



## A Festive Long-Distance Commencement

The Class of 2020 celebrated Commencement virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but one major aspect of their May 29 ceremonies remained the same as any other: community.

MD, MS and PhD graduates collaborated from home to help make the day memorable, participating by video in pre-recorded graduation festivities that are now archived online ([drexel.edu/medicine/news-events/commencement/](https://drexel.edu/medicine/news-events/commencement/)).

Students who would have been hooded by faculty and alumni instead shared videos in which they donned the regalia with help from their siblings, parents, significant others, children or other important people in their lives.

The graduates' loved ones typically fill the Kimmel Center with applause, but this year they expressed their support and pride through the ceremonies' online comment sections. College faculty and staff posted heartfelt congratulations as well.



Parents Rob Walker and Jamie Walker joined their son John Walker, MS '20, for graduation at the lake house where John had quarantined since leaving Philadelphia.

Monika Jost, PhD, director of the Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs, congratulated the students, noting, "Graduate school is always tough, and these past few months have been particularly taxing. But you rose to the occasion and you persevered. You should be especially proud of what you have achieved."

The Class of 2020 had an opportunity to learn from Commencement speaker Katherine High, MD, the president and head of research and development at Spark Therapeutics,

It is customary for MD graduates to recite the Physician's Pledge, in which they promise to dedicate their lives to serve humanity and put the health and well-being of their patients first. This year, 255 MD program graduates recited from home the oath that will guide them through their upcoming residencies, and throughout their careers.

The Class of 2020 also included 255 master's degree students and 18 PhD students who concluded their programs with the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Profession Studies. These students recited the Graduate Student Oath, vowing to represent their chosen professions honorably, pursue truth for the greater good, maintain scientific integrity, and commit to lifelong learning.

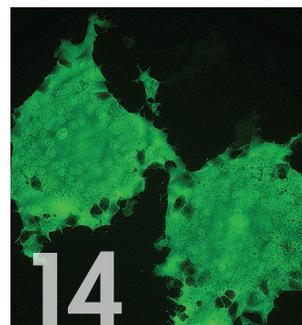
FALL 2020  
Vol. 7, No. 1



College community contributes PPE for frontline workers



Virtual Match Day sends Class of 2020 off in style



Rapid Response grants support researchers in COVID-19 fight

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# pulse

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 1505 Race Street, MS 484  
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**Danielle Kane**  
 Executive Director  
 Marketing & Communications

**Adrienne Hovey**  
 Editor

**Heidi Karl**  
 Art Director

**Contributing writers:**  
 Elisa Ludwig, Greg Richter,  
 Lisa Ryan, Nancy West

**Editorial Advisory Council:**  
 Joris Beld, PhD, Danielle Kane,  
 Paul McGonigle, PhD, Andrea Pesce

Submissions may be emailed to  
 CoM\_Pulse@drexel.edu.

For questions, comments or additional  
 copies of *Pulse*, call 267.359.6370  
 or email CoM\_Pulse@drexel.edu

[drexel.edu/medicine](http://drexel.edu/medicine)



# We Grow Closer Together

As this summer draws to a close, I am happy to share some good news with you. In spite of our physical distances, the College of Medicine has maintained, and even strengthened, our sense of community by holding a series of virtual Town Halls focused on faculty, research, COVID-19, health disparities, social justice and the return to campus. Each interactive meeting has brought together people from different constituencies (faculty, staff, students) and geographies (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and California campuses and affiliates) who otherwise might never have met each other.



And now we have more constituents: In August, the College of Medicine welcomed 271 first-year students into the MD program and 346 new students into the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies MS and PhD programs. Most of the welcome and orientation activities took place online, including the iconic White Coat Ceremony for first-year medical students. The extraordinary members of our faculty and professional staff rose to the occasion, applying their ingenuity and technical skill to create events that were meaningful. I also commend the students — both new arrivals and advanced students who contributed to orientation — on their adaptability and good cheer. Thanks to Zoom, YouTube and all of the above, the academic year has officially begun.

This is an unprecedented time. The COVID-19 pandemic has called on physicians and scientists to use all the knowledge, insight and perseverance they can muster. Many of our faculty members are investigating potential new diagnostic and management approaches to the disease, as well as new vaccines and treatments. We are playing a leading role in the key NIH clinical and laboratory study to define the immune response to COVID-19 (NIAID IMPACC Study) and have recently received large-scale grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for our COVID-19 research. This is important work, and it is truly inspiring.

It is fitting, in light of our history, that we break new ground in diversity, equity and inclusion. The College of Medicine is the proud successor to two historic medical schools, Hahnemann Medical College, founded in 1848, and the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, founded in 1850, the first medical school in the world for women. A desire to provide educational opportunity was also the foundation for Drexel, born in 1891 as the Drexel Institute of Art, Science and Industry, and today a vibrant national research university — globally engaged, yet integral to the fiber of Philadelphia and its diverse community.

Thus, it is our obligation to take on the great challenges of our communities, including systemic racism and health inequity, and to address the impact of these inequities across our missions of education, research, community service and clinical care.

Accordingly, I have committed additional resources to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The office has been reorganized and expanded to amplify its voice and influence. Leon McCreia II, MD, MPH, now leads the office as senior associate dean. He is supported by two new assistant deans, with their own areas of responsibility. Annette Gadegbeku, MD, is assistant dean for community health and Rita Guevara, MD '12, is assistant dean for diversity, equity and inclusion. Each of these very talented faculty members has demonstrated experience, dedication and success in addressing the issues that affect the health of our communities. Together, they will make a remarkable team.

**Charles B. Cairns, MD**  
 Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean  
 Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs



## Festive Commencement • *continued from the cover*

who this year received the honorary degree Doctor of Science. High drew from her career pioneering cures for genetic diseases to share an important message with graduates.

"Whatever you choose as your career path, make sure it's something that you feel is really worth doing," High said. "If you believe in the value of what you're doing, if you know that it's a worthwhile use of your talents and your energy, you'll have the fortitude and the long view that you need to help overcome obstacles along the way."

The student body elected Ria Harshal Mulherkar, MD, to address the graduates. She shared reflections on their time together: "We all came in with different dreams, different

histories, but no matter what it was that brought us here, our journeys united once we walked through the front doors of Drexel Medicine."

Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean and Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs Charles B. Cairns, MD, also addressed the graduates during the ceremonies. "You have been extraordinary in rapidly expanding your knowledge base, acquiring new skills and gaining the experience necessary to become successful scientists and physicians. You have also proven to be an especially resilient and resourceful group, given the unprecedented challenges you have faced," Cairns said. "We are so proud of the role that you will play and all that you will bring [to the world]."



## Being Black in Medical School

In May, William Justice, MD Class of 2022, delivered a letter to Drexel University College of Medicine leadership. Cosigned by nearly 40 medical students, the letter provided insight to the often misunderstood plight of Black people. It also expressed his pain and anger as a Black man about the injustices experienced by Black people in America, most recently the killings of George Floyd and countless others by law enforcement. Justice described the effects of both individual and systemic racism on himself and his classmates, as well as his disappointment in the College of Medicine for the lack of acknowledgment of George Floyd's death or the impacts it had on students of color. On May 30, the College of Medicine announced that a town hall would be held that week to focus on the needs of the community in a time of national unrest and pandemic.

The original agenda called for the Offices of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Student Counseling to respond to these events and discuss available resources for the Drexel community, and did not include time for student voices to be heard. Drexel's Student National Medical Association (SNMA) chapter asked to have students speak at the meeting, so they could discuss their experiences of racism at Drexel and ask for change within the organization. Two of those students were Brett Mitchell and Ayomide Igun. We asked them to reflect on their experiences, both as Black Drexel medical students in general and as two of the four student speakers at the town hall.

### Brett Mitchell:

Before starting med school, I didn't really think about how much pressure as a Black man I'd feel to succeed. Since there's less than 10 of us in my class, there's a constant, pressing reminder every time I'm at school of how important it is for me to become a doctor. It grimly feels like we are a dying breed. Additionally, I have to deal with being the only Black student in my small groups, which is what I have dealt with for most of my academic life. However, being involved with the school's SNMA chapter and the diversity office programs has certainly made Drexel feel more like home. These recent events have made the Black community here closer than ever, and our current bond has become my favorite part of med school. We always have each other's backs.

Leading up to the town hall, the Black students were collectively disappointed in how Drexel was initially handling the response to the George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery murders and racial tensions that they sparked. We were already angry at those killings and the constant devaluing

of Black life. Despite all that anger we felt, it didn't seem like Drexel was giving the Black community much time to express their grievances. In the allotted time we had, I volunteered to speak up and tell my story as a Black student. We all wanted to be strategic with our responses to truly take advantage of the short 15 minutes we had. We Zoomed almost every day to practice and devise demands. We felt that these racial tensions gave us leverage to spark positive change at our school.

I chose to speak because I wanted people to understand the things Black students go through and think about every day. I wanted to address how my braided Black hairstyle makes me self-conscious about how "professional" I look. Some students who may not have spent much time around Black people can be ignorant about aspects of Black people's plight. We wanted the school to address implicit racial biases better. I wanted to share about the shortcomings in anti-racism in the curriculum. A lot of us feel like Drexel could do a better job educating us about the health care disparities that plague the Black community in Philadelphia. It's disheartening to see Black people disproportionately dying from the coronavirus, and we need to do a better job of teaching future doctors about why that is and how we can prevent that. Our experiences and our issues matter.

I feel like the town hall went well. We got the school to release a public action plan. We also gained a lot of support from classmates and faculty.



Brett Mitchell, second-year medical student

However, I am pretty tired. Being an advocate for change is important work, of course, but it is hard. It feels like the pressure is on us, the SNMA leadership, to be the ones advocating for change, and I wish there were more of an active force behind us. It seems like SNMA is the sole anti-racism task force. But at the end of the day, we have the administration listening and we hope change can follow that.

### Ayomide Igun:

My experience as a Black medical student at Drexel has been more challenging than expected. There are only two other Black men in my class of about 260-something students. Although my high school was predominantly minority students, I attended the University of Maryland, College Park, which is less diverse, and was able to adapt and succeed while there. As someone who has navigated different cultural academic environments, I felt I would be prepared to navigate a predominantly white medical school. However, I quickly came to realize that my time at Drexel would be harder than anything I had ever experienced.

My first experience at Drexel — during orientation week, my first time stepping in the building — one of the orientation advisors got me confused with another Black male medical student. We don't look alike. One of the other advisors corrected her and she was like, "Oh, it's no big deal." I immediately sensed how awkward things had become, and in that moment I felt like I made everybody else cringe. I wanted to take myself out of the situation as fast as possible, so I quickly made my way into the auditorium.

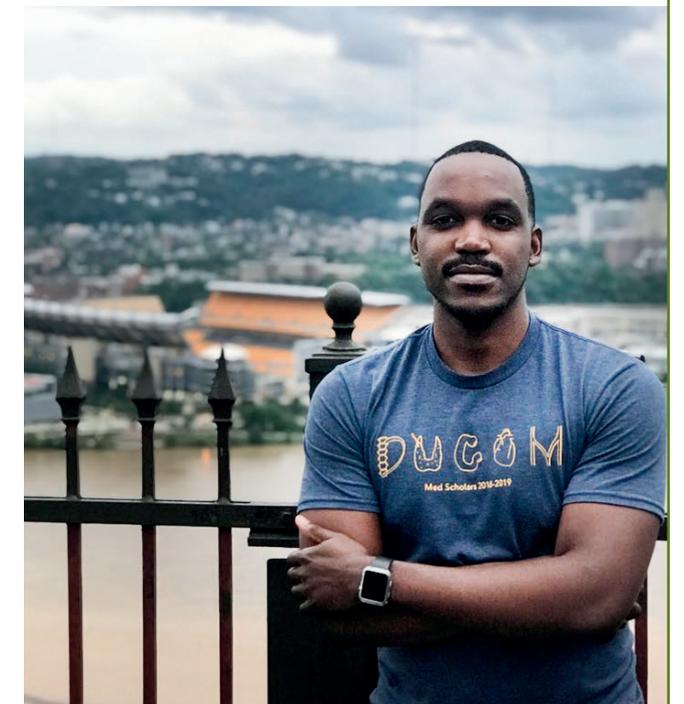
Another thing that happened — I was left out of a text message thread for my core group. When I found out, at first it felt like it was just a mistake, because they said, "Oh, we didn't realize you were not in the group thread." But I wondered if it was really just a mistake, and that kind of ate at me for a while. (Recently, due to the current climate of increased awareness, one of my group mates apologized for excluding me from the group text and said, "We should have just come to you and asked for your number." I felt so relieved, because I struggled with what exactly happened, and he confirmed it and apologized. I sometimes think I might be overly sensitive, but his words made me see I was right for the way I felt.)

