Congratulations Dr. Densen on your Distinguished Mentor Award!

Enclosed are well wishes and fond memories from some UI Carver College of Medicine alumni.
Dear Dr. Densen,

I still remember my first few weeks of medical school and your welcoming demeanor. It made all the difference! It was so helpful to hear your calm voice and observe your positive energy as we navigated the "new curriculum". You were, and always will be a great example to all and a wonderful teacher.

Congratulations from the bottom of my heart!

Rebecca Chackalackal (99MD)
Iowa City, IA
chacki@mchsi.com

Dr. Densen,

I want to thank you for being a positive motivator and my cheerleader as I matriculated through the medical school curriculum. You often helped me put things into perspective and encouraged me to let go of my fears and push through my difficulties. I appreciate you and you are so deserving of this award. May God continue to bless you and keep your family.

Sincerely,
Stephanie L. Brown (98MD)
Chicago, IL
stephanie_brown46227@Yahoo.com
Congratulations on this well-deserved award. You are the person I find myself most often quoting, from my earliest medical school days. "If it's really important, you'll hear it again." There is nothing more true in medicine and it is precisely how I teach and what I teach -- again and again. Best Wishes!

Robin Cook Kopelman (99MD 03R-Internal Medicine 03R-Psychiatry 05MPH)
Iowa City, IA
robin-cook@uiowa.edu

Dear Dr. Densen,

Thank you so much for your generous time and commitment to our development as students. I was a member of the UI class of 2000 and recall fondly what an excellent role model of kindness, patience you served as for us as we started our journey in medicine. You have been instrumental in helping to develop my commitment to lifelong learning and the patient experience. May God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,
Elena Arizmendez (96BA 96BS 00MD)
Austin, TX
mearizmendez@rehabaustin.com
Dear Dr. Densen. Congratulations to you! This honor is well deserved. All you've done for the College of Medicine and me is greatly appreciated!

John Wemmie (96MD 96PhD 00R-Psychiatry)
Iowa City, IA
john-wemmie@uiowa.edu

Congratulations in being awarded this wonderful honor, Dr. Densen! Without a doubt, you were one of the most positively influential staff for me during my medical training. The UIHC School of Medicine is most fortunate to have counted you among the best of their faculty for so many years!

Gina Moran (93MD 96R-Internal Medicine)
Dubuque, IA
morandbq@mchsi.com
3 weeks before I was to start my M1 year, I sustained a cervical spinal cord injury in a car accident. I was paralyzed from the neck down. My prognosis was very poor. I instructed my parents to defer my enrollment 1 year so I could complete my rehabilitation in the hope I would be able to matriculate the following year. 9 months later, I was asked to meet with Dr. Densen to determine if I would be physically capable of starting school with the next class. I was terrified I would be deemed incapable of meeting the technical standards for admission. My dream of becoming a physician hung in the balance.

The day of our meeting, I put on my best suite and did my best to hide my limp and other persisting physical impairments. I hobbled into Dr. Densen's office and sat down across from him. He looked at me with compassion and as he glanced down at my file. I sat as tall as possible, looked him straight in the eye and told him I knew I could do it. He smiled and asked me several questions and then told me he would discuss it with his colleague and let me know the College's decision within 1 week. I left his office with my heart in my hand...terrified I would receive a letter stating I would not be allowed to start medical school. To my surprise, I received a phone call 4 hours later informing me I was welcome to start school in the fall. To say I was relieved would be an understatement. In hindsight, I think Dr. Densen would have been on solid ground if he denied me the opportunity to enroll, but he took a chance on me and then mentored me throughout my time at the University of Iowa. Without him, I wouldn't be a practicing physician today. I will always be indebted to him for this.

Jonathan Myers (05MD)
Kimberly, ID
jonmyers1@gmail.com
Hello and congratulations Dr. Densen on this well-deserved award!! You have been instrumental and involved in the lives of many UI medical students and trainees including myself. Thank you for all your hard work and dedication!

Nick Ettinger (09MD 09PhD)
Nashville, TN
nick.ettinger@vanderbilt.edu

Dr. Densen has a most unique ability to tap into a student's potential, no matter how hidden that might be. Throughout my 20 year career thus far, I remember often how validated I felt thanks to his mentoring and coaching. His peaceful, contemplative nature balanced by genuine kindness and good humor served to draw me into internal medicine. I continue to aspire to become the kind of "internist's internist" Dr. Densen is. My med school days at Iowa were some of my very best. I am so honored to have known and to have benefitted from Dr. Densen's encouragement and grace.

