

Research standout makes his mark in College of Graduate Studies

BY CINDY ABOLE

aboleca@musc.edu

Upon meeting MUSC Ph.D. graduate candidate Kareem Heslop, it's easy to be drawn to his warm, bright smile; confident handshake; and gentle "Yooooow" greeting. He's Jamaican after all and genuinely spreads his carefree "irie" vibes and "everything's all right" attitude everywhere he goes.

It has been an incredible journey for Heslop, 28, who as a young boy dreamed of doing big things and helping others. "There were a lot of people who believed in me from a young age. It provides faith whenever I feel challenged. It's when you examine things retrospectively that you realize that all the pieces fit together in your journey," said Heslop.

On Saturday, Heslop will join 26 doctor of philosophy candidates from the College of Graduate Studies among MUSC's total 726 expected graduates from the Class of 2022. With this accomplishment, he achieves a lifelong dream shared not only by Heslop, but by his parents, family and friends, undergraduate friends and faculty, mentors and others along the way.

THE JAMAICAN WAY

It's a far cry from the boy who grew up almost 2,000 miles away around Boston Bay on the northeastern end of the Caribbean island located at the base of the Blue Mountains.

At age 4, Heslop left his birth family to live with a retired couple Edgar and Vivian Strachan and daughter Sylvia, who were from around Portland Province. Living with his adopted family, he was part of a stable and loving home.

"My parents provided everything I needed and raised me with a strong sense of character and love. They emphasized that having a good education, respect for others and empathy

See **STANDOUT** on page 3



Photo by Sarah Pack

College of Medicine graduate Dr. Julia Rodes.

From motorcycle crash survivor to medical school graduate

BY HELEN ADAMS

adamshel@musc.edu

Julia Rodes had serious doubts about whether she'd make it through medical school. "100%, 110%," she said. But as she prepares to graduate from the College of Medicine at MUSC and begin a residency at MUSC's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, she has become an inspiring figure on campus and beyond.

"Her focus and drive have helped me to view our world through a unique lens and have led to real change that will impact generations to come at MUSC," said Christopher Bunt, M.D., associate dean for Student Affairs and Professionalism in the College of Medicine.

Rodes will become the second student to graduate from the College of Medicine using a wheelchair. The first is someone she knows well. She met John Lin, M.D., at the Shepherd

See **SURVIVOR** on page 14

4 College of Health Professions

6 College of Pharmacy

7 College of Dental Medicine

8 College of Nursing

2 Bike-share program

5 Meet Tony Kwon, M.D., Ph.D.

11 2022 honor graduates

New bike-share program provides ‘spark’ of electricity to mobility in Charleston

By **BRYCE DONOVAN**
donovanb@musc.edu

Mama always taught you to share.
And now’s your moment to shine.
Thanks to a new bike-share program in Charleston, you can use a bike for a bit, park it somewhere else and then let somebody else use it later. Pat yourself on the back, you just shared!

This is the basic premise of a bike share – stations are placed strategically around the area, and for a small fee, bikes can be taken from or returned there – something Charleston has had in previous years, but now, more people will be able to experience the joys of sharing. That’s because last week, at a launch party for Lime – a bike-share company with roots in hundreds of cities across five continents – the City of Charleston, MUSC and the mobility company announced a new partnership consisting of more than 200 e-bikes at stations scattered around the city.

But wait, what’s an e-bike? Well, that’s a great question I just asked for you.

An e-bike is an electric bike that doesn’t do all the work for you but, rather, gives you a pedal assist. What that means is, when you pedal, the bike goes, “Whoa, take it easy there Lance Armstrong, let me help you.” So whether you’re pedaling on a flat street or up a steep hill (Charlestonians have heard legends of these), it’s as easy as key lime pie.

A big reason why the e-bike

announcement is so exciting is because pedal-assist opens up the possibility of biking to people of all sizes and ages. And the partnership with MUSC – where one of the more prominent bike hubs is located – is part of the teaching hospital’s continued commitment to advocating for healthier lifestyles.

“This fits so well with where MUSC wants to go in terms of community, accessibility and most importantly, health and wellness,” said Patrick Cawley, M.D., MUSC Health CEO and vice president for Health Affairs, University.

Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg also touted the health benefits but couldn’t help getting a little excited about the bikes themselves.

“Wait until you ride one of these bikes,” he said. “Man, you give that thing just one stroke, and you’re off.”

Not only are they easy to ride, they’re hard to miss. Neon green and white with a huge front basket for carrying gear, groceries, a small dog possibly, there were more than 20 bikes available to test ride at the partnership launch near MUSC’s Urban Farm. Faculty members, students and staff took turns testing out the bikes. Riders simply download the Lime app, enter in their personal information – MUSC employees get a 70% discount on all rides – and they’re off.

MUSC Health-Charleston CEO David Zaas, M.D., could not have look more delighted to be on one of the e-bikes, his white lab coat flapping in the wind as he



Photos by Sarah Pack

Dr. David Zaas, MUSC Health-Charleston CEO became a kid again when he hopped on one of the new electric bikes. He laughed in delight as he zoomed past Dr. Susan Johnson, director of the Office of Health Promotion.



More than 20 e-bikes were available to test ride during the May 6 launch announcement on MUSC’s campus.

zoomed around the giant oak tree near the Dental Clinic.

“That was great!” he said as he smiled at everyone.

Kimberly Kascak, assistant professor in MUSC’s office of interprofessional initiatives, wanted to see what all the hubbub was about, so she stopped and gave one of the bikes a try – and she was pretty impressed.

“If they’re going to have stations all around town, I could park my car where there isn’t

as much traffic, hop on one of these and get where I want to go quickly and without having to worry about parking,” she said. “I could actually see using this.”

To begin, Lime will have 27 e-bike stations spread across the peninsula. How to pay, riding rules as well as where those stations are located are all available within the app. In the coming months and years, Lime also hopes to expand to West Ashley, Mount Pleasant and North Charleston.



Editorial Office
MUSC Office of PublicAffairs &
Media Relations, 135 Cannon
Street, Suite 403C, Charleston, SC
29425.
843-792-4107
Fax: 843-792-6723

Editor: Cindy Abole
catalyst@musc.edu

The MUSC Catalyst News is published bi-monthly. Paid advertisements, which do not represent an endorsement by MUSC or the state of South Carolina, are handled by Island Publications Inc., Moultrie News, 505 Belle Hall Pkwy., Suite 202, Mount Pleasant, S.C., 843-958-7489, 958-7384, 958-7488 or 937-7489. E-mail: advertising@moultrienews.com.

STANDOUT *Continued from Page One*

are guiding lights for a fulfilling life. They also fostered an enduring connection between my birth mother, Angella, and myself,” Heslop said.

His first memory of being attracted to science was watching Cartoon Network’s show, “Dexter’s Laboratory,” following the adventures of eight-year-old Dexter, a boy genius and inventor, and his secret laboratory in his room.

“I saw that whenever Dexter was in trouble, he’d always find a way to solve things. ‘To the lab!’ Dexter would say, as he went off to solve a problem in a fun unique way,” Heslop said.

