By the second grade, Alma Littles’ teacher had already seen doctor in her destiny, it was just a matter of time before she too would realize just how much the field of medicine would impact the rest of her life.

Growing up in the rural area of Gadsden County, medical assistance was not very common among families. Often times in African-American communities, respectable health care may not always be available. Growing up in Quincy, Littles saw first-hand how families struggled to see doctors when necessary.

By age 14, Littles had already experienced multiple family deaths, including the death of her father, each untimely end being caused by lack of medical care. Littles was determined to create change not only for her family, but for her community and the entire state of Florida.

“I recognized that there was a need right here, and that I could make a difference here. So that’s what I wanted to do,” said Littles.

Today, Dr. Alma Littles is Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Florida State University College of Medicine, and now named one of the nation’s Top 15 Most Influential African-American Medical Educators by Black Medical Magazine.

“It’s very humbling, especially since it’s recognition for doing what I love to do,” said Littles about the national honor. “I know some of the people on the list, and know some of the things that they’ve done. So to be recognized among them is just an awesome thing. Even though it’s not the recognition that we sought for.”
In 1986, Littles graduated from the University of Florida College of Medicine, she was named Family Physician of the Year in 1993, and in 1995 was elected president of the Capital Medical Society in Tallahassee. Later she became Chair of the Department of Family Medicine and Rural Health in 2002 and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in 2003.

Now Littles is able to combine both her childhood aspirations of being a teacher, and a doctor, by being a medical educator, and helping her community, at the same time doing what she has always wanted to do.

“I think she is one of the most wonderful human beings I think I’ve ever met,” said Cathy Bell, Executive Support for School of Medicine and Academic Affairs. “She gave up her practice because she thought she would do more good in Florida by helping students.”

Littles enjoys educating students and helping them achieve their dreams the way she did. She encourages her students to always seek opportunities and take advantage of them when they are made available, “be prepared for doors when they open,” is what she tells them, which is the same advice she is using now for her own future.

When asked what’s next for her, she simply answered, “I’m not sure, but I’ll be prepared for the door when it opens.”

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