



**TOURO COLLEGE &
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

Touro Scholar

The Chironian

NYMC Archives Publications

Fall 2007

Chironian Fall/Winter 2007

New York Medical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://touro scholar.touro.edu/nymc_arch_journals



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

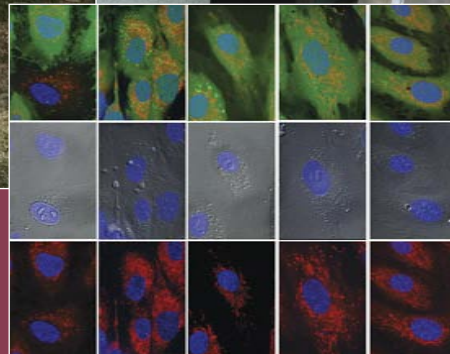
Recommended Citation

New York Medical College. (2007). Chironian Fall/Winter 2007. Retrieved from
https://touro scholar.touro.edu/nymc_arch_journals/50

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the NYMC Archives Publications at Touro Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Chironian by an authorized administrator of Touro Scholar. For more information, please contact touro.scholar@touro.edu.

Chironian

New York Medical College



Fall/Winter 2007

INSIDE

Alumni in Three Schools Advance Drug Safety
Vascular Inflammation Doesn't Stand a Chance
Probing the Mysteries of Ion Transport in the Kidney

Chironian

New York Medical College

Editor

Donna E. Moriarty, M.P.H. '04

Writers

Barbara Burgower Hordern

Nelly Edmundson Gupta

Dan Hurley

Andrea Kott, M.P.H.

Bill McDaniel

L.A. McKeown

Lori-Ann Perrault

Marjorie Roberts

Editorial Board

Michael A. Antonelle, M.D. '62

Doris J. Bucher, Ph.D.

Catharine Crea

Rhea L. Dornbush, Ph.D. M.P.H.

Julie A. Kubaska, M.S.

Matthew A. Pravetz, O.F.M., Ph.D. '88

Christopher F.X. Riegler, M.D. '88

Paul Visintainer, Ph.D.

Design

HEH Associates

Principal Photography

Robert Kieffer

Administration

Karl P. Adler, M.D.

President and Chief Executive Officer

Ralph O'Connell, M.D.

Provost and Dean, School of Medicine

Francis L. Belloni, Ph.D.

Dean, Graduate School of

Basic Medical Sciences

Robert W. Amler, M.D.

Dean, School of Public Health

Office of Public Relations

Donna E. Moriarty, M.P.H. '04

Senior Communications Director

Lori-Ann Perrault

Public Information Editor

Kevin R. Cummings, M.P.S., M.P.H. '00

Director of Web Communications

Please direct all inquiries to:

New York Medical College/Chironian

Valhalla, New York 10595

www.nymc.edu/pubs/chironian.asp

We welcome use of any material with attribution to New York Medical College.

Chironian is published semi-annually by the Office of Public Relations. We welcome reader feedback. Contact us at (914) 594-4536 or at chironian@nymc.edu.

New York Medical College Affiliates

Academic Medical Centers

Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers

Westchester Medical Center

University Hospitals

Danbury Hospital

Metropolitan Hospital Center

Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center

Major Affiliated Hospital

Sound Shore Medical Center of Westchester

Specialty Hospital

The New York Eye and Ear Infirmary

Westchester Institute for Human Development

Affiliated Hospitals

Benedictine Hospital

Calvary Hospital

Caritas Health Care, Inc.

Good Samaritan Hospital, Suffern

Greenwich Hospital

Kingston Hospital

Mount Vernon Hospital

Northern Westchester Hospital Center

Pascack Valley Hospital

Richmond University Medical Center

Saint Joseph's Medical Center, Yonkers

St. Vincent's Medical Center, Bridgeport

Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System

Affiliated Ambulatory Care Programs

Center for Comprehensive Health Practice

Morrisania Diagnostic & Treatment Center

Segundo Ruiz Belvis Diagnostic & Treatment Center



University News Briefs



— Photo by Photobureau, Inc. —

New York Medical College awarded 183 doctor of medicine (M.D.) degrees, 16 doctor of physical therapy (D.P.T.) degrees, 9 doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees, 45 master of science (M.S.) degrees and 85 master of public health (M.P.H.) degrees at the 148th Commencement exercises held on May 24 in Carnegie Hall. Jo Ivey Boufford, M.D., president of the New York Academy of Medicine, delivered the Commencement address to the Class of 2007, invoking them to make the world a healthier place with their leadership and commitment.

Julie A. Kubaska, M.S., has been appointed vice president of development and alumni relations. She joined the College in 1989 as director of alumni relations. Her new responsibilities involve overseeing the functions of the Office of Development, which include planned giving, major gifts, annual giving, corporate and foundation relations, advancement services and development communications and publications. Ms. Kubaska holds B.A. and M.S. degrees from The College of New Rochelle.

The College welcomed seven new members to the Board of Trustees:

Henry J. Amoroso, J.D., president and chief executive officer of Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers.

Regina M. Giuffrida, M.D. '80, a partner at the Mount Kisco Medical Group, a multi-specialty physician group in Westchester County, N.Y.

Jane Maher, M.D. '67, associate professor of surgery and chief of plastic, reconstructive and hand surgery at St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan.

Michael D. Israel, M.P.H., president and chief executive officer of Westchester Medical Center.

Eugene C. Rainis, M.B.A., a limited partner of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., a wholly owned and managed private banking, securities brokerage and financial advisory firm.

Gerard D. Robilotti, M.S., principal of Robilotti Consulting, LLC, in Newtown, Conn.

William E. Whiston, M.B.A., chief financial officer for the Archdiocese of New York.

Two new department chairmen have been appointed: **Howard Blanchette, M.D.**, as chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and **Thomas H. Hintze, Ph.D. '80**, chairman of the Department of Physiology. Dr. Blanchette succeeds Sari Kaminsky, M.D., professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology, who served as acting chair since 2006. Dr. Hintze became chair after it was announced that Gabor Kaley, Ph.D., was leaving the post, although he will remain on the faculty. Dr. Kaley held the distinction of being the longest sitting chairman of physiology in the nation. ☐

Features

Ira Schwartz, Ph.D., Turning 60, Knows The Best is Yet to Come

The chairman of microbiology and immunology can hardly wait for his eight young grandsons to grow up. Meanwhile, the deeply religious scientist, an ordained rabbi, researches Lyme disease and provides the "best possible environment" for his department faculty to succeed.

By Marjorie Roberts 4

From Shanghai to Innsbruck to Valhalla... a Scientist Follows His Bliss

Nephrologists are kidney specialists, but not all physicians are comfortable treating patients. Wenhui Wang, M.D., has researched the bean-shaped organ for 30 years.

By Nelly Edmondson Gupta 6



For Zoltan Ungvari, M.D., Ph.D., Researching Vascular Aging is a Family Affair

Inspired and mentored by legendary faculty in the Department of Physiology, he and his team (which happens to include his wife) are going after the causes of inflammation.

By Dan Hurley 8

Preceptor Program—Teaching Students The Art of Medicine

Most medical students arrive at the doorstep of New York Medical College with a lifelong dream and a powerful drive to begin using their new doctoring skills. They don't have long to wait.

By Barbara Burgower Hordern 10

Alumni

Four Stories, One Common Purpose

Graduates of the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences may have had different training, but they all agree on the Food and Drug Administration as the place where they can employ their wits and skill in service to one of the nation's most powerful regulatory agencies.

By L.A. McKeown 12

The Accidental Gastroenterologist

How Nicholas F. LaRusso, M.D. '69, turned opportunity into success—and found his way into the medical lexicon with his pioneering studies of liver disease.

By Andrea Kott, M.P.H. 16

Pharmaco-What?

Her current job title may inspire a little good-natured ribbing—along with some questions—but Nasiba Abdul-Karim, M.P.H. '04, is serious about her passion for drug safety.

By Bill McDaniel 18

Alumni News

By Andrea Kott, M.P.H. 21



On the Cover:

Ira Schwartz, Ph.D., goes about his business quietly, efficiently and with conviction, whether as Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology or devout Jew (and ordained rabbi).

Medical students don't have to wait long for their first taste of hands-on patient care. Two courses in years one and two—Introduction to Primary Care and Introduction to Clinical Skills—put students in primary care physicians' practices to observe, then participate, under the supervision of preceptors.

In the laboratory of Zoltan Ungvari, M.D., Ph.D., the team studies cellular pathways that regulate mitochondrial function in endothelial cells as they age. The cover graphic depicts mitochondria (stained red) in living endothelial cells under experimental conditions that promote formation of new, better functioning mitochondria. The blue stain depicts nuclei and the green depicts cytoplasm. [Graphic courtesy of Dr. Ungvari]



Ira Schwartz, Ph.D., Turning 60,

KNOWS THE BEST IS YET TO COME

The chairman of microbiology and immunology can hardly wait for his eight young grandsons to grow up. Meanwhile, the deeply religious scientist, an ordained rabbi, researches Lyme disease and provides the “best possible environment” for his department faculty to succeed.

By Marjorie Roberts

Norman Rockwell never met Ira Schwartz, Ph.D. If he had, a likeness of Dr. Schwartz surely would have graced the cover of a *Saturday Evening Post*. Rockwell was a master at capturing the essence of the human race by showing how ordinary men lived their lives—ordinary as in typical, not run-of-the-mill. Everyman scientist Ira Schwartz, professor and chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at New York Medical College, surely fits the bill.

It is five years since Provost and Dean Ralph A. O'Connell, M.D., appointed him to the position, which remained unfilled even after a lengthy search that followed the departure of the previous chairman, Soldano Ferrone, Ph.D. Dr. Schwartz was a member of that search committee when several members of the department asked him to put his name in for the job, and so he did. But it was not a simple decision, because he'd been through it once before. In 1997, when he was interim chairman of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, he was a candidate to succeed the late Isidore Danishefsky, Ph.D., and was not chosen. To be vulnerable again, to say nothing of taking on such a formidable job, seemed a small price to

pay for what he knew he could accomplish, so Ira Schwartz did the right thing.

“They made the right choice when they hired Dr. [Ernest Y.C.] Lee,” Dr. Schwartz says of the former University of Miami scientist who was recruited as biochemistry chair. “When I put my name in for the microbiology chair, it's not as if I wasn't perfectly happy doing what I was doing. I had an active, very productive biochemistry lab with four senior level Ph.D.s who were working at the highest level, and they all told me to go for it. But what finally turned the switch on in my head was a conversation with my wife, who is a lot smarter than I am. ‘Is being chairman of a department what you ultimately want? If you don't do this...’ She didn't have to finish the sentence. I realized I did have the desire to build something of value and this presented a great opportunity—to show what a department of microbiology and immunology should look like.”

New blood

There was a faculty of seven, mostly immunologists, when he took over. Now there are 11 on board the tenure track. Dr. Schwartz occupies the same chairman's office, “only with new furniture, which I was told I had to

get. I actually was embarrassed by the size of the office and I wanted to cut it in half,” says the department head who seems to have buried the ego that often comes with the territory.

He prefers to be in his lab with four Ph.D.s, two doctoral candidates and enough feng shui to accommodate his current grants. Two are from the NIH, “Determinants of *B. burgdorferi* Hematogenous Dissemination” and “Genotypic Variation and *B. burgdorferi* Pathogenesis,” with Gary P. Wormser, M.D., co-P.I., and one from the CDC, “Lyme Disease Diagnosis with Host Gene Expression Arrays,” for a current year total of \$657,000.

Dr. Wormser, professor of medicine and vice chairman of the Department of Medicine at the College and Chief of Infectious Diseases at Westchester Medical Center, appreciates what Dr. Schwartz has brought to the collaboration:

“Ira is far and away the best collaborator with whom I have had the pleasure to work. He has the rare ability to interrelate basic and clinical sciences, in no small measure due to his uncanny ability both to understand clinical issues and to communicate complex basic science concepts



A chemistry set given to him as a boy may have been the inspiration for Ira Schwartz, Ph.D.'s stellar career in medical science, first in biochemistry and molecular biology, and since 2002, as chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. Members of his laboratory who are delving into the complexities of Lyme disease are, from left, Ph.D. candidate Priyanka Ganguli; Dionysios Liveris, Ph.D., research assistant professor; Dr. Schwartz; Ph.D. candidate Christopher Pappas, M.S.'06; Radha Iyer, Ph.D., research associate; and Mary Petzke, Ph.D., research associate. Not shown are Klara Hanincova, Ph.D., post-doctoral fellow, and Ph.D. candidate Darya Terekhova.

effectively to clinicians...And he's a real mensch." [translated from the Yiddish, "a stand-up guy."]

