

## **2017 Osler Essay Contest**

### **Reflective Piece**

Ever since I had the opportunity to participate in scientific research, I have always enjoyed my experiences. I loved to perform literature review and contribute to journal clubs, tasks that I found satisfying and stimulating. Writing the Osler Essay was a significant challenge for me. It was the first time that I would write on a humanities-oriented subject. Instead of researching mostly scientific peer-reviewed journals, I also needed to learn to read sociological articles, as well as searching through books, something I had not done since high school. Fortunately, my mentor was an invaluable resource for me. Professor Wallis guided me to focus my research thesis – too wide and ambitious initially – and suggested a few important books to consult. Those volumes became my core resources when writing. Through our many meetings, she helped keep me on the right path whenever I got sidetracked or overwhelmed with the sheer volume of information. Also, with the help of my mentor and the kind librarians of the Osler Library, I became familiar with the many University online resources. I learned valuable searching methods and techniques, which transitioned smoothly into the Evidence-Based Medicine course taught in the first month of medical school. I was also amazed at the wealth of the University Online Database, which possesses complete archives of many reputable journals, such as all those managed by Elsevier. But what was the greatest eye-opener these last months was that the Osler Library of Medicine was just that: a library. I had the opportunity – which I actually had all along – to walk between shelves of ancient volumes, remnants of rich past. I felt like a historian: sifting through books more than a century old and learning from authentic works of the some the greatest names in the history of medicine. Two memories among many stick out. First, some of the books that I borrowed were originals that even had dedications from the authors themselves. And second, when I consulted Louis Pasteur's treatise on the germ theory, I felt like Robert Langdon: in a watched room, delicately turning the pages of a century-old folio with the utmost care and respect. Overall, I now know how privileged I am to access, learn from, and cherish the resources of the Osler Library. This experience was one to always remember and build upon.