

UPSTATE MEDICAL Alumni JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2019 PUBLISHED BY UPSTATE MEDICAL ALUMNI FOUNDATION

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CARE IN HAITI**





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Submissions and address
corrections should be sent to
Paul Norcross, SUNY Upstate
Medical University, Setnor
Academic Building #1510,
750 E. Adams St., Syracuse,
New York 13210-9976

Phone: 315/464-4361

Fax: 315/464-4360

Email:
norcrossp@upstate.edu

Paul Norcross

Executive Editor

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ON THE COVER:

Montage by Colleen Kiefer
using images from Wild
Bridge Films videography
for the Higgins Brothers
SurgiCenter for Hope in
Haiti

Upstate Graduates 149 New Physicians

Upstate Medical University awarded 149 medical degrees to College of Medicine graduates at Commencement 2019. This year's ceremony, held for the first time at Onondaga Community College's SRC Arena, was the first time since 2011 that all graduating Upstate students were recognized during a single ceremony.

This year's medical degree recipients included four students earning dual MD/PhD degrees: Karen Cyndari, Dawn Lammert, Scott Minchenberg, and Daniel Tylee. The eight-year MD/PhD program trains future physician-scientists who, by combining the practice of medicine in the clinic with biomedical research in the laboratory, are uniquely trained to bring the power of modern science to our understanding and treatment of human disease.

The College of Medicine also awarded 24 masters of public health degrees.

New York Health Commissioner Howard Zucker, MD, JD, was the featured Commencement speaker. As the state's chief physician, Dr. Zucker leads initiatives to combat the opioid crisis, strengthen environmental health, end the AIDS epidemic and address major public health issues, including Ebola, Legionella, e-cigarettes and tobacco cessation.

Zucker presides over the state's Medicaid program, the Wadsworth Center—New York's premier public health lab, and also oversees the entire health care workforce, including hospitals, long-term care and nursing homes.



Jordana Gilman Awarded SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence



Jordana Gilman, MD/MPH '19

JORDANA GILMAN, MD/MPH '19 was honored as one of 210 SUNY students from across the state to receive a 2019 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson said the student winners "made the choice to be leaders on their campuses, prioritize their studies, and serve their communities."

While at Upstate, Gilman pursued her passion for advocacy and public policy by addressing healthcare access for vulnerable populations. She completed projects

in public health and trans health medical education, and presented her work at conferences and workshops. She has published scientific papers and literary work (for which she won a Dearing Writing Award), and has been honored for her leadership, community service and advocacy.

Gilman was a Lerner Fellow for Public Health Promotion at SU's Maxwell School, where she was part of a group conducting an audit of a city block on Syracuse's Near West Side as part

of a "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" project.

She also participated in Upstate's Rural Medical Education Program, spending five months in clinical settings in Cortland, N.Y.

Gilman, a native of Rochester, is now a first-year medical resident in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Rochester/Strong Memorial Hospital.

Medical Students Honor Anatomical Gift Program Donors



On April 27, Upstate Medical University students hosted a memorial service honoring the 230 people who have donated their bodies for medical study in the last year.

The memorial service has been an annual event since 1980, hosted by first-year Upstate medicine, physical therapy, and physician assistant students at the completion of their human anatomy study.

"It's an opportunity for the students to show their appreciation for the gift they have received," says Dan Jaeger, technical director of Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program. "It's a chance to say thank you for the opportunity to study the human body."

Upstate students contributed their talents to the service in the

form of music, poetry and statements of gratitude. They also have the opportunity to connect face-to-face with donor family members.

The Upstate Anatomical Gift Program receives about 225 to 240 donations a year from a large swath of New York state—northeast to the Canadian and Vermont borders, stretching south into northern Pennsylvania. The donations are critical to medical education.

"You cannot really be a physician without knowing the body and the best way to know the body is having gross anatomy classes," says Dana M. Mihaila, MD, PhD, director of the Upstate Anatomical Gift Program. "It's an important piece in their education."

Upstate Offers New Master's Degree Program

This fall, Upstate Medical University will begin offering a one-year master's degree program designed to enhance a student's skills before they enter medical school.

The Medical Scholars Preparation Program is a rigorous year of study offered at SUNY graduate-level tuition. The program is intended for two types of students: those who are looking to improve their academic, clinical and analytical skills before applying to medical school; or those who were unsuccessful in applying to medical school and need further study before applying again, and is specifically designed to help students strengthen their scientific background. Students need to have completed the medical school prerequisite courses and taken the MCAT.

Program participants are guaranteed an admission

interview at the Upstate College of Medicine.

According to Krystal Ripa, director of special admissions programs at Upstate, offering an affordable, one-year enhancement program will allow many students to enter medical school who might not be able to otherwise.

Previously, if Upstate admissions felt a student was not academically prepared for medical school, it might recommend master's degree programs at other institutions, such as Georgetown, Drexel or Boston universities. "But not everyone has the resources to attend one of those programs, putting their medical school futures in jeopardy," Ripa says. "If medical school is the goal, we want to help students find a way to get there, right here at home."



Upstate Toxicologists Use Teleconferencing to Fight Opioid Epidemic

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY toxicologists are sharing their expertise with physicians, emergency medical services personnel and other health care workers across the state through a new monthly teleconferencing program.

Upstate's Project ECHO series will make toxicologists from the Upstate Poison Center available monthly to answer questions and discuss poisonings and drug cases that might be showing up in doctors' offices and emergency rooms across Upstate New York.

"Project ECHO eliminates our campus boundaries and brings our medical experts to where practitioners see their patients, whether just down the road or many miles away," says Project ECHO Manager Deidre Keefe.

"Thanks to our use of technology, we will be in the offices of practitioners across the state to discuss any baffling medical cases they may have encountered and provide our perspective in treating that case," adds Michael J. Hodgman, MD, medical director of the Upstate New York Poison Control Center. "We'll also address the new and emerging trends in drug use and other drug-related issues that might be threats to our communities."

While Poison Center toxicologists are available whenever needed for consultation by Emergency Department staff and emergency medical services personnel, Project ECHO will focus on education and conversation as opposed to addressing a real-time health crisis.



Sanger Named Fellow of American Association of Anatomists



Jean Sanger, PhD

Jean Sanger, PhD, professor of cell and developmental biology, has been selected as a fellow of the American Association of Anatomists. Dr. Sanger was recognized for her demonstrated excellence in science and her contributions to anatomical sciences at the Experimental Biology meeting in Orlando in April.

This latest honor for Sanger comes on the heels of her selection late last year as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Section on Biological Sciences). Sanger received the AAAS honor for “distinguished contributions to cell biology, especially in imaging cell division, assembly and maintenance of myofibrils—basic units of muscle fibers—and the interactions of infections bacteria with host cells.”

In 2017, Sanger was named a Fellow of the American Society for Cell Biology. Individuals are recognized as fellows for their service to the organization and for their research that must have significant and sustained impact on the discipline of cell biology.

Sanger’s current work at Upstate examines how myofibrils are assembled and maintained, and how disease-associated mutations of muscle proteins affect these two processes.

Throughout her career, Sanger has addressed issues of cell biology in her work at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole (Mass.), Dartmouth College, where she earned her doctorate in molecular biology, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory, in Heidelberg, Germany.

Her research work has been supported by NIH, NSF and the USDA. Dr. Sanger served on two different NSF research panels. She has lectured on her work at many universities and scientific meetings in the United States as well as in Canada, Chile, France, Germany, India, Japan, South Africa, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Cortland Physician Honored for Work with RMED Program

CHRISTOPHER MOHEIMANI, MD, a general surgeon at the Guthrie Cortland Medical Center, was honored by Upstate Medical University’s Rural Medical Education (RMED) Program with the 2019 Preceptor of the Year Award. As a preceptor, Dr. Moheimani has regularly hosted third-year medical students in his Cortland-based practice, as they participate in office hours, conduct inpatient rounds, and assist physicians in other practice responsibilities.

Moheimani is one of dozens of physicians in rural communities across New York who have partnered with Upstate to provide students with a rural medical experience.

“Not only did I learn the knowledge, details, and skills, that were beyond what was required for my rotation, but I more importantly learned how to be a good person and a well-rounded, compassionate physician,” said one student of working with Moheimani.



Christopher Moheimani, MD, winner of the 2019 Preceptor of the Year Award for his role in teaching students about rural medicine, center, with Carrie Roseamelia, PhD, assistant dean of rural medicine, and Julio Licinio, MD, PhD, executive dean of the College of Medicine.

NIH selects two Upstate students for Medical Research Scholars Program

TWO UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY students have been chosen to participate in a prestigious and highly selective research training program with the National Institutes of Health.

The students—Christina Marcelus and Daniel Lichtenstein, both third-year students in the College of Medicine—were selected from more than 130 applications for just 50 spots in the Medical Research Scholars Program (MRSP).

The year-long research training program allows medical, dental and veterinary students to take a one-year leave from their medical school studies and conduct basic, clinical, or translational research work on the NIH campus in Bethesda, Maryland, starting in July.

“The NIH Medical Research Scholars Program attracts the brightest talent from across the country. These scholars are the future leaders in American medicine,” says NIH Program Director Thomas R. Burklow, MD.

The students will pause their studies at Upstate and spend a year at NIH conducting research in an area that matches his or her personal interests and research goals. Each will be paired with a full-time NIH investigator as a mentor.

“Over the course of the academic year, MRSP scholars participate in courses, journal club seminars, a structured lecture series and clinical teaching rounds at the NIH Clinical Center,” according to NIH. “They also present their research to the NIH community and at national and international professional conferences.”

Christina Marcelus, originally from Spring Valley, just north of New York City, has been aiming for this NIH program even before she started medical school.

“Mentorship has been a key part of my success as a student, which is one of the biggest reasons why I wanted to do the program at NIH,” she says. “I want to be in academic medicine and be in a place where research really informs how we take care of patients. I wanted to be around people who are doing that and doing that really well.”

Marcelus is a first-generation medical student. Her parents are originally from Haiti—her mom works as a certified nurse’s aide and her father is a cook and janitor at a school. The enormity of being able to research oncology on the NIH campus for an entire year is still sinking in, she says.



Christina Marcelus



Daniel Lichtenstein

“To be going to one of the most amazing research institutes in the world is just surreal,” she says. “It’s beyond any expectations of what I’ve had for myself and my career and it makes me excited for what’s next.”

Daniel Lichtenstein, who is originally from near Poughkeepsie, previously worked in research labs during his undergraduate studies at McGill University and then later at Boston Children’s Hospital. Knowing he won’t be taking fourth-year classes with many of his friends has been bittersweet but he’s eager and excited to find a mentor at NIH.

His research areas include genetic engineering and public health—but he’s still not sure which will capture his full focus.

“They’re kind of evolving, which is what I like most about this program—you don’t have to go in with a set project in mind,” Lichtenstein says. “They will match you with someone who shares your interest when you get there.”

College of Medicine Dean Julio Licinio, MD, PhD, said the students’ success in the NIH program will be a good example for other Upstate students and will be beneficial to their careers.

“It means one extra year before they graduate; it delays their graduation; they go into residency later. Some people see that as a drawback but I think that it’s actually a very wise investment and the payoff is tremendous,” Licinio says. “They will be very well positioned to go to any residency program in the country.”

SUNY Honors Two with Distinguished Faculty Rank



Julio Licinio, MD, PhD



Margaret Turk, MD

Julio Licinio, MD, PhD, and Margaret Turk, MD, have been named by the SUNY Board of Trustees to SUNY Distinguished Faculty ranks in acknowledgement of their teaching, research and service. They join 16 other faculty members from SUNY campuses across the state in receiving this faculty designation.