Targeting ticks

New York Medical College found a subject of interest in Lyme disease, no doubt stoked by its location in Valhalla, on the leading edge of Northern Westchester, an endemic area for the tick-borne infection. In 1990, New York State awarded the College its first grant to support research in Lyme, which at the same time it was being over diagnosed, was paradoxically being under diagnosed. Indeed, it was the suspicion of Lyme disease that led Dr. Schwartz to study the infection in the first place.

"In February that year, my wife and I went hiking at Bear Mountain. Two days later she found an angry-looking bite on the back of her thigh. I told her to check it out in the hospital where she was working. The doctor there said he'd do a Lyme test. Now, I had never heard of Lyme disease. Of course it was negative—it was out of season and probably a spider bite. I went to the library and found out

the test was not reliable. Eventually I developed a nucleic acid test with internal funding from the state. Meanwhile, I had met Gary [Wormser] and Durland Fish [Ph.D., a former College faculty member now at Yale], and within two years I had an NIH grant that is now in its sixteenth year of funding. The research focus has evolved and the grant title has changed," he says.

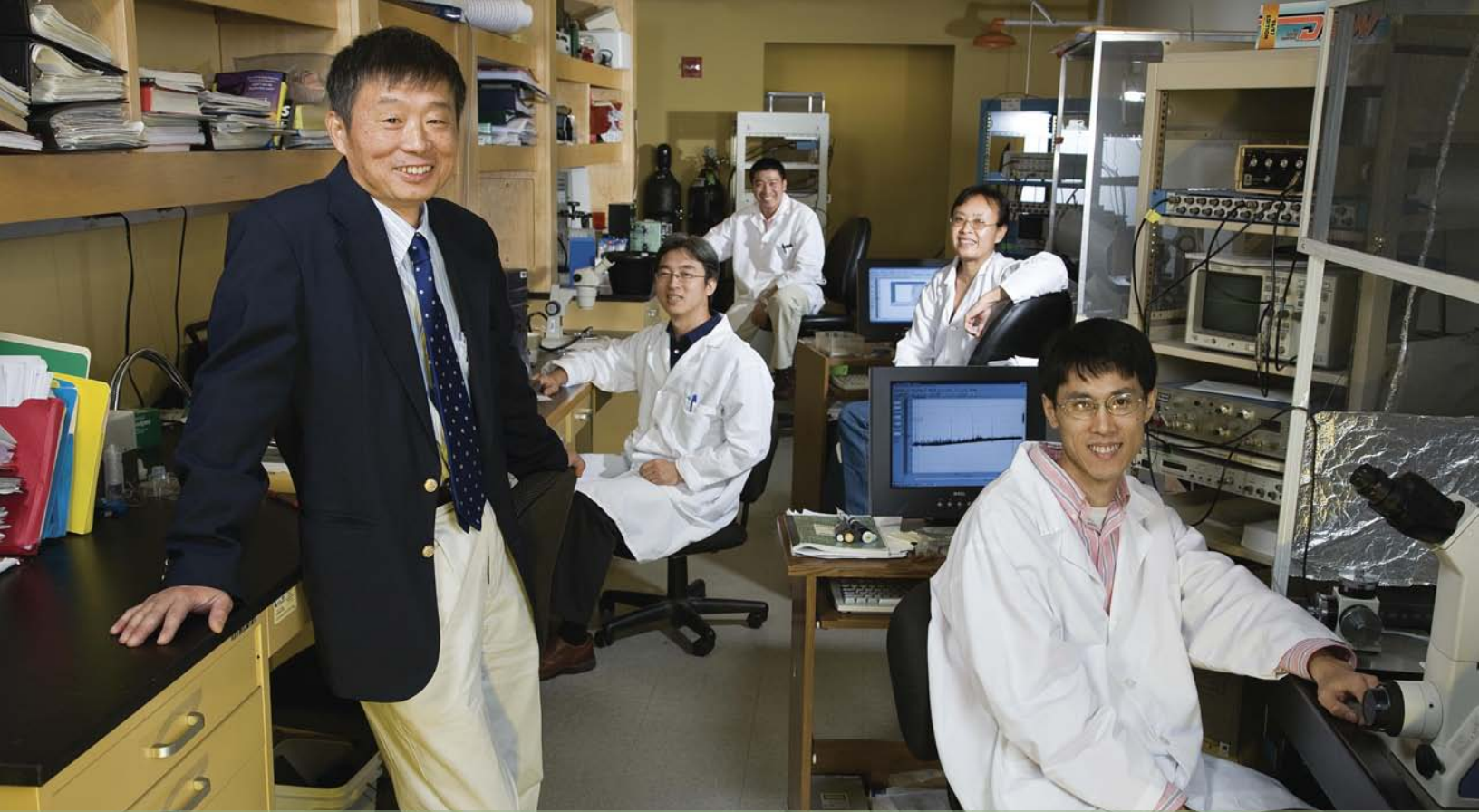
The testing and treatment of Lyme disease are still controversial. It is difficult to diagnose because the agent of transmission, the *B. burgdorferi* spirochete, is present in blood only in very low numbers. Patients with lingering symptoms tend to demand continued use of antibiotics, a practice that Schwartz, along with many colleagues, refutes as usually unwarranted and potentially harmful.

"A blood test that is sensitive and accurate in detecting the agent of transmission, the *B. burgdorferi* spirochete, is difficult to achieve because the presence of the bacteria in the blood is transient. Besides, there simply is zero evidence that these chronic

symptoms are due to an active bacterial infection that can be treated successfully with antibiotics, so to continue to treat with antibiotics what some refer to as chronic Lyme disease is inappropriate and not doing patients any favor," he says.

"We have a broad-based research program at the College that involves genomic and genetic studies of the bacterium that causes the disease and also includes the ecological aspects of Lyme. But it is our longstanding collaboration with the Department of Medicine's Division of Infectious Diseases and Gary Wormser that has led to our seminal discovery—the identification of different strains of *B. burgdorferi* that differ in their pathogenic potential. A major part of the program is trying to understand at the genetic level what contributes to these differences, to elucidate the molecular mechanism of pathogenesis to predict the probability of a disseminated infection from a tick bite. We're also working on a diagnostic test based on gene

(continued on page 20)



FROM SHANGHAI TO INNSBRUCK TO VALHALLA... a scientist follows his bliss

Nephrologists are kidney specialists, but not all physicians are comfortable treating patients. Wenhui Wang, M.D., has researched the bean-shaped organ for 30 years.

By Nelly Edmondson Gupta

Wenhui Wang, M.D., professor of pharmacology and an expert in renal physiology at New York Medical College, makes a habit of doing only things he likes. As luck would have it, he generally only likes things that are good for him. For example, he eats whatever he pleases but prefers fish to meat. He used to smoke but gave it up because cigarette breaks interrupted his lab experiments. He even enjoys his daily half-hour run. And perhaps most important, he has built a distinguished career in research because it pleases him. "I never force myself," he says with a grin.

If enlightened self-indulgence helps explain why the trim 58-year-old looks younger than his age, so might his spirit of intellectual adventure. Dr. Wang admits that when he began unraveling the mysteries of the human kidney three decades ago, he knew very little about the bean-shaped organs that lie deep within the retroperitoneum. "In China I was doing research related to endocrinology, but I wanted to move to Austria, and Innsbruck had an international reputation for kidney research," he explains. "It's not like the United States, where you can pick any research topic. That was my only opportunity, so I grabbed it and afterwards I thought, 'I like it!'"

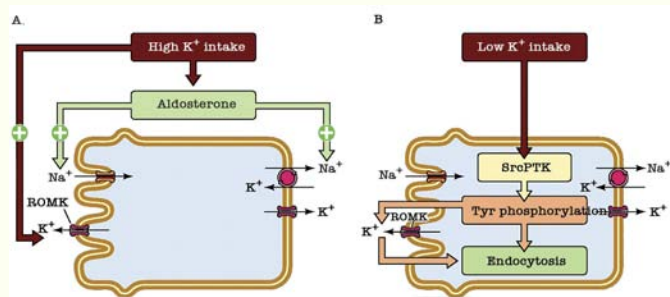
The National Institutes of Health likes Dr. Wang's work, too. In the past five years, it has funded him to the tune of close to \$1 million annually.

Dr. Wang's enthusiasm for his chosen field has taken him a long way, personally and professionally. Recently he talked about his work, his life, and why the United States is still, in many ways, the best country in the world.

Studying the universe within

Dr. Wang's research takes him to the inner reaches of the human body, where he focuses

Pictured above: Dr. Wang's laboratory team includes, from left, research associates Peng Sun, Ph.D., and Peng Yue, M.D., Ph.D., Daohung Lin, M.D., Ph.D., research assistant professor, and Zhijian Wang, Ph.D. candidate.



This graphic illustrates the mechanism by which the intake of dietary potassium (K) regulates the excretion of K from the kidney. The mechanism is essential for maintaining a normal plasma K concentration under physiological conditions. If the secretion of K in the kidney fails to match the dietary intake; this leads to either a high plasma or a low plasma K concentration which can cause a life-threatening irregular heartbeat. In figure A, when K intake increases, the kidney's influence on the level of K excretion occurs through a specific renal cell that increases the expression of ROMK channels, a K channel responsible for K secretion in the kidney. The kidney acts similarly to preserve K (figure B) when there is a decreased dietary intake, the ROMK channels are removed from the cell membrane in a process known as endocytosis. Used with permission. *Physiology* 20:140-146, 2005. Fig. 4, Models of high and low K intake in principal cells.

on ion channels—pore-like structures spanning cell membranes in the kidney that help regulate the blood levels and urinary excretion of sodium and potassium. Describing his work in layman's terms, he sounds more like an astronomer than a pharmacologist. "It's like when you find a new star," he says.

"In science you never can say I have learned enough. There is always something more; your mind is active; your hands can do something; you can work, you can read, you can think."

"When you look at ion transport you will always find unknowns. With new technology and knowledge from other studies you may find you're close to the goal, but you'll never totally reach it; there's always something new to learn."

To illustrate his point, Dr. Wang offers a down-to-earth example: "We know that potassium channels are regulated by how much potassium you eat. If you eat two bananas all the potassium channels on the cell membrane will open. If you don't eat anything with potassium in it, those channels will close down."

Some of the things we don't yet know are "how, exactly, the channels close down; how molecules are inserted into the channels, and which factors regulate the trafficking of the channels." Human kidneys may look small, says Dr. Wang, but they are complex enough to keep a cadre of scientists busy for the foreseeable future.

Alberto Nasjletti, M.D., professor of pharmacology and director of a longstanding NIH Program Project Grant for Hormonal Control of Blood Pressure, has high praise for Dr. Wang,

calling him "charismatic and enthusiastic," and no less than "an international star in the field of ion transport in the kidney." He goes on to describe the younger man's contributions to the department and the College: "Dr. Wang's research is highly relevant to the research activities of many of his colleagues in the Department of Pharmacology. And because he is so willing to interact with fellow scientists, Dr. Wang casts a decisive and positive influence on the academic environment of this institution. He truly commits himself."

Currently, Dr. Wang is working on two projects—one looking at potassium channels and another involving sodium channels. If we can better understand how these channels operate, he says, we may be able to create more effective therapies for hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, electrolyte disorders and more.

In the future, predicts Dr. Wang, it may be possible to take a single blood sample and from it analyze whatever ion channel glitch is causing a problem. The end result, he hopes, will be medications that are more highly targeted and, because they are not systemic, produce fewer side-effects than those currently on the market. He says it also pays to look at the old drugs for efficacy and response time.

Proud American

Born in Shanghai, Dr. Wang has lived in three very different places—China, Europe and the United States. In 1979, he left his native land and moved to Innsbruck, where he earned his M.D. degree. Then he returned to China. While doing his internship, Dr. Wang decided clinical work was not for him. "I tried to work in the hospital, but I didn't like it," he says. "Maybe it's my personality; I don't like doing things rush, rush, rush and following protocol. I like to think for myself."

