

ANGLES

News from Our Lady of Mercy School for Young Women

"I give back what cancer takes away; it is an incredibly rewarding part of my practice."

Ashley Amalfi, M.D. '02
Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon, Quatela Center for Plastic Surgery, Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery, University of Rochester

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OUR LADY OF MERCY

SCHOOL FOR YOUNG WOMEN

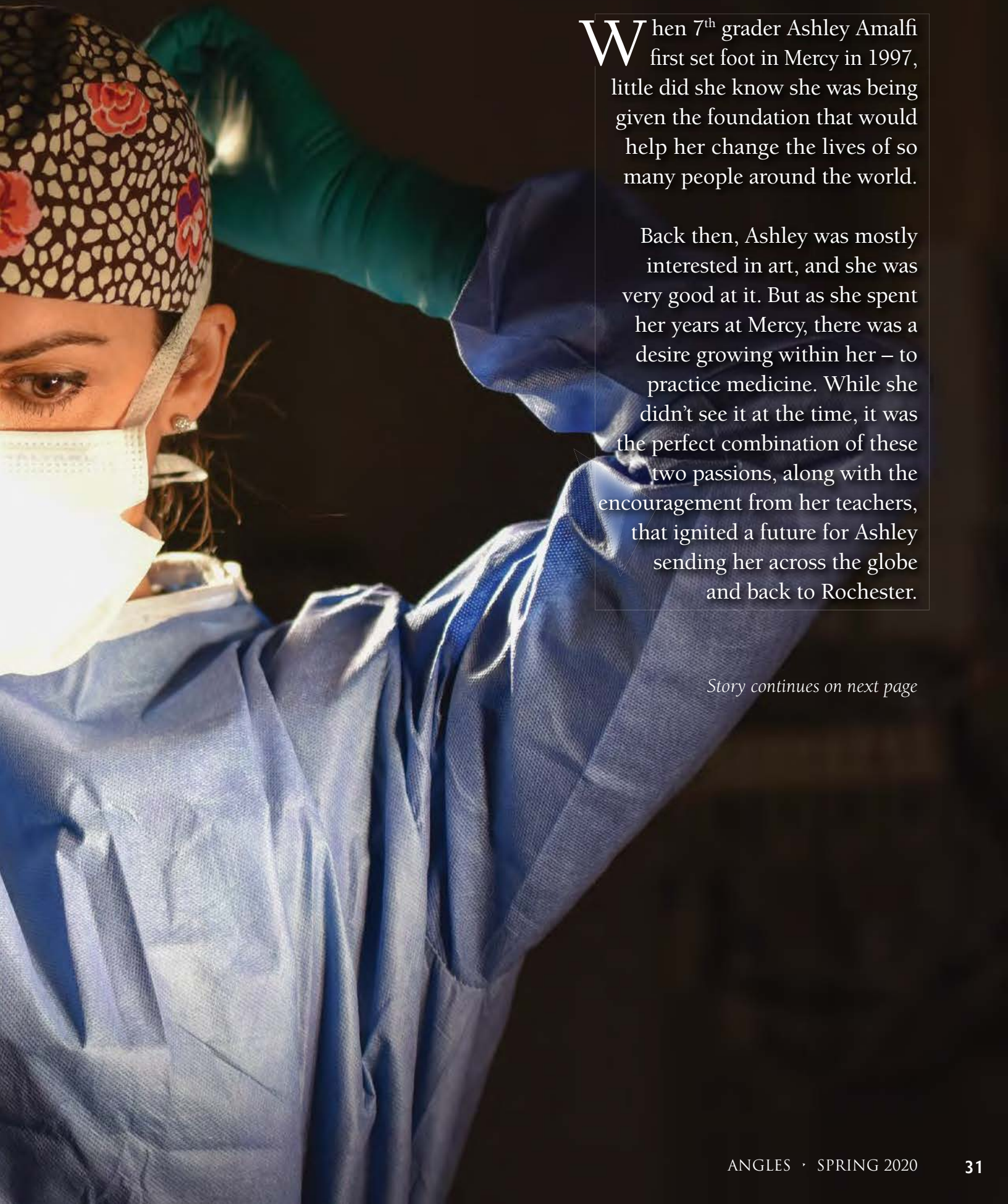
Grades 6-12





GIVING BACK WHAT CANCER TAKES AWAY

**Dr. Ashley Amalfi, M.D. '02 rebuilds
futures and gives women hope**



When 7th grader Ashley Amalfi first set foot in Mercy in 1997, little did she know she was being given the foundation that would help her change the lives of so many people around the world.

Back then, Ashley was mostly interested in art, and she was very good at it. But as she spent her years at Mercy, there was a desire growing within her – to practice medicine. While she didn't see it at the time, it was the perfect combination of these two passions, along with the encouragement from her teachers, that ignited a future for Ashley sending her across the globe and back to Rochester.

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“Mercy taught me to be a strong woman, and that if I worked hard to achieve my goals there were no limits to what I could do in life,” said Ashley. “There was a constant voice in my ear encouraging me to search and find what I loved to do.”