“That’s how I learned that sometimes you may not always find the answers in books. At times, you learn to hypothesize and think about how you can find a solution or make a way. In science, it’s the same thing. You may be the first person to see something and then you share it with the rest of your community to verify it. Realizing this gave me confidence to do anything,” Heslop continued.

As a student at Boston Primary and Infant in Boston Bay, he excelled in science, played cricket and other sports and was on the four-person team representing his school on Satcom Cable TV show “School Challenge Quiz.” It was during one of the live quiz programs, at age 12, that he declared he wanted to be a scientist.

Heslop did everything academically to excel in high school and stayed driven to

become a scientist. Heslop knew he wanted to attend college, but financially it would be difficult. It was then that he set his sights on academic scholarships.

PASSPORT TO COLLEGE

Determined to succeed, he connected with a classmate who had plans to attend college in the United States. He and Heslop and two other students teamed up, sharing their experiences and resources to navigate the college scholarship process together. Each applied to about 25 schools in the U.S. Ultimately, it was Claflin University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, that offered them the best academic scholarships. The students had Claflin University liaisons Joan and Norman Harris to thank for their time, guidance and efforts. The Harrises, who are Jamaican-born, were instrumental in guiding them through the university’s admissions requirements from the visa process and standardized tests to scholarships and financial aid.

The effort was so successful and the need to assist other students was so obvious that Harris and the students created the Passport to College (PTC) program, a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit established to assist STEM students living in the Caribbean in realizing their dreams to attend college and match to scholarships at historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) in the U.S.

“This program is special to me and all of us as we all sought for a way to attend college and realize our dreams. Our journey



Photos Provided

Dr. Kareem Heslop, who completed his time in the College of Graduate Studies, won the 2022 Student Bioenergeticist Award from the Biophysical Society.



Heslop’s mother, Vivia Strachan. She and husband Edgar Strachan raised Kareem from age 4.



Photo Provided

Passport to College sponsor Joan Harris, from left, and Claflin University admissions director Michael Ziegler, join international students Orlando Watson, Rashshana Blackwood, Sherlene Brown and Kareem Heslop as they began classes in August 2013.

together brought us close in friendships and support for Claflin and other students who come behind us,” Heslop said. Working with Harris, donors Montrose Myers, Laverne Campbell and a host of other “PTC villagers,” Heslop and his friends remain active mentors sharing their time, talents, experience and financial support with this program. Currently, there are 102 students enrolled in the program.

A PASSION FOR SCIENCE

Heslop committed himself to research experiences at Claflin, Stanford University and MUSC. In 2015, he took first place and the Black Apollo Science Award for his undergraduate research at the 15th annual Dr. Ernest E. Just Science Symposium at MUSC.

His work caught the eyes of many, and he was invited by Cynthia Wright, Ph.D.,

associate dean for admissions and career development in the College of Graduate Studies to participate in their annual Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP). SURP is a 10--research and education-based program to enhance research skills and introduce undergraduate students to careers in biomedical research. Heslop was a student research intern working consecutive summers in the labs of John Lemasters, M.D., Ph.D., the GlaxoSmithKline Distinguished Endowed Chair; and Eduardo Maldonado, D.V.M., Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Drug Discovery and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Heslop was introduced to mitochondrial research, investigating the pharmacologic inhibition of the voltage dependent anion channel (VDAC) and searching for novel compounds with the potential to be developed as anticancer drugs. In 2017, he

See STANDOUT on page 15

Faith, family, friends guide CRNA graduate through challenges

By LESLIE CANTU
adamshel@musc.edu

Only days from graduating from the MUSC College of Health Professions as a certified registered nurse anesthetist, Esther Odeghe reflected with awe and gratitude on the journey she has taken — from a young girl in Nigeria who could only watch helplessly as her grandmother died in pain to a professional who can provide physical and emotional comfort to patients.

The journey has not been straightforward but has come with zigs and zags and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. But prayer and the people in her life have made all the difference.

“Graduating and looking at what my paycheck is going to be, it makes me sit down and think, ‘Yes, God has been just. God has been faithful,’ — being from where I didn’t have a place, and I was planning to sleep in my car.”

Odeghe’s story begins in Aba, Nigeria, as the middle of five children and the only girl. In Nigeria, she didn’t even realize that anesthesia existed. Because medical care must be paid for upfront, she said, most people go to the hospital only when they’ve run out of other options. Her grandmother, whom they called Mma Mommy, died in pain after suffering “a spell.” Years later, in nursing school, Odeghe would start cataloguing her grandmother’s symptoms and realize it might have been a preventable death. But at the time, the only thing the family could do was call for the naturopathic doctor.

After finishing her schooling in Nigeria, Odeghe followed her two older brothers to the U.S. for college.

“Coming here, when I got here, I didn’t know what I wanted to do. All I knew was I wanted to leave Nigeria,” she said.

She landed at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. With a whole new world of possibilities opened up to her, she was at first an undecided major. But after carefully considering her strengths and weaknesses, she decided to pursue nursing. Still, it was a choice she made with her head rather than her heart. Only when she began working as a tech at a Columbia hospital did she truly begin to appreciate the role.

“My best times are seeing the patients smile,” she said.

While at SC State, Odeghe saw a presentation about different ways to advance in nursing, such as becoming a nurse practitioner or a CRNA, and decided she would like to pursue CRNA training. CRNA programs require experience as a critical care nurse, so upon graduation from SC State in 2014, Odeghe went to work at Carolinas Hospital System — now MUSC Health-Florence.



Photo by Sarah Pack

College of Health Professions’ Esther Odeghe is a graduate of the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Program.

“Graduating and looking at what my paycheck is going to be, it makes me sit down and think, ‘Yes, God has been just. God has been faithful,’ — being from where I didn’t have a place, and I was planning to sleep in my car.”

Esther Odeghe

But when she moved to Charleston to be closer to her brother, an immigration paperwork holdup prevented her from working.

“When I came to Charleston, I was all tears,” she said. “I wasn’t working. I had a nursing degree staring at me that I couldn’t use. I had the career path I wanted to pursue that I couldn’t pursue. I had a pending immigration process that I didn’t know if it was going to go south.”

She couldn’t even drive because her driver’s license had expired, she said.

She credits her church family with keeping her on the right path. Odeghe began attending Charleston Revival Tabernacle when she first moved here, and the church opened its arms to her — even so far as the pastor and his wife allowing her to live with them.

She couldn’t work; she couldn’t go to school and she couldn’t drive, so she threw herself into church life, joining the choir, teaching Sunday nursery school and cooking. Looking

back, she realizes her hosts knew what dire straits she was in and always subtly ensured that she had enough to eat.

It would have been so easy to give in to frustration and anger at her situation and turn to alcohol or drugs, she said.

“It’s only one bad thought that could send you to the other side of life,” she reflected.

She believes that God sent her to be with the right people to keep her sane in the most difficult times. Through the church, she also met her good friend Unyime Edem, who has become like a sister to her. For a time, Odeghe lived with Edem, and even after she began working again and attending school at MUSC, her friend was there to bring her food after long days, to lend her money when she’s come up short, to do her hair and to listen to her ups and downs.