"As witnessed by their massive accomplishments and groundbreaking research in their academic areas, each individual is passionate about their field of expertise, and shares that energy with their students," says SUNY Board Chairman

H. Carl McCall. "We are pleased to congratulate this most recent class of distinguished faculty."

Dr. Licinio, who serves as dean of the College of Medicine, received the rank of Distinguished Professor. Licinio is an internationally recognized leader in translational and clinical research in psychiatry and neuroendocrinology, including depression and obesity. He has established, led, and obtained competitive funding for numerous major national and international research and clinical projects and programs in these areas for over 25 years at Yale, NIH, UCLA, the University of Miami, the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, and SUNY Upstate Medical University.

Licinio has obtained over \$20 million in competitive grant funding from sponsors throughout the world; his work has resulted in over 300 publications and been cited over 27,000 times. He is founding and chief editor of three Springer Nature journals: *Molecular Psychiatry*, *Translational Psychiatry*, and *The Pharmacogenomics Journal*. In the last six years, he has published collaboratively with 190 colleagues from 54 institutions located in 19 countries, evidence of the strength and productivity of

"As witnessed by their massive accomplishments and groundbreaking research in their academic areas, each individual is passionate about their field of expertise, and shares that energy with their students.

We are pleased to congratulate this most recent class of distinguished faculty."

his strong and unique international partnerships in psychiatric research. Licinio has received many national and international awards for his exceptional achievements.

Dr. Turk received the rank of Distinguished Service Professor. Turk has dedicated her career to improving the health and well-being of people with disability. An academian and clinical expert in pediatric rehabilitation medicine and neuromuscular and electrodiagnostic medicine, Turk currently serves as her department's vice chair and quality officer, director of Pediatric Rehabilitation, associate director of University Hospital's Rehabilitation Units, director for

Clinical Research, and director for Student Education.

She has chaired both the Medical College Assembly and the Faculty Organization and currently chairs the College of Medicine Appointment and Promotions Committee. Turk has participated in and/or led multiple initiatives at the regional, state and national level to enhance care for patients with disability, including work with the New York State Department of Health, American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (serving as its first woman chair), American Board of Medical Specialties, Association of Academic Physiatrists, Center for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, Agency for Health Care Research and Quality, Institute of Medicine, Association of American Medical Colleges, and World Health Organization.

She is founding co-editor of the *Disability and Health Journal*, a high impact journal in the field, has edited several books, authored 25 book chapters/monographs and over 40 journal articles, and has been recognized with multiple regional, national and international awards for her work.

The Man in the Bow Tie



BY ARASH RADPARVAR, MD '07

In every person's life, there are those pivotal moments that determine individual destiny. December 19, 2001, was one such day in my life; the day when a childhood dream became a reality. That was the day I met the man in the bow tie.

The days preceding are also ingrained in my memory, when I traveled from Manhattan to Syracuse. I had never been to Syracuse and did not know what to expect. I had heard Upstate New York was beautiful and was excited to see what New York looked like outside the chaotic Big Apple.

To be honest, I was as excited about my trip as I was about the purpose of it. Our family's summer road trips to the Caspian Sea were by far my happiest childhood memories growing up in Iran. I was also especially excited about this trip because I was traveling on Amtrak. It was my first time ever riding on a train.

I would be spending one night in Syracuse and returning the next evening. I packed a small suitcase with some personal items I needed for my stay. But the most important were my suit, my dress shirt, and my tie. After all, I wasn't just going to visit and



Today, Dr. Radparvar divides his time between Greensboro Radiology in North Carolina, and the University of Pennsylvania, where he is a clinical associate in radiology.

explore Upstate New York. I was going to interview at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

My suit looked so elegant, dark charcoal with thin white stripes. I had fallen in love with it the moment I saw it at the big Macy's on Herald Square a week earlier. I closed my eyes and imagined myself in it. I looked so handsome and happy. I felt my heart flutter with joy. "Will this be my lucky suit?" I wondered to myself.

Would my refined appearance make up for my less than perfect score? Or would it all prove a waste of time, a big letdown?

The dark clouds of reality began to take over again, my thoughts racing. "I don't know of anyone who was ever accepted into medical school with a 4 on his MCAT."

"I tried this path a year ago. This is all going to be one short-lived false hope, a fleeting fantasy."

As my excitement turned into despair, I decided to have no expectations. Because I loved road trips, I reasoned I would just go for the experience. I would make an adventure out of this.

My train departed from Penn Station on the evening of December 18. The train was not crowded and I had an entire row to myself. I took a seat by the window and placed my small backpack on the seat next to me. I had packed some sandwiches and snacks for the road. I had also brought my CD player with a collection of CDs from my favorite Persian singers. I was determined to make the best of the trip regardless of the outcome of my interview.

It was beginning to grow dusk outside. I caught a glimpse of a faint reflection of myself on the window as I stared out. I still could not believe I was on my way to my first and, as of then, my only interview invitation. I knew my future depended on this only interview. This would probably be the only chance and the closest I would get to realizing my lifelong dream of becoming a physician.

My thoughts drifted back to childhood, living through the daily bombardments of eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, when I was constantly preoccupied with my family's safety and what I could do to help in case of an emergency. The

shattered windows, bloody ambulances, and unannounced missile attacks had become a daily routine. I could not help but observe the frailty of life and the pain war inflicts upon its victims. I wanted to be able to do something, anything that could help those in need. I remembered the selfless doctors who worked around the clock to treat and attempt to instill hope in the wounded. Those painful years were the initial sparks that inspired me to pursue a career in medicine.

In Iran, students enter medical university at the age of 18 after graduating from high school. Despite becoming the valedictorian of an elite high school in Shiraz, I was denied admission from every medical school in Iran due to my ethnic background. As a Jew, I did not possess the detailed knowledge of Islamic liturgy and jurisprudence deemed necessary for entrance.

Devastated by the realization that I could not achieve my goal at home, I chose to leave the country. Since I was not allowed to get a passport, I decided it was worth risking my life and fleeing, following my younger brothers, who had left the country for America six months earlier. Using a counterfeit passport, I escaped Iran in order to pursue my dream of becoming a physician in the United States.

I set off to this far away country I had grown up hearing described as the “Great Satan” with little more than \$1,000 in my pocket and a knowledge of broken English. Aware that I may never see my parents again, I had only the thoughts of becoming a physician and life in a free country to console me.

“Ticket please.” The conductor’s voice halted my rambling memories. We were now well outside the city limits and the train was going at full speed, tall buildings now replaced by trees and green spaces. The farther we moved away from the city, the faster the trees went past the train. It reminded me of how life seems to go by faster the older I get.

I arrived in the United States in July 1997, where I met up with my younger brothers and my uncle, who had a small apartment in Brooklyn. My cousin, who worked on Wall Street, told me not to waste my time with college. After all, at 22, I would be older than my classmates and besides, how would I be able to support myself? I refused to listen.

I got a job working as a busboy to earn money and apply to college. Thankfully, Yeshiva University granted me a scholarship, affording me the opportunity to pave the path towards my dreams.

I was determined to prove to the university administration that I would not let them down. I worked hard to excel in my studies and become a strong applicant for medical school and was very proud to be one of the three finalists nominated to be valedictorian.

But the challenges of entering medical school were far from over. Despite my outstanding performance in college, I was rejected from every single medical school I applied to. I watched my friends and classmates—some of whom I had helped with their science courses—celebrate their acceptances as I opened one letter of rejection after another.

My nemesis was the verbal section of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), which consisted of reading 8 or 9 passages and answering questions that followed each passage in a short amount of time. This required rapid reading and comprehension skills well beyond those of an immigrant of less than three years.

The MCAT consisted of three sections, each with a maximum of 15 points for a total of 45 points. A total score of 28–30 was deemed a minimum requirement for consideration. However, the breakdown of the score was just as important. A score of less than 8 on any individual section was generally unacceptable. Despite scoring above the 98 percentile on the science sections, and despite being a top student in my college, my score of 4 on the verbal section had guaranteed my rejection from every medical school I applied to.

I decided to dedicate another year to prepare and take the MCAT again, focusing on the dreaded verbal section. For an entire year I denied myself any social occasion. Other than going to work, I confined myself to my room and the library. I read the *Wall Street Journal* and the Op-Ed section of *New York Times* on a daily basis to improve my reading skills.

The process was wearing me down. I was 16 when I initially started to study for the medical school admission test. Ten years had passed and I was still trying to pass the test. Now, however, I was preparing to take the test in a foreign language, on a different continent, and with no family or financial support.

I had migrated to America with the dream of a better future, leaving my family with the hope that someday we would be reunited. Those hopes and dreams had turned into a reality of a lonely life and

an uncertain future. I had given up the comfort of home to live in a dirty old apartment. I longed for my mom's warm foods while I defrosted my packaged meals in the microwave. The thought of not succeeding and not seeing my parents again inflicted me with anxiety and frequent nightmares.

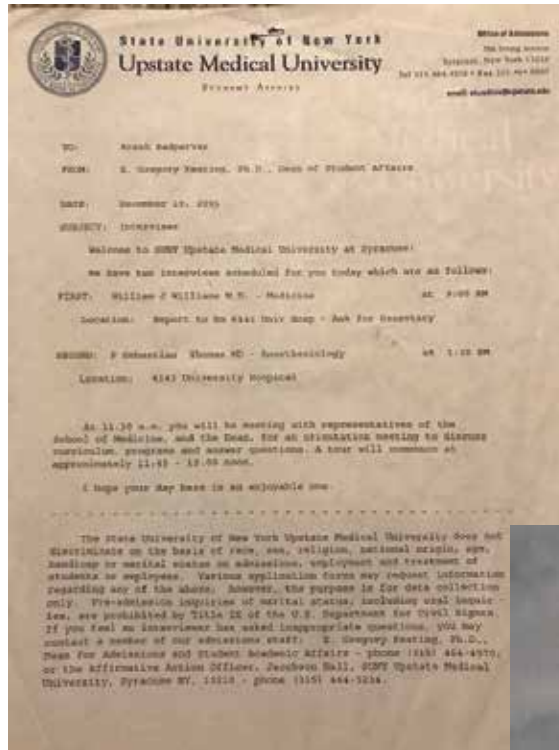
Unlike learning sciences, the skills of rapid reading and comprehension take years of practice to develop. Despite my efforts, my score on my second MCAT was identical to my previous year's score. Again, I scored 4 on the verbal section.

I was devastated, feeling I had wasted another year of my life. I felt all my efforts and sacrifices were futile. Just as in Iran, I was being denied from medical school based on a disadvantage I could not control.

I had seen immigrant friends give up their aspirations of medical school after repeated poor performance on the MCAT verbal section. Despite my low score, I was determined not to give up.

That's what put me on this train. While studying a few days earlier, my phone had rung. The lady on the other end told me she was calling from Upstate Medical University. She said that the committee had reviewed my application and had decided to grant me an interview. I could not believe what I was hearing! She asked me if I had a preferred date. I said I would take the first available date. December 19.

Outside, darkness of the night blended with the snow-covered ground like a black curtain over a white plush carpet. The incredibly ornate displays of illuminated Christmas decorations had transformed the town passing us into a glittering winter wonderland. The houses were outlined with decorative holiday lights. It was my first time seeing Christmas decorations outside of Manhattan and it looked magical.



