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The Indian Honor Association has completed its first year of honoring the elders through the publication of pictures. The number of elders and their family members being honored is approximately 1000. This has been an exciting and inspiring project, but it is only the beginning. The Indian Honor Association is grateful to the many supporters who have made the first year so successful. The Board of Directors of the Indian Honor Association pauses during this joyous season to say thank you for the many, many people who have helped during the past year. The vision that is the goal of the Indian Honor Association could not possibly be achieved without the faithful, dedicated support and encouragement of so many of you. A sincere thank you is extended to the following supporters and to the many others who contributed:

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For information on how to honor the Indian elders in your family, write:

The Indian Honor Association
of Robeson County, Inc.,
P.O. Box 2169 107 Second Street
Pembroke, NC 28372



Road less traveled leads to success for Pembroke Native American

ROAD LESS TRAVELED LEADS TO SUCCESS FOR PEMBROKE NATIVE AMERICAN

Tom Maynor realized he wanted to become a doctor the day before his college graduation. He wasn't prepared for the revelation. In fact, the decision to go to medical school prompted him to scramble for more information the day before his graduation march.

"I was a little behind," recalled the Pembroke native. "But I called the UNC School of Medicine to find out what I needed to do."

As a result of his initial call, Maynor was given a list of things he would have to accomplish over the next four years before applying to medical school, one of which was to secure a master's degree in the UNC School of Public Health.

"I had to prove to them that I could do the work," said Maynor, whose undergraduate experience started at East Carolina University in 1983 and ended at Pembroke State University in 1988. "After two and a half years, I left East Carolina with a 1.7 grade point average," he said. "My grades at Pembroke State University were good, but they couldn't bring my average up to a competitive level for admission to medical school. Basically, they [UNC School of Medicine] gave me the weekend to decide whether or not I was willing to take the courses necessary to bring me up to speed."

The day after graduation Maynor made the call that jump-started his medical career.

After graduating from Pembroke State University with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, Maynor set out to tackle the laundry list of tasks that would prepare him for admission to medical school. First, he spent the summer of '88 at UNC-CH completing foreign language requirements and was given permission to observe classes in the Medical Education Development (MED) Program sponsored by the school. After two

years he completed a bachelor of science degree in nutrition, and in 1992 earned his master's degree from the UNC School of Public Health.

"I'm glad I took the medical school's advice," Maynor said. "Looking back, it made sense for me to take the route I did. If I had not gotten into medical school, the master's degree in public health would have definitely given me an advantage in the job market."

Now in his second year at the East Carolina University School of Medicine, Maynor is realizing a dream that began to flicker in his mind when he was in high school. Maynor remembered a close friend's motorcycle accident where he was first on the scene.

"I was there immediately after he wrecked," Maynor recalled. "I knew he wasn't in a life-threatening situation, so while we were waiting on the ambulance, I found myself looking at and into the wounds on his legs, and I wasn't getting sick. I remember that being very weird."

"A few years later when I was a junior, I attended a health careers workshop at East Carolina sponsored by the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program at UNC-CH. I remember going into a cadaver lab and being the only kid in the class who was checking out the bodies in the cooler. That didn't bother me either. I guess then I figured a health career probably would be a good choice!"

When asked whether or not he plans to return to Pembroke after completing medical school, Maynor said, "Absolutely." The words of his grandfather still ring true in his ears. "You can go off and improve yourself, be successful," his grandfather once told him. "but unless you come home and help your own people, what good will it do you?"

Maynor is looking forward to eventually returning to Robeson County to practice family medicine. "I'm ready to take advantage of this opportunity," Maynor said. "I tell

students all the time to look around their own communities, at the doctors, nurses, or anyone in the health professions, and see how many of them are Indians. There are very few."

"Then I ask them, of the people they know who became physicians, medical technologists, nurses and so on, how many returned to their communities to work? Not many. That's why it's so important to me," said Maynor.

Having spent many years pursuing a medical career, Maynor believes he's a perfect example of the success one can achieve by setting goals and relying on inner strength and determination.

"I don't think I'm any smarter than the average student," he said. "I'm definitely not the typical student. It took me five years and two universities to finish my undergraduate degree. Then when I decided to go to medical school, it meant an extra year to earn another undergraduate degree and a few more years to get my master's. All that before I even applied to medical school."

Three years from now when I graduate, I'll be called Dr. Maynor. The person who went directly into medical school from college is also called Doctor. The pursuit may be different, but the outcome is the same."

So how does it feel to have come this far?

"My father made it to the twelfth grade but didn't graduate," Maynor said. "My mother made it to the eighth grade but later completed her GED when I was in high school. I was the first in my family to go to college and the first to graduate from college. Now, I'm just a few years away from becoming a family physician. That's a great feeling."



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