



The 30 Under 30 program recognizes trailblazing young alumni who have demonstrated professional success in any industry, significant community involvement or a commitment to maintaining a lifelong relationship with Temple University. 30 Under 30 highlights outstanding Owls from the more than 52,000 young Temple alumni who exemplify what it means to be Temple Made.



Leah Wenhold Parente, CST '17

Diamond gem

A merit scholarship Leah Wenhold Parente received when she applied to Temple made her decision to become an Owl a no-brainer. It also propelled her pursuit of a childhood interest in the environment. Today, as a hydrogeologist in North Carolina, Parente's job is to prevent contamination of groundwater and surface water from wastewater treatment and disposal/refuse systems.

"It's always been really important to me to make sure that the environment is protected for future generations," said Parente. "I feel like I've been very fortunate in that I've been able to do that type of work in both in my graduate research and especially now in my current position with the state."

The Department of Earth and Environmental Science was the right choice for Parente. "I think it's really rare that you have a department where every single faculty member is extremely caring and invested in their students and that shines through," she said.

Parente herself made an impact on the department, serving as a founding member of the National Honor Society for Earth Sciences and as a student ombudsperson, mentoring younger students and organizing events. For that work, Parente earned the Diamond Award. "It was an honor to be recognized

by the department," she said. "And it's one of my finest memories."

Another favorite Temple memory was attending presentations from visiting geologists. "It was so neat to see what other people were doing out in the field and to learn about the possibilities for a career in the geosciences," Parente said.

One of those possibilities is her current position as a geologist/hydrogeologist in the Division of Water Resources Non-discharge Branch at the State of North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality. Parente is making a national impact as she protects North Carolina waters from contamination.



My Temple education really helped shape me into the professional that I am today."

Committed clinician

In high school, Riya Kulkarni had a transformative experience when, after moving to India from the Bay Area at age 11, she returned to California at 16.

While in India, she shadowed physicians at a hospital and research center. Upon her return to the States, she noted contrasting approaches to healthcare. Since then, she has worked to improve healthcare around the world.

As an undergraduate biology student, Kulkarni volunteered and shadowed at Temple University Hospital. “Volunteering there helped open my eyes to the challenges faced by many with inadequate healthcare access within the United States,” she said. “I realized how access was limited in a major city with so many hospitals and doctors.”

During her time at Temple, she volunteered for a nonprofit and spent seven weeks in Uganda

helping to understand its HIV/AIDS program. “This experience opened my eyes to how important global health work is. I became more passionate about it, and that passion has stuck with me since,” she said.

Kulkarni went on to pursue a degree in osteopathic medicine at the A.T. Still University of Health Sciences in Arizona. During medical school, she discovered that she enjoyed working with children. “You’re truly supporting not just the child but their whole family,” she said.

She continued working on health projects across the globe—screening children for anemia in Peru and building healthcare capacity in Uganda.

Having experienced healthcare on four continents, Kulkarni continues to develop her understanding of cultural differences in healthcare delivery and access. Wherever she



Riya Kulkarni, CST '17

is, Kulkarni strives to meet the healthcare needs of the population she is serving.

Kulkarni is now a pediatric cardiology fellow at Nemours Children's Health in Wilmington, Delaware. “As a future pediatric cardiologist, I hope to provide pediatric cardiology services to global populations and building healthcare capacity with my global health career,” she said.

Hero with a heart

For Jaldhi Patel, the range of opportunities she had during her undergraduate years at Temple helped deepen her empathy and understanding of others—critical to her work as a cancer research coordinator.

“What truly fills me with pride is the ability to be there for others,” she said. “I learned that accomplishments aren’t always just about big wins and shiny medals. Sometimes they are about the moments of perseverance and the times I didn’t give up even when things got tough.”

When it came time to think about college, she knew she needed a place that offered a sense of acceptance that comes with being part of a large international student community. Temple was a natural choice. Plus, she heard nothing but glowing reviews of the school's science program.

An opportunity listed in an email from CST's Student Professional Development office led to Patel's first volunteer research position at Penn Medicine. There, Patel assisted with research into cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), an emergency procedure designed to keep blood flow active in someone who is unresponsive and not breathing.

Soon she began volunteering with the Mobile CPR Project, an initiative intended to increase the survival rate from cardiac arrest in underserved neighborhoods. As part of that effort, Patel traveled to churches, schools and stadiums to teach community members the life-saving technique, training thousands and earning national media recognition.

When the biology major graduated, Penn hired her as a clinical research assistant. Today, Patel is a clinical research coordinator at Penn Medicine's Abramson Cancer Center. She credits her time at Temple with her ability to relate to cancer patients from all walks of life.

“Thanks to the experiences I was afforded during my time at Temple, when patients come in I understand not only their disease, but also their day-to-day challenges,” Patel said. “I’m there for them as a provider, but also as a human.”



Jaldhi Patel, CST '20