The schedule from Dr. Radparvar's Interview Day at Upstate, and his interviewer, William J. Williams, MD.



I arrived at the College of Medicine well in time the next morning. The sight of medical students and

residents walking on campus wearing white coats and stethoscopes was both inspiring and aspiring. This time, I decided to allow myself to dream, even if for a brief moment.

I walked into the admissions office and introduced myself to the secretary. A few other applicants were already there. Everyone was dressed very professionally. I looked as sharp as anyone else, with a crisp white shirt and silk grey tie under my exquisite suit.

After all the interviewees had arrived, we met with Dr. Keating, the dean of admissions. Following some introductions and greetings, each applicant was handed a file that contained the itinerary for the day and the names of his or her two interviewers.

My first interviewer was Dr. Williams. His name, William J. Williams, reminded me of my close childhood friend in Iran. Just like Dr. Williams, my friend's last name was identical to his first name with an added letter. I thought that was an interesting coincidence.

As I walked over to the building where the interview was scheduled, I wondered what type of person Dr. Williams was. I wondered if he would be kind and friendly to me.

As I sat in the waiting area, my heart started to beat faster with anticipation and my thoughts began to race again. I kept thinking how just a few minutes spent with another person, whom I had never met, could change my destiny. One man, one interview, one impression would determine if I realized my lifelong dream or buried it.

"Hi Dr. Williams." The secretary's voice brought me back to myself. I looked up.

I estimated Dr. Williams was in his mid seventies. He had fair skin with rosy cheeks and a full head of mostly grey and white hair parted to the side. He was dressed in a crisp white shirt, black dress pants, shiny black dress shoes and red bow tie that gave him a distinguished look. His warm and friendly smile put me to ease and made it very natural for me to smile back. There was a sense of kindness about him. I felt an instantaneous connection as if I had known him all my life. I felt he was there not just to interview me, but to help me. To advocate for me.

As we stepped into his office, once again, I thought to myself how that interview was my one and only admission ticket. I had to shine over the next few minutes if I ever wanted any chance of becoming a physician.

Dr. Williams engaged me in some casual talk. He asked about my past and my interest in medicine. He was genuinely eager to get to know me as a person. We discussed a variety of topics from science to religion to art, travel, and other hobbies. It was a light and engaging conversation.

Towards the end of our talk, Dr. Williams got up from his chair and took out a textbook from the shelf and handed it to me. It was a medical text in hematology named *Williams Hematology* in honor of its editor-in-chief. It came to be known as "the book" in the field of hematology.

"He must like me if he is showing his book to me," I thought. It was then that I realized our 20-minute scheduled interview had turned into a one hour, 15-minute conversation. As we concluded I thanked him for his time. He walked me back to the conference room where other candidates were meeting for lunch. I had missed out on some touring of the medical school but that didn't compare to my additional time with Dr. Williams.

On January 8th, 2002, my phone rang one more unforgettable time. My dream was no longer just a dream—I was offered a spot at the Upstate College of Medicine.

Sometimes there is only so much we are able to accomplish by ourselves. I needed someone to believe in me and see the potential that my college professors had seen. That person was Dr. Williams, who saw in me something that transcended the conventional standards of medical school admission based on perfect standardized credentials.

Today, because of him, I am a healer and a teacher. And because of him, I am again a dreamer.

I realized another dream in 2008, during my intern year in Albany, New York, when I saw my parents again for the first time in more than 10 years. My brother drove them up to Albany from Baltimore and I remember seeing them waiting outside my apartment building when I came home from the hospital one evening.

In writing this memoir, I conducted a brief search on the life of Dr. Williams. I was surprised to learn that he attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania, where I have served as a clinical associate in radiology since 2014. That shared connection makes my services here even more special and meaningful to me.

I wish my hero were still around so he could read this and know how he impacted the life of a young dreamer. I also know that he would be too humble to accept credit, instead telling me to "pay it forward."

And that's what I try to do. While working with the residents and trainees here at UPenn, I like to think that I am imparting the wisdom of Dr. Williams on to the future generation of doctors. I take great pride thinking that I may be working with someone who will someday give a young dreamer a chance. That I may be working with a future William J. Williams. ■

Arash Radparvar earned his MD from Upstate Medical University in 2007, then completed a residency in radiology at St. Barnabas Medical Center and a fellowship in abdominal imaging at Thomas Jefferson University. This essay is adapted from a piece originally published on Medium.com. He can be found on twitter @DrRadparvar.

Offering Hope Throu

Ted Higgins, MD '78, is elevating surgical care in Haiti by training and retaining the country's top surgical talent.

BY RÉNÉE GEARHART LEVY

For more than 25 years, Kansas City surgeon Ted Higgins, MD '78, traveled to underserved areas to perform volunteer surgeries, for many years in the Dominican Republic, then Africa, then Haiti.

It was in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, that Higgins began dreaming of making a more lasting impact.

As the Chinese proverb says, give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime. "I wanted to teach them to fish," says Dr. Higgins.

That dream is now reality. The Higgins Brothers Surgicenter for Hope, located on the campus of the Haitian Christian Mission in Fonds-Parisien, employs an all-Haitian staff of 25, including two general surgeons, one OB-GYN surgeon, two anesthesiologists, two emergency room doctors, and four nurse midwives. In 2018, the surgical center performed more than 600 operations and delivered more than 500 babies, all at a sliding fee based on what the patient can afford, which in some cases is nothing.

The surgical center is further supported by surgical teams from Kansas City that Higgins brings down four times a year. Over a five-day period, the teams will conduct an average of 60 surgeries, helping to train their Haitian colleagues on new techniques and procedures, and working with surgical residents from the General Hospital in Port au Prince.

"The goal for the surgery center was not only to help the Haitian people but to build a surgery program for Haitian doctors, bringing American surgeons down to help train them," says Higgins. "The most exciting thing about the plan has always been to have Haitian people running the surgery center. We're

there to offer support, to perhaps show them a procedure they haven't seen yet. But the goal is to work ourselves out of a job."

Three years after opening its doors, plans are underway to expand the surgical center, providing an additional 13,000 square-feet of operating rooms, a maternity ward, radiology and pathology suites, offices, a utility space for storing equipment, and sleeping quarters for residents, which is estimated to cost \$900,000. "We are well on our way to raising the funds to complete this ambitious project," says Higgins. "The current plan is to be breaking ground by the new year."

Upstate Roots

The Higgins Brothers Surgicenter is named in honor of Higgins father, Edward Higgins, MD, who was an Upstate ENT resident from 1946 to 1950 under Gordon Hoople, MD, and his uncle, Paul Higgins, MD, a general surgeon who trained under Alfred Blaylock at Johns Hopkins. Both surgeons practiced together for 38 years in Cortland, NY, in a medical office built and used by their father and grandfather. Despite the rich medical legacy, Higgins himself



gh Healthcare



Dr. Higgins (third from right) pictured with the staff at the Higgins Brothers SurgiCenter

“...give a poor man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.
I wanted to teach them to fish...”

had no interest in a medical career growing up. At St Lawrence University, he studied history and government.

It was the Vietnam era, which, not uncommonly, was a polarizing event between he and his father, who had served in World War II. “I always admired my dad, but we differed on the war stuff,” Higgins says.

Despite his ROTC participation in college, Higgins was spared service in Vietnam. He enjoyed the luck of a high draft number and had no post-college plans.

“It gave me time to get away from what was going on in my life and Vietnam and to ponder, ‘What do I really want to do in life?’” he says.

It was clear his future was not as a farmer. “It was too hard,” he says.

Higgins says he realized the people he admired most had been right in front of him all along—his father and his uncle, who were role models in their community for their exemplary patient care and civic involvement. “I didn’t mind working hard and I wanted to be my own boss,” he says. “I realized medicine might be the way to go after all.”

Higgins had been a three-sport athlete in college—football, skiing, and tennis—and an undistinguished C student. And he’d never taken a science course. So he enrolled in a few courses at SUNY Cortland to see how he’d do. He aced everything.

“I had a renewed passion and realized I could be a student and focus,” says Higgins, who went on to enroll as a graduate student at Syracuse University, taking the full gamut of pre-med science and working in the lab of Samuel Chan, PhD, assisting with research on mitochondria oxidative phosphorylation. He stayed in Syracuse for medical school at Upstate, which he says was a wonderful fit, then headed to Yale for residency training in general surgery.

Higgins was a second-year resident covering for a friend on the hand service when he got called to the emergency room about a patient with a lacerated extensor tendon. “I went to the library to read up on tendon repairs and then headed to the

emergency room to stitch up that tendon,” he recalls.

The patient was a young woman who’d graduated Yale the previous year, back for the weekend visiting her roommate when she broke a glass and cut her hand washing dishes. After repairing the tendon and splinting her hand, Higgins told her she could seek follow-up care in New York City, where she lived and worked, or was welcome to come back to the clinic because he was sort of interested in seeing how it healed.

She came back. After the second or third visit they made plans to have dinner and see the opera. They were married during his fourth year. Higgins and his bride, Kim, never had a honeymoon, so a couple months later, when he heard about a rotation in Haiti, he thought that might fit the bill.

The couple spent three months at Hospital Albert Schweitzer in Deschappelles, Haiti. “I saw how much a general surgeon could do with very little. You don’t need a heart-lung bypass machine. You don’t need a cell saver. The amount of good you can do for breast cancer, thyroids, hernias, hydroceles, abdominal masses, with just very little equipment was eye opening,” he says.

They were also touched by the Haitian people, their culture, and their needs, and inspired by Dr. Larimer and Gwen Mellon, who devoted their lives to transformative work in health-care, local economies, and access to water.

Little did they realize that a seed had been planted.



Dr. Higgins and Haitian surgeons assess a renal failure patient from Port Au Prince for position of dialysis access. The SurgiCenter has performed more than 150 dialysis access surgeries so far.

After graduation, he recruited a college friend to travel and bike around Ireland and England. At the end of the summer, his friend went back to the U.S. for law school. Higgins had met a farmer who needed help and ended up staying and working for four months in the little town of Hacketstown, in the Wicklow Mountains, south of Dublin. He worked on the farm, played Gaelic football, and became part of the community, developing friendships that have lasted a lifetime.



A Call to Action

Higgins became board certified in both general surgery and vascular surgery. The couple settled in his wife's hometown of Kansas City, where she would have family support raising their young family while he developed his busy surgical practice.

In 1992, Higgins began annual trips to the Dominican Republic through their church, where teams provided health-care to sugar cane cutters and their families. Seeing surgical needs of all kinds, he began operating in a borrowed clinic. "I started off for probably 10 years doing just basic general surgery—hernias, hydroceles, abdominal masses, breast, thyroids, anything that needed to come off," he recalls. "Over time, some of the Dominican surgeons would want to come by and see what I was doing.

"Over time, some of the Dominican surgeons would want to come by and see what I was doing. I'd say, 'Don't just watch. Scrub in and let's work together.'"

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Subsequently, Higgins brought a couple of the surgeons to Kansas City to teach them how to perform laparoscopic surgery and take that back with them. Later, he introduced them to dialysis access surgery because they had gotten some dialysis machines.

That continued for 20 years. But in 2010, Haiti was devastated

by a major earthquake. The Higgins' daughter Maggie, then a pre-medical student, was there doing relief work and Higgins, who was on his way to volunteer in Africa, asked if she needed help. "Dad, there's just no operating rooms here for you to use," she told him.

But Higgins happened to have a Haitian-American nurse practitioner working in his practice. She told him she thought she could find him a place to work. "It won't be much, just a delivery room, but I think you can make it work," she told him.

