

Dr. Mathew Malek

Memorial Scholarship Endowment

Mat had known he wanted to be a physician from the time he was a young child. He loved the idea of being able to help people and their families during times they needed it most.

Having experienced his own loss of someone close to him, he knew the importance of not only treating the “patient,” but also the person and the families and friends who love them. Due to his passion for helping people and wanting to be the best physician he could, Matt spent time working and volunteering in nursing homes. He had a passion for rural medicine and always knew he wanted to end up practicing in a rural community.

After graduating high school, Mat went on to college at the University of North Dakota where he earned his undergraduate degree in biology. During this time, he worked in the biology research lab as a resident assistant, chemistry-teaching assistant, and anatomy-teaching assistant. He also volunteered many hours at the clinic in Grand Forks, working towards getting into medical school and learning from anyone who was willing to teach.

In the spring of 2011, Mat was accepted into the University of North Dakota School of Medicine. During his first couple of years of medical school, Mat served as president of the Family Medicine group and had his sights set on being a family medicine provider. It was right at the end of his second year, when he rotated with a private obstetrician, that Mat discovered he loved performing C-sections but just didn't think being an obstetrician was for him. This is when his new dream of becoming a general surgeon began. Mat continued medical school, doing rotations in Fargo, Grand Forks, and Devils Lake. In the spring of 2015, he was accepted into the general surgery residency in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

After graduating from residency in June of 2020,

Mat practiced as a general surgeon in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. He loved being a surgeon, demonstrated excellent patient care, and was passionate about teaching and mentoring incoming students and physicians. You could often find other students and colleagues commenting on his teaching skills. They would share that they were aware of how much he cared about them and knew that his teachings made them better people, nurses, and physicians.

During training, Mat didn't have much free time, but when he did, he made sure to spend as much of it as he could with his family. He loved to play hockey, scuba dive, go fishing with his boys, and be at the lake. When meeting Mat or while working a shift with him, people were guaranteed to hear about his family and most likely had already seen several pictures of them. He was very proud of his



family and didn't pass up a chance to brag about his wife and children.

Unfortunately, on September 6th, 2020, Mat's life was cut short due to a silent struggle with mental health. Since Mat's passing, his wife and friends have worked to spread the message of suicide awareness, emphasizing the importance of physicians and other medical personnel reaching out when they are struggling.

Mat adored his family, and they adored him. He loved his patients, and they loved him. His colleagues looked up to him, and he was passionate about what they had and could have accomplished together.

Mat is survived by his wife, Danielle, and their three children—Parker, Beckett, and Annistyn. The Dr. Mathew Malek Memorial Scholarship Endowment was created by his family, and a scholarship in his name will be awarded to a Lake Region State College student who has a passion for helping people and is interested in pursuing a career in medicine. ■