After making the decision to pursue research, Dr. Wang realized that he couldn't remain in China. Inadequate funding left

most labs there virtually empty, and conducting meaningful research was nearly impossible. At that point, Dr. Wang went to the University of Wuerzburg in Germany. He worked for a couple of years there with a mentor, who helped him land a job at Yale, where he worked as an associate research scientist in the department of cellular and molecular physiology. In 1993 he came to the College, and never left. In 1997, Dr. Wang became a U.S. citizen. "I like it here, I feel at home," he says.

Before coming to the States, Dr. Wang assumed that America and Western Europe were similar societies. After spending time here, however, he realized that Europe was still relatively closed. "Unless you're a citizen, they don't offer opportunities to foreign-educated people," he says. "I have friends in Europe, but regardless of how many years you stay there, you feel you don't belong. When you come to the States, after a couple of years you become part of it. And here, especially in the universities, there is no discrimination based on who you are, where you come from or how old you are. As long as you can make a meaningful contribution, we don't exclude anybody. And that is unique."

Defending the system

Despite recent news stories about the superiority of math and science education in China and India, Dr. Wang is a fan of the American educational system. While students elsewhere may do better on standardized tests, he thinks rote learning, which is still emphasized in Asia, isn't enough. "Here, after a person is finished with school they know how to learn things by themselves; how to grab knowledge. Here we teach students how to think and improve themselves, not to simply believe in authority."

In addition to his research, Dr. Wang teaches medical students and mentors masters level and doctoral students. Currently, he is

(continued on page 20)

For ZOLTAN UNGVARI, M.D., Ph.D., Researching Vascular Aging IS A FAMILY AFFAIR



Inspired and mentored by legendary faculty in the Department of Physiology, he and his team (which happens to include his wife) are going after the causes of inflammation.

Zoltan Ungvari, M.D., Ph.D., foreground, associate professor of physiology, devotes much of his research to exploring the ways in which high blood pressure inflames susceptible vessels. His team includes, from left, Anna Csiszar, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of physiology, Aracelie Rivera, M.S. '06, research technician, and Nazar Labinsky, M.D., a research fellow.

By Dan Hurley

For Zoltan Ungvari, M.D., Ph.D., unlocking the secrets to vascular inflammation is a family affair. Not only has the associate professor of physiology co-authored papers on the subject with his wife, Anna Csiszar, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Physiology, but the elder of their two young children has recently announced, at the wise old age of three, that she is going to do what Mommy does when she grows up.

"Perhaps it's because of our science-related conversations over dinner. It's kind of a 24/7 relationship," he says.

Dare one say it? Vascular inflammation has set these two physiologists' hearts afire.

"Inflammation is such a global mechanism of disease in the body," Dr. Ungvari says. "Pick a disease of aging and you will find it is an inflammatory disease, whether it's Alzheimer's, atherosclerosis or even cancer. I am very happy that in vascular biology, we are learning to actually modify this inflammatory process and see significant outcomes as a result."

His collaboration with Dr. Csiszar notwithstanding, Dr. Ungvari's work stands very much on its own. Having co-authored more than 60 papers since 1996, he is funded by the likes of the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association (AHA). Since last year, he has co-authored six published papers on the vascular benefits of resveratrol, a compound found in the skin

of berries, grapes and, in small amounts, wine. He and colleagues have found that it acts not only as an anti-inflammatory, but also as an anti-apoptotic and antioxidant on vessel walls.

Hungarian proving ground

His journey to the forefront of vascular research began in a resort town on the shores of Hungary's Lake Balaton, where he grew up. Determined to be a biological researcher from his earliest days, he was encouraged by his parents, both physicians, to go to medical school. While pursuing his medical degree at Semmelweis University of Medicine in Budapest, he began conducting research on animal models of hypertension in pregnancy. It was also where he met his future wife. Upon graduating *summa cum laude* in 1996, he enrolled in the university's Ph.D. program in pathophysiology, where he studied endothelial dysfunction in metabolic diseases and the cardiovascular side effects of the antidepressant fluoxetine (Prozac).

"I can fondly recall the excitement of our first discoveries on the calcium channel inhibitory properties of fluoxetine, sleeping on the lab floor for several days and ordering pizzas for the department," he says.

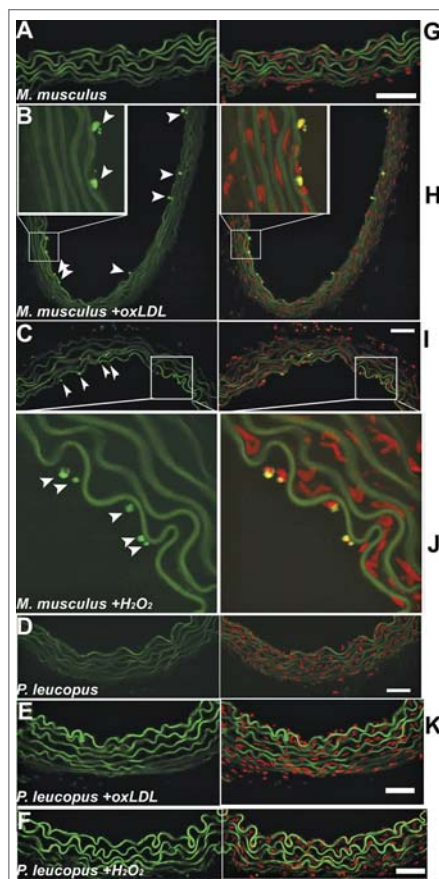
While at Semmelweis University he had the good fortune to meet Akos Koller, M.D., Ph.D., now a professor of physiology at the College, who had also graduated from Semmelweis and had since conducted groundbreaking work on the role of blood flow in the regulation of microcirculatory function. "Everyone in Hungary who was working in the field had read his papers and learned to use his methods," Dr. Ungvari says.

Invited by Dr. Koller and then-chair of the Department of Physiology, Gabor Kaley, Ph.D., to pursue postdoctoral studies here, Dr. Ungvari came to the United States in 1999 and made it his home.

"The physiology faculty of New York Medical College were very well known to me from their publications," Dr. Ungvari says. "A whole generation of young European microcirculatory researchers have used the papers of Dr. Koller, An Huang [M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of physiology], Dong Sun [M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of physiology] and Edward Messina [Ph.D., professor of physiology] as essential methodological 'cookbooks.'"

Olympian stamina

Like many in Hungary, Dr. Ungvari also knew that Dr. Koller had another claim to fame: he had membership on the Hungarian Olympic



Dr. Ungvari and his team study long-lived species to better understand the secrets of successful vascular aging. Above, aortic endothelial cells from the white-footed mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*), which lives three times longer than the house mouse, show marked resistance against the toxic effects of oxidized LDL. From top to bottom: cross sections of untreated and oxLDL-treated house mouse and white-footed mouse aortas; arrows point to TUNEL positive apoptotic endothelial cells. Right panels show nuclear counterstaining in the same sections. Experiments performed in collaboration with Praveen Ballabh, M.D., associate professor of anatomy and cell biology. [Csiszar, Ungvari et al, "Vascular superoxide and hydrogen peroxide production and oxidative stress resistance in two closely related rodent species with disparate longevity." *Aging Cell*, October 2007, Blackwell Publishing.]

water polo team in the 1980s. He missed his chance to earn a medal only because the Soviet bloc countries boycotted the 1984 games in Los Angeles.

"His friends on the team called him Rocket because of his stamina, and I can attest that he earned the name," Dr. Ungvari says. "During the time that I was working with him, I can't tell you how many papers we published in a very short period of time. That was one of the most productive periods in my life. I learned a lot from him about stamina and focus, how to bring a project to the finish line. That's something I'm very grateful to him for."

He is also grateful for the mentoring of Dr. Kaley, who sent him in 2003 to attend the intensive, six-week physiology course held at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Woods Hole, Mass. Dr. Ungvari has since become a regular each summer at the MBL, where he has been researching mechanisms involved in cellular oxidative stress resistance in successfully aging species.

"The laboratory mouse is extremely short-lived, living only up to about three years," he says, "whereas other animals with similar body size can live a much longer lifespan." Earlier this year, he co-authored a paper on vascular aging in the longest-living rodent, the naked mole-rat, which can live more than 28 years. The study found that the naked mole-rat maintains a youthful vascular function that protects it against aging-induced oxidative stress.

He devotes much of his research at the College to discerning the ways in which high blood pressure inflames susceptible vessels. "High pressure in the vessel initiates signal transduction, which begins to produce all kinds of inflammatory cytokines," he says. "But the mechanisms underlying this process are not completely understood. We focus on the regulation of these inflammatory cytokines by bone morphogenetic proteins-2/4, which affect vascular calcification and endothelial activation."

Pleased to share his scientific interests with Dr. Csiszar, he says she has brought fresh ideas regarding the role of inflammatory cytokines to disease processes. He notes with pride that his wife was chosen recently to receive the prestigious Nathan W. Shock Lecture Award from the National Institute of Aging.

"I also feel very lucky that in our department I have other wonderful colleagues who share my excitement about vascular aging processes," Dr. Ungvari says. "I hope that our fruitful collaborations with Thomas Hintze [Ph.D., professor and new department chair] and Michael Wolin [Ph.D., professor of physiology] on age-related alterations in cardiac function and free radical signaling will last for years to come."

Drs. Ungvari and Csiszar are laying the ground work for their progeny to follow in their footsteps. In addition to 3-year-old Anna Sara, there is 11-month-old Julia Rebecca, who is beginning to mimic what her sister does. "Anna loves animals, mice, bugs, and all the sea creatures she found crawling around in the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole," Dr. Ungvari said. "We have high hopes for another biologist in the family." 🐾



PRECEPTOR PROGRAM— Teaching Students The Art of Medicine

Most medical students arrive at the doorstep of New York Medical College with a lifelong dream and a powerful drive to begin using their new doctoring skills. They don't have long to wait.

By Barbara Burgower Hordern

When Ariadne Avellino, Class of 2009, first came to New York Medical College, she didn't know exactly what to expect. She had worked as an emergency medical technician in high school and college, and graduated from the University of Montana-Missoula before doing clinical research in a post-baccalaureate program at the University of Pennsylvania. In medical school she found the workload was heavy but manageable. But it was her first-year preceptorship that really inspired her, assuring her destiny.

At New York Medical College, all medical students are matched with physician preceptors who give them practical training in a true medical setting. In the first year, the Introduction to Primary Care course places them in the offices of primary care physicians, where they learn about doctoring shoulder-to-shoulder with a physician preceptor. Begun nearly 20 years ago, the program is so successful from the preceptors' point of view that fewer than 5 percent of them have moved on. Equally popular is the second-year Clinical Skills program, where students in various settings refine their communication skills and begin performing physical exams. "The goal is primarily to help students acquire the basic foundation for clinical practice, includ-



Like all students in the School of Medicine, Lisa Bienia and Ariadne Avellino, members of the Class of 2009, made great strides in their hands-on medical education by working with patients under the guidance of physician preceptors during their first two years of medical school—before the clinical years officially begin.

ing learning how to work with individuals whose health beliefs or cultures are different than their own," explains Karen Edwards, M.D., M.P.H. '91, associate dean for primary care in the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education and director of the Introduction to Primary Care course.

Real patients, real feedback

"I was so lucky," Ms. Avellino says. "I was with Dr. Stuart Beeber [adjunct professor of pediatrics] in my first year. Even though he'd been in practice for a long time, it was encouraging to know he was still interested in learning to be a better physician. Throughout the year he gave me very constructive feedback."

This feedback and the chance to interact with real patients are what

most excite first- and second-year students, many of whom have long nurtured a dream that would begin with just such a pivotal experience. For the nearly 300 College-affiliated physician preceptors scattered across New York City and the region, it's the chance to influence a new generation of physicians that most inspires them to volunteer their time.

"It's a great way to learn," says Sara Goldgraben, Class of 2010, whose first preceptorship was in the pediatric practice of Joshua E. Chesir, M.D., a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics in

New City, N.Y. “It’s the first time you really get patient interaction and individualized attention from a practicing physician. Dr. Chesir really took the time to guide me, giving me techniques for taking histories that went beyond the textbook. When one patient, a nine-year-old girl, was brought in with multiple fractures, they first suspected abuse. It turned out that she had osteogenesis imperfecta, a rare condition in which children are born with very brittle bones that can break easily. In this case, the suspicion of abuse didn’t fit. That’s why it’s so important to get to know your patient.”

“I didn’t get this kind of patient contact until I was a resident,” says Dr. Chesir, a 10-year veteran preceptor. “This not only teaches students to take a careful history, but also gives them an early opportunity to see how gratifying primary care can be.”



