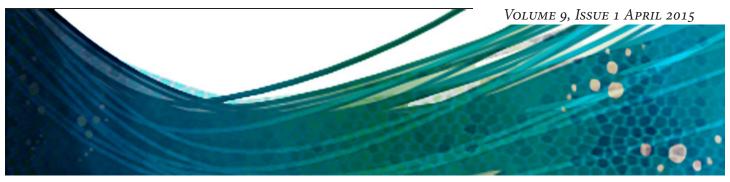
THE BLACK APOTHECARY



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You can also comment, subscribe, and access the website on any mobile device!



ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT: MEET DR. ERIKA ROMEUS, PHARM.D.

By Annabelle Dorion, P2

Dr. Romeus is an alumna of the College of Pharmacy and is currently the Pharmacy Manager at the Walgreens Outpatient Pharmacy located on the first floor of Howard University Hospital. She was previously the pharmacy manager at Walgreens in Chinatown. I had the pleasure to sit down with her and talk about her return to campus.

Graduation Year: Class of 2012 **Hometown**: Chicago, IL

HUCOP Organizations: APhA, Kappa Psi, and PLS

Most memorable moment while in school? Meeting my husband.

How long have you been with Walgreens? In 2002, I worked as a pharmacy technician. When I started school at Howard, I became an Intern.

Since starting as pharmacy manager at HUH Walgreens, what differences do you notice between the retail setting and outpatient hospital setting?

I have less time for my life, but there are some awesome and unique opportunities that you don't see in a retail pharmacy setting. I feel like my degree is being utilized more as a pharmacist in the hospital setting.

As the pharmacy manager, are there any plans or programs that you would like the pharmacy to implement at HUH?

A bedside pharmacy delivery system is currently in the works. I'd also like to work with the labor and delivery department to set up a breast pump renting service. Breast pumping devices are expensive, and this service would give mothers who deliver at HUH and want to breastfeed the chance to do so, without it being costly. I am also working with Dr. Adigun and his residents in the inpatient pharmacy on setting up a protocol to maintain a patient's medications even if it is not covered under the hospital formulary. When a patient comes to the hospital and has medications that they take regularly at home, they may not be able to maintain their medication therapy during their stay at the hospital. Sometimes, these medications are not covered under the hospital's formulary. To have the hospital fill these medications that are not on the formulary would increase the costs of the hospital. With a protocol set up with Walgreens and the hospital, Walgreens could fill their medications that are not the hospital formulary. This keeps the patient on their therapy during their stay and would be cost-effective for the hospital.

Do you have any advice for pharmacy students interested in retail pharmacy?

Gain as much experience as you can. Get a job in the retail setting if your schedule allows. Always make sure you are networking and making connections. And be genuine about everything that you do and want to pursue.

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT: MEET DR. FERESHTEH EJTEMAI, RPH

By Melody Khorrami, P4

It is always wonderful to hear from our alumna and alumni and learn about how they continue to make a difference in their communities!



Alumna: Fereshteh (Fay) Ejtemai, Rph

Year of graduation: Howard University College of Pharmacy 1986

Current Position: Owner and Pharmacist In-Charge at Gainesville Pharmacy

Location: Gainesville, VA

Experience: Fay has years of pharmacy experience at major retail chains, managed care organizations, and Independent Pharmacies before she decided to open her own pharmacy!

Community outreach: Fay's pharmacy continuously gives back to the local community through free educational seminars on various disease state topics and medication management, as well as nutrition and wellness topics. Her pharmacy is a regular sponsor of local community events including wellness festivals! She continues to be an example for future pharmacy students who aspire to be pharmacy owners and knowledgeable providers in their communities.

THE RESIDENCY BREAKDOWN: AN INSIDE LOOK INTO THE INS AND **OUTS OF APPLYING TO RESIDENCY** PROGRAMS, PART 1

By Lindsy Liu, P3

For those students interested in pursuing a residency after graduation, the process can seem daunting. There isn't a step-by-step guide for us to reference and the constantly increasing applicant pool means that the competition becomes more intense each year. ASHP recognizes three different types of first year residencies known as a postgraduate year 1 (PGY1). These include hospital based pharmacy practice, community pharmacy practice, and managed care.

