

NAACP

"Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane." Martin Luther King jr.

NAACP Civic Engagement Program

The National NAACP has a volunteer to increase voting. They will send you the names of ten infrequent black voters in your area that you can contact via text or phone prior to the November elections. NAACP.ORG

Missouri Senator Blunt is only Senator opposing removing Confederate Statues

Senator Roy Blunt (R) Missouri blocked a unanimous voice vote to remove two confederate statues from Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol this week. If you think Senator Blunt is misguided, please call his office at (202) 224-5721. Let Senator Blunt know we have had enough of traitorous, slave holding luminaries being celebrated in our Capitol.

Dr. Marcia Hernandez Gynecology/Oncology

Please tell us about your background.



My family history is very interesting. On my mother's side of the family we have some amazing stories. I was talking to my mom on the way to meet you and she was telling me that she remembers sitting on the lap of

Thurgood Marshall of the NAACP in my grandmother's house. My grandfather was remarkable; he graduated college at the age most of us begin to drive, pursued a doctorate, and had many successes in business and ministry. There was a story shared by an uncle who questioned his commitment to civil rights in the 1960's

Developing Resilience

This article is taken from the longer article by Eileen Zimmerman in the New York Times on 6/18/20.

Resilience is generally seen as an ability to handle difficulties and come out on the other side with some personal growth.

These are some of the characteristics of resilient people:

- They have a positive, realistic outlook. They don't dwell on negative information and seek opportunities in bleak situations.
- They have a moral compass. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and make decisions based on it.
- They have a belief in something greater than themselves.
- They are altruistic; they have a concern for others and a degree of selflessness. They are often dedicated to causes they find meaningful and that gives them a sense of purpose.
- They have a support system and support others. Very few resilient people "go it alone."
- They have a mission, a meaning, a purpose. They are committed to a mission which gives them courage and strength.
- They accept what they cannot change and focus effort on what they can change.

to which my grandfather presented his work with the standard bearers of the movement decades earlier: He was in the same Baptist minister's association with Martin Luther King Sr. and sometimes acted as a mentor to young Martin Luther King Jr. Family keepsakes include written correspondence from Martin Luther King Jr. that, although they did not have a close relationship, reveal a professional respect for the mission they shared. Education has always been a touchstone of my family; my great grandfather and my great-great grandfather were both physicians. In my own experience, there have been many challenges to pursuing a profession in medicine, but I am intrigued and inspired by my ancestor's tenacity in overcoming bias and exclusion that they likely faced in their time. My great-great grandfather, determined to contribute as a physician, had gone to medical school at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada because at that time, blacks weren't allowed in US medical schools. It seems my family has always valued the irrevocable credential education provides. As ideal as their successes sound, it is important to mention that slavery is a part of my history. Emerging from slavery, my dad's side of the family had been

sharecroppers in the Florida panhandle who eventually moved to Pennsylvania where my dad grew up in the projects in Chester, Pennsylvania. My father is a US Navy Veteran and still recounts the ups and downs of his service with my children. Shortly after his tenure in the military and my birth, he transitioned from a policeman to being responsible for a large insurance company's security, ultimately relocating to colorful Colorado. I grew up as a mountain girl, hiking, biking and skiing. Starting at the University of Colorado, Boulder I had a professor tell me I wasn't capable enough to get into medical school. Regrettably, I reconsidered my ambitions. After a brief break, I attended Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado where I found a supportive faculty who, despite my fledgling confidence, showed me I did not have to accept limitations.

I received my undergraduate degree and was married the same year. Being a military spouse, I was relegated to finding a path to medicine through a master's degree in business, but also met mentors in the sciences and Dr. Karen Cassidy, a physician who not only let me shadow her, but provide counsel and encouragement on my goal of becoming a physician.

Medical school has been the most challenging chapter of my life.

The sixteen-year duration spanning when I was originally accepted into medical school until the completion of my final board examinations bears so much more fruit than just an education. I was fortunate in being able to take two breaks for each of my children as well as completing research with one of the most prestigious children's hospitals in the country and graduating medical school with honors. I completed a four-year residency at the University of New Jersey Dental and Medicine (UNDMJ), Cooper University Hospital. While there I found I also enjoyed

caring for the oncology patients. I was offered an exceptional opportunity to stay in order to participate in a three year fellowship, which included a year with the University of Pennsylvania for a post-doctoral research project. immediately following, I was recruited to Springfield by Mercy as a Gynecological Oncologist.

Have you faced any racism here? Yes, but most of the people I meet are friendly and I am fortunate to work with colleagues who welcome diversity. My son however has faced racism at school from both a teacher and other students. It seems to be resolved at this time.

What advice do you have for young people? Education is a path to freedom. **Use your mind as your superpower.** Accepting help and a can do attitude is necessary. It took wonderful people, including individuals from diverse backgrounds, to lift me up and put me on their shoulders and then they shot me to the mountain top.