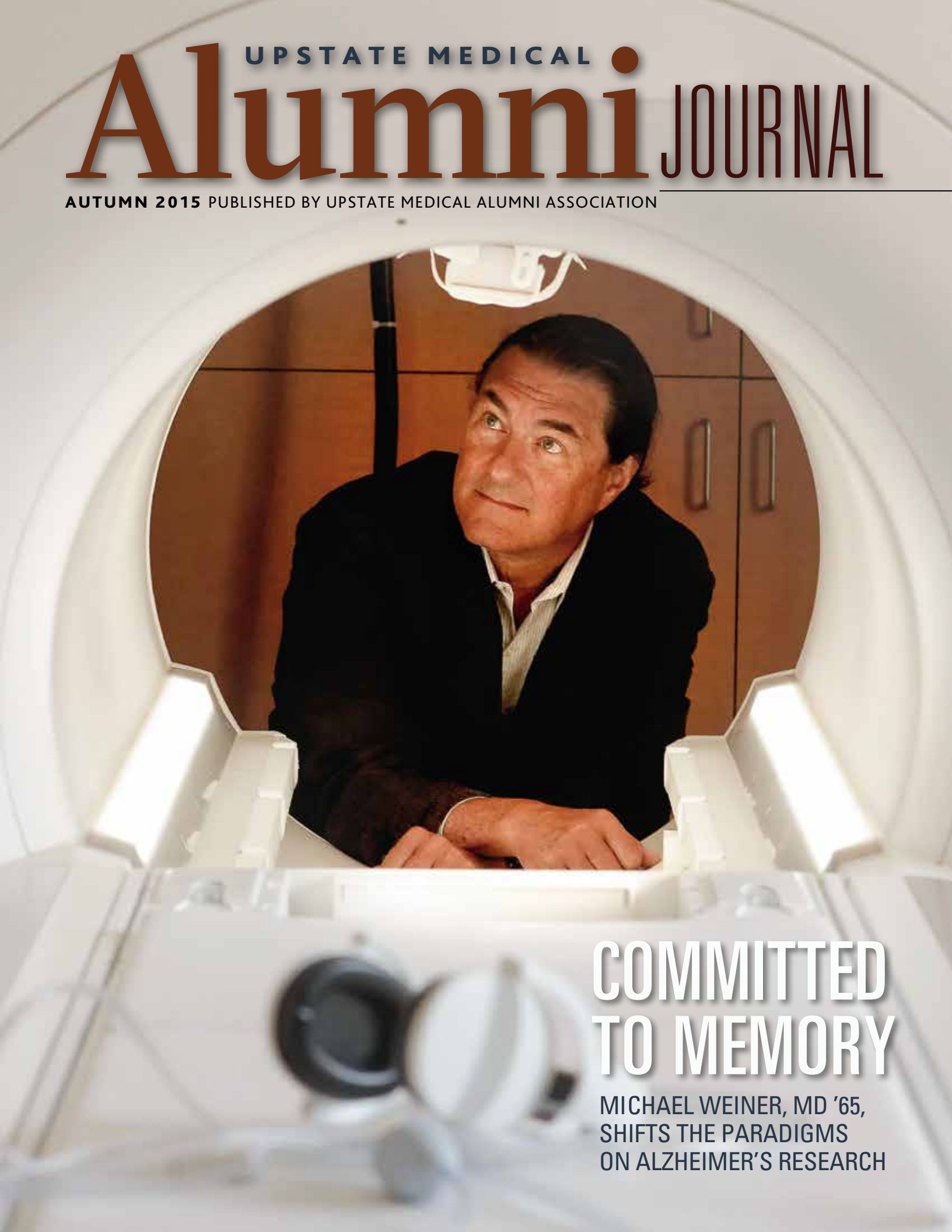


UPSTATE MEDICAL

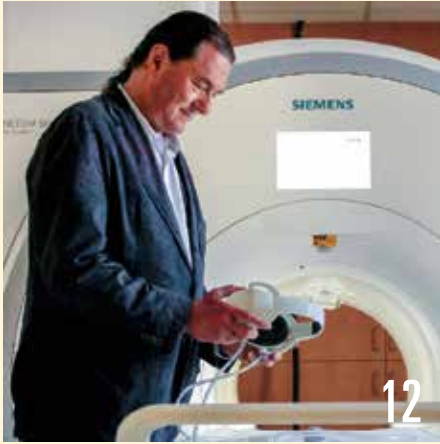
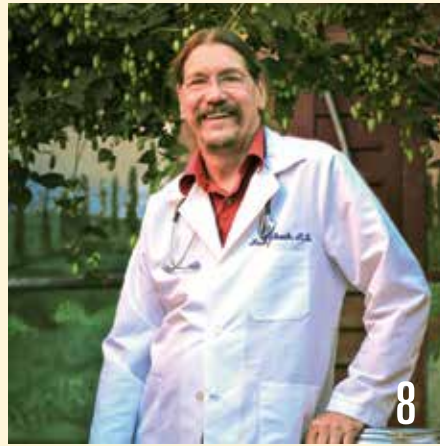
# Alumni JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2015 PUBLISHED BY UPSTATE MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## COMMITTED TO MEMORY

MICHAEL WEINER, MD '65,  
SHIFTS THE PARADIGMS  
ON ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH



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# UPSTATE MEDICAL Alumni JOURNAL

**AUTUMN 2015 ISSUE**  
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**ON THE COVER:** Photo of Michael Weiner, MD '65, by Michael Macor, San Francisco Chronicle, *Polaris*

## You Spoke. We Listened.

**IN CONJUNCTION WITH** the distribution of our Spring 2015 issue, we conducted our first-ever readership survey of the Upstate Medical *Alumni Journal*. The magazine goes to a broad audience—alumni, former house staff, parents and friends—and we wanted to assess to what extent the publication was valued and being read.