Those that choose to pursue a second year of postgraduate study, a PGY2, will focus on specialties within the field of pharmacy. Some of the many PGY2 areas of study include ambulatory care, cardiology, HIV, geriatrics, health system pharmacy practice and emergency medicine.

This year, Howard University College of Pharmacy class of 2015 proudly boasts 10 graduates that will be heading to prestigious residencies across the US. We offer our congratulations to those students.

- **Emanuel Awasom**
- Peju Awodipe
- Prince Chijioke
- Sylvia Dikas
- Kierra Dotson
- Bijan Mekoba
- Chisolm Onyilofor
- Bryan Sackey
- Menilik Tadesse
- Damika Watley

I sat down with these talented academics in order to demystify the details of residency applications, midyear, and match. The following interviews constitute part 1 of "The Residency Breakdown". You can find the remaining interviews in part 2 in the next issue of The Black Apothecary.

Name: Bryan Sackey

Residency Location: Michael E. DeBakey Veterans

Affairs Medical Center in Houston, Texas

Can you describe your overall experience with residency applications and the match process?

It was hectic and stressful! Each of the different phases of the process had its own level of stress. The pre-midyear phase was all about trying to figure out what programs fit your interests. I had a list of 20 or so programs, ranked by location first and then I listed which programs were in that area fit my interests. Then at midyear you come with a game plan but everything gets thrown out the window. It's utter chaos. But we came prepared and ready to take the brunt of the chaos.

Did you go to Midyear during your 3rd year also?

I did go my third year and but at that point I just observed everything. Back then, I wanted to do something in administration and I was looking at what programs had the most people rather than what actually fit me. In my opinion, going to Midyear during third year is just so you can adjust to the environment, that way fourth year wont be a surprise. You wont get more out of it than acclimation. If you can do that, then goal for 4th year seems more like complete the mission, instead of mission impossible.

How was your experience with Resi-Prep?

Resi-Prep was a huge help as far as preparation. I went with is beta version of my portfolio to midyear, got feedback, and afterwards I modified it for my interviews. ASHP's Personnel Placement Services (PPS), for me was the pre interview – I showed his pre interview and he found out what he needed to improve on. Post midyear, I was completely wracked with nerves. You are just sitting there, waiting for letter of recs and everything hinges on your preceptors, you are sending Christmas cards to remind them. You do anything. Finally, everything is submitted and then you wait.

On a scale of 1-10, how nervous were you at this point?

I was a 106! Luckily my first choice was the first to respond. I was actually on the road to NY for New Years Eve; driving down 95. I was checking my email every second and I saw the word congratulations and almost crashed. The rest of the programs took 2 weeks to respond. Then everything started trickling in and the next step was to prepare for interviews.

How did you prep for the interview?

My friends and I formed a prep team for interviews to make the process easier. I participated in mock interviews through ACCP, professors helped, I went over my presentations, and used RX prep to help get ready for the cases they give during the interviews. A lot of people don't realize that they give cases at these interviews! I would recommend reviewing the common things like diabetes, hypertension, and dyslipidemia.

Do you think you will pursue a PGY2? Is it a necessity now?

I think I will pursue it. I'm hearing more and more that PGY1 is not enough but the more important reason I'm pursuing it is because I know I want to specialize; probably in cardiology. Unless the next year proves me wrong, I feel like PGY1 is like a more intense 4th year. And I want to go one step further. The way the pharmacy field is going, we are becoming more of a primary care provider. Specialization is even more necessary to fulfill our growing role in patient care.

Do you have any advice for those pursuing residency?

BE YOURSELF! Meditate and find out who you are. I'm serious. You need to know who you are as a person. This whole process is exciting and nerve wracking but just put your best foot forward and be yourself.

Be honest, did you cry?

I didn't cry but I will never forget how nervous I was. I couldn't sleep. I had no back up plan. If I didn't get a residency I would have gone back to Ghana and started my entire life over. The emails get sent out in alphabetical order. I didn't know that so I'm an S just waiting while everyone else knew his or her results. But you know what, even you don't get it you will be ok. It's not the end of the world.

Do you have any advice on how to mentally, financially, and academically prepare for 4th year?

