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2016-2017 Medical Dermatology Society Mentorship Award

Mentor: Ruth Ann Vleugels, MD, Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH), Harvard Medical School

I would like to thank the Medical Dermatology Society for affording me the incredible honor of working with Dr. Ruth Ann Vleugels at Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH). This experience was invaluable to my training as a future academic medical dermatologist. Additionally, it provided me the tremendous opportunity of being mentored by Dr. Vleugels, an extraordinary clinician and educator.

Upon arrival to BWH, I received a schedule tailored to my interest in cutaneous manifestations of rheumatologic diseases. In addition to Dr. Vleugels, I was given the opportunity to work with Drs. Mital Patel and Joseph Merola, each of whom are experts in the field of complex medical dermatology, and Dr. Joanie Pinard, an amazing clinician and the current BWH Dermatology-Rheumatology fellow. My time was divided between Connective Tissue Diseases clinics, Hidradenitis Suppurativa clinic, and interdisciplinary Dermatology-Rheumatology clinics at both BWH and Boston Children's Hospital. These various clinical experiences granted me access to a high volume of medically complex and diverse patients with diseases ranging from pediatric scleroderma to STING-associated vasculopathy with onset in infancy to refractory dermatomyositis.

Throughout my rotation, Dr. Vleugels embodied all forms of clinical excellence while caring for medically complex patients. Leading by example, she conveyed empathy and compassion to each patient she met, and sought to provide comfort and hope over the course of all interactions. Despite an ever-present large following of medical students, residents and fellows, she never wavered from her singular focus on her patients, without compromising her dedication to the education of young physicians. Each patient was someone to learn from, through sight or story, and everyone was invited to participate in her quest for the diagnosis and best treatment.

The mentorship award provided the necessary funding for this experience and protected time away from my duties at my home institution. I am immensely grateful to the Medical Dermatology Society and to Dr. Ruth Ann Vleugels for this incredible experience.