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Shocker doctor worked her way through Wichita State, medical school

By Paul Suellentrop

People in Mulvane who knew Delane Vaughn as a youngster did not expect her to become a doctor. She understands their view of her future.

“I was pretty wild and undirected,” she said.

Vaughn loved science, and her biology teacher at Mulvane High School, Joe Johnson, started her on a path to Wichita State University as the first person in her family to attend college. She worked, raised a family and attended WSU and the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

In June, she started as clinic physician at Wichita State’s Student Health Services.

“I had a great biology teacher and took him all the years I could,” she said. “That man had high expectations, and he would tell you if you were not getting there. I really think that served me well.”

Vaughn graduated from Wichita State in 2003 with her Bachelor of Science in nursing at 29. She started med school in her early 30s and received her medical degree in 2011 from KU.

From her parents to her teachers, Vaughn credits people for supporting her, while requiring her to earn that support.



Dr. Delane Vaughn

She paid for her schooling and worked throughout in jobs such as a nurse, nurse’s aide, phlebotomist and administrative assistant. She often brought Jacob, her oldest son, to class with her at Wichita State. Twins Benjamin and Madeline were born while she attended KU Med.

Her love of science, helpful professors and mentors and a lot of Diet Coke kept her going.

"I was driven," she said. "I had that mentality: 'This is what I want to do, and I just need to figure out how to get it done and do things.' I probably didn't sleep enough. I definitely drank a lot of caffeine."

Her parents helped with childcare, always available for early mornings and late nights.

"Nobody watches your babies like grammy watches your babies," she said.

Paying for school was her responsibility.

"My parents definitely gave me support in many, many others that made all of my education possible," she said. "But they did not fund my college, and they were not prepared to fund it and did not think I needed help funding it."

Her parents also raised her with an upbringing that valued effort and responsibility. She and her brother bought their cars with their own money.

"I learned the value of working really hard," she said. "My mother very much was like 'If you want it, you're going to get it. Nobody is going to give it to you.'"

Professors such as Ray Fox and William Hendry, chair of WSU's Department of Biological Sciences, helped guide her through the unfamiliar college life.

"I enjoyed the classes, and I enjoyed the learning," she said. "I am so grateful for Wichita State. Without a big university (nearby), I don't know that I would have been able to go on and do the things I've done. I don't know that I would have ever left home."

Her advice to first-generation students is that there is always a way to reach goals, and people are always willing to help.

"I'm a rock-climber," she said. "That's how you rock climb. You make a move, and then you look around. 'What's next? Where can I get a hand hold?'"