Anne Malloy Wolff ‘97 - Rheumatologist

Please describe your work: As a rheumatologist, I am a physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of adult rheumatic disease such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogren’s, vasculitis, psoriatic arthritis and gout. Many diseases I treat stem from problems with the immune system and affect the muscles, bones, skin, and other organ systems.

What is exciting or rewarding to you in your work? It is a privilege to care for patients especially when they are in such a vulnerable state with chronic illness. I enjoy developing a trusting relationship with patients which is something that takes time to build. Helping a patient’s disease go into remission is a fantastically rewarding and exciting experience. Supporting and guiding patients with less responsive disease can be rewarding in a very different but equally satisfying way.

New treatments have revolutionized certain types of rheumatic disease. We are learning more about the immune system each day, and many new medications are coming into the market. That being said it can be an incredibly humbling field as there are many diseases for which we are lacking treatment.

How did you end up doing what you are doing? I had a difficult time deciding on a career path. I took some basic science classes at Saint Ben’s and enjoyed them, so I took some additional ones. The more I learned, the more the health field interested me.

I also loved the arts and French, so I pursued a major in biology and a minor in French. I decided to study abroad my third year which meant delaying my application to medical school. Although I hesitated before deciding, it was one of the best decisions I made in college.

After Saint Ben’s, I received a Doctor of Medicine at Creighton University Medical School in Omaha, Nebraska, then completed my Internal Medicine Residency at The University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. Finally, I completed a Rheumatology Fellowship at St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri before moving to St. Cloud.

Which aspects of your CSB experiences helped you? The phenomenal professors at Saint Ben’s and Saint John’s provided me with the skills and motivation to reach my goal. The science classes I took at Saint Ben’s taught me not only facts and theories but more importantly how to build upon knowledge learned and apply it. It is that application of the sciences to real life situations that drew me toward medicine.

Completing a minor in French taught me a beautiful language, but also the value of translation and communication. In medical training, I learned quickly that if a patient does not understand a disease or treatment it will be hard to guide them successfully in the care of their disease.
The Benedictine values of service, faith, and community helped to smooth the transition each time I moved to a new state and had to work on developing roots.

I considered my great-aunt Sister Kristin Malloy ’43 my guardian angel as she always had a patient ear and sound advice. There was no one I trusted more to critique papers and applications to medical school. Through her I was blessed to have the chance to dine with the sisters and see Saint Ben’s through a very different pair of glasses.

**Do you have any general advice to students?** Trust what you have learned and experienced at CSB/SJU. Learning to trust your own knowledge and judgment is a very difficult thing to learn, but it is so important.