

Emily Old

Professor Jacob Tousignaut

Health 101

November 5, 2021

A Sports Injury that Fueled Her Career

Ms. Meghan Gawne is a Certified Physician Assistant, or PA-C, in Greensborough, North Carolina. She is currently working at an orthopedic practice where she assesses patients with musculoskeletal injuries, orders various tests for diagnosing, analyzes test results with patients, and numerous other tasks. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology at a small college in her hometown, a master's degree in Surgical Assisting at Eastern Virginia Medical School and a masters from EVMS to be a Physician Assistant. In grade school, she suffered a sports injury while playing volleyball which inspired her to help people just like herself get back to doing what they love after being injured. Before her career as a PA-C, she thought her dream was to become a Medical Doctor, or MD so in undergrad, she took numerous courses to be on the Pre-Med track. She was heading straight for medical school, even taking the MCAT, when one day she realized she was not living the life she wanted. She was dreading the many years of school, many years of residency, and all the debt associated with going to med school. While exploring other options, she came across Eastern Virginia Medical School's website. She grew a new passion for the Physician Assistant career because this role can do just about anything a doctor can do with a couple less years of schooling, no residency, and less debt from school. To be eligible for this program, she had to hold a competitive number of patient care hours so she decided to complete EVMS's Surgical Assisting program to gain experience in the field and explore her interest in surgery. Graduating from the surgical assisting program in 2014, she loved her job and continued to be a surgical assistant for 5 years. Once she decided she was ready to go back to school, she applied for the PA program at EVMS and was accepted promptly. Just recently graduating PA school in 2021, she is settling into the orthopedic setting where she currently practicing.

Every day, Ms. Gawne takes pride in her career striving to give each patient the best care she can provide to them. When she is interacting with a patient, she thoroughly enjoys getting to know each of her patients as a unique person rather than just signs and symptoms being presented to her. This makes her patient's feel heard and truly cared for. Some of her daily tasks include evaluating patients, creating treatment plans, ordering tests, diagnosing, and analyzing test results. While she was in PA school, she learned how to take pen and paper notes when charting about patients but in her new practice, they use devices called Dictaphones to take notes on patients. She verbalizes her notes into this device which sends a recording to someone else to type up the notes and send those notes into the practice's database. Using the Dictaphone is currently the most surprising aspect of her career that she is still getting used to. The aspect that she has found the most challenging is remembering so much information about the numerous diseases the human body can present with. She did not realize how common it was for health care providers for look up information in reference during or after patient visits.

One piece of advice she gave I found helpful was about overcoming obstacles. She emphasized that perseverance is key and anyone entering the field of medicine needs to hold onto it. Everyone is going to face battles whether it is in school or the workforce but as long as your eyes are set on the end goal and you are taking challenges one step at a time, anything is possible.