

the Bulletin



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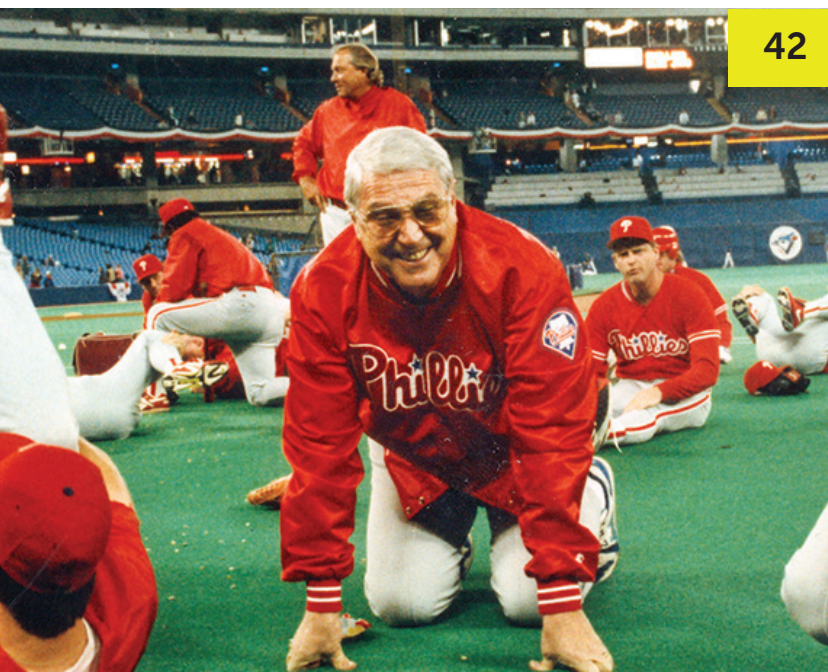
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Alumni Weekend

Friday, October 25
Saturday, October 26



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Dean's Column

Advancing Research Excellence

Welcome to the Fall 2024 issue of The Bulletin. As we commemorate the final months of our bicentennial celebration and begin to create our third century, I am both proud and honored to mark my first year at Jefferson. It has been a year of progress and promise. I have already met many extraordinary alumni, and I look forward to meeting many more of you.

This issue, I want to highlight one of my central priorities—expanding and accentuating scientific research and highlighting its role in our mission to improve lives.

We must tackle this initiative from all sides.

Research is the bedrock of everything we do, fundamental not only for Sidney Kimmel Medical College but also for the entire Jefferson enterprise. When I first arrived at Jefferson almost a year ago, I created the Dean's Executive Council for Research. Staffed by leaders in basic science and clinical research, this team has already begun to create strategies and programs designed to strengthen our research offerings.

For example, in this issue, you will read about basic science researcher Adam Snook, PhD, JCLS '08, who recently received a \$1.3 million grant for his CAR-T cell therapy cancer study. Dr. Snook's research could lead to a powerful new therapy for solid cancers, ultimately bringing life-changing—and life-saving—care to patients near and far.

We are also building on our recent success in securing the NCI Comprehensive Cancer Center designation. With the momentum of this achievement, we can better compete for National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences funding from the National Institutes of Health. Securing these large grants supporting clinical and translational research is an institutional priority, and we have established a task force and work groups to advance this important initiative.



In addition, we are committed to building a pipeline designed to attract, recruit, and retain qualified research investigators and physician-scientists. I am pleased to report we have launched the inaugural Sidney and Caroline Kimmel research pilot programs, made possible by the generous support of Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel. We are excited and encouraged by the number and diversity of the applications that we have received and have already been able to fund two basic science and two health outcomes clinical research applications in just our first year. Support from alumni and

philanthropic partners allows us to maintain our leadership in academics, research, and clinical care. Fundraising drives innovation, exploration, and discovery, and helps to create the necessary infrastructure for robust, active, and cutting-edge research. Our pursuit of excellence is rooted in our world-class clinical care, education, and research, and is integral to our mission to redefine what is possible and improve lives. [J](#)

Said Ibrahim, MD, MBA, MPH

Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean
Sidney Kimmel Medical College
President, Jefferson University Physicians

Time Capsule

Part I: Jefferson Medical College (1824-1895)

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY STRUGGLES

“IF THERE IS NO STRUGGLE,
THERE IS NO PROGRESS.”

- Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)



This excerpt is from “Thomas Jefferson University - Tradition and Heritage,” edited by alumnus Frederick B. Wagner Jr., MD '41.

The Jefferson Connection

How the medical institution we call Jefferson today actually got its name is a complex narrative. It involves a relationship of three cities—Canonsburg, Charlottesville, and Philadelphia. It also involves a relationship of three men—Thomas Jefferson, the namesake; George McClellan, the founder; and Robley Dunglison, the bridge.

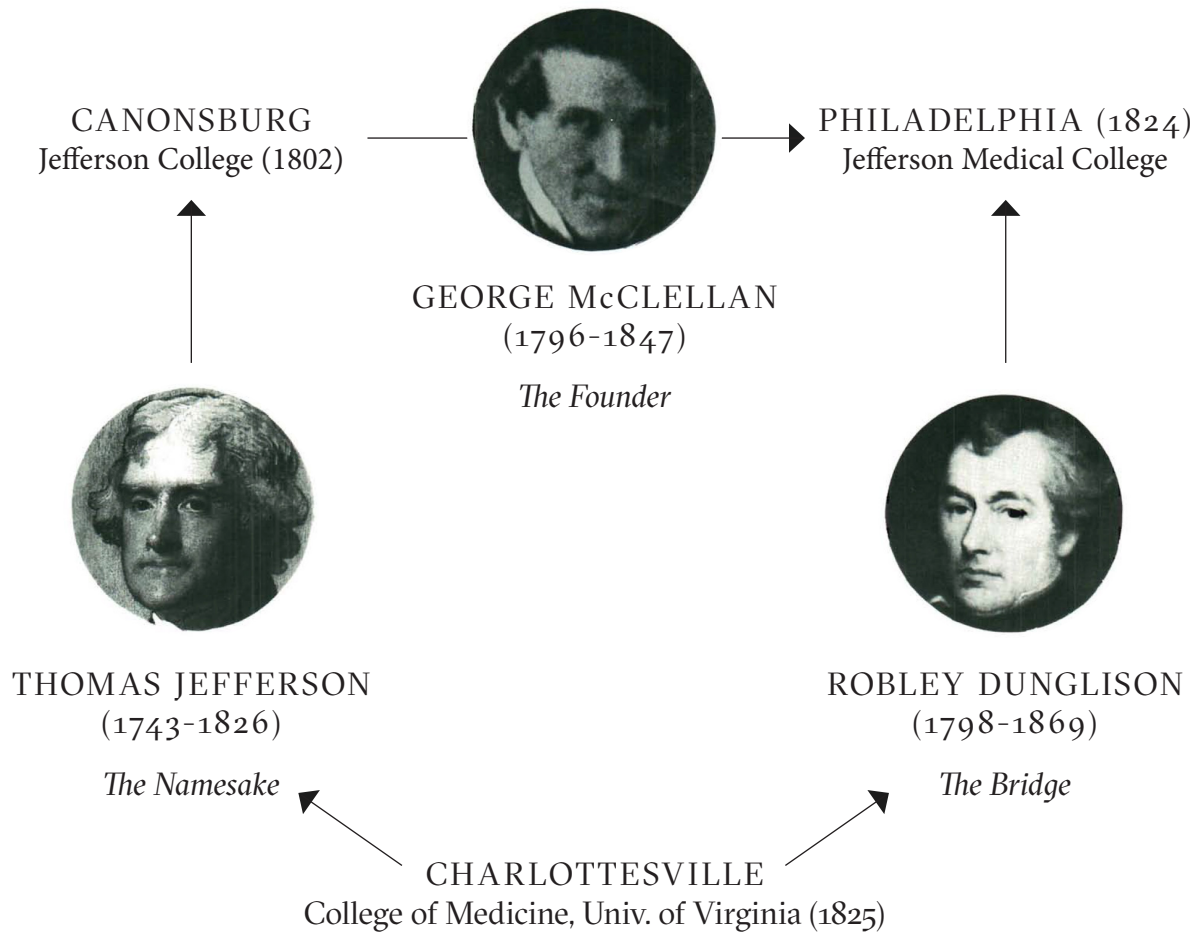
The first root of the gigantic family tree may be traced to about 1773, when an itinerant Presbyterian minister named John McMillen (1752-1833) traveled to western Pennsylvania to preach the gospel to the Scottish settlers of that area. After founding the Chartiers Hill Presbyterian Church near Canonsburg, he founded Canonsburg Academy in a log cabin around 1780, the first chartered literary institution west of the Alleghenies. The only good road into the area was a military one

from Virginia, constructed in 1754 through the forest by General Braddock’s pioneer battalion of 300 axemen. Because the western part of Pennsylvania was largely blocked by impassable mountains, this area was more closely linked to Virginia than to Philadelphia. The Reverend McMillen’s appeal to prominent citizens of Virginia and Pennsylvania for funds and books included Benjamin Franklin, who sent £50 and some books. Shortly after Franklin’s death in 1790 his portrait was sent.

In 1802 the trustees chartered the institution as a college and gave it the name of Jefferson in honor of the then third president of the United States (1801-1809). As a token of appreciation, Jefferson made a gift of some books, and in 1803 sent a portrait of himself by an unknown artist. In spite of the great statesman’s reputed wealth, generosity, and interest in

education, he had serious financial troubles. Because of a flamboyant lifestyle, lavish maintenance resulted in a personal debt of \$20,000 by the time Jefferson left the presidency. After the British destroyed the Library of Congress in 1814, the former President sold 13,000 volumes from his own library to the nation for \$23,950. This temporary relief was erased by the hordes of relatives, guests, and strangers who unashamedly wined, dined, and boarded at his expense, even keeping their horses in his stables. His threatened bankruptcy was saved by a national subscription of \$16,500 in 1826, the year of his death. A few months later Monticello itself (now a national memorial), with its furniture, pictures, and silver, was sold to cover the debts. Small wonder that Jefferson was unable to send any money to the college honoring his name.

The Jefferson-Dunglison-McClellan Connection



In 1824 events took place in Canonsburg, Philadelphia, and Charlottesville that marked the birth and aided the future of Jefferson Medical College. It was the year in which Dr. George McClellan negotiated the establishment of the Medical Department of Jefferson College at Canonsburg as the Jefferson Medical College of Philadelphia. His attempts to obtain a separate charter from the Pennsylvania legislature for a second medical college in Philadelphia had been unsuccessful.

In the same year at Charlottesville, Thomas Jefferson was busy with the creation of a medical school for the University of Virginia, which had first opened its doors in 1819. At age 76, Jefferson had already designed much of the physical structure and curriculum of his university. Now at 81 years, in full possession of the intellectual energy and humanitarian spirit that characterized his genius, he was

searching for the best possible young man "to teach medicine on historical lines with explanations of its successive theories since the time of Hippocrates for the purpose of affording such information as educated persons would want for the sake of culture." The post was deemed of such importance that the search extended to London, where Francis E. Gilmer, Esq., Jefferson's representative, enlisted Dr. Robley Dunglison. Dunglison was given academic tenure, with \$1,500 annual salary, free rent in one of the University pavilions, and a five-year covenant secured by a guarantee of \$5,000. It was the first full-time clinical teaching position in a university medical school in this country.

Within two months of Dunglison's arrival at Charlottesville, he was summoned to become the personal physician of Thomas Jefferson. Until then Jefferson had distrusted the medical profession, preferring

nature's healing. Yet in his twenties, Dunglison found himself attending the former president of the United States and serving as faculty head in the School of Medicine of the University of Virginia. He faithfully attended Jefferson's last two years and closed his eyelids at his death on July 4, 1826. Jefferson had arranged for Dunglison to receive as a gift the grandfather clock in his bedroom. The clock is now displayed in the main exhibition hall of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and its replica stands in the Board of Trustees' Room of the Scott Administration Building.

Dunglison became a professor at the University of Maryland in 1833 and, in 1836, at Jefferson Medical College, where he remained for the rest of his life. He was just two years younger than McClellan the founder and was the bridge between Jefferson the man and Jefferson the institution. 📖

Jefferson Celebrates Ribbon-Cutting and Dedication of University Archives

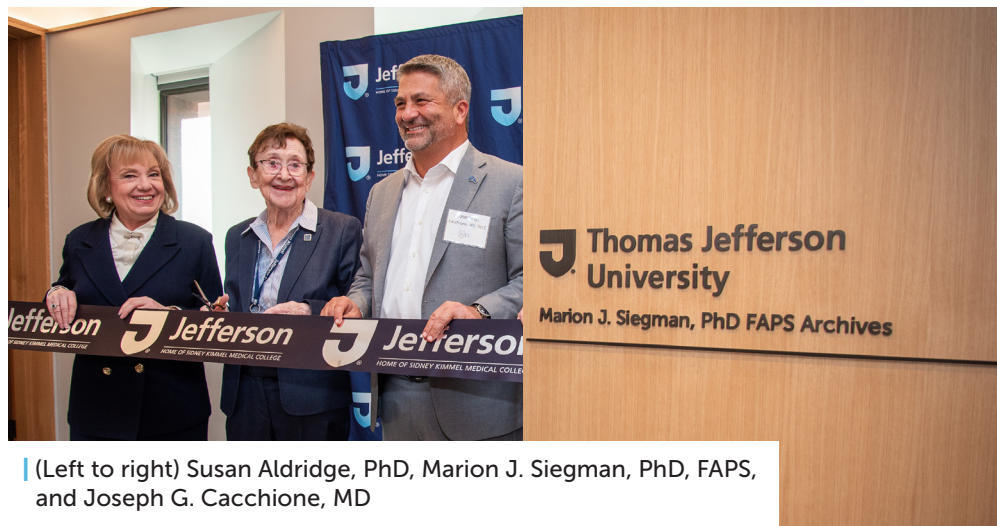
In April, as part of its bicentennial celebration, the Thomas Jefferson University community gathered at Scott Memorial Library to commemorate the ribbon-cutting and dedication of the Marion J. Siegman, PhD, FAPS Archives.