Including costs and time spent for midyear, travel to interviews, etc. I pulled out extra loans. It honestly depends on how much you apply to. I started by only applying to stuff in the area and then I expanded my search after midyear. I was on rotations, tutoring 3rd years, interviewing, and working. Oh, sign up for Southwest reward points and book your flights early!!!

Name: Emanuel Awasom

Residency Location: Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Healthcare Systems

Can you describe your overall experience with residency applications and the match process?

I participated in Resi-Prep and if you do it too, I suggest you take it seriously. You get out of Resi-Prep what you put in. If you take advantage of it and are proactive you will get everything you need. Dr. Adigun will give you materials and advice that will make a huge difference for you at midyear. At midyear, you can easily differentiate between the people that have prepared and those that haven't. Apart from your portfolio, you still need to be able to socialize and network, but networking is a skill and you can hone it. It may not come naturally but you can get better at it.

Your CV and Letter of intent should be done before you go to midyear. I had one letter of intent that covered everything I wanted to say, it was really broad and I tailored it to each program. I applied to 13 residencies so it was still really time consuming.

Some students participated in PPS, but I think it was a waste of money. I got an interview out of it but I think I could have done without it. Once you get back from midyear it's the busiest period ever. Bryan, Bijan, and I had sessions where we did mock interviews. We recorded them and then reviewed them to find areas we needed to improve on. We did the same with our presentations.

As far as residency applications go, you have to be ultra prepared. I started in the summer, around June. During that time, I contacted the programs and let them know that I was interested. Around 90% of the residency directors actually got back to me. It was a preintroduction; they didn't actually know me at this point. And again, before midyear, I reintroduced myself so by the time I actually met them at midyear they had heard my name several times. Introducing yourself earlier on will work in your favor.

I created an excel sheet that was divided by state and then I listed each program from those states that interested me. Then I ranked it by due dates, requirements, what I was interested in, and what each program required.

Once you start looking it can be overwhelming. Don't pick a program just because you think you will get into it. Pick what applies to your interest. For example, I like cardiology so I was able to find programs that fit and I stood out by ask questions at midyear specifically tailored to that program. If you aren't limited by location, apply to as many as possible because it's really competitive. Set your deadlines earlier than what it actually is. Don't take any chances!

From December 31st to January 20th I finally started getting interviews and most of them were out of state so I had to plan carefully. I had all of my California interviews in one week that way I didn't have to fly out multiple times.

How did you prep for the interviews?

I was so prepared by the time I got there I was ready for anything. You need to know your CV and you need know yourself. I created a PowerPoint that served as an overview for each program. It had everything I could find on the residency director, the people interviewing me, facts specific to the program. I may have done too much!

So you basically stalked everyone?

Pretty much! I stalked them and found out their interests. You want to steal the spotlight but you also need to know that people also love to talk about themselves so if I could ask the interviewer something personal they might remember me a little more than the next candidate.

Did you have to do anything else at your interview besides your presentation?

They give you cases similar to our OSCEs. You walk into a station and they give you five minutes to review and eight minutes to present. It was literally like OSCE! During my California interviews there were five rooms and I had 45 minutes for each. They just asked one clinical question after another.

How would you recommend we prepare for that?

You should definitely review antibiotics and anticoagulation medications especially the new oral anticoagulation medications and how you convert between the coagulation meds. If you prepare you'll be surprised at how much information you know.

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How did you pick your presentation topic?

I only had to present twice but you should know your presentation in and out. It should be something you've done on rotations that way you are familiar with all of the aspects of the case. DON'T DO SOMETHING UNFAMILIAR!

On the other hand, don't do something that is old hat like diabetes or hypertension. Avoid the things that are chronic and common. Pick something that fits in a case study like a unique disease state you don't see too often.

Do you have any other words advice for us?

Be yourself!!! It's the most important thing. At the same time be professional. People want to see who you are. Ask questions. Show that you are interested. The PowerPoint overview really helped me a lot. Know why you want to do a residency and know why that particular program you are applying to. If you are going out of state try to go the day before and try to arrive at the place 1-2 hours before your interview time. If you show up late you are automatically eliminated! Be nice. Don't be mean to your competitors. They residents will watch how you interact with others around you.

