

## Personal Statement

Will Stephens

I am a first-generation immigrant. I feel profoundly grateful to my parents for providing me the opportunity to create a prodigious future in the United States. For this reason, and many others, I have chosen to be a doctor. I have the ability to make a substantial difference in the lives and comfort of patients in my community. My initial desire to be a Podiatrist evolved from my life as an athlete. Cross country running and soccer injuries kept me in close contact with a Podiatrist for much of my teenage years. Since then, all the studies I pursued were in the hopes of ultimately becoming a physician.

As part of my journey, I completed education and training in multiple states. Beginning at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, I entered the esteemed Pre-Med program and enjoyed the diverse challenges. I then transferred to the University of North Texas to continue my education closer to home. After graduation, I gained invaluable insights working as a Medical Scribe in a Urology clinic for 8 months prior to being accepted into Kent State University College of Podiatric Medicine in Ohio. I completed my 4 years, and graduated in May 2018. While there, I volunteered to participate in a medical mission trip to Honduras in 2017, which turned out to be an unforgettable experience. The opportunity and reward of participating in surgical procedures in an underserved community still resonates with me. In my final year, I was voted Student of the Year by the student body. I was honored to be nominated, let alone elected. After graduation from KSUCPM, I joined a 12-month preceptorship program in New Jersey with the Institute for Podiatric Excellence and Development. My focus was on learning Practice Management and Billing and Coding, while continuing my academic education with a variety of resources.

I started my Residency training in New Jersey in July 2019, and have proceeded steadfastly toward my goal of becoming a Foot and Ankle Surgeon. Residency has presented me with diverse challenges, and my skill set has grown tremendously. I have been exposed to a vast number of surgical cases and techniques. As of May 2021, I have completed my surgical number requirements for Residency graduates a full year ahead of time. Throughout my clinical and hospital training patient care has been a priority for me. I am gratified by my education, and look ahead to fulfilling my dream of serving my community.

I continually strive to improve myself in some manner. My batteries and energy “recharge” when I learn topics that interest me. I keep my skills and knowledge up to date by attending surgical symposiums and workshops. I nourish my body with home cooked meals and regular work out routines which has helped maintain my mental health during stressful periods. I find deep satisfaction in teaching others, and enjoyed my role as a tutor. That extra time in the Anatomy lab has proven vital to my success. The feasibility of being in a position to support my family has kept me going through all the difficulties of my career choice.

I am considering moving to the Pacific Northwest after Residency to begin practicing. My brother and his wife re-located from Texas to Portland, Oregon and recently had their first son. Having spent the past seven years away from family, I would very much value being closer to see my nephew grow up. Additionally, my parents are considering relocating to the Pacific Northwest. I also have close family friends in Idaho.

I will always reflect on the immigration process- a time when my parents were forced to work simple jobs when they were of a college degree level of education, while my little brother and I were oblivious to the world and simply enjoying the adventure. My self-realization of their sacrifice, leaving everything and everyone they had ever known to forge out a new existence for their family, will continually inspire me to achieve my goals. I have come so far on this journey, yet the future ahead is beckoning.