“I’m crying — I call her. I’m laughing — I call her. When I broke up with my boyfriend, she was there. She’s been there,” Odeghe said.

Odeghe began the CRNA program at MUSC in 2019. Getting in was a huge accomplishment. “When I got into school my pastor cried. Everybody who knew my story cried,” she said.

But staying in has also been a feat. She didn’t have the funds to pay each semester’s tuition up front, so she took out loans and worked at Trident Medical Center to make monthly payments on what the loan didn’t cover — in fact, she made the final payment for her final semester only weeks ago.

When her classmates would go out for drinks after an exam, Odeghe would go to work. When she wasn’t too busy at work, she would study.

MEET TONY



Hyunwoo (Tony) Kwon, M.D., Ph.D.

College and how long at MUSC

MSTP Program; Eight years

How are you changing what's possible at MUSC

By investigating mechanisms underlying tumor immune dysregulation with the goal to help drive breakthroughs in cancer immunotherapy

Hometown *Seoul, South Korea*

Best thing about living in Charleston

The historic seaside location and incredible restaurants

Family *Mom and dad; older brother, Mike; (UChicago Pathology resident) and fiancée, Jennie (MUSC dental student)*

What inspired you to study at MUSC

Focus on student mentoring and camaraderie

People who've inspired you at MUSC

Dr. Nancy DeMore, Dr. Perry Halushka and Amy Connolly

Your residency plans *Physician-Scientist Training Program at The Ohio State Univ.*



Register for "We Are All Affected" today!

Join the Waring Historical Library for a commemorative symposium focusing on the history of HIV/AIDS in South Carolina and the South.

Event information:

May 24, 2022 - May 26, 2022

Circular Congregational Church | Virtual

For more information
and registration visit:
bit.ly/AllAffectedRegistration



Sponsors of this event include MUSC Arts in Healing, MUSC Libraries, MUSC Office of Humanities, the Gibbs Museum of Art, and the College of Charleston's Department of Medical Humanities.

THE WARING
HISTORICAL LIBRARY

CANINE THERAPISTS & CLINICIANS



The MUSC Canine Therapist Crew

are barking for doctors and nurses to be in our 2023 "Pin-Up" calendar!

We're sniffing out one human to pose with us per month.

Just tell why you think having us PAWtrol the hospital is so imPAWtant or share something special you've seen us do!

Submit contest entries to: bennetca@musc.edu

NLT Friday, May 27, 2022

*Judges will not have access to the names of the submissions

*This is a fund raiser for the Therapy Animal Program



MUSC INNOVATION STATION

**Launching our new
online store**

<http://innovationstation.musc.edu/>



NEGOTIATION
for Success and Satisfaction

Open to ALL faculty & Post-Doctoral Fellows

Friday, June 17
12:30 - 2:00 pm

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
and will include additional information
<https://redcap.link/negotiation22>



Dr. Jennifer Woodward
Vice Chancellor for Sponsored Programs
and Research Operations
Professor of Surgery and Immunology
at the University of Pittsburgh



Pharmacy's youngest grad is ready to make a difference

By LESLIE CANTU

adamshel@musc.edu

While most of Kira Adkins' new classmates in the MUSC College of Pharmacy in the fall of 2018 were learning each other's names and backgrounds, they all seemed to know something about her already. After all, she had been featured in local media as the girl who was accepted to pharmacy school at the age of 16.

But even if they knew her story, they didn't know her. Adkins remembers socializing with other new students around a table during orientation week when one brought up "that girl who got in, and she's only 16." Curious to hear the gossip, Adkins quietly listened. Luckily, the other students' reactions were overwhelmingly positive – mostly amazement at her accomplishment. She then revealed herself as "that girl."

"They were like, 'What?! No way! We expected you – I don't know – to look different,'" Adkins said. "And I was like, 'Look different how? Who did you expect?' And they were like, 'I don't know. Somebody nerdy.'"

"So I guess they were surprised," Adkins said, laughing at the memory.

From the youngest accepted applicant at the College of Pharmacy, Adkins now becomes the youngest graduate at the age of 21. It's an age when most college students – including her former classmates from Academic Magnet High School – are either getting ready to begin their careers or to apply to graduate schools to study medicine, law, business, or – of course – pharmacy.

Adkins bypassed the undergraduate years by earning college credits through Advanced Placement classes in high school and courses at Trident Technical College and Greenville Technical College. She had decided early on that she wanted to be a pharmacist, and so she began by choosing courses with an eye toward fulfilling her prerequisites.

"Then I started to get on a roll, and I thought, 'This is manageable.' So I just started adding more classes, started trying to do the sciences," she said.

Her parents, Randy and Sherlonda Adkins, are immensely proud of her. But those years of doubling up on high school and college coursework weren't easy, and they tried to make space for her to ease off the pressure.

"There were definitely difficult times, of course, because it was a lot – being in

college and high school," Randy Adkins said. "Anytime she had those times, we always made it clear she could step away if she wanted to. Just because you have a plan doesn't mean you have to put everything into it and move forward."

But Adkins was always able to regroup, refresh and keep going, her father said.

"We actually had a conversation about that a few weeks ago, about remembering those moments, because those moments will help you in your future. Life doesn't always pan out perfectly. This ended up panning out very well, but it was difficult along the way," he added.

Kira Adkins' interest in a health care career began when, at the age of 13, her parents invited her to accompany them on a mission trip to Honduras. In addition to working as a software consultant, her father is an ordained minister, and her mother is a physician assistant. Back home in South Carolina, Adkins joined the SCRUBS program at Roper St. Francis Health Care for middle and high school students interested in health care careers.

It quickly became obvious, she said, that she didn't want anything to do with a career that involved blood and gore. And as she began to learn about pharmacy, she also began to notice how accessible pharmacists are. Around practically every corner there's a CVS, a Walgreens, a Walmart or a grocery store – and they all have pharmacists.

She noted that pharmacists are considered among the most trustworthy professions, and she began to see how other health care providers relied on them. Even so, she said, it wasn't until she got to pharmacy school and began rotations that she truly began to understand the breadth of the field.


Rotations are meant to give students experience in a variety of settings, and Adkins has gotten that. She's worked in a long-term care facility, ambulatory clinics, community pharmacies and hospital pharmacies. In each setting, she's learned something about herself and about pharmacy.

Working at a pharmacy embedded within a Fetter Health clinic, which primarily serves minority and underserved communities, drove home the significance of being a Black woman in the profession. Study after study has shown the importance of health care providers looking like the communities




Photo by Kiya Anderson


College of Pharmacy graduate Dr. Kira Adkins.



236 Ponsbury Road
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464



Gay Slough
gslough@carolinaone.com
843-452-9708



Carolina One
Real Estate

Extraordinary home in I'On with private double grand piazzas. I'On Village, its restaurants, shops, and club are a three-minute walk from the home. Location is three miles to downtown Charleston and pristine beaches. The renovated kitchen has granite, Thermador appliances, plenty of cabinet space and open concept. The home has elegant lighting, molding,

high ceilings, built in china cabinet, plantation shutters, gas, or wood burning fireplace and lots of light. The RARE oversized attached two car garage is accessed from the private driveway behind the home. Upstairs, the large master suite has access to a front piazza to watch the sunset. The renovated master bath has a Jacuzzi tub and a stand-alone marble shower,

new dual Moroccan sinks, quartzite countertops and high-end fixtures. There are two more bedrooms on this level and a 4th bedroom with private bath on the first floor. Make this distinctive home your next home.