After returning from Africa, Higgins assembled a volunteer surgical team and headed to Haiti in November 2010. "The country was devastated. It was a real mess," he recalls.

Higgins was able to get an anesthetic machine, find an anesthesiologist, and worked out of the tiny cinderblock baby-delivery building on the campus of the Haitian Christian Mis-

Dr. Higgins assists general surgeon McKendy Termelus, MD, in an inguinal hernia repair. According to Higgins, the Haitian hernias are generally much larger than hernias seen in the United States and are often present for a long time because patients lack the resources for surgical repair.



Nurse midwives at the SurgiCenter deliver more than 500 babies a year, including a set of quadruplets last year.

sion in Fonds-Parisien, an isolated village in eastern Haiti approximately eight miles from the Haiti/Dominican border. “We had to move the operating room table to get the gurney in to move the patient. That’s how small it was.”

Over the next six years, he performed more than 500 sometimes life-saving surgeries. But over time, he recognized that the needs of the people far surpassed what could be accomplished in that dated under-sized facility. He wanted to build a bigger space.

After unsuccessful attempts at getting financial support for the project in Haiti, Higgins decided he was tired of waiting and funded the project himself, spending some \$500,000 of his own money to build the Higgins Brothers Surgicenter for Hope on the campus of the Haitian Christian Mission. “My agreement with the founder was that if I built this center there, it was for everybody in Haiti. We treat everybody, regardless of ability to pay,” he says.

“My agreement with the founder was that if I built this center there, it was for everybody in Haiti. We treat everybody, regardless of ability to pay.”

As in many developing countries, the common practice in Haiti if someone needs surgery is to visit the surgeon, who will tell the patient the cost and give him or her a list of supplies to bring—suture, bandages, etc. If you don’t have money, tough luck.

Using his “teaching a man to fish” philosophy, Higgins hired a Haitian crew to build the facility. “They have no mechanical equipment. Everything was done by hand—digging the trenches for foundations, constructing the building. It took over a year,”

he says. “And at the dedication, those workers were there in coat and tie as proud as can be.”

Building for the Future

The Higgins Brothers Surgicenter opened its doors on December 10, 2016. It is the only trauma/surgical care clinic offering 24-hour service in the area and

includes a surgical emergency room, consultation rooms, two major operating rooms, and one minor operating room, a large recovery room, and a maternity ward renovated from the original building. The facility offers emergency care, obstetrical and gynecologic, vascular, and urologic surgeries, as well as hernia and hydrocele repairs, and has a team of nurse midwives that assist with up to 500 births per year.

Last August, a 22-year-old woman walked down from the hills in labor and gave birth to quadruplets. “No pre-op evaluation, no epidural, no episiotomy;

nothing. Just came in and delivered four kids,” says Higgins. “They were two pounds each. We sent them to a neonatal unit in Port au Prince.”

In October, when the surgical center held a celebration honoring its Haitian staff, the quadruplets came for a visit. “They’re doing great,” he says. Higgins says the surgical skill of the staff is top notch, hand picked by him after working with them throughout their medical training. “Many surgeons from Haiti get trained and then leave and go to the United States because they can make more money,” he says. “But the doctors we have are committed to helping their own people, and they’re making a huge difference. The medical needs of the country don’t stop when the team from the U.S. leaves.”

Nonetheless, resources are limited. Most medical supplies are donated, however, getting containers transported to Haiti and through customs is a continual challenge. “Things are rel-

ative,” Higgins says. “We have to sometimes re-use sterile gowns. If you don’t have something you need, you make it work. I’ve been in cases where we’ve run out of suture, the Bovie doesn’t work, or lights go out. What do you do? Well, you get your flashlights out, or you get your cell phone app out—which is a great light by the way. You work with what you have.”

Higgins’ major focus now is on raising funds—for operating expenses, namely salaries for the Haitian staff, as well as new facilities, and scholarships for talented young Haitian students to become nurses, doctors, and medical technicians. “We need to ensure the quality of care at the facility will be sustainable,” he says.

Higgins continues to maintain his full-time surgical practice in Kansas City, where he is regularly listed among “best doctors” in the city. He volunteers at the Kansas City Free Clinic and established a fund to support multiple sclerosis

research in honor of a colleague who suffered from the affliction. That fund has grown into the third largest private fund for MS research in the United States and spawned a research foundation sponsoring young researchers working on finding a cure for the disease.

Like his father and uncle before him, Higgins is known in his community as a role model to medical students, physicians, and others for his surgical skill, empathetic patient care, and civic commitment. But it’s the Higgins Brothers Surgicenter in Haiti that has his heart.

“The bottom line of why I do this—its about the Haitian people,” he says. “They don’t have options and yet they survive in the best way they can, which is remarkable,” he says. “Just like you and me, they want the best for their children. Hopefully, we will change the story there.” ■

For more information, visit Higginsbrotherssurgicenter.org.

By elevating the standard of medical care, the Higgins Brothers SurgiCenter aims to raise the quality of life for Haitian citizens in the area.



TRAINING ROUNDS

Acting the Part

UPSTATE'S INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY PROGRAM USES THEATER ARTS TO HELP RESIDENTS IMPROVE COMMUNICATION.



Stephen J. Knohl, MD '97

Seven young adults stand in a circle in a practice room at Syracuse Stage early on a Thursday morning. They are concentrating on “standing well.”

“Your feet should belong to the ground and your head with the angels,” their instructor tells them.

They progress from standing well to walking well, with feet under pelvis, chest open, and shoulders back.

Next he has them back in a circle, “purposefully” passing a ball from one to another. “Face each other and look each other in the eye,” he admonishes. “Check yourself on how many times a day you catch yourself communicating to somebody sideways instead of giving them your full attention.”

The participants are all internal medicine residents at Upstate Medical University. They are taking direction from Stephen Cross, associate professor of acting at Syracuse University and artistic director of the Building Company Theater.

“Take a break from the way you think about learning,” Cross tells them. “These exercises are to get you to go to a different physical space and think about movement from a different perspective.”

This session on body movement and non-verbal communication is part of an Education Through Theater Arts (ETTA) program designed to help improve resident communication by making them aware of what their body language communicates to patients.

“This is an opportunity to think about how the body is involved in communication whether you want it to be there or not,” says Cross.

“When you walk into a room with a patient, they get your physical presence. Be aware of your body, how you are, how you move. It provides a lot of information.”

The residents participate in the exercises with varying levels of enthusiasm. One is clearly reluctant. Yet as the workshop progresses—requiring teamwork and coordinated movement—inhibitions fall. Everyone seems relaxed. Smiling.

Upstate’s internal medicine residents have been participating in the ETTA program since 2012, an initiative program director Steven J. Knohl, MD '97, introduced both as a way to integrate the arts into training as well as to augment the formal communication program, Learning to TALK (Treat All Like Kin).

Dr. Knohl launched Learning to TALK shortly after taking the reigns as program director in 2008. Residents participate in the longi-

Residents participate in a communications exercise, mimicking each other's behavior.





Residents build self-esteem by “risk taking” exercises that increase their trust in peers and in teamwork.

tudinal program once each year of their training. The sessions, held at Upstate’s patient simulation center, help residents work through challenging communications situations faced by physicians, including delivering news to a loved one about a dying family member, talking about cost conscious care, apologizing for a mistake, professionalism issues with colleagues, and teaching students.

At each annual session, residents work through three or four different scenarios with standardized patients as Knohl observes via live video in another room. Later, the residents discuss the challenges of those encounters with Knohl and then have the opportunity to watch their taped encounter to make their own evaluation of their performance. Residents also participate in additional sessions at the VA Medical Center while rotating there, focusing on issues specific to veterans.

In contrast, the ETTA experience is not necessarily medicine based, but provides techniques in nonverbal

“TAKE A BREAK FROM THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT LEARNING,” CROSS TELLS THEM. “THESE EXERCISES ARE TO GET YOU TO GO TO A DIFFERENT PHYSICAL SPACE AND THINK ABOUT MOVEMENT FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.”

communication. “Things that can affect message intended versus message received,” he says.

Cross first created the ETTA program in his native Nova Scotia as a set of theater exercises that could be transferred to non-theater social service organizations.

When he moved to Syracuse to teach at SU a dozen years ago, he brought the concept with him and has worked with local organizations including the Onondaga County Justice Center, Oasis Senior Center,

school districts, and refugee and migrant worker advocacy centers.

So when Knohl called Syracuse Stage looking for a theater experience for his residents, ETTA seemed the perfect fit. Twice a month, small groups of medical residents from Upstate come to Syracuse Stage to participate in role-playing exercises, non-verbal communication, physical relaxation, teamwork, confidence and self-esteem.

When applied to medical residents, these exercises encourage participants to become more comfortable in using their bodies to express their ideas, more present and “in the moment” when attending to the needs of others, and more confident.

“I think they find they’re being challenged in a way they really had never experienced before and recognize that perhaps some of their body language, some of their biases, are sort of out there in a way they never appreciated,” says Knohl.

Cross believes the exercises challenge the residents’ way of thinking

TRAINING ROUNDS

and learning. “We ask them to think in abstractions, which is not a typical part of their daily life,” he says. “Residents are typically consumed with figuring out what their attending wants of them, with not making a mistake. One of the first things we tell them is there is no right or wrong in the theater.”

But it’s not all fun and games either. As the link between patient satisfaction and safety becomes increasingly tied to reimbursement, the importance of good physician-patient communication is elevated.

Kay Frank, strategic program evaluator in the Department of Medicine, and Sue Henderson-Kendrick, Upstate director of graduate medical education, are working to quantify the impact of the experience, using a self reflection assessment after ETТА sessions and Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction scores at the resident clinic as a way to objectively measure the outcome of these experiences. “It’s ongoing but we’re seeing data showing positive improvement,” says Knohl.

Frank and Henderson-Kendrick have given poster presentations on the project at the Innovations in Medical Education Conference in Los Angeles and at the American Council for Graduate Medical Education Conference in Orlando, Florida, and are preparing a paper for the *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*.

Frank hopes to prove significance in ETТА through her doctoral dissertation by utilizing Press Ganey scores to pinpoint individual residents who may need more support with their communication skills. “For instance, we might see that Dr. Jane Doe does great with women 50 and older but isn’t so successful talking with men 18 to 30,” she explains. “We’re contemplating writing curriculum to help further support them before they go out into practice.”



Dr. Knohl facilitates a feedback session following a Learning to TALK simulated patient encounter.

She and Henderson-Kendrick are also hoping to expand the use of ETТА to other residency programs at Upstate. “Dr. Bradshaw from the Department of Neurology is coming to observe,” Frank says.

The experience has also impacted Cross. Last year, Building Company Theater produced a play based on the memoir *Prognosis Poor*, written by a family medicine doctor about the difficult realities of her residency experience. The production, directly inspired the ETТА/Upstate collaboration, was adapted for stage by Cross and performed both at Upstate for medical professionals and at a local theater company.

Cross ends today’s ETТА session with the Game of Power. He sets out six chairs, an oblong table, and a bottle of water and challenges those present to reconfigure the furniture to give one chair “more power” than the others.

There’s no hesitation. One by one, the residents jump to action,

coming up with a variety of tableau for the furniture and the bottle. “Which chair is most powerful? Why?” he asks. “What impact does that bottle make?”

