

DR. ALMA LITTLES

DEAN, FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Dr. Alma Littles is a long-time patient advocate who recognizes the importance of being part of and giving back to the community. After serving as interim dean of the Florida State University College of Medicine, she was named to the permanent position in July 2024. Previously, Littles served as senior associate dean for medical education and academic affairs since 2003, leading the college's accreditation efforts, curriculum development, and expansion of its community-based education model.

Littles has been involved in medical student education since 1989 and has been a family medicine physician specializing in rural communities. Shortly after joining FSU's faculty in 2001, she became the founding chair of the department of family medicine and rural health and continues to advocate for quality health care for citizens from rural communities and underserved populations pursuing the medical profession.

She's held many academic, professional, and community-oriented positions and honors through the years and serves as secretary of Shiloh P.B. Church in Quincy, Florida, where she lives with her husband Gentle Littles, III, and raised her son Gentle Germaine Littles.

DESCRIBE A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER. When I left private practice for academia, I realized I could contribute to the health of many more patients by helping train the next generation of physicians and other health care providers.

HOW DO YOU DEFINE SUCCESS? Success is seeing what needs to be done, working with others to devise a plan, and making it happen.

WHO HAS SERVED AS A MENTOR TO YOU IN YOUR CAREER JOURNEY, AND HOW DID THEY IMPACT YOUR PATH? My mother was a significant mentor for



me; her strength and compassion were unmatched. Dr. Pat Woodward was my pediatrician, and as I solidified that I wanted to be a doctor, he became a role model. With each stage of my career, there were many who provided inspiration, including Dr. Alex Brickler, Dr. Bud Harrison, and Dr. Don Zorn.

WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED ALONG THE WAY THAT HAVE IMPROVED YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE? Having several relatives suffer premature morbidity and mortality taught me that every day is a gift. We should be grateful and use that time to make the world a better place.

WHAT CHANGES DO YOU HOPE TO SEE IN YOUR COMMUNITY OVER THE COMING YEARS? I would like to see enhanced patient care services in the Florida Panhandle and other rural communities, so patients won't have to travel long distances to receive not only basic, but more advanced care when it's needed.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUNG WOMEN PURSUING THEIR CAREERS? Don't underestimate who you are and what you're capable of achieving. Find mentors doing what you'd like to do, and connect with them either personally or vicariously by reading about them and following the path of their successes.