4BR and 3.5BA
2832 SF
\$1,945,000 • 22003467

PG2-2001785-1

See **PHARMACIST** on page 10

Irish family ties helped to inspire dental class leader's career choice

By HELEN ADAMS

adamshel@musc.edu

Keith Tormey plans to visit relatives in Drogheda, Ireland, after graduating from the James B. Edwards College of Dental Medicine at MUSC. They're ready for him. "The amount of texts I've gotten: 'Hey, I need you to look at my tooth,'" he said.

He's used to it. "It's funny. Ever since I've gotten to a dental school, they'll send me pictures with their mouth open, and be like, 'Hey, what do you think of this?' 'What do you think of that?'"

Tormey is proud to be able to help. His family helped inspire the Upstate South Carolina man's interest in dentistry.

"My parents immigrated here in 1992 to kind of better their lives and have a better opportunity for their children. And as I got older, I appreciated that a little bit more and took notice of, 'Hey, why are me and my sister going to the dentist and you and dad aren't?'"

He said he realized that dental care hadn't been as high a priority where his parents are from as it is here. "I could tell a big difference in terms of the confidence level that me and my sister had versus some other family members that weren't as fortunate enough to receive dental care. I took that as my motivation to try to make a difference in people's lives

See **LEADER** on page 12



Photo by Sarah Pack

Dr. Keith Tormey was bitten by the dental bug early. "I definitely knew dentistry was my calling."



Holiday Inn

Enjoy Waterfront Views of Charleston Harbor,
Easy Access to Downtown Charleston and Free Parking!



Looking for a great staycation location with wonderful views, an amazing restaurant and bar?

We have a great meeting space venue and Happy Hour deals right around the corner from MUSC!

Our beautiful Charleston, SC hotel is conveniently located off Savannah Highway (Hwy 17) and overlooks the Ashley River. Our location is perfect for guests looking for lodging near Charleston's best attractions and is close to MUSC. Charleston is known for its amazing history, restaurants, and shops. We offer free shuttle service to the historic Downtown Charleston area for your comfort and convenience.

Justin Claiborne Sr. • Sales Manager

301 Savannah Hwy, Charleston, SC 29407 • 843-460-1442 (Direct Line)
<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/charleston/chsrv/hoteldetail>

Coming Full Circle: From foster child to foster child advocate

BY BRYCE DONOVAN
donovanb@musc.edu

Crystal Wood doesn't believe in "what ifs." The 37-year-old single mother, who will be graduating from the MUSC College of Nursing's Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner program this week with a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, thinks that everybody we intersect with in life is there to teach us something. Many of them teach us the good things. A grandmother who instills compassion. A sibling who forces greater patience. But sometimes we cross paths with those who bring nothing but adversity to the lives they touch. For some, that adversity can permanently destroy their lives. But for others, it's that adversity — and coming out on the other side stronger for the hardships — that gives them the drive to overcome.

Through all the ups and downs in her life, deep down, Wood always knew which kind of person she was. And that has everything to do with how she ended up here, at the zenith of her field.

THE TRUTH HURTS

Most of them stared with their mouths open. Some looked away.

That was the moment she knew she was different.

Crystal Wood was 10 years old, hanging out with some friends at her elementary school when she made a comment that stopped her classmates in their tracks.

"I just casually said, 'I mean, you know how it is, when your dad hits you,'" she said. "But they just looked at me like they couldn't believe what I just said."

For years — many before that illuminating day in fifth grade, and sadly a few after — she endured her father's many forms of abuse. At first, she took it because she didn't know any better. Toward the end, she suffered through it so her older siblings didn't have to.

"If he was hurting me," she said, "I knew he couldn't be hurting them."

Finally, at 12 years old, Wood told a school counselor what was going on at home. She was immediately placed in foster care. Though it wasn't perfect, it was a far cry from what she was used to. For the next couple of years, she bounced around foster homes until

eventually, at 17, she moved out and began life on her own.

Things seemed to be turning around for Wood. She finished high school. Enrolled in a technical college. Got straight As. That led to her going for and becoming a registered nurse.

Sadly, the adversity in her life would return in an all-too-familiar form.

FAMILIAR CHAOS

After graduating from nursing school, she reconnected with her biological mother — now that her father was in prison — who encouraged Wood to further her education in the south to be closer to family and move from her home of Vermont down to Georgia where she now lived.

Wood was accepted at Georgia Southern University. Again, things were going well academically for Wood, her life on an upward trajectory. And then she met a guy. At first, he seemed really sweet. Wood got pregnant, and quickly, he morphed into her father. He was mean, disrespectful, abusive. It was an all-too-familiar spot for Wood.

And for years she stayed with him, keeping the abuse and pain private. All the while, she worked at a small Georgia hospital, barely keeping the young family afloat. Many months, they lived without electricity or running water. As soon as Wood would come home with a paycheck, her husband would take it and blow it.

"I tried to leave him so many times, but I just couldn't do it," she said. "Everything was so crazy and chaotic, but it was familiar to me."

But to know Crystal Wood is to know that she refuses to give up on anything. So she dug deep and made a concerted effort to salvage her marriage. And for a few months, she did. But then his abusive behavior returned.

Finally, she did what she knew needed to be done, and she left him.

"I stayed in this emotionally bankrupt place for so long. And I had finally just had enough," she said.

After leaving her husband, Wood moved into her own place. Got sole custody of her son. Found a new job in a geriatric behavioral health psychiatric unit, working with patients with mental health needs. On the side, she began to volunteer as a court-appointed



Photo by Sarah Pack

Dr. Crystal Wood on foster care: "The system is no place to raise a child."

"It's one thing to tell somebody you know how hard it must be to go through something. But to be able to speak from a place where you can say, 'I've been where you are,' I think that makes all the difference."

Crystal Wood, DNP

special advocate (CASA) for local foster kids.

It was a natural match.

"It's one thing to tell somebody you know how hard it must be to go through something," she said. "But to be able to speak from a place where you can say, 'I've been where you are,' I think that makes all the difference."

EMBRACING HER LIFE

Her first case as a CASA was two young brothers.

"I'm not going to lie, when I first met them, I was so nervous. But that melted away so quickly," she said.

When someone becomes a CASA, the agency asks that advocate to stay committed for at least a year. The boys she would be advocating for, both under 10 years old at the time, had already had 14 case workers since entering foster care. Yes, 14.

"I mean, who walks away from these kids?" she asked.

In her role as a CASA, Wood's role is to serve as a "big sister." To advocate for the children. She meets with parents — foster and biological — doctors, teachers, you name it — all in the name of getting the full picture. Sometimes that means spending hours in court, listening to all sorts of people talk about the kids and their situations.