From Syracuse Stage, the residents will head directly to clinic to see patients. “As you move through the day, be aware of your body and where you hold onto tension,” Cross advises the group. “Let this work resonate with you through the rest of day.” ■

1954 Reunion

September 20-21, 2019

Robert H. Zimmer, of Jamesville, NY, writes, "Dear Classmates, I hope that those of us able to travel will make every effort to be present for the 65th year of our medical class graduation. Updates are welcomed. Personally, I enjoy health, which enables biking the Erie Canal towpath, hunting deer, seasonal vacations, and Chautauqua Institution world affairs studies. It is impressive to hear Stalin and Khrushchev's granddaughters tell how much they enjoy living in this country! See you in September."

1956

Michael L. Del Monico has made his final move and is now in Raleigh, NC.

1957

Eugene A. Kaplan, of Cazenovia, NY, is teaching two days a week in the Department of Psychiatry (primarily psychodynamic and existential psychotherapies). He now has the title Professor and Chair Emeritus, "which leaves much time left for family and travel!" he writes.

1958

George S. Goldstein and Shirley are enjoying life overlooking the Atlantic in Boca Raton, Florida. "Regards to all!"

Arnold M. Moses '54, of Syracuse, NY, retired in 2015 as a SUNY Distinguished Service Professor, also serving as chief of the Metabolic Bone Disease Center and director of the Clinic Research Unit. Since retirement, he has maintained contact by going to conferences and lectures.

1959 Reunion

September 20-21, 2019

Zaven S. Ayanian, of Rockville, MD, will celebrate his 60th reunion in September. He recently attended three of his grandchildren's college graduations and is extremely proud of each one of them and their accomplishments.



Zaven S. Ayanian '59 with family at his granddaughter's college graduation

1960

Julian M. Aroesty, of Lexington, MA, shares that years of downhill skiing have taken their toll. He has bilateral torn menisci, so his knees hurt about 100 percent of the time, but he can still cycle and did 2,100 miles in four and a half months. "It's good for strong legs and, more importantly, is supposed to delay the onset of dementia," he writes. His youngest grandson, who just turned two, knows the difference between an octagon and a pentagon and recognizes all the printed numbers from 1-10. He is with him every Monday, during which he is introducing him to Spanish.

"When UpToDate first started, I wrote several of the cardiology units and still continue to update about 20 sections regularly. Still doing medical malpractice defense for the Harvard insurer (CRICO) and Coverys cardiac cases. I have had my share of health issues but so far nothing life threatening. Looking forward to our next reunion in 2020."

Jerome Glazer, of Boca Raton, FL, has been retired for 15 years. "I moved initially to Palm Beach, to be near my brother Malcolm Glazer, however, he passed away and my wife wished to move to Boca. I'm very grateful for my wonderful wife and my wonderful life in Rochester, NY, and

Florida. I'm also very proud of my children. Two of them are physicians and love their work. I don't understand why some of my colleagues do not recommend medicine as a profession. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at our reunion next year in Syracuse. Best regards to all," he writes.

1964 Reunion

September 20-21, 2019

Alan M. Roth, of Carmichael, CA, is emeritus professor of ophthalmology and pathology at University of California Davis and is involved in construction of the new Tschannen Eye Institute for the UC Davis Eye Center.

CLASS NOTES

A. Albert Tripodi, of Longboat Key, FL, and Fran continue to enjoy the almost perpetual sunshine in Longboat Key. He spends his time cycling, volunteering in a medical clinic for the indigent in Sarasota, teaching adult education at the Osher Institute of Ringling College, and attending classes there as well. They attended the graduation of his grandson at Cornell in the spring and plan to attend the 55th medical class reunion in September.

1965

Harold L. Eichler, of Boca Raton, FL, writes, "If I'm alive in 2020 I'll be at the alumni reunion."

1966

Martin S. Goldstein and Susan are enjoying retirement in Boca Raton, FL. Their nine grandchildren are great, with two in college.

1967

Harvey A. Rubenstein, of Potomac, MD, has had a wonderful career in medicine. He received his post-graduate education at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York City, where he designed the first radioimmunoassay for

the measurement of T3, which contributed to his being chosen for a very responsible medical position in the U.S. Air Force for two years. He then entered into the private practice of endocrinology, metabolism, and diabetes in Northern Virginia, and a teaching position as a clinical associate professor of medicine at Georgetown University Medical Center. He has engaged in several medical projects on Capital Hill, one with the help of the then-Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, and in the process met with two U.S. presidents. "Consequently, I am so very grateful to Upstate Medical Center for having admitted me to the school, which gave me the start towards these experiences. I am now retired from private practice for two years in order to have time to experience and enjoy other aspects of life, including hobbies, travel, and family, and especially spend more time with my wonderful wife. However, I have not given up medicine or forgotten the role society has played in enhancing my engagement in this wonderful career. Consequently, in an attempt to give back, I am donating my time and experience to a free clinic where I give weekly endocrine care to patients who otherwise would not have such access."

1968

Robert L. Bard, of New York, NY, is one of the top medical advisors of the First Responders Cancer Resource screening program and an active cancer diagnostic specialist in Manhattan. He continues to examine firefighters (both active and retired) as part of the outreach mission of the "Get Checked Now!" program. He also became a New York State Trooper Surgeon in April.

Kenneth J. Hoffer, of Santa Monica, CA, and his wife Marcia have spent more than 20 years exploring the EU. They began in 1997 in Italy and spent three months driving through the entire country. No plans, no reservations, no tours—just the two of them driving around seeing everything they could find. They have repeated this every two years, visiting a different country or region (including two six-week trips in 2000 and 2010) until 2017, when they had covered everything except Romania and Malta. Hoffer now has a website, "Dr. Hoffer's Travel Site" at www.KHoffer.com. Anyone needing ideas or recommendations while planning a trip to Europe may find it helpful.

1969 Reunion

September 20-21, 2019

Kenneth M. Grundfast, of Chestnut Hill, MA, is still practicing otolaryngology, serving as an assistant dean at the Boston University School of Medicine, and also as physician leader for improving patient experience at the Boston Medical Center. His third grandchild, Emmet, was born February 5, 2019. "I remain grateful for the education I received at SUNY Upstate and look forward to getting together with classmates at the upcoming 50th reunion."

John T. McCarthy and **Jane L. Falkenstein**, of Troy, NY, are gearing up for their class of 1969 fiftieth anniversary, September 20 and 21, 2019!



Jane Falkenstein '69, John McCarthy '69, Bill Vacek '69, and Jerry Selzer '69

Ronald J. Saxon, recently retired from ENT practice after 45 years and left Connecticut for Palm Beach Gardens, FL. "We have five grandsons. Sorry to miss reunion because of a family commitment. I wish my classmates and friends good luck and the best of health," he writes.

Hofburg Palace, Vienna, photographed by Kenneth J. Hoffer '68



VIRGINIA A. CAINE, MD '76

Public Health Crusader

During a time when black women were not very present in the health care industry, Virginia A. Caine, MD '76, saw a path.

"My uncle was a physician in Arkansas and my father was the pre-med advisor at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff," Dr. Caine says. "I also had a number of cousins who were physicians, pharmacists, and dentists, so a lot of discussions around the table revolved around health care when I was growing up."

For Caine, working in the sciences felt like a clear next step. She knew it was possible because she saw it within her family. Still, that type of representation didn't exist outside of her family. It still doesn't. A 2015 study from the American Hospital Association's Institute for Diversity and Health Equity found that just 11 percent of minorities make up executive leadership across the health care industry, even though a third of patients being served in various clinics and hospitals are minorities.

During her years of medical training, Caine didn't let the lack of women and people of color deter her. As an undergraduate student, she spent a summer at Harvard University's School of Medicine, where she worked alongside a doctor and learned about treating infectious diseases. She left Massachusetts that summer knowing she wanted to work with patients and help treat their diseases.

While in medical school at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, she got the opportunity to work with infectious disease specialist King Holmes, MD, PhD, who became her mentor.

"He is world renowned for his work with sexually transmitted diseases," Caine said. "It was under him that I learned about the Tuskegee Airmen being injected with syphilis. That affected those men and their families for generations and it made me want to do something about it because that's how I was raised. When we see injustice happening, we don't stay silent," she says.

Caine also noticed how prevalently STDs affected teenagers and young adults. Knowing that many of these diseases were preventable,

she threw herself into the work.

After medical school, Caine did her residency in internal medicine at the University of Cincinnati and trained in infectious disease at the University of Washington in Seattle. After completing her training, she went to work at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Maryland, where she served as a research epidemiologist studying HIV/AIDS. In the late 1980s she got an offer to bring her research to Indianapolis in a joint position between Indiana University and the Marion County Department of Health (MCDH). She took the offer and became the director of the STD program at MCDH.

Thirty years later, she's now the director of MCDH and last year was named Bicentennial Professor at the Indiana University School of Medicine. During her tenure, she established the first countywide HIV/AIDS integrated health care delivery system involving major hospitals, community health centers, and social service agencies, as well as the first HIV dental clinic. She also created the first nationwide AIDS physician education program for the National Medical Association, a program later duplicated by the American Medical Association. Additionally, Caine served as the co-director for the Indianapolis Healthy Babies Initiative, working with community leaders to decrease the black infant mortality rate to its lowest level ever.

In 2004, Caine was elected president of the American Public Health Association, the oldest and largest organization of public health professionals in the world. She has also served as an Expert Panel Member for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in drafting their treatment guidelines for sexually transmitted diseases and served as an advisor to the National Institute of Health on AIDS clinical treatment guidelines.

Among numerous accolades, Caine has been honored for her work in public health by the National Medical Association, which named her Practitioner of the Year in 2010, and by BioCrossroads, a statewide initiative to advance and invest in life sciences, which named Caine the Life Sciences Champion of the year



Virginia A. Caine, MD '76

in 2017. In April, she received the 2019 Gerald L. Bepko Community Medallion from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, in honor of her 30-plus years of exemplary application of research to critical public health problems.

Caine says she owes her success to mentors who believed in her as well as her belief in herself.

"You really need to know who you are, what your values are, and what your commitment is," she says. "Don't let someone else tell you who you are. Follow your dreams, follow your aspirations, and don't be afraid to ask for help along the way."

—Brittany King

Adapted with permission from the Indianapolis Recorder

CLASS NOTES

James H. Brodsky '74, of Potomac, MD, was recently certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine and American Board of Lifestyle Medicine. He writes, "Dr. Rohner would tell us this is a profession of lifelong learning," he writes.

1970

Bernard J. Crain, of Hickory, NC, is retired from emergency medicine and very involved in PSR's Back for the Brink Campaign—The Call to Prevent Nuclear War. www.preventnuclearwar.org.

1972

John W. Ely, of Iowa City, IA, retired in 2013. He is doing lots of home repair and woodworking.

1974 ReUnion

September 20-21, 2019

Jack L. Baldassare, moved to Fort Lee, NJ. "All is fine with Elena and our five grandchildren."

Joseph A. Blady, of Franklin Lakes, NJ, retired in 2000. He received a master's degree in international affairs in 2003 from Columbia School of International and Public Affairs. He was with the Department of Defense from 2001 to 2014 and has been a defense contractor since 2016.

1975

Gary C. Brown, retired from active medical practice and lives on Hilton Head Island, SC, with his wife Melissa. They both work as volunteers in medicine to provide basic eye care. They enjoy and are blessed with six grandchildren. They also enjoy the beach, biking, and their dogs, Gus and Sabrina. Brown continues medical interests through their center for Value Based Medicine and is writing medical thriller novels.

Robert M. Goldberg, of Somers Point, NJ, was named one of the region's Top Doctors in the May issue of *Philadelphia* magazine. He continues to enjoy his solo private practice of medical oncology/hematology in Somers Point.