The results were gratifying, with overwhelmingly positive feedback. Almost all respondents read every issue and stated the content is easy to read, with a good blend of campus activities and alumni news. Most pointed to the feature articles and Class Notes as the top reasons they read, and complimented the visual design. Some of you offered constructive criticism, which we will keep in mind as we plan future issues.

Overwhelmingly, you like receiving a printed publication rather than electronic delivery.



*“The feature articles are always interesting and timely. I like to read about alumni accomplishments.”*

*“Makes me proud to be an alumnus.”*

*“That I read it actually says a lot!”*

### AND SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

*“The Journal has a bit of a hometown spin. Reach out to find alumni who have accomplished great things outside of Central New York.”*

*“The Journal has little content relating to former residents; that’s unfortunate and disappointing.”*

*“I would be interested in learning more about the contributions of the school to basic and clinical science.”*

### WE APPRECIATE HEARING FROM YOU.

Whether it is responding to a survey, sending a letter to the editor, or submitting a class note or other story idea, we invite you to keep in touch. (And that means you too, former house staff. We’d love to share your accomplishments.)

Email: [norcrospp@upstate.edu](mailto:norcrospp@upstate.edu) or visit us on the web at [www.upstate.edu/medalumni](http://www.upstate.edu/medalumni)

### A FEW STATISTICS:

- 81%** of respondents were alumni, with every decade represented (from the Class of 1949 to the Class of 2012)
- 94%** read every issue
- 89%** rated the visual layout as “excellent” or “very good”
- 73%** say “interesting feature articles” encouraged them to read the *Alumni Journal*
- 40%** say the *Journal* inspired them to make a gift to the College of Medicine

### THERE WAS PLENTY OF PRAISE:

*“The Spring 2015 issue was excellent in all aspects.”*

*“Very well done. It looks classy and has an attractive overall appearance.”*

*“I receive publications from many highly ranked medical schools. Our Alumni Journal compares well.”*

# Upstate Mints 156 New Physicians at Commencement 2015

Upstate Medical University Interim President Gregory L. Eastwood, MD, awarded 147 medical degrees, three MD/PhD degrees, and six MD/MPH degrees to graduates of Upstate's College of Medicine at a Commencement Ceremony on Sunday, May 17. Twenty-five Master of Public Health degrees were also conferred.

The commencement address was given by Linda Burnes Bolton, DrPH, RN, FAAN, a leader in health care policy and nursing development, who received an honorary doctor of science degree earlier that day.

Burnes Bolton is vice president for nursing, chief nursing officer, and director of Nursing Research at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles. She is one of the principal investigators at the Burns and Allen Research Institute at Cedars-Sinai. To date, she has served as the principal investigator on 10 research projects, totaling more than \$12 million, related to health services management, the evolution of nursing, and improved modes of patient care delivery.

Meenakshi Davuluri, MD '15, and Marnie Annese, MPH '15, also offered remarks.

Identical twins Matthew and Michael Siegenthaler were among the College of Medicine's graduating class.



Meghan Jacobs, MD '15, receives congratulations from Dr. Eastwood.



2015 MD/PhD graduates Eric Michael Wohlford, Samuel J. MacKenzie, and Adeseye Adekeye



Happy graduates of the Class of 2015: Kelly Cummings, Alexandra Aarons, Chelsea DeBolt, Matthew Chiarello, and Miruna Carnaru



Jasmin Sahbaz, MD '15, with his wife, Lamya, and son Yunis

## Upstate Enrolls Highest Percentage of State Residents in New York

### UPSTATE MEDICAL

University's College of Medicine had a higher percentage of New York residents for the fall 2014 incoming class than all other allopathic medical schools in the state, public or private.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, Upstate's College of Medicine received 4,412 applications for admission for the class of 2018. Of the 154 enrolled students, 94.2 percent of them were from New York State. That percentage bested SUNY Buffalo (88.9), SUNY Downstate (86.7) and SUNY Stony Brook (77.3). All four institutions have seen a rise in that percentage since the 2012 standings were released.

"The education of New York residents is directly tied to Upstate's mission," says Upstate Interim President Gregory L. Eastwood, MD.

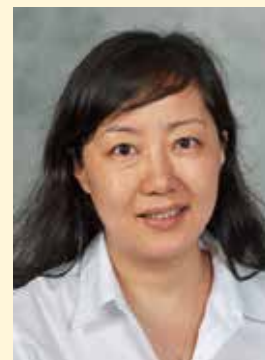
"When we commit to improving the health of our community, growing our own to be the next generation of doctors is an integral part of that process."

The ranking is a testament to the strength and reach of Upstate Medical University from Pennsylvania to the Canadian border. "The College of Medicine and our Upstate University Hospital create a multi-faceted, interactive classroom for our students," says the hospital's chief executive officer, John B. McCabe, MD '79. "That learning environment is sought after by students and produces knowledgeable, agile medical professionals."