If you can get the 7th rotation off DO IT! It is so busy during that time, having that rotation off will make a difference.

The interviews aren't as scary as you think they are going to be. I actually talked about my workout routines with these guys. Residents want to see if they can work with you and if you all will get along. Gauge your audience as well. Some places are more relaxed and others aren't. San Diego was incredibly relaxed. While I was waiting for my interview, one of the residents came in from a run on the beach. What a great place! In some places, the people are really type A and have trouble interacting but overall if you are yourself you will be ok.

Do you have any advice for ranking the programs? Rank based on where you want to go because it works in your favor. If you know deep down that you don't want to go there, just DON'T DO IT!

Rank at least three days before. When it was match day, I rechecked it every second. I didn't sleep. I stayed up all night watching basketball and I checked at 3 am, 6 am, 7am, and finally at 8:07 I knew. I got my match.

Name: Menilik Tadesse

Residency Location: Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland

Can you describe your overall experience with residency applications and the match process?

It was really stressful because I only got 3 interviews even though I applied to 14 programs. Really, once you send in all of your applications it gets easier. That's a huge weight of your shoulders.

Considering how competitive residencies are, what do you suggest we do when we are picking places to apply to?

As long as you are willing to go places that aren't among your top choices you can make it somewhere. You just need to be flexible.

How did you prep for the interviews?

I participated in the Resi-Prep program with Dr. Adigun and I did mock interviews. I don't want to say I winged it, but I didn't waste too much time trying to anticipate their questions. I was just ready for situational questions.

Do you have any advice for those pursuing residency?

I'm probably one of the only people that didn't go to midyear. One program actually asked for a photo so they could match it to one taken at midyear! Since I didn't go, I didn't get an interview. 1st and 2nd year I would recommend working during school.

It shows you can handle multiple responsibilities and that you can manage your time. You should also pursue organizational positions. If you can't work that often, you could try working every other weekend. Some programs specifically asked me why I didn't work in school, so it is something they look at.

How did you decide which program best fit you?

The one I ranked the highest I didn't match to, they only had one spot so it was incredibly competitive. I ranked the ones with prescribing abilities highest and I loved the opportunities offered by the VA so I ranked those highly as well. Once you meet with the program you'll have a much better gauge of whether you would fit in there.

(interview continued on page 6)

Do you think you will pursue a PGY2? Is it a necessity now?

I'm not really sure. I saw some combined programs but mine is just a PGY1. Right now, I just want to see how my first year goes!

Do you have any advice on how to mentally, financially, and academically prepare for 4th year?

Including costs and time spent for midyear, travel to interviews, etc. it got pretty expensive. Naplex costs around \$500, licensure will probably be \$100, my 14 residency applications probably came out to \$450, then you get to add in moving fees, travel expense, and it's a lot. You should try to save for it all!

Do you have any other words of advice for us?

You want to do your best on any 4th year rotation. You need to put your best foot forward. I made sure I went above and beyond and worked hard because every location might be a place you might apply to some day.

So, I mentioned that some residency programs noticed I hadn't worked but I was able to talk about my rotation at CVS so it might have helped me.

Name: Sylvia Dikas

Residency Location: Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia

Can you describe your overall experience with residency applications and the match process?

Honestly, in the beginning I did not want to do a residency. I had worked at Walgreens since 2010 and I liked it. Dr. Adigun's rotation completely changed my mind. Over time it just solidified for me. Resi-Prep wasn't intense but it really does prepare you. He really does help you understand what the residency director's need and want.

Also, my rotation Children's Hospital contributed to my decision. My CV was almost perfect because Dr. Adigun really puts in a lot of effort to help you and he doesn't even get paid for it! He gives you so much feedback and is so pro-student and pro-residency you can't help but become as passionate about it as he is.

Did you go to midyear?

I just went to midyear my 4th year. I did PPS and I think it helps. Going to a PPS interview can help show that

you have early interest in that program. But you should only do the ones you are really interested in because it takes away time that you could spend at other booths. I scheduled way too many PPS interviews, my feet hurt, and my fit bit was going crazy! So overall, I would reserve PPS for what you are really interested in.