Christopher Hildebrand (92MD)
Madison, WI
christopher.hildebrand@va.gov
“Dean Densen”, as I still fondly refer to him, evoked the drama and magic of medicine inside of me in a very powerful way. Dean Densen taught me so many things. One of the most memorable lessons he shared was that we, physicians, should never look at patients as disease entities to be tackled or managed, but instead to regard each patient as a noble human being who has afforded us the privilege and honor of sharing in their lives. I never forgot this lesson and never will. There are not many physicians in this world more or as deserving of this award than Dr. Peter Densen - my teacher, my mentor, my friend.

Kentrell Liddell (01MD)
Jackson, MI
kmliddellmd@aol.com

Congratulations Dr Densen! Your legacy reaches far and wide!

Christie McCarthy (96MD)
Wayzata, MN
cminmn@hotmail.com
Congratulations on your retirement, Dr. Densen! I am so grateful for your gentle, patient teaching, and your positive encouragement during my medical school years. You were delightful to work with at the VA hospital when I was a 3rd year medical student, and you gave a great speech at our graduation in 1994. I admired you for your knowledge, your caring, and your interest in medical education. You made a huge difference in my education, and in the way I interact with medical students, residents, and fellows now. Thank you, and have a wonderful retirement.

Michelle Ochs Kinney (94MD)
Rochester, MN
kinney.michelle@mayo.edu

When I was in Medical School, Dr. Densen was Dean Densen. I remember he filled in once for our physical exam class. I remember we were examining the chest and of course breath sounds. Dr. Densen taught me where to listen for the right middle lobe lung field. Seems trivial, I know, but it was an "ah-ha" moment for me. Daily, multiple times a day, I listen to lung sounds and the right middle lobe and still think of him. Thank you Dr. Densen for your guidance, leadership and teaching in big and small ways to those of us blessed to be your pupil. Congratulations!

Colette Lothe (01MD)
Marshalltown, IA
sclothe@msn.com
Congratulations Dr. Peter Densen! I remember having you give us M1 medical students microbiology lectures in the laboratory and other students in my class who went to the Univ. of Iowa for undergrad told me you were known at the Univ. of Iowa College of Medicine as Painful Peter Densen because you were so tough on us medical students. Well, I thought you were tough on the outside as you expected us to perform up to our potential and flourish at the Univ. of Iowa College of Medicine, but you also were very fair and based your evaluation on merit and not favoritism or cronyism. On top of that, I had you as my preceptor for my M4 infectious disease rotation and I found out you really were a great human being on the inside. My significant other at the time, who was an M3, had her father suddenly die her M2 year and then her mother got colon cancer her M3 year. Peter called her into his office and really was instrumental in helping her not completely fall apart to finish her medical training. She fondly remember our medical school Dean Peter Densen and how he positively impacted her life when things were not going so well in her life.

Daniel Dawson (97MD)
Gainesville, FL
daniel.g.dawson@gmail.com
Dr. Densen, who served as Dean while I was a medical student, was instrumental in my academic success at the University of Iowa. When I encountered academic difficulty due to severe family stressors, he provided both practical and moral support to help me successfully navigate the educational system. I have been a successful practicing pediatrician for the past fifteen years and have had the opportunity to mentor residents and medical students as well as to nurture my patients and to give back to my community. I cannot imagine spending my life doing anything other than practicing pediatrics and am not sure I would have had that opportunity without Dr. Densen’s administrative support. Dr. Densen exemplifies the ideal physician educator, setting high standards for students and providing a compassionate guiding hand when deemed necessary. He has been an asset to the University of Iowa and I wish him the best in his retirement.

Deborah Weyer (97MD)
Middleburg, FL
deborahweyer@yahoo.com

Best Wishes, and thanks for all your support and advice in the early years of my education. It’s hard to believe it’s been 25 years since I was just a high school kid giving questionable ideas to your youngest son. Your career has been notable for all the improvements in health care education you advocated for, and the result has been a generation of physician leaders spreading the Iowa ethos across the nation. Please share this award with your lovely wife -- I’m sure it was always a team effort!

Brian (95BS MD) and Corrie (98BA) Wagner
Sacramento, CA
wagnerbl@gmail.com
Dr. Densen

Thank you for your years of teaching, service and mentoring to medical students at the University of Iowa. I appreciated your approachability and sense of humor. I am proud to have graduated from University of Iowa Medical school. Congratulations and best wishes!

