English Alum, Dr. Marion Bishop, Honored at Homecoming 2021

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Marion Bishop

During Homecoming 2021, Dr. Marion Bishop (USU ’87) will be honored as Alumna of the Year. You can read USU’s story on Fall 2021 honored alumni here. Professor Joyce Kinkead recalls Marion as a student: “She was amazingly bright and articulate and stood out in a classroom as a memorable student. Given her extraordinary work during the pandemic as a health care professional and a writer, she was an obvious choice to nominate as an outstanding alumna.”

Marion Bishop, a Cache Valley native, graduated from USU in 1987 with a bachelor’s in English before moving to New York to pursue a master’s and doctorate in English and American Literature. After completing her doctorate, Marion taught at the collegiate level at several universities in the eastern United States.

While at Bentley College in Massachusetts, Marion decided to switch career paths and pursue her dream of becoming a physician. Marion’s interest in medicine began as a youth watching her father work as a physician and later the first Emergency Room Director at Logan Regional Hospital. Growing up, Marion was not exposed to female doctors, and she recalls, “I didn’t know practicing medicine was something a girl could do.” She says that the lack of women as role models in the field and a lack of confidence led her to first study English. Overcoming the fears and worries she had about attending medical school, Marion found herself back at USU to complete her medical school prerequisites. During this time, she founded Women in Medicine, a group which encouraged women in pursue careers in the health sciences.

To many, Marion’s change in career may seem like a major shift in interests, but she says that her study of English and medicine are more alike than meets the eye. To her, English and medicine are different ways of exploring the human experience. As an English professor, Marion wrote about the human experience, as a doctor, she is in the trenches.

Marion attended medical school at the University of Utah and completed a three-year Emergency Medicine residency at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Marion now works as an emergency medicine physician at Cache Valley Hospital and Brigham City Community Hospital and advocates for women who are interested in medicine to follow their dreams regardless of the obstacles and pressures they may face.

Throughout her medical career, Marion has continued to find ways to combine her passions. She has published with medical journals, and now writes about Covid-19. During the pandemic, Marion has been sought out for clear and pragmatic advice, appearing on Utah Public Radio and being interviewed by the Salt Lake Tribune. She came to the attention of the media through a blog post on what it means to be a physician and a mother during a pandemic, writing movingly of the “Faces of Covid-19.” She has also written guest columns with advice on wearing masks.

According to the Utah Women & Leadership Project led by Dr. Susan Madsen, the inaugural Karen Haight Huntsman Endowed Professor of Leadership, “Well-informed health care providers are uniquely positioned to support and strengthen girls and women over a lifetime.” Women practitioners are influential through providing quality patient care, serving as visible role models, educating their communities, mentoring, and advocating broadly to promote women’s wellbeing.