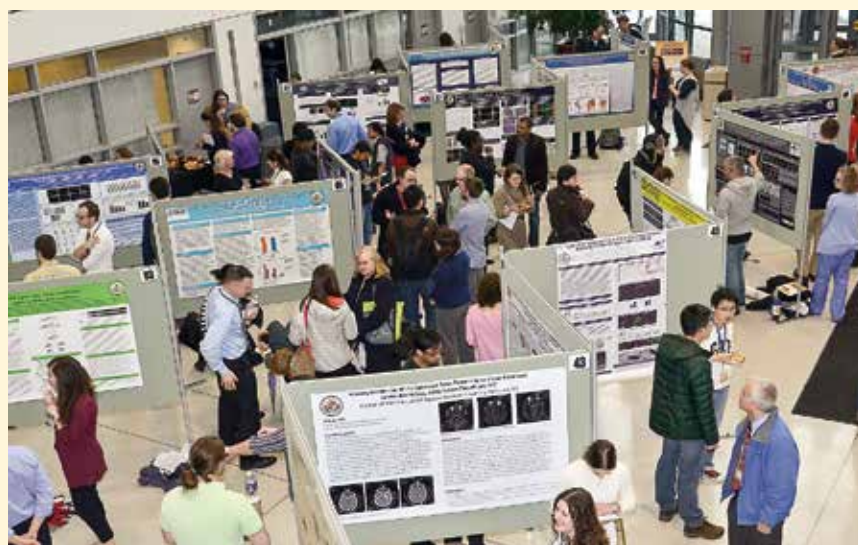
## Upstate Study Reveals New Information on Genomic Instability

Using a novel method they developed to map chromosome breaks in a model organism, the budding yeast, Upstate scientist Wenyi Feng, PhD, and her colleagues have discovered new information as to how and where chromosome fragile sites can occur in human DNA. These sites are frequently observed in cancer cells and are responsible for causing genomic rearrangements. Their findings offer a better understanding of the mechanisms of chromosome fragile sites and could lead to a breakthrough in identifying new cancer-associated genes.

The study was recently published in *Genome Research*. Dr. Feng, assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Upstate, was joined in the study by Elizabeth A. Hoffman, Andrew McCulley, Brian Haarer, PhD, and Remigiusz Arnak, PhD.

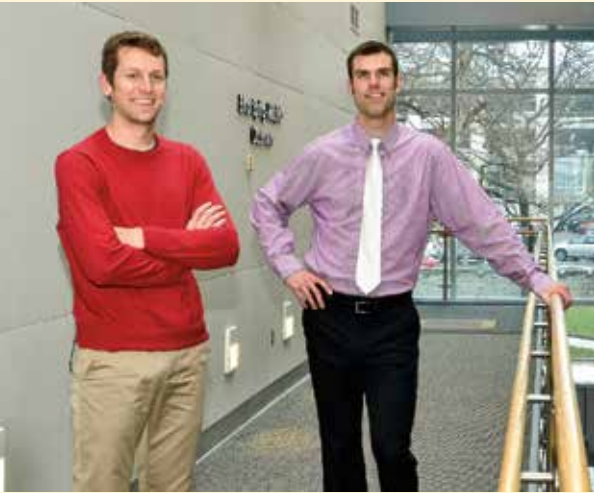


Wenyi Feng, PhD



**UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY SPOTLIGHTED RESEARCH STUDIES** by more than 100 students from its colleges of Graduate Studies, Health Professions, Medicine, and Nursing at the annual Charles R. Ross Memorial Student Research Day on March 25. In addition to a student poster session and reception, the event included a keynote address by Jeffrey A. Whitsett, MD, of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and oral presentations by students representing each college.

## Students Honored with SUNY Chancellor's Awards



Samuel MacKenzie, MD/PhD '15,  
and Thomas A. Franzon, MD '15

### RECENT GRADUATES

Thomas A. Franzon, MD '15, and Samuel John Mackenzie, MD/PhD '15, received 2015 Chancellor's Awards for Student Excellence from the State University of New York (SUNY) for their strong records of academic excellence, leadership, campus involvement and community service.

"Students receiving this award are to be commended for their excellence as role models, artists, scholar athletes,

and civic volunteers," said SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher. "Their leadership can serve as an inspiration to all SUNY students and a tremendous point of pride for the entire SUNY family."

Dr. Franzon is now a first-year resident in internal medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He was president of Upstate's chapter of

Alpha Omega Alpha, an elected Upstate representative to the Association of American Medical Colleges, and served as the recruitment chair for Upstate's Chapter of the American Medical Association. He was also lead coordinator at Upstate's Refugee Clinic, and coordinator of Upstate's Migrant Clinic, where he traveled to local farms to provide health care assessments in conjunction with the Onondaga County Health Department.

Dr. Mackenzie is currently a pediatric neurology resident at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Mackenzie holds the only student position on the American Medical Association Board of Trustees; his election was a first for Upstate in the 30 years that students have held an AMA trustee seat. He has served the AMA as a member of the Council on Medical Service; as a student delegation leader at three AMA conferences, where he helped pass numerous student and state sponsored resolutions; and as a member of the Medical Student Section's Committee for Scientific Issues. At Upstate, he served in numerous roles including the University Council, faculty search committees, the dean's search committee, and the judicial committee.

## Upstate Physicians Participate in United Nations Forum on Global Indigenous Issues

Upstate Medical University physicians Robert Silverman, MD, HS '90, and Brian Thompson, MD '91, took part in the 14th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York City in April. Dr. Silverman, professor and chair of obstetrics and gynecology, and Dr. Thompson, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and assistant dean for diversity, attended the meeting as representatives of Upstate in coordination with the American Indian Law

Alliance, a non-governmental organization in consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is an annual meeting that addresses global indigenous issues, such as human rights, land rights, water rights, economic rights, economic sustainability, social sustainability, sovereignty and health care, among others. The session resulted in an outcome statement and document that will be



Brian Thompson, MD '91

presented to the United Nations with recommendations and action items.