"It really upsets me because a lot of time, the people in the courtroom talk about the kids like they're pieces of furniture. I constantly have to remind them that these are human beings with feelings, not objects."

And sometimes — this is the most important part, she'll tell you — she spends quality time with the kids. Once, sometimes twice a month, Wood will visit the kids at school, maybe play some cards with them, draw pictures. Out of that time comes trust.

"These kids are used to grownups saying things and not following through," Wood said. "So when I say I'll be there, I'm going to be there."

Around the same time Wood began



Photo Provided

Wood and her son, Mitchell. Whenever Wood meets with foster children, she brings photos of her son. “They need to see me as a person and not just a worker doing a job.”

working as a CASA, at the urging of friends and colleagues who believed in her, she applied to MUSC to get her doctorate.

“I hung all my laundry out there,” she said. “I owned every little detail of my life. Some people thought I was crazy to do that, but honestly, I think it helped my chances because who better to talk to people about something than someone who has been through it?”

Joy Lauerer, DNP, an advanced practice psychiatric-mental health nurse and associate professor in the College of Nursing, was one of the people who reviewed Wood’s application.

“I read her essay and was blown away,” Lauerer said. “GPA and references are important, but they’re not the only thing we look at. I just looked at what this woman had gone through, and I knew she was resilient.”



Lauerer

IN THEIR SHOES

This week, three years after taking the leap of faith and applying to MUSC, Wood will graduate, capping her phoenix-like rise from the depths of despair to someone with the necessary skills and compassion to help kids just like her. Kids going through trauma, abuse, neglect, depression. Foster kids



Photo Provided

Wood having fun at a CASA convention.

who need someone who understands them. Who can speak for them.

“I don’t know anybody that has a great foster care experience,” she said. “The system is no place to raise a child. They need someone to talk to, someone who will advocate for them.”

And who better than a person who has been there herself? Who through it all never lost hope. Who despite the cruelty

Want to help?

On any given day, there are more than 400,000 children and youth in foster care. These young people have experienced abuse or neglect, ushering them into the court and foster care systems. Most have been removed from their homes. That means new homes, new schools, courtroom hearings and a revolving door of professionals – all while coping with the trauma of abuse or neglect. No young person should have to face that chaos alone.

For more than 270,000 youth, a caring and highly trained court appointed special advocate (CASA) or guardian ad litem (GAL) volunteer is by their sides to advocate for their best interests and well-being. If you think you’d like to volunteer, visit childadvocate.sc.gov or call the Charleston County GAL Program at 843-525-0779.

Want to provide financial assistance to the National CASA/GAL Association, visit <https://give.nationalcasagal.org/donate>.



of others remains kindhearted, striving to make things better for others.

“Sometimes having difficult life experiences can make for a more a compassionate practitioner,” Lauerer said. “So much of what we do isn’t about the medicine, it’s about the relationships, and I think she’ll be so good at that. Her empathy is going to serve her well.”

College of Nursing instructor Angie Powers, DNP, wholeheartedly agreed. “Crystal personally understands the difference a mental health provider can make in the lives of a patient,” she said. “I have no doubt she’ll make a huge impact in the mental health community.”

Wood hopes that impact comes in the form of shaping a better foster system in Hazlehurst, Georgia, where she now lives. To start, she wants to create a mentorship program for kids coming from tough backgrounds. In turn, she hopes that leads to higher standards of care for these kids.

But on a more personal note, she hopes to make life better for a child who could use a second chance by adopting a foster child of her own.

“It’s not my fault I was in foster care,” she said. “And it’s not theirs either. We all deserve better. And I’m going to make sure that happens.”



Powers

PHARMACIST *Continued from Page Six*

they serve, yet, nationally, only about 5% of pharmacists are Black.

Adkins recalls one instance when her preceptor, or trainer, pointed out that the whole time the patient had been answering his questions, she had been looking at Adkins.

“She was looking at you because she trusted you,” her preceptor told her.

“That’s really when I started to realize how I, as a young Black female provider, can play into health care,” Adkins said. “I needed that rotation to really see that.”

Although she enjoyed forming relationships with patients in the ambulatory and community settings, her rotations showed her that she prefers to work in an acute care setting.

“In the acute care setting, you have no idea what you’re going to come across. Every single day I walked in, and I was like, ‘OK, what did we get overnight?’” she said.

She also liked that pharmacists were fully embedded members of the care team, not just an afterthought. A pharmacist was part of rounds each day, and for almost every patient, the doctors would consult the pharmacist about the best medication, the proper dosage and any possible interactions.

“They need a pharmacist on rounds, and I didn’t really realize that until I was there,” Adkins said.

She had a similar experience at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, where the pharmacists would be on rounds and

had to carefully interpret labs to make recommendations, since many of the patients were intubated or sedated and couldn’t speak for themselves.

At the VA, she said, her preceptor was especially challenging – in a good way. He told her he was going to treat her the same as a resident – someone who’s already graduated from pharmacy school – and assigned her projects as well as patients.

“During the time, I was like, ‘This guy is crazy. He’s expecting me to do all this stuff, and I don’t know if I can do it.’ But at the end of it, I was like ‘OK, I needed that.’ Because I was able to do it all,” she said. “So that showed me I can juggle having patients but also doing longitudinal projects, also educating the team. It showed me that I can educate other health care providers and communicate with them.”

All of Adkins’ fourth-year rotations were in the Charleston area, which is somewhat unusual. Originally she planned to do some “away” rotations – after all, this is the student who organized three classmates to find rotations in Hawaii after their first year so they could live in Hawaii for a month – but COVID had already canceled her second-year rotation in New York City, forcing her to scramble for a replacement, and she didn’t want to go through that again.

Happily, by the time she got to her fourth-year rotations, all save one were in person.

Adkins, who describes herself as a social butterfly, is already getting to know the people she’ll be spending the next year with. She’ll be a resident at Prisma Health, where she’ll do acute care rotations and



Photo Provided

Kira Adkins, far right, with her family. From left: brother, Dyran; father, Randy; sister, Kayla; and mother, Sherlonda.

“That’s really when I started to realize how I, as a young Black female provider, can play into health care. I needed that rotation to really see that.”

Kira Adkins, Pharm.D.

narrow down her interests. Right now, she’s interested in pediatrics, critical care and psychiatry, and she hopes the residency will show her which is the career path for her – or even show her a career path that she hasn’t yet considered.

“I love the idea of keeping your mind open because you don’t know what you don’t know. Like psychiatry – I never would have known I was interested in that, and I just

did that rotation in March. It was not on my radar until I did the rotation,” she said.

As she prepares to graduate, Adkins acknowledges the village that has helped her to get to where she is – starting with her family and growing to include her professors, the pharmacists at the MUSC Shawn Jenkins Children’s Hospital, with whom she’s worked since her first year, and many more.

“I couldn’t have done it by myself. I give a lot of credit to my parents. They’re always here for me, always supporting me. Also my siblings – yes, they are younger, but they’re a big part of my support system as well,” she said.

Randy Adkins said their church family, where Adkins has learned to accept support when she’s needed it and to support others in turn, has been instrumental. And he and his wife are eager to see what their daughter does next.