1977

William R. Latreille, of Malone, NY, was elected Speaker of the Medical Society of the State of New York at the MSSNY's 213th annual House of Delegates on April 13.



William R. Latreille '77

George C. Wortley, of Lynchburg, VA, is currently at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station located at the Geographic South Pole, serving as the physician from February to November. "The major challenges are six months of darkness and minus-100F temperatures. But the stars and auroras are spectacular," he writes.

1978

Gerald N. Goldberg, of Tucson, AZ, was the 2019 recipient of the Ellet H. Drake Memorial Award. This lifetime achievement award honors him for his masterful contributions to the field of laser and energy-based medical devices. This is one of the

highest level of awards that can be received in the world of lasers. The recognition is especially momentous as he won the Leon Goldman Award in 2017. His career has been dedicated to skin enhancement and complicated conditions ranging from challenging vascular birthmarks in children to extreme rhinophyma. He also dramatically transforms sun-damaged and aged skin with his life-changing laser skin resurfacing treatments. He is founder of Pima Dermatology in Tucson.

Leon I. Rosenberg, of Cherry Hill, NJ, and Caryn are doing well. "I love to keep busy and I am still working full-time; my son, Jake, is also a psychiatrist and just joined my clinical research practice. We have eight terrific granddaughters and divide our weekends between them, our four terrific children and their spouses, in Cherry Hill, Manhattan, and Fleischmanns, in upstate New York. Sorry we missed the reunion. Hope all are doing well."



Gerald N. Goldberg '78 receiving his award

1979 Reunion

September 20-21, 2019

James P. Corsones, of Hurley, NY, welcomed his third grandchild, Harper Marie Corsones, born on May 3, in Baltimore, MD, to David and Deana Corsones.

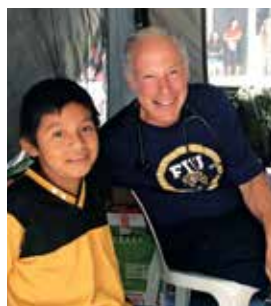
Joan S. Dengrove and **Neal M. Shindel '80**, of Whittier, CA, share that their son **Alex Shindel '12** is joining his dad's gastroenterology practice starting September 2019.

Elizabeth (Ackley) Rocco, of West Hartford, CT, writes, "Time flies. I practiced general and pediatric ophthalmology for 33 years with a group in Middletown, CT, and retired in 2017. I have a six-month-old grandson (daughter's) in Manhattan, and my two grown sons live 30 and 40 minutes away in CT." Since retiring she has helped with local Syrian refugees and serves coffee one afternoon weekly at the West Hartford Senior Center. Last fall, she journeyed with a Christian-Palestinian tour to Jerusalem and Israel for two weeks. This summer, she and Wes plan to see three of the Hawaiian Islands and do some hiking. She no longer plays basketball, but hikes, does Zumba, skis, and gardens extensively. "Upstate and Syracuse occupy a special place in my heart."

Marc A. Subik, of Huntington, WV, shares that daughter Rochele will be attending pharmacy school and son Grant will be attending nursing school, both at Marshall.

1980

Robert L. Levine, of Miami, FL, is still working as chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine and Critical Care and is associate dean of Graduate Medical Education at FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami. He recently returned from a rewarding week in Huehuetenango, Guatemala, working with the U.S. Army on a medical mission with the FIU disaster-team. He and Melanie are doing great and had a fantastic vacation last year in Ireland with **Peter J. Stahl** and his wife Wendy. "We would love to see some more classmates; please come visit us in sunny Miami."



Robert L. Levine '80

Robert M. Vandemark, of Hillsborough, NC, retired in 2015 after working at Duke Medical Center and then serving for almost 20 years as chief of radiology at both the Durham, NC, and Orlando, FL, VA Medical Centers. He enjoys helping his son with his award-winning restaurant and relaxing in North Carolina with his wife, children, and two grandchildren.



Margot Fass '81 created the Frog House on the Erie Canal

1981

Margot L. Fass, of Rochester, NY, is still a practicing psychiatrist, and successful painter, author, and illustrator of the children's book, *Froggy Family's First Frolic*. She is also passionate about frogs and their essential role in planetary ecology. In 2017, she was drawn to see some of the most engaging, most endangered species in their native habitat. All she learned in trips to Ecuador and Costa Rica sealed her determination to work against amphibian extinction, both worldwide and near her home in Rochester. An opportunity to convert a small building, accessible from the towpath on the famed Erie Canal, allowed her to open A Frog House, a center for education, entertainment, and exploration of local frog habitats and their residents, and defense of local wetlands from heedless development. On April 27, 2019, she initiated a regional celebration of the 11th International Save the Frogs Day, to teach about impending extinctions and ways to turn them around. The celebration has already led local leaders to vow protection for a sizeable wetland region.

1982

Alan J. Goodman, of New York, NY, and **Catherine M. Vernon '87**, met up for their annual winter vacation in the sun, this time in Aruba.



Catherine M. Vernon '87 with Alan J. Goodman '82

Alan T. Lefor, of Utsunomiya, Japan, and his wife recently welcomed their granddaughter, Mikoto. In traditional Japanese style, their daughter and granddaughter are living with them. He has decided to get another PhD and is enrolling at the University of Tokyo in April for a doctorate in bioengineering. Meanwhile, he and his son recently completed a long-awaited tour of Russia. "It is good to be busy," he writes.

CLASS NOTES

1983

Michael A. Norko, of Durham, CT, became the editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* in January 2019.

Darryl A. Zuckerman, of Olivette, MO, was appointed chair of the American Board of Radiology IR/DR oral exam committee. He will be moving to Connecticut, having accepted a position at Yale New Haven Hospital.



Gary J. Drillings '85 with his wife Nancy, and their sons, David and Jonathan



Mary Mahoney '23, daughter of Teresa J. Karcnik-Mahoney '88

1984 Reunion September 20-21, 2019

William M. Hartrich, of Williamsville, NY, retired at the end of June as team internist for the Buffalo Sabres after 21 years. He joined **John M. Marzo** for the 1998-99 Sabres Stanley cup final.

Robert A. Zamelis, Provo, UT, is a ski racing coach for the Sundance Ski Team. His 14-year-old daughter ("Yes, I started late") Madelyn Alexandra is on the team. They had huge snow this year more than 100-inch base.

1985

Gary J. Drillings, of Montville, NJ, is happy to report that he completed the Business of Medicine MBA program from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. He is now serving as president of the medical staff at Chilton

Medical Center, part of the Atlantic Health System in New Jersey. He has been chairman of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery since 2008, and after 23 years of solo practice, recently joined North Jersey Orthopaedic Group in Wayne, NJ.

Drew Malloy, of Santa Cruz, CA, shares that daughter Maggie will enter University of California Davis in the fall as a member of the school's Division I swim team. "Go Aggies!"

1986

Shelley R. Berson, of Nyack, NY, continues to work as a solo otolaryngologist who merges sleep medicine and allergy data to create unique form-function treatment plans. "Publication #2 underway about REM sleep and allergy," she writes.



Claire Bolon-Speck '88 and daughter Emily Speck '23

1988

Claire Bolon-Speck, of Newbury, VT, is excited that daughter Emily Speck will start medical school at Upstate in August. "Emily is looking forward to her new adventure in Syracuse and we are looking forward to visiting her there!" she writes.

Teresa J. Karcnik-Mahoney, of Middletown, NY, writes, "My daughter Mary graduated from Binghamton University in May, *summa cum laude* with dual degrees in chemistry and physics and will enter Upstate in August, 35 years after I started there!"

1989 Reunion September 20-21, 2019

Stephen R. Weinman, of New Paltz, NY, writes, "Greetings to my fellow classmates on the eve of our 30th reunion. From the photos I see on line, all of us have withstood the ravages of time, although if you are like me, our professional photos are from sometime in the '00s. I still have a medical center in Highland, NY, and recently invested in a device that shrinks fat cells. It actually works, and any of my classmates are free to come give it a try, especially after all the beer that will be con-



Stephen R. Weinman '89 and sons Kyle and Lucas

sumed at Reunion. Hope to see everyone there." He recently traveled to Curacao with his family, including his father, **Herbert M. Weinman '65**. His 15-year-old and 13-year-old became certified scuba divers this spring and they all got to hang out with a new friend.

1991

Rosalind S. Odin, of Manlius, NY, and **Valerie Newman** went on their yearly wine tasting trip with their husbands in Sonoma, CA, this past April. Val is a neonatologist in Portland, OR, and Roz is a pediatrician in Syracuse. "So great to see each other!"



Val Newman '91 and Roz Odin '91 in Sonoma, CA.

1993

Stephen Kirsch, of Scarborough, MA, received a master's degree in public health from the University Southern Maine Muskie School of Public Service in May 2018. His capstone research focused on the use of Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution (OEND) and he remains interested in continuing to impact the opioid epidemic clinical care and public health initiatives at the national, state, and the community level."



Stephen Kirsch '93

1994 Reunion

September 20•21, 2019

1998

Felice A. Caldarella, of Flemington, NJ, was elected vice president of the American Association of Endocrinologists (AAE) at the AAE 28th Annual Scientific and Clinical Congress in Los Angeles on May 3. He is a practicing endocrinologist at the Center for Endocrine Health and has been a member of the AAE since 2001.



Ron Elfenbein '00 with his EyeBox

Tamara A. Prull, of Canandaigua, NY, shares the good news of her second child, Mackenzie Makovec, born on February 11, 2019, who joins big sister Alison, age five. She is still practicing at Finger Lakes Health and enjoying life. "Wishing all of my classmates the best!" she writes.

1999 Reunion

September 20•21, 2019

2000

Ron Elfenbein, of Arnold, MD, opened Chesapeake Urgent Care in Gambrills, MD, in 2016. He has the world's only FDA- approved no-baseline-required concussion testing machine, the EyeBox. Patients watch a movie for 3.5 minutes and the machine can rule in or out a concussion. His facility is one of only two places in the world that has access to this technology. He recently had his fourth child, son Zac, born December 5, 2018. Son Alex, age 11, made the state U.S. Olympic development

team; Haley, age 10, finished eighth overall for level four gymnastics in the state, seven for bars and sixth for beam. "Everyone is happy and healthy!" he writes.

2002

Letitia E. Hillsman, of Lithonia, GA, sends greetings from Atlanta. "I hope that all is well with the SUNY Upstate Medical University class of 2002."



Letitia E. Hillsman '02 in Berlin, Germany



Would you have an interest in taking a trip with a group of fellow Alumni, if the Medical Alumni Foundation partnered with a tour operator and offered a trip to locations such as Italy, Ireland or Spain? Please email medalum@upstate.edu if you are interested.

CLASS NOTES

2004 Reunion

September 20•21, 2019

Michael S. Curtis, is a plastic surgeon at Mercy Clinic St. Louis, where he was recently named as section chair of plastic surgery. He and Michelle, along with Petra (eight) and AJ (two) live in Chesterfield, MO.

2005

Rachel M. Pessah-Pollack, of Roslyn Heights, NY, was reelected to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologist's (AACE) Board of Directors for a three-year term.

2006

Matthew H. Grant, of Branford, CT, and his wife, Joanna Radin, PhD, welcomed their son Raphael on March 6, 2019. Matt is an adult infectious diseases specialist at the Yale Transplant Center and Joanna is a historian at the Yale School of Medicine.

