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When I was little, my favorite thing to do at the beach was submerging my toes into the wet sand, and lifting them to watch the ocean wipe away the print. We leave footprints everywhere we go: digital footprints, carbon footprints, physical footprints on a rainy day. But far everlasting is the influence that we consciously and unconsciously leave behind on people. Footprints on the heart.

I have deep admiration for Michael's empathetic nature and the lasting impressions he left on those around him, whether it was a close friend or the people he helped anonymously through his donations to cancer funds. Likewise, the surge of joy I feel whenever my students persevere through a difficult problem, and the sense of finding my purpose when I assisted a nauseous patient during my shadowing experience reveals that true happiness is contagious. To show another person care is to exemplify the most valuable part of being human. It is the spirit of altruism. The spirit of Michael.

It is my hope in the future to pursue a career as a trauma surgeon. I wish to enter a humanitarian field, where at some of the most critical times, I will be a reassuring presence in the hearts of my patients. Medicine encompasses the values I hold the dearest: human interaction, a dynamic learning environment, and the knowledge that although I may not be able to save everyone, I might save the world of a single person. I look up to Michael as a reminder that the most powerful forces on Earth are the love and compassion we leave on others, and those are the footprints that will never be erased.