Ashley credits her Mercy teachers for giving her the tools and life skills necessary to achieve her goals. Today, **Dr. Ashley Amalfi '02** is a Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from George Washington University with a BA in Fine Arts and Art History. She pursued her Doctor of Medicine from the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry. Ashley then matched into a competitive integrated residency in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Southern Illinois University in Springfield. She returned home after completing her training and

began her career in academics as Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Rochester for the last four years. She transitioned this fall into private practice at the Quatela Center for Plastic Surgery and is very excited about this new chapter in her career.

Even though she graduated from Mercy in 2002, she never really left. Ashley took with her the fundamentals of perseverance and work ethic, as well as the self-confidence she needed to propel her to pursue her passion.

“I had an advantage coming from Mercy as I embarked on higher education – I was so far ahead of my peers,” said Ashley. Thanks to Mercy, I had a well-established learning style and organizational system that helped me to excel in the university setting and ultimately graduate in just three years with my undergraduate degree.”

It was in medical school when Ashley was able to truly see how she could help others – in direct alignment with the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy. Toward the end of her medical training in 2009, she participated in the Smile Train, a mission in Nha Trang, Vietnam. She and other physicians performed surgeries to help adults and children suffering from severe burns and cleft palates. Ashley completed 50 surgeries during her time abroad, transforming the lives of her patients and their families, and reinvigorating her desire to pursue both her artistic passion and medical career with full force.

“What I do today as a surgeon is a perfect manifestation of my art background,” Ashley said. “I still get to create art every single

day, but now it's three-dimensional in a different medium. It's equally rewarding and does so much good.”

Ashley's practice is comprised of reconstructive and cosmetic surgery of the breast and body. While at the University of Rochester, she also performed a wide array of general reconstructive surgeries including skin cancer reconstructions of the face and body as well as complex hand trauma and reconstructive surgeries of the face. She operates head to toe, which has made her an expert in anatomy.

As the newest member of the surgical team at the Quatela Center for Plastic Surgery, Ashley performs cosmetic breast surgery but has also maintained her practice in breast reconstruction surgery

– because as a woman, she can relate to her patients' emotional needs, and understands how devastating cancer can be.

“I am so blessed to act as a small glimmer of hope in my patients' breast cancer journey,” Ashley said. “I give back what cancer

takes away; it is an incredibly rewarding part of my practice.”

But Ashley finds rewards in all areas of her practice. As a mother herself, she finds ‘Mommy Makeovers’ to be one of the most gratifying procedures she can offer new mothers. Ashley has immense expertise in breast reconstruction and is highly sought out for primary and revision breast reconstruction surgery. She has experience caring for many different congenital breast differences and asymmetries as well as patients who are unhappy with their outcomes from previous surgery and are looking for revision surgery. As an artist, she has the skills and attention to detail which translate into her cosmetic surgical outcomes. Ashley recognizes that each of her patient's goals and desires are unique, and tailors her surgical plan and techniques to help her patients look and feel their best.

Ashley's journey to the top of her field was not easy; nor was it common. She is one of just over one thousand female Board-Certified plastic surgeons in the country – and was the only female plastic surgeon in Rochester when she relocated back to her home town. In a field dominated by men, she never once questioned her dream or felt she couldn't achieve it. Mercy taught her to find other strong women to mentor and support her. Along her way, Ashley did just that, following in the footsteps of the pioneers who went before her. She also found male mentors who supported her for her talents and individuality.

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Left: Ashley Amalfi, M.D. at work in the operating room.

Below: Dr. Amalfi speaks to students at Mercy's 2019 Event to Inspire Career Exploration, Networking, and Empowerment event.



“Surrounding myself with all of these wonderful individuals helped me find success in my career, and I would not have had that foundation if I didn’t start at Mercy.”

When she reflects back on her time at Mercy, Ashley vividly remembers all of the celebrations; especially the excitement and family-like atmosphere of the traditions such as Spirit Day, May Day, and graduation. But it’s more than the events that warms Ashley’s heart.

“When I think of Mercy I think of my friends; they are all wonderful feelings rather than just moments in time,” Ashley said. “My Mercy friends are still my sisters; we were each other’s bridesmaids and are godparents to all of our children. We will never lose touch.”

As a Rochester native, Ashley has no plans to leave the community that has been so good to her. She is married to Dr. Thomas Frye, a urologic oncology surgeon at the University of Rochester Medical Center. The couple has a young son, Thomas, and daughter, Leoni, who keep their lives busy. Ashley hopes her daughter will one day become a Mercy Girl – to experience what she did and forge her own successful path.

Success is exactly what Mercy delivers. Ashley never once doubted her abilities to excel in a male-dominated field. She believes all opportunities are equally hers if she just works hard; there are no limits to what she can become. This is a timeless message Ashley gave to the eager young crowd of Mercy Girls at the 2019 *Event to Inspire Career Exploration, Networking, and Empowerment* early last year.

“The Mercy experience is like no other. Soak up the people, the experiences, the culture, and the lessons. All of this will serve you well in your future and they will remain the backbone of your success.”

And Ashley is proof of that. ■