Andrew K. Lau, of Scarsdale, NY, started a new position on February 1 as chairman of anesthesiology and pain management at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY.

2009 Reunion

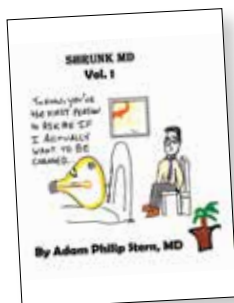
September 20•21, 2019

Greggy D. Laroche, of Ocala, FL, was married on May 26, 2018, to his best friend, Imhabibi Akojie. She gave birth to their handsome boy, Immanuel Wellington Laroche, on April 10, 2019.

Darrick May, of Boulder, CO, completed a research fellowship at Johns Hopkins, where he was investigating the therapeutic potential of psilocybin. He moved to Boulder to further his pursuit of providing psychedelic-assisted psychotherapy. He is currently a sub-investigator and therapist on a phase-three study of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and administers ketamine-assisted therapy in his private practice.

2010

Adam P. Stern, of Newtonville, MA, released his first book of cartoons, which take an acerbic look at modern medical and psychiatric practice. The book, *Shrunk MD*, is available on Amazon in paperback and Kindle formats. All royalties will be donated to KC Cure, a grassroots organization devoted to funding cutting-edge kidney cancer research.



2011

Alice S. Y. Shen became active-duty general surgeon in the Navy in October 2018. She is currently stationed at Twentynine Palms, CA, at a marine base serving military personnel and family. Next stop, Okinawa, Japan.

2012

David Lebowitz, of Orlando, FL, was appointed program director of the University of Central Florida/HCA GME Consortium Emergency Medicine Residency of Greater Orlando. He is very excited about this new role and continues as co-director of the medical informatics longitudinal curriculum for medical students.

2013

Catherine M. Dickinson, of Pawtucket, RI, completed her residency in general surgery at Brown University/RIH in June. She will be stationed in Naples, Italy, as a general surgeon for the Navy for the next two years. Her husband Ryan, and children Amelia, Joseph, and Michelina, are all looking forward to the journey.

John T. Quaresima, of Queensbury, NY, and wife, Jennie, welcomed their fourth child on March 11. Benjamin Davis was excited to meet his sisters: Amelia Jean, Eliza Dolores, and Izabella Brady. John works as a family physician at Hudson Headwaters Health

Network in Glens Falls, NY, along with his brother, **Mark A. Quaresima**, and many other proud Upstate grads."

2014 Reunion

September 20•21, 2019

Anthony J. Chiaravalloti, of West Hartford, CT, is excited to announce that after completing his dermatology residency and fellowship in Mohs micrographic surgery at University of Connecticut, he is coming home to practice in Syracuse. He has joined fellow alumnus, **Jeffrey R. LaDuca '98** at Reflections Dermatology and will be practicing medical dermatology and Mohs surgery at their East Syracuse office.

Nicole A. Zimmerman Keefe, of Charlottesville, VA, published the first textbook as lead editor on interventional radiology catered towards medical students and residents. At almost 600 pages, *IR Playbook* has sold nearly 1,000 copies in the first eight months available, filling a much-needed vacancy in IR education after the advent of the IR residency.



Nicole A. Zimmerman Keefe '14 with *IR Playbook* at the 2019 Society of Interventional Radiology Conference



Matthew H. Grant '06, Joanna Radin, PhD, and son Raphael



Greggy D. Laroche '09 and family

CHRISTINE YANG FINNIN, MD '14

Skin Specialist

Early in her medical education, Christine Yang Finnin, MD '14, found herself fascinated by lectures on the skin and slides of skin lesions. "I'm a very visual person and found them interesting to look at," she recalls. "I was interested in how the skin reflects a lot of what is going on internally."

With no academic department of dermatology at Upstate, Dr. Finnin knew she'd have to be proactive if she wanted to pursue the competitive specialty. The summer after her first year, she participated in an endocrinology research project on polycystic ovary syndrome that looked at hirsutism and acne. She spent time shadowing in the local office of clinical faculty members Ramsay Farah, MD '95, and Joyce Farah, MD '01. Although she considered radiology and psychiatry, by the time third-year clinical rotations were complete, Finnin was set on dermatology, securing away rotations at Columbia University, University of California-Irvine, and Georgetown.

Those efforts paid off. Finnin completed her residency in dermatology at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center in Manhattan in June 2018 and is now the sole clinician and medical director at Integrated Dermatology in Latham, New York.

Integrated Dermatology is the largest independent dermatology practice in the United States and had recently acquired the Schenectady-area practice before bringing Finnin on board. "It's exciting to be the first Integrated Dermatology practice in New York State and I believe our patients will benefit from access to the best clinical care available," she says.

The location was a key draw. During her residency, Finnin was married to Dan Finnin, MD '15, who had been a year behind her at Upstate. He was in the Navy, and after completing his intern year, was assigned to the Navy clinic in Saratoga Springs, New York, serving as the only general practitioner for military personnel in the area.

"We'd been living apart, so finding this opportunity in the Capital Region was perfect," Finnin says.

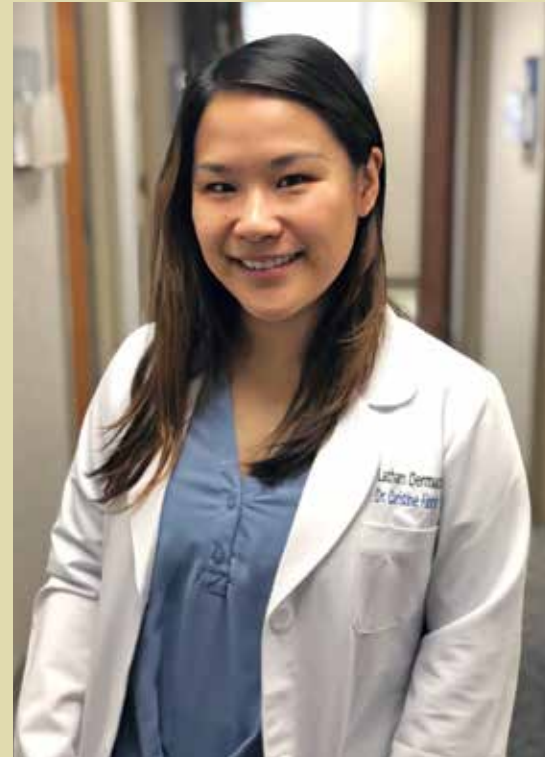
In February, the couple welcomed their first child, a baby girl, and in July, Dan began an emergency medicine residency at Albany Medical Center.

At Finnin's new practice, her focus is on medical dermatology, serving a population that is largely older and Caucasian and at high risk for skin cancer. "That's the bread and butter of what I do every day, but what I love about dermatology is the variety. You get to do a lot of different things—aesthetics, procedures, pediatrics," she says.

Finnin says she feels well prepared for solo practice by her residency at Columbia, which attracted complex patients from all over the world. "We had a very busy consult service and saw many immune-compromised patients, whether from cancer, transplant, or HIV," she says.

During her last year of residency, Finnin spent a month in Hue, Vietnam, where she served as an attending physician at a clinic with no formally trained dermatologist, both seeing patients and training medical students and other physicians. "It was really interesting to practice in a place that was resource poor yet still try to provide good care," she says. "I was impressed with what they were able to do with such few resources."

Finnin's advice to aspiring dermatologists? "It's best if you can determine that interest sooner rather than later," she says. "If you have any inkling that's the path you want, try to get involved with some kind of related research and find a dermatologist you can shadow," she says. "Study hard and get as many honors in your rotations as you can. Score well on Step 1. Even though a lot of programs say they don't have a score cut off, they probably do, even unofficially."



Christine Yang Finnin, MD '14

Finnin says she's still attracted to the visual aspect of her work. "There's an immediate gratification to being able to look at something and identify what it is," she says.

But she says the greatest benefit is the variety of opportunity her specialty provides. "There's so many different subspecialties you can focus on," she says. "I like doing a little of everything. But it's so early in my career, we'll see how it's going to evolve."

—Renée Gearhart Levy

CLASS NOTES

2016

Kevin M. Albanese, of Manlius, NY, is engaged to **Gabriela Palacio**.

Matthew J. Cortese, of Cincinnati, OH, announces the birth of son Theodore Michael Cortese on April 20.



Theodore Michael Cortese

Andrew J. Nastro, of New York, NY, gives a shout out to the class of 2016. "You are all doing fantastic things and making me proud!" he writes.

Danielle S. Wallace, of Rochester, NY, says there was an Upstate mini-reunion at the recent APDIM Chief Residents Meeting in Philadelphia, PA. "Six members of the class of 2016 attended the conference, as we will all be serving as chief residents in internal medicine at our respective programs for the coming academic year," she writes.



Left to right: Ryann Quinn (Northwell), Cate White (SUNY Upstate), Junaid Habibullah (Northwell), Tim Kuchera (Thomas Jefferson), Danielle Wallace (University of Rochester) and Peter Edmonds (Vanderbilt). Not pictured is Ellie Garbade who will be serving as a chief resident at the University of Rochester.



Sarah J. Lopez '17, Kristine M. Faulkham '17, and Olivia L. Yost '17

2017

Kristine M. Faulkham, of West Hartford, CT, met up with classmates, **Sarah J. Lopez** and **Olivia L. Yost** at the AAFP Chief Resident Conference. She and Sarah are chief residents at University of Connecticut and Olivia is a chief resident at University of Michigan.

House Staff

John M. Barry, HS '66, of Portland, OR, received the William P. Didusch Art Award at the American Urological Association Annual Meeting in Chicago on May 6.

John R. Iacovino, HS '69, practiced pulmonary diseases and critical care in Norwalk, CT, for 10 years. Sensing the impending doom of office-based private practice, he entered the life insurance industry and ultimately became vice president, chief medical director of underwriting at the New York Life Insurance Company in New York City. He was president of the American Academy of

Insurance Medicine and received their Distinguished Physician Award and the W. John Elder Award for his numerous publications on life expectancy of medical conditions in the *Journal of Insurance Medicine*. He retired in 2004 and joined Fasano Associates in Washington, DC. His responsibilities include medical/actuarial research and estimation of life expectancy for various insurance products. He lives in Wallace, NC, with his wife Anita.

Padala Reddy, HS '73, of Wichita, KS, was on a recent flight from Dallas to Dubai on his way to Hyderabad, India, for his medical class reunion, when a passenger exited from the restroom and became unconscious. After a flight attendant called for help, Reddy checked for his pulse, and not detecting any, immediately started CPR by chest compressions. In a minute or two the passenger started waking up and his pulse and blood pressure were normal. The flight attendants and passenger thanked him, and as

a token of appreciation, the airline, Emirates, awarded him 5,000 miles.

Stephen A. Albanese, HS '85, of Manlius, NY, chairman of Upstate Medical University Department of Orthopedic Surgery, was elected president of the Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America (POSNA) at the organization's annual meeting in May 2019. POSNA is a professional society of more than 1,400 surgeons, physicians, and allied health professionals dedicated to improving the care of children with musculoskeletal disorders. He has also served as president of the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery (2013-2014). Albanese is professor of orthopedic surgery and has been department chair and residency program director at Upstate since 2000.