With the whole George Floyd situation, and the school's slow response to what happened, it was a galvanizing moment for the Black medical students. For the first time, we created a group chat. It was the first time we all came together in the same

group. The town hall was going to happen, and we wanted everybody to get a chance to share their experiences, but ultimately the number got cut down to four people. I didn't really want to do it at first; I don't like to stand out. But I felt it was very important that there was a Black male voice.

I didn't really know how to go about preparing. Do you just speak from the heart? I ended up actually typing it out. I thought carefully about what I did and didn't want to share. Although I felt some experiences I have had would be valuable for the town hall attendees to hear about, I wanted to make sure that I didn't violate the trust and friendship of some classmates and administrators. Then we had a Zoom call where the four of us who were going to speak practiced what we were going to say. At the town hall, it went better than I expected, and that's all I can ask for.

Since the town hall, I have had mixed feelings. There hasn't been much difference in my day to day. I'm still just in my rotations in New Jersey. It does take time for change to happen, but a good number of people have reached out to me to say they were really proud of me. I feel good that I did it, and hopefully in the future I'll feel like what I did led to some change. I'm a realist. Change comes over time, and it's the little things that you do that ultimately lead to the implementation and the longevity of whatever your goal is.



Ayomide Igun, fourth-year medical student

## Verdi J. DiSesa, MD, MBA, Named Senior Vice Dean and COO

Verdi J. DiSesa, MD, MBA, was named to the newly created position of senior vice dean and chief operating officer of the College of Medicine in April.

In addition to contributing to the development of strategies and initiatives to advance the vision and objectives of the College of Medicine, DiSesa will work to optimize collaboration with the College's affiliated hospitals, including St. Christopher's Hospital for Children and Tower Health, and other organizations that are engaged in the education of students and residents. He is charged with increasing the understanding of lifetime health management, population health, and social determinants of disease as important guiding principles for clinical practice and medical education.

DiSesa will contribute to the conception and design of innovative educational, research, and clinical projects. Working collaboratively across the College of Medicine



with other Drexel colleges and schools, he will develop innovative programs that enhance the ability to measure and improve population health.

DiSesa has extensive experience in local, national and international health care settings. Most recently, he was the president and CEO of Temple University Hospital, chief operating officer of Temple University Health System, and senior vice dean for clinical affairs at Temple University School of Medicine.

In addition to his administrative roles, he has been actively engaged in the practice of cardiac surgery and the clinical instruction of residents and medical students throughout his career. He has had faculty appointments at Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, Rush Medical College in Chicago, and Allegheny University of the Sciences (once the parent of Hahnemann and MCP), as well as Temple.

DiSesa is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and earned his MBA from the Wharton School. He completed his residency in cardiothoracic surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital and in cardiac surgery at Children's Hospital in Boston. He is a member of the Relative Value Scale Update Committee of the American Medical Association.

## Inaugural #BlackInNeuroWeek

A team of 22 neuroscientists, neuroengineers and science communicators created #BlackInNeuroWeek, a social media initiative with daily themed discussions aimed at celebrating, amplifying and supporting Black voices in neuro. The inaugural Black In Neuro Week, a virtual celebration of Black excellence in neuroscience and related fields, took place July 27 – August 2. Alumna Brielle R. Ferguson, PhD '17, was a member of the event's organizing committee, which was spread across institutions in three countries.



Ongoing, Black In Neuro is a professional development program highlighting Black contributions to neuroscience, neurology and related fields, organized by and for STEM graduate students, postdocs and professionals. The website [blackinneuro.com](http://blackinneuro.com) offers searchable profiles of the Black In Neuro Community, resources for students at all levels, and a growing collection of relevant papers.

Inspired by Black Birders Week, Black In Neuro formed on Twitter on July 3. Similar themed weeks have included #BlackInAstro, #BlackPhysicists and #BlackBotanists.

## Explore & Serve Day

The Division of Pre-medical and Pre-health Programs held its annual Explore & Serve Day in April, to recognize and celebrate the research and community service projects students conducted outside the classroom during their programs of study.

Participating in biomedical research enables pre-medical/pre-health graduates to become better diagnosticians and practitioners of evidence-based medicine. Community service projects prepare them to better serve patients and their families as health care practitioners.

This year, the students' achievements were featured in a virtual Explore & Serve Day showcase, including oral and

poster presentations that took place over three days. High-caliber research was presented on a variety of topics, ranging from neurobiology to the efficacy of natural products. The community service projects ran the gamut from local to global.

As Explore & Serve Day demonstrated, these research and service experiences enriched the students' perspectives as they honed their critical thinking skills or reflected on the needs of the communities with which they work.



## Transplant Team at Home at Tower Health

The nationally ranked kidney and liver transplant group recruited by Tower Health pending the closure of Hahnemann University Hospital performed its first transplant under the auspices of the Tower Health Transplant Institute in May at Reading Hospital.

Led by David Reich, MD, professor of surgery at Drexel, the team of transplant surgeons, hepatologists and nephrologists joined Tower Health Medical Group last fall, along with experienced clinical and support staff. Performing the surgery on May 25 was a milestone many months in the making. In addition to becoming familiar with the hospital, preparations included setting up equipment, creating policies and procedures, taking part in simulations for the surgery and evaluating the transplant candidates. Then additional protocols were called for with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While at Hahnemann, the transplant program became the only 5-star-rated kidney transplant program in Pennsylvania and the third-best kidney transplant program in the nation, as ranked by the Scientific Registry of Transplant Recipients (based on patient



**Drs. Gary Xiao, Stephen Guy, David Reich and Karthik Ranganna.**

survival with a functioning kidney one year after transplant).

Reich, now medical director of the Tower Health Transplant Institute, and colleagues remind us to consider organ donation. Although the number of donors has increased, it is always outstripped by the number of potential recipients.

## Marla Gold, MD, Named Vice Provost for Community Health Care Innovation

Marla J. Gold, MD, has been appointed to the newly created position of vice provost for community health care innovation at Drexel University. In this role, she is responsible for optimizing community health care services, promoting population health, and coordinating health care and health science research and education within Drexel's urban setting.

Working closely with College of Medicine Dean Charles B. Cairns, MD, Gold will develop and implement a strategic vision that anticipates changes in health care and population health nationally and sets the stage for enhanced integration; facilitate the expansion of health care research within Drexel's health sciences colleges and schools; and spur innovations in health care delivery and the inter-professional education of future health care providers. She will also focus on supporting the advancement of the College of Medicine's missions of education, clinical care, research and community engagement.

Gold has a long track record of leadership at Drexel, holding key positions in medicine and public health for more than three decades. In the 1990s, she designed and built the College of Medicine's Partnership Comprehensive Care Practice, an integrated system of multispecialty care

for people with HIV/AIDS, which is still the largest such practice in the region. She was named dean of Drexel's School of Public Health in 2003, leading the school to its first full accreditation, along with robust growth in research and enrollment. Since stepping down as dean in 2013, Gold has served as a senior member of the faculty in the

School of Public Health, teaching students at all levels and, more recently, directing the school's doctorate in public health program.

Gold's relationship with Drexel began with her completion of an internal medicine residency and infectious disease fellowship at the College of Medicine's predecessor institution the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She is a 1997 alumna of Drexel's Executive

Leadership in Academic Medicine program for women.

She has served on the Philadelphia Board of Health for over two decades and has provided guidance to federal, state and city leaders concerning key health topics. Gold's knowledge of the regional health care systems, coupled with her familiarity with the Drexel health community, will allow her to bridge entities that contribute to education, research and practice, while building on Drexel's expertise in health science and commitment to civic engagement.



## St. Christopher's — Into the Future

On December 15, 2019, Drexel University and Tower Health took ownership of St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, returning the hospital to its historic roots as a not-for-profit organization.

Tower Health and Drexel are committed to the vital role St. Christopher's plays in the Philadelphia region's health care. More than 30,000 children depend on the hospital for primary and specialty care, and 70,000 children are served annually by the hospital's emergency department. St. Christopher's will continue to be a critical part of the educational experience for Drexel's medical students and their hospital-based clinical rotations in pediatrics. The hospital also fulfills an important strategic goal for Tower Health, enhancing pediatric specialty services across the system.



**Drexel University President John Fry and Tower Health President and CEO Clint Matthews present a welcome gift to Donald Mueller, the new CEO of St. Christopher's. The art was done by a patient, and signed by the hospital's staff.**

St. Christopher's is a 188-bed facility with more than 220 pediatric experts on staff, combining exceptional primary pediatric care with a wide array of pediatric specialties. It houses one of only three Level I Pediatric Trauma Centers in Pennsylvania and the only dedicated and verified Pediatric Only Burn Center between Manhattan and Baltimore. St. Christopher's is a Magnet-designated hospital and received a Women's Choice Award for Best Children's Hospital in 2019.

The College of Medicine's association with St. Christopher's dates back to one of our predecessor schools, Medical College of Pennsylvania. Over the years, the close affiliation with the hospital and the many faculty members there have made it the home base for Drexel's academic Department of Pediatrics. The interim academic chair for pediatrics is Renee Turchi, MD, MPH, an MCP alumna, who is the medical director of the Center for Children and Youth With Special Health Care Needs at the hospital.

St. Christopher's welcomed Donald Mueller as the new president and CEO of the hospital on July 27. He joined St. Christopher's from Children's Hospital at Erlanger in Chattanooga, Tennessee. As CEO there, he led one of only four Comprehensive Regional Pediatric Centers certified by the state — the region's only full-service facility with a dedicated 65-bed Level IV NICU, pediatric trauma team, emergency department and pediatric ICU.

## Drexel AMA Hosts 5th Annual MedTalks@Drexel

The Drexel student chapter of the American Medical Association hosted its fifth annual MedTalks@Drexel last November at the Queen Lane Campus. The TED Talk-style conference showcased contemporary issues affecting physicians and innovative solutions.

The students arranged a remarkable lineup of speakers and topics.

- Damien Croft, MD, MPH, Drexel's Dornsife School of Public Health: "Physicians and Future Ways of Working"
- Marilyn Heine, MD, hematologist: "The Role of Physicians in the New World of Augmented Intelligence"
- Michael Weinstein, MD, Jefferson University Hospitals: "Physician Burnout"
- Kevin Zacharoff, MD, SUNY Stony Brook School of Medicine: "Opioid Crisis Innovation and Regulation"

Each presentation, distilled from a wealth of knowledge and experience, offered a unique perspective to the students and cultivated a deeper understanding of their future careers.



**Damien Croft, MD, MPH, spoke on future ways of working.**

## 2020 Golden Apple Honors

The annual Golden Apple Awards recognize outstanding service and teaching at Drexel University College of Medicine. Each class of medical students nominates faculty and staff members for the honor and votes to determine the award winners.

Non-faculty awards are given to honor staff who have provided outstanding service to the student body and the College. The awards for staff are voted on by the entire student body. The Special Recognition Awards are voted on by the Student Government Association.



