

# Unicorn in Motion

By Dawn S. Brown, PT, DPT, EdD

In these spaces of healing,  
Where bodies learn to rise again,  
I walk in,  
Black, bold, and brilliant –  
And the room gets quiet.

Because in this profession,  
Faces like mine?  
They're rare  
Physical Therapist. Faculty. Leader.  
Triple threat in a world that barely sees one.

Since I was a child,  
I've loved unicorns –  
Not for the glitter,  
But for the truth they carried:  
A creature so unique,  
It couldn't be mistaken for anything else.

And now –  
Irony laughs with me  
Because what is a unicorn?  
Extraordinary, mythical  
Something they said you'd never find  
Until it walks in the room and says:  
"I am here."

I am that something.  
Not horned magic,  
But hard-earned mastery  
Not fantasy,  
But fact.  
A rarity forged in resilience,  
In grit,  
In grace.

So, let them marvel  
Let them stare  
Because the unicorn?  
She's not in the storybook anymore

She's standing right here –  
Changing the narrative,  
One patient,  
One student,  
One policy at a time.

And when they ask,  
“How did you do it?”  
I'll smile and say:  
“I didn't just dream unicorns.  
I became one.”

## *About the Author*



Dr. Dawn S. Brown, PT, DPT, EdD, OCS, serves as Assistant Chair of Curricular Affairs and Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences at Northwestern University. A recognized leader in physical therapy education, Dr. Brown has delivered more than 40 invited and peer-reviewed presentations at regional and national conferences and continues to contribute to the field through ongoing scholarly publication in educational research. Her research focuses on leadership development, faculty development, and fostering belonging in academic and clinical settings. She has held influential roles, including Commissioner for the National Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Commission for the American Council of Academic Physical Therapy (ACAPT), Co-Chair of the Illinois Physical Therapy Association DEI Committee, and member of ACAPT's Education Planning and Innovation Committee. Dr. Brown also serves on the Advisory Board for Simucase, contributes educational content to <http://PhysicalTherapy.com>, and is appointed to the Illinois State Board of Health as the Doctor of Physical Therapy representative, where she contributes to both the Policy and Rules Committees. Currently, she is a fellow in the 2025–2026 cohort of the APTA Academy of Education Fellowship in Higher Education Leadership. Dr. Brown's scholarship and service have made a lasting impact on advancing equity and excellence in health professions.