Second-year medical students Sara Goldgraben and Gonzalo Manzano spend a lot of time in study mode, reading and absorbing vast amounts of material. The real-world experiences that accompanied their first- and second-year preceptorships has helped them stay focused and motivated.

Not just book learning

“You can’t learn medicine just from a textbook,” agrees Benjamin Dodoo, M.D., internist and clinical assistant professor of medicine, who works for a federally funded health center in White Plains, N.Y. Dr. Dodoo trained in England and Switzerland, and has been a second-year preceptor for 15 years. “Sometimes students are afraid to actually touch a patient. They think they may break something. But they do well and as time goes on they do even better,” he says.

Lisa Bienia, Class of 2009, worked with Dr. Dodoo last year. “The second-year preceptorship helps you learn to take a history well, and often you can get a diagnosis just from a good history. You go into their family history, their social history, any allergies to medications, as well as the chief complaint that brought them there.”

The skills demonstrated in the preceptorship are covered first in class. “But learning about a heart murmur is not the same as hearing one,” Ms. Bienia says. “Dr. Dodoo helped me recognize the symptoms of diseases that I was studying in my academic classes. He really helped me understand that you can make a good diagnosis most of the time by performing a good history and physical, and not relying so much on technology.”

“The preceptorships allow students to apply what they know and use it for practical purposes,” says preceptor Donna Phanumas, M.D. ’94, adjunct assistant professor of medicine. A geriatrician at The Center for Healthy Aging at Greenwich Hospital, Dr. Phanumas recalls, “When I saw my first patient, I thought, this is what I was born to do. Most students are like that. They are so enthusiastic.”

“I loved working with Dr. Phanumas,” says Ms. Avellino. “I got to do a history and a physical every week, and she helped me see the broadest possible picture. Any time I examined a patient, she was with me. I’m very grateful for all the effort and time she spent with me. The preceptors teach you more than how to take a history and do an exam—they show you how to be compassionate and listen.”

Looking beyond the immediate

“You can get tired of just reading and reading and reading,” says Gonzalo Manzano, Class of 2010, “but when you go out there and actually take care of patients, that gives you real motivation. At first, all medical students are nervous about handling patients, but through experience, it starts coming naturally. My preceptor, Dr. Adenike Adeyemo, runs a neighborhood clinic in the Bronx. She taught me how important it is to consider their psychological as well as their physical well-being. If she had a sense that a patient was depressed, she’d ask questions to get him to talk about what was bothering him. She was always looking beyond the immediate symptoms to see if there was something else lurking in the shadows.

“I also learned that a lot of patients establish a profound relationship with their doctor. Dr. Adeyemo was really involved in their lives, and the patients are loyal to her. I think that is the best way to deal with patients. It takes those extra five or ten minutes, but in the long run, it helps not just the patient but also your career.”

Such an appreciation for the profession is what all preceptors hope to impart. “What we give our medical students is the reality of medicine,” says Dr. Adeyemo. “They realize that they are dealing with human beings, people with feelings, and it’s not just about making money and being renowned. It’s about being involved. These people place their whole lives on your lap, often at the first meeting. You can’t abuse the trust and confidence they put in you.”

“The reading can be done anywhere; it’s the art they need to see,” says Peter Gergley, M.D., a pediatrician in private practice in Garrison, N.Y., and a 10-year veteran of the preceptorship program.

Students couldn’t agree more. “Sometimes you can almost get lost in all that studying,” says Ms. Goldgraben. “The preceptor program helps you keep your focus, and puts what you study into action. It’s really about people.” ☺

APPROVED

FOUR STORIES: One Common Purpose

Graduates of the School of Medicine and the Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences may have had different training, but they all agree on the Food and Drug Administration as the place where they can employ their wits and skill in service to one of the nation's most powerful regulatory agencies.

By L.A. McKeown

Public service offers its own badge of distinction—self-sacrifice, recognition and the opportunity to achieve in a less bloodthirsty environment, for the most part. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has its own

cachet as protector of the nation's health, so it is no surprise that graduates of New York Medical College have found a home at one of the most powerful federal agencies in the country. They all acknowledge a sense of purpose working in the federal

health sector that they rarely felt elsewhere. Their stories also showcase how their graduate education helped them get where they are today and keeps them going strong.

39 years and counting

Joseph Hanig, Ph.D. '68, M.S. '65, has spent nearly 40 years working at the FDA as a research toxicologist. Shortly after becoming one of the first to receive a doctorate from the Graduate School of Basic Medical Sciences, he received a National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council postdoctoral fellowship tenable at the FDA for two years. When that ended in 1970 he was converted to a permanent employee and he's been there ever since.

"The opportunity to work in the federal setting—and the fact that the FDA has a lot of redeeming qualities in terms of impact on health and safety—are what most appealed to me," says Dr. Hanig, who is currently associate director for research policy in the Office of Testing and Research (OTR). "Since then the organization has grown much larger and the problems we are addressing are far more complex. The science has advanced tremendously in terms of the technology that we can bring to bear on many different issues," he adds.



Joseph Hanig, Ph.D. '68, M.S. '65
Research Toxicologist

Dr. Hanig started as a pharmacology/toxicology researcher and progressed to project leader, group leader and deputy division director, mostly looking at mechanisms of toxicity for various drugs. His work has focused on trying to develop biomarkers that predict toxicity and that are relatively non-invasive.

Research and writing are strong personal interests for Dr. Hanig, who has published 42 research papers in peer-reviewed journals, 4 e-journal articles and 9 books or book chapters, and presented at numerous conferences and society meetings. He also holds a U.S. patent for a procedure that reduces the body burden of HIV and other blood-borne infections.

The diversity of the applied research involved in his work appeals to Dr. Hanig, a benefit he believes is hard to find anywhere but at the FDA. His work has involved toxicology studies of such high profile drugs as hexachlorophene, cytarabine, and the head-lice medication, lindane. Some consumer groups have asked that the use of lindane in shampoos and lotions for children with lice

"The opportunity to work in the federal setting and the fact that the FDA has a lot of redeeming qualities in terms of impact on health and safety appealed to me."

or scabies be banned out of concerns it may cause seizures and brain damage. Hanig also recently started a program to develop animal models to aid in pediatric toxicology studies, something that he thinks is important but often is overlooked. Awareness of age-related differences in drug susceptibility was brought home when the FDA voted in October to ban over-the-counter cold products for children under age 6.

Despite his busy schedule, which also includes acting as a reviewer for various pharmacology and toxicology journals and holding adjunct teaching positions at Howard University and New York Medical College, Dr. Hanig says he greatly enjoys his job. "The consolidated White Oak campus at FDA is almost like being at a university," he says. "In the old days I had to travel around a lot but now I can do research, attend a regulatory meeting and participate in a seminar all in one day."

Pharmacologist finds his niche

As a supervisory pharmacologist at the FDA, Todd Bourcier, Ph.D. '95, M.S. '92, oversees a dozen pharmacologists in the review of Investigational New Drug (IND) applications and New Drug Applications (NDA). They review all preclinical data, including pharmacological and toxicological data that are important to the clinical development and use of drugs in humans.

"We sit down and read through a 10-volume or even an 80-volume submission that includes a lot of science data, and at the end of 30 days we have to recommend what dose is supported, what dose is safe in humans, what kind of monitoring should be employed and the general toxicological profile of the drug," says Dr. Bourcier, who works in the Division of Metabolic and Endocrine Products within the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "As more and more clinical and pre-clinical data come in, we modify the importance of the toxicologic studies accordingly," he says. The initial submission, which reviews first-in-human clinical studies, is customarily followed by additional, strategically timed reviews of data submitted to support further clinical development.

Unlike academic pharmacologists, those in the FDA's review division do not perform clinical or bench research. Instead, they serve as reviewers for the huge volume of research conducted by drug companies and sponsors. For this reason, Dr. Bourcier says anyone interested in a job like his really should like to read—and a thorough knowledge of pharmacology wouldn't hurt, either.



Todd Bourcier, Ph.D. '95
Supervisory Pharmacologist

"I found the pharmacology training I had at New York Medical College extremely helpful," says Dr. Bourcier. "In fact, it was virtually a custom-made education for the basic principles of the work we do here at the FDA."

Before joining the agency in 2004, Bourcier spent time at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston in the cardiovascular and anesthesiology divisions as an instructor and post-doctoral fellow, a stint that gave him experience in grant writing and laboratory supervision.

He says one of the factors that influenced his decision to work for the FDA was the access to data that really aren't available to anyone except those on the inside. "The database of information that we have, clinical and nonclinical, is just enormous. It's not available out there in the literature. That is something that really engages my interest," Dr. Bourcier says. Another factor is that his workload and hours at the FDA are steady and manageable, leaving him enough time

"I found the pharmacology training I had at New York Medical College virtually a custom-made education for the basic principles of the work we do here at the FDA."

for his family—wife Kasia, who is a fellow scientist in the Bethesda office of the Immune Tolerance Network, and their 5-year-old daughter Hanna. "I've been able to balance my work and personal life much better in this position than when I worked in a hospital setting," he says. "People who work in labs know how crazy the hours can be. You don't have that here, and that's been important for me."

The cutting edge

Lisa Stockbridge, Ph.D. '85, met her husband Norman, who currently directs the FDA's Division of Cardiovascular and Renal Products, while both were studying at New York Medical College. While Lisa was working on her Ph.D. in physiology, Norman was doing a post-doctorate in the laboratory of William Ross, Ph.D., professor of physiology. Their focus was a new technology that looked at action potentials using voltage-dependent and calcium-dependent dyes—dyeing a neuron or

"I would not have been 'acceptable material' at the FDA had I not been given this really broad-based education in medical physiology."

brain slice and using wavelengths of light to capture neuronal activity.

"Hardly anybody, anywhere was doing that. Through [Dr. Ross], we both learned how to do [this cutting edge technique]," says Dr. Stockbridge. "Norman and I basically sprang from that lab," she adds.

From there, the Stockbridges went to the University of Alberta, where they spent six years continuing the work they began at New York Medical College. In 1991 they returned to the U.S., where Lisa landed a position as a National Research Council Senior Research Associate at the FDA. She credits Dr. Ross with helping her gain the experience and the recognition within the research community that led to her FDA position.

"I would not have been 'acceptable material' at the FDA had I not been given this really broad-based education in medical physiology," Dr. Stockbridge says. "I don't know how many people appreciate how comprehensive the program at New York



Lisa Stockbridge, Ph.D. '85
Regulatory Reviewer

Medical College is, but it really ensures that you understand every bodily system and all its interactions. To my mind, that is perfect for FDA work."

Currently, Dr. Stockbridge is a regulatory reviewer in the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. She says her education allowed her to move quickly into cross-cutting initiatives at FDA. Prior to her current position, she was the business program manager for the initial phase of a large program called Facts@FDA.gov, a comprehensive internet resource designed to give one-stop access for information about all FDA-regulated products. Dr. Stockbridge, one of the FDA's labeling experts, has been working on the project since 2004. She calls it is an enormous undertaking because it includes product labeling information for anything the FDA regulates.

The Stockbridges have two children, Christopher, 25, who graduated from West Point and is a captain in the U.S. Army, and Melissa, 20, who is studying modern languages and linguistics at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County—Honors College.

Dr. Stockbridge believes her education and career choices led her to a place where she can make a difference. "You really do get the feeling that you're doing something of consequence and making important contributions to your little piece of the world," Dr. Stockbridge says of her job at the FDA. "You may not be able to save everybody but you can save some people through the work you do."

Nephrologist likes new challenges

Melanie Blank, M.D. '85, spent 14 years in solo private practice as an internist in Virginia before going to work at the FDA in 2004. A nephrologist by training, she felt it was time to explore other career options.

"It was partly for lifestyle reasons—it was very difficult being in practice alone and dealing with various pressures that most internists face," says Dr. Blank. "I felt like I was being overly regulated. A colleague who had made the transition from inter-

nal medicine practice to the FDA inspired me and I decided to go for it."

In 2004, she went to work for the FDA as a clinical reviewer in the Division of Medical Imaging and Hematology Products. Although not her area of expertise, she found it intellectually stimulating and cutting-edge enough to satisfy her. Despite so many years of being her own boss, Dr. Blank said she has much independence in her job and feels free to express her opinions and recommendations.

"It's really very exciting when you consider we do a lot to protect the public's health."

