

DREXEL UNIVERSITY

# College of Medicine

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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**TRAILBLAZERS**  
ALUMNI MAKE THEIR WAY

# Support Our Students

Now more than ever our students need your help.

Philanthropic support at all levels empowers the College of Medicine to train the next generation of leaders with cutting-edge technology, outstanding faculty, and the financial aid that allows students to pursue their passions without concern for mounting debt. Your support can have an immediate impact on the lives of Drexel students:

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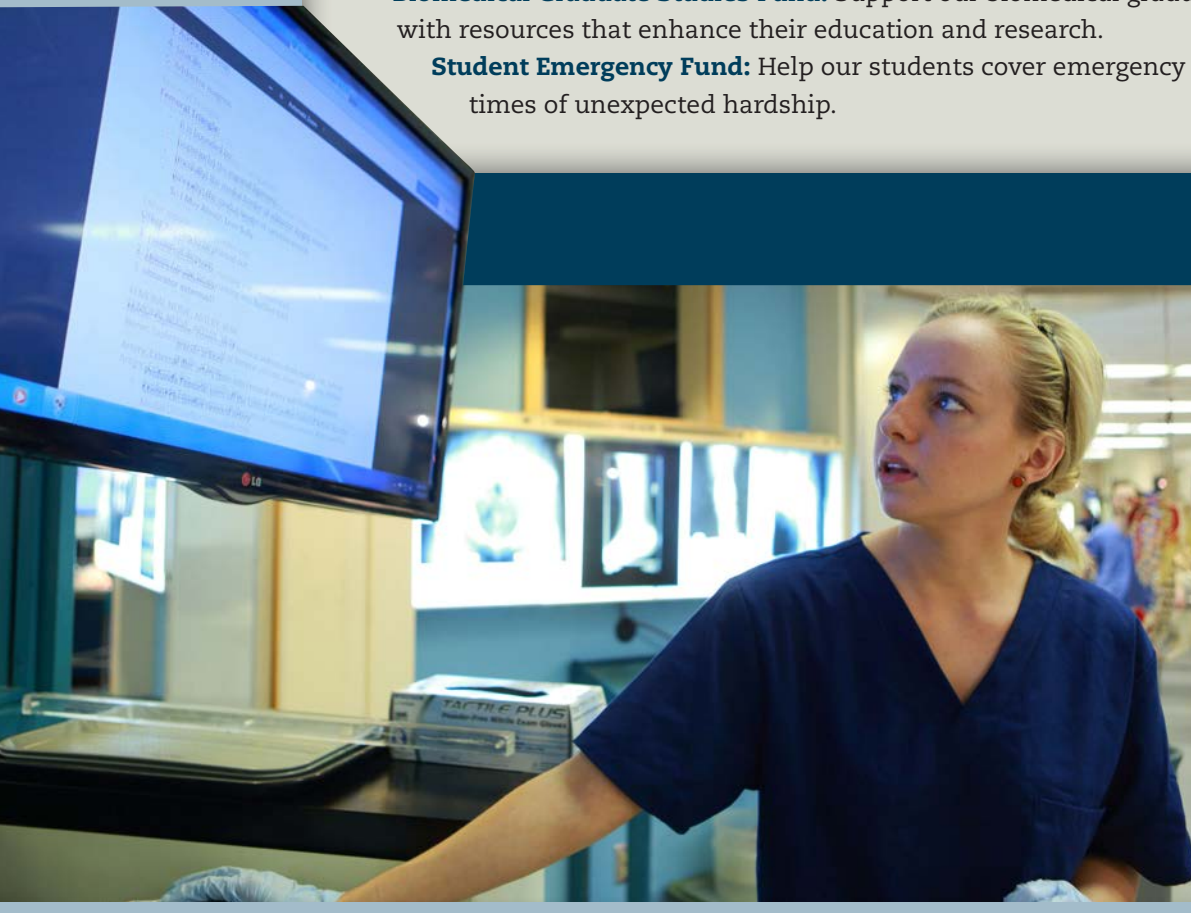
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Questions?  
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Thank you for your support. Your role as an alum is crucial in making a positive difference in the lives of students at Drexel University College of Medicine!

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*Editor's note: In the Spring/Summer 2020 issue of the Alumni Magazine, page 28, we misidentified Agatha Nody, WMC '69, as Agatha Noely. We apologize for the error.*



## FEATURED

### DREXEL DRAGON CLAWS

Members of Drexel Dragon Claws with a client, Isaiah. This club grew from a small group with a 3D printer to a Drexel-sanctioned, e-NABLE-certified organization that makes prosthetic devices for those in need.

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Meet Tina Adjei, MD, MCPHU '99, an emergency physician and entrepreneur who is dedicated to improving care for all patients.

Photo: Thom Carroll

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers Respond to the Spring/Summer 2020 Issue

[Re: "Telemedicine: Changing the Face of Health Care"] In the Pacific region, Col. Chuck Callahan (retired) helped start a similar store-and-forward web-based consultation system in 1997, covering the far-flung islands and remote bases throughout the Pacific region and Alaska. After participating in the consultations, I worked with Col. Callahan on a review of the Echo-PAC system, which was published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* ("Effectiveness of an Internet-Based Store-and-Forward Telemedicine System for Pediatric Subspecialty Consultation," 2005;159:389-393). Reviewing the cases when the requests for pediatric consultations came in from far-flung places around the Pacific was rewarding.

When I was a general medical officer in the Indian Health Service in Bethel, Alaska, from 1977 to 1979, I participated

in a NASA experimental program using the ATS-6 communication satellite for telemedicine consultations with the Alaska Native Medical Center 400 miles away in Anchorage. We would show X-rays to the radiologists and orthopedists there for evaluation by putting the film on a light box and pointing the camera at it, with an audio channel for discussion. Very helpful! Primitive compared to today's technology. I stayed in Alaska for seven years. There was a story about me in the alumni magazine from circa 1984 about rural providers.

David Estroff, MD, HU '76, FAAP  
Colonel, U.S. Army Medical Corps, Retired  
Clinical Professor of Pediatrics, University of Washington  
Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Uniformed Services  
University of the Health Sciences



Wonderful timeline article, "Honoring the Hahnemann Community." I would love to share the article on social media [when it is posted] online.

Marilyn Heine, MD; Hematology/Oncology Fellowship, MCP '89

*Editor's note: The entire issue is available online as a flip book at [ducom.org/ducom-alumni-magazine-2020-spring-summer.html](http://ducom.org/ducom-alumni-magazine-2020-spring-summer.html). The web version of the article is at [bit.ly/honoringHU](http://bit.ly/honoringHU). Alumni can always request PDFs of articles or past issues by emailing [akh33@drexel.edu](mailto:akh33@drexel.edu).*

I enjoyed the recent edition of the *Alumni Magazine*, especially its graphic presentation related to humanities and medicine ["Learning at the Intersection of Art and Science"]. The article referenced the origin of the Medical Humanities program in 1976. Several classmates and I had spearheaded this effort, including Marion Childs, MD; Mark Aita, SJ, MD (now deceased); Andrea DiGaetano, MD; and three to four others whom I can no longer specifically recall (and I feel badly about not being able to give credit where due!). There were few formal medical school teaching programs anywhere in the country in medical ethics in 1974. There was an organization in Philadelphia at the time, the Health Care and Human Values Task Force, which was a loose consortium of faculty from the six medical schools in town who had interest in this area. I was awarded a summer travel "fellowship" stipend in 1975 to travel the country to interview a half-dozen founding directors of medical school teaching programs about how they were able to establish a program. In the academic year of 1975-1976, a group of students from the MCP Class of 1977 created an ad hoc committee on bioethics, which sponsored a series of every-other-month free colloquia on medical ethics topics, taught by some of the most prominent scholars of that time. All of these visiting faculty came for free!



The next year we continued the colloquia, gained support from the classes behind us as well as the faculty, and agitated for institutional support, including recognized teaching time. We found a ready ally in Eva Fernandez Fox, MD, chair of radiology, and chair of the Curriculum Committee (to which I was a student representative). Due in large measure to her support and very sage strategic advice, the importance of medical ethics teaching as a formal part of medical education at MCP was recognized more widely, and by the time my class graduated in 1977, a fourth-year elective had been established within the Department of Community Medicine, and several lectures were inserted into the second-year curriculum. MCP was the first Philadelphia medical school to explicitly provide curriculum time to medical ethics.

The path to acceptance was neither easy nor straightforward, but was ultimately successful due to strong support from Dr. Fox and a handful of other faculty. Dr. Fox went a step further, endowing an ongoing graduation prize, the Eva Fernandez Fox Award for Personal Integrity, Stability, Responsibility, and Loyalty to the College of Medicine. I was quite proud to be the inaugural recipient.

Dennis F. Saver, MD, MCP '77, FAAP  
Chair, Cleveland Clinic Indian River Hospital Ethics Committee

**WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM YOU**

We welcome letters to the editor. Please send your ideas or letters concerning the magazine by email to [akh33@drexel.edu](mailto:akh33@drexel.edu), or by mail to DUCoM Alumni Magazine, 1505 Race Street, Mail Stop 484, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Please include your contact information. Letters to the editor may be edited for space.

Greetings, fellow alumni!

Our always full lives have alas been made even busier this year by the myriad personal and professional challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since you've chosen to spend a few moments with the *College of Medicine Alumni Magazine*, I hope you will find this brief update on your Alumni Association informative and the articles that follow compelling.

Despite the COVID-imposed cancellation of our May 2020 Alumni Weekend, I am happy to share that on May 14, 2020, we experienced a successful albeit virtual — *thank you, Zoom!* — “passing of the gavel” from Mark Codella, MD, HU '84, outgoing Alumni Association Board president, over to me. I am honored and delighted in equal measure to serve as the Association's president for the next two years. As a graduate of one of the College of Medicine's legacy schools I, just as many of you, witnessed the incorporation of my medical school into a series of entities that ultimately led 18 years ago to the creation of the Drexel University College of Medicine of today.

The Alumni Association, 18,537 strong at last count, welcomes all graduates of Hahnemann Medical College of Pennsylvania, Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, Medical College of Pennsylvania, Hahnemann University, MCP Hahnemann University, and Drexel University College of Medicine and its Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies. Our Association is strengthened by the diverse professional experiences and varied talents of our graduates, as illustrated by the work of the Association's Board of Directors. The Board meets four times yearly and has continued to meet over the summer and fall in spite of the pandemic, via videoconferencing. Each Board member also joins one of the Board's working committees: Awards, Cultivation & Engagement, Finance, and Nominating. The work of those four Board committees allows the Association to formally and effectively recognize our distinguished alumni, to foster meaningful exchanges between alumni as well as between current College of Medicine students and alumni, to fund grants to student organizations and to individual students taking part in research projects, and to identify alumni interested in participating in the activities of the Association.

