Meharry Medical College Students Discover Their Futures at National Match Day

By Gayle Starling- Melvin

NASHVILLE, TN — On Friday, March 21, fourth-year medical students at Meharry Medical College learned where they would begin their medical careers. Match Day, the annual event where medical schools across the nation announce where students will complete their residencies, was celebrated by Meharryians in front of proud parents, colleagues, mentors and friends.

The program began with an invocation given by fourth-year medical student, Letitia Lyons, who is also the chaplain for the School of Medicine’s class of 2014. Charles P Mouton, M.D., M.S., senior vice president for health affairs and dean, School of Medicine, followed with opening remarks. “Society expects lifelong learning. It must be self-directed. It must be disciplined,” said Mouton. “We must make sure that you hold high what Meharry has given you and do it with all the dignity, respect and honor that you yourselves and it deserves.”

Unaware of where they would spend the next three years, students opened sealed envelopes detailing their specialties and which hospitals they had been “matched” with in front of hundreds of people. Surrounded by those who helped get them to this defining day, students were given an opportunity to speak. Emotions of tears, laughter, relief and nervousness filled the auditorium.

Yaksha Partee, who matched at Barnes-Jewish Hospital at Washington University in St. Louis, is one of the many Meharry students eager to live Meharry’s mission of serving the underserved and providing care to those who are most in need.

“I chose to specialize in emergency medicine because many in the underserved community have no health insurance and so their only real access to care is the emergency room,” said Partee. “The energy keeps me on my toes and challenges me to acquire a broad set of skills so I can treat those who need it most.”

This year, Meharry matched 86 students and had a match rate of 86 percent. Meharry students complete their residencies in small towns and large cities across the nation.

Student “matches” were determined by the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), a non-profit organization that uses computerized mathematical algorithms to coordinate the matching of over 30,000 student applicants to open residency positions at teaching hospitals across the U.S.

Meharry is a leading national educator of African Americans with M.D. and D.D.S. degrees and Ph.D. degrees in the biomedical sciences. Visit http://www.mmc.edu to learn more.

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Yaksha Partee points to St. Louis, where she will be continuing her medical education at Barnes-Jewish Hospital at Washington University as a resident in emergency medicine.

As her father reads her destiny, Dr. Katina Stevens can’t hold back her tears. She will be studying family medicine at Meharry Medical College.

Class of 2014, School of Medicine, class president, Christian Solly is going to be a resident in emergency medicine, studying at Louisiana State University Medical Center in Baton Rouge, LA.

Chowetown Osburn’s mother beams toward her daughter as Osburn learns she is going to Danbury Hospital in Danbury, CT to begin her residency in obstetrics and gynecology.
Shari Johnson matches at St. Vincent Medical Hospital, Jacksonville, FL in family medicine.

Mildred D. Collins, M.D., associate professor and associate dean for student affairs in family and community medicine, with the School of Medicine, Meharry Medical College, poses as he gets ready to call another name.

Melissa Hazlett hugs her husband when she finds out she is headed for Yale University to study emergency medicine. Hazlett is a co-founder, and on the board of directors, of Meharry’s student run, free clinic, Meharry 12 South Community Clinic.

With letter in hand, and her mom by her side, Noemi Bitow learned she matched at the University of Arizona where she will be studying family medicine. Bitow is a co-founder of Meharry’s student run, free clinic, Meharry 12 South Community Clinic.

Kendra Richardson, standing with her mother, is going to Carolinas Medical Center as a resident in family medicine.

Dontal Johnson, with his family in tow, will be going to Vanderbilt University Medical Center to study pediatrics. He also won the money pot by being the last name called!