**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**IZIEGBE EHIOROBO**

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and family, faculty, administrators, distinguished guests, and of course, my fellow graduates, I want you to know it’s a privilege to be here today and an honor to have the opportunity to stand before you and share some thoughts on this very special occasion. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) My colleagues and I have spent the past three years worrying and stressing, wondering and witnessing, putting in long hours trying to make sense of so much....oh... and in our **SPARE TIME**... we completed our requirements...!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... **Of COURSE** I’m kidding... we have **NO** idea what spare time is!!! But what we **DO** know is that it was all worth it.

The world really did feel like a different place when we began our studies... Commencing our residency together three years ago, I think we would all agree that we were very green and far less knowledgeable than we are today. We might even have to admit that one of the first lessons we learned was about the **WHITE COAT**... it’s a common syndrome and as fresh, newly minted residents, we realized that the dreaded condition does not only affect the patient... I must admit that on that very first “fitting,” I was a little struck by the awesomeness and power of what that white coat means... who would have thought that less than two yards of woven white fabric could strike such fear into the hearts of innocent residents?? (**Wait for the laugh**). The past three years has taught us so much....we began the process delving deep into the universe of medicine.... learning to cope...finding the ways to diagnose, comfort, and heal, becoming more and more aware of the situations... and often crises that presented... and continue to present themselves, and developing a deeper understanding and relationship to the world around us and within us... we found ourselves maturing together over the years and developing into excellent clinicians under the tutelage of the most amazing faculty members one could ever have hoped for.

We experienced both joy and sadness together... for instance, what could be more miraculous than the births of several babies to our colleagues... myself included!! We were part of the process of the diagnosis of cancer in one of our colleagues and truly, we learned from first hand experience just what it meant to stay strong together. There’s a saying that goes, “Life is what happens when you’re busy making other plans...” Of course we learned the textbook definitions and lessons throughout our course, but we were also paying attention. We got to learn about the preciousness and delicacy of life. We learned that no matter what we thought we could or could not handle, we had more to give... to learn... and to grow. We learned that our capacity for knowledge and our diligence to continue learning are both bottomless, and the more we know, the more we need to know. We learned that in order to be the most caring, intuitive, and compassionate doctors possible, we had to... and **MUST** be... **PRESENT**.

We are very fortunate to have had such great mentors and teachers throughout this course. I would like to give special thanks to the program director, Dr Larbi, for the faith he had in us three years ago when each of us were selected for a residency spot and for maintaining that faith .... **even** as he got to know us more and more... (**Wait for the laugh**) His dedication and the confidence he continuously instilled in all of us clearly made a difference in our education... Dr. Larbi’s efforts to ensure that we had an outstanding residency training is something that I will keep close by, in my thoughts, as I make my way in the medical world, and as an example for others.

I would also like to thank the residency coordinators, Mr LaCour and Ms. Brooks-Neal for all their efforts to ensure that the program continued to run smoothly.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all of the faculty members for their endless support, encouragement, and devotion to our success

We know that as we complete this course, we will repay the faith that this institution has in us by being compassionate, intelligent, and observant ambassadors. The Howard University Hospital Internal Medicine Residency Program will forever remain as our roots, and for that we will continue to be grateful.

Sigmund Freud said, “Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength.” Throughout this program, I have learned and bore witness to the intricacies, fallibility, and magnificence of humanity. I am honored to be a part of the medical profession and I thank you all for the strength you have instilled in me.

Here’s to my fellow graduates... May we all find our strengths and continue to serve!!

Congratulations and thank you all!!