The Alumni Association Board recognizes the importance of our alumni and, as we look to 2021 and beyond, we are actively planning to promote activities and interactions among as many alumni as are interested. We are arranging more virtual events that you can join from around the globe. We want to hear from you! We want to include you! Write us at [medical.alumni@drexel.edu](mailto:medical.alumni@drexel.edu) to share updates and let us know what matters to you as an alum. You can check us out on the web at [drexel.edu/medicine/alumni](http://drexel.edu/medicine/alumni), on Facebook or LinkedIn, and connect with other alumni on Dragon Network, our new alumni/student professional mentoring platform. Links to these sites are available on the “Stay Connected” page of the website. And, however you choose to get in touch, I hope to get to meet you — virtually or in person — sooner rather than later!



*Claudia S. Plottel*

Claudia S. Plottel, MD, MCP '84  
President, Alumni Association Board

# CHARTING HER OWN COURSE

By Elisa Ludwig

Throughout her career, emergency physician Tina Adjei, MD, MCPHU '99, has worked to improve the delivery of care to patients who need it the most. Her path hasn't always been linear, but there's certainly a through line — whether she's working on the emergency room floor, assessing ways to reduce hospital admissions or mentoring doctors in training, Adjei is bridging the gaps of racial and socioeconomic inequality in medicine.

Adjei grew up in Washington, D.C., in an academic household — her father was the chair of the Engineering Department at Howard University and encouraged Adjei and her siblings to pursue similar careers in “hard” sciences. As a young person, Adjei wanted to take a different route. She actually envisioned herself as an entrepreneur, but she also knew that she wanted to help people.

“I was an old soul, and I was lucky to have many adults in my life who let me know that I had endless opportunities and to take advantage of them. It was my mother who said, ‘Do something you enjoy, something you care about,’” she says.

That something, she realized, after getting her undergraduate degree in zoology from Howard University and her master's degree in developmental biology from American University, was medicine. She chose MCP Hahnemann because she was ready to branch out of her hometown, and she particularly liked the medical school's focus on diversity.

“There was this sense that the school embraced you and appreciated what you brought to the table,” she says. “At the same time, there was an opportunity for minority students to come to campus and meet during the summer and learn about the medical school environment. This did a world of good for bolstering our confidence and making us feel at home.”

Ultimately, Adjei decided to specialize in emergency medicine, feeling a kinship with the doctors she met on her rotation in the ER during her first year of medical school. “In general, I found that they were well-rounded people, many of them well-traveled, who enjoyed the unpredictability and excitement of the emergency room, and that spoke to me.”

## PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES

During her residency at the University of Maryland, Adjei honed her knowledge of the diseases of poverty and the poorer health outcomes specific to inner city populations.

But over time, she found she wasn't seeing the daily new challenges she'd hoped for in the ER. During her second year of residency, Adjei's mother passed away, a painful loss. “It was very devastating for me,” she says. “She was the reason I became a doctor and strove to be successful in life.”

As an ER attending, she encountered a revolving door of chronic problems associated with structural racism, food insecurity and lack of access to health care. With that came a sense of her own ineffectualness to make a difference.

“After a while, you start to feel burned out. You realize that when people come to the ER, you have very little power to change their lives. You can't go to their home and make sure they have food or a job. You can't even make sure they go to their follow-up appointments. There's only so much you can do to help, and most patients were falling through the cracks.”

## BUILDING CONNECTION THROUGH INNOVATION

Five years after completing her residency, a friend and colleague from the University of Maryland announced that he was opening an urgent care facility, and Adjei latched on to the concept. Starting her own business would allow her to define the way she interacted with patients and perhaps make more of a meaningful impact on their lives, while exploring her entrepreneurial dreams. She also had a unique vision for how urgent care could fulfill a bigger role in a community setting.

“I saw that I could combine cutting-edge technology with a warm, family-like atmosphere,” she says. “I wanted to be almost like a primary care provider within a community practice. I didn't want you to just come in for one injury and never come back — the idea was that you'd want to return and trust us with your care, and we could handle anything short of preventive care or a hospital admission.”

When she was pregnant with their third child, Adjei and her husband, George, set about making this plan a reality — giving the new clinic a true mom-and-pop flavor with modern, high-tech conveniences. George, an IT director at Discovery Communications, did his part, handling technology and infrastructure such as the patient files and databases,



Photo Thom Carroll

Tina Adjei, MD, MPCHU '99, is committed to improving the delivery of care to patients who need it most.

office network and keycards. MyCare Express Urgent Care opened in Eldersburg, Maryland, in 2008, followed by a second location in Reisterstown, Maryland.

Over the years, Adjei developed the exact practice she envisioned while deepening her own knowledge and experience as a physician and entrepreneur. This allowed her to build long-term relationships with her patients, many of whom she keeps in contact with today.

The success of MyCare was part of a larger trend in the United States, with the explosive growth of the urgent care industry. Then came the implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2010, which changed the equation for small practices, and particularly for a model like Adjei's, which relied on more minutes spent with each patient. By the time she was approached by Carroll Health Group with an offer to buy MyCare in 2014, she decided it was the right juncture for a transition.

Adjei initially stayed on as medical director at MyCare under its new ownership and then served as an administrator for the health system, but soon realized that she was much more at home providing direct care to patients. In 2017, she went back to her roots as an emergency room attending at Kaiser Permanente in Halethorpe, Maryland. For now, she says, with two teenage daughters and a preteen son at home, this feels like the right place to be.

### PAVING THE WAY FOR OTHERS

All along the way, in both hospital and urgent care settings, Adjei has devoted herself to mentoring young medical students and physicians, particularly women and minorities. She's interested in broadening cultural competence for all doctors as well as increasing the number of traditionally underrepresented people practicing medicine.

"Being a minority and female gives me a unique perspective and allows me to understand the health disparities and challenges minorities and women face daily. In the end, this changes how health care is delivered and perceived by the patient," she says. "Women and minorities need opportunities to see providers who understand them and can meet their needs, and it's also important on the journey of medical training that young students encounter professionals in the field that look like them."

One of the biggest barriers for minorities wanting to go into the medical field is the cost of medical school. Mentoring was one way to help, but as Adjei became a successful entrepreneur, she knew she wanted to use her advantages to ensure that students had access to the kind of education she had. Creating the Mary Lee Edwards Scholarship for women and minority medical students at Drexel was a way to do that while honoring her beloved mother, she says.

"When I think of her, and how she helped me become successful, it seemed only fitting to pay it forward in her name. When a student writes me a thank you letter, I know she meant something to them, too."

# The Human Aspect of

## DREXEL DRAGON CLAWS

By Catherine McCorkle

Dragon Claws is serious about service. In just a few years, the graduate student group grew from four guys with a 3D printer to a sanctioned Drexel organization directly impacting young people and families in the Greater Philadelphia region. Former members of the club's leadership Steven DiStefano, Gabe Pertierra and Brittany Smith (all members of the Biomedical Science program Class of 2020) attest that the hours of work involved are not only rewarding; they enhance the graduate school experience as well.

Their mission? To provide free, task-specific prosthetic devices to local children. It began with a small group of students in 2017. "They got their hands on a 3D printer, and they were doing amazing things," Pertierra says. Those students worked to have their group certified by e-NABLE, a global community of volunteers creating 3D-printed upper-limb prostheses.

DiStefano, Pertierra and Smith didn't start Dragon Claws, but they engineered its growth. They're quick to point to the founders as exemplary, inspirational role models. They are thrilled to have the opportunity to continue what the founders began and to impact the community.

The devices they make depend on the client. "If the client says, 'I need x, y and z,'" Smith explains, "we will work around the clock trying to figure out how we can do that. We've spent many hours sitting in a room, drawing on whiteboards, trying to work something out. It's a good time."



*A client named Isaiah, with members of Drexel Dragon Claws (left to right) Gabe Pertierra, Steven DiStefano, Tyler Bogaczyk (MS Biomedical Studies '19), Brittany Smith, current Interdisciplinary Health Sciences student Edward Han, and Anthony Cappellino (MS Biomedical Studies '20).*



# Medicine:

Describing a device he and DiStefano made for a child missing part of one arm, Pertierra says, "Riding a bike with one hand is very difficult. So we built an extension that was the size of the child's limb. It fit just snugly enough so that, if he fell, he could bail out of it. We had to think of so many different things. There's no blueprint for this. Steve and I spent hours doing a prototype, but it was well worth it."

## BROADENING THEIR REACH

As group membership and clients increased, they adapted. Dragon Claws began using social media (in addition to the e-NABLE database) to connect with potential clients. The cost of the materials (printer maintenance, filament, any necessary tools) "was all out of our own pockets," says Pertierra, "which was okay when the printer was small and we had a small number of clients." Smith turned to fundraising, using GoFundMe to further their work, "once we had more members, more demands, and we needed new printers."

The leadership of the MS in Biomedical Science program was supportive of the group's goals. The program requires students to volunteer in the community through a service project. "They allowed students to volunteer with us and count those hours even before we were a sanctioned club. They made us better," Pertierra observes, specifically citing the support of their advisor, Monika Jost, PhD, director, Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs. Smith and DiStefano also began the process of establishing Dragon Claws as an official Drexel organization, presenting to the Graduate Student Association Board in early 2020.

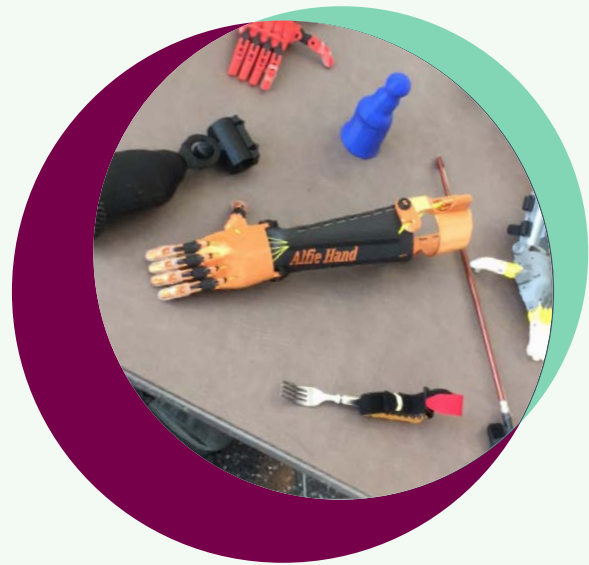
The benefits of becoming a sanctioned organization were clear, DiStefano explains. An official group would have access to extra resources and much-needed funding. Additionally, they'd be guaranteed a dedicated workspace. Until this point, Tina Ross, co-director of the Master of Forensic Science program, was generously letting the group use her lab as a workspace and to house their printers.