Having outgrown its previous space, the Archives needed more climate-safe storage to house materials securely. After years of discussion regarding desired improvements, Siegman—who has spent more than a half century as a researcher and educator at Sidney Kimmel Medical College and is a longtime champion of the Archives—made a generous gift to renovate and expand the collection in order to better preserve the institution’s rich, 200-year history.

University Archivist F. Michael Angelo noted that the new space includes an expanded storage vault with state-of-the-art environmental controls, a commercial-grade digitization station, and an expanded exhibition gallery with numerous display cases that will showcase previously unseen artifacts. Among other improvements, a dedicated lecture room to accommodate the University’s innovative programming was added.

“There are many wonderful contents to be housed in this new history center, which has been in the making for 200 years,” Angelo said. “Dr. Siegman’s generosity, love of history, and vision have provided an appropriate jewel house to preserve and display these many historic gems, which are a welcome addition in this bicentennial year.”

The collections housed in the Archives have enduring historical value that document the development of Jefferson and its constituent institutions, affiliates, and alumni, Angelo said. It includes the oxygenator component from Dr. John H. Gibbon Jr.’s original heart-lung machine, and rare books such as the highly valuable first edition of the 16th century anatomy atlas “De



(Left to right) Susan Aldridge, PhD, Marion J. Siegman, PhD, FAPS, and Joseph G. Cacchione, MD

humani corporis fabrica.”

Among the other highlights of the Siegman Archives are:

- The Archives and Manuscripts Collections. This includes official records of the University such as alumni records, publications, and manuscripts produced by faculty and alumni.
- The Rare Books Collection. A rich collection of rare anatomy books, including works of Vesalius, as well as volumes on medical botany and books published before 1501. After the Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, it is the largest and most valuable library of rare medical texts in the Delaware Valley.
- The Artifacts Collection. There are hundreds of donated objects documenting the history of medicine; they range from a 17th-century leech carrier and an 1801 portable birthing chair to a 1920s blood transfusion kit, and medical saddle bag from 1880.
- Jefferson Digital Commons (JDC). In the 1990s, Jefferson was one of the earliest institutions to digitize its historic holdings that include oral histories, commencement programs, student publications, historical photographs, and more.

Susan Aldridge, PhD, president of Thomas Jefferson University, noted



F. Michael Angelo, FA



that the dedication and ribbon-cutting event was perfectly timed. “As Jefferson celebrates its bicentennial in 2024, Dr. Siegman’s generous gift better allows the community to reflect on our rich history with an eye toward creating our third century in Philadelphia,” Aldridge said. “We couldn’t be more grateful and excited about the reopening of our vast archival collection, which contains a treasure trove of historical items and records.”

Class of 2024 Students Get Their Residency Assignments on Match Day

For a nerve-racking 30 minutes, Gloria Pereira and Joe Paladino sat side by side in Connelly Auditorium to see where they would match and complete their residencies. The understandably nervous couple will get married next month, so their near-future plans would depend heavily on matching at the same place.

Fortunately, once the Sidney Kimmel Medical College students tore open the envelopes at the end of the ceremony, the news proved all they had hoped for. They both will head to Montefiore Medical Center in New York City—Pereira for psychiatry and Paladino for anesthesiology.

The elation and sense of excitement and relief filled the room for the couple and their classmates as they all opened the envelopes that would set them on the path to their future—a moment not lost on Charles Pohl, MD '87, vice dean for student affairs.

The Class of 2024 will have a special place in University history, he noted during the March 15 Match Day event. They began their medical education at the pandemic's uneasy height of summer 2020 and will graduate during Jefferson's Bicentennial.

"You will be forever etched in our lives," Pohl said. "Between your resolve and your spirit, you not only hit the ground running, but you exceeded our expectations."

Of the 241 Jefferson med students who participated in this year's National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), the University match rate stood about 2 percent higher compared to all U.S. allopathic graduating seniors, Pohl said. An additional 16 students didn't take part in the NRMP because of a commitment to one of the armed services, the ophthalmology match, the urology match, or a deferment of residency. With these early matches, Jefferson had one of the highest match rates nationally.



For the NRMP, the specialties of internal medicine, anesthesia, pediatrics, and general surgery received the most matches for Jefferson students, said Pohl.

Overjoyed to match at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School for pediatrics, Iswarya Manivannan said she has always loved working with children. Plus, she looks forward to returning home to New Jersey.

Aisosa Ize-Iyamu matched for pediatrics as well and will continue her medical career at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Surrounded by family and friends, she basked in the moment, too.

"It's the culmination of all the hard work. This is literally the best day of our lives," she said.

For students who successfully matched through the NRMP, 32 percent will stay at Pennsylvania

hospitals; 30 percent matched to a Jefferson Health hospital or one of its affiliates.

"To get into Jefferson feels absolutely amazing—I love the environment and residency," said Sheraz Qamar, who will enter internal medicine to eventually go into cardiology.

Members of the Class of 2024 not only celebrated the moment with family (and some pets) on Lubert Plaza following the ceremony, but they shared in the collective excitement for their classmates.

– Mike Bederka

ICYMI

Jefferson Flies with the Eagles: The Unique Partnership Aims to Improve Lives



This season, the Philadelphia Eagles and Jefferson Health will kick off a multi-year partnership that designates the healthcare system as a Proud Partner of the Philadelphia Eagles.

“Partnering with the Philadelphia Eagles, a team that exemplifies excellence, teamwork, and unity, is a remarkable opportunity for us to extend our reach and impact,” says Nick Ragone, Esq., Jefferson’s executive vice president and chief marketing and communications officer. “We believe that, just as sports unite our city, this partnership will help us foster a healthier and more connected community.”

As part of the agreement, Jefferson Health will receive sponsorship rights, as well as the exclusive right to have its logo on the team’s practice jerseys.

In addition, Jefferson Health will receive a prominent branding presence at Lincoln Financial Field, which will include a dedicated activation space on Pepsi Plaza for fans to engage with on game days. Promotional support and exposure will also extend across the team’s digital, print, and social media platforms, radio advertising during Eagles game broadcasts, and integration into the team’s preseason telecasts.

“Jefferson Health’s expertise in patient care, research, and education is one of the many qualities that underscores their importance to the Greater Philadelphia area,” says Brian Napoli, senior vice president for corporate partnerships for the Philadelphia Eagles. “We are privileged to align ourselves with an institution whose distinguished reputation is built on a longstanding commitment to the community.”



Explore, Learn, and Experience the World With Jefferson Alumni!

As part of our commitment to lifelong learning, the Office of Alumni Relations offers opportunities for group travel for Jefferson, Textile, and Philadelphia University alumni, friends, and families. Our varied itinerary of travel destinations combines educational forums, unique adventures, and excursions to places of historical and cultural interest, with opportunities to discover nature’s majestic landscapes and incredible wildlife. These trips offer the highest-quality travel experience through our partnerships with experienced travel providers.

- ▶ **Antarctica Discovery**
January 18–29, 2025
- ▶ **Chilean Wonders**
January 20–31, 2025
- ▶ **The Galapagos Islands (Western Itinerary)**
February 11–18, 2025
- ▶ **Cuba and Its People**
April 4–11, 2025
- ▶ **Secrets of Peru**
April 9–17, 2025
- ▶ **Flavors of Sicily**
May 2–10, 2025
- ▶ **Mediterranean Spring**
May 6–13, 2025
- ▶ **South Korea and Japan**
May 6–25, 2025

For detailed trip information and to join our Travel Interest List, visit [Jefferson.edu/AlumniTravel](https://www.jefferson.edu/AlumniTravel) or contact Alumni Relations at 215-955-7750 or alumni@jefferson.edu.

Sidney Kimmel Medical College

STUDENT FACT SHEET

2024 Incoming Class

10,377

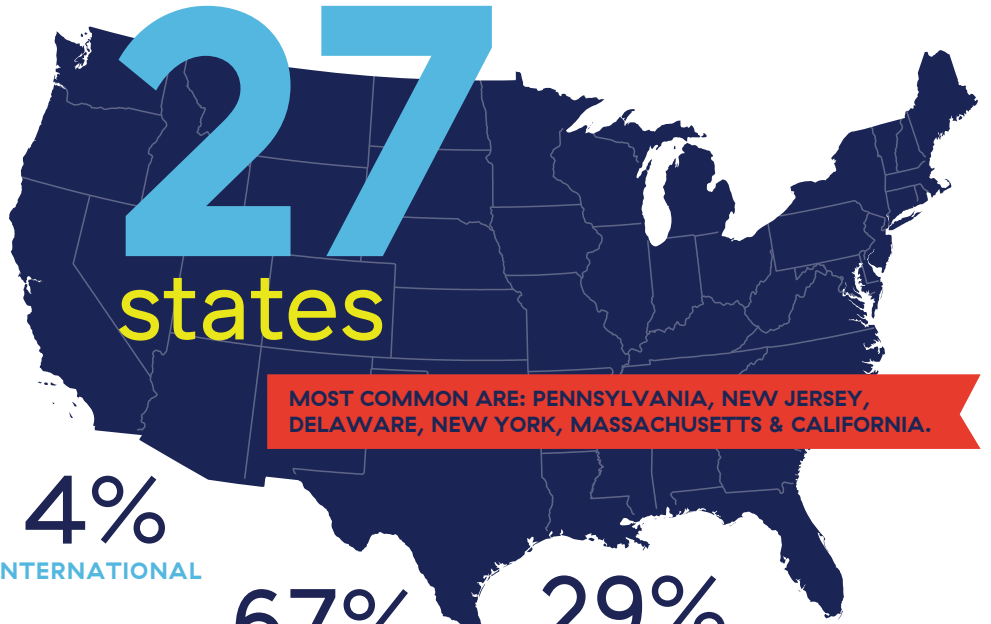
AMCAS APPLICANTS

3.5%

OF APPLICANTS
OFFERED ACCEPTANCE

272

STUDENTS ACCEPTED
TO FIRST YEAR CLASS



MOST COMMON ARE: PENNSYLVANIA, NEW JERSEY,
DELAWARE, NEW YORK, MASSACHUSETTS & CALIFORNIA.

4%


INTERNATIONAL

67%

OUT-OF-STATE
RESIDENTS

29%

IN-STATE RESIDENTS



54%
FEMALE

45%
MALE



3.83 AVERAGE TOTAL GPA

AVERAGE SCIENCE GPA 3.78

513 AVERAGE MCAT

112

GRADUATE AND
UNDERGRADUATE
SCHOOLS
REPRESENTED



AGE RANGE OF MEDICAL STUDENTS

58%

20-23

30%

24-26

12%

27-37

SCAN TO
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NEW MEDICAL STUDENTS DESTINED TO BE LEADERS AND CHANGEMAKERS

Members of the SKMC Class of 2028 Don Their White Coats

BY MIKE BEDERKA

With loved ones by their sides, the 277 members of the Sidney Kimmel Medical College Class of 2028 ceremoniously donned their white coats for the first time on July 26 in Philadelphia's Crystal Tea Room.

The students boast interesting and diverse backgrounds, bringing exciting new dimensions to the medical school.

One of those students is Toren Ikea-Mario, a triplet and one of 16 siblings, who is of royal lineage.

Ikea-Mario, born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, is a prince on the Micronesian island of Polowat, where his family has run the tiny atoll for generations. Although he worked as a wilderness firefighter there, he knew he wanted to be a doctor since age 5 when his identical brother was diagnosed with Hodgkin lymphoma.

This early exposure to cancer and countless hospital visits inspired him to become involved at a camp for children with cancer. First a counselor and then a board member, Ikea-Mario just wrapped up his 20th year with the nonprofit

near his hometown in Oregon.

Describing himself as a "very proud Micronesian," Ikea-Mario plans to become a pediatric oncologist. "I'm thrilled to represent my people in this way," he said. "There aren't enough Micronesians or Pacific Islanders in medicine, and I want to increase the representation for my people."

At the ceremony, the students recited the Hippocratic Oath, and heard words of encouragement from University leadership, alumni, and other students.

Sidney Kimmel Medical College Dean Said Ibrahim, MD, recounted his life growing up on the Somalian-Ethiopian border—which he described as "one of the least developed areas in the world"—and reaching his current position at the medical college.

"If I can do this, you can," he told the students. "Today marks the start of an extraordinary journey for you. I know it because I traveled that journey: one that will challenge you, one that will inspire you, and, ultimately, one that will shape you into the physician of tomorrow. At

Sidney Kimmel Medical College, our mission is not only to provide cutting-edge medical education but to foster an environment where compassion, integrity, and collaboration thrive."

Charles Pohl, MD, senior vice provost for student affairs and career counseling at Sidney Kimmel Medical College, told the students: "When you don your white coat today, you will gain enviable access and immeasurable trust ascribed by those who have come before you. That is, you will be in the room when a patient is diagnosed with a debilitating or terminal disease. You will be in the room when a person becomes a mother. You will be in the room when a family grieves the loss of their child. You will be in the room when medical therapeutics save lives."

It was this emotional component of medicine that inspired student Molly Orlick to become a doctor. As an undergraduate, she volunteered at a hospice and free medical clinic.