Stephen A. Albanese, MD, HS '85

Rohit Jain, HS '12, is an assistant professor of endocrinology at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

I N M E M O R I A M

1942

ROBERT N. JACKSON, of Chester, VT, died September 10, 2014. After receiving his medical degree, he joined the U.S. Army, where he served as a major in Egypt at the conclusion of World War II. He completed his surgical residency at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in White River Junction and May Hitchcock Memorial Hospital in Hanover. Dr. Jackson was a surgeon at Springfield Hospital for 40 years. He was survived by his daughter, Joan Jackson-O'Brien; six grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

1947

LYNNE T. GREENE, of Baltimore, MD, died May 5. Dr. Greene was part of the World War II "V6" program, which accelerated college and medical school into six years. He interned at Highland Hospital in Rochester, NY, and was a resident in general internal medicine at St. Luke's Hospital in Newburgh, NY. He served a number of years in the U.S. Navy, with duty stations that included the marine training base at Paris Island, SC. After a decade of general practice, he completed a residency in anesthesiology at St. Albans Naval Hospital in Queens, NY, and joined the faculty of anesthesia at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center, where he was associate clinical professor of anesthesiology and headed up the residency program. In 1972, he left academic medicine for private practice of anesthesia at Tompkins County Hospital in Ithaca, NY, where he remained until his retirement in 1987. He was survived by his four children; seven grandchildren; and eight great grandchildren.

1954

LAURA Z. (ODIAN) PAPAZIAN, of Smithfield, RI, died July 14, 2018. Dr. Papazian was survived by her two daughters, Lisa and Nancy; and one grandson.

1955

SPYROS PETER ANGELOS, of Plattsburgh, NY, died October 16, 2018. Dr. Angelos interned at Bellevue Hospital in New York City and completed his surgical training as a fellow in general surgery at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. He served in the U.S. Air Force at Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, ME, before returning to Plattsburgh to practice

general surgery at CVPH Medical Center until his retirement in 1997. He was survived by his wife, Mina; his daughter, Anna; sons Peter, John and Stephen; and seven grandchildren.

1958

ALLEN S. GOLDMAN, of Camden, ME, died April 9, 2018. He was survived by his wife, Rachel Bok-Goldman.

1959

SHELDON P. BRAVERMAN, of San Antonio, TX, died November 6, 2018. Dr. Braverman opened a private practice in ophthalmology in Baltimore after a surgical internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital and a fellowship in retina surgery at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia. After one year of practice, he served as captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and Chief of Ophthalmology at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. After two years of military service, he started his private practice in downtown San Antonio, where he was the first retina surgeon in South Texas. Braverman was always on the cutting edge of ophthalmology and a skilled surgeon. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgery and past president of the San Antonio Ophthalmology Society. He was survived by his two sons, Richard and Stuart; daughter Susan; and seven grandchildren.

1960

JOSEPH R. BIANCHINE, of McLean, VA, died March 3. Dr. Bianchine had extensive research experience in the pharmaceutical management of Parkinson's and other neurological diseases. He held senior medical school faculty positions at The Ohio State University, Johns Hopkins University, and Texas Tech University, where he founded the Parkinson's Disease Research Institute. He was also instrumental in the approval of more than 15 new drug applications with the FDA. He was survived by his son, Peter; daughter Christine; and two grandchildren.

1964

DONALD R. BIRNBAUM, of Delray Beach, FL, died April 12. Dr. Birnbaum was survived by his wife, Benjie, and other family members.

1965

TERRENCE M. O'NEILL, of Sun City Center, FL, died March 27, 2018. Dr. O'Neill practiced obstetrics and gynecology in Springfield, MA, from 1970 to 1999. He held numerous medical hospital appointments as well as hospital organizational responsibilities. He was civic and politically active, holding many elected and appointed positions in West Springfield, MA, and in Vermont. O'Neill was survived by his wife, Roberta; daughter Darcy; sons Sean and Devin; and nine grandchildren.

1969

JOHN KRAWCHENKO, of Naples, FL, died October 9, 2018. Dr. Krawchenko served in the Army and achieved the rank of major. He completed his residency in neurosurgery at Upstate and practiced in Syracuse prior to opening his practice in Watertown, NY. He cared for patients in Watertown and the surrounding North Country for more than 30 years. Krawchenko was survived by his wife, Joan; daughter Kara; and two grandsons.

1973

BLANCHE A. BORZELL, of Watkins Glen, NY, died February 9. After a residency in family medicine, she opened her practice in Watkins Glen. She was also a coroner for the county for more than 30 years, serving as chief coroner for more than 20. She served on the Board of Directors and as first vice president of NYSACCME, as a Diplomat of the American Board of Family Medicine, and a clinical associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine at Upstate. Borzell was survived by her husband, Jim Robertson; daughter Blanche; son James; and five grandchildren.

IN MEMORIAM

1977

MICHAEL E. BERLOW, of Lakewood Ranch, FL, died February 25. Dr. Berlow completed his residency in radiology at Upstate. He held an MBA from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Berlow practiced radiology in Syracuse, Albany, and Rochester, NY; Cleveland, OH; and Inverness, FL. He was survived by his wife, Judy, and daughters, Jessica and Rebecca.

1985

BRIAN P. SORRENTINO, of Cordova, TN, died November 16, 2018. Dr. Sorrentino was a physician/scientist at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. He was director of the Experimental Hematology Division and held the Wall Street Committee Endowed Chair in bone marrow transplant research. He worked at St. Jude for 25 years. Most recently, he conducted research to improve the immune systems of infants with X-linked severe combined immunodeficiency. Sorrentino was survived by his wife, Suzanne; son Joseph; daughter Emily; and a granddaughter.

1986

ROBERT D. RAKOV, of College Station, TX, died January 17, 2019. Dr. Rakov served in the U.S. Air Force and was an Air Traffic Controller for four years before entering Cornell University. After receiving his medical degree he served in the Air Force as a flight surgeon in the U.S., Korea and Japan, and left with rank of Major. He completed a fellowship in rural medicine and obstetrics at Tacoma Family Medicine. He settled in Snyder, Texas where he practiced family medicine for 20 years in Snyder and Lamesa. In 2017, he accepted the position of director of peer review and assistant clinical professor at Texas A & M University. Dr. Rakov was survived by his wife, Theresa; son, Alek; daughter Emily; and his father Dr. Robert Rakov.

1990

CLAYTON D. HARRO, of Owings Mills, MD, died November 1, 2014. Dr. Harro served as a respected leader in vaccine development at The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. Over the course of his career, his teams did pioneering work on HPV vaccines and more than 70 NIH and

industry sponsored trials. He also directed the Enteric Vaccine Evaluation Unit at the Center for Immunizations Research, overseeing the development and evaluation of enteric vaccines for traveler's diarrhea. Harro was survived by his wife, Elizabeth, and three sons.

Residents

ANITA E. FALLA, HS '53, of Millburn, NJ, died April 20, 2018. In 1954, Dr. Falla began her career as a pediatric surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital. From 1955 to 1960 she was a surgeon at Northwestern University Medical Center in Chicago and Buffalo Children's Hospital in New York. From 1960 to 1997, Falla practiced at Children's Hospital in Newark, NJ, becoming the first woman pediatric surgeon in New Jersey. At 80, she completed her uninterrupted career as a pediatric surgeon at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Newark and Livingston, NJ. She was survived by her brother, Emil S. Falla; nieces, and nephews.

JOSEPH G. HOLLOWELL, JR., of Atlanta, GA, died June 12, 2010. Dr. Hollowell was a captain in the U.S. Air Force from 1959 to 1961. He was associate professor of pediatrics at the Medical College of Georgia from 1963 to 1970, and also at Kansas University Medical Center from 1970 to 1979; director of Kansas Special Health Services from 1977 to 1982; director of the division of health for Kansas Department of Health and Environment from 1979 to 1985; associate professor of pediatrics and director of developmental disabilities from 1985 to 1990; chief of developmental disabilities for the Centers for Disease Control from 1990 to 1995; chief of environmental health services for Centers for Disease Control from 1995 to 2000; and clinical professor of pediatrics at Kansas University Medical Center from 2001 to 2007. Hollowell was survived by his wife, Emily; son Joseph; daughters Kyra, Susan, Barbara, Edith and Janet; and 10 grandchildren.

JOHN E. KELLY, JR., HS '58, of Skaneateles, NY, died March 15. Following his medical degree from the University of Maryland and initial internships and residency in Baltimore, he received a commission as an officer in the Navy. He was promoted to Lt. Commander, and completed his naval service in 1963. He returned to Syracuse, where he established his practice in internal medicine and general surgery and practiced until his retirement. Dr. Kelly is survived by his children, Chris, AJ, Jennifer, Maggie, and Terry; six grandchildren; and one great-grandson.

DAVID G. MORGAN, HS '75, of Spokane, WA, died June 28, 2018. Dr. Morgan began a solo pediatric practice in Spokane, WA, in 1981, which continued to flourish and serve the community for 37 years. He retired December 2017. He was survived by his wife, Christine; children Emily, Fletcher, Ann, Michael and Elizabeth; stepchildren Jennifer, Elizabeth, Claire, and Joel; and seven grandchildren.

DANIEL I. PALANT, of Lexington, MA, died August 18, 2018. Dr. Palant resided and practiced pediatric medicine in Lexington, MA. Known as "Dr. Dan," his life was built around caring for children and everyone he came into contact with. He was a pediatrician and chief of professional services at the 7206 USAF Dispensary in Athens, Greece, for four years, receiving the United States Air Force Commendation Medal for Outstanding Service. He was survived by his wife, Barbara; sons William and Jonathan; daughter Stefanie; and two grandchildren.

ROBERT L. SCHEER, of Tully, NY, died March 15. Dr. Scheer entered the U.S. Army in 1945 and served in Germany, France, and North Africa as a medical technician. While in the Army, he worked with a doctor who helped shape his career choice. Scheer entered private practice in Syracuse, specializing in nephrology. He was instrumental in introducing kidney dialysis and transplantation in Central New York. He also served as the editor of the *Onondaga County Medical Society Journal*. As a clinical instructor at Upstate, he helped train generations of medical students, many now practicing in the Syracuse area. Scheer was the founder and medical director of the first dialysis unit in Central New York at St. Joseph's Hospital. His practice grew to include several nephrologists and served hundreds of patients annually from around the region. After retiring from active practice he continued to serve patients as the administrator of the dialysis unit. Scheer was survived by his children, David, Lisa, Tony, and Bill; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

GEORGE C. SCHUSSLER, of New York, NY, died June 27, 2018. Dr. Schussler was recognized for his contributions to the understanding of Thyroxine-binding proteins and the Euthyroid Sick Syndrome. He was survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren.

KENDRICK A. SEARS, of Jamesville, NY, died March 13. Dr. Sears was an orthopedic surgeon and served many community groups, including the Office of Professional Medical Conduct for New York State, which he chaired for several years. He was survived by his wife, Gracia; four sons; and six grandchildren.



Medical School Advisement Sessions

The Upstate College of Medicine Office of Admissions offers general information sessions for those interested in applying or reapplying to the College of Medicine. The small group sessions are held on the first Tuesday of each month (unless it should fall on a holiday, in which case it will be the second Tuesday) at 11 a.m. in Weiskotten Hall room 1213.

Details on the application and screening process will be discussed and potential applicants will have the opportunity to ask questions, as well as to speak one-on-one with an admissions advisor about their application if they desire.

Those who have already submitted an application that is pending a review and decision are not eligible to attend.



For more information, call 315-464-4570, or visit <https://engage.upstate.edu/portal/com-info>

UPSTATE MEDICAL ALUMNI FOUNDATION

SUNY Upstate Medical University
Setnor Academic Building, Suite 1510
750 E. Adams St.
Syracuse, New York 13210

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