

Dr. James Watkins Serves As Good Role Model To Kids

By Karen Parker
Post Staff Writer

When Dr. James Watkins was interviewed as a Charlotte Post achiever, he made it clear his professional success was not his definition of an achiever.

"When I think of myself as an achiever, it's because I know I'm serving as a good role model to kids," Dr. Watkins commented. "I not only tell them they too can enter the medical field, but they can also follow in the footsteps of other black professionals. They (black children) need contact with all black professionals to see where their opportunities lie," Dr. Watkins expressed.

A native of Montgomery, AL, Dr. Watkins practices as a general and vascular surgeon. He and his business partner, Dr. Robert Vaughn Jr., became friends long before they opened their offices at 951 S. Independence Blvd., Suite 415.

Dr. Watkins explained he aspired to become a surgeon because "it's one of the areas in medicine where he can most directly affect the patient and achieve a cure." He said, "that's the joy of my profession."

As a vascular surgeon, Dr. Watkins works to improve circulation in various parts of his patients' bodies. "If circulation remains blocked," he presented, "it could lead to gangrene."

Needless to say, cures can't always be found.



Dr. James Watkins
.....Community role model

"When I find there is little I can do for a patient, it can become disappointing," admitted Watkins. He professed those patients still need the understanding, and he he makes sure he's there to provide it.

A member of several medical associations and societies, Dr. Watkins explained, he enjoys his career for more than the monetary awards. Besides serving as a professional

role model to children, he noted he is working constantly to make people realize the importance of trusting all black professionals.

He stated he doesn't feel there is a shortage of black doctors when you consider the number of blacks who patronize black doctors. "However, if you look at black doctor per black patient, then yes there is a shortage," Watkins deduced.

"It's a struggle," he assured, "But I'll always work to reverse the negative outlook on doctors and other professionals who happen to be black. The truth is we too are well-trained; in many instances more so than nonblacks."

Dr. Watkins didn't display any anger as he talked about a problem which exists in cities nationwide. He feels it's a problem which developed years ago, but wasn't intentionally created by anyone black.

"I know that some years ago, black doctors, through

no fault of their own, weren't operating from the best medical facilities, and sometimes patients had to wait for hours to receive examinations or treatments. It's still hard to fight those stigmas which so many people remember," he concluded.

So, the graduate of University of Alabama, Meharry Medical College, and Georgetown University, has even achieved the patience to understand criticisms which many professionals refuse to tolerate.



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