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Genetics
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I decided what I wanted to do with my life when it had just barely begun. When I was about nine years old, I attended an engineering summer camp hosted by my intermediate school. Over the summer we learned various things about mechanical and chemical engineering through fun and creative projects. It was then that I decided I wanted to pursue a career in STEM. Following this experience, I have continued to foster my interest in science by participating in various STEM workshops, summer programs, job shadowing, and internships.

The summer after my initial introduction to the world of STEM, I enrolled in the National Youth Leadership Forum Pathways to STEM summer program. To explore more science career opportunities, I chose to enroll in the CSI Pathway. The CSI pathway simulated what it is like to be a forensic detective by teaching me and other students how to use science and math to solve a criminal case. The program also educated me on the plethora of careers that STEM encompassed, and I was inclined to do further research on the options for my future. This research comprised of online searches and attending a multitude of workshops to get firsthand experience in these different fields. Eventually, I was able to narrow down the field that I wanted to pursue a career in. I decided that I wanted to study Biomedical Engineering. I came to this decision about halfway through middle school.

Before graduating from middle school, I applied for and was accepted into Deep Creek High School's Science and Medicine Academy. During my time in the academy, I spent the summer prior to my senior year job shadowing at Coastal Prosthetics and Orthotics. This experience further piqued my interest in Biomedical Engineering. Here I learned the intricacies of creating prosthetic limbs as well as medical devices to aid people with various foot issues. The part of the shadowing that I found most interesting was when I learned of the importance that choosing the right materials for each device was. This knowledge helped me decide which branch of Biomedical Engineering I wanted to study.

The following year, my senior year, I spent my spring semester doing an internship at Norfolk State University under the Materials Science Program. I got to experience what it was like to work in a lab and conduct real experiments. I worked alongside scientists whose project at the time was to create materials and construct a model that emulated the electrical currents in a human skull. I also learned the process to create electrodes that could measure these electrical currents. By the end of the semester, I was able to create a set of these electrodes on my own. It was during this time that I fell in love with research and shifted my interest to a laboratory-based career.

Now, I am currently majoring in Biomedical Sciences with a minor Biomedical Engineering at Old Dominion University. I plan on pursuing a master's degree and possibly a Ph.D. as well. I hope to find a job that pertains to either Pharmaceutical Science or Materials Science. While being a STEM major is not an easy road, I believe that having been invested in my future from such a young age, I am prepared and eager to conquer any difficulties ahead to obtain a spot in my intended field.