"There are certain similarities to working in a practice," Dr. Blank says. "Sometimes you call the shots but other times you don't. And you have a lot of consensus-building, which is important in both situations. I think the way we work together at the FDA is quite similar to what I was used to in practice in terms of collegial collaboration and trying to do what is best for the public health, in this case, as opposed to the patient."

If being relieved of the pressures of running a business is a plus, then not having to deal with insurance companies or be on-call are two more advantages. In addition, the pay is good and the hours are more flexible, both important to Dr. Blank, who is a single mother of two teenagers.

"All around, I see this as being a very positive move for me," she says. Although the FDA allows its physicians professional development time in which they can continue to practice on a limited basis, Dr. Blank says she is satisfied with her clinical medicine experience and doesn't feel the need to continue to see patients, although she admits to missing it on occasion.

As a clinical reviewer, Dr. Blank and her colleagues make determinations about the safety and efficacy of drugs at various phases of development. "It's really very exciting when you consider we do a lot to protect the public's health," she says. "Our



Melanie Blank, M.D. '85
Senior Clinical Reviewer

decisions are far reaching and that gives me a real sense of satisfaction. I think I feel that more here than I did in private practice."

She is excited about her upcoming move to the FDA's Division of Cardiovascular and Renal Products, where she will be involved with the clinical qualification of renal biomarkers for renal injury, a new and exciting area that promises to be a factor in future center-wide drug development. "That's going to tie everything together for me," she says. +

THE ACCIDENTAL GASTROENTEROLOGIST

How Nicholas F. LaRusso, M.D.'69, turned opportunity into success—and found his way into the medical lexicon with his pioneering studies of liver disease.

By Andrea Kott, M.P.H

Nicholas F. LaRusso, M.D. '69, does not seem like the type of man who would discover his life's work by accident. The renowned physician and scientist has had the kind

of success that would seem the result of deliberate planning. Yet the work that has ultimately become Dr. LaRusso's passion—innovative care of patients with liver disease and epithelial cell biology—

found him, rather than the other way around. He has become one of the nation's top gastroenterologists and research scientists, making giant leaps in the study of liver disease, a leading cause of death in the U.S.

While the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) has affectionately named Dr. LaRusso, its 102nd president, the “accidental gastroenterologist,” there has been nothing unintended about his scientific contributions. Most notable of these is his role in studying the cholangiocyte, the epithelial cell that lines the bile ducts in the liver, and its role in the cholangiopathies, a group of serious and often life-threatening liver diseases in which the cholangiocyte is the principal target of a variety of pathologic processes. He has, in effect, established the field of cholangiocyte biology. “We coined the term cholangiocyte and it is now in *Stedman’s Medical Dictionary*. It was not there 10 years ago,” Dr. LaRusso says.

Born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., Dr. LaRusso graduated *magna cum laude* from Boston College. After earning his M.D. at New York Medical College and doing a medicine internship at Metropolitan Hospital Center in Manhattan, he completed his training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Then, opportunity knocked. Alan F. Hofmann, M.D., Ph.D., Dr. LaRusso’s scientific mentor and a world-renowned clinical investigator, helped him land a spot as a guest investigator in the department of biochemical cytology at Rockefeller University in New York City.

Trained by the best

In 1977, after two years at Rockefeller in the laboratory of the Nobel laureate Christian DeDuve, Dr. LaRusso accepted a faculty appointment in the division of gastroenterology and hepatology back at the Mayo Clinic, where he began his career as an independent physician scientist and epithelial cell biologist. He initially focused on a little-understood adult cholestatic liver disease—primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC)—which had a very poor prognosis before liver transplantation. “In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when people developed advanced liver disease as a result of PSC, they all died. It was pretty discouraging,” he rues.

Meanwhile, Thomas E. Starlz, M.D., Ph.D., a pioneer in liver transplantation at the University of Pittsburgh, began using cyclosporine as an immunosuppressive agent after liver transplantation. “We at Mayo became very interested. We con-

nected with Dr. Starlz and began to refer patients to him for transplant,” Dr. LaRusso says. In the mid-1980s, he and his colleagues decided to start Mayo’s own liver transplant program, which today operates in the headquarters as well as at the clinic’s two other main locations in



In his 30 years at the Mayo Clinic, Nicholas F. LaRusso, M.D. '69, has built a reputation for gastroenterological research and patient care, and helped pioneer the study of the cholangiocyte.

Scottsdale, Ariz., and Jacksonville, Fla. “Our transplant program is one of the largest in the country with some of the best outcomes,” he adds.

Breaking new ground

Dr. LaRusso and his colleagues pioneered new approaches in the study of cholangiocytes, including methods to isolate highly purified bile duct epithelial cells from rodents, human and rodent cell culture systems, cell fractionation techniques and perfused bile duct models.

In some cystic liver diseases, bile ducts expand and become like basketballs instead of their usual form, a long, hose-like tube. And in some conditions the bile ducts become highly inflamed, which leads to scar tissue and cirrhosis. “We know these cells are involved but the processes that result in their becoming abnormal differ. And we barely understand how any of these processes happen. That’s what my research focuses on,” he says.

Still, research comprises only one aspect of his professional life. Describing himself as a physician-scientist, he says, “I do research, but my research is linked to my

practice. The ultimate goal is trying to understand and positively influence disease development and progression.”

Ready for anything

Dr. LaRusso credits his undergraduate medical education for the quality of his clinical training. “I learned how to be a scientist at Mayo and Rockefeller. What I learned at New York Med was how to be a good doctor,” he says. “I learned how to take care of sick patients, to deal with medical emergencies, and to handle a diverse patient population. When I came to Mayo, I felt confident I could deal with whatever came along.”

His credentials are impressive: he is the Charles H. Weinman Endowed Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic, chair of the Department of Medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine, and a distin-

“What I learned at New York Med was how to be a good doctor. When I came to Mayo, I felt confident I could deal with whatever came along.”

guished investigator of the Mayo Foundation. He is also an NIH funded investigator and recipient of a prestigious MERIT Award; former editor of *Gastroenterology*; and recipient of Distinguished Achievement awards from the AGA and the AASLD, as well as the AGA’s Distinguished Mentor Award.

Dr. LaRusso becomes ebullient when talking about the future, which he sees as full of possibilities. Says the marathon runner and father of four grown children, “I want to stay healthy, to be able to keep coming to work and making a difference. If I continue to be as fortunate as I’ve been in the past, that would be great.” ☘

Pharmaco-WHAT?

Her current job title may inspire a little good-natured ribbing—along with some questions—but Nasiba Abdul-Karim, M.P.H. '04, is serious about her passion for drug safety.

By Bill McDaniel

She is a manager of *pharmacovigilance*. The phrase conjures up images of some Orwellian drug ministry straight out of the novel *1984*, dedicated to making sure we all take our meds on time. You won't find it in most dictionaries, but according to the online mega-reference Wikipedia, pharmacovigilance is the science of detecting, assessing, understanding and preventing adverse

effects, particularly long-term and short-term side effects of medicines.

But in describing her job with its intriguing title, Nasiba Abdul-Karim, M.P.H. '04, puts it this way: "It's all about drug safety and taking a holistic look at how patients and groups of patients react to the medications they take." That has been her all-consuming passion since receiving a B.S. in

Biology from Spelman College and going to work for Forest Laboratories in Jersey City, N.J., where she was assigned to the company's drug safety unit tracking instances of adverse drug reactions (or ADRs), "almost by chance."

Because clinical trials involve relatively small numbers of patients, less common side effects and ADRs (including severe

ADRs such as liver damage) are often unknown at the time a drug enters the market. And given the proliferation of medications today, drug interaction has become a major concern. Being on the lookout for potential hazards when medications are combined has become a necessity, although the investigations unfortunately often come after a report of an adverse reaction.

"I became interested in digging into instances of adverse drug reactions to find out what was going on," she says. "It was like detective work. I enjoyed the research and searching for clues, connections and answers. That became my motivation to get my master's degree. And since I'm a New York City woman, the School of Public Health at New York Medical College was the right choice for me."

Since graduating with her M.P.H. in epidemiology, Ms. Abdul-Karim's career has focused on drug safety. From her job at Pfizer, where she worked briefly after graduation, to The Medicines Company where, as manager of drug safety, she created company procedures to ensure compliance with FDA regulations, she has held increasingly responsible positions in the field of drug safety, or pharmacovigilance.

Her career path has now led her to Celgene Corporation, a biopharmaceutical company headquartered in Summit, N.J., that manufactures a number of innovative therapies to treat cancer and immunological diseases. One of them, thalidomide, is notorious for having caused devastating birth defects when taken by pregnant women in the early 1960s. Today, the FDA does not allow general sale of thalidomide but, with significant restrictions and careful monitoring by people like Ms. Abdul-Karim, does allow its use in studies of certain severe or life-threatening diseases where there may be no other treatment.

As a result, Celgene requires those who prescribe and dispense its products to register in a special distribution program, which allows the company to closely monitor usage by patients and prescribers. Though pre- and post-marketing drug safety programs are mandated by the FDA, all pharmaceutical companies approach

She realized that
what she truly
wanted went beyond
her girlhood dream
of being a doctor.
She made the classic
leap to a public
health focus:
populations rather
than individuals,
prevention rather
than treatment.

this requirement differently, with varying degrees of rigor. Ms. Abdul-Karim's approach is most definitely proactive and rigorous. She uses an internal drug safety database, composed of reports from physicians, hospitals, pharmacists and patients, to actively assess the safety of these participants on a regular basis. She also monitors and collects information for her periodic safety reports to the FDA and international authorities such as the European Medicines Agency.

"While getting my degree, I decided on a concentration in epidemiology," Ms. Abdul-Karim says, "because it is an ideal field of study for anyone interested in drug safety. Epidemiology focuses on research methodology and evidence-based medicine for identifying risk factors. Just as epidemiologists use research and analysis to identify causal relationships between exposures and outcomes, so do those of us interested in drug safety rely heavily on research and analysis to identify the causes of adverse drug reactions. That's where the detective work comes in."

Growing up in a close-knit neighborhood in New York City, her dreams and ambitions centered on cardiology and surgery. She volunteered in New York Hospital's Nuclear Cardiology Research Department, Harlem Hospital's Pediatric Center, as well



Nasiba Abdul-Karim, M.P.H. '04, investigates the long- and short-term side effects of medicines for a company that manufactures innovative therapies for treating cancer and immunological diseases.

as many non-profit youth and health outreach programs.

But at some point she realized that what she truly wanted went beyond her girlhood dream of being a doctor. She made the classic leap to a public health focus: populations rather than individuals, prevention rather than treatment. "I wanted to impact the patient's life as a whole; to advocate for patients in ways they could not advocate for themselves and to advocate for good health practices on a larger scale," she said. "And most definitely I love making a difference. If I notice something new or different going on—some different correlation or factor—hundreds, maybe thousands of lives can be saved." 📌

Ira Schwartz, Ph.D., Turning 60, Knows The Best is Yet to Come

(continued from page 5)

expression, which is not yet in use to diagnose any infectious disease.”

Before there was DNA, there was just chemistry, which became Ira Schwartz’ passion in the eighth grade, though he still doesn’t know why. “It must be the chemistry set I was given at the age of 10,” he jokes. “All I know was that balancing equations was easy and I absolutely loved organic chemistry.” There was another love in his life that would co-exist all the days of his life. Growing up on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, Dr. Schwartz attended the first full-time Jewish day school in the U.S.—the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School established in 1900. “My entire education combined secular and religious studies. Even in undergraduate school I took

“A department is like a body. Every organ has its own function, and when they all function together the body is healthy.”

two full-time courses of study, but I did it for intellectual and religious reasons. At no time did I ever contemplate becoming a member of the practicing clergy,” he says.

“Being strictly observant has never posed a problem because as a person of faith, there are things I just don’t compromise on, such as a strict observance of the Sabbath. I’ve also tried to keep these two aspects of my life separate,” says Dr. Schwartz. “I’m not here as a rabbi who happens to be a microbiologist. I’m here because I have a Ph.D. and I do basic science research—which has nothing to do with the fact that I have a rabbinical degree.”

Dr. Schwartz married in 1968 after earning his undergraduate degree. He had met Arlene when she was 17, and a student at the Bronx High School of Science. A therapist with a master’s degree in social work, she is currently a supervisor in the behavioral health division at Good Samaritan Hospital, a College affiliate, in Suffern, N.Y.

They have three children—Kenneth, an assistant headmaster (and ordained rabbi) at a private Jewish day school in Manhattan; and daughters Aliza and Rina, who teach middle school. The oldest of eight grandsons is only six, yet grandpa is already counting the bar mitzvahs in his head.