### Class of 2023

#### Foundations of Basic Science – Year 1

Haviva Goldman, PhD, Neurobiology & Anatomy  
Caitlin Howe, PhD, Neurobiology & Anatomy  
Jed Shumsky, PhD, Neurobiology & Anatomy

### Class of 2022

#### Case-Based Learning – Year 1

Maya Bass, MD, Family Medicine

#### Foundations of Basic Science – Year 1

Dennis DePace, PhD, Neurobiology & Anatomy  
Michael White, PhD, Pharmacology & Physiology

#### Foundations of Patient Care – Year 1

Pamela Duke, MD, Internal Medicine

#### Case-Based Learning – Year 2

Donna Antonucci, MD, Internal Medicine  
Sara Schultz, MD,  
Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine

#### Foundations of Basic Science – Year 2

Amy Baranoski, MD,  
Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine  
Cheryl Hanau, MD, Pathology

#### Frontiers – Year 2

Esther Chernak, MD, MPH,  
Office of Educational Affairs

### Class of 2021

#### Case-Based Learning – Year 2

Kim Kahng, MD, Office of Educational Affairs

#### Foundations of Patient Care – Year 2

Adrienne Willard, MD, Internal Medicine

### Attending Physician

Wei Du, MD, Psychiatry, Various Sites  
Seth Patton, DO, Internal Medicine,  
Allegheny General Hospital  
Vilmaris Quinones-Cardona, MD, Pediatrics,  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children  
Hakim Uqdah, MD, Internal Medicine,  
WellSpan York Hospital  
Anh-Thu Vu, MD, Neurology,  
Office of Educational Affairs

### Resident Physician

Alexander Bruscke, MD, OB/GYN,  
WellSpan York Hospital  
Kyle Macaulay, DO, Internal Medicine,  
Reading Hospital  
Athena Tudino, MD, OB/GYN,  
Crozer-Chester Medical Center

### Class of 2020

#### Attending Physician

Gazi Abdulhay, MD, OB/GYN,  
Crozer-Chester Medical Center  
Mahesh Krishnamurthy, MD, Internal Medicine,  
Easton Hospital  
Gul Madison, MD, Internal Medicine, Mercy Hospital

### Resident Physician

Heather Goddard, MD, Pediatrics,  
St. Christopher's Hospital for Children

### Student Government Association Awards

Caitlin Curcio, MS  
Amy Fuchs, MD

### Student Body Awards

Jill Adaman, PhD  
Diane Gottlieb, MD  
Marie Hartman  
Douglas Whitmire

## Topping Off at Tower Health

Tower Health and Drexel University celebrated an official “topping off” ceremony for the College of Medicine’s additional location, Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health, in West Reading, Pennsylvania.

Consistent with social distancing restrictions, a small ceremony was held during which a handful of leaders from



Tower Health and Drexel watched the placement of the final 30-foot steel beam. Construction of the new facility is slated to be complete in time to welcome the first 40 students for the 2021-2022 academic year.

The structure consists of:

- 2,636,000 pounds of structural steel
- 3,109 pieces of steel
- 2,300 cubic yards of foundation concrete
- 290,000 pounds of foundation reinforcing bar
- 3,620 cubic yards of concrete
- 41 tons of reinforcing steel bar

The new facility will feature state-of-the-art technology, as well as traditional classrooms, learning communities and lecture halls, and a significant focus on wellness. It will include specially designed patient rooms, an anatomy laboratory and simulation labs to help students advance their medical skills. When fully operational, the campus will have the capacity to educate and train 200 medical students.

**Observing tradition, representatives signed the beam before it rose bearing the flag and evergreen tree.**

## Pitching in With PPE

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, before everyone was asked to wear masks, Drexel faculty, staff and students worked to compile much-needed supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) from around campus and throughout the community to give to local health care providers and hospitals in Philadelphia.

Students from the College of Medicine and Drexel’s College of Nursing and Health Professions gathered surgical masks, N95 masks, isolation gowns, disposable or washable scrubs and gowns, glasses and face shields, bleach, aprons, patient gowns, EPA-approved wipes, and other materials. They asked faculty and staff who might typically have had access to those items to consider donating them, especially since Drexel had suspended in-person classes, as well as non-essential research.

“As we wound down non-essential research and simultaneously became aware of the rapidly growing need for these supplies, my research team and I decided we should donate what we could,” said Michael Lane, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Neurobiology & Anatomy. “In reaching out to people in our department, and the Spinal Cord Research Center, we found that others were thinking the same thing, so we quickly started to collect what we had together.”

Haviva Goldman, PhD, a professor, and Theresa Connors, a lab manager, in the department were among the many who pitched in.

Meanwhile, some Drexel medical students joined the Philadelphia Organization of Health Professions Students–COVID Response Facebook group to learn how they could help out. Medical student Kira Smith encouraged others in the Facebook group to ask their

anatomy professors for extra PPE, after she did the same at Drexel and was put in touch with Lane to help coordinate the student effort at the College of Medicine.

Besides Smith, the Drexel group included medical students Rachel Yoo, Edward Guo, Anisha Gopu, Stephanie Anciro, Estefania Alba and Des Lee. The students collected items from construction companies, biotech companies, skin treatment centers, museums, hardware stores, auto shops, nail salons, tattoo parlors, veterinary hospitals and neighboring universities.

In a statement on behalf of the group, Alba and Smith said, “We have been feeling helpless, disoriented and unsure of how we can be of help from a distance. We realized that even though we were unable to help in clinics or hospitals, we could still play a role in combating this pandemic.”



**St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children received Drexel donations.**

## Pediatric AIDS Benefit Concert Raises \$32,000

The 27th annual Pediatric AIDS Benefit Concert, held February 1, was again a success, bringing in \$32,000 this year for children living with HIV and AIDS. The event has raised more than \$600,000 for the patients of the Dorothy Mann Center for Pediatric and Adolescent HIV at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children.

The annual gathering of the College of Medicine’s talented students and faculty featured unique and entertaining performances by soloists, bands, a cappella singers and dance groups, as well as a silent auction and dinner buffet. Attendees included Drexel medical students, graduate students and faculty, St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children representatives, physicians, alumni, and students from nearby medical schools. The 2020 ticket sales, totaling 546, exceeded last year’s by 80 guests.

The Dorothy Mann Center for Pediatric and Adolescent HIV at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children is the largest of its kind in the tri-state area. It provides comprehensive care, including social services, to children infected with HIV and their families. The money raised by the students through donations, ticket sales and silent auction helps provide affected families with emergency funds for housing, utilities, food and rent, and helps to offset other expenses such as college application fees and supplies for summer camp.

Donations are accepted for the center on an ongoing basis. For more information, visit [ducompabc.wixsite.com/pabc](http://ducompabc.wixsite.com/pabc).



## Vision2020Votes Ramps Up Voter Mobilization

Among women who were eligible to vote in the 2016 presidential election, more than one-third — 37 percent — did not cast a ballot. In the 2018 midterm election, almost half — 45 percent — of eligible women did not vote.

Vision2020Votes, launched last spring, is a nonpartisan, national, online voter mobilization effort to get more women than ever registered and voting in the 2020 elections ([Vision2020Votes.org](http://Vision2020Votes.org)).

Vision2020Votes is an initiative of Women 100, a series of programs and events to celebrate American women during the centennial year of the 19th Amendment, and spark new ideas about the path to gender equality. Presented by Drexel’s Vision

2020, Women 100 is the largest 19th Amendment centennial celebration in the United States.

“Vision2020Votes is designed to assist and encourage the one-third of eligible American women who habitually do not vote,” according to Lynn Yeakel, president and founder of Vision 2020.

“In this 100th anniversary year of women’s right to vote, not only is exercising that right an important



way to thank the suffragists who fought so long and hard to win that right for us, it is our responsibility and opportunity as citizens to act like the majority we are,” Yeakel continues.

Why do people who intend to vote not follow through? In many cases, women do not vote because life gets in the way: They were busy, forgot, missed the mail-in deadline, didn’t know where to go, didn’t have child care, and so on.

People are far more likely to overcome such barriers if they join a team of people they know who all commit to voting, they make a plan to vote, and they are encouraged and reminded along the way. That’s the concept that led to Vision2020Votes. Participants can sign up and invite others to join their team. There is no money involved — no request for donations. The sole aim of the program is to encourage women to be active citizens in our democracy.

## Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Expanded

In recognition of its vital importance to the College of Medicine's missions, Dean Charles B. Cairns, MD, announced the expansion and reorganization of the College of Medicine's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, effective August 1, committing additional resources to the office and creating three positions to enhance its scope and capacity to serve.

Leon McCrea II, MD, MPH, has been promoted from assistant dean to senior associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion, reporting directly to Dean Cairns. He is charged with leading the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, associated programs, and faculty and staff; developing policies and processes to bolster diversity, equity and inclusion at the College of Medicine; and collaborating with the Offices of Faculty Affairs and Faculty Development to implement best practices for the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty from groups historically underrepresented in medicine.

McCrea will also work with Admissions, Educational Affairs, Student Affairs and Alumni Engagement on best practices related to increasing the representation of historically underrepresented groups in medicine and biomedical sciences; and serve as a resource for the College of Medicine's affiliate sites for education and training in bias and anti-racism. He will continue as an associate professor in the Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine and program director of the Drexel/



Leon McCrea II, MD, MPH



Rita Guevara, MD



Annette Gadegbeku, MD

Tower Health Family Medicine Residency.

Rita Guevara, MD, has been appointed assistant dean of diversity, equity and inclusion, collaborating on all efforts of the office, including recruitment, enrollment, community building and stakeholder events. She will also focus on specific projects involving the pipeline mentorship program, educational grant preparation and quality improvement of programming. An alumna of the College of Medicine, both the MD program and the Drexel Pathway to Medical School, Guevara is an assistant professor in the Department of Pediatrics and serves as director of health equity at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

Annette Gadegbeku, MD, has been appointed assistant dean of community health within the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. In this role, she will establish local partnerships to promote urban health equity in collaboration with the University; be involved in curricular support and training in inclusion and anti-racism; engage students and faculty in scholarship and service related to health equity; and take on focused projects, for example, in faculty development. Gadegbeku is an associate professor in the Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine, chief of the Division of Community Health and associate program director of the Family Medicine Residency.

## Karen Restifo, MD, JD, Named Inaugural Vice Dean of Tower Health Campus

Karen Restifo, MD, JD, has been named regional vice dean of Drexel University College of Medicine's Tower Health campus in West Reading, effective September 1. Dr. Restifo comes to Drexel from the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California, where she served as associate dean of student affairs. During her tenure there, she helped with preparation for an LCME full accreditation site visit. She also served on numerous committees, including the Student Performance Committee, Student Affairs Committee, Medical Education Committee, Diversity Council, and the Wellness Task Force. She played a role in the development of Keck School of Medicine's new MD



program curriculum.

Before her time at USC, Dr. Restifo was associate dean of student affairs at the University of Arizona College of Medicine at Phoenix, and then at the Texas Christian University and University of North Texas Health Sciences Medical School. In Phoenix, she was part of the school's transition from regional campus to an independent medical school, including preparing for multiple LCME accreditation site visits. At the University of North Texas, she was involved in curriculum development and preparation for the school's preliminary LCME accreditation site visit.

Dr. Restifo was recently chair of the AAMC's Western Group on Student Affairs, having previously served as vice chair, and chair of the group's steering committee. She has presented regionally and nationally on the topics of USMLE preparation, standardized video interviewing, improvements to residency match culture, and professionalism



## Class of 2020 Meets Their Match – Virtually!

Upon learning where they will complete their residency training, Drexel University College of Medicine's fourth-year medical students typically celebrate with hugs and high-fives. This year, the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic led students, staff and faculty to move their March 20 Match Day envelope-opening party online.

While many students felt initial disappointment at the venue change, some noted that their families would not have been able to attend an in-person event anyway, so the online format suited them even better.

### Where to?

Primary care was the specialty of choice for 103 graduates, including 62 internal medicine matches, 19 in pediatrics, and 22 in family medicine. Another popular specialty was emergency medicine, which was the choice of 26 graduates; 18 members of the Class of 2020 will train in anesthesiology as well as 14 each in OB/GYN, radiology and psychiatry. Nearly one-third of graduates, 82 in total, will complete at least part of their training in Pennsylvania, and 48 graduates will complete their residencies at Drexel-affiliated hospitals.



during the transition to residency. Throughout her career, she has championed student wellness as a critical part of the process of training outstanding physicians.

After earning her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Restifo attended Georgetown University School of Medicine. She completed an internship at Washington Hospital Center and an emergency medicine residency at Johns Hopkins University.