"It is Dr. Silverman's and my agenda to ultimately decrease health



Robert Silverman, MD, HS '90

care disparities and increase access to health care for indigenous peoples," said Thompson.



Danielle Wallace, MD '16

## Student Poem Published in JAMA

Fourth-year Upstate medical student Danielle Wallace's poem, "Malignancy of the Mind," was selected for the March 3 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Wallace '16 says the poem was inspired by a patient she saw during her internal medicine clerkship at the Binghamton Clinical Campus. She was able to spend significant time with the patient, allowing her to develop a nuanced diagnosis that was not apparent at first.

"I recognized how negatively the time crunch of inpatient medicine could impact outcomes," she says. "I was frustrated, so I wrote about it and submitted it on a whim to JAMA."

Wallace enjoys reading physician memoirs and essays, especially by Atul Gawande, Abraham Verghese and Brendan Reilly. "Any form of creative writing can be so important as an outlet for everything, good and bad, that people in the medical community experience," says Wallace, who plans on going into internal medicine, probably primary care.

## Upstate Student Receives U.S. Public Health Service Excellence Award

Upstate Medical University MD/PhD student Nicole Cifra's passion for adolescent medicine has earned her a 2015 United States Public Health Service Excellence in Public Health Award.

Cifra '16 is one of only 57 medical students nationwide to earn the USPHS award that recognizes a commitment to public health leadership.

"Many of the challenges adolescents face are deeply rooted in public health, which I didn't have an appreciation for prior to the public health curriculum," said Cifra. "In particular, I narrowed in on the field of eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder are classified as mental illnesses by the American Psychiatric Association and can be fatal."

Cifra's passion for public health has inspired involvement at national and international levels, as well as in the local community. She attended the Academy of Eating Disorders conference in Boston in April and is on an international task force with people from the Netherlands, Japan, Australia and other countries.

In Syracuse, Cifra serves on the board of Ophelia's Place, a not-for-profit that provides support for individuals and families dealing with eating disorders. She periodically leads support groups there, and advocates for the organization in the community.

Cifra said she's grateful to Dean of Student Affairs Julie White, PhD, for nominating her for the award.

## Researchers Identify Subtype of Lethal Prostate Cancer

**RESEARCHERS AT UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY** and Harvard University have linked the loss of key gene, WAVE1, to a lethal form of prostate cancer, according to a study published in the journal *Oncotarget*.

Prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in men and is responsible for 27,000 deaths annually. About 220,000 new cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed each year.

Using bioinformatic meta-analysis to compare several publicly available databases, researchers found that alterations in the WAVE1 gene were associated with a shorter period of remission in patients who were treated for prostate cancer. Strikingly, the study also showed that 22.9 percent of the prostate cancers reviewed in the database harbored the WAVE1 gene deletion.

"We observed that prostate cancer tumors contain a frequent deletion of the WAVE1 gene. What's important, though, is that this WAVE1 gene deletion occurs in metastatic and lethal cancer, thus suggesting that the WAVE1 gene loss may represent an aggressive subtype of prostate cancer which is more challenging to treat and more likely to progress," said study coauthor Leszek Kotula, MD, PhD, associate professor of urology and biochemistry and molecular biology at Upstate. "It is possible that patients who have tumors characterized by the deletion of the WAVE1 gene may benefit from earlier intervention, such as surgery or radiation therapy."

## It's a Match!

### EACH YEAR, FOURTH-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS

across the country look forward to the third week of March to learn where they will begin their medical training in their chosen specialties. At noon on March 20, supported by faculty, family, friends and the University community, Upstate students eagerly opened their white envelopes to discover how the national "Match" played out for each of them.

### THE RESULTS:

**72** medical students will enter the primary care specialties of internal medicine (25 students), pediatrics (16 students), family medicine (20 students) and obstetrics and gynecology (11 students)

**76** students will remain in New York State

**26** students will remain in Syracuse: 16 as medical residents at Upstate University Hospital and 10 as residents at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center

### STUDENTS ALSO MATCHED IN THE FOLLOWING SPECIALTIES:

Anesthesiology-5  
 Child Neurology-2  
 Emergency Medicine-15  
 General Surgery-10  
 Neurological Surgery-1  
 Ophthalmology-6  
 Orthopedic Surgery-5  
 Pathology-1  
 Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation-2  
 Psychiatry-10  
 Neurology-5  
 Radiation Oncology-1  
 Radiology-Diagnostic-7  
 Urology-1  
 Vascular Surgery-2

In addition to matching its students to programs throughout the country, Upstate University Hospital filled all of its 127 resident positions offered in this match, according to William Grant, EdD, Upstate associate dean for graduate medical education.

"We are pleased to have retained 16 of our own students in residency positions here," says Grant. "The selection of Upstate by not only our own students but others around the country and across the globe is a statement of the confidence and high esteem that new residents place in our educational programs and in Upstate."

Interested in seeing who might be coming to your area? You can find a complete list of match assignments at [medalumni.upstate.edu/match](http://medalumni.upstate.edu/match).



Elizabeth Zane, MD '15, adds her destination to the list.



Katelyn Newman (sister of Ashley Newman, MD '15) congratulates Danielle Antosh, MD '15.





Krista Tookhan, MD '15, with her sons, Cameron and Kaden.



