

Robert Smalls, Jr.
Aspiring Neurosurgeon



My internship experience was an absolute blessing. I completed three two-week rotations with three different medical professionals. During my first rotation, I was mentored by Dr. Rogers Cain, a Primary Care Physician. I learned about two sides of medicine; the clinical or patient oriented side (which entails reviewing the patients' symptoms in an effort to diagnose their illnesses) and the business side of medicine which involves the financial aspects of insurance and billing. One of the most important things I learned from Dr. Cain, is the importance of taking care of the community that we serve in all that we do.

During my second rotation, I shadowed Electrophysiology Cardiologist, Trevor Greene. At his office, I learned how to check patients' blood pressure and details on various techniques used to image the heart. These techniques include PET scan, nuclear imaging, EKG and the ultrasound. I was also able to observe Dr. Greene in the operating room as he performed heart surgery, the implantation of a pacemaker. This was one of the most fascinating periods of my internship. Dr. Greene emphasized the importance of maintaining a calm demeanor when dealing with patients. I will always remember Dr. Greene's motto: "You can do more than you think can; and just as much as you say you can".

My last internship rotation was with Gastroenterologist Renard Rawls. This was an amazing experience as well. I interacted with the patients as Dr. Rawls instructed them on how to control various symptoms due to gastrointestinal issues. I also learned about many diseases that affect the digestive system. I learned about various types of hepatitis, acid reflux and other gastrointestinal diseases. I also shadowed Dr. Rawls in the operating room as he performed a colonoscopy and several endoscopy procedures. I admire Dr. Rawls for his professionalism, knowledge and insight. He is inviting and very easy to talk to. Dr. Rawls instilled in me that I should never give up on my dreams in life and to never let anyone tell me what I can and cannot do.

This has been one of the most rewarding, productive summers that I have ever experienced. None of this would have been possible without the AnnieRuth Foundation. I would like to thank Ms. Dee Wilcox and the AnnieRuth Foundation Board of Directors and volunteers for getting me one step closer to making my dream of becoming a neurosurgeon come true.