



Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL HEALTH
in collaboration with Columbia University Medical Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark A. Thomas
(212) 305 -9587
mt2432@columbia.edu

FORMER PILOT NOW ABOARD GLOBAL HEALTH CLASS

December 27, 2007 (New York, NY)

Getting Rachel Barney to discuss her career adventures is a journey in itself. She's a mission-driven woman, without a desire for public recognition for her service. A first year student at the Medical School for International Health (MSIH), a collaboration of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Columbia University Medical Center, Barney brings a background that touches the depths of grassroots service to the heights of the jet stream, as a United States Marine helicopter pilot.

Along the path to MSIH, Barney has realized her truest passion for medicine and currently serves as the class representative for the first-year students. Born in New Jersey, Barney attended Columbia University, majoring in Chemical Engineering.

The result of a ground-breaking ten-year old collaboration between Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and Columbia University, the MSIH is the only medical school in the world established specifically to train future doctors to provide healthcare for populations throughout the globe. In addition to basic American-style medical curriculum taught in English, students at MSIH also learn cross-cultural communication, nutrition in developing worlds, disaster relief, population-based medicine, and bio-terrorism and health.

In 1993, while a senior at Columbia, Rachel first experienced health care by working fulltime for the New York City Emergency Medical Services (NYC EMS), in South Manhattan and the South Bronx. She graduated in winter 1995 and upgraded to paramedic with NYC EMS. Barney's decade between undergraduate and applying to medical school, began in 1997 with her entry into the Marine Corps to begin pilot training. The Marine Corps did not allow women to serve as pilots until 1993. By 2000, she completed advanced flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator. In 2001, Barney was deployed to Japan. She returned just prior to September 11th and spent the next 18-months in San Diego. She was then sent to Iraq in 2003, 2004, and 2005, flying reconnaissance, medi-vac escort, and close air



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support missions.

“It was in Iraq during my first tour that I realized medicine was really what I wanted to do. My time in the military brought home the importance of service,” she said. “The Marine Corps definitely helped me with time management, self-discipline, and a little perspective on life.”

After Barney completed a Masters in Aeronautical Science, she accepted an offer to teach English in France, while preparing for enrollment into medical school.

“I may be older and my experiences may be different than most other medical students,” she said. “But I think the skills I gathered through those experiences will ultimately allow me to serve people more effectively than I could have otherwise.”

Since the program’s inception in 1998, MSIH has educated more than 200 men and women from all corners of the world, including the United States, China, Kosovo, Rwanda, Kenya, Russia, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. Over 75% of the Medical School for International Health’s graduates are engaged in residency or fellowship training at leading medical centers in the United States and many of them have continued to demonstrate their commitment to helping advance the health of communities around the world through involvement in medical relief work and healthcare improvement projects.

For more information about the Medical School for International Health, visit the MSIH website at <http://cumc.columbia.edu/dept/bgcu-md/> or call the Admissions Office at (212) 305-9587.

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