After 10 years at the Yale University School of Medicine, Dr. Restifo attended the University of Connecticut School of Law. She then completed a medical ethics fellowship at Harvard Medical School in 2012. She attended the AAMC Executive Development Seminar for Associate Deans and Department Chairs in 2014, and the Leadership Development Program at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix from 2014 to 2015.

# Mobilized: Drexel Researchers Face Down the Coronavirus

Fighting a global pandemic requires innovation and urgency, and Drexel's researchers have heeded the call. Vaccine adjuvants, infection blockers and protein targeting to inactivate the virus are among the 17 COVID-19 projects currently supported by the \$100,000 Rapid Response Research & Development Fund, created by University trustees. More than half the awarded projects involve College of Medicine faculty.

"When the pandemic started, Drexel research was shut down except for essential COVID-19 investigations," says Irwin Chaiken, PhD, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology. "Investigators considered the problem, the urgency to respond and what they could do to help."

## Stopping the Virus in Its Tracks

Chaiken drew from his ongoing research in HIV when he developed the concept for his study "Irreversible Inactivation of SARS-CoV-2 by Spike Protein Targeting." Chaiken and his team recognized right away that the primary protein on the surface of the SARS-CoV-2 virus had properties that were similar to the spike protein in HIV. The idea was to use the same technology they had developed for HIV to target the new virus.

While the spike protein has been widely established as a target for treating SARS-CoV-2, it's Chaiken's use of lectin-DLIs (dual action lytic inhibitors) that makes his work particularly novel and could lead to the development of a therapy that would actually render the virus inactive. The team has tested the concept on a pseudovirus with positive results.

"We found that in fact the lectin-DLIs did inhibit infection by SARS-CoV-1, and preliminary data suggests that it will work on SARS-CoV-2," Chaiken says. "It's worth noting that the spike protein for SARS is also crucial for the development of vaccines."

## A Vaccine That Goes the Distance

To that end, Chaiken has been collaborating with another project team, led by infectious disease experts Elias El Haddad, PhD, professor of medicine, and Michele Kutzler, PhD, associate professor of medicine, and microbiology and immunology. They are working

to develop a vaccine using both an antigen and an adjuvant.

"We know that control of this pandemic will be challenging without a vaccine," Kutzler says. "We saw an opportunity to pivot our research and develop a vaccine for the prevention of this disease."

In particular, they wanted to test out the adjuvant molecule Haddad had developed, adenosine deaminase-1 (ADA-1), an enzyme critical for maintenance and function of the immune system, which has been shown to boost the activity of T cells. They are partnering with David Weiner, PhD, of the Wistar Institute on an immunoadjuvant system for a potential COVID vaccine. They are doing preclinical collaboration with the Weiner Lab on the ADA-1 adjuvant and a DNA vaccine encoding SARS-CoV2 S1 glycoprotein. The goal is to evaluate the immunogenicity of the vaccine and see if its effects would be more potent and longer lasting with the addition of ADA-1.

"The knowledge that immune function declines with age and that there is greater risk of severe COVID-19 in older adults and immune-compromised individuals leading to poor vaccine responses leads us to believe that development of effective adjuvants is key," Kutzler says. "In addition, we're looking for improved immune memory and durability in this next generation of vaccine formulations."

The team is hoping to complete the preclinical work by the end of the year and begin clinical trials early next year.

## Blocking Infection at the Gate

At the time of the initial outbreak, Simon Cocklin, PhD, an associate professor, and Adel Rashad, PhD, research assistant professor, both in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, were collaborating with a laboratory at Shandong University in Jinan, China, that was directly impacted.

"Our partners in China were concerned about CoV-2 and asked if we would help on the biology side of testing new antivirals for the virus," Cocklin says.

Cocklin and Rashad's study, "Macrocyclic and Small Molecule Inhibitors of SARS-CoV-2 Entry," is focused on developing molecules that could stop the virus and initial infection at the level of cellular entry.

"Based on the nature of the SARS-CoV-2 glycoproteins, we decided to go with macrocyclic compounds, which are effectively large small molecules so they have more interaction sites and can be optimized to incredible potencies," Cocklin says.

So far, the team has completed computational screening of almost 13,000 macrocycles against the glycoproteins. "After prioritizing and purchasing a smaller subset of these compounds, we found two that we demonstrated experimentally to interact with the SARS-CoV-2 spike glycoprotein complex," Cocklin says. "Testing of these compounds in an antiviral pseudovirus screening assay demonstrated that they interfered with

the virus entry into cells, but not very potently. Therefore, we subsequently identified and computationally assessed some close variations of these macrocyclic compounds that were commercially available. Purchase and testing of these new compounds allowed us to discover a novel, specific macrocyclic compound inhibitor of SARS-CoV-2 entry that works 20-fold better than our original hits. We are currently seeking funds to continue to identify and optimize this promising class of anti-SARS-CoV-2 molecules.

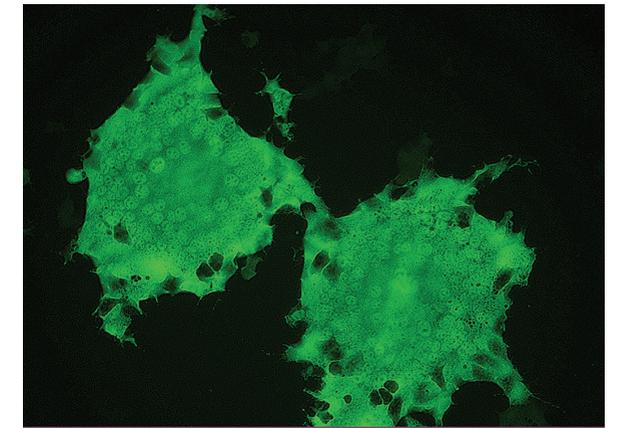
"These types of inhibitory molecules could be given to at-risk populations while we are waiting for an effective vaccine. They could have widespread benefits for those already infected with SARS-CoV-2, and those awaiting administration of the approved vaccine," Cocklin says. "They could also provide a treatment option for those who will be ineligible for COVID-19 vaccination due to age, being immunocompromised, or other preexisting medical conditions."

## Cellular Pathways of Protection

Sonia Navas-Martin, PhD, and Julio Martin-Garcia, PhD, associate professors of microbiology and immunology, are looking into the healing properties of macrophages, or white blood cells used as an innate first-line immune defense, to eliminate the virus and how these "peace-keeping cells" might be deployed as therapeutic intervention against SARS-CoV-2.

"Inflammation is a double-edged sword and although it is required for resolution from infections, it can be detrimental and contribute to fatal outcomes," Navas-Martin says. "Based on my previous expertise on coronaviruses and my long-term collaboration with Dr. Martin-Garcia studying macrophage response to RNA virus infection, we first decided to focus on an important gap of knowledge in coronavirus' mechanisms of disease."

The team is investigating macrophage responses to SARS-CoV-2 infection, specifically how the virus inhibits macrophages and how macrophage activations might



Cytopathic effects in coronavirus-infected cells.

change as the cells age. With preliminary data in hand, they can start to address some of these questions.

"Our SARS-CoV-2 research moves forward in several directions, but clearly we want to tackle cell pathways to control inflammation. The main question is how the virus kills in some people, particularly the elderly or those with comorbidities. Perhaps the right question to ask is how our immune system contributes to those fatal outcomes. At the end, it is a balance between the virus and the host, and identifying individual cells' responses is key to successfully winning this pandemic battle."

Navas-Martin has been studying coronaviruses since 1999, and she has been fascinated by their unique properties ever since. The biggest challenge in confronting COVID-19 will be ongoing integration of basic and translational research. In a sense, she says, the virus has been a reminder from Mother Nature that we're all in this together.

"Solutions to this pandemic — antivirals, vaccines, etc. — will be identified through scientific collaboration rather than wild competition," she says. "It is a lesson that we all have to learn."

## Better Protection by Design

Rapid Response grants went to several proposals using technology and design to protect and support patients, health care workers and special populations.

College of Medicine Dean Charles B. Cairns, MD, has developed a COVID-19 information-sharing mobile app called the Drexel Health Tracker. With the collective health of the Drexel community in mind, the app is part of the school's evidence-based public health measures, and is being used to monitor individual health through self-reporting, in concert with testing protocols.

Funding was also awarded to a collaboration by Dean Cairns and Westphal College of Media Arts & Design professor Genevieve Dion, director of the Center for Functional Fabrics, to create protective face masks for health

care workers and the general public.

In the sphere of public and mental health, Psychiatry Department faculty Drs. David Bennett and Barbara Schindler are leading the project "Implementation of an Online Peer Support Community to Assist Women with Substance Abuse Disorder during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Study," with collaborators in the College of Computing and Informatics.

In addition, Michael Weingarten, MD, MBA, professor of surgery, is working with a team from the College of Nursing and Health Professions on the study "Chronically Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Physical and Mental Health and Telehealth Care Delivery: Perspectives from Providers and Older Adults."



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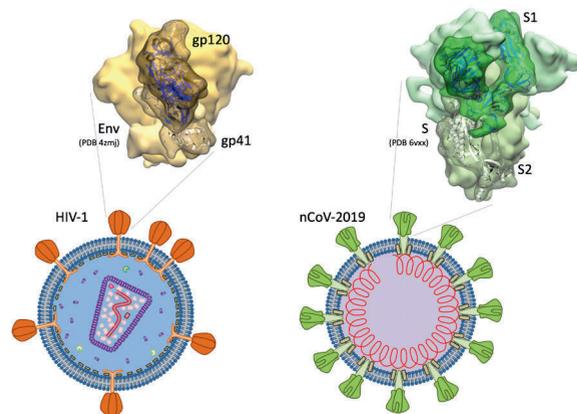


Image created by Cameron Abrams



Dr. Ajit

**Seena Ajit, PhD**, associate professor, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology; **Botros Shenoda, MD, PhD, Sujay Ramanathan, Richa Gupta, PhD, Yuzhen Tian, Renee Jean-Toussaint**, current and former Ajit Lab members; **Srinivas Somarowthu, PhD**, assistant professor, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology; **Guillermo Alexander, PhD**, professor, Department of Neurology; and colleagues at Drexel's School of Biomedical Engineering, Science & Health Systems, are authors of "Xist Attenuates Acute Inflammatory Response by Female Cells" in *Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences*, online March 19.



Dr. Barker



Dr. Giacometti

**Jacqueline Barker, PhD**, assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, principal investigator, and **Laura Giacometti, PhD '18**, a postdoctoral fellow in

Barker's lab, co-investigator, received a pilot grant for "Sex Differences in HIV- and Cocaine-induced Changes in Astrocyte Function and Reactivity" from the National Institute of Mental Health-funded Comprehensive NeuroAIDS Center Developmental Core at Temple University. This project includes \$20,000 in direct costs that will enable them to develop a new line of research combining their interest in HIV- and drug-induced changes in neurobiology with their work on sex differences in astrocyte function.



Dr. Mather



Dr. Ke

**Swati Dass**, doctoral student; **Michael Mather, PhD**, research assistant professor; and **Hangjun Ke, PhD**, assistant professor, all in the Department of

Microbiology & Immunology, authored "Divergent Mitochondrial Ribosomes in Unicellular Parasitic Protozoans" in *Trends in Parasitology*, February 19, 2020.

**Rachael D'Auria**, Class of 2022 MD student, wrote an essay "10:56 – The Minute a Patient's Life Ends and a Medical Student's Life Changes" for the blog Reflective-MedEd (January 28), and her post was picked up by bioethics.net. D'Auria presented her work "Ethical Dilemmas in the Emergency Department: Medical Student Observations and Surveys of Resident and Attending Physicians" at the Fourth Annual Medical Student Ethics Conference – Becoming a Physician: Ethical Challenges in Medical Education, on November 16, 2019, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. She completed this work in collaboration with classmates **Sonia Varandani** and **Ravi Moazzam**.



**Mary Anne Delaney, MD**, professor of psychiatry, associate dean for faculty affairs, and associate director of the ELAM program, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Philadelphia Chapter of the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society. The award honors a society member for a lifetime of career activities that have advanced the field of psychiatry through patient care, teaching and research. The award was presented at the chapter's Benjamin Rush Gala on November 15, 2019.