Jill Bjorge Nelson (96MD)
Omaha, NE
jnelson@omahaderm.com

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Thank you for your continued support of medical education. I was a proud beneficiary of your student award during my medical school years and also enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving feast at your home with friends and family. Your generosity is most valued and your dedication to education influenced many lives and professionals in training!

Eleanor Lisa Lavadie-Gomez (07MD)
West Liberty, IA
lisalava_2000@yahoo.com

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Dean Densen-

Much deserved is this recognition for you! Enjoy!
As a medical student, I recall sitting in committee with you as a student member, finding it very intimidating but a worthwhile experience. Not long after that, match time for residency slots came, and you left me a note in your own handwriting I still recall..... "Lucky is the residency program that will match you!" I no longer felt like a "number", but a candidate worthy of my future training. And so it has been.......!
Thank you for your sense of humor, encouragement, and your dedication to student and resident education to better the future of medicine!

With regard-
Sheryl Hansel (97MD)
Cedar Falls, IA
thehansels@cfu.net
Dear Dr. Densen!

Thank you for being a ray of sunshine and a beacon of hope when I was down and out during medical school. Your unwavering support and investment in my education and well-being as a human being was unparalleled. Please continue to walk-the-walk so that your colleagues may learn from your doings. You are one of the only fond memories I take from my experience at UI Carver College of Medicine and for that, I am grateful. You deserve this honor. My deepest apologies for being unable to attend your event.

Warmest Regards!
Jameel Ahmad Brown (00BS 05MD)
Little Rock, AR
jahmabdrown@gmail.com

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Peter,

Thank you for your outstanding mentoring as well as friendship and collaboration over the last decade. I look forward to more in the years to come.

Sincerely,
Chris Cooper (87BA 91MD 97R-Urology)
Iowa City, IA
christopher-cooper@uiowa.edu
Dr. Densen, as I navigate my current roles as educator, program director and clinician I can think of few mentors who have influenced me to such a degree as you have. As a medical student, we interacted with many people who are poised to mentor us in different ways; you mentor by example. Your interactions with me were always professional, thoughtful and realistic. If there was something that wasn't working in my student life you pushed me to examine that and make changes. I know that a huge part of the physician that I am today is because of the character that you helped build within me. As I work with my residents (I am a program director) I smile and catch myself asking a resident the phrase that you challenged me with, "Well, how do we make that happen?"

Thank you for mentoring by example and making me challenge myself.

Sincerely,
Michelle Parra (03MD)
Lebanon, NH
michelle.c.parra@hitchcock.org

I was fortunate enough to be a part of the College of Medicine Class of 2005. We were in our preclinical years during the transition into the then new MERF building. While I knew I was getting an outstanding education at the time, I didn't quite realize how thoughtful, progressive, and innovative the new curriculum Dr. Densen helped craft was. Now over ten years later, I'm teaching medical students in a "new" curriculum at Northwestern, and our general goals/themes sound very familiar.

Best Wishes and Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition of your contribution to medical education, research, and clinical excellence.

Jayson Neagle (01BS 05MD 08R-Internal Medicine)
Chicago, IL
jneagle@nmh.org
It's a rare character to have served so many but still be able to maintain an intense focus with one-on-one. That's unique about Dr. Densen - his ability to see the horizon but at the same time connect with the individual as if each were a Lego block of its own with its unique color and size. It has been 19 years since I'd done a Sub-I with him as an M4 but this award is no less deserving and definitely worth the wait. In a hyper-competitive medical school environment, he made it certain that "we" can only be as strong as "our" weakest link, and that "we" all could learn from each other. It has been exhaustive for him while watching his grandchildren grow up, as he had shared with me recently. That tells me that for him teaching is very personal, taking the batons from no less his grandfathers. The UI is so blessed to have such a "teammate" for decades. Bravo!

Man Nguyen (91BSE 95MD)
Huntington Beach, CA
ManHawkeye86-Stratocumulus@Yahoo.com

Thanks for all your support and guidance to me as an unusually "mature" medical student and to all in my Class of 1991. Your frame of reference was unique and well-grounded in common sense and a broad knowledge base. Congratulations on influencing so many, and on a vital medical career.

Lloyd Luke (76BM 91MD)
Waterloo, IA
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