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“What kind of doctor do you want to be?” This question is known to create much anxiety in the hearts of medical students everywhere. I have thought long and hard about what specialty I will enter, and am now confident in my answer. However, my response is not what you would expect.

A specialist is someone who devotes much time and effort into developing a skill and, for physicians that skill will eventually serve to help others. I believe that my mentor, Dr. Theresa J. Wright, has a specialty that is unlike any other. Though she is a cardiologist by training, she has a unique skill for encouraging and guiding young people, especially young women, through their journey in the field of medicine. Dr. Wright not only gives me practical advice along my own journey, but also a constant source of encouragement and support. This is the kind of physician that I want to become. I strive to continually develop my passion for helping others, and utilize my skills to meet the needs of those around me.

I met Dr. Wright the year after completing my undergraduate degree. I knew I wanted to become a doctor, but had no idea how to begin the process. After being introduced to her through a family member, I was told to email her my information. I followed directions and expressed in the email how passionate I was about becoming a doctor, but was unsure about the path I would have to take to achieve that goal. Her reply to me was a simple statement that I will never forget: “You’ve already been blessed with all you will need to realize your dream.”

Many may not see the significance in this statement, but to a young pre-med who felt overwhelmed by the admissions process and the pursuit of this larger-than-life dream of becoming a doc-

tor, it meant so much. For years I was told I needed specific grades, a perfect score, a certain group of extracurricular activities, a specific major, or a certain kind of personal statement to get into medical school. While these things are true, they tend to make students believe that they should fit a certain “medical student” mold. In that moment, I found that Dr. Wright was skilled at hearing the real concerns that lie beneath one’s words, then finding the perfect response to calm one’s anxiety. Sensing my worries, she let me know that my individuality and my own personal story was my greatest asset. To this day, I look at that email and feel reassurance.

Over the next few years I would complete graduate school, apply to medical school, and successfully matriculate into Indiana University School of Medicine. Along the way, there were challenges and obstacles that at the time felt insurmountable. However, Dr. Wright has been there every step of the way, encouraging me, advising me, and reminding me that my faith will continue to guide me and supply the strength needed to persevere.

In addition to her mentoring, Dr. Wright is very active within a number of institutions. She was instrumental in the opening of two charter schools in Indianapolis, is very active in her church, and still manages to spend a great deal of time with her family. Having been introduced to some of the other ladies that she mentors, I must say that her kind-natured spirit and influence is evident in each one of them. Once we met, we all immediately bonded and found a shared connection that is deeper than Dr. Wright’s presence in our lives, namely, we have all seen how much of herself she invests in the lives of others, and how she constantly sows back into

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her community in Indianapolis, and we believe that these are critical skills for physicians to develop.

Dr. Wright's actions have indeed provided the greatest lesson as to the capabilities of a woman physician. She is a woman who cares for her patients, investing in their health and the health of their communities. She is a woman who can be counted on by her colleagues, but is also concerned with making sure that the next generation of women physicians are given the care and attention they need to be successful. She is a woman who remains grounded in her faith never forgetting that she and her family must be continually nurtured as well.

Yes, I have chosen the kind of doctor that I want to be. It is one who is indeed knowledgeable and proficient in her field of medical expertise, but also exudes the wisdom, compassion, and giving nature of Dr. Wright.

