**Ricky Ditzel Jr. Biography**

Ricky Ditzel Jr. was raised in Florida with his siblings Alexis and John Anthony. He and his siblings’ adolescent life was defined by chaos. Inspired to make a positive change for his family, he enlisted in the Army and served as a U.S. Army Special Operations Flight Paramedic. As a special operations flight paramedic, Ricky treated U.S. and Allied forces service members who suffered from the acute and chronic effects of traumatic brain injury.

These experiences propelled Ricky to become a neurodegenerative disease researcher and vocal advocate for brain and mental health. Ricky believes strongly in a life of service and consistently seeks opportunities to support underserved communities and promote health equity. He believes the current healthcare structure reduces access to care for individuals with neurologic disabilities due to limitations associated with public transportation, specialty care access, and education.

Driven towards research and finding solutions to increase the quality of life for people with neurological disabilities, Ricky is pursuing a career as a physician. He plans to create a neurologic center of excellence that will provide comprehensive multidisciplinary outpatient care under one roof. Ricky is currently the Chairman for SOF2SOM, a board member for the Neuroacanthocytosis Advocacy USA, and the Special Operations Medical Association. He will continue to serve his country and community, while doing his best to honor the legacies of those who have gone before him. “For they loved to fight, fought to win, and would rather die than quit. Night Stalkers don’t quit!”