## REAL-WORLD IMPACTS

Yet throughout this process — fundraising, publicizing, getting the club sanctioned, working with clients, and grad school — DiStefano, Pertierra and Smith all stress that helping kids in need of assistive devices made the work more than worth it.

"I absolutely loved the interaction with our clients," says Smith. "Many volunteer opportunities presented to us were 'one-and-done.' You went, you did your service, you checked that box, and then you left. I think most of us wanted to impact the people we were working with instead of just putting a Band-Aid on it."

"That's what made Dragon Claws stand out as opposed to any other volunteer opportunity," Pertierra echoes. "I don't think any of us discounts the impact we were able to have on our clients. That was so personal ... so humbling."



*A sampling of the devices that Drexel Dragon Claws has made for their clients. The red hand, a "wrist-powered" hand, was printed to get Drexel Dragon Claws e-NABLE certified. The blue ball-and-socket device is a draft for a bike-riding prosthesis for a client. The black and orange hand, known as an "Alfie hand," is a scaled-up version of the hand that Isaiah uses. The device with a fork was designed to increase independence for an adult double amputee. The violin bow was designed for a young boy who wished to play the violin.*

One of their first classes in graduate school focused on the human aspect of medicine, "the part that's not science-based or health-based," DiStefano observes. He says that working with Dragon Claws, keeping that human aspect in focus, "makes everything else seem much more manageable and enjoyable."

Smith shares an experience that seems to embody how they all feel about Dragon Claws and how it in turn has impacted them.


They'd made a prosthetic arm for a 7-year-old boy, and after visiting him and his family for several hours, needed to take the arm back to campus to make the necessary adjustments. Smith recalls approaching the boy, saying, "'Okay, I'm just going to take this off, and I'll bring it back in a couple of months.' I didn't get halfway through my sentence when he looks at me and clutches his arm against himself, saying 'You're not going to take it, right?' In that moment, Smith realized she couldn't take the prosthetic from the boy even though the team need to make adjustments. "We're going to print another," she said, leaving him with the arm.

She says that returning to campus after hours with the family, and now with several hours of new work ahead of them, "We should've been exhausted. We should've been stressed about studying. But we were just all smiles the entire way home. It was such a light in our lives and in our week. It's hard to remember that connection sometimes when you're sitting in class, but this is truly why we want to do medicine."

*Gabe Pertierra is now attending medical school at Drexel. Steven DiStefano is at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. Brittany Smith attends Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine.*

# TRAILBLAZERS

## ALUMNI MAKE THEIR WAY



Drexel University College of Medicine and its predecessor institutions have a long history of graduating trailblazers, including Eliza Grier, one of the nation's first Black doctors; Susan La Flesche Picotte, the first Native American to earn a medical degree; or Ann Preston, the first woman medical school dean in the world. As we hear from alumni today, it's clear that you are still forging new ground.

by Jeff Johnson

We spoke with a wide range of Drexel alumni about how their experiences at their alma maters influenced their careers and set them on the path of their unique accomplishments. Some of them discuss the ways they are advancing contemporary medicine and education, some reflect back on their storied careers, and others look ahead to breakthroughs they hope to make. We learned about the strides they have made in expanding and diversifying their fields, working with the current generation of medical and graduate students, and their advice for those who are early in their careers.



**JUSTIN COHEN, PHD** Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics '18, is a post-doctoral fellow at Yale University School of Medicine, doing research on a disease he lives with, facioscapulo-humeral muscular dystrophy (FSHD).



**ANN ZERA TAN, MD** '04, is the first female chief of staff of Adventist Health White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles.



**PAMELA PARKE BENSEN, MD,** MCP '70, MS, is the first female board member elected to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), and is an emergency medicine specialist in Buffalo Junction, Virginia.



**ALTHA STEWART, MD;** Psychiatry Residency, HU '82, is senior associate dean for community health engagement, associate professor of psychiatry, and director of the Center for Health in Justice Involved Youth at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. She was the first Black president of the American Psychiatric Association.



**RALPH RIVIELLO, MD,** HU '94, is the first openly gay chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long School of Medicine at UT Health San Antonio.

## AT DREXEL

*Our interviewees are at different stages in their careers, and their experiences with Drexel span multiple eras and provide glimpses of its history. We asked them to talk about their time at Drexel, what they learned, and what they found especially memorable.*

**DR. COHEN:** First and foremost, my time at Drexel gave me a good background in laboratory research, so I was able to apply the tools that I learned to my postdoc. Even beyond that, it gave me the opportunity to work with different types of people and personalities, which taught me how to collaborate better with people.

**DR. TAN:** Once I started residency, I realized how well Drexel prepared me in the foundation of pathology. The communication skills that we worked on as medical students served me well in my career, as my field heavily relies on working and communicating with surgeons, oncologists, gastroenterologists and others.

**DR. BENSEN:** Drexel University College of Medicine was Woman's Medical College when I entered, and the federal government mandated that federal funds would no longer be given to any institution that discriminated based on gender. This was the biggest group of graduating medical students every year who were female. Every other medical school in the country had a few women. We were told that because of the law we had to have men, and so the decision was made in 1970 that we would become co-ed by adding to the 60 women that the school accepted.

**DR. STEWART:** Everything that I learned at Drexel was part of preparing me to be ready to do everything I did subsequent to my time at Drexel: working as the executive director of one of the largest public mental health systems in the country, Detroit Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency; serving as commissioner of mental health in New York City; even my work in Philly before I started to move around, I was medical director and then CEO for what is now Community Behavioral Health. This all directly related to the training, confidence and support that I received at Drexel. I think all roads lead back to where I began at Drexel in becoming a psychiatrist.

**DR. RIVIELLO:** I am forever thankful to my Drexel chair, Dr. Richard Hamilton, for the guidance, advice and counsel he gave me during my time there. He lit the fire in me to become a department chair. Early in my career, in a simple end-of-the-year review, he said to me, "Where do you see yourself going?" That question and the subsequent encouragement started me on the pathway that led me to where I am now. That is what I hope to do for any of my faculty and residents here. Light the fire for them to think beyond the here and now and to look toward the future, and to help them get there.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

*These alums are doing impressive work. Of course, their accomplishments have not come without struggle and sacrifice. We talked about their achievements, as well as challenges they have worked through as they sought to advance within their fields and make an impact in their communities.*

**DR. STEWART:** The work that I do now is with young people, children and adolescents who are at risk of going into out-of-home placement. Whether it's juvenile justice systems, child welfare systems or something else that takes them away from home and family and community — that work is a part of a movement around the country to keep children out of systems and in their homes and families, because that's where they best grow and thrive. What we do now at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center around this particular population is some of the most creative and innovative work that I've ever done, because you're combatting limited resources, bad images and stigma, mostly of mental illness or childhood trauma. What you really want is for these children and their families and communities to be in a better position than when they first came to you for help.

**DR. BENSEN:** It took me seven years to get 911 in my community because there was only one in the country when I started working on it. I trained the first paramedics in the state of Maine, got statewide EMS protocols, got the ACEP chapter up and running in Maine, spent years lobbying in Washington, D.C., for emergency medicine. I'm really proud of the fact that everything you experience when you go to the emergency department today, I personally or through ACEP have had some impact on.

**DR. RIVIELLO:** The accomplishment I am most proud of happened in Philly in 2011. After a few years of planning and developing the program, we were able to successfully launch the Philadelphia Sexual Assault Response Center, which provides 24/7 medical examinations to victims of sexual violence. It was the first program like it in the state and one of only a few in the country. It has been hugely successful and rewarding and has helped thousands of survivors over the years. I hope to try to replicate something like it here in San Antonio.

**DR. COHEN:** I have the unique perspective of being both a patient and scientist studying FSHD. This makes studying the disease much more personal, as I know what it means firsthand to experience all of the symptoms. At the same time, it can make things difficult because I understand just how challenging this disease will be to treat and/or cure and that, while there are promising therapies in development, it will still be

a while off. The other challenge is that laboratory research is very demanding, even for someone who doesn't have a disability. Having a muscle weakness means that my endurance is not the same as a typical person's. I have to be good about time management in order to make sure I can still do my work.

**DR. BENSEN** [who ran for the ACEP board five times before being elected]: The second time I ran for the board, my husband and I went to the reception afterwards and ran into a man I knew. And the man said to me: "Well, I don't know. You are just so qualified. I just don't know why you didn't win. But you know a southern gentleman. We just couldn't vote for a woman." Well, luckily my husband had my right arm in his left. Because otherwise this guy would have found himself on the floor.

**DR. TAN:** Many professional women face the challenges and hardships of work/life balance, especially after having kids. We are often torn between two worlds that we love — to choose between our children versus commitment to our patients, their cases and our health care family. I still struggle with it today, but I am definitely more efficient at work because of it. The dual role of being a professional career mom has taught me critical time management and organization skills that have given me the ability to do both.

**DR. BENSEN:** The "Meet the Candidates" [board election event] would put you up on the stage and they would ask you questions. And one question they asked was, "What would you bring to the board that nobody else has?" And I started my comments with "I would bring a broad perspective. And more estrogen than anyone else running." I figured, OK, I'm going to put this right out on the table. Then I told them the story about what that man had said to me after the last election. And I said to the group, "I want you to know I'm not asking you to vote for me because I'm a woman. I'm asking you *not* to vote *against* me because I'm a woman." And that was the year that I won.

**DR. RIVIELLO:** One of the formative challenges I've faced was whether or not to be out at work. I was afraid that being out would have some negative impact on my work, my career success, how I was perceived by staff, students and residents. When I moved to Philadelphia, I was fortunate to join a department that had several out faculty members and drew upon my diversity experiences when I was a student at Hahnemann. I saw them and their successes and realized that in this environment, it was safe to be out. And to be honest, it was really no big deal. I have succeeded because of what I did, what I accomplished, my hard work, not because I am gay or straight.

## TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

*Some of our interviewees teach in addition to their clinical and research endeavors. We asked about the relationship between these roles, and their impressions of their students' emerging perspectives.*

**DR. STEWART:** I think students are coming into this with a strong sense of understanding that it's a privilege to work in this environment, to know these things, to learn these things, and to share that knowledge with people who need it. They also bring a strong sense of health as a social justice issue, that a part of exercising their privilege is to make sure that the right to health care is available to all.

**DR. RIVIELLO:** We need to be able to provide [our residents and students] a solid practice environment that exposes them to countless types of patients and patient experiences. In order to teach, I also need to make sure we have passionate, diverse faculty members who want to be here to teach and care for patients. Our clinical site is a great training site as it has a phenomenal mix of patients and acuity. In order to provide that opportunity, I need to make sure our clinical operations are in sync with the hospital's goals and objectives, and we are good stewards of the hospital's resources.