Jamal Hajjari, MD '15 celebrates with wife Lamiae and daughter Rima.

**ON MARCH 28, FIRST-YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS** held a memorial service at Syracuse University's Hendricks Chapel to honor the memory of their cadavers, essentially, the students' first patients. The ceremony, which included poetry and music from class members as well as remarks from faculty members Dana Mhaila, MD, PhD, and Ruth Hart, MD '80, was attended by numerous family members of those who had donated their bodies to student learning. The beautiful glass mosaic pictured below was created for the occasion by first-year students Manu Arul, Nicole Li, and Benjamin Casola.



# DOC Z



WHETHER AT THE LOCAL CLINIC OR THE PUB THAT BEARS HIS NAME, MARK ZILKOSKI, MD '77, CARES FOR THE PEOPLE OF WOLF POINT, MONTANA. BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY



**O**n any given Tuesday, Mark Zilkoski, MD '77, spends his morning conducting varied surgical procedures—C-sections, appendectomies, colonoscopies, breast biopsies—at Trinity Hospital, and his afternoons seeing patients at the Listerud Rural Health Clinic. Both healthcare facilities are located in Wolf Point, Montana—population 2,600—and are part of Northeast Montana Health Services, where Dr. Zilkoski is the medical director and sole MD.

“I like the medicine I get to do here,” says the family practitioner. “I can really hone my physical exam skills and do a lot.”

Three hundred miles from the nearest big city—Billings, with 100,000 residents—Zilkoski is the go-to doc for most of the community’s needs. “If I have a patient with a neurological problem, I don’t send them to Billings straight away, I call the neurologist and talk with them about the problem. The specialists know me; they know what I can and can’t do.”

Come Tuesday evening, however, the multi-tasking Doc Z takes on a different set of responsibilities—calling the questions for Trivia Night at Doc’Z Brew Pub, the self-named establishment he opened in 2009 after developing a passion for brewing beer.

“Being a brew tender is much like being a physician—it is all about relationships and community,” says Zilkoski. “It is not just about making good beer.”

Starting a microbrewery was an unlikely undertaking for a man whose beer consumption consisted of an annual Bud Light at a Super Bowl party. “I never liked beer,” Zilkoski says.

All that changed in 2007, when he tasted his first microbrew—an Alaskan Amber—while vacationing at a ski resort. “It was really good,” he says.

With no microbrews available in Wolf Point, Zilkoski decided to try his hand at home brewing, planting hops in his backyard. Every six weeks he’d try a new recipe, inviting his friends over to drink the brew once it was ready for consumption. “We fell in love with microbrews,” says Zilkoski.

But it was a chance visit to a gas station in Lincoln, Montana, that really got him going. There, gathering dust on a shelf, was a set of glasses embossed with Montana brewery logos. “There was one from Belt, Montana, which is a town of 700. I figured if they could have a brewery, we could too.”

Zilkoski, along with his wife, Myrle, and business partner Mark Sansaver, has filled that void. In 2009, the trio launched Missouri Breaks Brewing, with Zilkoski as the brewmaster, and opened Doc’Z Pub, in an abandoned downtown building they bought at auction.

Initially, they opened and closed their doors the same day. “The customers drank us out of stock,” says Zilkoski, referring to Missouri Breaks’ five original microbrews. Two weeks later, they were back in business.

“We’ve gone from brewing five gallons at a time to 40 gallons, to 55 gallons, and now we have a 220 gallon tank and brew 180 gallons a week,” he says.

Despite that steady growth, Zilkoski stresses that Doc’Z is a pub and not a bar. “This isn’t a place where people come to drink as much as they can,” he says.

In addition to serving Rattlesnake IPA and Black Bear Brown Beer, Doc’Z also serves breakfast, lunch, desserts, coffees, and assorted other non-alcoholic drinks, including Zilkoski’s popular homemade root beer.

That’s an important distinction given Wolf Point’s location within the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. Sansaver, who holds an MBA, is also a member of the Assiniboine tribe and works for the tribal government as a grants manager. Zilkoski, a physician first, insists their establishment

**“BEING A BREW  
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MAKING GOOD  
BEER.”**

is more about community and camaraderie than about consumption.

They are aided in that by Montana law. Technically, Doc’Z is the brewery’s tasting room, and can only serve alcohol between 10 and 8 pm, with most Montana breweries only open between 4 and 8. Patrons are limited to four 12 ounce servings per visit. “This is more about people coming in for a beer or two to socialize,” says Zilkoski. Tuesday is trivia night. Wednesday is art night; patrons are invited to come in and paint while listening to local musicians who play for tips. “People come here who would never go to a regular bar,” he says.

The pub features an outdoor courtyard, where some of the hops are grown, and patrons are welcome to bring their own food to grill for dinner.

It’s also the site of many a Zilkoski family gathering. “There’s too many of us to fit almost anywhere else,” he jokes.

Inside, Doc’Z is decorated with antique medical equipment, including a lancet from the 1700s, an original gastroscope, and a 50-year-old defibrillator. “They don’t throw anything away at the hospital without checking with me first,” Zilkoski quips. The pub also displays more than 200 growlers from breweries across the United States. If someone brings in one he doesn’t have, Zilkoski will trade for a Missouri Breaks growler filled with his or her beer of choice.