“We know she’s going to do phenomenal things.”

The MUSC COVID-19 Archive:
DOCUMENTING LIFE DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Waring Historical Library
invites you to participate.

SHARE YOUR STORIES
IN ANY WAY YOU SEE FIT,
BY WRITTEN NARRATIVE,
THE SPOKEN WORD, THROUGH
IMAGES, ETC.

JAMES ISLAND MEDICAL OFFICE/GENERAL OFFICE FOR LEASE

776 Daniel Ellis Dr., #3C
2,664 sq ft
Asking \$21psf NNN
Available immediately
Located next door to Lowes

Bryan Perrucci, CCIM
Southeastern Management Group, Inc.
151 King Street
Charleston, SC 29401
843-343-1921 (mobile)
843-577-8595 x15 (office)
perrucci@semgsc.com

SE MG

MUSC recognizes each college's top honor graduates

Editor's Note: MUSC's Class of 2022 first and second honor graduates are recognized for their academic excellence and achievement. On May 19, the graduates were celebrated at a luncheon hosted by MUSC President David Cole, M.D., FACS, first lady Kathy Cole and the Division of Education Innovation and Student Life.

College of Dental Medicine

Doctor of Dental Medicine

First honor graduate – Brooke Grice
Second honor graduate – Matthew Roach and Haley C. Kramer

College of Graduate Studies

Doctor of Philosophy

Distinguished graduates – Vivian Chioma and Daniel McCalley

College of Health Professions

Doctor of Health Administration

First honor graduates – Alicia McDaniel and Krystle Campbell
Second honor graduates – Michele Napoliello and Louis Edwards

Doctor of Occupational Therapy

First honor graduates – Amanda Abes and Danielle Altman-Gajowka
Second honor graduates – Laura Judy and Lily Rashid

Doctor of Physical Therapy

First honor graduates – Madeline Mazoue and Alison Westberry
Second honor graduates – Emily Andreasen and Natalie Hipp

Doctor of Nurse Anesthesia Practice (AFN)

First honor graduates – Sean P. Cooney and Rebecca P. Young
Second honor graduates – T. Graham Lovett and Ashley S. Tasich

Master in Health Administration – Executive

First honor graduates – Nick Brettingen and Reagan Owens
Second honor graduates – Ann Collins Josey and Lindsay Segal

Master in Health Administration – Residential

First honor graduates – Forrest Sharp and Lauren Rossitch
Second honor graduates – Jamila Labee and McKenna Kies

Master of Science in Cardiovascular Perfusion

First honor graduates – Jane Lee and Anthony Evangelista
Second honor graduates – Trevor Millikan and Courtney Beletti

College of Medicine

Doctor of Medicine

First honor graduate – Caroline McLeod

Medicine – Master of Public Health

First honor graduates – Zachary Harley and Meghan Thomas
Second honor graduates – Sarah Pelhan and Betsy Oddo

College of Nursing

Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing

First honor graduates – Madison Bynum and Kate Ague-Kneeland

Doctor of Nursing Practice

First honor graduate – Alexander Brown

College of Pharmacy

Doctor of Pharmacy

First honor graduate – Bethany Burnette
Second honor graduates – Ahmed Alanazi and Drew Sauck

BUY SMARTER - KNOW FOR SURE



David Kent 26 years
843.606.0824
David@BuyersAgent.Net
www.DavidKent.Net

You Want Us On Your Side

Charlotte Lemon 23 years
843.900.1322
Charlotte@BuyersAgent.Net
www.CharlotteLemon.Net



Representing Buyers Exclusively for over 49 years



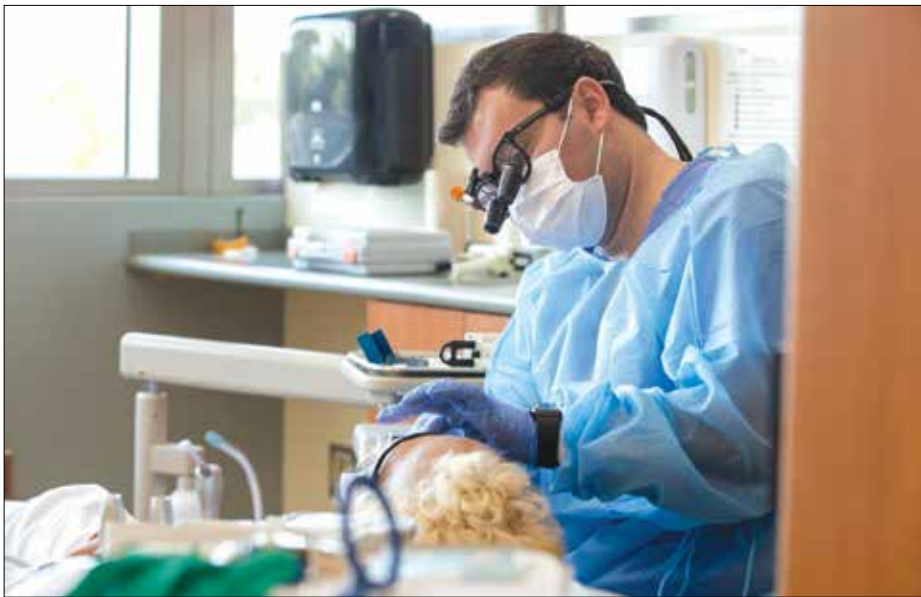


Photo by Sarah Pack

Dr. Tormey works with a patient on the MUSC campus.

LEADER *Continued from Page Seven*

through the use of their smile.”

He found that motivation early. Tormey, who grew up in Greer, was the kid who actually liked going to the dentist. “I always enjoyed talking with my hygienist and asking a bunch of questions. I was that kid that was like, ‘Why are we doing this?’ Or, ‘What are you doing now?’”

Tormey built a relationship with his dentist and got the chance to shadow him in the eighth grade. “I definitely knew dentistry was my calling.”

As an undergraduate health sciences major at Clemson University, Tormey had the chance to be involved in dental education abroad through the nonprofit organization Vida Volunteer. “I ended up going to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala,” he said.

He also went to Ecuador while in dental school at MUSC – before COVID hit. COVID arrived just as Tormey was getting ready to begin working with patients.

“We were supposed to start clinic in May of 2020. And that was delayed for about a month. We started, I think, in the middle of June. And it was kind of a slow start, but the College of Dental Medicine and MUSC did a good job on kind of educating us on proper PPE and all that kind of stuff.” PPE stands for personal protective equipment.

“It was crazy – the amount of PPE that we had to have. But it got us in the clinic, and our patients showed up for treatment, and we were grateful that we were able to continue

with our education while like adapting to the challenges that everybody was adapting to. It was definitely a wild time.”

Meanwhile, Tormey served as president of his class the entire time he was in dental school. “I like leading and getting out of my comfort zone a little and challenging others to get out of their comfort zones,” he said.

“I definitely feel like my grades could’ve been higher if I didn’t serve in this role. But it’s been very rewarding. The people that I’ve been able to serve have been great. And I definitely wouldn’t change it if I was to go back and do it again.”

