

# Staying the Course

## FAUSTA DITAH WAS RAISED IN

Ntamafe, in the small village of Mankon, Cameroon, on Africa's west coast. In 2000, he moved to Minnesota, where he worked as a home health aide for two years to earn money before completing a degree in biochemistry at the University of Minnesota. He earns his M.D. from the Medical School in 2008.

INTERVIEW BY WHITLEY HILL

PHOTO BY J. ADRIAN WYLIE

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**MY FATHER WAS AN ELEMENTARY** school teacher. He used a motorcycle to get to school. When I was about 7 years old, he was on his motorcycle and was hit by a car. He stayed in the hospital for three months and when he was finally discharged, he had a wound on his leg that was still healing. He came home with gauze and Betadine so he could change the dressings twice a day.

“My brother and I were pretty consumed by this. We made sure we woke up in time to participate in the dressing changes. Soon, the people in the village, when they sustained cuts and wanted something to dress their wounds, would run to our house and oh boy, we were very delighted when dad wasn't at home. We knew we had a shot at doing it.

“I'm satisfied I was able to stay the course and pursue my dream, but sometimes the responsibility feels overwhelming — so many people looking to me and counting on me as an example. I think of my parents and their dedication. A good number of times, they would sacrifice their meal in order to ensure the tuition was paid. They believed in the power of education and vowed to empower us, irrespective of what it took.”

—FAUSTA DITAH