What was it like putting together your applications?

You really do have a good amount of time to finish everything. You can make sure everything is on track. LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT!!!!! Stress that for me!

I gave my recommenders three weeks to a month to turn their letters in. Resi-Prep will walk you through everything. You give a thank you letter, a CV, a list of sites you are applying to, and a letter generally explaining why you applied to those specific programs.

How do you gently remind you recommenders to make sure you get your letters of recommendation in on time?

So, to politely remind them I would send emails checking up on them and updating them on the deadlines and progress and definitely offer thanks.

How did you prep for the interviews? Others have mentioned they had cases and presentations.

Yes, there were cases and there were presentations. For the cases, my interviews did give me a reference to use, but you have limited time so you can't spend it looking everything up. Use your friends to prepare and don't take any opportunity for granted. I also suggest looking up sample residency questions. It's not about memorizing answers it's just about getting that thought process going.

How did you decide which program best fit you?

The program was my biggest influence in ranking. Of course the people you will be working with are incredibly important too. Location was also a factor for me and I did want to stay close to this area. Even though my program is a little far away I

can still get back to DC for the weekend. It actually worked out really well, because it will allow me to focus during the week. When you rank, you need to take into account what you want to do in the future.

(interview continued on page 7)

How did you decide which program best fit you?

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Even though my program is a little far away I can still get back to DC for the weekend. It actually worked out really well, because it will allow me to focus during the week. When you rank, you need to take into account what you want to do in the future.

Do you think you will pursue a PGY2?

I'm not completely closed to the idea, but right now I don't think so. My program doesn't offer one now but who knows what will happen in the future. If I were to do one it would probably be in ambulatory care.

Do you have any advice on how to mentally, financially, and academically prepare for 4th year?

When you consider the cost and time spent for midyear, travel to interviews, etc. all I can say is save money!! Get onto good terms with people that you could see writing you a letter of recommendations. A lot of programs want letters from your 4th year preceptors.

In addition to them serving as a recommender, remember pharmacy is a small world. Before each rotation I would send my preceptor my CV and ask them if there is any advice they have for me. And you can bet that when you apply for residencies they will recognize someone you've worked vwith and they will call them up and check on you.

You should really do your difficult rotations in the beginning. You need a lighter load in the 6th and 7th rotations to be ready to work for your interviews.

You want the more attractive rotations to be earlier so the residency programs can see that and you talk about it. That being said don't get too caught up in having fancy rotations.

I decided too late that I wanted to residency so my rotations weren't what you would call clinically oriented, but I still managed to get a residency. You make each experience special. Your passion and your interest will shine through.

Puzzle 1 (Medium, difficulty rating 0.56)

					3	5		7
			9	6			4	
2					1	8	6	3
				8	2			
	2		7		5		1	
			4	9				
9	5	7	2					6
	1			7	9			
8		2	3					

Puzzle 2 (Medium, difficulty rating 0.46)

4		7					8	
2	6		5	8				
	9	8		2		4		
	4		1					3
			7		8			
3					5		9	
		5		7		3	6	
				4	9		2	8
	2					1		9

Puzzle 1 (Medium, difficulty rating 0.56)

6	4	1	8	2	3	5	9	7
5	8	3	9	6	7	1	4	2
2	7	9	5	4	1	8	6	3
7	9	6	1	8	2	3	5	4
4	2	8	7	3	5	6	1	9
1	3	5	4	9	6	7	2	8
9	5	7	2	1	8	4	3	6
3	1	4	6	7	9	2	8	5
8	6	2	3	5	4	9	7	1

Puzzle 2 (Medium, difficulty rating 0.46)

4	3	7	9	1	6	2	8	5
2	6	1	5	8	4	9	3	7
5	9	8	3	2	7	4	1	6
8	4	6	1	9	2	7	5	3
1	5	9	7	3	8	6	4	2
3	7	2	4	6	5	8	9	1
9	8	5	2	7	1	3	6	4
7	1	3	6	4	9	5	2	8
6	2	4	8	5	3	1	7	9



The Black Apothecary would like to congratulate the class of 2015 on their upcoming graduation. We wish you the best of luck on the NAPLEX and in all your future endeavors.

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