

Family physicians have always been a cornerstone of American communities. As far back as the earliest years of this country, they have been the go-to people if anyone had an illness or injury. The wide scope of their practice allows them to build relationships with patients that other medical specialties may not have. This is even further shown in smaller communities where a family physician may be the only doctor in the area. When the responsibility of an entire town's well-being is in your hands, great dedication is required. Along with this dedication comes much respect from the people of that community. Two family physicians impacting my life are Dr. Jerry Turner of Columbus and Dr. Morris Parsons of Ackerman.

Dr. Turner is one of the first people who inspired me to become a physician when I was just a young child. As a three or four year old boy, I remember my dad playing in a church league softball game with Dr. Turner. In an attempt to catch a fly ball, my dad collided with the outfield fence. It was bleeding very badly and no one knew what to do. That is, until Dr. Turner came in from left field and stitched his arm back up in between games. It always stood out to me as impressive and heroic that he would be able to do that for my dad in the middle of a softball tournament. As I grew older, I continued to go to Dr. Turner with ailments such as colds, sprains, and one time a suspicious lump that turned out to be a benign tumor. He was always friendly, compassionate and nurturing, which are important qualities in making people feel comfortable in a doctor's office.

Another family physician impacting my life was Dr. Parsons, a small town family physician in Ackerman, Mississippi. Dr. Parsons cared for my late great-grandmother and continues to this day to care for my grandparents. When my great-grandmother started having health problems in her nineties, Dr. Parsons was always there for her. Her old age made it very difficult for her to leave the house so Dr. Parsons would make house calls, which are very rare in

this day and age. This shows incredible dedication especially with his skills in such high demand in such a small town. Recently, my grandmother told me that he was offered a job practicing in a bigger city, but he turned it down in favor of staying in his small town practice. This is wonderfully inspiring that this kind of dedication is being shown by doctors today.

I am sure that most people have similar stories about their family physicians who have cared for them and their families. Their ability to form relationships with their patients is second-to-none compared to other doctors. No other person can say they are responsible for whole families' health and this garners great respect. No matter whether you are young or old, you are definitely in good hands with family physicians.