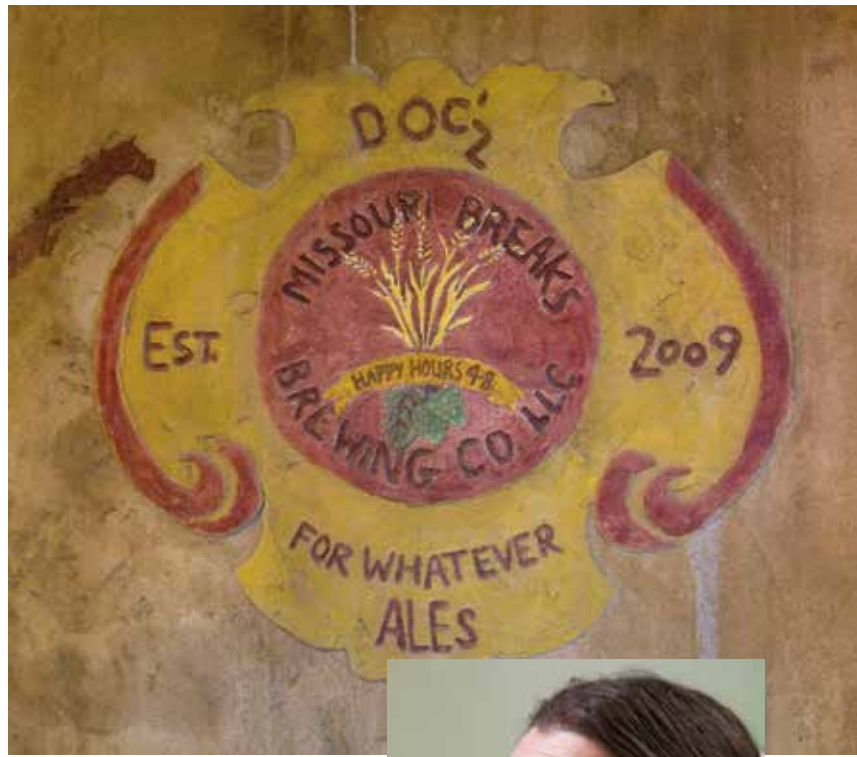
AUSTIN SMITH



Zilkoski and his wife, Myrle, have been married 38 years and have nine children.

He has a few from Central New York. Zilkoski is a Syracuse native who went to Syracuse University and Upstate Medical University before moving to Stockton, California, for his family medicine residency. Afterward, he and Myrle, by then married, moved to Wolf Point, where he spent three years working for Indian Health Services to pay off a government loan commitment. That was followed by eight years on the faculty at the Medical College of Ohio, where Zilkoski says he tried to model his teaching after his favorite Upstate professor, Robert Rohner, MD '52, resulting in several teaching awards. When Zilkoski was due for a sabbatical, he decided to forgo research and instead spend six months back at Indian Health Services in Wolf Point. That was 23 years ago.

Shortly after making their move permanent, Zilkoski took over the town's private practice,



AUSTIN SMITH

**“MY DAUGHTER IS A GREAT BREWER BUT SHE DOES NOT LIKE TO TRY ANYTHING NEW, SO IF WE’RE GOING TO DO A NEW SPECIALTY BEER, THAT’S ON ME.”**

his current situation. He and Myrle now have nine children (ranging in age from 40 to 15) and 19 grandchildren (with number 20 on the way). Two of their daughters are instrumental in running the brewery and pub—Marianne runs the day-to-day operations and Katie has taken over as brewmaster.

“My daughter is a great brewer but she does not like to try anything new, so if we’re going to do a new specialty beer, that’s on me,” says Zilkoski, who enjoys both the chemistry of the fermentation process (zymurgy) and the creativity of recipe making.

Missouri Breaks brews an annual cherry ale, thanks to 270 pounds of cherries from a friend’s orchard, hand pitted by pub volunteers who get free beer during the task. When Zilkoski wanted to introduce a pumpkin ale, a patron who owns

PROVIDED



Some of the Zilkoski clan in the brewery (above); Zilkoski with two of his grandsons (their matching shirts were unplanned).

PROVIDED



the local tree farm had special pumpkins germinated early and grown in time for Halloween, gratis for the pub. “It becomes a community thing, with people pitching in. That’s what I love most,” he says.

Relationship building is the same thing that attracted him to family medicine. And in a small town, Zilkoski knows most everyone. He says the bulk of his practice is internal medicine primary care, with the most common ailments being diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease. The area also claims the highest rate of Hepatitis C in the northwest, principally due to methamphetamine use.

The local Indian Health Services offers only clinic-based care, so anything more complicated is referred to the hospital or the Listerud Clinic, where Zilkoski is assisted by two midwives, a nurse practitioner, and a physician assistant. He also accepts medical students from around the country for clerkships, although he hasn’t had one from Upstate yet.

Clearly, his community values him as much as he does them. He was named Montana Family Physician of the Year in 2005, and in 2006 received the George Saari Humanitarian Award from the University of Washington Medical School.

Many of those relationships overlap, with patients who are pub patrons, and vice versa. A geriatrician, Zilkoski offers free beer to anyone over 85. “I have a few who take me up on it,” he says.

And his relationships spread far and wide. Although remote (Zilkoski describes the town’s location as “north of the Freeman and east of the Unabomber”), Wolf Point is both the county seat and the head of tribal politics. “People from all over the country end up here,” says Zilkoski. “When they walk into our town they would never guess there is a place like Doc’Z, which would be right at home in San Francisco or New Orleans,” he says. “We’ve developed all kinds of friendships with people from out of town and out of state.”

Although microbreweries are popping up with increasing frequency, Zilkoski maintains that many of them don’t make good beer. “We take it seriously and work hard at trying to make good beer,” he says.

