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Jeffrienne Young, MD, Ophthalmology, West Des Moines

Physicians Eye Clinic, West Des
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Who is your role model?

During my ophthalmology clinical rotation in medical school, I was fortunate to meet an amazing ophthalmologist and role model, Dr. Mary Gilbert Lawrence. She showed me that it is possible to be an eye surgeon and have an active and full life with my family and community. During medical school, she was incredibly supportive of medical students, and generous with both her time and contacts to help me personally to pursue research opportunities and clinical rotations across the country. I admire her myriad achievements including starting a Teleretinal Imaging Program for rural patients in six states across the Upper Midwest, her national leadership as Deputy Executive Director of the Department of Defense/Veterans Affairs Vision of Excellence Center where she directed research on vision dysfunction of our troops with Traumatic Brain Injury, her recent bid to run for U.S. Congress, and her continued leadership efforts to advocate for patient safety in Minnesota and across the country. I value her friendship greatly, and she continues to inspire me not only to care for my own patients, but to pursue leadership positions at the local, state, and national levels to advocate important

eye health issues on behalf of all patients across our country..

What inspired you to pursue medicine?

I grew up in a family with personal connections to medical professionals. My father is an orthodontist and my mother was a registered nurse. My mother chose to stay home after I was born, but my parents always encouraged me to pursue a professional career. Growing up, I was lucky to have friends whose parents were physicians. My best friend's mother was a physician, and I spent a great deal of time with their family both at their home and on vacations. My friend's mother was very happy with her career as a physician. She enjoyed caring for her patients and I admired her greatly. She showed me that it was possible to have both a meaningful career in medicine and a warm, engaged family life.

What advice would you give to medical students?

I encourage prospective medical students to spend time actively caring for patients, to make sure that they truly want to spend their time caring directly for patients every day. I encourage medical students who are in the midst of choosing their medical specialty to consider not only the lifestyle of the specialty, but to spend time reading medical journals about the specialty. It is important that the specific scientific topics of the specialty are interesting, since so much of their career will be dedicated to that specific subject matter. And regardless of whether a student ultimately chooses medicine as a career, I encourage students pursuing a professional career to continue actively engaging with their friends, their colleagues and their community, and to continue their hobbies and interests outside of their career. Ultimately, it's the personal connections to individuals, colleagues, and the greater community that create a successful life-long professional career and a meaningful life's journey.

[View Dr. Young's bio.](#)

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