Dr. Schwartz earned his B.S. degree in chemistry at the City College of New York and followed with his Ph.D. in biochemistry from the City University of New York. His thesis dealt with the interaction of the anti-tumor drugs adriamycin and daunorubicin with DNA, but his post-doc at the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology in Nutley, N.J., focused on the workings of protein synthesis. When the post-doc concluded, Dr. Schwartz accepted the post of assistant professor of biochemistry from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. But after five years in New England, the Schwartz family felt something was still missing. In 1980 they returned to New York. Dr. Schwartz joined the College as assistant professor of biochemistry, and when Lyme disease began to flourish in Westchester County, he discovered “an unexplored area that was so exciting I decided to take up a new challenge.”

From any viewpoint, remaking the Department of Microbiology and Immunology has been a monumental task. But “the faculty have bought into what I have laid out and things are going quite well,” he says. “A department is like a body. Every organ has its own function, and when they all function together the body is healthy.” Besides rejuvenating his own department, Dr. Schwartz chairs the Research Support Services Committee of the Faculty Senate, an advocacy group that lobbies for the research faculty on administrative issues that include purchasing and accounting, research infrastructure such as comparative medicine and other core facilities, and services like the bookstore.

As one who is known for being open to multiple points of view and a champion of his colleagues and their research, Ira Schwartz is a working scientist who still believes passionately that there is no higher calling.

“I am engaged in discovery every day. When I look at the sequence of a gene and realize I’m the first one to sequence it, I’m blown away!” he admits. “To realize that I am the first human being to have figured out this information leaves me just as excited about that today as I was 30 years ago.” ☛

From Shanghai to Innsbruck to Valhalla... a Scientist Follows his Bliss

(continued from page 7)

working with four Ph.D. students; three are women. For the record, Dr. Wang does not agree with former Harvard University president Lawrence H. Summers, who in 2005 unleashed a storm of controversy when he suggested that there are biological differences between men and women that might help explain women’s underrepresentation in the higher echelons of science and technology. “You cannot generalize,” says Dr. Wang firmly. “It really depends on the person.”

As to whether he prefers research or teaching, Dr. Wang says he enjoys both because they naturally complement each other. “I really like to interact with students and especially to help them develop their gifts and talents,” he says. Also, “with research, you study one field quite narrowly; you lose the big picture. Teaching forces you to learn new things.”

He adds that there is so much happening in science today, it’s important to keep up. “If you don’t refresh yourself, after a few years your knowledge will be outdated,” he says. “Teaching also helps you understand what’s going on in new areas, and which techniques and knowledge you can bring back and use in your own research.”

In thinking about his scientific legacy, Dr. Wang says his goals are relatively modest: “The word legacy is too much for me.” What he wants is to continue working and publishing scientific papers that he hopes will make “small” breakthroughs. “I hope I can contribute something to kidney science, to do something meaningful while I’m having fun. In science you never can say, I have learned enough. There is always something more; your mind is active; your hands can do something; you can work, you can read, you can think,” he explains.

That’s not to say Dr. Wang spends every waking hour peering through a microscope or standing at the front of a classroom. At home he enjoys reading about politics and listening to classical music, especially Mozart. “When I listen I feel very relaxed,” he says. He also makes time to return to China at least once a year to visit his mother, who is 93, and to teach and serve as a guest lecturer at Chinese medical schools.

Dr. Wang has this advice to up and coming students who are making decisions about their careers: “Pick up something you like and stick with it,” he urges. “If you don’t like it, you cannot do it well.” ☛

James P. Angiulo, M.D. '72: A MAN OF MANY COATS



Lance Fairchild Photography

James P. Angiulo, M.D. '72

By Andrea Kott, M.P.H.

White coat, suit jacket, black robe. Doctor, lawyer, judge. As all three, James P. Angiulo, M.D. '72, has dedicated himself to helping others, keeping a hand in each trade all the while.

Not everyone has the fortitude to pursue more than one major career path in life, especially when those paths include medicine and law. But it was more than the lure of the professions that compelled Dr. Angiulo; it was his love and admiration for his father, a lawyer, and his uncle and godfather, an osteopath, that steered him first toward medicine and then law.

"The common ground between medicine and law and the judiciary is trying to help people," said Dr. Angiulo, who uses the nickname "Judge Jim." As a lawyer he advocated for clients. As a judge

he evaluates the evidence before him to make good decisions. As a physician he examines lab tests, x-rays, and EKGs to make the right clinical decisions. "In all three cases the objective is to help a human being," he said.

Truth be told, Dr. Angiulo, an anesthesiologist, always wanted to be a lawyer. "When I grew up, like most kids, I wanted to be like my dad," he said. But starting up a law practice in 1941 did not offer financial stability, so his father worked at a Queens, N.Y., post office during the week. "On Sundays we would go to his law office," Dr. Angiulo said. Meanwhile, Dr. Angiulo's Uncle Pat was practicing anesthesiology in Tucson, Ariz., a world away from the concrete jungle he knew growing up.

He recalled one visit when he was a pre-law student at St John's University in Jamaica,

N.Y. "Uncle Pat said, 'Why become a lawyer when you can become a doctor? You'll be better off financially.'"

Dr. Angiulo said his uncle mentioned things that can "strike a chord in a young man," such as making a lot of money, getting married and settling down. "One thing led to another and I started to respect that there are more people than Dad to look up to," he said. "Next thing you know, I switched my major from pre-law to pre-med."

After earning his M.D. at New York Medical College and completing training in anesthesiology at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Dr. Angiulo continued to follow his uncle's footsteps all the way to Tucson. By then a husband and a father, he began practicing obstetric anesthesiology at the University of Arizona in 1975 and became chief of anesthesiology two years later at Kino Community Hospital in Pima County, where he stayed until 2000.

Although Dr. Angiulo enjoyed medicine, his passion for law tugged at him. "I always had a burning desire to be an attorney," he said. Instead of leaving one field for another, he decided to practice both.

From 1982 to 1985, while working night shifts at the hospital, Dr. Angiulo attended the University of Arizona College of Law, where he graduated with highest distinction. "I never would have been able to do that without the support of my loving wife, Nina, and my children, who made sure to 'keep it quiet while Daddy was studying,'" he said. He passed

(continued on page 27)

SMACK
KICK
ALUMNI

Alumni Association Board of Governors

Officers

President

Christopher F.X. Riegler, M.D. '88

President-Elect

Eileen (Lee) M. Dieck, M.D. '86

Vice President

Mario F. Tagliagambe, Jr., M.D. '84

Treasurer

Stephen J. Nicholas, M.D. '86

Secretary

John M. Cosgrove, M.D. '83

Archivist

Charles W. Episalla, M.D. '88

Immediate Past President

Louis E. Fierro, M.D. '60

Elected Governors

John A. Addrizzo, M.D. '64

Thomas D. Cerabona, M.D. '82

Theodore Diktaban, M.D. '76

Caroline A. Fierro, M.D. '95

Robert J. Furey, M.D. '62

Joseph L. Giamelli, M.D. '02

Regina M. Giuffrida, M.D. '80

Jane N. Maher, M.D. '67

Richard E. Memoli, M.D. '69

Henry I. Saphier, M.D. '61

George C. Shapiro, M.D. '88

Faculty Governor

Leonard J. Newman, M.D. '70

Member Emeritus

Philip A. Marraccini, M.D. '50

Past Presidents

Dennis J. Allendorf, M.D. '70

Michael A. Antonelle, M.D. '62

Saverio S. Bentivegna, M.D. '57

Joseph F. Dursi, M.D. '59

Louis E. Fierro, M.D. '60

Rita F. Girolamo, M.D. '51

Cyrille H. Halkin, M.D. '45

Henry P. Leis, Jr., M.D. '41

David T. Mininberg, M.D. '61

E. Edward Napp, M.D. '33

Seymour Schlusell, M.D. '51

Lawrence B. Slobody, M.D. '36

Martin L. Stone, M.D. '44

Paul Tartell, M.D. '52

Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations

Julie A. Kubaska, M.S.

Michele Zucker Saunders, M.S. '01: SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST TURNED AUTHOR

By Andrea Kott, M.P.H.

Michele Zucker Saunders, M.S. '01, has a fond memory of first grade. She was working with a speech therapist to correct her articulation of the "s" sound. Ms. Saunders recalls looking forward to the game playing, rhymes and books that comprised her therapy. "It was such an enjoyable experience and it put me on the path to a career I truly love," she said.

That vivid memory, along with the inspiration that came from having a mother who was a teacher, fueled her own interest in pursuing a career in speech-language pathology. "Helping others and teaching others has always been something I aspired to do," Ms. Saunders said.

Ms. Saunders graduated from the inaugural class of the Speech-Language Pathology Program in the School of Public Health. Throughout her career she has worked in a variety of settings, including clinics and hospitals, special education preschools, elementary schools, high schools, and most recently, a public middle school in Rockland County, N.Y., where she lives. She works with typically developing children as well as children with developmental delays or disabilities.

Some of her students have relatively straightforward and simple articulation issues, like a lisp. Others come with a range of developmental disabilities, such as autism disorder, Asperger's syndrome,

LinguSystems, Inc. "As a therapist, you're always looking to find students' strengths and to work with those to help them achieve the goals they need to reach," Ms. Saunders said.

The series is directed largely to speech-language pathologists, therapists, and special education teachers.

Published in August 2006, the books are arranged according to the activities of daily living "Body Parts and Clothing," "Feelings and Actions," "Holidays, People and Places," "Staying Clean and Healthy," and "Weather, Seasons and Months." They use communication and activity "webs," visual diagrams that contain sentences and actions that children might say or do in

a variety of contexts and are designed to help children initiate appropriate conversation and behaviors.

For example, the "Feelings and Actions" book has a communication web titled, "Things I Can Say When I Need a Break," and an activity web titled, "Things I Can Do When I Need a Break." The web also provides a variety of suggested sentences and behaviors appropriate to the situation. A child may learn how to say, "I want to stop" or "I'm tired" when she needs a break; similarly, she may learn to go for a walk or do a puzzle.



Michele Zucker Saunders, M.S. '01

learning disabilities, Down syndrome, speech or language impairments, fluency or voice disorders, or some variation of pervasive development disorder, also known as PDD. "The scope of the practice for speech-language pathologists over time has grown and expanded," Ms. Saunders said.

To meet the varying needs and abilities of people with speech-language challenges, Ms. Saunders has written a six-book series called "Autism and PDD: Things I Can Say and Do", published by

M I L E S T O N E S

While the series can be used with an array of students with developmental disabilities, it is particularly effective with children with autism, who do best with concrete and literal tasks. "Autism is an area where we're constantly looking for techniques and therapy ideas to help students access and initiate language," Ms. Saunders says. "These activities give students actual sentences to use in a variety of contexts they face throughout their daily lives."

Each book also provides blank web templates that allow the teacher or therapist to customize activities to each student's language and social skill levels and to personalize lessons to match a student's specific communication situation or needs.

Ms. Saunders wrote the entire series while on maternity leave with her infant daughter. She has a second series in production, "Autism and PDD: Tell Me About It." The five-book series is scheduled for publication in August 2008. Besides fulfilling her love of writing and her longtime dream of getting published, writing the series has also given Ms. Saunders another way to reach children or anyone in need of new and creative communication strategies. "It's something I've always wanted to do," she said. "Sometimes you're just supposed to do something and it works." ♦

Two Thousand Five

Claudia F. Califano, M.D. '05, is happily settled in the New Haven area, loving Yale, and married to Kevin P. Becker, M.D., Ph.D., a neurologist. "Best wishes and deepest gratitude to all at NYMC!"

Heidi M. Dambach, M.D. '05, reports that **Jeremy Stupin, M.D. '05**, has transferred back to California for his residency at the University of California, San Diego; **Ken Chong, M.D. '05**, has a one-year old toddler; **Clara Lo, M.D. '05**, will be starting her fellowship in July 2008; and, **Kristin Belen, M.D. '05** is getting married in November 2007.

Two Thousand Four

Julia M. Braza, M.D. '04, is engaged to Anthony Martyniak, M.D., a fellow pathology resident at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. The couple plans to marry next August on Cape Cod, Mass.

Steven Kananan, M.P.H. '04, writes that the National Association of EMS Physicians accepted his thesis for a poster presentation in January 2006. The National Association of EMS Educators selected Mr. Kananan to create educational standards for EMS response to weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. He was also appointed chair of the research committee for the National Association of EMS Educators.

