

My mentor

The persistent calm: Anthony Stallion, MD, FACS

by *Kaine C. Onwuzulike, MD, PhD*

I first met Anthony Stallion, MD, FACS, as a first-year medical student at Case Western Reserve University, and I was instinctively drawn to him as one of the few in an elite subset of minority academic pediatric surgeons in the greater Cleveland area. As an aspiring surgeon, I found great solace in his wisdom, character, and alacrity toward mentorship. Our continued interaction throughout my medical training was immeasurable, and his commitment to surgical academia was a propelling force in my own pursuit of a doctoral degree in genetic epidemiology and biostatistics.

Dr. Stallion embodies the key essentials of any successful mentor, as he is extremely well learned, poised, and equally skilled in his craft. He is an effective communicator, exceptional teacher, and powerful motivator. As with most great mentors, Dr. Stallion has become a role model to emulate as I learn and practice the “surgical way of life” as described by Edward M. Copeland III, MD, FACS, the Edward R. Woodward Distinguished Professor of Surgery at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and 87th President of the American College of Surgeons.* Incumbent in this role illustrated by Dr. Copeland and practiced by Dr. Stallion and great mentors alike is the seamless integration of “sound judgment with both influence and patience.” In my junior career, I have seen no one do it better than Dr. Stallion.

Perhaps most telling of his influence is his participation and leadership in national academic organizations such as the American College of Surgeons and the American Association of Pediatric Surgery. He stresses to his mentees the importance of doing the same. His selflessness and sincere mentorship have been reflected in his unwavering support during my transition from pursuit of a career in pediatric general surgery, for which he himself is renowned, to that of my current application of neurological surgery. His cogent plea to me during this transformation was

*Copeland EM III. Presidential Address: The role of a mentor in creating a surgical way of life. *Bull Am Coll Surg*. 2006;91(12):8-13.



Dr. Stallion



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to remain sedulous in pursuit and equally diligent in the application of the widely accepted core surgical values of honesty, respect for patients and colleagues, contribution to the scientific fund of knowledge, and respect for tradition.

Dr. Stallion routinely urges his mentees to be punctilious in preoperative and postoperative care of our patients. He has never been hubristic in our interactions, and in contradistinction, has remained humble and honored to serve the greater role of surgical educator. I take great pride in our relationship and aspire to provide the same leadership and direction to subsequent generations.

In closing, as described by Dr. Copeland in his magnificent Presidential Address, “The role of a mentor in creating a surgical way of life,” Dr. Stallion has helped establish for me the very core of professional ethics and patient care that are indispensable to a successful and enriching career in academic surgery. He continually strives to make those around him successful, sharing in our triumphs and achievements, and in doing so solidifies his very own legacy. I remain sanguine that I too will instill these very principles into those mentees who seek to learn and practice the surgical way of life. □

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