**Andrew Louis DiMatteo**, then a second-year medical student, was featured in the AMA "Members Move Medicine" series on the American Medical Association website on January 8. He spoke about giving back to the community, his pride in participating in the U.S. Army Health Professions Scholarship program, and working in the student Health Outreach Project clinics. DiMatteo leads the Drexel chapter of the AMA Medical Student Section.



Dr. Irollo



Mr. Platt

**Lindsay Festa, PhD '18**, former postdoctoral fellow; **Elena Irollo, PhD**, research associate; **Brian J. Platt**, manager of research administration; **Yuzen Tian**, research associate; and



Dr. Meucci

**Olimpia Meucci, MD, PhD**, professor and chair, all in the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, published "CXCL12-Induced Rescue of Cortical Dendritic Spines and Cognitive Flexibility" in *eLife*, January 23, 2020.

**Arthur L. Frank, MD**, professor, Department of Medicine, published a chapter, "The Role of Humanities in Medical Education," in the textbook *Handbook of Research on the Efficacy of Training Programs and Systems in Medical Education* (IGI Global, 2020).



**Annette Gadegbeku, MD**, associate professor, Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine, was invited to speak at the 2020 Cities Changing Diabetes Summit in Munich, Germany (canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Gadegbeku became involved with the organization when Philadelphia became a member city in November 2019.

**Ebony Gary, PhD '19**, was the first author of two papers published in *Vaccine*: "CCR10 Expression Is Required for the Adjuvant Activity of the Mucosal Chemokine CCL28 When Delivered in the Context of an HIV-1 Env DNA Vaccine" (March 4, 2020) and "Adenosine Deaminase-1 Enhances Germinal Center Formation and Functional Antibody Responses to HIV-1 Envelope DNA and Protein Vaccines" (April 9, 2020). Additional Drexel authors for

the March publication include **Noshin Kathuria, PhD '14**; MS students in Microbiology & Immunology **Ashley Curatola** and **Arjun Ramamurthi**; **Mariana Bernui, PhD**, assistant professor, and **Michele Kutzler, PhD**, associate professor, both in the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology; **Getrude Makurumidze**, then a Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship student in the Kutzler Lab; and **Elias El Haddad, PhD**, professor, Department of Medicine. Drexel co-authors for the April publication include **Margaret O'Connor**, third-year MD student; **Marita Chakhtoura, PhD**, and **Virginie Tardif, PhD**, postdoctoral fellows, Haddad Lab; **Ogan Kumova**, Microbiology & Immunology PhD student; Kutzler; and Haddad.



Dr. Gaskill



Ms. Nolan

**Peter Gaskill, PhD**, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology; **Rachel Nolan**, neuroscience PhD student in the MD/PhD program;



Dr. Matt



Ms. Johnson

**Katelyn Reeb**, Pharmacology & Physiology PhD student; **Yi Rong**, Drug Discovery & Development student; **Stephanie Matt, PhD**, postdoctoral researcher; **Hannah Johnson**, Drexel undergraduate



Ms. Runner

student; and **Kaitlyn Runner**, Gaskill Lab manager, published "Dopamine Activates NF-B and Primes the NLRP3 Inflammasome in Primary Human Macrophages" in *Brain and Behavior Immunity*, December 2019. Gaskill is the recipient of an R21 award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for his project "DAT-Psychostimulant Mediated Dopamine Release Increases Macrophage IL-1beta Production Through NF-kB Activation and Inflammasome Priming."



**Meera N. Harhay, MD**, associate professor of medicine, and partners at the National Kidney Foundation, University of Virginia and Emory University, received a five-year R01 NIH grant for "Identifying Healthy and High-Risk Weight Loss Phenotypes to Optimize Obesity Management in End-Stage Kidney Disease." Harhay also co-authored a June 22 Health Affairs blog post on how to save safety-net hospitals in the face of the human and financial toll of COVID-19.



Brain Metastasis."

**Edward Hartsough, PhD**, assistant professor of pharmacology and physiology, was awarded a one-year medical research grant in the amount of \$110,000 from the W.W. Smith Charitable Trust for his study "Organotypic Brain Slice Co-Culture for Modeling Melanoma

# Calendar

## Ongoing

Now-June **Seat at the Table Exhibition**  
View the multimedia segment at [women100.org/seatatthetable](http://women100.org/seatatthetable)  
In-person exhibition temporarily closed until the Kimmel Center reopens  
Contact: [vision2020@drexel.edu](mailto:vision2020@drexel.edu)

## October

- 5-9 **Virtual Career Fair**  
Monday and Tuesday: STEM Employers  
Friday: Health and Human Service Employers  
Contact: [Helene Stockman-Baer, hms372@drexel.edu](mailto:Helene.Stockman-Baer@drexel.edu)
- 8 **Discovery Day**  
Annual Day of Research: Virtual Event  
Information: [drexel.edu/medicine/discoveryday](http://drexel.edu/medicine/discoveryday)  
Contact: [Stephanie Schleidt, ss3946@drexel.edu](mailto:Stephanie.Schleidt@drexel.edu)
- 16-17 **SHE Leads Road Rally**  
Watch via webcast  
Road trip from Philadelphia to Seneca Falls, N.Y.  
Information: [women100.org/she-leads-road-rally](http://women100.org/she-leads-road-rally)  
Contact: [vision2020@drexel.edu](mailto:vision2020@drexel.edu)

## November

- 3 Election Day
- 19 **Marion Spencer Fay Award and Lecture**  
Award recipient Marina Picciotto, PhD, of Yale University will present "My Journey in the Neuroscience of Nicotine Addiction: From Molecules to Behavior": Virtual Event  
Contact: [Janine Barber, jkb48@drexel.edu](mailto:Janine.Barber@drexel.edu)
- 26 Thanksgiving

## December

- 11 **Women's Leadership Summit**  
One-day immersive leadership development focused on gender equity in medicine and science: Virtual Event  
Information: [bit.ly/wimscleads2020](http://bit.ly/wimscleads2020)

## Save the Date

**Woman One Award Ceremony and Reception, March 22, 2021**  
Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts  
Contact: [Janine Barber, jkb48@drexel.edu](mailto:Janine.Barber@drexel.edu)

**Alumni: For information about alumni events, please call toll-free 888.DUGRADS (888.384.7237), email [medical.alumni@drexel.edu](mailto:medical.alumni@drexel.edu) or visit [drexel.edu/medicine/alumni/events](http://drexel.edu/medicine/alumni/events).**



**William L. Justice, MS**, Class of 2022 medical student, received a Knox-McGruder Scholarship from the Medical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania. The society selects a recipient from each Philadelphia-area medical school for the \$2,000 educational scholarship. Justice was honored alongside other recipients at a ceremony on February 19.



**J. Yasha Kresh, PhD**, professor of cardiothoracic surgery and medicine, was an invited speaker at the 27th annual meeting of the International Society for Mechanical Circulatory Support, October 21-23, 2019, held in Bologna, Italy. The title of his talk was "Spiral-Flow-Generated Mechanical Assistance."



**Michele A. Kutzler, PhD**, assistant dean of faculty development and associate professor, Departments of Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology, was appointed to the Research & Scholarship Committee of the Association of American Medical Colleges Group on Faculty

Affairs, effective July 1. Kutzler is also president-elect of the Eastern Pennsylvania branch of the American Society for Microbiology for the coming year. She will take over as president in 2021.



**Stacia Lewandowski**, a doctoral student working in the laboratory of Ole Mortensen, PhD, associate professor, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, received a travel award from the International Behavioral Neuroscience Society to present her research at the society's 2020 meeting June 2-6 in Glasgow, Scotland. (The meeting was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.)



**Olimpia Meucci, MD, PhD**, professor and chair of pharmacology and physiology, was elected to fellowship in the National Academy of Inventors. The new class of fellows was to be inducted at the academy's 2020 annual meeting in April, but because of the spread of COVID-19, the meeting was canceled and the induction ceremony will take place at the 2021 meeting instead.



**Joanne Murray**, historian and director of the Legacy Center: Archives and Special Collections, was interviewed about the archives by Dei Lynam for the "Interesting People" segment on WWDB-AM Talk on February 20.



**Sonia Navas-Martin, PhD**, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, has been invited to serve as a curator of the American Society for Microbiology COVID-19 Research Registry. This registry includes top-ranked COVID-19 research articles curated by experts, and serves as a resource for scientists working to accelerate scientific research on SARS-CoV-2.

**Clarissa O'Connor**, Class of 2021 medical student, co-authored a blog post, "Patients, Providers and the Working Class: Lessons for Health Workers From the Closing of Hahnemann Hospital," for *in-House*, an online peer-reviewed publication for residents and fellows.



**Mauricio Reginato, PhD**, professor, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, principal investigator, along with a co-PI from Medical University of South Carolina, was awarded an NIH UO1 grant for his project "Role of O-GlcNAc on Breast Cancer Initiating Cells."

The five-year \$2.8 million grant is funded by the National Cancer Institute. This grant is part of the Alliance of

Glycobiologists for Cancer Research program. Reginato's lab is one of ten labs in the country to join this consortium.



**Robert T. Sataloff, MD, DMA**, professor and chair of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, presented "State of the Art in Voice Surgery" to the Department of Surgery at Lankenau Medical Center on January 28, 2020.



**Priscila Sato, PhD**, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, was selected to attend the Eureka Institute's international certificate course, a translational medicine program that was scheduled to be held in spring 2020 in Siracusa, Italy. It was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.



**Barbara A. Schindler, MD**, professor, Department of Psychiatry, published a chapter, "The Clinician as Educator: Redefining the Medical Educator's Role and Toolbox," in the textbook *Handbook of Research on the Efficacy of Training Programs and Systems in Medical Education* (IGI Global, 2020).



**Nancy Spector, MD**, executive director of the ELAM program and associate dean for faculty development, received the Elizabeth Bingham Award from the Philadelphia Chapter of the Association for Women in Science. The award is presented to a distinguished scientist who has influenced the advancement of women in science. In addition, Spector's September 2019 *Pediatrics* article was cited in *Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine: Opening Doors*, published by National Academies Press.



**Zsofia Szep, MD**, associate professor of medicine and medical director of the Partnership Comprehensive Care Practice, was awarded a five-year \$2.5 million SAMHSA grant for "Philadelphia Urban Health Collaborative for Substance Use Disorder: Mobile Services for Prevention, Engagement in Care and Treatment."



**Daniel Taylor, DO**, assistant professor of pediatrics, wrote two Medical Mystery columns for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: "An Unusual Rash on Newborn's Feet" ran on June 19 and "What Caused Unusual Blisters and Itching on a Boy With Eczema?" on January 31. Taylor also

authored a December 2, 2019, opinion piece about the importance of accurately counting children in the 2020 census, in particular the highest risk children who may go uncounted. In a July 17 op-ed, he noted that better COVID-19 testing for children is necessary before schools can reopen.



**Thomas Trojjan, MD**, professor, Department of Family, Community & Preventive Medicine, was selected to represent the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine in its Global Exchange program trip to Norway in November 2020.



Dr. Varjavand



Ms. Johnson

**Nielufar Varjavand, MD**, professor of medicine and director of the Physician Refresher/Reentry Program, **Cynthia Johnson**, assistant dean for continuing medical education, and **Pamela**



Dr. Duke

**Duke, MD**, professor of medicine, published "Physician Reentry: Results of a Post-Program Survey" in the *Journal of Medical Regulation*, October 2019.



**Lynn H. Yeakel, MSM**, director of the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership at the College of Medicine, and the founder and president of Vision 2020, was a presenter on November 5, at the 2019 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Expo in Philadelphia.

Yeakel's presentation, "To Advance Women's Health and Leadership, Let's Think and Act Like the Majority We Are," was focused on the development of programs at the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership that advance women's health and women in leadership. In addition, she spoke about Vision 2020's Women 100 national celebration (see Vision2020Votes in News & Events).

## Female Faculty Win Fellowship Support

Two female faculty members have won support for their special projects as recipients of the competitive 2020-2021 Mary DeWitt Pettit, MD, Fellowship.



