



Like Father, Like Son

Dr. Tom Braithwaite, class of 1978, and his son, Matt Braithwaite, class of 2011, share a love of running, science and Augustana.

In the late 1970s, shaggy-haired kids wearing jeans and sandals walked the zigzag of footpaths between Gilbert, the Commons and Humanities as a vinyl Eagles' album blared from the dorm room of a tall, long-limbed kid named Braithwaite.

In 2011, different shaggy-haired kids wearing jeans and sandals walk the same cement zigzag as an Eagles' tune, ripped from a CD and converted to an Mp3 file, blares from the dorm room of a different tall, long-limbed kid, also named Braithwaite.

More than three decades after Dr. Tom Braithwaite, class of 1978, graduated and left Augustana for the University of South Dakota School of Medicine, his son, Matt Braithwaite, class of 2011, is preparing to follow in his father's footsteps.

But music – and countless hours spent studying inside the Gilbert Science Center – aren't the only things this father and son have in common.

a J-Term study abroad course in Ecuador and the Galápagos Islands, Matt's interest in science increased exponentially.

"Those experiences really fueled my scientific curiosity and really helped me mature as a student of science. I learned how to ask good questions and, from there, how to go about answering them problematically. They certainly spurred my interest in a health-related career."

While Matt credits some of GSC's science icons of today – Dr. Mark Larson, Dr. Gary Earl and Dr. Craig Spencer – as great mentors and affirming advisors, Tom, a Chemistry major at Augustana and now a hospitalist with Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, had the chance to study under GSC's scientific pioneers of yesterday – Dr. Roy Kintner, Dr. Arlen Viste, Dr. Lee Johnson and Dr. Lansing Prescott.

"Those people didn't just teach science for science's sake. They understood that science is a tool," he said.

He met his wife, Tacey, class of 1976, at Au-

gustana, and she brought a new perspective to his role as a doctor.

"The diagnosis and the disease itself remind me of my own vulnerability. As a doctor, you develop this sort of veneer of invulnerability – over and over again you think, 'this can't happen to me.'"

"The reality is, it can."

As a doctor, he also carried the burden, and the advantage, of knowledge.

"I felt a heavy responsibility to make sure my family understood what was going on every step of the way because ultimately, understanding alleviates fear. At the same time, being medically trained was a huge advantage in going through this. The fact that I could understand what was going on helped me to help my family get through it."

Throughout the experience, he also came face to face with the frustration of waiting – waiting for test results, waiting for answers to questions and waiting for guidance on the next step.

"Now, I work really hard to ease the agony

**“The draw, for me, is the ability
to channel my scientific interests
into helping people in need.”**

– Matt Braithwaite, Class of 2011

Superheroes

His dad remembers Matt, now 22-years old, as a curious kid who loved shooting hoops, tossing a baseball and playing with Power Rangers.

"He loved playing superheroes," he says, smiling at the memory.

But for Matt, a biology major, his real hero, he says, was his dad.

"As a kid, I always looked up to my dad – I still do. I was exposed to what he was doing professionally because I would visit him at the hospital or the clinic. I knew he was an outstanding physician because time and time again, families would ask me, 'is Dr. Braithwaite your father? We're so grateful for him; he helped our family.'"

Taking after his father, this fall Matt will begin the next phase of his studies as a first year medical student at the Sanford-USD School of Medicine in Vermillion. His decision to pursue a career in medicine, he says, was fueled by watching his dad, and by his interest in science.

"It's been a choice I've made for myself. The draw, for me, is the ability to channel my scientific interests into helping people in need."

Following research experiences in Sioux Falls at the Avera Research lab; in Boston at Harvard University, working under Dr. Mark Larson, assistant professor of biology at Augustana, on platelet formation; and during

gustana. The two began dating at USD, while he was in med school and she was studying at the USD School of Law. In addition to Matt, the Braithwaites also have a daughter, Arienne, 26, who is completing seminary in Chicago.

After graduating from USD, Tom, 54, completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of Iowa. He began his career specializing in Internal Medicine and, in 2003, took on the role of hospitalist, a position that allows him to oversee the medical management of adult in-patients.

Perspectives

After more than two decades of practicing medicine, Tom found himself on the other side of the examination room in 2003 when he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. At the time, Matt was getting set to start high school.

He was treated with chemotherapy and went into remission. He thought, he says, he had beaten the disease.

"I thought it was done. I ran a half marathon in 2004 to celebrate my recovery."

His journey, he learned, was far from over. In 2008, he relapsed. A year later, he went into remission, only to relapse again in 2010.

"When it came back in 2008, I realized that this was going to be my companion."

His time as a patient, he says, has brought a

of waiting for my patients in any way I can. If it means going to a patient's room at 8 p.m. to give them the test results I received at 7:30 p.m., then I'll do that."

In recognition of his excellence in medicine, and in honor of his efforts to help patients, Tom was named one of the Top 10 Hospitalists in the country by the American College of Physicians earlier this year, an award for which his colleagues nominated him.

After spending the better part of three months undergoing a stem cell transplant at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., last summer, today Tom is in complete remission. His prognosis, he says, is good.

"I feel good. I'm not back to patient care yet because my immune system is still maturing, but I'm running 20-25 miles each week and I have a good sense of energy."

Footsteps

For Matt, watching his family manage the challenge of sickness added to his interest in science and medicine.

"Knowing my dad was sick was a presence that was with me all the time, in the back of my mind. It definitely pushed me to become more interested in the science of cancer and maybe, to focus on oncology. At this point

CONTINUED ON: **Page 36**

Whitney Hofer married Shawn Flanagan on Oct. 22, 2010. She is a registered nurse at Avera McKennan Hospital. They live in Hartford, S.D.