He was used to being busy. As an undergraduate, he helped manage the Clemson men’s soccer program. “We won the 2014 ACC championship, and we were a finalist in 2015.”

The time management that required, due to practices and travel, was good preparation for what came next. “It was a cool experience. I think that ultimately that helped me with my success in dental school – having that experience in college in terms of always traveling, always having something extra to do other than just studying. When I got to dental school, it was like, ‘Wow. I’m used to being so active and so involved.’ That’s why I got involved in class leadership positions.”

One of Tormey’s mentors, Tariq Javed, associate dean for academic and student affairs, said he was a good role model and leader. “Keith has been a resilient and dedicated student. Perseverance, keeping it going, and, above all, helping anybody who needs any help or support in his class are his



Photo Provided

Dr. Tormey with his parents and sister. From left: Pearse, Annamaria, Noeline and Keith.

“Keith has been a resilient and dedicated student. Perseverance, keeping it going, and above all, helping anybody who needs any help or support in his class are his qualities.”

Tariq Javed, D.M.D.

qualities.”

After graduation and his trip to Ireland, Tormey will go to work at a dental practice in Simpsonville – near where he grew up. “I always knew I wanted to go back home and serve the community that I grew up in. So I’m definitely fortunate to have that opportunity,” he said.

“I’ll see patients of all ages. I’ll take special needs patients, anybody that comes into my office. I’m looking forward to treating them.”

He also plans to keep up his mission work. “I want to not only serve the international community but hopefully provide care to my

own community. The office that I’m working for provides a day of service once a year where they open up two of the offices and just provide patients with one procedure free of charge,” Tormey said.

He’d like to do a mission trip to Ireland and help people beyond his loved ones. Tormey said he’s motivated by faith. “I want people to know that there’s a higher power out there, whether they want to believe the same thing that I believe or not. That’s fine. But ultimately, I hope I’m helping them in more than just dentistry.”

COVID-19 employee/student testing continues at Charleston area locations

Testing continues to be an important tool in slowing the spread of COVID-19. For testing options, employees and students should visit <https://muschealth.org/patients-visitors/coronavirus-information/covid-19-testing>.

Note: MUSC’s M-lot COVID-19 testing site (downtown Charleston) is open to the public. Appointments are required (no walk ups). Please schedule in MyChart or call 843-876-7227.

JOURNEY *Continued from Page Four*

At one point, she thought she would have to drop out so she could work full time and save some money before continuing her studies. But it's a tough program, and she feared that if she left, she would never return.

Reluctantly, she contacted Angela Mund, DNP, director of the college's Division of Anesthesia for Nurses.

"She does not know how she impacted me. I was scared to tell her, and she was just full of ideas," Odeghe said.

Mund brainstormed ideas for reducing the financial burden and was able to help Odeghe qualify for in-state tuition, which Odeghe said was enormously helpful.

It also made her work even harder, if that was possible. After all that Mund did for her, Odeghe felt she couldn't let her down by getting a bad grade. Nor could she let down her parents, to whom she was sending money, or her church family and everyone who had helped her.

"It was a humbling, growing experience. I prayed a lot," she said.

Supportive faculty, who saw through the "everything's OK" facade to the struggle within, were instrumental to her success in the program, she said.

As for Mund, she saw Odeghe's determination from the moment they met when Odeghe interviewed for acceptance into the college.

"She demonstrated resilience, which is an important attribute for our students and for CRNAs," Mund said. "Once she started in the program, she continued to overcome obstacles to her dream of becoming a CRNA. And even with these challenges, she always has such a positive outlook. I am confident that this played an integral part in her successes."

And Mund said she looks forward to the amazing things that Odeghe will accomplish.

After graduation, Odeghe is headed to Cape Fear Valley Health System in North Carolina on a year's contract. She plans to take that year to orient herself and decide where she might like to live long term. She knows that she wants to settle in the U.S., although she would like to participate in medical mission trips to Nigeria.

Odeghe said her journey has been difficult and stressful at times, but she is grateful for all the options she now has.

"I did not take it for granted," she said. "I don't complain. I don't complain because I'm like, 'It's an opportunity.'"



Blood Drive

National Trauma Awareness Month Blood Drive

5/18/2022 | 9:00 AM-2:00 PM

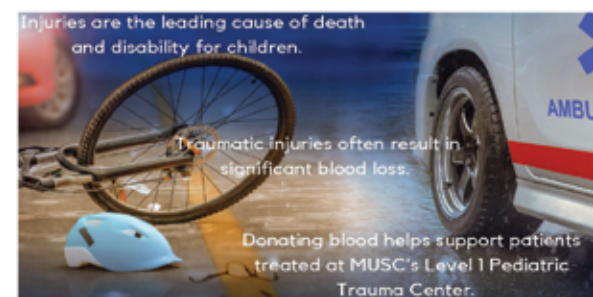
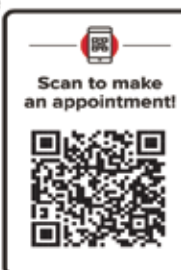
Shawn Jenkins Children's Hospital
Charleston Center Drive
Located across from MUSC

5/19/2022 | 9:00 AM- 2:00 PM

MUSC
99 Jonathan Lucas St.

To make an appointment, please scan the QR Code.

All donors will receive a \$10 eGift card & a \$10 charitable donation to MUSC Turning the Tide Violence Intervention Program will be made for every blood donor!



The Blood Connection is a non-profit organization. Blood can be donated every 56 days. Donors must be 16 years or older and over 130 lbs. No donors. Subsequent donations are required to have written consent to donate blood. Before you donate blood, make sure that you drink plenty of water and eat a healthy meal. The Blood Connection is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donors and donors are welcome to donate.

thebloodconnection.org



Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Level: Intermediate

	1				2	9		
						7		
2				9				4
9			1	2		3		
3			4					
1	4				6		7	
7	8			5			1	
								8
		2	9	1		6		

www.dalspizza.com

229 St. Philip St., Charleston • 843-853-6337

SURVIVOR *Continued from Page One*

Center in Atlanta after a motorcycle crash that left her paralyzed. Lin is medical director of the center's Spinal Cord Injury Program and a 1996 MUSC graduate.

"It was so transformative to know Dr. Lin. He's a physical representation of a person who went through the exact same thing. And he is living a life in medicine. He was able to do it. You know, I needed that physical representation at that moment," Rodes said.

She'd been afraid that her chance to become a doctor disappeared the day she crashed while taking a class required to get a motorcycle license. Rodes hit a curb and went flying into a wall. She wound up pinned under the motorcycle. Rodes doesn't remember the accident but does remember what it was like recovering from it.

"A spinal cord injury is not just about not being able to walk anymore. You don't have control over your bowels; you don't have control over your nervous system, like whether or not you're going to sweat, whether or not your body can regulate itself anymore," she said.

"I saw how exhausting every day could possibly be when I was first rehabbing and learning how to get dressed and learning how to put my pants on and learning how to use a catheter. I was so overwhelmed by how hard it would be to live. I thought I was going to lose my chance to be in medicine, too. Science is where my heart was. I didn't know what else to do with my life if I couldn't do science."

