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Pine-Richland High School

Grade 10

### Radiology, a Career of Healing Others

I walk down the east wing of the hospital, passing through several sliding glass doors before turning into the radiological department. I give a nod to one of the other doctors as he walks out.

“Dr. Yueh, how are you?” I say, smiling. The middle-aged man with silver hair and large glasses looks up at me.

“I’m doing fine, Doctor, how are you?”

“Excellent. I just finished a biopsy on a patient. I diagnosed a tumor around the patient’s abdominal viscera, but I caught it early enough, so the malignancy should still be at a treatable stage. He’ll be getting better soon.”

“Wonderful!” Dr. Yueh says as he leaves. “I’m heading out now, so you’ll be the only one here for the rest of the evening.”

“I’ll see you tomorrow, Dr. Yueh,” I call as I open the door to my office, bumping into the anatomic skeleton, Mr. Bones, as it rattles around.

I plop down into my chair, propping up a few X-ray films on the view box. Glancing over at the wall behind me, I look at a few pictures of my family next to my degree certificates. A bachelor’s degree from Yale hangs to the far left. Those four years were rigorous. Premed was so competitive, and every day in organic chemistry, the tension in the atmosphere felt more like that of a boxing match than a college class. I was lucky to maintain my 3.86 GPA by the time I graduated.

Beside my bachelor’s degree hangs my medical degree. The rigor of college did not even compare to the stress at medical school. My entire life consisted of studying as I poured through books like Grant’s Atlas of Anatomy, practically learning a second language with all the medical terms I had to understand. Time did not suffice for the amount of material we covered during those four years, as incessant studying filled my days and nights.

Surviving four years of medical school and finishing in the Alpha Omega Alpha Society led me to an excellent residency at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. After

experiencing a variety of fields during medical school, I settled on becoming a radiologist. Surgery included long hours, and I did not want the monotonous interaction with patients that a general practitioner endured, so radiology fit me best. The hours were acceptable, and I loved analyzing MRI scans in search of problems. I completed residency four years later and soon landed a job with Allegheny General Hospital. After 2 years of working there, I became a partner with the radiology group.

I focus back on my job and look at the view box in front of me. Scanning the chest X-ray, I spot an abnormal white shadow in the lung; it is most likely lung cancer, but given its size and location, it looks curable. I reach over to the phone and call the thoracic surgeon.

“This patient has a new lung mass that may require surgery, but the cancer is in its early stages, and you should be able to excise it,” I say.

After looking at an MRI of another patient to see no evidence of disease, I stand up and leave my office, walking to the CT scanner to perform one last procedure before going home. I stride into the room to see a 60-year-old man, who, according to the CT tech standing nearby, is suffering from a fluid buildup in the lung. The man coughs and struggles to breathe. I approach him as he sits on the side of the hospital bed.

“I should be able to take care of this in a minute,” I say warmly. I take a hollow point needle connected to a syringe and place the needle into the man’s chest, draining the fluid. Instantly, his labored breathing resolves.

“Thank you, doctor. I really appreciate it,” the recovered man says.

“You’re very welcome.”

Moments like this explain my passion for radiology. What greater job exists than helping others, healing the sick? The man with an abdominal tumor would have died of cancer in a few years, but now that I diagnosed the problem, he will soon be perfectly healthy. The patient with lung cancer, rather than being taken by the disease in a year, will have the newly found tumor removed and recover from the deadly illness. And the 60-year old man, rather than suffering from coughing and gasping for air, will go home breathing deep breaths of fresh air. As I stride through the sliding glass doors and into the hospital parking lot, I appreciate the uniqueness of my job as a radiologist. I endured rigorous education and training, but every hour of studying was worth it; every late night at the hospital, every textbook I read. Nothing compares to the

feeling of healing others. I know of no greater occupation than that which gives help to the desperate, health to the sick, and life to the dying.