"Even in this limited capacity, I saw how special and meaningful it was to provide comfort and

Today marks the start of an extraordinary journey for you. I know it because I traveled that journey: one that will challenge you, one that will inspire you, and, ultimately, one that will shape you into the physician of tomorrow.

- SAID IBRAHIM, MD, MBA, MPH

support to these patients and their families during such difficult and trying times," said Orlick, who also interned with a U.S. Congresswoman and worked for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Appreciating a physician's vast, vital role in a person's life, Orlick knew she wanted to enter medicine and applied early decision to Sidney Kimmel Medical College.

Orlick's father, Martin Orlick, MD, a 1984 graduate of SKMC, helped his daughter don the white coat at the ceremony.

"You can be there for people during some of their happiest times but also some of the most difficult and exceptionally sad times," she said. "When you have a physician who really cares, that can make a patient's life so much better—and that's what I hope to do one day."

Classmate Arryana Daniels, from Wilmington, Delaware, experienced firsthand the difference one doctor could make. While playing Division I soccer as an undergraduate, hours from home, she tore her ACL during a match.

The nearby orthopedic surgeon's cold and dismissive bedside manner exacerbated a difficult situation. Daniels instead went to Rothman Orthopaedics at Jefferson Health for the procedure, with wildly different results. The physician attentively listened to her concerns and thoroughly explained the operation.

"I wanted to be like that doctor, being super intentional and considerate of the patient and making sure they get well and get the treatment they deserve and need," said Daniels, who spent years volunteering at First Tee—Delaware, a youth development organization that introduces golf and its values to children.

In welcoming the Class of 2028, University President Susan Aldridge, PhD, praised the students for their dedication and accomplishments and reflected on this White Coat Ceremony's significance during

Jefferson's Bicentennial.

"With a bold vision and only \$550, four medical pioneers—led by Dr. George McClellan—established Jefferson Medical College in 1824," said Aldridge, noting its place as the fifth medical school in the United States.

"Now, 200 years from its conception and thousands of students later, all of you are carrying on this great legacy by donning your white coat as the first big step in your own journey to becoming a physician," she told them. "I have no doubt you're ready, given your obvious intelligence and desire to make a difference in patients' lives by delivering the best care with empathy, integrity, and professionalism."

As physicians, the Class of 2028 will light the way with trailblazing ideas and groundbreaking solutions to fight disease, alleviate suffering, and make positive change worldwide, Aldridge predicted. "Know that medical school will be every bit as challenging as it is rewarding," she said. "But we have tremendous faith in your success as stewards of the future in patient-centered healthcare." 📌





JEFFERSON RESEARCH LAB MAKING PROGRESS IN BATTLE AGAINST CANCER

Patience and Funding Propel Discovery in Use of CAR-T Therapy

BY CINDY LEFLER

For Adam Snook, PhD '08, it's all about solving puzzles.

As a basic scientist, Snook seeks to find answers in the laboratory that lead to the development of new therapies for cancer patients.

He admits it's not always easy.

"I was surprised when I started doing research that it can be a slog at times. We don't get a lot of wins, and getting great data can be rare," says Snook, associate professor in the Department of Pharmacology, Physiology, and Cancer Biology in Sidney Kimmel Medical College. "But," he exclaims with enthusiasm, "when the pieces fall into place, and the data points in the right direction, I love it!"

Lately, those pieces have been falling into place beautifully. Snook, who focuses on basic, translational, and clinical aspects of gastrointestinal biology and tumorigenesis, recently received a \$1.3 million grant from the Robert J. Kleberg and Helen C. Kleberg Foundation for his laboratory's "Universal Cell Therapy for Cancer" study. This research could lead to a powerful new therapy for solid cancers—a therapy that is effective, mass-producible, and affordable.

Snook's research focuses on CAR-T cell therapy, a form of immunotherapy that has given new hope for those diagnosed with leukemia and lymphoma. In this approach, the patient's T cells—cells that are part of the

immune system—are collected and genetically re-engineered to express a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR), a special protein created in the laboratory that binds to other proteins on cancer cells. The CAR is then added to the T cells and infused into the patient's vein so that they can attack the cancer cells.

However, says Snook, there are challenges to CAR-T therapy. While it has been curative for some patients with leukemia, it has not been successfully applied to "solid" malignancies such as lung, colorectal, and pancreatic cancers. In addition, it's time consuming: manufacturing CAR-T cells relies on removing the patient's own T cells, modifying them in the laboratory over the course of several weeks, and then returning them to the patient. And it is expensive—about \$500,000 per treatment.

These limitations mean that the most promising new cancer treatment in decades is not readily available to the majority of cancer patients. In fact, it's estimated that only 20,000 to 30,000 patients with blood cancers in the United States have been treated with CAR-T cell therapy since it was approved in 2017.

"We don't have the infrastructure anywhere in the United States to be able to manufacture CAR-T cells one patient at a time for tens or

hundreds of thousands of people per year, so we need to find some kind of different approach that will be more easily deployed for many, many patients. And the approach that we're working on is to use allogeneic donor cells," Snook explains.

The process includes obtaining T cells from donors, genetically modifying them, then mass producing them to be ready for use on demand for patients in need—almost like blood donation.

Furthermore, continuing to re-engineer the cells could make the treatment safe and effective for a wider range of cancers, as well.

"The CAR-T cell that we're currently working on also works against many solid cancers," he says, noting that a paper they are about to publish shows CAR-T cells were effective for the top six causes of cancer death, including lung, pancreas, and breast. "So, we're merging two areas together so that it will work for many kinds of cancers and would be available for many people at once. It could really shift the outcome for so many patients."

For example, the lab has identified an enzyme in the intestine called guanylyl cyclase C (GUCY2C), which can be employed as an antigen target for adoptive cell therapy in colorectal cancer. "And we've recently discovered its expression by other gastrointestinal

cancers, including stomach and esophagus, creating an opportunity to treat these fatal diseases.”

It’s these kinds of encouraging results that keep Snook going, even after more than two decades in the lab. Snook joined Jefferson in 2001 to work on developing vaccines for certain types of cancer; he completed his PhD six years later.

“Some people like to find a new thing; they get bored on one thing for too long. But I really like to be able to take one project and see it through to the end,” he says, noting that his lab has been working on CAR-T cell research for almost a decade. He has also continued the work on a cancer vaccine that he started 23 years ago.

The most recent trial of the cancer vaccine targets colon, pancreas, gastric, and esophageal cancers. Approximately 50 patients have been vaccinated over a period of four years in a phase 2 clinical trial.

“We’ve already seen immune responses in our very first trial with the first version of our vaccine, and we are working toward our next clinical trial—a combination of vaccines that combines the first one with a second,” Snook says.

Snook believes that a vaccine for GI cancers is not too far in the future, noting that “recent studies have produced promising clinical responses with an mRNA vaccine for pancreatic cancer, as well as hopeful results from a trial combining a cancer vaccine with an immune checkpoint blocking drug for melanoma.”

But as always, more research is needed, and funding is critical in all areas of working toward developing therapies in the battle against cancer.

“This Kleberg Foundation grant is huge for us, and now will allow us to really devote a lot more resources to the project overall and hopefully be able to accelerate our pace of development,” he says.

Snook says that grants and funding from private and foundation donors are vital to the success of his—and all—research.

Over the past three decades, federal grant money has been increasingly difficult to obtain, so the emphasis has been on smaller pilot grants, grateful patient generosity, and foundations to keep the overall research moving forward.

With enough funding and enough research, Snook believes curing cancer in our lifetime is possible.

“We have made fantastic progress overall in the treatment of cancer. Things like childhood cancers

went from 80 percent fatal to 80 percent curable over the last 50 or 60 years,” he says. “And about five years ago we actually started to see a decline in cancer death rates, mostly due to improvements in lung cancer treatment with immunotherapy. We’re making big progress in some areas and slower progress in others, but overall, we keep making advances and improving patient outcomes.” And those advances will spur his lab on to continue its work until all of the pieces of the puzzle are together and cancer is cured. [↗](#)



that's why we're



BY IRISA GOLD

here

The Czarnecki Family's Jefferson Journey *For the Love of Family, Patients, and Medicine*

In 2025, Jefferson's Class of 1965 will celebrate its 60th anniversary. The occasion will highlight this singular class's distinction as the first in Jefferson's storied history to include women. Alumna Nancy Czarnecki, MD '65, was the first woman to matriculate to—and graduate from—the medical college.

"Back in the early '60s, some of the major universities in the Philadelphia area did not accept women," Nancy says.

What a difference six decades make.

According to a 2023 report from the Association of American Medical Colleges, in 2019, for the first time, women comprised the majority of medical school applicants, matriculants/first-time enrollees, and total enrollees.

Nancy's path to medical school was influenced by a desire to do more. During her college years as a med tech at Temple University, her beloved grandfather developed severe pain. She felt helpless. She wanted more. When her mother read that Jefferson, known for its clinical skills and doctor/patient relationships, was accepting women for the first time, she jumped at the chance to apply. "I thought, I have to learn to do more for him," she says.

Nancy's former Temple classmate, a Jefferson first-year

medical student, invited her to visit him at the anatomy building. "There were all these men in white jackets, students hovered over their cadavers," she recounts. "It became an uproar. There was a hand on my shoulder, and I turned around. Dr. Michaels, a prosector in anatomy, said, 'Lady, do you know you're causing pandemonium in here?' But he had a twinkle in his eye, and somehow, I knew I was going to love this place."

Nancy and seven other women joined Jefferson in 1961. "We bonded, and we're still in touch," she says. "We would talk about classes, our backgrounds, and stuck together as women normally do. We had a lot of fun and were accepted well by most of the faculty and the guys in the class. Most came from co-ed schools, so it was no big deal. I thought we would get a lot more resistance from the professors, but outside of little light jokes, it was a great experience."

Following medical school, Nancy went right into family practice. "At the time, you could go into family practice without residency," she shares. "I was board certified, and you were grandfathered in if you passed the exams, which I did."

Nancy and her husband, whom she met while in college, opened a family practice in the Port Richmond area of Philadelphia



1. Nancy Czarnecki, MD '65
2. Joseph Czarnecki, MD '95
3. John Czarnecki, SKMC student

that thrived for more than 20 years. After leaving private practice, she joined the insurance industry in the role of medical director. "I saw how medicine was practiced in other states and used my knowledge of family practice to help finetune their programs," she says.

Nancy's Jefferson bond is ironclad. Selected as the first woman president of the Jefferson Medical College Alumni Association, she also served on the Jefferson University Board of Trustees as an

Jefferson MEDICAL COLLEGE

and rarely saw a female surgical resident."

Not only did she lead the charge for women, Nancy's Jefferson legacy spans three generations. "How could I not go to a place that was so good to my mom and trained her so wonderfully?" says Nancy's son Joseph Czarnecki, MD '95. "Aside from Jefferson being a wonderful medical school, being able to go to a place where my mom had somewhat of a historic impact was important to me. I had the option to go to several other medical schools, but I felt the training would be better at Jefferson—more hands-on, and clinically oriented. The bar was set so high that no one else came close

Jefferson lived up to its reputation as a hands-on medical school and gave me the ability to begin to hone my craft as a surgeon."

Coming from an immigrant family that prioritized education, patriotism, and a love for his country, Joseph entered the health profession scholarship program with the U.S. Air Force, serving for four years as a general medical officer on active duty at Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, Texas. "It was incredibly important to be able to give back to my country in a way that was going to work well for me and my skill set as an evolving orthopedic surgeon," he says. Following his service, he joined the Harvard Combined Orthopedic Residency program,

Jefferson's First Alumna

When you walk down Allegheny Avenue in the Richmond area of Philadelphia with Dr. Nancy Szawce Czarnecki and her husband "Dr. Joe" it is clear what a family practice in an inner city neighborhood can mean. Doctor and patient know one another. There is a rapport between the Czarneckis and this neighborhood that can be expressed, like greetings exchanged, in Polish, Ukrainian and maybe Lithuanian. Nancy Czarnecki and her husband

are partners in family practice. In addition to enjoying her patients, Dr. Czarnecki finds this practice of general medicine stimulating because she treats young families and old, is able to deal with many different problems, and can understand her patients as whole people not just as body parts or one organ. They have their own office where she is able to keep up her pathology, a subject she particularly enjoyed at Jefferson. As it works in the generalists from the female patients and her husband she and he also does a good deal of emergency work. With a new staff building around this fall the Czarneckis have taken an another patient to meet a patient had who never seems to stop growing.

Dr. Czarnecki and her husband have managed another division of labor, one which has allowed her to have four children since 1970 an still practice medicine. She work her own version of part-time, most patients only need days a week if working long hours the day she does go in. With a husband for a partner naturally loves, and all one she is currently enjoying, an relatively easy to arrange, and it has not even been her patients. The children think having a physician (a mother) is a great feat.

Dr. Czarnecki can administer the custom immunizations, and gentle injections seems to be a lot less traumatic with Mommy on the left side of the hypodermic. When the children get older and realize how big they are, Dr. Czarnecki likes to build up her hospital practice, because she feels one can leave even when that way.

The letters of the alphabet are Nancy Czarnecki the first woman ever to graduate from Jefferson Medical College, class of 1965. A few liked it that way. "Everybody went out of his way for me at JMC, as there was really a great feeling. Because we were the first class of women, we were special. I don't



ALUMNI BULLETIN

Fall 1989

alumna trustee." Since her fifth-year reunion, Nancy has also served as reunion chair, recently collaborating on the creation of the Class of 1965 Scholarship Fund for deserving Jefferson medical students. "I've always loved Jefferson," she says.