**DR. STEWART:** Training to become a doctor during the time of COVID-19 is going to create a very different kind of medical professional. Now we have a generation that will remember their clinical training on a unit where the letters PPE are as important as BP, blood gas, all of those things that as clinicians we learn and take for granted as part of our lexicon. Now there's a whole new vocabulary: COVID, PPE, having to FaceTime with patients who are dying because families can't visit. Having to work the shift under the pressure of knowing that you are very limited in what you can do to heal, when we go into this to be healers. Health equity, health disparities, the traumas associated with racism, and structural and systemic racism, are all things that lead back to: Will this person have better health if we deal with these things as part of a health care issue?

**DR. RIVIELLO:** I have also learned through the years that everyone, no matter who they are or what they are doing, is on a pathway and they progress at their pace, not at a pace that I think they should or that I want them to. So, I have learned to be more patient with folks and help them to achieve the potential they see in themselves, not one that may be artificial or too far-reaching.

## PAYING IT FORWARD

*Finally, we asked these alumni what advice they would offer to someone facing similar opportunities and challenges early in their career.*

**DR. STEWART:** If I'm talking to young people today, I remind them that a lot of their energy and enthusiasm was shared by the members of my generation when we were at their place in the career development line, and that while we may approach things differently, we have things to learn from them. But we old folks still have a few tricks up our sleeves that they might want to make use of. Maybe if we blend our knowledge with theirs we can create the system that we all want.

**DR. TAN:** Having practiced pathology and clinical lab medicine for 11 years now, not only have I learned so much about the advances in this field, especially in molecular testing and cancer genomics, but I've learned so much from my environment and those I work with every day (techs, physician colleagues, administrators, nurses, lab assistants, etc.). They have taught me to keep an open and creative mind. I learn from everybody, from all aspects of my hospital team, and am blessed to be surrounded by good people. Because of that, I have grown and become confident in taking on roles I thought I would never have.

**DR. BENSEN:** You have to assume the best in other people, confront them in a way that doesn't create more friction, and be persistent. The other thing I would suggest is to find a support group. Four people is perfect. Find people who are in the same situation that you are in, but who have different experiences.

**DR. COHEN:** I would definitely say don't try to do everything by yourself. A lot of my ability to succeed came from the fact that I was able to look into available resources. Especially for someone with a disability: You need to be able to take advantage of everything that's available to you. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

**DR. RIVIELLO:** Never sell yourself short or try to be someone you are not. It does not work, and people can see right through you. Instead, be yourself and let your talents, actions and passions speak for themselves. Also, do not close the door on new ideas or opportunities. I would not be here today if someone had not asked me to do something that I never would have thought of doing. And finally, I would be remiss if I did not tell them to be humble and remember that everything we do, we do for our patients. Without them, we would not be here.

# Seed Funding:

## Small Investments With Tremendous Dividends

By Catherine McCorkle

Like ripples across a pond, individual alumni donations can have long-lasting effects, reaching destinations far from where the pebble was originally cast. This has been the case at the College of Medicine, where a single gift directed toward critical COVID-19 research has grown exponentially in the area of vaccine development. There were immediate, short-term outcomes along the way as well, yet the investigations being conducted by College faculty have the long-term potential to benefit entire populations.

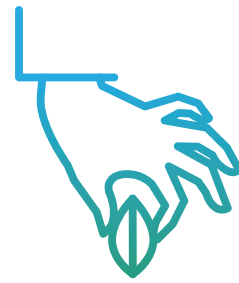
Smaller donations that yield large dividends are known as seed funding. The image of a seed is an apt one, since one relatively small investment, like a single seed planted in the ground, has the potential to generate substantial benefits. Earlier this year at the College of Medicine, a generous alumni donor, who wishes to remain anonymous, made a gift toward accelerating research around COVID-19. This donation formed the backbone of what quickly became the College's Innovation Fund.

Tracking one project team that benefitted from the fund vividly illustrates the impact of seed funding. In April, Michele Kutzler, PhD, associate dean for faculty and associate professor, and Elias Haddad, PhD, professor, both in the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology, and their team received \$10,000 from the Innovation Fund. Kutzler identifies several immediate outcomes that strengthened her project along the way: pivoting to high-risk/high-reward research, forming new faculty partnerships, and investing in professional development.

### A Focus on Pressing Needs

Seed funding often empowers faculty to shift from prior research endeavors to those of a critical nature. Right now, that's COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and therapies, so Kutzler and Haddad began vaccine and adjuvant research. At this early stage in the process, funds were used to design a nucleic acid-based vaccine against the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 and to begin preliminary tests with the adjuvant to look at enhancing vaccine durability. Additionally, with seed money from the Innovation Fund, colleagues in Drexel's College of Engineering developed a way to 3D print individual personal protective gear, and College of Medicine Dean Charles Cairns created a health tracker smartphone app, all to be used in the labs. "Those seed funds were critical for providing startup money necessary to get innovative ideas off the ground, and the funded projects have had a lasting impact on the University's response to COVID-19," Kutzler says.

Particularly for senior faculty, seed funds can stimulate research into new, impactful areas of scholarship. Researchers can be "a little more risky," Kutzler explains, in expanding a project's scope. Likewise, junior or non-tenure track faculty can take the risk of




pivoting to work perhaps not typically funded by many granting agencies. She adds, "There's a high-risk, high-benefit reward that really builds from those seed funds for faculty at all levels of their career."

### Innovation Through Collaboration

Building partnerships among faculty is another immediate benefit of seed funding. For instance, various groups were allocated resources from the Innovation Fund. Each conducted separate investigations around COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and therapies. Through new partnerships, it became clear that aspects of the individual projects were complementary, with the goal to test a next-generation COVID-19 or pan-coronavirus vaccine strategy.

For instance, Sonia Navas-Martin, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Microbiology & Immunology, is building an ex vivo system — growing lung cells on a chip to infect them with coronavirus. "We're going to see if the antibodies neutralize the virus and prevent infection of human lung tissue," says Kutzler. "It's a very relevant model to translate what we see in our experimental preclinical models." Irwin Chaiken, PhD, professor in the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, will bring his expertise in protein chemistry to help the team characterize the kinetics of the binding properties of the antibodies elicited by the vaccine and adjuvant.

Thanks to this faculty collaboration, three Drexel teams came together as a sort of "supergroup" and applied for a large state grant funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This Drexel group — led by Kutzler, Haddad, Chaiken, Navas-Martin and Julio Martin-Garcia, associate professor, Department of Microbiology & Biology — received a \$1 million grant from the Commonwealth in support of their research into a vaccine adjuvant that improves durability and the quality of protective antibodies. It was the largest



award given for COVID-19 research in Pennsylvania. Through pre-existing grants, Drexel provided an additional \$1 million. This grant was instrumental “to improve the infrastructure to support emerging infectious disease research in the Department of Microbiology & Immunology,” Kutzler says. In order to work with coronaviruses, the existing Biosafety Level 3 laboratory was modified and improved to accommodate these new studies, thus expanding the types of high-impact research that can be done.

### Professional Growth

As an added benefit, some of the Pennsylvania grant will provide opportunities to train post-doctoral fellows and medical and graduate students in research on infectious disease. This is an example of what Kutzler identifies as the third immediate benefit of seed funding: professional enrichment for the next generation of scientists.

Most grants have clear parameters about the type of research expected and outcomes to be achieved. Yet faculty can benefit from other types of enrichment as well. For instance, through a seed fund, they may be able to work in another institution’s lab, then bring that lab’s techniques back to their university. “Seed funds could also be used for an activity that helps faculty achieve their professional goals,” Kutzler says. “It may not result in a research work product or a publication or funding, but through building networks and collaborative science, it would advance the academic missions of the university.”

In this environment of risk-taking, professional collaboration and enrichment, inquiry and innovation cannot be far behind. More faculty are in a position to “write larger grants now that they have these new partnerships, or they have an expanded technique or the expanded expertise because of that seed grant,” Kutzler says.

With that initial \$10,000 investment from the Innovation Fund, Kutzler and her colleagues were able to quickly pivot their research into a high-risk area and build new partnerships in the process. When the Commonwealth announced its COVID-19 grant in July, there was only a three-week turnaround for applications. Yet because the Drexel teams had already crafted their initial proposals for the Innovation Fund, the bulk of the application was already written. “A lot of institutions weren’t able to make that deadline,” Kutzler says. They built on their partnerships to propose a multifaceted project that was more comprehensive than any one investigator could manage when working alone.

### A Promising Future

As a result of this work, the team was invited to apply for a large, multi-year NIH grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. “We would have never been able to write this grant,” explains Kutzler, “without the early investigations made possible by seed funding. We basically designed the vaccine construct and tested the immune adjuvant with these funds.” When they were asked to apply for the NIH grant, the work accomplished in the spring “gave us preliminary data and proof of concept that we used to show feasibility.”

The team’s NIH proposal is to develop an immunoadjuvant system for the next-generation COVID-19 vaccine. “We’ll need continuing updates to the initial vaccine. The aim of our adjuvant research program is to create a dose-sparing platform, enhance immunogenicity in older individuals, and improve the durability of the vaccine immune response,” Kutzler explains. “There’s some data that suggests that when someone generates an antibody response to coronaviruses, it doesn’t last very long. So, our research is focused on enhancing the immune response. Our hope is that future vaccines would protect people for more than one year.”

The scope of the NIH grant and its possible impact is significant. “We’re going to try to turn this first million awarded into a larger award of over \$5 million, so the initial investment made from the seed grant will have lasting impact on research at Drexel for many years,” Kutzler says.

While the Drexel team won’t learn whether they’ve received the NIH grant for several months, this process is undoubtedly “an example of alumni donations that grow exponentially,” says Kutzler. From one seed donated by a generous alum, the College is on the verge of creating an entire forest. In the arena of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and therapies, that cannot happen soon enough.



# Get Ready, Get Set, **GET INVOLVED!**

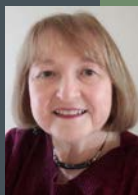
If the challenges we have all faced this year have inspired you to reconnect with classmates and reengage with your alma mater, you are not alone. Alumni are reaching out in greater numbers than ever to ask how they might help each other, current students and the College of Medicine. Here are a few ways anyone can get involved.

## Join the Alumni Association Board of Directors

The call for nominations for the Alumni Association Board of Directors is ongoing. The board accepts nominations on a rolling basis, so you can nominate yourself or a fellow alum at any time, and your nomination will be voted on at the next meeting; if the nomination does not coincide with a time close to a scheduled meeting, the vote can be held virtually.

If you are interested in board membership, contact Nikki Bromberg, [nlb67@drexel.edu](mailto:nlb67@drexel.edu), and she will schedule a call with you to talk about the responsibilities of board service. You will also be asked to submit a CV and statement of interest, which the Nominating Committee will review before making a recommendation to the board.

