

# 2023-2024 Golden Stethoscope Nomination

Nominated for: Outstanding DOCS Preceptor

*Name of Nominee* Dr. Joann Zell, MD

Dr. Zell is incredibly deserving of recognition for outstanding DOCS Preceptor because she fosters a welcoming environment in which she empowers her students to hone their clinical skills. Dr. Zell always asks me, "what do you think?" whenever I am contemplating how best to direct my line of questioning or physical exam maneuvers in a clinical scenario. This is a phenomenal way of teaching because it encourages me to critically think about why I am asking a question or performing a maneuver rather than blindly following an outline or rubric. Dr. Zell is a thoughtful listener and directs her teaching based on how I respond to her "what do you think?" question. When she gives feedback, she incorporates my thought process and ideas, truly making each teaching point an individualized lesson plan.

An example of Dr. Zell's empowering teaching style was evident when I interviewed a standardized patient presenting for care with a history of trauma. I was initially hesitant to ask about the patient's trauma because I did not feel I had the tools to respond appropriately to the patient. When I asked Dr. Zell what to do next, she responded with "what do you think?" In that moment, I said I would just ask the patient to share what they are comfortable sharing and I would just listen. After the interview, the standardized patient remarked that they felt heard and that was the skill they were most looking for in that moment. Whenever I am not sure what to do next, I will definitely remember Dr. Zell's key advice, to take a moment and ask "what do I think?"

Dr. Zell truly cares for each of her students like they are a member of her family. Before every DOCS session, she checks in with every single student and remarks on highs and lows, both personally and professionally. She remembers our relationships, our favorite hobbies, and what we like to do outside of school. Dr. Zell has an amazing understanding when each one of her students is stressed and she goes out of her way to check in with us to make sure we are prioritizing taking care of ourselves. She leads by example and shares how she finds balance in medicine as encouragement to us to do the same.

Dr. Zell is a tremendous mentor in which she encourages us to prioritize the patient not their disease. Before she introduces us to a patient (either one of her own or a standardized patient), she emphasizes the patient's circumstances and their lives outside their condition. This is a continuous reminder to maintain our personal touch when treating our patients and I am incredibly grateful for this reminder.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to nominate Dr. Zell for the "Outstanding DOCS Preceptor" Award and cannot recommend her highly enough. Please contact me at [joseph.3.cleveland@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:joseph.3.cleveland@cuanschutz.edu) if you have any further questions or need any further information.

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