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Alumni Profile

Where is TJ?

Former Tiger basketball forward Tajudeen “TJ” Soyoye entertained fans at the Hearn Center with his athleticism during two seasons spanning 1999 to 2001. Now he spends time across Stadium Boulevard at University Hospital as a resident in Family and Community Medicine. His life is good, he says, even if it seems awash in contradictions: He is 6,200 miles from his birthplace of Lagos, Nigeria, but feels very much at home at MU. He sometimes feels emotionally exhausted from the demands of the residency, but he is doing what he wants to do.

Growing up in Nigeria, Soyoye, BS '01, got a close look at another kind of medicine — herbalism — by observing his father at work. “I watched as people came into his office sick and left healthy,” Soyoye says.

Although Soyoye’s father encouraged him to go into Western medicine, that support had a flipside: His father disliked any time spent on sports. “As a



Former Tiger Tajudeen “TJ” Soyoye, BS '01, shown here in the atrium outside the J. Otto Lottes Health Sciences Library, enjoys his life as a

boy playing on teams, I had to cook up family and community medicine resident at MU. stories. When I played basketball for Photo by Rob Hill the Nigerian national team, my name and photo were sometimes in the paper. My sister would tear out the sports section before my father saw it.”

Soyoye didn't like doing those things, but he sensed that basketball would be his path to medical school. Sure enough, after graduating from MU with a bachelor's degree in biological sciences, he continued on to medical school at American University of Antigua/KMC and now to his residency at MU. Soyoye is a U.S. citizen, and he'd like to return to Nigeria and practice medicine some day. But for now he needs to finish his training.

It's tough at times, and he misses having time to shoot hoops. But, he says, “This is my dream, and I'm living it.” — *Dale Smith*

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