Candace D. Poff, M.P.H. '04, is beginning her fourth year of medical school and will be participating in the 2008 Match and applying to Westchester Medical Center. Poff and husband Patrick Drew Hinote have a year-old son, Palmer.

Two Thousand Three

John J. Panagotacos, M.D. '03, completed his residency in neurology at UCLA and is starting a fellowship there in vascular neurology (stroke).

Two Thousand Two

Anne M. Faustin, M.P.H. '02, is regional vice president for the American Cancer Society (ACS) in the Bronx. Previously, she was senior director of the ACS healthcare systems and collaborations division.

Amy Windrum Maragioglio, M.S. '02, married Chuck Maragioglio in 2003 and gave birth to Charles "Charlie" Tracy

Maragioglio in July 2005. She is working part-time at Island Sports Physical Therapy of Coram on Long Island.

Two Thousand One

Theodore Kutzy, M.D. '01, completed his residency in internal medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in 2004 and a fellowship in palliative care at the James J. Peters V.A. Medical Center in the Bronx in 2006. Dr. Kutzy is medical director for Compassionate Care Hospice. He is also a New York State certified medical acupuncturist.

Arie E. Pelta, M.D. '01, has completed a colon and rectal surgery fellowship at the Georgia Colon and Rectal Clinic in Atlanta and has joined the practice as a colon and rectal surgeon. The clinic's senior partner is **Guy Oranio, M.D. '79**. Dr. Pelta and wife Alyssa have three children: Avigayil 5, Elisheva 4, and Yehuda 3.

Timothy M. McClung, M.P.H. '01, is a fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives. To obtain this status, he had to fulfill multiple requirements, such as meeting academic and experiential criteria, earning continuing education credits and demonstrating professional/community service. Presently, he is a director of operations improvement at Norwalk Hospital in Conn.

Two Thousand

Lauren A. Bumby, M.D. '00, is practicing internal medicine in Ridgefield, Conn. Previously, she worked for Saint Vincent's community medicine department, serving as medical director of a clinic at the largest men's homeless shelter in New York City.

Vanessa A. Ribaldo Kaufman, M.D. '00, is working in the department of pulmonary and critical care medicine at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown, Pa.

Peter Kofitsas, M.S. '00, has written and published a book, *Live Better Journal*. Mr. Kofitsas was named "National Health Expert" by *Fitness* magazine in 2006 and appeared on the Lance Armstrong Learning Channel special, *Running for Life*.

Matthew G. Pinto, M.D. '00, has completed a fellowship in pediatric critical care at Schneider Children's Hospital in New Hyde Park, N.Y., and has joined the faculty at NYMC as assistant professor of pediatrics in the critical care division of Maria Fareri Children's Hospital.

The Nineties

John K. Chan, M.D. '97, is an attending physician in the department of ophthalmology for Kaiser Permanente in Hayward, Calif. Dr. Chan is also clinical instructor in the department of ophthalmology at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco.

Scot G. McAfee, M.D. '97, directs the adult psychiatry-training program at St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan.

Sunit H. Patel, M.D. '97, and wife Samantha announce the birth of twin girls, Angela and Alexandra, born August 16, 2007. Dr. Patel lives and practices pediatrics in Westerly, R.I.

Bradley S. Cash, M.D. '95, is medical director of Spine Options in White Plains, N.Y., and is pleased to announce the opening of a second location in Eastchester for non-surgical care of neck and back pain.

Po Ching Fong, M.D. '95, is practicing obstetrics and gynecology in New York City. She and her husband have two children.

Catherine G. Winkler, M.P.H. '95, works at Danbury Hospital in nursing administration. She is a doctoral candidate at Yale University, where she also has a teaching fellowship. She expects to graduate in July 2008.

Mokarram Jafri, M.D. '94, is chair of anesthesia at Saratoga Hospital in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

Joanne P. Starr, M.D. '90, is director of cardiothoracic surgery at Children's Hospital of New Jersey in Newark. Dr. Starr also leads a medical team to the Dominican Republic each year to perform heart surgery for congenital defects, as part of the International Children's Heart Foundation.

The Eighties

Michelle A. (Grosz) Multz, M.D. '87, reports that daughter Rachel is in middle school and "thinks she knows everything," while son Daniel is a "big first-grader."

Hollis G. Potter, M.D. '85, chief of the division of magnetic resonance imaging at the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan, has been named one of New York City's Best Doctors.

(continued on page 26)

ALUMNI HONOR THEIR PEERS And Remember Medical School Days

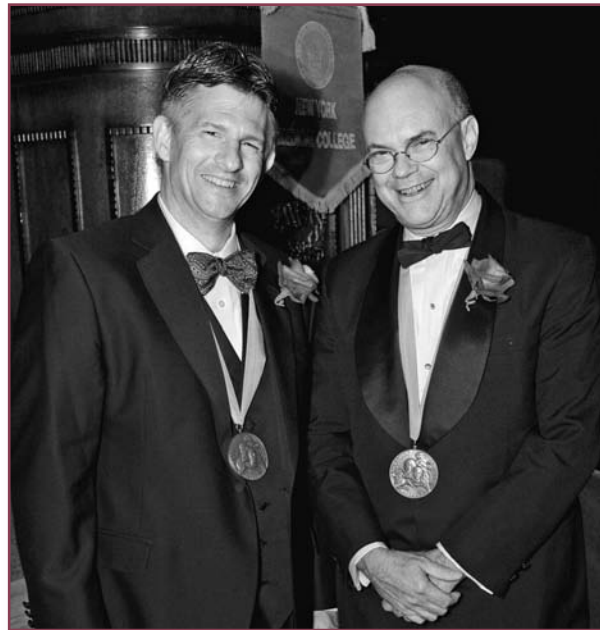
By Lori-Ann Perrault

Old friends were reunited and new acquaintances were made amid the art deco trappings of the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City on May 19, when the College hosted its annual alumni banquet and awards presentations. The following day the celebration moved north to the Valhalla campus where a reunion luncheon was held for the Classes of 1942, 1947, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002.

At the banquet, members of the Class of 1957 and the Class of 1982 were awarded gold and silver diplomas. The evening served as an occasion to honor two alumni with an Alumni Association Medal of Honor, the highest recognition awarded by the Alumni Association.

Every year since 1948 New York Medical College has honored distinguished alumni, nominated by their alumni peers and selected by the Alumni Board of Governors, for significant contributions in

medicine and academic achievements. A glimpse at a list of past medal of honor recipients reveals prominent physicians, educators, scientists and researchers. This year's recipients are no exception: John M. Jessup, M.D. '72, and Scot C. Remick, M.D. '82.



The 2007 Alumni Medal of Honor recipients Scot C. Remick, M.D. '82, left, and John M. Jessup, M.D. '72, proudly displayed their solid bronze die-struck medallions.

Dr. Jessup is currently chief of the Diagnostics Evaluation Branch of the Cancer Diagnosis Program at the National Cancer Institute in Rockville, Md. He has served in the United States Public Health Service, the Maryland Defense Force

holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, and is an emergency physician in the Maryland Bioterrorism Unit. His career has also included stints on the faculty of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Harvard Medical School, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and Georgetown University Medical Center.

Dr. Remick is the director of the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center at West Virginia University, a position he assumed last summer. Prior to that he served as the Dr. Lester E. Coleman, Jr., Chair in Cancer Research and Therapeutics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio, and as associate director for clinical research at the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center in Cleveland. He has published more than 153 papers. To date, his research has generated more than \$15 million in grant awards. ♦



Flanked by College and Alumni Association leadership, John A. Braca III, M.D. '07, center, received the Alumni Endowed Scholarship for Scholastic Excellence and Community Service. From left: Ralph A. O'Connell, M.D., provost and dean of the School of Medicine, Christopher F. X. Riegler, M.D. '88, president of the Alumni Association and member of the Board of Trustees, Louis E. Fierro, M.D. '60, immediate past president of the Alumni Association and member of the Board of Trustees, and Karl P. Adler, M.D., president and chief executive officer.



Gold diploma recipients were happy to reminisce with their former classmates and friends from the Class of 1957. Back row from left: William Brown, M.D., Michael Daly, M.D., Charles Aswad, M.D., Donald Bradley, M.D., Richard Cobb, M.D., Joan Easton, M.D., Charles Kilhenny, M.D., E. Arthur Livingston, M.D., Harold Reikes, M.D., and Robert Martin, M.D. Center row: William McCully, M.D., William Cleary, M.D., John DeAngelis, M.D., Mark Anapoell, M.D., Murray Pozner, M.D., John Spring, M.D., John Harrison, M.D., and Lawrence Smith, M.D. From row: Thomas March, M.D., Owen Heninger, M.D., Wallace Rooney, M.D., S. Ross Mackay, M.D., John Tracy, M.D., Arthur Zimmerman, M.D., Jerry Weisfogel, M.D., and William Donnelly, M.D.

Gone By At 25- and 50-Year Reunions



Members of the Class of 1982 were awarded silver diplomas marking 25 years since they received their medical degrees. Back row from left: Buff Greider, M.D., Donald Harrell, M.D., James Woodburn, M.D., Michael Campion, M.D., Jeffrey Matican, M.D., Vincent LaDelia, M.D., Michael Rogers, M.D., Kenneth Egan, M.D., and Daniel Wapner, M.D. Third row: Howard Quentzel, M.D., Ralph Falk, M.D., Barry Karon, M.D., Harriet Dickenson, M.D., Beth Kalman Karon, M.D., Philip Ragone, M.D., Edward Herman, M.D., and Malcolm Roth, M.D. Second row: Vincent Panella, M.D., Gary Rosman, M.D., Lawrence Fein, M.D., Joseph Lobl, M.D., Robert Troiano, M.D., Robert Perelman, M.D., Jeffrey Krupen, M.D., Donald McCord, M.D., James Friedman, M.D., Robert Jason, M.D., and Alan Morelli, M.D. Front row: Andrew Simon, M.D., Scot Remick, M.D., Joseph Calandra, M.D., Ann Esposito Anderson, M.D., Joseph Cerbone, M.D., Anne McVeigh, M.D., George Tsimoyianis, M.D., David Kelly, M.D., Daryl Altman, M.D., and Jay Tartell, M.D.



At the Alumni Reunion luncheon, an old yearbook promoted laughter and memories for these former classmates from the Class of 1957: Lawrence R. Smith, M.D., Richard Cobb, M.D., Mike Daly, M.D., George R. Monahan, M.D. and S. Ross Mackay, M.D.



Attending their first five-year reunion were these members of the Class of 2002. From left: Shephard Kosurt, M.D., Joseph Giamelli, M.D., Michael Sergi, M.D., and Mason Oltman, M.D.



Erica Cargill Jones, M.D. '92, brought her daughters, Fiona, age 6, and Serena, age 13, to her alma mater for the luncheon.



Joseph M. Wu, M.D., left, professor of microbiology and immunology, welcomed Harold Reikes, M.D. '57, and his wife Mary to the Valhalla campus.

M I L E S T O N E S

(continued from page 23)

William F. Varr III, M.D. '84, has a private ophthalmology practice in Warwick, R.I. He writes that daughter Elizabeth, 22, has graduated from Boston University, where daughter Meredith 20, is a sophomore. Daughter Alaina, 20, is a sophomore at the College of Charleston.

Amy Batterman Ditchek, M.D. '83, says "Hi to all," and reports that all is well in Brooklyn. "I can't believe it will be 25 years since graduation! I will try to attend the celebration."

Deborah Fried, M.D. '83, writes, "Many of the Class of '83 probably agree that 50 is the new...um...29? May we all age with grace and style."

Harriet Dickinson, M.D. '82, attended the 25th anniversary dinner and luncheon and "had a great time!"

The Seventies

Harmon C. Stein, M.D. '79, is performing cataract and Lasik surgery in his Bucks and Mercer County offices in Pennsylvania. Sons Justin, 28, just got married and Seth, 19, is studying at the University of Rochester and volunteering in Guatemala. Daughter Jillian, 16, performed off-Broadway and is attending the Lawrenceville School near Princeton, N.J.

Charles F. Lanzieri, M.D. '78, is interim chairman of radiology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Greta Daun, M.D. '77, lives and practices medicine in New York City.

Lloyd Haskell, M.D. '77, has been working in the pharmaceutical industry for 20 years and is vice president in the internal medicine group of Johnson & Johnson in Raritan, N.J.