She learned she could – from Lin. "Dr. Lin made a path for me to come into medicine. I learned a lot of strengths from him. It's not how you overcome something, but how you continue to face it daily. And make the choice to continue to face it daily."

Lin called it humbling to hear that. He said her achievement shows just how capable people with disabilities can be. "I knew she was a tenacious person who wanted to grab the bull by the horns and solve the problem. She's definitely self-directed. She has no problem initiating an action plan."

She had to do that in medical school, working with professors and peers to find ways to do the required class and clinical work. "The most accessible rotation that I had was my surgery rotation because of how aware and how open the attendings were to having dialogue about, 'Hey, what if I try to scrub in; I'm not going to be able to touch my chair to move over here. So let's talk about how we're going to do that.' Accessibility is less about, 'Is there a ramp?' And it's more about how, 'How can we talk about this?'"

And talking will be a big part of her future. After she finishes her psychiatry residency at MUSC Health, Rodes will work at the VA Medical Center in Charleston. As the wife of an Army officer, she feels right at home with veterans. And she chose psychiatry because she's seen plenty of mental health suffering and wants to help.

Some of that suffering was among her fellow patients at the Shepherd Center when they were learning how to live with spinal cord injuries that left them paralyzed. "You're all learning together. So you bond really well with these other people, and you graduate rehab together. And that means that



Photos Provided

Julia Rodes with her husband, Jared. They met as teenagers working at a church camp.

you have learned all the lessons you need to learn in order to live independently. And we keep in touch," Rodes said. "Unfortunately, I've lost some friends to suicide."



Rodes during her rehabilitation at the Shepherd Center following a motorcycle accident.

Suicide also affected her husband's world. "I've spent the last 10 years with my husband as an active duty spouse. We were able to travel with the Army, and the Army treated us really well. But the longer he was active duty, the more of his friends and his soldiers took their lives. And so suicide became this common theme that we grew to understand."

She wants to show people dealing with that level of suffering that there are other choices. Her own experience will be a part of that. "In psychiatry, you're dealing with a lifelong illness. I am living in a body that I wouldn't necessarily have chosen. And for a lot of people, they wake up in a reality that they wouldn't necessarily have chosen either. And I think I can really relate to somebody on that," she said.

"There's somebody living in a chair; you might guess that they live with chronic pain. And that's something that I live with. Seeing a physical representation of somebody living in pain makes you feel like, 'Maybe I can do it too.' And so I hope that helps somebody else."

Rodes said the acceptance she's found for a life that hasn't gone the way she planned is something she can share with them, too. "Not every happy ending is about a cure. Not every happy ending is about being free from disease or being free from the ailment. A lot of happy endings have to do with having peace. And I have peace with my injury. I have peace with my body," Rodes said.

"It's because I have so much excitement for what I can do and what I am going to be doing. And so when you redefine capability, it just opens the world to you."



Prism Photo & Framing

620 Coleman Blvd.

843-971-0469

www.prismphotolab.com

STANDOUT *Continued from Page Three*

was invited to continue his research passion at MUSC.

For his thesis work and under Maldonado's direct guidance, Heslop focused on the role of the mitochondrial channel as a potential aide in treating cancer. He successfully conducted his Ph.D. dissertation defense on March 8.

"As a graduate student, you're training to get a broad understanding of research with the idea of one day becoming a principal investigator. Eventually you learn to become more independent and bold – taking ownership of your project and doing everything to keep the project moving forward while managing priorities. I'm so glad that MUSC's environment encourages a collaborative spirit. I felt free to go directly to others and discuss my project and needs," said Heslop.

In particular, Heslop enjoyed positive collaborative experiences with Patrick Woster, Ph.D., professor and the SmartState Endowed Chair in Drug Discovery. Heslop worked closely with Woster and his team, learning to identify compounds that bind to the VDAC channel and screening them in tumor cells. He also worked alongside other leading experts at MUSC, including Yuri Peterson, Ph.D.; Pieter



Heslop, center, is joined by his research mentors and other faculty, staff.

Berger, Ph.D.; Stephen Duncan, Ph.D.; and Amandine Rovini, Ph.D.

"In our lab, collaboration is key. It's good for us and good for the students to learn how drugs are discovered and optimized. Kareem's research is unique, as it offers a new approach to treating a very difficult cancer. The skill set Kareem takes with him is very important," said Woster.

Aside from managing research, Heslop stayed busy writing grants, publishing his work, conducting research presentations at local and

national conferences and staying active as a speaker, mentor and teacher.

In February, he presented his research and received the 2022 Student Bioenergeticist Award by the Bioenergetics, Mitochondria and Metabolism subgroup of the Biophysical Society.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR HESLOP?

After graduation, Heslop will begin a post-doctoral position at Genentech in San Francisco, California. Part of the

Roche Group, Genentech is a leading biotech company that is focused on the discovery, development, manufacturing and commercialization of medicines to treat patients with life-threatening conditions. He chose something that gave him options – to work as an international professional scientist in a thriving research environment or continue to work in academic research.

Perhaps one of his mentors said it best.

"Kareem's journey at MUSC has been unique. I've worked with many graduate students over the years and would easily rank Kareem among the top 5% or even better. He's been one of our best students," Woster said.

Heslop was humbled by Woster's glowing praise. "I'm always grateful for my path and motivation as well as the people who helped me along the way," said Heslop. "Getting to this part in my life when my parents can see that I'm on a trajectory to do something good is a gift that I want to give them, especially at this time of their lives. It's a reward we all share. I know both sides of my family are proud of me. This achievement is very personal to me. The idea that they took a chance years ago to take care of a little boy and gave him opportunities is a gift. It went far beyond what they or I could ever imagine."



"Marshall Walker is a major asset to the neighborhood, as well as Downtown Charleston, as he has a strong community presence. I highly recommend Marshall Walker Real Estate for your real estate needs."

- Rich C.



SEARCH ALL RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE LISTINGS WITHOUT REGISTRATION

WWW.MARSHALLWALKER.COM



CONSULTATIONS



PHOTO, VIDEO & 3D TOURS



SHOWINGS



CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS



FINANCING



INSPECTIONS

843-647-7761

582 RUTLEDGE AVENUE, CHARLESTON 29403

LISTEN UP!

The MUSC Catalyst News is the **BEST** and **MOST EFFECTIVE** way to reach students, faculty, staff, patients, AND patient visitors in the MUSC community!



Promote your message in the Catalyst News today!

The MUSC Catalyst News is an award-winning newspaper, delivered bi-monthly (every two weeks.) The Catalyst News was recognized in 2008 as **best newspaper-newsletter by the SC-PRSA**. The Catalyst News serves an **audience of more than 17,000** MUSC students, faculty, researchers, hospital patients, their families and patient visitors. MUSC is among the top three employers in the Tri-county area.

The Catalyst News is available (readable) in a PDF online version, which means that each advertisers' message is also promoted electronically.
<https://web.musc.edu/about/news-center>



Contact us today!

843-958-7489 • advertising@moultrienews.com