As the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, family has been at the center of my career motivations. My interest in retina originated with my sister who was diagnosed with Stargardt disease at the age of 17. Watching her navigate vision loss and making major adjustments to her life and her goal inspired me towards research. I started studying inherited retinal diseases as an undergraduate at the University of Iowa's Anderson Lab. Utilizing optical coherence tomography, we compared phenotypic variance in the thickness of retinal ganglion cell layers of wild-type mice and mice containing Cep290 mutations. As a medical student at University at Buffalo, researched the use of post-transcriptional gene-silencing products to manifest target knockdown of mutant mRNA that are overexpressed in human retinal degenerations. This continues to be an area of interest for me and as new therapies and clinical trials arise in the field, my hope is to one day contribute to the preservation and possible restoration of her vision.

My grandfather, Prof. Adebayo Oladele-Ajose, a Prince of Lagos and a fierce advocate for underserved communities, was one of the most impactful people in my life that I never met. His legacy has been a source of pride and direction for my family. He provided widespread access to healthcare throughout Nigeria by establishing the British Red Cross Society in Nigeria and the Infectious Disease Hospital in Lagos to address Tuberculosis outbreaks. Over the course of his professional life, he played a pivotal role in the framework of the fledgling country's health care system in pre and post-colonial rule. Even though he passed long before I was born, I have always been motivated by his career and his service towards his fellow man. In homage to the incredible impact my grandfather left, I have fastened my career towards public health and policy both in the local and global health sphere. Currently, I am on my residency program's global ophthalmology track and working on a few projects oriented towards public and global health. Notably, I am working on increasing usership of an artificial intelligence based diabetic retinopathy screening tool that was developed at our institution. By addressing provider and patient hesitancy to utilize the tool, we were able to increase access to diabetic screening exams while decongesting overbooked clinics. We hope to eventually take this tool to resource-scarce areas locally and internationally with hopes of improving patient outcomes by allocating more clinical time for patients diagnosed with more severe diabetic retinopathy.

Within the realm of advocacy, I am currently serving in my second term as the resident director on the Board of Directors for the Iowa Medical Society. I was elected to this position by over 600 medical students, residents, fellows, and attending physicians across the state. In this role, I serve on the committee on legislation where we monitor proposed legislation that could have deep impacts on our healthcare system. Through our advocacy work, we have been able to represent the interests of physicians, medical trainees, and patients throughout the state. This has been pivotal in understanding the role advocacy has to play in maintaining physician-patient trust, and this is a space I plan on continuing to navigate as I further my career in academic medicine.