Board service consists of attending the four meetings per year, plus any committee meetings. There will occasionally be documents to review prior to meetings. Virtual attendance at meetings has always been welcome. A board term lasts three years, and members can serve for two consecutive terms.

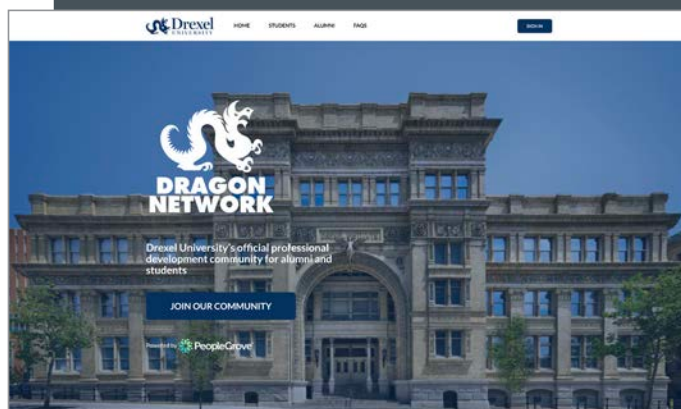


“Serving on the Drexel University College of Medicine Alumni Association Board of Directors for over 20 years — first as a director, then as president, and now as a director emerita — has been one of the greatest pleasures of my life. I consider my service both an honor and a privilege that has allowed me to give back to my alma mater in a direct and impactful fashion as it has grown into the amazing institution it is today. Moreover, as an alumna of what is now the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies, I have watched with pride as my school’s alumni have gained status and recognition alongside our medical alumni colleagues.”

– Ellie Cantor, PhD, MCP '79

## Join Dragon Network

Dragon Network is Drexel University’s online professional community for alumni and students. This one-stop shop facilitates career-focused conversations, provides meaningful opportunities for alumni to give back and unites students and alumni from around the world — one connection at a time. In addition to offering an opportunity to mentor students, Dragon Network can be used to build your network, reconnect with former classmates and explore job opportunities. Visit [dragonnetwork.drexel.edu](http://dragonnetwork.drexel.edu) to join Dragon Network today.





## Volunteer

Alumni around the globe can volunteer in a variety of ways, especially as our activities have moved to virtual platforms. Here are a few ways you can share your time, knowledge and skills with current students and other alums.

**Be a Discovery Day judge.** Each fall, the College of Medicine hosts Discovery Day, an annual day of research for graduate, undergraduate and high school students, as well as postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate trainees. Several hundred posters are presented for judging by faculty and alumni volunteers. Additional research is selected to be shared via platform presentations. While Discovery Day is usually held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, this year's event took place virtually on a poster-sharing web platform. The call for Discovery Day judges is usually sent out in late summer via email. If you would like to be added to a list of prospective judges, please email

Nikki Bromberg,  
nlb67@drexel.edu.



Sandra Urdaneta-Hartmann, MD, PhD, MBA Lebow '09, discussing a Discovery Day poster with first author Bailey Balouch in 2019.

“Alumni commitment and support is of paramount importance for the future of our students. Involvement as a Discovery Day judge permitted me to expand my knowledge and become more familiar with the College of Medicine and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies.”

–Donna Antonucci, MD, MCP '84

“I like that as a Discovery Day judge you can learn about a wide range of topics and learn about the people who have done the work. This context is often lost in the scientific literature.”

–Bradley Nash, PhD  
Pharmacology & Physiology '17



Alumni panelists Paul Phelps, MD '10, Clifford Hudis, MD, MCP '83, Sidra Ghafoor, MD '13, and Michael Mirmanesh, MD '14, along with student moderator Cassandra Mitchell, MD Class of 2021, and Karen Shulik, Office of Student Affairs and Career Advising, at the Exploring Specialties career panel on October 27.



**Participate in a panel.** On October 27, the Office of Student Affairs & Career Advising partnered with the Office of Alumni Relations to host a career panel for current MD students. Fifteen panelists representing a diverse range of specialties shared their wisdom with nearly 200 student attendees via Zoom. Panels like this allow alumni to give back by sharing their expertise and experience with students. Because panels can be held virtually, alumni living across the U.S. and abroad have a chance to get involved. We look forward to hosting many similar events in the future. If you are interested in serving as a panelist, contact Nikki Bromberg, nlb67@drexel.edu.

“Sharing my mid-career experience with medical students gave me the opportunity to reflect on how meaningful my career has been, helping remind me why I went into medicine and what a privilege it has been.”

–Keith Scott Dickerson, MD, MCP '97, MS-BME



**Host informational interviews.** Current students can benefit greatly from the perspectives and advice offered by alumni who have gone before them; they value the insights of those currently working in the fields they are considering entering. These interviews will happen remotely for the time being, but they still provide students with essential information about various careers in medicine, biomedical science and the health sciences. Contact Nikki Bromberg, nlb67@drexel.edu, if you are interested in participating in informational interviews.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If you have a creative idea for how you or other alumni might get involved with Drexel, please let us know. Contact Nikki Bromberg at nlb67@drexel.edu to share your idea. Thank you for all that you do to support Drexel University College of Medicine.

## '60s

**Arthur Rosenthal, MD, HU '69**, a general surgeon with a special interest in breast surgery, was highlighted in *Frontal Report Sports*. He serves as the chief of the Surgical Oncology/Breast program at the START Center for Cancer Care in San Antonio, Texas.

## '70s

**J. Leonard Lichtenfeld, MD, HU '71**, joined the Clinical Advisory Board of TrialJectory, an AI-powered digital health platform that finds new treatment options for cancer patients. A board-certified medical oncologist and internist, Lichtenfeld previously served as the American Cancer Society's deputy chief medical officer and has over four decades of in-depth cancer research and care experience.

**Jacqueline Wertsch, MD, MCP '74**, received the American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to the fields of neuromuscular and electrodiagnostic medicine. She is the first woman to receive the award. Wertsch was on the faculty at the Medical College of Wisconsin for 30 years, until 2010, when she retired from clinical practice. She was awarded an emeritus professor appointment and continues teaching activities through EduDoc LLC.

**Janet Haas, MD, HU '77**, chair of the board of the William Penn Foundation, was quoted in *Philadelphia Magazine's* "76 Most Influential Philadelphians" article. The Haas family was ranked #28 on the list. The foundation raised over \$115 million last year to fund arts, education and environmental causes.



**Barbara Schindler, MD, WMC '70**, is being honored for 50 years of employment at Drexel University College of Medicine. After graduating from WMC, Schindler completed adult and child psychiatry training at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. From 1993 to 1995, she served as acting chair of the Department of Psychiatry, and then served as vice dean of educational and academic affairs for 18 years. She is now vice dean emerita, as well as a professor of psychiatry and pediatrics.

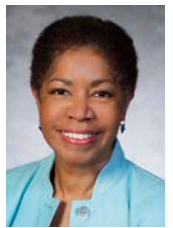
Schindler is the founder and continues as medical director of the Caring Together program, an outpatient treatment program for women with substance use and psychiatric disorders and their children. Her work resulted in Drexel receiving a National Institute on Drug Abuse Center of Excellence designation for Physician Information. She is principal investigator of a three-year Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services grant aimed at integrated opioid use disorder prevention and treatment.

Drexel is grateful for her years of dedicated service to the school and the Philadelphia community.

**Stephen K. Klasko, MD, HU '78; MBA**, president and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, was featured in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article, speaking about the ongoing mission of Jefferson to acquire Einstein Healthcare Network. He was ranked #22 on *Philadelphia Magazine's* "76 Most Influential Philadelphians" list. Klasko has been serving on the management team of a special-purpose acquisition company called Health Assurance Acquisition Corp. The SPAC hopes to raise \$500 million in an initial public offering to take a Bay Area health technology business public.

**Melanie S. Kzirian, MPA, Speech Pathology & Audiology, HU '78**, former owner of Philadelphia-based Interstate Lift, has sold the stairlift company to Stannah, a U.K.-based stairlift company. Kzirian will be staying on with Stannah as the company continues to grow the business in the Philadelphia area.

**Anna Pujols McKee, MD, HU '79**, executive vice president and chief medical officer of The Joint Commission, joined the board of directors of Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity. She has served on the boards of the Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council, the Public Health Management Corporation and the Philadelphia AIDS Consortium.



## '80s

**Ken Cohen, MD, HU '80; Internal Medicine Residency, HUH**, participated with top U.S. physicians and psychiatrists in the *Washington Post's* livestreaming event titled "Primary Care in the Time of COVID-19." The panelists addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the primary care system and family physicians. Cohen is the chief medical officer at New West Physicians and senior medical director of OptumCare. Additionally, he is a clinical associate professor of medicine and pharmacy at the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

**Robert Maddalon, MD, MCP '80; Orthopedic Surgery Residency, MCP '85**, became a partner at Florida Orthopaedic Institute after its recent merger with OrthoCare Florida. Florida Orthopaedic Institute is now the largest orthopedic group in Florida, with 95 orthopedic surgeons. He is a founding member of Brandon Orthopedics and OrthoCare Florida.

**Donna Sudak, MD, MCP '80**, professor of psychiatry at the College of Medicine, was quoted in an article, "Americans Are More Likely to Report Mental Health Concerns Related to the Pandemic Than Other Developed Countries, Survey Finds," that was published on ArcaMax.com.

**Christine Petti, MD, MCP '81; Surgery Residency, MCP '86**, won first place in the annual Readers' Choice Awards category of "Best Cosmetic Surgeon" for 2020. Petti has held this title every year since 2014. She is a plastic surgeon in Torrance,

California, certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and an active member of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery as well as the American Society for Plastic Surgeons.

**Norman A. Hetzler, MD, HU '82**, was awarded the prestigious Bronze Star Medal for his service in Afghanistan as a U.S. Navy physician. Hetzler is a cardiothoracic surgeon with Coliseum Hospital in Macon, Georgia, who deployed to Afghanistan last August as a commander with his U.S. Navy Reserve unit, which is based at Dobbins Air Force Base in Marietta, Georgia.

**Ingrid Ockenhouse, MD, MCP '83; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP**, joined the primary care team at UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) Family Medicine in Montoursville, Pennsylvania.

**Donald M. Yealy, MD, MCP '85**, senior medical director and chair of emergency medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, was recently appointed by Governor Tom Wolf as a member of the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine, and has testified before state and federal committees earlier this year on the pandemic. Yealy was quoted in an October 19 *Philadelphia Inquirer* article regarding the rise of COVID-19 infections and the burden on hospital systems. He said that, due to the increase of testing low-symptom and asymptomatic cases, and vulnerable populations being more cautious, there had been less demand on hospitals; therefore the current surge of cases was not likely to overwhelm or incapacitate Pennsylvania hospitals.