She never forgot the women who followed in her footsteps, launching two programs at Jefferson geared to female students to provide information about specific medical specialties and residency programs. "It was helpful, because at the time, there weren't that many women at Jefferson," she says. "You didn't see women department heads

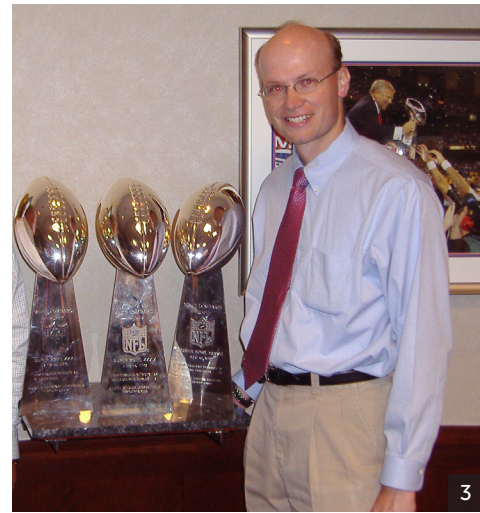
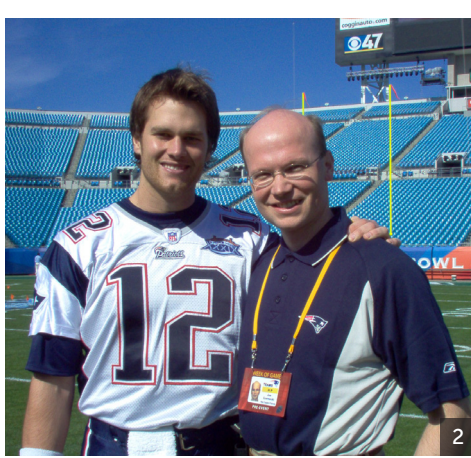
to meeting that for me. I wanted to be part of that legacy."

Joseph's love of surgery began early in life. "When I was in college and had a couple of orthopedic surgeries, that really crystallized that I was very interested in going into orthopedics," he shares. "Jefferson's legacy dating back to the days of Samuel Gross is palpable when you're there. It's one of the important places for surgery and how surgery came to be in the United States. If you learn sound surgical principles in a great medical school like Jefferson, you can carry those on and can ever be evolving.

staying for four years, followed by a year at the Mass General/Harvard sports medicine and shoulder surgery fellowship. Today, he practices orthopedic surgery in Massachusetts.

Nancy's son John Czarneck had an internship in physical therapy at Jefferson and then worked in the department for two years.

"The opportunities that my family had at Jefferson were gigantic," says Nancy's grandson, John's son and namesake, and Joseph's nephew and godson John Czarnecki, who attended the Penn State Jefferson Combined BSMD program and



(left to right)
 1. Joseph and Wendy Czarnecki
 2. Tom Brady and Joseph Czarnecki
 3. Joseph Czarnecki
 4. Joe, John and Nancy Czarnecki

I couldn't see a place that would fit him better than Jefferson. It had been really good for my mom and me, and I knew it would be a good place for him.

just completed his first year as a member of the Sidney Kimmel Medical College Class of 2027. "It's very cool to be the third generation of my family to attend."

"When John ended up deciding that he wanted to go to med school, we had multiple conversations and I highly encouraged him to go," shares Joseph. "I couldn't see a place that would fit him better than Jefferson. It had been really good for my mom and me, and I knew it would be a good place for him."

"Family is very important to me," John says. "We are very close. Being able to have this connection and to talk about something that we share in terms of what we do professionally has strengthened my relationship with my grandmother."


Nancy was able to join John at his White Coat Ceremony, a source of immense pride and gratitude for both. "She was so happy to see the increased diversity within Jefferson, especially as my class is more women than men," he says. "It's something she's proud to be a part of in terms of her legacy."

Jefferson's pioneering JeffMD curriculum is invaluable to John. "What makes it extra special is its systems-based approach," he shares. "With JeffMD, we have the opportunity to go block by block and synthesize a lot of different information together. That's an ultimate strength." John also raves about the liaison program, which bridges the gap between faculty and students and addresses

concerns about how classes are taught and materials delivered. "There are always concrete results that come out of the meetings, and compromise is reached quite often," he notes.

Even in his first year, John had the opportunity to participate in exciting research opportunities within orthopedics, plastic surgery, and sports medicine. "The best advice I've gotten from both my grandmother and my uncle is to keep your mind open," John shares. "As a Jefferson student, your education shapes what you find interesting. It's very important that you're truly passionate and acknowledge every possibility of what you can do in the future."

"A lot of people ask what medical school is like and what Jefferson is like," he continues. "The big difference between the way that people talk about other spots and Jefferson, especially within the medical student community, is that the students here are extremely happy and passionate about what they do. I think that's something that may get lost along the way of accreditation, ranking, and prestige. It elevates the entire school and makes Jefferson a special place."

"We must continue to build our future for our patients," says Nancy. "Jefferson historian D. Frederick Wagner's book, 'Heritage and Traditions,' includes a quote from Cicero: 'In nothing do men more nearly approach the gods than in giving health to men.' And that's why we're here." 



HIS *NORTH* STAR

Gregory C. Kane, MD '87, MACP
Jane and Leonard Korman Professor of Pulmonary Medicine
Chair, Department of Medicine

BY IRISA GOLD

A revered leader in pulmonary medicine, critical care, and medical education both nationally and across the globe, Gregory Kane, MD '87, has been inspiring, changing, and saving lives at Jefferson for more than three decades. He cares deeply about all aspects of his role and is equally passionate about both providing the best care for his patients and training the next generation of physicians. "That is really our consistent north star," he says.

The Jane and Leonard Korman Professor of Pulmonary Medicine and chair of the Department of Medicine, Kane began his Jefferson journey before he even started at Jefferson Medical College. "I fell in love with Jefferson the first time I visited as a potential student," he says. "The thing that excited me most was the focus on clinical education that separated it from many other medical schools. With the affiliate experiences and the strength of the faculty combined with a very collegial and supportive atmosphere, I thought it was the perfect environment to become an outstanding physician."

Following residency, Kane focused on pulmonary and critical care as a specialty and returned to Jefferson. He shares: "I looked



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at a variety of fellowship training programs and Jefferson offered everything I was looking for. There were strong research and clinical opportunities, and the clinical faculty was superb. I came back to Jefferson in 1990, and I've never left."

Kane's credo is simple—and transformative. "Keep the patients at the center of everything that we do," he says. "Interactions with patients in healthcare today can be, too often, transactional. They're a procedure, an intervention, and we don't get to know the patient or see them back over time. The best healthcare comes when the physician knows the patient, their preferences, values, family background, and how they view the world. My job is to provide the science and the prescription, but listen to the patient in terms of what their preferences are. That's an important part of every academic health center's legacy and it's something that I'm proud of and want to continue to see emphasized in academic medicine."

A critical area of Kane's focus in the last decade has been lung cancer screening. "Finding lung cancer early can lead to cures and save lives," he says. "It's exciting to be involved in a field that's

completely new. In the pantheon of cancer screening, we had historically focused on colon cancer, prostate cancer, breast cancer, cervical cancer, and skin cancer. In 2011, we recognized that there was value to performing annual CAT scans in people who have had significant smoking exposure over their lifetime. This was an incredible opportunity to bring a new screening therapy to the foreground, show that it's effective, and roll it out in our community. There is a lot of work ahead to achieve what we want to do not only for our individual patients, but for people across the city from all races, backgrounds, and walks of life. I'm looking forward to the numbers of lung cancer screenings matching our performance in breast cancer and colon cancer."

As editor of a critically acclaimed book in the field, "Lung Cancer Screening: A Population Approach," Kane is proud to be leading the charge in shifting the paradigm of academic medicine's approach to the discipline. "When I first joined academic medicine, the paradigm was, 'We'll sit in the hospital and our clinic office and wait for the patient to come to us,'" he explains. "Today, we have to be able to go out to the community and meet the patient where they are, in order to get them to consider screening."

Historically, the highest rates of screening have been in geographic areas that were white and well-educated. Kane says that closing that disparity requires tailored messaging and meeting patients in a way that's culturally appropriate. "Academic

medicine is changing," Kane says. "We're not just thinking about the patients that come in through our doors—we're thinking about those patients who don't come in, how we can reach them, and how we can change their health experience and health journey by reaching out and being more thoughtful and inclusive."

Kane has been recognized throughout his career for educating—and inspiring—Jefferson's best and brightest. "One of the joys of working in the Department of Medicine is that I get to support our students, residents, and fellows across the spectrum of their educational journey," he says. "That makes day-to-day work at Jefferson rewarding, interesting, stimulating, and fun. I tell people that being a teaching physician is the best job in all of medicine." One key experience for Kane was serving as president of the Association of Program Directors in Internal Medicine. He is as proud of advancing the learning environment for medical education at the national level as he is of advancing the careers of scores of students, residents, and fellows through his personal interactions.

Beloved by his patients, residents, fellows, and students, Kane has received numerous awards recognizing his clinical and teaching expertise. "As a young clinician, one of the awards I got was from our interns in the residency program," he shares. "Internship is a stressful year. The interns work harder than anybody in the hospital. They have the longest hours, and probably get the fewest thank-yous. When

I looked back on that time in my career, the opportunity to be recognized by our interns for teaching was really rewarding and exciting." Other accolades include the Mary F. Lindback Award for Distinguished Teaching and the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Teach award from the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education. In 1997 he was honored with the presentation of his portrait by the medical college senior class—one of the youngest Jefferson physicians at the time to ever win this prestigious honor. This year, he will receive the esteemed Achievement Award in Medicine at the 22nd Annual Jefferson Gala, honoring a Jefferson physician who is recognized for their leadership, academic contributions, exemplary patient care, and dedication to Jefferson's mission to improve lives.

When asked about his legacy, Kane both honors Jefferson's past and looks forward to its bright future. "When I look back on Jefferson's history, there is a group of remarkable clinician leaders," he says. "I like to think that with the excellence that we deliver today, we're fulfilling the legacy of those great clinicians who came before us. My hope is that I can pass a little bit of that excellence on to the next generation of physicians, so that we can continue to be a leader in healthcare in the region and across the country, and continue to focus on what's important in medicine, which is keeping the patient the focus of everything we do." 📌

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Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University

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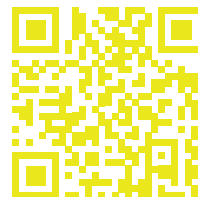
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FULL CIRCLE



Suresh G. Nair, MD '84
Physician-in-Chief
Lehigh Valley Topper Cancer Institute

BY IRISA GOLD

In August, Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) joined Jefferson Health, placing the combined system among the top 15 largest not-for-profit health systems in the U.S., with 32 hospitals and more than 700 sites of care.

For devoted Jefferson alum and physician-in-chief of the LVHN Topper Cancer Institute Suresh G. Nair, MD, '84, this exciting development is what can only be described as a "full circle moment."

Nair was born in India, where his life took a turn when he was just three. Given the opportunity to study in the U.S., his father pursued his PhD in chemistry at Iowa State University. His mother joined him there, earning her master's degree in nutrition. Meanwhile, Nair and his younger sister stayed in India, raised by both sets of grandparents. After returning three years later, Nair's father worked as a research chemist for the Atomic Energy Commission, helping to purify molybdenum for nuclear energy. Nair and his sister started at a school where everything was taught in English.

However, soon after being reunited, tragedy struck. Nair's beloved maternal grandmother developed an aggressive form of uterine cancer and passed away after only a month. They had been extremely close, and six-year-old Nair was devastated. "I became withdrawn," he says. "I remember asking my mom questions, and she

said, 'There's all this mystery around cancer, and it's something you can't do anything about.'"

In contrast, his father was hopeful, telling him how America was so advanced in science, he was sure they were going to figure out cancer. "I remember saying that I'd like to be part of research and help people with cancer," Nair says. "My father said, 'You should consider medicine.'"

At age 11, Nair and his family permanently moved to the U.S. After six months in elementary school in the south side of Chicago, Illinois, the family moved to York, Pennsylvania, the place where molybdenum was purified to be sent to all East Coast markets. "My dad's dream was always to permanently immigrate to the U.S.," he shares. "Luckily, he got a job right in his narrow field."

While in high school, Nair exhibited a strong aptitude for science and math. He first learned about Jefferson's Accelerated Premedical-Medical Program with Penn State while taking advanced college-level courses at the school's campus in York. Even after being accepted early decision to attend MIT, then his dream school, it was a visit to Penn State's main campus that changed his life. He explains, "I came home and said, 'Dad, I don't know about going to Boston after seeing the Penn State campus.' We knew Jefferson was one of the best

medical schools in the country. During my interview the faculty member spoke about Jefferson's values of empathy, compassion, caring, and bedside manner. I said, 'I hope I get in here. This is an amazing place.'"

Today, 40 years since his graduation, Nair has fond memories and is grateful for the strong clinical foundation as well as the values instilled in him by his Jefferson education. "The thing that I remember most is how much the patient was at the center of all the teaching," he says. "It was clear from day one to graduation, whether it was basic science, introduction to clinical medicine, taking a good history and physical, learning to be a good listener, or bedside manner."

While he was also exposed to many wonderful Jefferson alumni who returned to lecture at the college, Nair is incredibly grateful to one of his most inspirational teachers, post-grad alum Michael J. Mastrangelo, MD, RES '70, FEL '71, who is internationally recognized for his patient care and research in melanoma and helped to solidify Nair's interest in oncology and specializing in melanoma and immunotherapy.