Kari Hanson is working as a graduate assistant in Athletic Training for Hawaii Pacific University in Honolulu, Hawaii. She is also pursuing a master's degree in communications.

Margaret Kaffar and **Kyle Kelly**, '08, were married on Aug. 6, 2010.

Elizabeth Stewart has taken a teaching position in Huron, S.D.

CLASS OF 2010

Julie Ailts is a first grade teacher in Worthington, Minn.

Laura Aseltine is working as a fifth grade teacher at Laura B. Anderson in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Amber Baustian has taken a nursing position in Edgerton, Minn.

Brittney Boogaard is working as a registered nurse in Fargo, N.D.

Amanda Schnepel married Tate Brandon on Dec. 11, 2010. They live in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Michael Brusven married **Maggie VanBockern** on April 30, 2011. They live in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Alicia DeHann is working at Sanford Health's Birthplace.

Elizabeth Dolven-Kolle is working as a nurse with Sanford Healthcare in Fargo, ND.

Nina Dukich and Tim Solberg were married on April 1, 2011.

Emily Ehlers is working for Sanford Health in Fargo, ND.

Miranda Erikson is working in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Sanford Health.

Gavin Folkestad is an English teacher in Luverne, Minn.

Paige Fossum is pursuing a master's degree in Social Work at the University of South Dakota. She is also working at the Washington Pavilion and the HelpLine Center while interning at Avera Behavioral Health.

Andraya Gacke is working for Jane Addams Elementary in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Justina Berkness married **Tyler Hayzlett** on June 26, 2010. They live in Sioux Falls, S.D. Justina is a teacher at John Harris Elementary.

Mauri Becker married **Matt Heesch** on July 2, 2010. They live in Omaha, Neb.

Sarah (Goslinga) Hunt is working at Mayo Clinic.

Correction – **Amanda Jenson** is a collections assistant at the Center for Western Studies. She was mis-

takenly listed as working at the Mikkelsen Library in the Winter 2010 issue of *The Augustana*.

Jenni Simmons married Ryan Jervik on Dec. 18, 2010. They live in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Nicole Kaplan is working as a teacher at Warroad (Minn.) High School.

Samantha Link is a registered nurse at Rice Memorial Hospital in Wilmar, Minn.

Jessa Menning is a math teacher at Whittier Middle School in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Tonya (Moser) Metzger is working in early childhood education and special education in Hills/Beaver Creek, Minn.

Kelsey Ott has taken a job as a registered nurse with Sanford Health.

BreAnna Petersen is working for Sanford Health in Fargo, N.D.

Stephanie Rust is working at Sanford Health as a NICU nurse.

Brittany Schwendemann is working at Sanford Health in Fargo, N.D.

Sabrina (Kingery) Sowles is working in Cardiology at Sanford Health.

Ashley Teunissen is working as a special education teacher in Brandon, S.D.

Blake Thompson is a designer with Quality Claims Solutions in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Malerie Mertz married Tim Yeaton on July 17, 2010. Malerie is a K-12 vocal director in Webster, S.D.



Celebrating Birthdays and Friendship
Six members of the Class of 1962 gathered in Colorado last fall to celebrate their 70th birthdays. Tandra (Bottger) Wright, Carol (Nelson) Miedema, Ruth (Beatty) O'Neal, Eva (Holtan) Partridge, Caryl (Pederson) Funk, and Kalley (Georgopoulos) Johnson agree that Augustana afforded them the opportunity to make life-long friendships!

‘At the end of the day, medicine is about people – their suffering; their vulnerable moments; and their well-being.’

CONTINUED FROM: **Page 5**

though, that's a decision for later.”

As his dad, Tom says he's just happy his son has found his calling.

“I'm gratified he found something he's passionate in – that he's found his calling and that he's using his God-given gifts.”

While more than 30 years have passed since Tom was a student at Augustana, he says some things haven't changed.

“GSC has certainly been a home away from home for both of us,” he says, smiling. He laughs at the mention of the Eagles (although he contends his roommate was the real fan of the group). “My roommate played the Eagles album in our room all the time. He recently sent me their latest CD. Matt listened to it, burned a copy, and is now playing it in his dorm room. Life really does come full circle.”

Tom also understands the emotional ride of the medical school application process.

“It's not de ja vue, but listening to Matt throughout the process certainly feels familiar. It really did conjure up so many memories for

me,” he said. “He has a big process ahead of him – from the rigorous training to learning about the business aspects of medicine.”

“My ultimate hope is that he never loses his sense of wonder. At the end of the day, medicine is about people – their suffering; their vulnerable moments; and their well-being. It's also about life-long education.”

For Matt, it's nice to know that someone's been in his shoes before.

“It's really comforting to know that he can relate to everything I'm going through,” he said.

For Tom, watching Matt grow up from a curious young boy to a curious young scientist and a competitive athlete has been the ultimate gift.

A standout on Augustana's track and cross country teams, Matt has been widely recognized for his success as a student-athlete. Most recently, he received the 2011 Dr. William Britton Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence, an award that recognizes the top male student-athlete within the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference. He was also named

a 2011 NCAA Post-Graduate Scholarship winner and was a 2010 NCAA Elite 88 winner at the Division II Men's Cross Country Championship, the first Viking in school history to earn the award. The Elite 88 is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 88 championships.

Matt was an All-American in cross country in 2010. He was named a United States Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic Team member, earned Academic All-NSIC honors this past season and was presented with the NSIC Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award from the NSIC this spring.

“Parenting is like unwrapping a present in supreme slow motion,” Tom said. “You don't really know what you're unwrapping, because your children grow and change every day, but they're the greatest gift ever. Matt and I are connected in so many ways – through running, through Augie, through our love of science, but mostly because I love him. I couldn't be more proud of him.”