William A McGann, M.D. '77, directs the San Francisco orthopaedic residency program and is chief of orthopaedics at St. Mary's Hospital and Medical Center. He performs total joint replacements at San Francisco Orthopaedic Medical Group.

Robert A. Stern, M.D. '76, and wife Anita are doing well in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Daughter Karyn is an endodontist in Boston, and daughter Jodi is an attorney in New York City; son Joshua is a fellow in cardiology at NYU. "Hope all classmates are well!"

Biagio Mignone, M.D. '75, announces that son **Paul Mignone, M.D. '06**, will be starting his ophthalmology residency at St. Luke's/Roosevelt Hospital upon completion of his internship in Spokane, Wash.

Jack Albert, M.D. '74, writes that daughter Amanda has graduated at age 17½ with honors in piano from Lynn University in Boca Raton, Fla. Son Josh, 13, is in eighth grade at Creekside Middle School and made all-county and all-state percussion bands.

Steven Weinstock, M.D. '74, reports that this year he completed the Hermosa Beach to Manhattan Beach, pier-to-pier, two-mile rough water swim in 59 minutes, "my best time in eight years." Dr. Weinstock says he is thinking about retiring and swimming full time, but has seven grandchildren to help. He also has celebrated his 37th wedding anniversary with Shelley.

Harvey Zara, M.D. '73, writes that he and wife Shelley retired and moved to Vermont in 2005. "We work very hard at being ski bums."

Robert M. D'Alessandri, M.D. '71, commonly known as "Dr. Bob" from his televised medical shows, is stepping down as vice president for health sciences at West Virginia University. A specialist in infectious diseases and general medicine, Dr. D'Alessandri was dean of the WVU School of Medicine from 1989 to 2004. He now appears as a medical correspondent on "Doctors on Call," which appears on West Virginia Public Television.

Thomas B. Graboys, M.D. '70, has been promoted to full professor at Harvard Medical School and is awaiting April publication of his book, *Life in The Balance, A Physician's Memoir of Life, Love and Loss with Parkinson's Disease and Dementia*.

The Sixties

Richard Hirsh, M.D. '69, continues his international mammography teaching projects, having completed three missions to Nicaragua, Serbia, and Macedonia in 2007. Dr. Hirsh plans to travel to Kenya in March 2008. In July 2007 he received the Service Award from the Akron Peace Council.

Richard Fogler, M.D. '68, is chairman of surgery and chief medical officer at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn, N.Y. Dr. Fogler is also the proud father of Dan Fogler, a Tony award-winning Broadway and film star.

Stephanie Roze, M.D. '68, is practicing pediatrics in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Marc Lowen, M.D. '67, is ob/gyn program director at Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, Md., and also has a private gynecology practice. He is enjoying his 10 grandchildren and writes, "We saw Dr. Richard Stone in Salt Lake City and he looks terrific."

Michael Brody, M.D. '66, is still practicing and "trying to get it right."

Tony Cohen, M.D. '66, is retired from medicine.

Craig Jurgensen, M.D. '66, having celebrated his 40th year since graduating from medical school, is retired.

Steven Weissberg, M.D. '66, has "finally" given up obstetrics. "It's a new life being able to sleep through the night," he writes. "Best wishes to all fellow classmates. Would love to hear from you."

Richard Allen, M.D. '65, an ob/gyn and assistant dean for graduate medical education and an adjunct professor at Oregon Health and Science University, received the American Medical Association's 2007 Distinguished Service Award.

Leonard B. Krich, M.D. '65, announces that he and wife Barbara welcomed their fourth grandchild (first girl) into the family in July 2007. "Simone joined cousins Benjamin, McKaden, and Seth to round out our family to an even dozen!"

Richard P. Singer, M.D. '65, is retired as medical director of Alameda County's Behavioral Health Care Services and from his private psychiatry practice. Dr. Singer and wife Nancy are enjoying more time with their grandchildren and many more leisurely stays at their lake house in the "gold country" of California.

Francis P. MacMillan Sr., M.D. '64, is semi-retired from gastroenterology, practicing 2½ days per week in Haverhill, Mass. Dr. MacMillan will be joining his son, Francis P. MacMillan Jr., M.D., in his new gastroenterology practice.

Howard D. Harrison, M.D. '61, has served a year as chair of the senior physician group of the AMA. Dr. Harrison had a shoulder replacement in January 2007.

Robert D. Hirsch, M.D. '61, has retired after 41 years in private ob/gyn practice. "I miss the patient contact and diagnostic challenges but not the malpractice risks." Dr. Hirsch plans to travel and catch up on theater and non-medical literature.

Buck J. Williams, M.D. '60, writes from Sun City, Ariz., "Retirement is great!"

The Fifties

Anthony J. Rella, M.D. '59, is retired from the practice of general and thoracic surgery. "All three of our children are attorneys!" Dr. Rella and wife Helena plan

to enjoy retirement at home in New York or at their vacation home in Key Biscayne, Fla.

Cecelia A. Young, M.D. '59, is practicing internal medicine part time in Stony Brook but plans on retiring in the near future. Dr. Young has spoken with many classmates, including **Helen Toomey, M.D. '59**, who spends her time mostly between New Hampshire and Southampton, L.I., with trips to Maine to see her two grandsons Mathew and Jacob; **Paul A Stavrolakes, M.D. '59**, who has moved with wife Jean into a condo in Port Jefferson, L.I.; Jane Engelke, widow of **Harold Engelke, M.D. '59**, who died suddenly of cardiac arrest; **John Starke, M.D. '59**, who with his wife Jane sent a 2006 Christmas card from Little Silver, N.J. with a picture of themselves with their gorgeous new grandson; and, **Margarita R. DeSantis, M.D. '59**, who retired from pediatric practice but is still living in Orange, N.J.

Raymond Bagg, M.D. '58, has completed 30 years with Texas Tech School of Medicine, preceded by 20 years with the U.S. Army Medical Department. "I am approaching the level of grand master in bureaucratic survivalship."

Robert J. Blankfein, M.D. '58, can't wait to attend the 50th class reunion in New York City in May 2008.

Arthur Ginsburg, M.D. '58, is retired and eagerly anticipating the 50th reunion.

Owen E. Heninger, M.D. '57, is practicing psychiatry in Whittier, Calif.

Kenneth L. Becker, M.D. '56, Ph.D., is the 2007 recipient of the Endocrine Society's Distinguished Educator Award, which recognizes exceptional achievement as an educator in the discipline of endocrinology and metabolism. Dr. Becker, who is director of the endocrine program at George Washington University and chief of endocrinology at the Washington Veterans Affairs Medical Center, has spent the past two decades studying neuroendocrine secretory products and has, with his associates, developed a new methodology for the therapy of sepsis. He has written two textbooks, *Principles and Practice of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, and *The Endocrine Lung in Health and Disease*.

Gabriel Gregoratos, M.D. '54, is clinical professor of medicine emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Gregoratos teaches and conducts consultation rounds part time. He was recently honored with the 2007 Gifted Teacher Award of The American College of Cardiology.

A Man of Many Coats

(continued from page 21)

the bar on his first try and joined his father, an immigration law expert, in a small, two-room law office. He continued to practice anesthesia full-time, with law on the side. "I was earning my living as an anesthesiologist and doing law work primarily to spend some time with my dad," he said.

Even then, his professional appetite was not sated. During the mid 1990s, he decided to train to become a pro tempore justice of the peace so he could substitute for judges who were retiring, on vacation or sick. His interest in the judiciary grew and, when he wasn't practicing anesthesia, he began spending more time in the courtroom, watching and listening. "I spent hundreds of hours at no pay sitting and listening and questioning—and I eventually became very qualified to be a judge," said Dr. Angiulo,

who retired from his part-time law practice in 1997.

In 2000 Dr. Angiulo stopped practicing anesthesiology full time and accepted a two-year appointment as judge in the town of Sahuarita. Two years later he was elected justice of the peace for the precinct that covers the area where he lives. His fellow judges have since elected him presiding judge of all Pima County justice courts.

His job may seem far removed from medicine or private practice law, but Dr. Angiulo still gathers information to try to solve problems, all with the goal of helping others. And, when he is not in court, he is keeping his medical license up to date, taking CMEs and attending meetings. "The oil in my lamp has never run dry," he likes to say. ♦

Calendar of Events

January 27 – 30, 2008
25th Annual Alumni CME Winter Seminar
"Healthcare in the 21st Century"
LaQuinta Resort & Club
LaQuinta, CA

May 17, 2008
Annual Alumni Banquet and Awards Presentation

May 18, 2008
Five-Year Class Reunions Luncheon

May 21, 2008
149th Commencement

For more information, please contact
Alumni Relations at (914) 594-4556.

In Memoriam



Brooke L. Brennan, M.D. '01, died March 10, 2007 in Danville, Ky. She was 34.

Lorena 'Katie' M. Leone, M.P.H. '99, died March 25, 2007 in Ridgefield Park, N.J. She was 55.

Joseph J. Stavola, M.D. '87, died June 9, 2007 in Westport, Conn. He was 46.

Robert B. Burdick, M.D. '77, died May 2, 2007 in Wisconsin. He was 61.

James Joseph DeLigio, M.D. '74, died December 15, 2006.

Barbara E. Bess, M.D. '65, died August 26, 1999 in New York, N.Y. She was 61.

John R. Morgan III, M.D. '62, died March 18, 2007 in Trenton, N.J.

Criss Kidder, M.D. '61, died June 26, 2006 in Anahola, Hawaii. He was 72.

John Elkas, M.D. '60, died April 10, 2007 in Caldwell, N.J. He was 73.

Norris K. Culf, M.D. '57, died April 2, 2007 in Stuart, Fla. He was 75.

Charles J. Zmijewski, M.D. '57, died May 21, 2001. He was 70.

Harry Allen, M.D. '56, died on June 4, 2006.

Thomas F. Fogarty, M.D. '55, died July 26, 2007 in Pelham, N.Y.

Eugene Greider, M.D. '52, died April 16, 2007. He was 88.

Rita Girolamo, M.D. '51, died on September 8, 2007. She was 80.

Clemens E. Prokesch, M.D. '49, died May 1, 2007 in New London, Conn. He was 88.

Bruce Jeffery Ebbels, M.D. '48, died March 22, 2007 in Watertown, N.Y. He was 82.

Bela R. Rieger, M.D. '47, died on May 3, 2007. He was 85.

Henry M. Kaplan, M.D. '44, died on October 10, 2007.

John Wallace "Jack" Nevins, M.D. '44, died on August 24, 2007 in Palm Springs, CA.

Margaret Harte-Madden, M.D. '43, died on September 21, 2007.

James V. McNulty, M.D. '43, died May 13, 2007 in La Jolla, Calif. He was 89.

Vincent J. Merendino, M.D. '42, died April 8, 2007 in Englewood, N.J. He was 90.

Clifford F. Moran, M.D. '42, died January 16, 2004. He was 88.

John J. Konefal, M.D. '41, died April 29, 2007 in Charlotte, N.C. He was 90.

Joseph M. Wool, M.D. '41, died February 22, 2007. He was 93.

Vincent Lodico, M.D. '40, died on January 11, 2006.

Alfred L. Lewis, M.D. '39, died August 5, 2006. He was 93.

George J. Mastellone, M.D. '39, died June 12, 2007 in Williamstown, Mass. He was 93.

Joseph M. Teta, M.D. '38, died May 20, 2007 in Vero Beach, Fla. He was 94.

Frank M. Galioto, M.D. '34, died December 1, 1996. He was 86.

George R. Nagamatsu, M.D. '34, died October 24, 2001. He was 98.

Faculty

Joseph A. Cimino, M.D., M.P.H., professor and chairman of the Department of Community and Preventive Medicine, died on July 1, 2007 at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx, N.Y., from complications of prostate cancer. He was 73.

Arthur L. DeAngelis, M.D., clinical assistant professor of medicine until 1996, died August 25, 2007. He was 63.

Rita Girolamo, M.D. '51, professor emeritus of radiology, died on September 8, 2007. She was 80.

Edward Holtzman, M.D., assistant clinical professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences, died June 25, 2007. He was 82.

Vincent J. Merendino, M.D. '42, professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology from 1954 to 1997, died April 8, 2007 in Englewood, N.J. He was 90.

New York Medical College

A HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

95 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, NY 10595



NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
PAID
ALBANY NY
PERMIT #164