Following a residency in internal medicine at Geisinger Medical Center, where he met his beloved wife, Terri, a nurse, Nair completed a fellowship in hematology-oncology at the University of Pittsburgh before

The thing that I remember most is how much the patient was at the center of all the teaching ... It was clear from day one to graduation, whether it was basic science, introduction to clinical medicine, taking a good history and physical, learning to be a good listener, or bedside manner.

returning to Geisinger as a medical oncologist. He advanced to lead research for Geisinger, connecting with the Mayo Clinic's clinical trials group, where he was promoted to the group's national community chair. "Over time, I began to develop a subspecialty interest in melanoma immunotherapy," he shares.

After 14 years at Geisinger, LVHN came calling, looking for a very specific recruit. "They were moving in a more academic direction and wanted someone to start a hematology fellowship and lead clinical trials," Nair says. "That was right in my niche." He didn't waste any time, initially starting a fellowship in conjunction with Hershey Medical Center; and after 10 years creating a successful fellowship at LVHN that has already graduated 20 fellows. Nair led the program for five years before stepping down while remaining part of the core faculty.

"My Jefferson education has always been the launching point for all of my successes," he says. Becoming involved with the National Cancer Institute early on in his career, he began collaborating on clinical trial research in his community. When Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center chose LVHN as one of its three national research partners, it was recommended that LVHN develop an institute model and that he be named as physician-in-chief of

the Cancer Institute, a role he has proudly held for eight years. In that time, he has continued his patient care and research, published about 80 papers, and mentored nearly 40 oncologists within the Institute, which has doubled in size under his leadership.

Today, while at least half of Nair's research is specific to melanoma, he has expanded his work on immunotherapy and is the local PI for a pioneering pancreatic cancer vaccine trial at LVHN. "There are two vaccines now that are very hopeful for increasing the cure rate of resected pancreatic cancer," he shares. "We are one of about 20 sites in the U.S., and our first patient was vaccinated in August of this year."

In another full circle moment, Nair is thrilled to have had the chance to pass the baton and hood his son, Jake, who graduated from Sidney Kimmel Medical College in 2023 and has embarked on his residency in family medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

"When I see patients, I often think of my grandma," he says. "It's been a guiding force throughout my life. I feel very blessed to have had this education, this career, the connections that I have with my patients and my family, and the opportunity to be a force for good in society." 🍷



| Jake Nair, MD '23

Ask the Right Question SAVE A LIFE



Primary Care Physicians Can Guide Patients in Crisis to Healing

BY CINDY LEFLER



Sometimes all it takes to save a life is asking the right question: “So how’s your mood?”

It’s a question that primary care physicians should always ask their patients, says Matthew Wintersteen, PhD, director of the David Farber ASPIRE (Advancement of Suicide Prevention, Intervention, Research, and Education) Center at Jefferson and associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior.

Wintersteen says in the battle against suicide, the first line of defense is not always the mental health professional, but often a primary care doctor.

“In outpatient psychiatry or psychology, we see a very small fraction of the total population who are at risk for suicide,” he says, noting that the stigma of suicidal thoughts often prevents an individual from seeking help from a mental health professional. “But they do go to their doctors when they’re sick or need a checkup, and that’s an important opportunity that shouldn’t be missed.”

Unfortunately, it is often missed. “In medicine, we typically start with, ‘Tell me what’s wrong,’ or ‘What brings you in today?’” Wintersteen says. “When working with someone who is suicidal, those questions can be interpreted as ‘Tell me all the things you’re ashamed of,’ which is a terrible way to start a conversation.”

Many people are afraid to talk about it, he says: “If they have thoughts of suicide, they may feel ashamed and don’t want to share that with other people.”

Wintersteen says primary care physicians can ease patients into a discussion by simply asking: “So how’s your mood?”

“It gives them a chance to feel heard by someone they trust, and that their experience is going to matter,” he says. “It makes it a lot easier to then have a conversation about the things that they’re struggling with.”

He also suggests never telling a patient “It’s going to be okay,” because the doctor has no way of knowing that. Instead, reassure the patient by saying: “We’re going to do everything we can to help you feel better.”

The healing process includes finding the kind of care offered at the David Farber ASPIRE Center,

which focuses on advancing evidence-based therapy, innovative research, and high-quality education for the next generation of therapists, healthcare professionals, and community members.

The David Farber ASPIRE Center opened in 2022 through a generous donation from the Farber family, who also helped establish the Vickie and Jack Farber Institute for Neuroscience at Jefferson in 2002.

“The David Farber ASPIRE Center is set to be the gold standard for both clinical care and research across the country,” Wintersteen says. Perhaps the most unique aspect of the Center is that it sees only the most at-risk patients in an outpatient setting.

“The people typically seen at the David Farber ASPIRE Center are those who have made suicide attempts within the past three months, or who have been actively thinking about suicide within the past month,” Wintersteen says. “Many of my colleagues in psychiatry would hospitalize the patients we see in an outpatient practice, because they are high-risk. Yet, after a year in existence, and more than 100 patients, we’ve had a total of two suicide attempts—both of whom immediately reached out to us for support, and both of whom

got the help they needed and are doing well.”

When patients arrive at the Center, they go through a comprehensive intake process using an evidence-based approach; the team then determines the factors driving their suicidal experience and pinpoints the best treatment for that person.

Wintersteen says that treatment is not a one-size-fits-all kind of process. “What works for Jane might not work for Mark. We fully recognize that some treatments—while there’s ample evidence to suggest they’re effective—may not work for everybody.”

risk assessment, safety planning, and trauma-informed care.

Also, through the support of the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Center hosts both clinical and research fellowships.

The Center is growing in both size and reputation and has ever-increasing goals. However, financing those goals is always a challenge, and depends heavily on philanthropy.

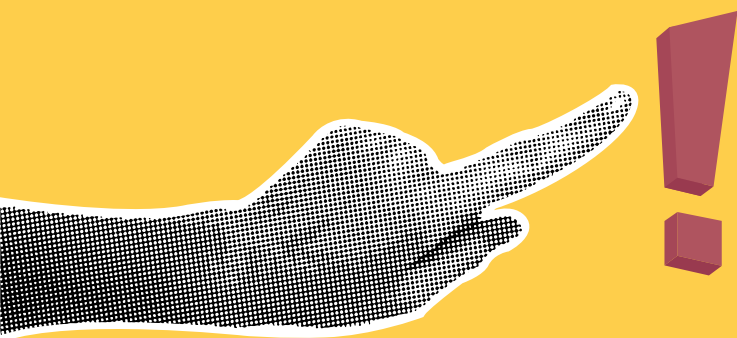
“Philanthropy is critically important to the work that we do. It allows us to see people who are uninsured or underinsured. It allows us to provide training for individuals who can

them, it’s okay to ask them if they’re having thoughts of suicide or have engaged in behaviors to make a suicide attempt,” Wintersteen says.

If a patient does express suicidal thoughts, the physician needs to keep them engaged.

“The worst thing you can do at that moment is to say, ‘Let me get you connected to somebody else.’ What that says to the patient is that I can’t handle it and somebody else should deal with it.”

Patients need to know their doctor is listening to them and that what they’re saying is important, Wintersteen says: “Though a family



If we avoid talking about suicide in other areas of medicine, we further stigmatize it, AND PEOPLE DON'T GET BETTER.

Patient care is linked to the research being conducted at the Center, in an effort to continually improve methods and outcomes.

“From day one, we are collecting data from individuals who come in for appointments,” Wintersteen says. “And throughout the course of their care, we’re able to follow, track, and collect additional data to evaluate changes in outcome.”

Creating a data repository enables the team to determine the success of interventions and enhance treatment.

In addition to patient care and research, education also plays a major role at the David Farber ASPIRE Center, providing suicide prevention programs for physicians, nurses, office support staff, and the general public.

In collaboration with the Prevent Suicide PA Online Learning platform, training sessions are free or low-cost, and feature content such as

then take the level of care they’re learning out to the community. It disseminates the work we’re doing to a broader audience.”

While the Center accepts most forms of insurance, it is designed to work with anyone in crisis.

“If you come in and you don’t have insurance, or if you are underinsured, or if you have no means to pay for your care, we’re still going to do everything we can to provide you the same level of care as anyone else,” he says, noting that this is possible only through philanthropy.

But that care can only happen when those in crisis are identified—and that is where the primary care physician comes in, Wintersteen says.

“Check in with them when they come in for their annual visits and ask them questions about their behavioral health. Ask them about depression, ask them about anxiety, and if you are concerned about

physician is not a psychologist or psychiatrist, we want patients to know that primary care can be a resource for connecting with somebody who can help them create a life that’s worth living again.”

Ask the question, urges Wintersteen, because “if we avoid talking about suicide in other areas of medicine, we further stigmatize it, and people simply don’t get better.”

For more information about the David Farber ASPIRE Center, visit jeffersonhealth.org/ASPIRE or call 215-503-7077.



The ART and SCIENCE of Medicine

JOSEPH F. MAJDAN, MD, FEL '81, FACP, FCCP
Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Clinical Proficiency Remediation
Sidney Kimmel Medical College

BY BULLETIN STAFF

For postgrad alumnus Joseph F. Majdan, MD, FEL '81, associate professor of medicine and director of clinical proficiency remediation at Sidney Kimmel Medical College, becoming a doctor was his lifelong goal.

"There never was a day in my life when I did not want to become a physician," Majdan says. "Medicine, still at my stage of life, takes my breath away. Being in medicine is the reason I believe I was put here on Earth, to help my fellow man and to teach and mentor the future generations of medical students and residents."

He and his wife, Anita, have generously established a scholarship for medical students from underrepresented demographics who have a demonstrated financial need. They have also signed a bequest to leave their estate to Jefferson to fund a fully endowed scholarship in perpetuity.

Seeing students like him who need financial assistance to attend medical school resonates deeply with Majdan, who recalls having to work in a factory and clean offices at age 15 in order to save up for school tuition. "It wasn't easy for me to get where I am today," he shares. "Yet, I had a dream, an unwavering belief that my vocation was to become a physician. I see medical students like me who have parents like I had who had to scrimp and save for everything to provide their children with an education. As the ability to be seen by a physician

and receive healthcare in its truest expression should be universally available to all, so should the opportunity for qualified students from all diverse backgrounds who are in financial need be provided the financial support to attend medical school. My wife and I firmly believe in this and wish to ease the financial burden for these students to attend our medical school."

The Majdans hope their generosity will spur more such scholarships. They say a scholarship perpetuates the future of medicine in all aspects, both in the delivery of healthcare to cities and towns needing it and in the continuance of fostering diversity and inclusiveness in medicine.

An encounter as a child with his general practitioner, alumnus Francis Thomas, MD '44, when he was ill helped to lead Majdan on his path to Jefferson.

"Dr. Thomas came to my home to see me," Majdan shares. "There was something comforting, truly caring coming from him. He was talking to me as a person. I was so scared, yet his smile, his voice, comforted me. I had always previously kept telling him that I wanted to be a doctor."

At the end of the house call, Thomas gifted the young boy a letter opener. "Dr. Thomas said, 'Some day when you have your office, I want you to put this on your desk so you can remember me and our time together,'" Majdan says. Today, more than 60 years later, that letter opener still sits in a place

of honor on his desk. He says, "I often tell that story to our medical students and show them the letter opener."

Majdan came to Jefferson as a fellow in cardiology in 1979 and opened a practice at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital following his fellowship in 1981. "As I got to know and love Jefferson," he says, "I found that it professed those principles of medicine both tangible and intangible that I strove for—excellence in medical care delivered in a caring and humanistic manner that touched, respected the essence of our patients, the human spirit."

For Majdan, Jefferson is a wonderful example of all that is right and noble about medicine. "It defines and continues to define itself, not just in providing excellent care and groundbreaking discoveries and research," he says. "Jefferson has never forgotten that the cornerstone of medicine must be the doctor-patient relationship, and that we must always see the humanity first in our patients."

In 1981 he began his teaching career. In those 44 years of teaching, several generations of Jefferson medical students have learned from Majdan, many now introducing themselves as the children of former students. "I continue to find a great sense of fulfillment and happiness in teaching or simply sitting and talking with a student or two who have stopped by my office to talk or have called me at home," he says. "My door is



| Dr. Majdan (center, holding envelopes) with students at 2024 Match Day

always open for students and our graduates. Hopefully, I have sown in them the seed to continue to teach, to profess, and to live by the principles and traditions of medicine that I have sought to instill in our students. Teaching is like dropping a pebble in a still pond and watching the ripples move away. When you teach a student, they will pass the knowledge on to their students, and those students pass it on to their students: like the ripples in the pond, those principles of medicine continue and will never end.”

Majdan was director of the third-year internal medicine clerkship for 10 years. In 2005, he joined the faculty of the Dr. Robert and Dorothy Rector Clinical Skills and Simulation Center at Jefferson. He continues teaching medical students to this day, developing and sharpening their physical examination skills, developing their skills at focused history, and helping them learn the process of formulating differential diagnoses. “I still do physical examination at the bedside,” he says. “I not only demonstrate the approach to the physical exam and physical findings,

but I also talk to our students about the intangibles of relating to these patients. During these rounds, I have often been inspired by the mature insight and compassion that our medical students possess.”

His students never forget Majdan’s teachings. “I always say, ‘It’s the history, history, history, history,’” he says. “I tell my students that to be a true physician, you must develop yourself not just in the science of medicine, but in the art of medicine.”

Majdan shares his great, unwavering faith in medicine and those who will follow in his footsteps. “I have every confidence that our Jefferson heritage, principles, and philosophy will continue,” he shares. “After my wife, Anita, and I are gone, our scholarship will continue in perpetuity; and in so doing, we will ensure that the education of future doctors will continue and that those intangibles, principles, and traditions that have defined the Jefferson physician continue.”