Before launching the brewery, Zilkoski says he was “delusional” in thinking it might be a huge financial success. Sansaver, his partner and close friend, has muscular dystrophy, and Zilkoski thought the business might provide a safety net should he ever become disabled.

“So far, we’re not getting rich,” he says. “But we sure are having a lot of fun.” ■



PROVIDED

**Mark Zilkoski, MD '77, isn't alone in his appreciation of small-town life in the West. For 23 years, Linda Powell, MD '89, has been the solo doc in tiny Odessa, Washington.**

## HOME ON THE RANGE

**G**rowing up in Oxford, New York, **Linda Small Powell, MD '89**, looked up to her town doctor, a man who took care of the small town’s entire population and practiced into his 90s. “He was a gentle soul and a big part of the community,” she recalls.

When Dr. Powell decided to pursue medicine, his practice became her ideal. She wanted to practice family medicine in a small town, preferably in a rural area. While a medical student at Upstate, Powell traded her Syracuse assignment so she could do her clinical training in Binghamton instead. And when it came time for residency, she sought out a location

where only family medicine residencies were offered so there would be little competition for learning opportunities. “I wanted to be somewhere where you actually were able to do a lot of real doctor stuff and not the grunt work that interns often have to do,” says Powell.

She landed in Casper, Wyoming, where she had her pick of procedures to learn from and plenty of one-on-one time with faculty, plus the ability to moonlight in nearby small towns. “I gained lots of experience to be ready for rural medicine,” she says.

Powell married during residency, and her new husband’s only requirement when she began looking for a job was that their town have a golf course so he’d have something to do. When she was invited to visit Odessa, Washington, that was her first question.

Today, the Powells have a home on the golf course in Odessa, a farming community originally settled by Germans from Russia with a population of under 1,000. Powell has been medical director of the Odessa Clinic, and the town’s only full-time doctor, for 23 years. Patients range from newborns to the town’s oldest resident, who is 103. She’s diagnosed everything from Lou Gehrig’s disease to myasthenia gravis, to all kinds of cancers. “Rural medicine is a great opportunity if you like to puzzle things out, if you’re not necessarily into the latest gadget and gizmo in tech, and you like to have long-term contact with patients so that you really connect with people and know them,” she says.

Powell works four days a week, dividing her time between the town’s health clinic, 25-bed hospital, and 12-room assisted living center, all of which have government designation as “critical access” to assist with funding. She is supported by a full-time PA and a visiting doctor who takes call one weekend a month, but since neither live in town, she provides the majority of care.

“Being on call is hard, but the trade off is that small town life is easy,” says Powell, who has never second-guessed her calling. “Being in a rural area doesn’t mean we’re practicing substandard medicine; we just have to be smarter about our resources because we don’t have everything at our fingertips.” —RGL



# Committed To Memory

MICHAEL WEINER, MD '65, SHIFTS THE  
PARADIGMS ON ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH.

BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

**A**s director of the world's largest observational study of Alzheimer's disease, Michael Weiner, MD '65, could have been resting on his laurels. He'd already raised more than \$140 million for Alzheimer's research that was being shared worldwide and had enrolled more than 1,500 patients in clinical trials. But there was still no meaningful treatment for the disease.

"I'm a pretty high energy, restless person," Dr. Weiner says.

In his early 70s, when most of his peers were retired, Weiner decided to focus on what he saw as the biggest single obstacle to having an effective treatment and cure for Alzheimer's Disease: getting patients enrolled in clinical trials.

About one third of the cost of running a clinical trial comes from having to recruit patients, and many trials fail or are delayed because of it.

