

Letter to Semmelweis. Letter to my Daughter.

G Katsanos

Gazing at my keyboard, the task seems impossible. How can I relay, how could I even begin to put in words the blizzard of emotions I feel, as the Semmelweis choir sings “Szózat”.

It was 1989, Hungary was beginning its journey after the Berlin wall collapse, and I was a first-year medical SOTE student, starting my own journey with colleagues that would become brothers and sisters in arms, friends for life. Back then, everything felt vast, intense, and uncertain. Yet, within the strict, historic halls of Semmelweis, I found more than just rigorous science—I found my foundation. Semmelweis provided me with the solid knowledge upon which I built my entire career, instilling in me a standard of excellence, resilience, and honor. To this day, I carry immense gratitude for the University that shaped not only my career, but also my character.

Now in 2026, history comes full circle, as I am watching my daughter taking the oath and starting her own journey in the arms of Semmelweis University. I feel proud, I feel safe for her.

Knowing the unwavering quality and timeless integrity of this great institution, I take comfort in knowing she is in the best hands. As I look at her standing among her peers, eyes gleaming with the same fiery idealism I carried, my own eyes fill with tears. And hope. The fears of a parent are appeased by a deep gratitude for an institution that transformed my life and is now opening its doors to her.

My dearest daughter, as you raise your hand and speak those sacred words, know that this path will demand everything from you, but it will crown your efforts with a profound and timeless fulfillment. Trust the sacred foundation you are building here at Semmelweis. Lean on your peers—they will become your lifeline, just as mine were to me. Walk these halls with confidence, knowing you carry a legacy of devotion, but remember that this journey is your own. I watch you fly away, filled with hope, proud beyond words of the professional and woman you are becoming.

Semmelweis, please take care of her.

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This article is dedicated to **Christina Papadaki MD, PhD (1970 - 2023)**, a Semmelweis Alumni, class of 1989