**Stephen L. Kessler, MD, MCP '86**, was quoted in a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article regarding the effect of climate on the spread of COVID-19.

**David P. Russo, MD, HU '86**, was appointed medical director at Seabrook, a non-profit, CARF-accredited substance use and co-occurring disorder treatment provider. Russo joined Seabrook as a staff physician in 2019. Previously, he served for 27 years as a surgeon, specializing in bariatric and various cancer procedures, before deciding to switch career paths and completing his fellowship training in addiction medicine.

**David J. Shulkin, MD, MCP '86; HD '19**, was appointed to the scientific advisory board of CureLab Oncology, a clinical-stage biotech company. He also joined RapidSOS, an emergency technology company providing a direct data link from connected devices to 911 and first responders, as an advisor to help guide the company's expansion into the health care industry. Shulkin served as the 9th U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs after a prominent and successful career in the health care sector.

**Virginia Calega, MD, MCP '87**, wrote an article, "Eight Ways to Balance Your News Intake With Brain Breaks," for the *Philly Voice*. Calega, a board-certified internist and geriatrician, is vice president of medical affairs at Independence Blue Cross. She is past chair of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Medical Policy Panel.

**Patrick Hwu, MD, MCP '87**, a tumor immunologist, was appointed president and CEO of Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida. Hwu joins Moffitt from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he held various leadership roles during his 17-year tenure, most recently as head of the Division of Cancer Medicine. He was profiled in an article on the *Florida Politics* website. Hwu is also president-elect of the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer and sits on the external advisory boards of the University of Chicago, University of Virginia, Columbia University, Yale University, and Moffitt Cancer Center.

**Mark LiBassi, MD, MCP '87; Surgery Residency, MCP '92**, a gastrointestinal surgeon, joined the medical team at Mary Surgical Associates Langhorne. LiBassi is a member of the Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, the Society of Laparoendoscopic Surgeons, the American Hernia Society and the Eastern Association for the Surgery of Trauma. He is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.

**Glen Stettin, MD, MCP '88**, joined the board of directors at PRA Health Sciences, Inc. Stettin is the senior vice president and chief innovation officer at Express Scripts & Cigna Services, a division of Cigna Corporation. In this capacity, he heads up research and development, patient and physician experience, product development and management focused on new clinical solutions and data, and analysis and platforms as services. Stettin previously served as senior vice president and chief innovation officer of Express Scripts, which was acquired by Cigna in 2018.

**Jody Foster, MD, MCP '89; MBA**, chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Pennsylvania Hospital and the first assistant dean for professionalism at Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, was interviewed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In the article, Foster explained how to deal with difficult colleagues in the new virtual work environment and how to avoid becoming one yourself.

**Chong Park, MD, HU '89**, was appointed president of Jefferson Hospital in Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania, and Canonsburg Hospital in Washington County, Pennsylvania, both a part of Allegheny Health Network. Park is a longtime Allegheny Health Network cardiothoracic surgeon and served as medical director of the Cardiovascular Institute at Jefferson. For the past six years, he has also served as Jefferson's chief medical officer, leading the hospital's medical staff and clinical operations.

## '90s

**Fernando B. Bonanni Jr., MD, HU '90**, joined the Blessing Bariatric Institute in Quincy, Illinois, as a bariatric surgeon and institute medical director.

**Philip E. Werthman, MD, HU '90; MMH**, joined the Scientific and Medical Advisory Board at GT Biopharma, Inc. Werthman is director of the Center for Male Reproductive Medicine and former assistant clinical professor of urology at the University of Southern California School of Medicine.

**Richard Grossberg, MD, HU '93**, joined the board of directors of Hattie Larlham, an intellectual and developmental disabilities nonprofit organization. Grossberg has served as the medical director at the Hattie Larlham Center for Children with Disabilities in Mantua, Ohio, since 1999. He is a board-certified pediatric neurodevelopmental disabilities specialist at University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, where he has worked since 2000. He is also an associate clinical professor of pediatrics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine.

**Sedat M. Surmeli, MD, HU '94**, joined St. Peter's OB/GYN-Slingerlands, a practice of St. Peter's Health Partners Medical Associates. His professional interests include normal and high-risk pregnancy, major and minor gynecologic surgery, management of menopause, and routine gynecologic care. Surmeli comes to the Capital Region from West Orange, New Jersey, where he previously worked as an OB/GYN physician with Axia Women's Health.

**Michael Cackovic, MD, HU '97**, shared his expertise about the cause of swollen lymph nodes during pregnancy for an article on TheBump.com. Cackovic is an OB/GYN specializing in maternal-fetal medicine at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus.

**Keith Scott Dickerson, MD, MCP '97**, received the 2020 Family Medicine Teacher of the Year Award from the Colorado Academy of Family Physicians. He is the associate program director of the Family Medicine Residency and chair of the Medical Section at St. Mary's Medical Center, Grand Junction, Colorado. Dickerson earned his BS in electrical engineering and his MS in biomedical engineering from Drexel before enrolling in medical school at MCP.



**Deborah Lang, PhD Molecular Pathology, MCPHU '97**, associate professor of dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine, has been awarded a two-year, \$250,000 grant from the Harry J. Lloyd Charitable Trust to further her research on the molecular and cellular biology of melanoma. The award will support her project "Transcriptional Mechanisms Underlying the Shared and Unique Roles of YAP and TAZ in Melanoma." She has mentored more than 20 students and has served as an elected council member and plenary speaker of the Pan American Society for Pigment Cell Research.

**Amit Shah, MD, HU '97**, chief medical officer at CareOregon, wrote an article, "Eliminating Medical Bias Starts with Studying Patterns," for the *Becker's Hospital Review* website. Shah previously served as CareOregon's senior medical director of network and clinical support. He has served as a board member for CareOregon, Jefferson Health Information Exchange, Northwest Regional Primary Care Association and Comagine.

## '00s

**Paul Bolno, MD, MCPHU '00; Surgery Resident, MCPHU; MBA**, joined the board of directors of SQZ Biotechnologies, a clinical-stage cell therapy company. Bolno is the chief executive officer of Wave Life Sciences. Prior to this, he was vice president of worldwide business development and head of Asia business development and investments, as well as head of global neuroscience business development, at GlaxoSmithKline. He earned his MBA from LeBow College of Business in 2005.

**David Damsker, MD, MCPHU '00**, director of the Bucks County Department of Public Health, served as a panelist for a town hall meeting hosted by the Bucks Families for Leadership. The meeting focused on COVID-19 best practices as students and families prepare to face the challenges of in-person learning. Damsker was also quoted in an article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* regarding the danger of COVID-19 spread in schools.

**Ian B. K. Martin, MD, MCPHU '00; MBA**, professor with tenure and system chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, was appointed by the Milwaukee Common Council's Public Safety and Health Committee to the Board of Health of the City of Milwaukee. In addition to his MCW roles, Martin is emergency physician-in-chief at the Froedtert & MCW Health Network. Prior to coming to MCW, Martin served as professor and executive chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine at West Virginia University School of Medicine.



**Sophia McIntyre, MD, MCPHU '00**, became senior vice president of the Ambulatory Division at WellStar Medical group based in Atlanta, according to a LinkedIn update. Previously, McIntyre was the chief medical officer of Hudson River Health-Care, Inc. and had been with Hudson River since 2008.

**Africa Stewart, MD '00, MBA; Drexel/Hahnemann Obstetrics & Gynecology Residency**, is president of the U.S. Board of Directors of Doctors Without Borders. She was first elected to the board in 2017. Stewart's career with the Doctors Without Borders began with a trip to Sudan in 2011, and she has now completed five surgical field assignments and served as a guide for the organization's Forced From Home exhibition about the global refugee crisis.



**Asif M. Ilyas, MD, MCPHU '01**, recently launched the Foundation for Opioid Research and Education, part of the Rothman Orthopedic Institute. The mission of this new nonprofit foundation includes educating patients and prescribers on safe opioid consumption and prescribing; supporting research focusing on opioid-sparing pain management strategies; and advocating to lawmakers on evidenced-based opioid policies. Ilyas has been asked to serve on President-elect Biden's Health Policy Committee to develop the administration's opioid policy.



**Manny Pacheco, MD '01**, became senior consultant and chief of public policy and government advocacy at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, according to a LinkedIn update. Pacheco is an assistant professor at Tufts University School of Medicine. He is a member of the American Psychiatric Association, and his specialty areas include medical, addiction, and disaster psychiatry, as well as ethics and drug interactions consultation.

**Taiwona L. Elliott, DO; PBC Medical Science Preparatory '02**, was appointed director of the Family Medicine Residency program and vice president of clinical education and services at Duke/Southern Regional Area Health Education Center in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

**Vishal Kothari, MD '05**, was recognized by Continental Who's Who as a Top Surgeon for his professional excellence and outstanding contributions to the fields of medicine and education with Nebraska Medicine's Lauritzen Outpatient Center. A board-certified general surgeon, Kothari is currently serving patients within the Nebraska Medicine Healthcare Network.

**Juli Tomaino, MD '05**, became deputy director at the Food and Drug Administration, where she leads several areas, including the Division of Gastroenterology, the Office of Immunology and Inflammation, the Office of New Drugs and the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, according to a LinkedIn update.

**Marcelo R. Malakooti, MD '08**, was appointed associate chief medical officer at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, according to a LinkedIn update. Malakooti also serves as medical director of the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit.

**Heather Painter, PhD Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics '08**, published a study, "Novel Methods to Detect Malaria Biomarkers for Evaluation of Vaccine Safety and Efficacy," on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website. Painter is a principal investigator in the Laboratory of Mucosal Pathogens and Cellular Immunology within the FDA.

## '10s

**Marshal Meier, MD '10**, will be working at the newly established monthly clinic offered at Flagstaff Bone & Joint's Sedona, Arizona, office. Meier is a physical medicine and interventional spine doctor at Flagstaff Bone & Joint, and also practices at their Flagstaff and Cottonwood locations. He completed his internship at the University of Utah School of Medicine, his residency at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, and a rehabilitation interventional spine fellowship at UCLA Spine Center.

**Karissa Lozenski, PhD Microbiology & Immunology '11**, became director and clinical trial lead at Bristol Myers-Squibb, according to a LinkedIn update.

**Elizabeth Malsin, MD '11**, was profiled in *U.S. News & World Report* about performing a double lung transplant on the first known COVID-19 patient in the U.S. to undergo the procedure. Malsin is a pulmonary critical care physician at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago. She completed an internal medicine residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, followed by fellowship training in pulmonary and critical care medicine at Northwestern.

