

## *Melinda DeFilippo*

Out of all of the paths that my life has taken me on, I know medicine is the final meeting point for them all. As a child, I can remember visiting my uncle at Palmer University where he was studying chiropractic medicine. He took us on a tour through the library, and I was amazed when I saw hundreds of books focused on an overlying topic of health and the human body. Curiosity and excitement took over as I saw authentic skeletons of humans with various skeletal diseases within display cases and I realized how complicated the human body is. My interest in medicine and exercise physiology grew after I unfortunately tore my ACL and medial meniscus playing basketball my senior year in high school. I wanted to know if the injury could have been prevented and what I could do to reduce the risk to my other knee. I was amazed when a sports medicine physician told me that body structure and hormones have shown to increase the risk of injury in athletes. My mind was set; I wanted to be a doctor.

Throughout undergraduate and medical school, many experiences have made me into the mature young woman and dedicated physician I am today. As an undergrad, I managed to complete my exercise physiology classes, while also taking pre-requisite classes for medical school, participating in intramural sports and involving myself in various clubs. In medical school, the workload got heavier, but I still maintained my dedication to extracurricular activities. During this time I developed time-management skills, discipline and learned the importance of organization. I was president of the sports medicine club and a teaching assistant for the first year students' osteopathic manipulative medicine labs, which taught me leadership, teaching and communication skills.

Medical school was a growth process for me and it still amazes me how much I am able to learn from one year to the next. I remember the feeling of absolute terror the first day of my internal medicine rotation as a third-year student that transformed to a feeling of confidence only four weeks later. Throughout my clinical rotations, I remind myself how privileged I am to be able to share in the lives of patients. I have experienced the difficult moments when a patient first learned she had cancer, and I have been present for the first breaths of a baby's joyous birth. Recently my grandfather died suddenly from a massive pulmonary embolism and from this tragic experience I have learned the needs of family members when a loved one passes away. I know that these touching experiences will make me a better physician. My contact with patients, their families, doctors, nurses and other members of the healthcare team remind me of the importance of team work, interpersonal skills and communication.

After years of hard work, I have chosen the path to family medicine. I love working with children, adolescents and adults, while solving the problems that are unique to each age group. Most of all, it is the continuity of care offered by family medicine that attracts me. I want to build a relationship with a family and care for them for many years allowing me to be compassionate, competent and provide complete healthcare.

I seek a residency program that will provide me with excellent training and a supportive environment that emphasizes education, and encourages me to grow as a person and

physician. I realize that with the profession's duty of knowledge comes many challenges, but I will never turn away from the path to help others.