

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well

Campus News Archive

Campus News, Newsletters, and Events

7-30-2010

Richard A. Wehseler '91 named MAFP 2010 Family Physician of the Year

University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news

Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Richard A. Wehseler '91 named MAFP 2010 Family Physician of the Year" (2010).
Campus News Archive. 1504.
https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/urel_news/1504

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Campus News, Newsletters, and Events at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Campus News Archive by an authorized administrator of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Richard A. Wehseler '91 named MAFP 2010 Family Physician of the Year

Summary: Wehseler credits his liberal arts background with helping him communicate well and shaping his perspective on life.

(July 30, 2010)-The Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) selected Richard A. Wehseler, MD, as the 2010 Family Physician of the Year. Chosen by the MAFP Board of Directors from among family physicians across the state nominated by patients, community members, and colleagues, this honor is conferred annually on a family physician who represents the highest ideals of the specialty of family medicine, including caring, comprehensive medical service, community involvement and service as a role model.

Wehseler, a biology and English major, is a 1991 graduate of the University of Minnesota, Morris. He attended medical school at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, which specializes in educating primary-care physicians, and completed his family medicine residency at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester. A family physician in the area for 12 years, Dr. Wehseler practices at the Affiliated Community Medical Centers New London clinic.

According to the MAFP news release, those who nominated Wehseler describe him as an outstanding family physician who demonstrates genuine concern and compassion for his patients on a daily basis: "If there is only one reason why Rick Wehseler deserves this award, it is not because of the work he performs with his hands, but rather the work he performs with his heart," wrote New London resident April Dorry. Other patients praised him for his personalized notes to them, house calls when needed, and strong support during times of crisis, and validated him as not only a talented professional but an active member of the community.

Personable and passionate

Van Gooch, Morris professor emeritus of biology and Wehseler's undergraduate mentor, expected nothing less of his student. Reacting to the news, he affirmed: "Rick is incredibly personable and passionate, and I am not at all surprised that he obtained the physician's award."

Wehseler returned the compliment, calling Gooch the driving force behind his attending medical school.

Wehseler's success was prefigured at Morris in countless ways. Working with Gooch in the late 1980s, he received an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (UROP) grant, presented his circadian rhythm research at several undergraduate research meetings and symposia around the country, and was a coauthor on a research publication. Students in Morris's Summer Scholars program, in which he was a teaching assistant for the human reproduction and biotechnology course for three years, gave him very strong evaluations.

To be certain of his interests and abilities in the medical field, Wehseler took the Emergency Medical Training (EMT) Course and became a member of the Morris Medical Rescue unit, making many emergency runs within the Morris community. Both his academic and medical skills were put to the test when, on an extended three-week University-sponsored field trip to Alaska, he was a teaching assistant while also in charge of first aid.

An enduring achievement delineated this steady trajectory toward medical school. Under the persistent urging of Wehseler and other students, the biology discipline acquired its first human cadaver. Wehseler recalled working through the University of Minnesota Medical School and mortuary science class to obtain the cadaver and declared this a “good and useful experience,” one that allowed him to develop early proficiency in dissection and sharpen his presentation skills while demonstrating dissection of the thigh and knee to students in the human anatomy and physiology class and the EMT course.

Wehseler never doubted his interest in biology, but his major in English was a valued bonus. The critical thinking skills nourished at a liberal arts institution, he says, helped him communicate well in medical school, with patients, and in shaping his perspective on life.

Although immersed in his premed studies, he relished the opportunities to do other things that are the hallmark of a small campus with strong academic standards, enjoying his time as a resident adviser in Pine Hall and as a member of the performing arts committee and several student clubs.

Diverse interests, but not overload

In all this time, Wehseler managed not to succumb to activity overload. One of the things Van Gooch says he admired most about his student was that despite his diverse interests, he was always in such control of his activities that he still found time to help others and to have fun.

And these are traits he has upheld throughout his adult life. Besides maintaining a full patient schedule, Wehseler is chief of staff at Rice Memorial Hospital in Willmar and assistant county coroner for Kandiyohi County. He is also an active volunteer in his community helping with skin checks before wrestling meets, serving on several church committees, and working at the parish cemetery.

Wehseler and his wife, Nancy, live in Spicer with their three children.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.