

From Bay St. Louis to UCSF: Local Doctor's Fellowship Win Becomes Living Legacy of The 15 White Coats

New Orleans-based co-founder marks milestone as Essence Festival spotlights Black excellence

NEW ORLEANS, LA, UNITED STATES, July 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Sydney Labat, a Mississippi-born physician and co-founder of the national nonprofit The 15 White Coats®, has matched into the nation's top OB Anesthesia fellowship at UCSF — a milestone she calls “a manifestation of faith, discipline, and community.”

Labat first made national headlines in 2019 when she and fourteen Black classmates stood in their white coats at Louisiana's Whitney Plantation — a powerful image that sparked a viral moment and the birth of The 15 White Coats®, a nonprofit working to dismantle barriers for Black and Brown students in medicine.

Since then, the group has awarded over \$300,000 in scholarships, reached more than 10,000 students through culturally reflective books, and mentored over 100 future physicians across the country — showing what happens when representation, mentorship, and real investment intersect.

Labat herself is living proof that this model works — as both a co-founder and a testament to what happens when the door stays open behind you.

“Sydney Labat is the heartbeat of our origin story,” said Dr. Bennetta Horne, Assistant Dean at Tulane School of Medicine and board member of The 15 White Coats®. “She saw the vision before it took shape — and laid the foundation with the discipline and leadership that moves mountains.”



Empowering tomorrow's healers, today. ? Funding The Future Physicians — equipping underrepresented pre-med students with the resources, mentorship, and support they need to thrive on their journey to medical school. #FTFP #The15WhiteCoats #FutureDoctors

Today, only [5.7%](#) of U.S. physicians identify as Black or African American, while Black women are [2.6 to 4](#) times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women.

“If your dreams don’t scare you, they’re not big enough,” Labat said. “This isn’t just about me — it’s about making sure Black mothers, Black babies, and Black families thrive. That’s the mission.”

Dr. Labat will be available for in-person interviews on Saturday, July 5, during Essence Festival of Culture in New Orleans (July 4–6) before relocating to San Francisco.

About The 15 White Coats®

Founded in 2019, The 15 White Coats® is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to increasing the number of Black and Brown physicians in America through scholarship funding, mentorship, literacy, and iconic storytelling. Learn more:

<https://www.the15whitecoats.org Support> The 15 White Coats®!

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*Dr. Sydney Labat, Co-Founder
and Vice President of the 15
White Coats*



Dr. Sydney Labat, co-founder of The 15 White Coats, wearing her white coat — now headed to UCSF for a prestigious OB Anesthesia fellowship.

Editor’s Note:

High-resolution photos available upon request, including the original Whitney Plantation image and an updated professional headshot of Dr. Labat.

Suggested social pull-quote: “If your dreams don’t scare you, they’re not big enough.” — Dr. Sydney Labat

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