Dr. Barker

Dr. Shultz

Jacqueline Barker, PhD, an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology & Physiology, received a fellowship for her study "Astrocyte Contribution to Ethanol-Dependence Induced Susceptibility to Adversity in Females."

Sara Keely Schultz, MD, an associate professor of medicine specializing in infectious diseases and HIV medicine, was a recipient for her project "Engaging Female Sex Workers at Prevention Point: The Intersection of Sexual Health and Medical Education."

Established jointly by the Trust Fund of the Alumnae/i Association of WMC/MCP and the Estate of Mary DeWitt Pettit, MD, who chaired the Department of Gynecology, and later Obstetrics & Gynecology, at Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, the fellowship was donated by the Trust Fund to Drexel University in 2015.

By supporting their work, the \$10,000 award is intended to provide junior female faculty members with the opportunity to acquire additional credentials necessary to advance in academic rank.



Tell your colleagues what you're doing. Email your professional news, including grants, honors, presentations and publications to [CoM\\_Pulse@drexel.edu](mailto:CoM_Pulse@drexel.edu).

## '50s

**John F. DiTunno, MD, HU '58**, was honored at the 50th anniversary of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, which he chaired for nearly 30 years. DiTunno, who retired from teaching in 2019, has been a sculptor for more than two decades. His works are in India, Italy, Canada and the United States.

## '60s

**Frank S. Pettyjohn, MD, HU '63**, was honored with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who's Who. He served in the U.S. Army in Korea before attending medical school. After he earned his MD, he joined the Army Medical Corps and served in Vietnam, reaching the rank of colonel before leaving the military. He has served as chief, Division of Cardiology, and as chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, and at the West Florida Regional Medical Center. During his military career, he was awarded the Combat Medical Badge, the Master Flight Surgeon Badge, the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Medal with two oak leaf clusters.



**Sucha Asbell, MD, WMC '66**, received the Gold Medal of the American College of Radiation Oncology, in recognition of her distinguished service to the college and to the field of radiation oncology. The medal was presented during the organization's annual meeting, held February 26-29 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. At the meeting, Asbell delivered the Luther Brady Lecture: "In the Past 50 Years We Have Evolved to SBRT and Immunotherapy." She is a professor of radiation oncology at Cooper Medical School of Rowan University.



**Lawrence W. Lazarus, MD, HU '67**, co-authored the *Insider's Guide to Quality, Affordable Healthcare*. He has spent his career specializing in geriatric medicine and psychiatry, primarily at Rush Medical School and University in Chicago, Illinois, where he was the founding director of the Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship program. He is in private practice in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Kristen Ries, MD, WMC '67; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP; Infectious Diseases Fellowship, MCP**, received an honorary degree from the University of Utah. Ries is a professor emerita of internal medicine and retired infectious diseases physician who was at the forefront of treating patients in Utah at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (in 1988, she was named one of

*Newsweek* magazine's Unsung Heroes). In honor of Ries's work, the Marriott Library at the university has established an archive that collects oral histories, documents and other memorabilia related to the history of treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Utah.

**Paula A. Moynahan, MD, WMC '68**, received the Career Achievement Award from the College of Mount Saint Vincent. Moynahan owns plastic surgery practices in Manhattan and Middlebury, Connecticut. She has served as an attending physician at Lenox Hill Hospital and Manhattan Ear, Nose, and Throat Hospital, as well as Waterbury Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, and Nautaguck Valley Surgical Center in Waterbury, Connecticut.

**Vivian Pender, MD, WMC '69**, was elected president-elect of the American Psychiatric Association (2020-2021). She will become president of the association in May 2021. An APA Distinguished Life Fellow, she has served as a member of the APA Board of Trustees since 2014, among other leadership roles. She is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, a training psychoanalyst at Columbia University, and a consultant psychiatrist and psychoanalyst to the United Nations, in addition to her private practice. She is a founder of Healthcare Against Trafficking.



## '70s

**Virginia Ettinger Hall, MD, HU '72**, is chair of the Foundation of the Pennsylvania Medical Society, which oversees three key programs: the Physicians' Health Program, which addresses potential impairing conditions, including mental health and substance abuse issues; LifeGuard, which addresses clinical competency assessment for medical professionals; and Student Financial Services, which administers financial aid for medical students. Hall notes that the foundation (then known as the Educational and Scientific Trust) granted her a scholarship for her first year at Hahnemann and loans thereafter. Hall also serves on the Ludhiana Christian Medical College Board USA, which supports the private, minority-run school and teaching hospital in Ludhiana, Punjab, India, where she teaches almost every February. Hall is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

**James L. Madara, MD, HU '75**, executive vice president and CEO of the American Medical Association, was named to *Modern Healthcare's* annual list of the 100 most influential people in health care.

**Mariell Jessup, MD, HU '76**, was awarded an ESC Gold Medal from the European Society of Cardiology in recognition of her outstanding achievements in cardiology. Jessup serves as the chief science and medical officer for the American Heart Association.

**Stephen Klasko, MD, HU '78**, president and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health, was named to the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Power 100 list for 2019; to *Modern Healthcare's* annual list of the 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare; and to the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* national list of 2020 Influencers.

**Roger A. Orsini, MD, MCP '78; MBA**, and his co-author published *The Search for Excellence in Clinical Practice: A Handbook on Clinical Process Improvement for Providers* (Sentia Publishing), a manual for decision-making in health care. Orsini is a plastic surgeon in private practice in Easton, Maryland.



**Randy W. Hawkins, MD, HU '79**, has been reappointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to the Medical Board of California, where he has served since 2015. Hawkins is an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science and has a private practice in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine and critical care.



**Anna Pujols McKee, MD, HU '79**, executive vice president and chief medical officer of The Joint Commission, has been recognized by *Modern Healthcare* as one of 2020's Top 25 Minority Leaders. She was also named to the list in 2014.



## '80s

**Richard Eisenberg, MD, MCP '80; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP**, an ophthalmologist, shared his expertise in ocular migraines in the article "Was Bryce Harper Dehydrated?" in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (August 20, 2019). Eisenberg practices at Worcester Ophthalmology Associates in Worcester, Massachusetts.

**Michael Anger, MD, HU '81; Internal Medicine Residency, HU '84**, was appointed senior vice president and chief medical officer for Fresenius Medical Care's Renal Therapies Group, a provider of kidney care products. He previously served as chief medical officer of American Renal Associates, which operates dialysis clinics in 27 states and Washington, D.C. He is also the immediate past-president and senior partner of Western Nephrology, a 50-year-old practice in the Denver, Colorado, area.

**Larry Bush, MD, HU '82; Infectious Diseases Fellowship, MCP '88**, was appointed president of the Palm Beach County Medical Society. He is an affiliated professor of medicine at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University and affiliated associate professor of medicine at the University of Miami-Miller School of Medicine.

**Linda Blose, MD, HU '83**, was honored by the Slatington Public Library for her philanthropy, which has provided books and programming to the community. She currently practices internal medicine in the St. Luke's University Health Network in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

**Richard Malamut, MD, HU '85**, joined the medical advisory board of MedinCell, a pharmaceutical company. Malamut is currently chief medical officer and executive vice president at Collegium Pharmaceuticals.

**Joe Hulihan, MD, HU '86; Neurology Residency, HU '90**, became chief medical officer of Marinus Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a pharmaceutical company dedicated to the development of innovative therapeutics to treat epilepsy, depression and other neuropsychiatric disorders, located in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

**David Shulkin, MD, MCP '86**, launched his new book, *It Shouldn't Be This Hard to Serve Your Country: Our Broken Government and the Plight of Veterans* (PublicAffairs, 2019) about his time as Secretary of Veterans Affairs under the Trump administration (see [drexelmagazine.org/2020/who-will-see-us-through-this](https://drexelmagazine.org/2020/who-will-see-us-through-this)). Shulkin has joined the policy advisory board of Datavant, a computer software company that serves the health care industry, and the board of directors of OraSure Technologies, Inc. a provider of point-of-care diagnostic tests, specimen collection devices, and microbiome laboratory and analytical services.

**James Winkler, PhD Pharmacology, MCP '87**, joined OnKure, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company, as vice president of discovery and translational biology. He has held positions with FORMA Therapeutics, Arvinas, Array BioPharma, GlaxoSmithKline, SmithKline Beecham and Johnson & Johnson.

**Christopher Bowden, MD, HU '88**, has been appointed to the board of directors of Ziopharm Oncology, Inc. He currently serves as chief medical officer of Agios Pharmaceuticals, headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was previously vice president for product development oncology at Genentech.

**David Talenti, MD, HU '88**, a gastroenterologist based in Honesdale, Pennsylvania, was elected vice president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

**Cora Foster, MD, MCP '89; General Surgery Residency, MCPHU '96**, joined the medical staff at Schuyler Hospital in Montour Falls, New York, where she will be providing same-day surgical procedures. Foster specializes in breast health services.

**Jeffrey J. Meter, MD, HU '89**, joined Bristol Hospital and Health Care Group, in Bristol, Connecticut, as medical director and chair of surgical services. He most recently worked at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford.

## '90s

**Lieping Chen, MD; PhD, Experimental Pathology, HU '90**, is one of three recipients of the Richard V. Smalley, MD, Memorial Award and Lectureship from the Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer. Research conducted by Chen and the others formed the foundation for developing immune checkpoint blockade immunotherapies. Chen is United Technologies Corporation Professor in Cancer Research, and a professor of immunobiology, dermatology, and medicine at Yale School of Medicine.

**Wendye Robbins, MD, MCP '90**, president and CEO of Blade Therapeutics, Inc., joined the board of directors of RAPT Therapeutics, Inc., a clinical-stage immunology-based biopharmaceutical company.

**Margaret Vallen, MD, MCP '90**, became the head of the New England Food Allergy Treatment Center at their newly opened office in Quincy, Massachusetts.

**Ilene Weizer, MD, HU '90; Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency, HU**, a gynecologist, joined Lehigh Valley Physician Group at their practices in Frackville and Pottsville, Pennsylvania.

**Judith Kirby, MD, HU '91**, an ophthalmologist, was named a Best Doctor in the *Magazine of Dallas*.

**Beth Rosenberg, MD, MCP '91**, was featured in the "Reflections" series on Chapelboro.com, which highlights health care professionals in the Chapel Hill, North Carolina, area. She currently serves as a primary care doctor at Piedmont Health Senior Care and provides cardiology services.

**Glenn W. Stambo, MD, HU '91**, chief of vascular and interventional radiology at AdventHealth Carrollwood Hospital in Tampa, Florida, co-authored "The Use of Rapid Sequence Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the Brain as a Screening Tool for the Detection of Gross Intracranial Pathology in Children Presenting to the Emergency Department With a Chief Complaint of Persistent or Recurrent Headaches" in *Pediatric Emergency Care* (online ahead of print, April 16, 2020).

## The Gator Fanatics Annual

BATON ROUGE, La. – The annual mini-reunion of Hahnemann graduates led by Elmer "IronDoc El" Pinzon, 2019 edition, centered as usual on Florida Gators football. Sadly, the matchup between the Gators and the LSU Tigers saw the Gators go down to defeat. Nonetheless, the get-together was reason enough to celebrate for Drs. Pinzon, HU '94, Mike Addonizio, HU '93, and Jack Lee, HU '93, and friends.

**Drs. Addonizio, Pinzon and Lee (2nd, 3rd and 5th from left)**



**John Sundy, MD, HU '91; PhD Microbiology & Immunology, HU '91**, was appointed chief medical officer at Pandion Therapeutics, a clinical-stage biotechnology company developing modular protein therapeutics for autoimmune diseases. Sundy most recently served as senior vice president and inflammation therapeutic area head at Gilead Sciences.

**Paul M. Reinbold, MD, HU '92**, was appointed to the new position of vice president and chief medical director at Acts Retirement-Life Communities.

**Glenn T. Ault, MD, HU '93**, has been elected president of the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery. He is a professor of surgery and senior associate dean, clinical administration, at the Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California.