**Priyanka Chugh, MD '12**, board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology, joined the Gastroenterology Center of Excellence, part of the Trinity Health of New England Medical Group, in Naugatuck, Connecticut. Her research and clinical interests include complex liver diseases, inflammatory bowel disease, inflammatory bowel syndrome, colon cancer screening, peptic ulcer disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease. She also has a clinical interest in obesity and nutrition in overall health and will be certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine in 2021.

**Joshua Sesek, MD '14**, joined the urologic surgery team at Pinehurst Surgical Clinic. Sesek comes to Pinehurst after completing his residency in general surgery and urology at Stony Brook University Hospital in Stony Brook, New York.

**Rishi Patel, MD '15**, joined the medical team at Capital Health-Rheumatology Specialists in Pennington, New Jersey, part of Capital Health Medical Group. Patel is a member of the American College of Rheumatology and the American College of Physicians. He completed his internal medicine residency at Cooper University Hospital/Cooper Medical School of Rowan University and a rheumatology fellowship at North Shore-Long Island Jewish Medical Center.

**Sina Memari, MD '16**, emergency medicine physician, joined the medical staff at the Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox, Illinois. He completed an emergency medicine residency at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County.

**Brielle Ferguson, PhD Neuroscience '17**, was named to *Forbes* magazine's 30 Under 30 Science list. Ferguson is currently a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Neurology at Stanford University.



**Nicole Klee, PhD Molecular & Cell Biology & Genetics '17**, became publication lead at Alcon, a Swiss eye care company that manufactures surgical and vision care products for conditions like cataracts, glaucoma, retinal diseases and refractive errors.

**David D. Oh, MD '17**, became chief resident of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Temple University Health System, according to a LinkedIn update.

**Nikkisha Mills, MS Interdisciplinary Health Sciences '18**, graduated from the School of Medicine of Wayne State University's Pre-Medical program. She is interested in emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and surgery, with a research interest in infectious disease.

**Karen Hager, MS Clinical Research Organization & Management '19**, became director of clinical research at Medicago, a biopharmaceutical company that uses plant-based manufacturing and virus-like particle technologies to develop innovative vaccines and protein-based therapeutics for infectious diseases and emerging public health challenges.

**Austin Katona, MD '19**, and **Anamika Saha, MD '20**, were featured in *Philadelphia* magazine. The couple recently held their wedding and reception over Zoom with immediate family present virtually from as far as London and Bangladesh.

## '20s

**Andrew Joseph III, MS Drexel Pathway to Medical School '20**, was highlighted in an article in the *Clarion Herald*, the local New Orleans Archdiocese's newspaper. Joseph is an alumnus of The Good Shepherd School, an elementary school serving underprivileged children in New Orleans that opened in 2001. Now a member of the Drexel MD program Class of 2024, he is the first alumnus of Good Shepard to attend medical school, an accomplishment he hopes will inspire young people in his hometown and across the country.



Chung Heng Liu

**Anamika Saha, MD '20**, see Austin Katona, MD '19.

## Former Residents and Fellows

(alphabetical)

**Charmaine Edwards, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP '95**, a gastroenterologist/hepatologist, joined Gateway Medical Group's office in Granite City, Illinois. Edwards will also continue to practice at Gateway's sister facility, Red Bud Regional Hospital in Red Bud, Illinois.

**Jordan Glaser, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Orthopedics Residency '11**, joined Southeastern Health's Southeastern Orthopedics. Glaser is a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons as well as a member of the North American Spine Society and the Society for Minimally Invasive Spine Surgery.

**Mayya Kawar, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Emergency Medicine Residency**, an emergency care physician, joined the medical staff at Frederiksted Health Care Inc. in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

**Mahboob Rahman, MD, PhD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP**, joined CytoDyn, Inc., a biotechnical company developing innovative treatments for multiple therapeutic indications, as chief scientific officer. Rahman was most recently the global head of immunology development and pharmacovigilance at Mesoblast Inc., a regenerative medicine company.

**Donna Smith, MD; Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency, MCP '93**, a gynecologist and obstetrician, joined Care for Her, the women's health service at Mendocino Community Health Clinic in Mendocino County, California. She has spent most of her career practicing medicine in small, rural communities, most recently in Glasgow, Montana.

**Allan Tunkel, MD, PhD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP '87**, gave a presentation, "The Impact of COVID-19 on Medical Education," at the annual Future of Medicine Summit hosted by the Palm Beach County Medical Society. Tunkel is the senior associate dean for medical education and chief of medical education at the Brown University Alpert Medical School.

**L. Steven Zukerman, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP**, serves as medical director of Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center's newly created Cardio-Oncology program, which provides cancer patients and survivors access to cardiology and oncology specialists and advanced imaging services. Zukerman is board certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease.

## In Memoriam

**Armand J. Angulo, MD, HU '58**, November 4, 2020

**Norris D. Bunn, MD, HU '57**, September 28, 2020

**Ronald D. Castellanos, MD, HU '66**, August 1, 2020

**Richard P. Cook, MD, HU '77**, October 4, 2020

**Jerome Fields, MD, HU '55**, August 10, 2020

**Robert Fomalont, MD, HU '60**, September 27, 2020

**Catherine S. Fontaine, MD, WMC '54**,  
September 12, 2020

**Fred Andrew Fow, MD, MCP '87**, October 14, 2020

**Frederick George, MD, HU '55**, September 23, 2020

**Daniel Hamaty, MD, HU '53**, August 25, 2020

**Bernard M. Harrison, MD, MCP '82**, December 3, 2019

**Rose Mary Hatem Bonsack, MD, WMC '60**,  
September 27, 2020

**Thomas E. Levrault, MD, HU '74**, August 15, 2020

**Edgar A. Lucidi, MD, HU '57**, October 4, 2020

**Daniel M. Lundblad, MD, HU '63**, November 11, 2020

**Charles E. MacKenzie, MD, HU '65**, November 1, 2020

**Timothy M. Mahoney, MD, MCPHU '00**, July 22, 2020

**William C. Meade, MD, HU '77**, August 8, 2020

**Gary Delane Mitchell, MD, MCP '97**,  
September 21, 2020

**Grace C. Nugent, MD, MCP '89**, September 1, 2020

**Joseph B. Paley, MD, HU '58**, July 26, 2020

**Gregory Nicholas Prah, MD, MCP '91**,  
September 3, 2020

**John M. Ravin, MD, HU '63**, August 11, 2020

**Ronald J. Rejzer, MD, HU '80**, November 7, 2020

**Marvin Rosen, MD, HU '48**, July 26, 2020

**Donald J. Sherman, MD, HU '59**, September 20, 2020

**David C. Siffring, MD, MCPHU '99**, August 15, 2020

**Michael G. Stambaugh, MS Radiation Science, HU '78**, October 9, 2020

**Brian M. Swan, PBC Interdepartmental Medical Science, MCPHU '96**, August 19, 2019

**Kurt Zeglen, MD, HU '81**, July 29, 2020

Each year, the Drexel University College of Medicine Alumni Awards program recognizes exceptional alumni who go above and beyond in their professions, in the community and within the University. The 2020 Alumni Association Award recipients were honored during a virtual ceremony on December 2.

## Lourdes C. Corman, MD, WMC '70

### BOOTS COOPER, MD, SERVICE AWARD

Lourdes Corman decided she wanted to be a doctor when she was in second grade in Cuba. She emigrated to the U.S. in 1961, later followed by her family.

Corman enrolled in the Class of 1970 at Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. She did an internship and residency in internal medicine and a fellowship in infectious diseases at the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She then joined the University of Missouri, Columbia, for a fellowship in rheumatology.

Since 1999, she has been professor and regional chair of the Division of Internal Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham Huntsville campus. In 2012, the Huntsville Regional Campus and Huntsville Hospital were approved for a new internal medicine residency program, of which Corman served as the initial training program director until June 2015.

Corman has co-edited several issues of *Medical Clinics of North America* on topics including medical evaluation of the preoperative patient, clinical immunology and nutrition. She edited *Rheumatology for the House Officer* and published early reports on the association of parvovirus with rheumatic diseases.

Corman has received multiple teaching awards, including a Golden Apple Award as chief resident at MCP, the prestigious Hippocratic Award at the University of Florida in 1994, and several Argus and Best Attending Awards from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Under her leadership, the department was chosen as "best clinical rotation" by the third- and fourth-year students many times. She retired in 2018.



## Ian B. K. Martin, MD, MCPHU '00, MBA

### OUTSTANDING MEDICAL GRADUATE AWARD

Ian Martin is system chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and professor with tenure of emergency medicine and internal medicine. He is also emergency physician-in-chief of the Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin health system.

Martin earned a bachelor's degree from Duke University. He earned his MD from MCP Hahnemann University and his MBA from the University of North Carolina Kenan-Flagler Business School. Martin trained in emergency medicine and internal medicine at the University of Maryland Medical Center and the R. Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center in Baltimore.

He has devoted his academic career to improving the delivery of emergency care globally, with emphasis on East Africa. Martin's research interests include elucidation of optimal models for emergency department-based HIV and hepatitis C testing and acute care disease burden epidemiology in developing countries. His work has been published in many high-impact, peer-reviewed journals. Martin has garnered grant support for his research from federal and state agencies, industry, and academic institutions.

Martin recently completed a term as president of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine. Before that, he completed one-year terms as president-elect and secretary-treasurer of the society. He is also the founder and a past-president of SAEM's Global Emergency Medicine Academy.

Martin is the 2018 recipient of the Marcus L. Martin, MD Leadership Award. He also received the 2020 Georges Benjamin, MD Award for excellence in education, service and research from the National Medical Association's Emergency Medicine Section.



## Sharrón L. Manuel, PhD '12, MD '13

### GRADUATE CITATION AWARD – EARLY CAREER OR YOUNG INVESTIGATOR

Sharrón L. Manuel is an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and holds a secondary appointment in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, at Texas Tech Health Sciences Center of El Paso. She also received her BS in biomedical engineering from Drexel University. For her PhD thesis in microbiology and immunology, she investigated the role of dendritic cells in the pathogenesis of human T cell leukemia virus-mediated disease. She completed her residency training at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, and then completed a master's in reproductive sciences and medicine at Northwestern University. The focus of her master's thesis was female reproductive aging and changes within human ovarian stroma.

Manuel is a board-certified obstetrician and gynecologist. Her clinical interests include managing basic infertility concerns, abnormal uterine bleeding, early pregnancy loss, women's preventive health and general obstetrics. Her research focus is in the areas of polycystic ovary syndrome, reproductive aging and ovarian biology.

Manuel has presented abstracts and oral presentations on the local, regional, national and international level. She has authored and co-authored several manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals. She has also received several awards for her mentorship and research as a young investigator, including the Society for the Study of Reproduction Burroughs Wellcome Travel Junior Faculty Fellowship and the University of Kentucky Resident Teaching Award.



