

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Friday, August 7, 2020

High school sweethearts tackle life and medical school together



Emily and Tyler Hunter are both third-year students at the USA College of Medicine.
Photo credit: Ashton Clark Photography

"It's great to have a lifelong companion, study buddy, and classmate all in one," said Tyler Hunter, a medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. "For us, having a partner that understands the rigors of medical school and the constant need to have a productive study environment is essential."

Tyler and his wife, Emily, also a medical student at the USA College of Medicine, originally met in middle school. They started dating their sophomore year of high school and eventually got married their senior year of undergraduate school at USA.

"We have always been interested in healthcare," Emily said. "Growing up, I thought I wanted to be a veterinarian, later deciding to pursue training as a nurse while in high school and entering college. It wasn't until my second-year of college that I decided I'd rather become a doctor."

Now, the Hunters are beginning their third year of medical school.

According to Tyler, the key to being married to another medical student is to establish healthy stress management skills. "Medical students love comparing themselves to others – even if it is their spouse," he said. "To manage this stress, we have gone through several seasons of our medical life where we shared class time together, but did not share our grades with one another."

Tyler also credits premarital counseling for establishing a healthy foundation prior to medical school. "Premarital counseling was extremely useful for our relationship and it let us go into our marriage knowing what expectations to have

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and how we react to stress," he said. "When people are stressed, they can put less work into their relationships. It is important to be aware of this and take steps to avoid any problems."

According to Tyler, finances are also a huge topic for arguments among couples and he thanks the U.S. Army for helping to eliminate that stressor in his marriage. "The Army's Health Professions Scholarship Program allows us to have our school paid for and a monthly stipend to live on," he said. "It has given financial peace of mind while also helping the men and women who serve our country."

Though unsure of what specialty they each want to practice at this point, Emily and Tyler are already looking forward to Match Day 2022. "We would prefer to have different specialties to increase our chances of being able to find a single hospital where we can both complete our residencies," Tyler said. "As of now, we both share an interest in internal medicine, infectious diseases and pulmonology and critical care."

Emily said she extremely lucky to go through medical school with her best friend. "He understands what the stress is like from a first-hand experience and encourages me to be my best self every day," she said.

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Pediatric epilepsy specialist joins neurology faculty



Asri Yuliati, M.D., a neurologist specializing in pediatric epilepsy, joins the USA College of Medicine faculty as an assistant professor of neurology.

As a level 4 epilepsy center, USA Health is expanding its epilepsy treatment capabilities with the addition of Asri Yuliati, M.D., a neurologist specializing in pediatric epilepsy. She will join the neurology team at USA Health and will also serve as an assistant professor of neurology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine.

"It is important for children with epilepsy to see a pediatric epileptologist who is familiar with the different types of epilepsy syndromes so they can have the appropriate evaluation, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment," Yuliati said. "The earlier we intervene, the better the neurodevelopmental outcome will be. Epilepsy is one of the most treatable conditions in neurology."

Many children grow out of their epilepsy while other cases are more difficult, requiring comprehensive evaluation, such as genetic testing and pre-surgical evaluation, and different types of treatment, such as anti-seizure medication, epilepsy surgery and vagus nerve stimulation, that USA Health is able to offer as the only level 4 epilepsy center in the region.

Yuliati said she volunteered to work with children with disabilities and this

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inspired her to study medicine and become a pediatric neurologist. She received her medical degree from Sun Yat Sen University in China. She completed a pediatric residency at Flushing Hospital Medical Center in New York followed by a child neurology residency at Wayne State University in Michigan and an epilepsy fellowship at the UCLA Medical Center in California.

Besides epilepsy, she will treat autism, headaches, concussions, traumatic brain injuries, brain tumors, vascular malformations, and cerebral palsy with a special interest and research focus on neonatal seizures, neurocritical care and epilepsy surgery.

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Thursday, August 6, 2020

USA College of Medicine mourns loss of third-year student Samantha Thomas



Students at the USA College of Medicine created a memorial at Hippocrates Park in honor of Samantha Thomas, a third-year student who passed away on Aug. 1.

Samantha Thomas is remembered by classmates as a ray of sunshine, a beautiful spirit with an ever-present smile, a brilliant mind with compassion to match, a nonjudgmental and supportive friend, and a strong young woman who overcame hardships and persevered in life.



"This weekend, we were notified of the tragic news that we lost one of our College of Medicine family," said John Marymont, M.D., MBA, vice president for medical affairs and dean of the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. "Samantha Thomas, a third-year medical student, lost her life as a result of a car crash early Saturday morning. Our deepest condolences go out to her family, friends and classmates."

The 24-year-old was just beginning her third year of medical school. During her time at the USA College of Medicine, Thomas served on the Honor Council and as secretary of the Anesthesiology Interest Group.

Throughout the week, as a memorial to Thomas, fellow medical students have left flowers, messages and decorated rocks at the foot of the Hippocrates statue on campus.

"Samantha was a fun, hard-working, intelligent and driven woman. She was a great friend and a great study buddy," said Zack Aggen, president of the Class of 2022. "We would grind through material for hours and then out of nowhere she'd say something like, 'Hey! Did you know ...' This invariably led to a decrease in motivation and often an impromptu trip around the pond on campus to see the fish, turtles and geese. Even though we'd eventually get distracted, she was brilliant and a great organizer. She helped me learn so much material."

Aggen added, "Samantha had a huge heart. She would often go out of her way to help friends that were struggling even when she had difficulties in her own life."

A native of Guntersville, Ala., Thomas graduated from Guntersville High School as valedictorian of her class. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Alabama.

In her free time, Thomas enjoyed water skiing, horseback riding, volleyball, hiking and reading.



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Mark your calendar: Upcoming grand rounds

Mark your calendar for the following grand rounds:

Orthopaedic Surgery Grand Rounds

"Spondylolisthesis/Spondylolysis"

Prasit Nimityongskul, M.D., Professor and Interim Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery, USA College of Medicine

7 to 8 a.m. Friday, Aug. 7

Zoom

Contact: Rhonda Smith at 251-665-8251 or rhondasmith@health.southalabama.edu

OB-GYN Grand Rounds

"Coding and Billing for OB-GYN Services"

Tammy G. Heim, CPC, Director of Education, ACS

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Aug. 7

Zoom

Contact: Nichelle Bradley at 251-415-1566 or nbradley@health.southalabama.edu

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Through the Looking Glass: 'Abnormal' EKGs"

Nilarun Chowdhuri, M.D., Cardiology Fellow, University Hospital

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 7

Zoom

Contact: Angela Hunt at 251-471-7923 or arhunt@health.southalabama.edu

Cardiology Grand Rounds

"Cardiology Research"

Cherie Revere, CRNP, Cardiology Nurse Practitioner, USA Health

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14

Zoom

Contact: Angela Hunt at 251-471-7923 or arhunt@health.southalabama.edu

Visit the [CME Tracker](#) website for more information.

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