**Thomas Bottoni, MD, HU '93**, was appointed regional medical director at Velocity Urgent Care, for facilities in Suffolk, Carrollton and South Boston, Virginia. He has served as a physician in the U.S. Navy and as an adjunct professor of emergency medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

**Thomas J. Riordan, MD, MCP '93**, gave a presentation on the Pennsylvania State Prescription Drug Monitoring Program at the 2019 Patient Safety and Risk Management Conference sponsored by the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society, held in November in Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania. In December, he presented a workshop, "Reversing the Opioid Use Indication for Medicinal Marijuana in New Jersey and Pennsylvania," at the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium in San Diego.

**Michael Gittelman, MD, MCP '94**, was re-elected vice chairperson of District V of the American Academy of Pediatrics. He is a pediatric emergency medicine physician at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and a professor of clinical pediatrics at the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine. He completed his residency in pediatrics at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

**Kristin L. Brill, MD, HU '95**, joined the Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center-Jefferson Health as enterprise director of breast oncology. She was previously with Cooper University Health Care.

**Cynthia Burns, MD, MCP '95; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP**, joined the medical team at Shenandoah Community Health-Primary Care in Martinsburg, West Virginia.

**Stuart M. Hoffman, MD, HU, '96**, a general surgeon, joined the medical staff at Alice Hyde Medical Center, part of the University of Vermont Health Network. Hoffman's area of focus is gastroenterology and minimally invasive procedures.

**David Webster, MD, HU '97**, a captain in the U.S. Navy, became commander of Naval Hospital Pensacola in 2019. His previous assignment was as the executive officer for Naval Hospital Sigonella, Italy.

**Il Jun Chon, MD, MCP '98**, vice president of medical affairs for WellSpan Ephrata Community Hospital, was the subject of an interview, "Hospital Physician's Respect for Life Informs His Attitude Toward Death," published on LancasterOnline.

**Heather Dale Jones, MD, MCP '98**, joined Armata Pharmaceuticals, Inc., a clinical-stage biotechnology company, as medical director. Jones is a practicing pulmonary and critical care specialist and physician researcher.

**Jeffrey Nebelsieck, MD, HU '98**, was recognized as a 2020 Top Doctor by *Phoenix* magazine. Nebelsieck is an internist at Internal Medicine of Arizona in Phoenix as well as the team physician for the NFL's Arizona Cardinals.

**Charles (Chuck) Peters, MD, MCP '98**, a captain in the U.S. Navy Reserve, was called up to active duty to help staff the COVID-19-related temporary hospital at the Javits Center in New York City. He served as senior medical executive of his unit, which falls under the Army 44th Medical Brigade and was under the overall command of the U.S. Public Health Service in the Joint FEMA Task Force. Peters is a cardiologist with Geisinger Wyoming Medical Center in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

**Tuesday Renner, MD, MCP '98**, a family medicine physician, joined the staff of Alton Family Medicine in Alton, New Hampshire.

**James Rubano, MD, HU '98**, joined the advisory board of Muve Health, an outpatient total joint replacement provider. Rubano is an orthopedic surgeon at Delaware Orthopaedic Specialists in Wilmington, Delaware.

**John Langell, MD, MCPHU '99; PhD Microbiology & Immunology, MCPHU '98; MPH**, was appointed president of Northeast Ohio Medical University. Langell previously served as vice dean for the University of Utah School of Medicine.

## '00s

**Frantz C. Hastrup, MD, MCPHU '00**, pulmonologist, joined the medical staff at Stamford Health Medical Group in Stamford, Connecticut.

**Geeta Lalwani, MD, MCPHU '01**, an ophthalmologist, was appointed to the Retina Scientific Advisory Board of Ocugen, Inc., a biopharmaceutical company. Lalwani is the founder of Rocky Mountain Retina Associates, Boulder, Colorado.

**Mina Charepoo, MD '02**, a psychiatrist, was appointed to the Missouri Mental Health Commission by Governor Mike Parson. She is an assistant professor of psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

**Heather Clauss, MD '02**, was named senior associate dean of faculty affairs at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. She is a professor of clinical medicine and program director of the Infectious Diseases Fellowship.

**Archit A. Naik, MD '04; MBA**, was appointed director of the Breast Health program at Einstein Medical Center Montgomery in East Norriton, Pennsylvania. Naik is fellowship trained in breast oncologic surgery and specializes in oncoplastic surgery. He earned his MBA from Drexel's LeBow College of Business in 2012.

**Jessica Summers, MD '05**, was appointed assistant professor of surgery at Upstate Medical University and medical director of Upstate's Clark Burn Center in Syracuse, New York. Prior to joining Upstate last year, she was on the faculty of the University of Nebraska Medical Center, and medical director of its burn unit.

**Raina Sinha, MD '06**, pediatric cardiovascular surgeon, joined Connecticut Children's Hospital. She is the hospital's first female pediatric cardiovascular surgeon and one of only 17 female pediatric cardiovascular surgeons practicing in the United States.

**Bobby Awadalla, MD '08**, general and cosmetic dermatologist and Mohs surgeon, joined Haute Beauty Network as a skin expert. Awadalla practices in the Los Angeles and Las Vegas areas.

**James A. Blair Jr., MD '08**, an orthopedic trauma surgeon, has completed his active duty service with the U.S. Army, shortly after receiving a promotion to lieutenant colonel. He practiced at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, for six years and completed two combat tours to Afghanistan and Syria. He is transitioning to the civilian world as an associate professor and chief of orthopaedic trauma at the Medical College of Georgia-Augusta University. He previously served as a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso.



**Mark L. Villalon, MD '08**, an interventional cardiologist, joined the medical team at NorthBay Heart and Vascular in Fairfield, California.

**Kelly Wanamaker, MD '08**, a cardiothoracic surgeon, became the first female heart surgeon at Baystate Health in Springfield, Massachusetts. She was previously with Lehigh Valley Health Network Heart Institute in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

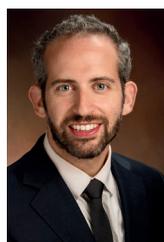
**Stephen Park, MD '09**, joined the provider network Capital Digestive Care at their offices in Frederick, Ijamsville and Rockville, Maryland. He previously served as medical director of the gastroenterology clinic at Joint Base Andrews in Prince George's County, Maryland.

**Meghan Patel, MD '09, Drexel/Hahnemann Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency '12**, who also earned a BS in biomedical engineering from Drexel in 2005, has joined Capital Health OB/GYN in Langhorne, Pennsylvania.

## '10s

**Michael Cohen, MD '11**, joined Northern Light Neurosurgery and Spine in Bangor, Maine. He completed his neurosurgery residency at Rutgers Department of Neurological Surgery, and a fellowship in skull base and cerebrovascular neurosurgery at the University of Utah.

**Lawrence Fried, MD '11**, an attending at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the Division of Neurology, Pediatric Regional Epilepsy program, has enrolled in an MBA program at the Wharton School. He is co-PI for a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (see "Telemedicine: Changing the Face of Health Care" in DUCoM Alumni Magazine, Spring/Summer 2020). Fried completed a pediatrics residency at A.I. duPont Hospital for Children/Thomas Jefferson University Hospital; pediatric neurology residency at Columbia University Medical Center/NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital; and epilepsy fellowship at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.



**Laura Grangeia, MD '11**, emergency physician, joined the emergency department at Evangelical Community Hospital in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, last year. She had been an attending physician at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. She completed her residency in emergency medicine at the University of Virginia Health System.

**Casey Kissel, MLAS '11; DVM**, is a clinical research veterinarian in the Gene Therapy program at the University of Pennsylvania. She earned her veterinary degree at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and completed a clinical residency in comparative medicine at Johns Hopkins.



**Richard Huneke, DVM, and Dr. Kissel**

**Justin Stone, MD '11**, joined the Emergency Department at Evangelical Community Hospital, in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, last year. He previously served as an attending physician and co-director of the Division of Emergency Ultrasound at Einstein Healthcare Network. He completed his emergency medicine residency and ultrasound fellowship at the University of Virginia Health System.

**Eric Emanski, MD '12**, a spine surgeon, joined Spine Surgery Associates in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He completed an orthopedic surgery residency at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the Louis A. Goldstein Spine Surgery Fellowship at the University of Rochester. Prior to joining Spine Surgery Associates, Emanski practiced at Coordinated Health, in Pennsylvania.

**Sameep Kadakia, MD '12**, served as guest editor for an issue of *Seminars in Plastic Surgery*: "Special Topics in Palatal and Maxillary Reconstruction." Kadakia practices with Premier ENT Associates in Dayton, Ohio, and is part of the Plastic Surgery Department at Wright State University. He earned his undergraduate degree from Drexel in biological sciences.

**Natalia Miranda, MD '12; Drexel/Hahnemann Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency '16**, joined Capital Health-Lawrence OB/GYN Associates in Bordentown, New Jersey.

**Tyler R. Morris, MD '12**, an orthopedic surgeon, joined the medical team at the Bone and Joint Group, part of AdvancedHEALTH, in Clarksville, Tennessee.

**Edward Schleyer, MD '12**, an orthopedic surgeon with clinical expertise in sports medicine and trauma surgery, joined the medical team at Coastal Orthopedic Associates in Beverly, Massachusetts.

**Andrew Shen, MD '12; MS Medical Science '08**, an anesthesiologist, joined MercyOne Medical Group at MercyOne Anesthesiology Care in Iowa, providing care for patients at Waterloo Medical Center and Cedar Falls Medical Center.

**Kristin A. Van Heertum, MD '12**, an ob-gyn and fertility specialist, joined the medical team at Nashville Fertility Center. She completed her residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Abington Hospital-Jefferson Health and a fellowship in reproductive endocrinology and infertility at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center/Case Western Reserve University.

**Aaron Beck, MD '13**, an orthopedic spine surgeon, joined the medical team at Plymouth Bay Orthopedic Associates at their headquarters in Plymouth, Massachusetts. He completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and the Harvard Combined Spine Fellowship program at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brigham & Women's. He also earned an MS in medical science at the College of Medicine.

## Exploring Specialties

MD alumni offered medical students personal insight into their specialties at a panel discussion and reception last fall. Hosted by the College's Office of Student Affairs & Career Advising and the Office of Alumni Relations, the event included Timothy Niesen, MD '11, Radiology/Interventional Radiology; Meghan Berkenstock, MD '11, Ophthalmology; Kelly Heath, MD '03, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation; Jeffrey Butcher, MD '00, General Surgery (Colorectal Surgery); Teresa Romano, MD '05, Pediatric Emergency Medicine; Erik Zeger, MD '99, Internal Medicine (Oncology); and Bill Ding, MD '07, Radiation Oncology.



**Alumni Bill Ding, Teresa Romano and Erik Zeger**

**James Kasenchak, MD '13**, a vitreo-retinal specialist, joined Geisinger Ophthalmology's team at Geisinger Williamsport Ophthalmology and Geisinger Port Matilda Ophthalmology.

**Austin Williams, MD '13**, published *Surgery Morning Report: Beyond the Pearls* (Elsevier, 2019), a case-based review of surgery for medical students and residents.

**Gary D. Lewis, MD '14**, a radiation oncologist, joined the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, where he is an assistant professor in the Department of Radiation Oncology and sees patients at the university's Radiation Oncology Center. He completed his internship at Crozer Chester Medical Center in Pennsylvania and his residency at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.

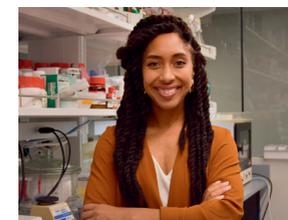
**Geraldine McWilliams, MD '14**, joined the medical team at the VA Medical Center in White River Junction, Vermont. McWilliams is a geriatric psychiatrist who cares for aging veterans with mental health needs unique to an older population.

**Natalie Krane, MD '15**, was recognized in May as a "Mountain Hawk Hero" — an individual associated with Lehigh Athletics who is making a difference in the medical

field — by Lehigh University Athletics, Lehigh Valley Health Network, and Lehigh Coordinated Health. Krane completed her residency in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery at Oregon Health and Science University this year, and is a fellow in facial plastic and reconstructive surgery at the University of Kansas School of Medicine.

**Stephanie Okwudi, MD '15**, an anesthesiologist, joined the anesthesiology staff at Javon Bea Hospital-Riverside, part of the Mercy Rockford Health System, located in Rockford, Illinois. She completed the Drexel Pathway to Medical School certificate program in 2010.