I always say, ‘It’s the history, history, history, history.’ I tell my students that to be a true physician, you must develop yourself not just in the science of medicine, but in the art of medicine.

SKMC Alumni Board President

Irfan Galaria, MD '01, MBA



Get Connected, Get Involved, Give Back to Your Alma Mater

Six years ago, I was flying back to Virginia from a volunteer surgical trip to Ethiopia. About 35,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean, I realized that the only reason I was able to do this was the training I received at Jefferson. That's when I knew it was time to re-engage with my alma mater and start giving back. This July, I became the president of the Alumni Association with the goal of encouraging many more of my fellow alumni to also reconnect with the institution that has given us so many opportunities.

Think back on the experiences you had here and how they helped you achieve your goals; now you have the power to help others have similar experiences and achieve similar goals. You can become a mentor, provide real-world professional advice, or offer housing to students during their residency interviews, just to name a few. Your commitment can be large or small—you can offer significant investments of time, or just a few minutes that will have a lasting and positive effect on the lives of those following in your footsteps.

While we are spread across the country—and across the world—we are still connected by that bond of where we came from. It is my objective to strengthen that bond by encouraging more local and regional activities, forming teams and committees to organize events and increase engagement, and creating events where alums

will have the opportunity to meet and learn about the college from current medical school faculty and leaders.

Throughout the years I've noticed alumni losing a little interest in becoming involved with the medical college. Some are disillusioned with a few of the actions taken by Jefferson, specifically the sale of "The Gross Clinic" and the name change.

While some alumni believe those two moves caused a loss of identity, they actually led to a gain in our mission and reputation. Those tough decisions put Jefferson in the financial position to succeed and continue our legacy of training the next generation of outstanding physicians. Jefferson is more than oil on a canvas or a name on a building. Jefferson is an institution that has always put the education of our doctors and the care of our community first. Consequently, our standing in the country has continued to grow, and our stellar reputation endures.

And so, I ask you to reflect, as I did on that plane six years ago. Recognize the golden opportunities we have been given and commit to giving back. I invite all of you to contact me. Let me know how you'd like to help, and how I can better bring together our alumni. 🇯

Dr. Galaria can be reached at
SKMCalumnipresident@jefferson.edu

2025

SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Alumni Weekend



Calling All '0s and '5s!

SIGN UP TO JOIN YOUR CLASS YEAR REUNION COMMITTEE!

Help make your reunion in 2025 unforgettable! We are looking for volunteers to assist with our planning and outreach efforts. Reconnect with classmates, share your medical college pride, and help shape an event full of celebrations and memories!

Get involved today and make 2025 the best reunion yet!

To volunteer, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at alumni@jefferson.edu or 215-955-7750.

SKMC Class Agents



SKMC Class Agent Program

SKMC Class Agents serve as liaisons to the medical college, working in conjunction with Annual Giving and Alumni Relations programming and reunions to enhance alumni engagement, participation, and overall annual support of Jefferson.

Interested in becoming a Class Agent?
Contact Cindy Rowand at 267-226-1254
or cindy.rowand@jefferson.edu

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Herbert E. Cohn, MD, Class of 1955
Eugene F. Bonacci, MD, Class of 1956
Stanton N. Smullens, MD, Class of 1961
William V. Harrer, MD, Class of 1962
William Freeman, MD, Class of 1964
Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc, Class of 1965
Michael P. Dolan, MD, Class of 1966
Elliot J. Rayfield, MD, Class of 1967
Harold A. Yocum, MD, Class of 1968
M. Dean Kinsey, MD, Class of 1969
Edward B. Ruby, MD, Class of 1971
Lawrence R. Schiller, MD, Class of 1972
Lynne E. Porter, MD, Class of 1973
Steven R. Peikin, MD, Class of 1974
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Create a Legacy... not a Tax Liability.

It's true—and thanks to tax law changes, you have several attractive options that will support our mission and secure your legacy!

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If you'd like to help Thomas Jefferson University and avoid tax liability on required minimum distributions from your IRA, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) might be the answer. If you are at least 70½, you may transfer up to \$100,000 each year directly to Jefferson. Because we're a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit, you will not pay tax on the distribution.

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You can also use your IRA to fund a once-in-a-lifetime gift that makes a big impact at Jefferson, pays you income, and defers tax on a portion of your required minimum distribution!

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Because your gift is not included in your taxable annual income, you'll also enjoy a tax benefit—and your gift counts toward the \$100,000 QCD yearly limit.

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You can name Jefferson as the beneficiary of all or a portion of your IRA. It's a gift that will have a big impact on the future of the University but no impact on your cash flow during your lifetime.

Contact us today to learn more.

Lisa Repko, JD

Vice President, Thomas Jefferson University and Planned Giving

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Class Notes



A Passion Project

Renowned surgeon and accomplished watercolorist **Gerald J. Marks, MD '49**, has published a stunning coffee table book containing 115 of his wondrous watercolor paintings, all accomplished from the ages of 90 through 99, as well as captions and commentary by him and other surgeons and artists.

Titled "Ageless Art: The Special Joy of Watercolor Painting After 90," the 135-page tome shares an important message with those privileged to revel in its colorful pages. Published as he reaches the age of 99, as Marks explains, the book presents an argument against ageism.

"The book is meant to be an encouragement to individuals of an advanced age who either paint or have a notion of wanting to paint so that they feel they are justified in the pursuit," says Marks, who completed a great deal of artwork in just the last nine years.

Marks is appreciative of being able to take the opportunity to focus on how life can be enhanced by either painting or appreciating painting. "It improves the sense of observation and impacts spiritual values," he shares. "My art has actually improved with age. Painting has given me great comfort and fun, and retrospectively, I think my art enhanced my surgical technique."

In conjunction with fourth-generation alumnus and surgeon Geoffrey Dunn, MD '79, Marks has also co-founded the Surgeon Artists League, a new surgical artist society including members inside and outside of Jefferson, which fuses art and surgery and whose goal is to promote art in the surgical community.



'68

Harold Yocum, MD, has been retired for over 10 years. He fills his days with family activities: grandkids (11), church, American Legion, Audubon Society and birding (life list 639 in North America), Scouting (serves on the Council Executive Board as well as performing through character acting as Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting). Dr. Yocum still attends Hand Journal Club monthly for the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. He recently gave a rare "curbside consult" for granddaughter Maddie, age 4, who fractured her left wrist falling from the monkey bars at pre-K. He is enjoying it all!

'74

Michael LeWitt, MD, marks his 50th year since graduating from Jefferson Medical College. He has retired from his emergency medicine practice, and believes that his education starting with Jefferson was a good one. He enjoyed teaching, and spent a large part of his practice in association with two emergency medicine residencies that he helped to begin, one at Jefferson and one at Conemaugh Valley Memorial Medical Center, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. One of his few regrets is that there weren't more emergency medicine residencies when he started his journey, noting that "self-taught is not always the best way to learn medicine!"

William Olney, MD, completed internal medicine training at University of Southern California (USC), and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and served a cardiology fellowship at Harvard before embarking upon a private practice in New Hampshire. During those 25 years he created a cardiology department at his community hospital, chaired the Department of Medicine, and was chief of staff. He satisfied his love of teaching by lecturing as the chair of the continuing medical education committee as well as for the pharmaceutical industry.

Moreover, he was an adjunct assistant professor in the Kinesiology department at the University of New Hampshire. He served his civic duty as a Rotarian and past president, city physician, a member of the board of the YMCA, a board member of the New Hampshire Heart Association, and a sponsor of several youth sports teams.

He raised three daughters, all professionals, and is now a proud grandpa to seven grandchildren.

In retirement at Sawgrass Country Club in Ponte Vedra Beach, he keeps active with tennis, golf, swimming, ballroom dancing, and enjoying the arts. Dr. Olney honors the memory of a member of his class, his roommate at Jefferson and best friend for 50 years, Dr. John Brown. Dr. Brown passed on the legacy of his father, Harold, a Jefferson graduate, to his two sons, Andy and Tim, both Jefferson alums. John completed his plastic surgery training in the United States Army, stationed in Hawaii, Germany, and Bethesda, Maryland. After leaving the service, he practiced in Greenville, Pennsylvania. He leaves his two sons, his daughter, Molly, and wife, Peg. Dr. Olney regrets that Dr. Brown "cannot be here for this reunion with us in body, but forever he will be in our hearts and minds."

'75

Gary Clark, MD, retired from MetroHealth Medical Center/Case Western Reserve University on September 30, 2023, where he was professor and founding chair of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation as well as PM&R residency program director and director of Amputee Rehabilitation (now emeritus professor). He was elected to the MetroHealth Hall of Honor for outstanding service, innovation, and leadership and is currently consulting part time with Paradigm Outcomes for catastrophic work injuries (amputations). Dr. Clark lives in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, with his wife of 49 years, near their daughter, son-in-law, and three grandsons.

Thomas Ellenberger, Jr., MD, closed his office as of August 31, 2023, after 45 years of solo practice in internal medicine in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. He continues to work part time with the health clinic associated with the state vocational rehabilitation facility. Dr. Ellenberg is proud of his wonderful children and grandchildren. The class 50-year reunion is anticipated in 2025.

'76

Kenneth Sommerville, MD, now resides in Hampstead, North Carolina. He is semi-retired and consulting for pharmaceutical companies. He authored a chapter with Dr. Beatrice Setnik, a well-regarded expert on drug abuse, on the abuse potential of cannabidiol (CBD) that was just published in a large textbook called "Cannabis Use, Neurobiology, and Treatment." The chapter reviews studies on the abuse potential of CBD, which is approved for certain types of epilepsy. There was no evidence of abuse potential with CBD. Dr. Sommerville shares that "colleagues are welcome to visit!"

'77



▲ **Robert Savage, MD**, was featured as the Wellesley Society of Artists' August 2024 Artist of the Month. His personal collection has been featured in the American Fine Art Magazine, and he is a frequent art history contributor to the Wellesley-Weston Magazine, where his career transition from physician to artist

was featured in the 2022 summer edition. He is an exhibiting member and was a board member of the Wellesley Society of Artists. His current writings and lectures focus on women artists of the early 20th century.

'78

Harold J. Davis, MD, is still practicing full time in gynecology and currently serves as director of Gynecology at Regional Hospital (Scranton); assistant medical director for maternal and family health services; and associate clinical professor of OB/GYN at Geisinger School of Medicine.

'79

Gary Mohr, MD, operated a solo private practice in family medicine in Canon City, Colorado, for 41 years and retired last year. He lives in beautiful Westcliffe with his wife, Christina. They have been doing lots of traveling, and have been to Antarctica and Africa this year. Dr. Mohr has been to all seven continents, and visited all 50 states and about 40 of the national parks. He and his wife have time to dote on their 12 grandchildren and have a second home in Pennsylvania so they can spend more time with them. He is active in his church and community—even working on stained glass windows! "Life is grand!"

'81

Richard Spaide, MD, was awarded the Arnall Patz Medal for outstanding contributions in retinal vascular and macular disease by the Macula Society at its annual meeting in Palm Springs. In December, he and his wife, Chang, (PhD from Jefferson in 1982), went to Hong Kong where he was a keynote speaker at a retinal meeting. After Hong Kong, they took a bicycle trip in Vietnam and Cambodia.

'82

Scott Lauter, MD, retired in July 2023 and is enjoying living at the shore in Lewes, Delaware, with his wife, Carol. Scott's clinical career in internal medicine evolved to hospital medicine and then to medical leadership. At Lancaster General Hospital he founded and directed the hospital medicine program, becoming chair of the Department of Medicine and medical director of care management. He then transitioned to Atlantic Health System in Morristown, NJ, where he spent seven years as chief medical officer of Atlantic Medical Group (AMG), leading over 1,000 physicians and more than 300 advance practice clinicians at 210 practices and 450 sites of care in 14 counties in Central and Northern New Jersey. He was an NJ Biz Health Care Heroes Physician of the Year in 2020, which recognized his

ambulatory care leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. During his leadership, AMG was recognized as a finalist for the American Medical Group Association Acclaim Award, and was one of eight health systems participating in the initial AMA Advancing Equity Through Quality and Safety Peer Network program. Scott is proud of his two children, both Jefferson Medical College graduates. Derek is a cardiac anesthesiologist at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Alison is a glaucoma ophthalmologist at Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Naples, Florida.

Judd W. Moul, MD, received the Penn State University Alumni Fellow Award for 2023 and the Distinguished Contribution Award from the American Urological Association for 2023. These are related to his career-long work in prostate cancer research and patient care.

'87

Santiago J. Munoz, MD, is back to Johns Hopkins University Hospital to complete his professional career as a physician. He previously practiced academic transplant hepatology in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for nearly 40 years and helped to develop the Jefferson, Einstein, and Tower Health liver transplant programs.

'90

Ron Berne, MD, has just reached his 30-year milestone in private practice, specializing in medical / geriatric dermatology in Chicago, Illinois. After three decades in outpatient and inpatient medical dermatology, he recently merged his private practice with Dermatology + Aesthetics/Vital Skin Dermatology Group. He has the fondest memories of his training at Jefferson Medical College and wishes all his classmates well.

◀ **Galicano Inguito, MD**, and his wife, Pia, met Philadelphia legends Kylie and Jason Kelce while in Paris for the Olympics.



