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## Doc Delivered Future Colleague: 'I Can't Help but Be Proud'

Marie DeFreitas

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For Tracy Powell, MD, and physician assistant Moriah Novacinski, their paths have crossed more than once — and quite unexpectedly.

The first time was decades ago during Powell's first year out of residency when he delivered Novacinski. She would be one of the first babies he ever delivered, but the only future colleague.



Tracy Powell and Moriah Novacinski hold up art that Novacinski made for Powell as a child, art that he kept as a momento.

The two then met again at M Health Fairview Southdale Hospital in Edina, Minnesota, in 2017 after Novacinski graduated from St. Kate's. While on rotation as a PA student, Novacinski saw Powell from afar and instantly recognized him, though she was hesitant to approach him. Powell on the other hand instantly greeted her, saying, "I think I delivered you!" Now, the two work together.

"His influence extends back to when he was my primary physician," Novacinski told *Medscape Medical News*. "Although I don't remember specific appointments with him, I do recall the feeling or sentiment around my time with Tracy. I remember kindness, trust, safety. My parents have always spoken so highly of him."



Moriah Novacinski dons her white coat after graduating from PA school.

Powell, now an emergency medicine physician, in turn feels the same way about the Novacinski family.

"I was a family doctor early on, and [Moriah's] family was one of my first families that I got to take care of, and I love them. They were the model family, you know, husband and wife, kind, always came to appointments, and I got to deliver Moriah as one of my first deliveries," Powell told *Medscape Medical News*. "I always had a special place in my heart for that family."



Moriah Novacinski and her parents.

Powell's connection with the Novacinskis only strengthened the relationship between the two. "The longer I am in medicine, the smaller the medical world seems," Novacinski says. [But] I have never heard another story like mine with Tracy. I do think we have a unique connection."

That connection has served them both along the way, allowing them to lean on each other throughout their medical careers. For Novacinski, Powell's decades-long experience offers her a guidebook on how to conduct herself around patients.

"What sticks with me the most is Tracy's ability to connect with people," Novacinski says. "Tracy is personable, caring, and energetic on shift. He is relatable and knowledgeable, traits that help him quickly build trust with his patients. These are crucial skills in the fast-paced setting of emergency medicine. I am constantly trying to incorporate these elements into my own patient interactions and am so thankful for his influence."

Novacinski does her part in influencing Powell, too.

"You know, as you get older in your career, it's easy to be burned out," Powell says. "It's easy to lose focus of why we do what we do. And I just have pride seeing how excited she is about coming to work and doing her job and caring for patients."

Powell notes that Moriah's energy and excitement about her budding medical career are the most impactful part of working together. "Tracy, step it up," he often tells himself, "You've got to

keep up with Moriah."

Besides working alongside each other and saving lives in the ED, the two also share another passion: running. Both were avid runners in undergrad and continue to run regularly, often competing in marathons and other races, including the Boston Marathon. Powell ran the Boston Marathon in 1996, and Novacinski ran it in 2018. Powell even helped Novacinski with some of the training for her race.

"Running has been another connection between myself and Tracy," she says. "We have frequently discussed races and training plans. It has been fun to discuss another passion that we both share."

But will the pair run a race together in the future?

"I would love to run a race with Tracy," Novacinski says. "You would have to ask him about that, though, he golfs more than he runs these days!" Powell feels similarly, sharing that he would "love to do a 5K with Moriah" but emphasizes that it wouldn't be competitive. Instead, it would be just for fun.

For both Powell and Novacinski, it's the connection they have with patients that's the most rewarding part of their jobs. Their connection as colleagues is simply the cherry on top.

"I hope I've been a mentor to her," Powell says. "In a paternal sense, like with your child, I can't help but be proud of all that she's doing."

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