**Brielle R. Ferguson, PhD Neuroscience '17**, a postdoctoral fellow in the Huguenard Laboratory at Stanford University, Department of Neurology, was an organizer of the inaugural Black In Neuro Week (see News & Events). Ferguson is also co-president of the Stanford Black Postdoc Association.



**Brian Lefchak, MD '17, MPH '17**, wrote an op-ed, "In COVID We Mistrust," published July 9 by *in-House*, a peer-reviewed online publication for residents and fellows. He is in his final year of residency in pediatrics at NewYork-Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medical Center.

**Austin Coley, PhD Neuroscience '19**, is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, and an instructor in Cellular Neurobiology at the University of California, San Diego.



**Aleesha Shaik, MD '19; MPH**, an internal medicine resident at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, wrote an article, "A View From the Front Line in the War Against the Coronavirus," which was published on CommunityNews.org.



## Former Residents and Fellows

(alphabetical)

**Ira D. Cheifetz, DDS; Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Residency, HU '78**, was appointed board chair of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.

**Patrick Dacquel, DO; Drexel/Hahnemann Emergency Medicine Residency '14**, joined the medical staff at St. James Hospital in Hornell, New York, in April.

**Steven J. Davidson, MD; Emergency Medicine Residency, MCP '78**, provides consulting services for EMedConcepts. He is retired as an emergency physician and CMIO of Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York.

**Martin J. Fowler Jr., DO; Drexel/Hahnemann Neurology Residency '04**, joined SOC Telemad's Neurology Leadership Council as a member-at-large/Service Line Excellence. He earned his BS in health science and society at Hahnemann University in 1992.

**Marilyn Heine, MD; Hematology/Oncology Fellowship, MCP '89**, was elected chair of the American Medical Association Council on Legislation during its June meeting. Heine also represents the AMA on the board of the Council for Affordable Quality Healthcare Committee on Operating Rules for Information Exchange and is a member of the Governing Council for the AMA Private Practice Physicians Congress.

**David Hershkowitz, DDS; General Anesthesiology Residency, MCP '87**, joined Penn Dental Medicine as associate professor of clinical dentistry and chief of the Division of Restorative Dentistry.

**Jonathan Kiev, MD; Surgery Residency, HU '94**, joined CHI Saint Joseph Medical Group-Cardiology in London, Kentucky, as a general and thoracic surgeon.

**Chen Liu, MD, PhD; Anatomical and Clinical Pathology Residency, HU**, was appointed chair of pathology at Yale School of Medicine, and chief of pathology at Yale New Haven Hospital.

**Rathna Nuti, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Sports Medicine Fellowship '17**, was named a Best Doctor in the *Magazine of Dallas*.

**Randall A. Oyer, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, MCP '84; Hematology/Oncology Fellowship, MCP '86**, was named president of the Association of Community Cancer Centers (2020-2021). Oyer is an oncologist at the Ann B. Barshinger Cancer Institute at Penn Medicine Lancaster General.

**Marlon Pastrana, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann General Surgery Residency '18**, a bariatric surgeon, joined Baptist Health Medical Group in Miami, Florida.

**Erica R. Podolsky, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann General Surgery Residency '12**, was recognized in Top Doctors 2020 by *Boca Raton* magazine. Podolsky is the medical director of bariatric surgery, vice chair of the Department of Surgery, and director of medical students at Delray Medical Center. She completed her fellowship in bariatric and minimally invasive surgery at Duke University.



**Altha Stewart, MD; Psychiatry Residency, HU '82**, was named senior associate dean for community health engagement at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine.



**Michael J. Styler, MD; Internal Medicine Residency, HU '87; Hematology/Oncology Fellowship, HU '91**, joined the Department of Hematology/Oncology at Fox Chase Cancer Center in Philadelphia as an associate professor and part of the Bone Marrow Transplant program. He previously served as medical director of the transplant center and clinical service chief of hematology/oncology at Hahnemann University Hospital and held a faculty appointment at the College of Medicine.

**Paul Tejera, MD; Drexel/Hahnemann Internal Medicine Residency '13; Drexel/Hahnemann Endocrinology Fellowship '15**, an endocrinologist with the St. Lawrence Health System's Canton-Potsdam Hospital in Canton, New York, was elected a fellow of the American College of Endocrinology.



**We want to hear from you.** Email [medical.alumni@drexel.edu](mailto:medical.alumni@drexel.edu) or call toll-free 888.384.7237. Website: [drexel.edu/medicine/alumni](http://drexel.edu/medicine/alumni)

## Dragons Deliver

During one special week in January, the labor and delivery team at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson was run entirely by Drexel College of Medicine graduates: Eugene Kim, MD '11, of RWJ Ob/Gyn Associates; and ob-gyn residents Selena Park, MD '19; Haley Glatthorn, MD '18; and Jenani Jayakumar, MD '16, now a maternal-fetal medicine fellow at Jefferson. By all accounts, they worked really well together (and had a great time) — no surprise!

**Drs. Kim, Park, Glatthorn and Jayakumar**



## In Memoriam

**Peter B. Baute, MD, HU '60**, April 4, 2020

**Lewis H. Biben, MD, HU '49**, October 20, 2019

**James E. Bitter, MD, HU '59**, May 28, 2020

**William J. Boyd, MD, HU '55**, March 26, 2020

**Elizabeth Johnston Breaux, MD, MCP '77**,

September 23, 2019

**Nancy H. Bright, MD, WMC '54**, December 20, 2019

**Anthony J. Bruno, MD, HU '57**, March 2, 2020

**Jeffrey L. Canose, MD, MCP '83**, January 20, 2020

**James Michael Chiadis, MD, HU '80**, May 16, 2020

**Alan Ciccirelli, MD, HU '71**, March 13, 2020

**Mark G. Cohen, MD, HU '52**, September 27, 2019

**Geoffrey A. Corson, MD, HU '54**, January 3, 2020

**Nancy Turner Deduk, MD, WMC '54**, April 3, 2020

**Frieda Denenmark, MD, MCP '77**, June 16, 2020

**Ruth Endicott, MD, WMC '53**, December 1, 2019

**Beatrice Senofsy Enson, MD, WMC '53**, May 16, 2020

**Scott D. Gledistch, MD, HU '78**, October 23, 2019

**Milton S. Good, MD, HU '58**, June 15, 2020

**Lynette Barbara Goodstine, MD, MCP '77**,

November 19, 2019

**Barbara R. Griffith, MD, WMC '66**, May 20, 2020

**Thomas W. Hunter, MD, HU '52**, February 11, 2020

**Fred D. Jacks Jr., MD, HU '76**, May 1, 2020

**William C. Kashatus, MD, HU '59**, November 29, 2019

**Rosalind Hopmeier Kramer, MD, WMC '63**,

September 26, 2019

**Mary Ellen Kunkel, MD, WMC '52**, April 14, 2020

**Craig A. Lapham, MD, HU '84**, March 19, 2020

**Gerald F. Lassofo, MD, HU '68**, September 17, 2019

**Eleanor P. Laubly, MD, WMC '62**, July 4, 2019

**John J. LeBeau, MD, HU '58**, May 14, 2020

**Donald J. Loeper, MD, HU '54**, June 1, 2020

**Norma R. Mason, MD, WMC '53**, December 21, 2019

**A. Clarke Miller, MD, HU '61**, October 4, 2019

**Ann Freedman Mizgerd, MD, WMC '63**, June 6, 2020

**Clifford Owen Motley, MS '11**, June 11, 2020

**Margaret Mullins, MD, MCP '73**, February 11, 2020

**William Carl Nelson Jr., MD, HU '80**, June 25, 2020

**Corine Ruth Overkamp, MD, WMC '60**, April 17,

2020

**Lucy Barbara Piotrowska, MD, WMC '53**,

January 22, 2020

**Sarah S. Polt, MD, WMC '57**, July 15, 2019

**Alexandros D. Powers, MD, HU '85**, October 22, 2019

**Mary L. Pratt, MD, HU '60**, April 21, 2020

**Russell B. Puschak, MD, HU '56**, March 26, 2020

**David R. Raines, MD, HU '69**, December 20, 2019

**Judith Lynn Ramsdell, MD, MCP '72**, October 1, 2019

**Julie Annette Ricking, MD, MCP '71**, March 6, 2020

**Timothy Wade Robinson, MD, MCP '82**,

October 24, 2019

**Pauline Lothrop Rock, MD, WMC '66**, April 17, 2020

**W. David Rummel, MD, HU '48**, June 19, 2019

**John J. Ryan Jr., MD, HU '64**, November 14, 2019

**Anne C. Rybicki, PhD, HU '82**, October 8, 2019

**Robert S. Seeherman, MD, HU '49**, October 25, 2019

**Robert C. Seidler, MD, HU '58**, December 29, 2019

**Carol M. Sheaffer, MD, MCP '74**, June 5, 2020

**Carl P. Sipowicz, MD, HU '65**, January 20, 2020

**John Storer, MD, HU '45**, October 2, 2019

**Theodore W. Uroskie, MD, HU '70**, June 3, 2020

**William H. R. White II, MD, HU '54**,

September 29, 2019

**Stephen N. Wiener, MD, HU '53**, August 2, 2019

**Genevieve C. Winiarski, MD, MCP '72**, May 13, 2020

**Barbara Winn, MD, WMC '52**, January 14, 2020

**Jacob Wolansky, MD, HU '53**, January 28, 2020

**Jerold J. Yecies, MD, HU '66**, March 12, 2020

**Arthur Zeglen, MD, HU '49**, May 27, 2020

**Elmer N. Zinner, MD, HU '55**, January 18, 2020

**Laird G. Jackson, MD**, retired professor of obstetrics and gynecology, died on October 17, 2019, at age 89. One of the nation's earliest practicing geneticists, he made critical contributions to the field, particularly in pediatric genetics and prenatal testing. He joined the faculty in 2001 and was also a research associate at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He is perhaps best known for his work on Cornelia de Lange syndrome.

**Albert S. Kramer, MD, HU '50**, died on December 12, 2019. He was 92. After completing his residency in internal medicine at Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, he served as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy from 1953 until 1955, then began his career as a general family internist in Huntington, New York, where he served as an attending physician at Huntington Hospital.

**Clifton A. Ogburn, MD**, emeritus professor at Medical College of Pennsylvania, died November 8, 2019, at 89.

**Lisa Harms Panchella, MLAS '05**, died on January 15, 2020, at age 38. She worked in research compliance at the Wistar Institute. Earlier she worked in animal welfare compliance at the University of Pennsylvania, then as IACUC program coordinator at Temple. She served in many leadership roles for the Delaware Valley Branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science as well as webmaster.

**Amy Beth Rowan, MD, MCP '87**, age 56, died on March 22, 2020. She trained in adult psychiatry, child and adolescent psychiatry, addiction psychiatry and forensic psychiatry. Her focus was children and teens in residential care, and hospitalized adults. She was a past-president of the Regional Council of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry of Eastern Pennsylvania & Southern New Jersey.

**Eric W. Vogel, MD, MCP '94**, former associate professor of medicine, died on December 25, 2019. He became an instructor at MCP-Hahnemann School of Medicine in 1997 and continued as a faculty member in the Division of General Internal Medicine at Drexel until 2011, when he joined Cigna-HealthSpring. He served first as lead hospitalist, then was named senior medical director for Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic in 2016.

**Ethel Schwartz Weinberg, MD, HU '61**, a former dean of Woman's Medical College, died on March 4, at age 83. She is credited with laying the groundwork for the specialty of emergency medicine after she joined Woman's in 1968 to establish the Retraining Program for Women Physicians. Read more in the *College of Medicine Alumni Magazine* article "The Birth of Emergency Medicine" (<https://bit.ly/34WG1eF>).



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Charles B. Cairns, MD  
Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Dean  
Senior Vice President of Medical Affairs

The College of Medicine welcomed incoming MD students at a virtual White Coat Ceremony on August 7, 2020. The ceremony can be viewed online at [drexel.edu/medicine/whitecoat](http://drexel.edu/medicine/whitecoat).



Members of the MD Class of 2024 recite the Physician's Pledge