'91

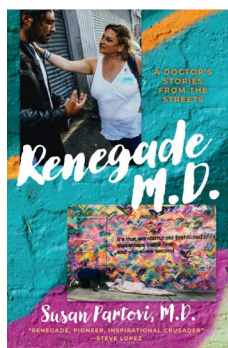
Maria Sophocles, MD, has been in clinical practice for 29 years and is focused on closing the gender gap in healthcare, specifically addressing what she calls The Bedroom Gap—the differences in the sexual experience of men and women in midlife. To that end, she has a forthcoming book with the same title and a TED talk which can be accessed at go.ted.com/mariaesophocles. Visit her website, mariasophoclesmd.com, for more about what she is up to these days.



▲ **David Weismiller, MD**, and his husband, Brian DeLong, welcomed their first grandchild on August 1, 2024. A girl, Kayden Leigh (Weismiller) Bychinski weighed eight pounds three ounces. Along with her parents, Meredith and Brennen, Kayden joins her four-legged siblings, Chip and Kovu, at their home in Las Vegas, Nevada. Fathers of three daughters, David and Brian have gone from “Girl Dads” to “Girl Granddads.” David has an active family medicine practice at the Kirk Kerkorian School of Medicine, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he is a professor.

'94

Susan Partovi, MD, recently published “Renegade MD: A



Doctor's Stories from The Streets.” The book features powerful stories from her work with patients

experiencing homelessness, mental illness, substance use, and cultural challenges, aiming to humanize these individuals and offer insights on compassionate medical care. Along with her classmate, Dr. Elaine Goldhammer, she co-founded a nonprofit that brought medical students to Haiti annually until the COVID-19 pandemic.

'96

Gary A. Tuma, MD, worked for six years at Jefferson in plastic surgery after finishing his plastic surgery training at Emory University. He then moved to Capital Health to become the director of plastic surgery and start a plastic surgery practice. While at Capital Health he was involved in starting a physician-led medical group called Capital Health Medical Group and became the chief medical officer for specialty care. He lives in Villanova, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Rita, and has two children. His eldest graduated from Cornell University and is doing spine research at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, and the second is at Lehigh University in the Business School. His father, Dr. Victor Tuma, Class of 1969, passed this year as an active practicing pediatrician in his 80s.

'97

John R. Mantione, MD, has been in OB/GYN practice in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, since 2001 and has just finished serving six years as medical staff officer. He also serves as board chair on the Pennsylvania Medical Society Board of Trustees. He and Nina have entered their “empty nester” years following their youngest child's graduation in June 2024.

'01

Lillian Liang Emlet, MD, is still practicing as an adult intensivist in academic medicine in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and also started her own coaching business, Transforming Healthcare Coaching. “Together, we can transform healthcare, one person at a time.”

David Luke Salko, MD, is coming up on 20 years of practice in family medicine. He has appreciated the roots that have grown over his life. His father, Gregory J. Salko ('71) was his inspiration, and also influenced many others in medicine—Dr. Philip Salko ('08), Dr. Allen Orehek ('95), and Dr. Stephen Nurkiewicz ('86). He enjoys the daily conversations he is privileged to have with his patients and colleagues, enjoys teaching medical students, and remains challenged by the system of medicine as a medical director and board member for the hospital. He shares that his career in family medicine would not be possible without his family—his lovely, dedicated wife, Jen, and fantastic four children, Aniella, Julianne, James, and Nathan. Their love and support have balanced his family medicine career. “Who knows where life can take us, but with courage we can attempt anything. Thanks, Jefferson, for all your efforts over the last 200 years!”

'07

Avital (O'Glasser) Strauss-Benjamin, MD, has been living in Portland, Oregon, since graduating from medical school. She stayed as faculty at Oregon Health & Science University after finishing her internal medicine residency and has been the medical director of the Preoperative Medicine Clinic for the last five years. Additionally, she co-edited and published an anthology of women in medicine essays last Fall, entitled “An Evolution of Empowerment: Voices of Women in Medicine and Their Allies”.

'21

Benjamin Chipkin, MD, and **Mary White, MD**, were married on May 11, 2024. Many SKMC alumni were in attendance, including mother of the bride and alumni association past president Patricia Curtin, MD '88.



From Jefferson to Global Impact A Journey with KCNT1 Epilepsy

Photo courtesy of Jordan Bush Photography and the Penn Medicine Orphan Disease Center

2003 Jefferson Medical College alumni Lisa Collea and Justin West have embarked on a journey that has intertwined their family and professional lives with a deeply personal mission.

Together with their three children, Lisa, a dedicated cornea specialist and consultant to the FDA, and Justin, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon, call Southern California home. "The vibrant setting contrasts sharply with the challenges we face daily," Justin shares. "We are grateful for the foundation Jefferson provided us, both in our medical careers and in shaping our approach to these challenges."

Lisa and Justin's youngest son, Andrew, was born with an ultra-rare form of encephalopathic epilepsy linked to a KCNT1 mutation. Now seven years old, Andrew has never walked or talked. Without targeted therapy, his future remains uncertain, with a 50 percent chance he may not reach his 10th birthday.

The diagnosis thrust the family into the world of rare diseases. The statistics are staggering. One in 10 Americans, approximately 35 million people, grapple with a rare disorder, yet less than 5% of these disorders are currently treatable. Faced with this reality, Lisa and Justin have committed to an unwavering mission of hope and determination.

In 2019, they co-founded the KCNT1 Epilepsy Foundation, which aims to accelerate research and drug discovery not just for Andrew, but for the 500 children worldwide afflicted by this rare genetic disease.

Their efforts have already borne fruit. When Andrew was diagnosed in 2017, only two early-stage drug discovery programs for KCNT1 existed. Today, thanks to their staunch and uncompromising advocacy and the support of the community, more than 20 drug development initiatives are underway globally. KCNT1 has been transformed from an obscure genetic disorder to one of the most recognized genetic epilepsies.

This past June, Justin returned to Philadelphia for the first time since graduation, not only for nostalgic purposes, but also to convene with families and pharmaceutical teams at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). Thirteen U.S. families, alongside five pharmaceutical teams actively pursuing Investigational New Drug (IND) submissions, joined this pivotal collaboration to push forward clinical trials and treatment advances.

"We participated in the Million Dollar Bike Ride (MDBR) hosted by the University of Pennsylvania, raising over \$35,000—matched by the MDBR—to fund crucial research

initiatives," Justin says. "The funds we generated will support teams seeking to answer additional questions about KCNT1, paving the way for future breakthroughs."

The event hosts over 600 cyclists who ride either 10, 32, or 72 miles starting in the city, and ranging across the Greater Philadelphia region. In 10 years, the MDBR's 30-plus teams have raised more than \$20 million to fund research grants on the diseases they represent. 100% of the funds raised go directly to these pilot grants.

Justin shares: "Raising a severely disabled child has reshaped our lives in ways we couldn't have foreseen. Yet, the unwavering support of our Jefferson family—both emotional and financial—has lightened our burden immeasurably. Their support fuels our determination to push boundaries in medical research and to advocate for those who need it most. As we continue this journey, we carry with us the values instilled by Jefferson Medical College: compassion, resilience, and a commitment to innovation. Together, we will forge ahead, driven by the hope that one day soon, children like Andrew will have the chance for a brighter, healthier future."

SHARE

YOUR STORY

Achievements

Class Notes

'61 Robert B. Tesh, MD, has spent most of his career conducting clinical and field research on vector-borne and zoonotic viral diseases. He's worked as a professor of pathology and microbiology and immunology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston for the past 22 years, and has also worked with NIH/NIAD, Yale University. Dr. Tesh officially retired four years ago and is now an adjunct professor.

'64 Robert McKim, MD, graduated in 1984 and entered a rotating internship at Emanuel Hospital in Portland, Oregon. During the internship he was drafted for military service for the Vietnam War. Dr. McKim entered family practice in 1987 and after 600+ hours of CME, became Family Practice Board Certified. There were no family practice residencies at that time. He has also held positions as a man's medical examiner for the FAA, associate teaching professor in the Department of Family Practice at Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland, Oregon, and served on the board of trustees for the Oregon Academy of Family Practice and the Oregon Medical Association, and as an Oregon Delegate to the America Medical Association.

After over 2,300 deliveries, many tonsillectomies and orthopedic and tendon repairs, and 47 years, Dr. McKim retired in 2013. "Had a great career. Thanks, Jefferson," says McKim.

'67 Steven Fischer, MD, has retired after 45 years of practice as an ENT physician.

'68 Harold A. Yocum, MD, has been an



| Pictured right, Dean Winslow, MD '76, with Anthony Fauci, center

avid birdwatcher since his time as a boy scout during his teenage years; this year he went over 600. He also served as president of the Oklahoma City Audubon Society.

'73 Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS, was inaugurated as the seventh president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore on Friday, Nov. 5, 2021.

Thomas Jose Silber, MD, has been honored by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) with the William G. Bartholome Award for Ethical Excellence, the Academy's highest honor in bioethics. Dr. Silber has dedicated more than 50 years of work to reflecting, writing, teaching, and devoting energy to the divagation of the field of pediatric ethics.

He has been a consultant to the World Health Organization and the Pan-American Health Organization and has been awarded the Adele Hoffman Award by the Section on Adolescence of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Outstanding Achievement in Adolescent Medicine by the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Cuban Ministry of Health, and the Children's National Mentorship Award. For several decades, Dr.

Silber was the director of the Adolescent Medicine Fellowship Program, the director of the Donald Delaney Eating Disorders Program, and director of the Ethics Program at Children's National in Washington, DC.

Dr. Silber is now professor emeritus at George Washington University, Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine. He serves on the executive committee of the Ethics Program and is the editor of *Pediatric Ethics*.

'76 Dean Winslow, MD, a professor of medicine at Stanford University and senior fellow by courtesy at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, is currently on leave from Stanford while serving as senior advisor to the CDC COVID-19 Testing and Diagnostics Working Group based in Washington, DC. He is also back on active duty orders with the California State Guard.

'78 Robert P. Boran, Jr., MD, has retired from active practice in orthopaedic surgery. He continues to serve on the board of directors of the Eastern Orthopaedic Association (EOA) and recently received the Outstanding Service award of the EOA.

Stephen I. Kramer, MD, recently retired after 38 years of clinical practice as professor emeritus of psychiatry and behavioral medicine at Wake Forest Baptist Health Sciences in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. During his tenure, he helped develop programs in forensic psychiatry and neuropsychiatry.

Dr. Kramer served the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, Inc. for 25 years, and continues to work for the Joint Commission as field representative/physician surveyor and as a topic editor for *DynaMed*. Currently, he is serving his second term on the board of directors of the Winston-Salem Symphony, and grandparenting with his wife, Rochelle Prague Kramer, who also retired from the medical center as a reference librarian.

'80 Angela E. Lin, MD is a medical geneticist at MGH who cares for patients with rare syndromes. She has a long-standing interest in art and the portrayal of people with physical differences. Dr. Lin fulfilled a dream as the senior editor of a special issue of the *American Journal of Medical Genetics* titled "Syndromes and Malformations in Art and Antiquity: New Perspective on a Familiar Theme."

'83 Ruth E. Weissberger, MD, has been named governor of the Connecticut chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP), the national organization of internists. The board of governors is an advisory board to the board of regents and implements national projects in addition to representing members at the national level.

'85 Suzanne Topalian, MD, has spent the past four decades contributing



Michael Savage, MD '80, FEL '86 (left) and David Fischman, MD, FACC, FACP, FEL '91 (right) were recently featured in an article published by *Public Health* as two of the Top 50 Influencers in Cardiology on Twitter. Follow them: @DocSavageTJU and @fischman_david.



groundbreaking research and opening new avenues of scientific investigation in cancer immunology. Her contributions extend well beyond her lab at Johns Hopkins, establishing immunotherapy as a pillar of oncology around the world. Her research has resulted in the unprecedented development and regulatory approval of drugs for over a dozen different cancers—benefiting countless patients and their families.

Dr. Topalian's research focuses on manipulating immune checkpoints in cancer therapy. She led a team at the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center in a global effort that established immunotherapy as a viable method of cancer treatment alongside surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy.

'95 Nya Asato, MD, a pediatric neurologist, has been named vice president of training by the Kennedy Krieger Institute. She also directs the nationally recognized Maternal and Child Health Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Other Related Disabilities Program (LEND), which provides graduate-level, interdisciplinary training to clinicians with an interest in neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Dr. Asato joined the institute from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine's Department of Pediatrics, where she was a professor of both pediatrics and clinical and translational science at the school.

She has served as the program director of Pitt's neurodevelopmental disabilities residency since 2007.



'06 Madhuri Dholakia, MD, published her debut novel, *The White Coat Diaries*, which highlights a young doctor's struggle to survive residency, love, and life. The book deals with themes of physician burnout, moral injury, high expectations placed on her from culture, and more. She has two more books planned in her deal with Penguin Random House/Berkley.

Accolades

Milestones

Events

Let the *Bulletin* community know what you've been up to by sharing your news in Class Notes!

Send us your news: editor@jefferson.edu

Celebrating a Life of Service to Jefferson

PHILLIP J. MARONE, MD '57

Phillip J. Marone, an icon in sports medicine and visionary in spinal cord rehabilitation, passed away on October 11, 2023 at the age of 93. Part of life at Jefferson for more than 60 years, from his time as a student in the early 1950s through his role as associate dean for alumni relations before retiring in 2013, Dr. Marone touched many lives during his career as a physician and was instrumental in the growth of Thomas Jefferson into the university it is today.

Dr. Marone was a resource and inspiration for patients, faculty, and students. In his honor, the Phillip J. Marone Scholarship was established in 2013 to recognize his retirement from a long career at Jefferson. His legacy of medicine, education, and service will continue to guide and inspire all who were lucky enough to know him as a colleague, physician, and friend. In many ways, Dr. Marone was considered Thomas Jefferson University School of Medicine, and his immeasurable impact will not soon be forgotten.