## Mary Siracusa Parisi, MD, HU '51

### HU DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE AWARD

A pioneer for women in medicine, Mary Siracusa Parisi was one of only five women graduates of the Hahnemann Class of 1951. With perseverance, courage and relentless determination, Parisi became the first college graduate and first medical doctor in her family. She completed an internship at St. Vincent's Hospital and residency in pediatrics at New York University Medical Center. She practiced until she was 91 years old. Dedicated to a lifetime in medicine, she served several generations of New York families in her thriving practice for 66 years.

In 1955, Parisi opened a pediatric practice in the Bronx, and later one in Glen Cove, New York. Widowed at 45 years old, she raised five children as a single parent. Education was of paramount importance, and all five children attended college; two went on to graduate school. Her daughter is a 1992 graduate of Hahnemann.

A solo practitioner with a steadfast, strong work ethic, she regularly made house calls, and answered phone calls at all hours. She saw newborns in the nursery and made hospital rounds. As volunteer faculty at North Shore University Hospital and Winthrop Hospital in New York, she mentored residents and provided internships for high school and college students.

Parisi served as president of the American Medical Women's Association, president of the Morgagni Medical Society and a member of the board of Hahnemann School of Medicine.



## Timothy Manzone, MD, MCP '89

### MCP DISTINGUISHED GRADUATE AWARD

Timothy Manzone attended Haverford College and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He practiced law for several years before becoming a physician.

He attended the Medical College of Pennsylvania, where he served two terms as class co-president. After graduating from MCP in 1989, Manzone completed a residency in medical imaging at Mercy Catholic Medical Center, and received fellowship training in nuclear medicine at both Temple University Hospital and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1999, Manzone joined the nuclear medicine section at Christiana Care, where he became nuclear medicine section chief in 2008. In this role, Manzone was recognized as one of Delaware's "Top Docs" by *Delaware Today* magazine on multiple occasions. He retired from daily practice in 2020. His work in the field of bone health is nationally recognized and included formation of a multidisciplinary committee at Christiana Care to improve primary and secondary prevention of fragility fractures.

Manzone is a board member and past president of the General Clinical Nuclear Medicine Council of the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging. He is an application reviewer and member of the Nuclear/PET Board of the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission, and he recently served as president of the Delaware Society for Clinical Oncology. A strong supporter of Drexel University College of Medicine, Manzone served two terms on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and was president of the Alumni Association from 2016 to 2018.





## Meghan Kathleen Berkenstock, MD '11

### EMERGING LEADER AWARD

Meghan Berkenstock completed her ophthalmology residency at Drexel University/Hahnemann University Hospital, followed by an additional year of training in ocular immunology at the Jules Stein Eye Institute. She then joined the faculty of the Wilmer Eye Institute of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Berkenstock exemplifies the tripartite mission of academic medicine: clinical excellence, research and teaching. Her research focuses on improving care of patients with uveitis. She is a co-investigator in National Eye Institute co-sponsored studies including the Multicenter Uveitis Steroid Treatment trial and the Periocular and Intravitreal Corticosteroids for Uveitic Macular Edema trial. In addition, her clinical research focuses on identifying ocular adverse events associated with immunotherapy agents in the treatment of systemic malignancies.

She has been an invited speaker for national and international conferences, including the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the International Ocular Inflammation Society, and she is a board examiner for the American Board of Ophthalmology. She is the author of more than 30 papers and book chapters and was nominated for the Johns Hopkins Health System Physician of the Year, and the Armstrong Award for Excellence in Quality and Safety; she earned an honorable mention for the E. Robert Feroli Award for Excellence in Medication Safety.

Berkenstock currently serves on the College of Medicine Alumni Association Board. She has mentored Drexel students interested in ophthalmology, and provided them with research, presentation and publishing opportunities.



## John Langell, PhD, MCPHU '98, MD, MCPHU '99

### OUTSTANDING BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE AWARD

As the seventh president of Northeast Ohio Medical University, John Langell is focused on transforming health care education and driving university innovation. He is a national leader in health care innovation, operations and strategy. He previously served as vice dean for innovation and as the executive director of the Center for Medical Innovation at the University of Utah.

Langell has expertise in product development and commercialization, business development and medical technology regulatory strategy. He developed the Center for Medical Innovation at the University of Utah to foster innovation in medical technology development and commercialization, and to aid in the creation of unique educational programs in innovation and entrepreneurship. He also co-founded the Therapeutic Games and Applications Lab at the University of Utah, focused on research, development, testing and deployment of software-based applications and digital solutions for disease management, health maintenance and simulation.

He is a retired colonel in United States Air Force after a distinguished 24-year career, where he served on both active duty and reserve status. He spent ten years as medical commander (CEO), directing operations of large health care programs and managing over 500 health care providers and administrators.

Langell completed his undergraduate training at UCLA and his MD and PhD at MCP Hahnemann University. He completed surgical training at Stanford University Medical Center and advanced residency training in space and aerospace medicine with NASA/UTMB at the Johnson Space Center in Houston.



## Donald M. Yealy, MD, MCP '85

### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Donald Yealy earned a bachelor's degree in biology at Villanova University in 1981 and a medical degree at the Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1985. He then completed an emergency medicine residency in 1988 and a research fellowship in 1989 at the University of Pittsburgh.

In his more than 390 scientific publications, he was lead or senior author on NIH-funded efforts in airway management, acute pneumonia, acute heart failure, pulmonary embolism and sepsis care. His work has changed early care in many life-threatening conditions, with his publications guiding national recommendations.

Yealy is deputy editor of *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, has edited nine scientific textbooks (including bestsellers in emergency medicine and trauma care) and serves as a referee for 20 scientific journals. At the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC, he oversees the early care of more than 1.5 million people each year in emergency and urgent care settings, and he led the system's COVID-19 response. He currently serves on the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine.

Yealy received the highest research recognition from both the American College of Emergency Physicians and the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine, as well as the highest educational award from ACEP and the leadership award for SAEM. He was given the Ralph C. Wilde Award for excellence in care and leadership by the Allegheny County Medical Society, and he is a 2017 inductee of the National Academy of Medicine, one of the highest professional honors for a physician, health care leader or scientist.





“I really like the challenge of building new things and thinking outside the box, and that’s the essence of my role. I’m very excited and honored to be here. We’re building a great team.”

## Karen Restifo, MD, JD

Regional Vice Dean, Tower Health Campus, West Reading, Pennsylvania

Karen Restifo, MD, JD, was appointed to the newly created position of regional vice dean of the College of Medicine’s Tower Health campus in West Reading, Pennsylvania. She comes to Drexel with a wealth of experience in medical school leadership. She also brings to the table a deep understanding of student affairs, the accreditation process and medical ethics.

### WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AT the West Reading campus?

#### What are your goals and expectations?

My goals are to create a learning environment where students feel included and safe, and to graduate medical students who are exceptionally well-trained, are great patient advocates, and give back to their community. Our admissions goal is to enroll 40 first-year students in our inaugural class, which will begin in August 2021. I really like the challenge of building new things and thinking outside the box, and that’s the essence of my role here, as we expand to include both first- and second-year students, as well as continuing to teach the third- and fourth-year students who are already here.

I’m responsible for delivering the curriculum, creating a safe and supportive environment for students, and helping to manage the accreditation process. My job involves recruiting and hiring faculty, helping to find clinicians to teach students to do physical exams, facilitating the College’s connections within Tower, supporting the faculty’s efforts to set up community health programs, and making sure students have the wellness resources they need.

I’m very excited and honored to be here. We’re building a great team. We’re very proud of the curriculum and our new academic building, which is a thoughtfully constructed, bright place for people to learn, teach and work.

### WHAT DOES THE WEST READING campus offer medical students?

Reading Hospital, which is located a mile from the new academic building, is a huge 714-bed regional medical center — the largest, by bed count, between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Currently, the hospital offers 20 residency and fellowship programs and plans to add more. It also has the only Level 1 Trauma Center in the county, and the Emergency Department is the busiest single-site ED in Pennsylvania, which is great for students because they are exposed to more diversity. I think we will attract students who are interested in a smaller class in a community-based setting.

In our first year, our entire campus will be one learning community of 40 students. They will attend classes in a brand new, state-of-the-art building with a simulation center and clinical skills center.

The physicians at Tower Health are very interested and excited to be involved with teaching our medical students. In addition, a large number of Drexel College of Medicine alumni live within a 20-mile radius of our West Reading campus. We are hopeful that they will be interested in opportunities to work with our medical students and mentor them. I’m happy to talk to any alumni who are interested!

### WHAT ASPECTS OF MEDICAL education are especially important to future doctors now?

With the COVID-19 pandemic, our job is to deliver medical education designed to help our future doctors know how to learn, what to read, what information sources are credible, and how to change their practice as necessary in an everchanging world. They also must learn how to advocate for their patients. Importantly, we need to educate them about diversity, so they can take care of patients from many different backgrounds. For example, they must know how to treat diabetes in all sorts of patient situations, such as those who can’t afford their medication, lack transportation to get to doctor visits or can’t afford to buy healthy food.

We also have to expose medical students to research so they understand it even if they don’t perform much research themselves. And they need to learn about interdisciplinary practice, medical ethics, and the importance of being empathetic and compassionate.

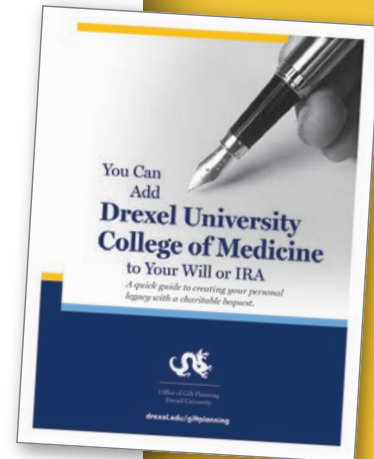
Finally, we need to teach medical students how to take care of themselves. Mental health problems are very prevalent in medical students, trainees and physicians. It is critical that we teach them to recognize when they’re stressed, when they should take a five-minute break, and when to ask for help. It’s like the airplane safety rule — you have to put the oxygen mask on yourself first before you can help others. We are very focused on providing students with support to deal with the big stressors they may face as they pursue medical education.

## *Your Legacy. Their Future.*

A charitable bequest is an excellent way for you to make educating future Drexel University College of Medicine students a part of your personal legacy.

Find your inspiration!

**To learn how your fellow alumni have made a difference for future generations at the College of Medicine, call **215.895.1882**, or email [giftplanning@drexel.edu](mailto:giftplanning@drexel.edu), and request your copy of "You Can Add Drexel University College of Medicine to Your Will or IRA."**





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# Alumni Weekend



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 Additional information will be available soon.