1930 Born in 1930. Grew up in a rural area in Pine Grove, New Jersey, an Italian "compound" of his father's family where everyone knew each other. Grandfather Marone wanted him to become a doctor.



Worked on a farm in summers, could drive a tractor before a car. "While I was growing up, I learned what it was to work – my work ethic was instilled in me by my family."

1943

Moved to a bigger house in Philadelphia, because family was growing. There were five children. Graduated from high school when he was 16.



1953

Before going to college, worked in a paint factory for a couple of years.

Wanted to become a doctor but decided to become a pharmacist first. He went to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy, and graduated in 1953.

1957–58

Applied to JMC while still at PCP, and came to Jefferson the same year he graduated.

Graduated from JMC in 1957. Married Carmela the day after graduation.

Served as intern and resident at Jefferson, 1957 and 1958.

1960

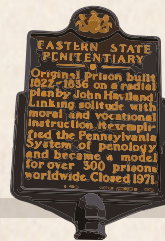
Spent the year of 1960 as fellow in NYU at Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the request of his mentor, Dr. Anthony DePalma. "I took the 5 a.m. train out of 30th Street Station every day and I got home about 8:30 p.m. It was a long year, but it gave me something that no other orthopedist had at that time – a background in physical medicine and rehabilitation that was beyond what you would normally get as an orthopedic resident."



"I have nothing but good memories at Jefferson. I have enjoyed every year I was a physician, and I did everything to the best of my ability. I would tell people if I couldn't help them. God has been good to me."

1961–1966

Worked as an orthopedic resident at Eastern State Penitentiary. "My scrub nurses were inmates. It was the most interesting part of my career."



1972

Residencies led to a clinical professorship in physical medicine, rehab and orthopedics at Jefferson. "I helped train people in both sides of aisle. Rehab people looked upon me as someone who could help train people so I had both PMR residents as well as orthopedic residents."

Joined the Philadelphia Phillies as team physician in 1972. "The manager needed quick answers to questions like, 'How long will this player be out?'"



1978

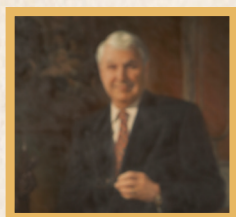
Instrumental in launch of the spine center at Jefferson.



1992–1998

Received rehabilitation award from Magee in 1992.

Presented with portrait in 1998.



1999–2000

Retired from baseball in 1999.

Became associate dean of alumni relations in 2000 and was the face of Jefferson to our alumni for 14 years. He also solicited numerous gifts in support of the medical college.

2007

Earned master's degree in public health in 2007. "It showed me how much I did not know about public health."



2013

"I came into medicine to help people, which I hope I have done. I have treated everybody the same, whether they paid me or not."

Dr. Marone retires from Jefferson on December 31, 2013.

In Memoriam

'57

Robert (Bob) Hillel Schwab, MD, passed away at age 91 on May 6, 2024, in Cresskill, New Jersey, surrounded by his loving family. Born on June 25, 1932 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Bob was the son of Joseph and Fanny Schwab. He was predeceased by his brother, Morton Schwab, MD, as well as by his sisters Blanche Korson and Florence Harris. Growing up in Wynnefield, Pennsylvania, Bob graduated in 1950 from Overbrook High School, where he was a standout player for the Philadelphia championship-winning basketball team. He attended college at Temple University, where he graduated with honors as a chemistry major. He attended Jefferson Medical College in 1957 and completed his internship at Philadelphia General Hospital and his residency at Thomas Jefferson University. Following his medical training, Bob pursued a fellowship in cardiology at Georgetown University Hospital. He returned to Philadelphia, where he was in private practice for 50 years. Concurrently, he served as an associate professor at Thomas Jefferson University. Beyond his professional pursuits, Bob was a true intellectual who loved to learn. He was an avid reader, a brilliant stock investor, and a passionate tennis player, remaining active on the court until the age of 90. He was known for his playful sense of humor and had an eternal twinkle in his eye. Above all, he was a devoted husband, father, and physician. Bob will be deeply missed by his family and all who had the privilege to know him.

'60

Gary G. Carpenter, MD, 94, of Lansdale, Pennsylvania, died Saturday, March 9, 2024. He was the beloved husband of Evelyn (Flint) Carpenter. Born August 25, 1929, in San Francisco, California, he was a son of the late Arthur and Elsa (Von Springer) Carpenter. Dr. Carpenter worked as a pediatric endocrinologist at Thomas

Jefferson University Hospital for more than 50 years. He was an associate professor of pediatrics at Jefferson Medical College, where he enjoyed teaching medical students, residents, and fellows in addition to his patient care responsibilities. Gary had many hobbies, including rowing, kayaking, bicycling, and flying sailplanes with the Flying Dutchmen. He also enjoyed painting and music, especially jazz, and he played numerous instruments, including piano, vibraphone, ukulele, accordion, mandolin, and melodica. He especially loved playing jazz at Ristorante Toscano in Lansdale for many years.

J. Joseph (Joe) Danyo, MD, passed away on July 21, 2023, at age 89. Joe touched countless lives with his generosity, love, and humor. A board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, he co-founded KDV Orthopedics in York, Pennsylvania, where he practiced for many years. He was the first president of the American Association for Hand Surgery and served as president of the Pennsylvania Medical Society. Joe was known for his compassionate care, always making patients feel heard and uplifted.

Born on August 24, 1933, Joe was predeceased by his parents, Andrew and Mary Danyo, his three brothers, three sisters, and his wife, Sally Little Danyo. He is survived by five children, 17 grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Joe remained a voracious learner throughout his life, known for his wit, wisdom, and love of storytelling. Even in retirement, he continued to help others as a SCORE advisor for new entrepreneurs. Joe will be remembered as a vibrant and influential person whose legacy of love and compassion continues to inspire all who knew him.

'62

Alan R. Freedman, MD, passed away on February 8, 2024. He

graduated from Jefferson Medical College in June 1962. He spent a year in a rotating internship at Presbyterian Hospital followed by a residency in pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. In 1965, he entered the U.S. Air Force as a captain and pediatrician at Dover Air Force Base in Dover, Delaware. After serving two years of active duty, he was honorably discharged to start a private practice in Center City Philadelphia. He worked for many years in various medical groups and opened a private practice with Miriam Anolik, MD. Dr. Freedman retired eight years ago at the age of 80, having cared for many generations of children. He enjoyed his retirement reading, attending classes and lectures with his wife of 61 years, Arlene, attending Broadway shows and operas, and traveling. His greatest joy was spending time with his wife, his grown daughters and son, his three grandchildren, and his two-year-old great-granddaughter.

'63

James (Jim) Stephen Butcofski, MD, of Forty Fort, Pennsylvania, passed away Tuesday, February 27, 2024. He was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, on December 26, 1936. Jim graduated from Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School, Class of 1954. He graduated with honors from the University of Notre Dame in 1958. Jim earned his medical degree from Thomas Jefferson Medical College in 1963. He served as a captain in the U.S. Army at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, from 1964 to 1965, and then became a commanding officer in the Army in Vietnam, Cam Ranh Bay, from 1965 to 1966. "Dr. B," as his patients affectionately called him, had a medical career that spanned 50 years, starting at Family Practice Associates with Dr. David Kistler from 1967 to 1981. He then went on to practice at Geisinger Hospital, the former NPW, where he was chairman of the building committee. He

became medical director of First Hospital Wyoming Valley from 1984 to 1995, establishing his medical practice in the same building. Jim's final office was in the Mercy Medical Arts Building in South Wilkes-Barre, where he practiced until his retirement at the age of 75. After retiring, Jim worked as a doctor for the Social Security Administration in the disability division. Throughout his lifetime, Jim served his community on the Board of Directors for Wyoming Valley Hospital, the Tuberculosis Society, and United Penn Bank, and as medical director of the Westmoreland Club, where he was a longtime member. He was also a member of the ROJ 154. Preceding Jim in death were his parents, Frank and Nell Butcofski, of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, and brother, Frank Butcofski, a dentist. Jim was cherished by his patients and family, whom he loved in return. He always had a ready smile and willingness to help those in need. Jim adored his family and alma mater, Notre Dame. He enjoyed many football weekends with his family and friends.

'66

Thomas Jeffrey Green, MD, passed away on March 2, 2024. Dr. Green, fondly known as "Pappy," was born to Alfred V. and Maletha (Claar) Green in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Dr. Green was a graduate of Lilly-Washington High School, Gettysburg College (member of Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity and the Gettysburg Choir), and Jefferson Medical College (member of Kappa Beta Phi and Nu Sigma Nu fraternities). He was also the co-founder of the Jefferson Rugby Football Club. A lifetime fan of sports and musical arts, he blended these two hobbies well when a career-ending knee injury limited his playing time to singing his favorite rugby songs with friends, and cheering for his favorite football team, the Pittsburgh Steelers. Dr. Green was a U.S. Navy veteran, orthopaedic surgeon, and highly esteemed community leader. He served our country honorably

during the Vietnam War as a surgeon, ultimately attaining the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He was stationed at the Naval Air Station in Sigonella, Sicily, where he helped his wife Carol deliver their third child in a home built on a bed of lava rocks at the foot of Mount Etna, one of the world's most active volcanoes. While stationed in Sicily, he received a Letter of Appreciation in 1969 for actions taken to contain an infectious hepatitis outbreak in the Sigonella Grade School. His actions not only reduced the number of cases, but also confined the outbreak, which enabled the command to continue performing its mission. Dr. Green was an active orthopedic surgeon in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, from 1975 to 2014. He fixed so many broken bones and painful joints, his grandson once called him "the Mayor of Carlisle" for running into people who knew him everywhere they went. He was a member of the Carlisle Hospital medical staff throughout his career and served as chair of the Department of Surgery, as well as on the hospital Executive Committee, and the Carlisle Hospital Medical Care Foundation Board of Directors for several terms. Dr. Green will be remembered as a loving husband, father, brother, and grandfather who will be profoundly missed by family, friends, and colleagues spanning the globe. He welcomed guests into his home so warmly and deeply that he was affectionally called "Dad" by many. He was an avid equestrian who enjoyed competing with his horses in multiple disciplines, including eventing, dressage, and hunter paces. His favorite equestrian sport was foxhunting, which he enjoyed for many years as field secretary for Rose Tree Fox Hunting Club based in South Central Pennsylvania.

'69

Lawrence Berman, MD, passed away on October 15, 2022, at the age of 78. Beloved husband of Diane (nee Bush) for 54 years; loving father of Scott Berman and Heather (Steven) Simon; cherished

grandfather of Hanya and Sydney; loved brother of Sheldon Berman. Larry was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was a Navy veteran, and served in the Coast Guard Auxiliary over 30 years. Larry was professor emeritus of pediatric anesthesiology at the University of Florida.

'71

Tom (Tim) S. Mebane III, MD, passed away on May 22, 2024, in St. Louis, Missouri, due to complications from advanced bladder cancer. Born July 11, 1948, in Detroit, Michigan, he was the oldest son of Tom S. and Barbara M. Mebane, and known as "Tim" to most. His family relocated to State College, Pennsylvania, where he grew up with four siblings. A graduate of State College High School's Class of 1966, Tim earned his BS and MD through Penn State University and Jefferson Medical College's accelerated five-year program. He specialized in obstetrics and gynecology, establishing a practice in Central Pennsylvania in 1976, and delivered over 13,000 babies throughout his 41-year career. In 1998, he joined Kaiser Permanente in Atlanta, Georgia, retiring in 2012. Tim also served as medical director of New Day Treatment Center, helping those battling substance abuse. Known for his adventurous spirit and love of sports, Tim embraced life's challenges. Though faced with personal losses and health issues, he met each day with a hopeful smile, leaving behind a legacy of memories and kindness.

Terrence S. Carden, MD

March 12, 1938 – August 1, 2024

Tribute by Tom Fiss, MD '71



I read about Terry long before I met him. In September 1967, the small Jefferson newspaper featured an article heralding eight members of the freshman class who had

come to medicine as a second career. Terry was a journalist. He had graduated from Scranton University and the Columbia School of Journalism. He had worked for the Scrantonian-Tribune and Philadelphia Inquirer. When he arrived at Jefferson with his lovely wife Marion, and two children, Terry III and Andrea, he already had a life—and it was an accomplished one. We finally met sophomore year on the Fox Chase local train and became fast and firm friends. At Jefferson he served on student council and Alpha Omega Alpha, and was editor of the 1970 and 1971 Jefferson yearbook, the "Clinic." (I benefited from and matured greatly during our almost daily contact while producing those yearbooks.) He also worked the weekend city desk at the Philadelphia Bulletin and as a night lab technician. Terry passed the inaugural examination of the American Board of Emergency Medicine and was chief of emergency medicine, Highland Park Hospital, and director of South Lake County Mobile Intensive Care. His medical practice concluded with 10 years of service—and travel with the Joint Commission. In 2007, he established the Terrence and Jean McGuire Carden Memorial Scholarship at the University of Scranton "for children or grandchildren of current or retired postal workers, school teachers, or journalists engaged in the gathering, and reporting of news to the public, regardless of medium." A man of many talents, he remained always an overgrown leprechaun from Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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To learn more, please contact:

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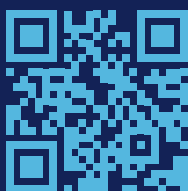


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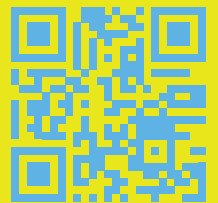
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