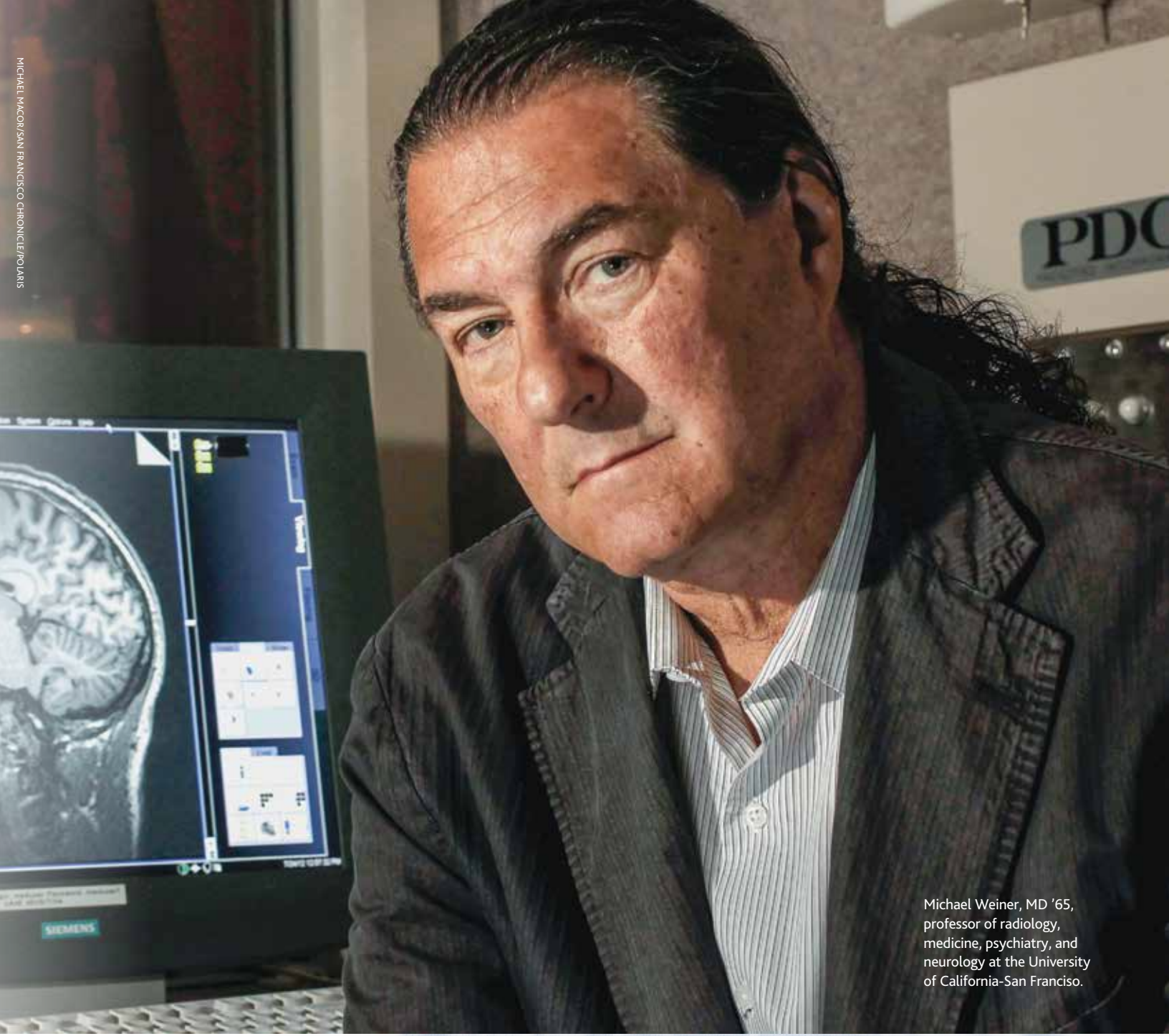
"It's kind of a dirty little secret," says Weiner, a professor of radiology, medicine, psychiatry, and neurology at University of California-San Francisco. "Most clinical trials never meet their deadlines for enrollment. And most sites that have contracts for trials don't meet their commitment for enrollment."

He's trying a 21st-century approach. In April 2014, Weiner launched the Internet-based Brain Health Registry, a website ([www.brainhealthregistry.org](http://www.brainhealthregistry.org)) that recruits volunteers to register and take brief computerized cognitive tests twice a year. Data collected from those biannual visits will help scientists track brain functions over time and match volunteers across the country with clinical trials and research studies they may qualify for, saving time and money compared to traditional recruitment methods. In its first year, the Brain Health Registry enrolled more than 22,000 subjects.

"This project aims to greatly accelerate the search for cures," says Weiner.

It's an important mission. Alzheimer's disease is one of the few major causes of death in America that is actually on the rise. Unlike many cancers, HIV/AIDS, or heart disease, Alzheimer's is the only top-10 killer without a way to prevent, cure, or even slow its progression, he says.

And unlike a disease such as cancer, where patients are diagnosed in a clinical setting and presented with treatment options that may include clinical trials, the onset



Michael Weiner, MD '65, professor of radiology, medicine, psychiatry, and neurology at the University of California-San Francisco.

“ I couldn't really be an expert in all of MRI because there were too many applications. I realized it was time for me to pick a disease. ”



of Alzheimer's often occurs over time, and once a patient has dementia, it's too late. "If you're 75 and tell your doctor you're forgetting things a little more, they'll probably tell you it's normal aging and that's the end of it. They're not going to sign you up for a clinical trial," says Weiner.

The Brain Health Registry aims to build that subject pool. Weiner's visionary goal is to dramatically accelerate and improve the diagnosis and treatment of neurological diseases in a cost effective manner by gathering an unprecedented amount of data in a single, easily-accessible location. According to him, it's the first neuroscience project to use the Internet on such a scale to advance clinical research.

But thinking big is nothing new for Weiner.

**B**ack in 2000, Weiner was using MRI to study N-acetyl aspartate (NAA), a marker of healthy nerve cells, and its relationship to predicting Alzheimer's disease.

"The field was in chaos," he recalls. "I had some interesting results, another guy had results in London, and another guy had results at Mayo Clinic. We all had different funding and we were all doing experiments in a different way with different mea-

surements. Meanwhile, the big pharmaceutical companies were clamoring for something to help them develop treatments for Alzheimer's."

Weiner had an idea. What if all the people using biomarkers to study Alzheimer's joined forces? "If we tried our different methods on the same pool of patients it would be much easier to determine what worked best," he recalls.

That little idea snowballed into the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative (ADNI). Since it began in 2004, ADNI has secured \$140 million in government, industry, and foundation support to identify biomarkers for use in clinical trials and to determine the best way to measure the treatment effects of Alzheimer's therapeutics. The unprecedented study has gathered and analyzed thousands of brain scans, genetic profiles, and biomarkers in blood and cerebrospinal fluid that are used to detect the disease at a pre-dementia stage, measure the progress of the disease, or monitor the effects of treatment.

In 2004, for example, Weiner's group reported that reduced NAA predicts development of Alzheimer's disease in mildly impaired elderly subjects. They have also demonstrated that brain blood flow is



reduced in Alzheimer's disease and in patients with mild impairment.

But Weiner is just one investigator. ADNI encompasses approximately 100 researchers, with more than 1,500 patients enrolled in clinical trials. Since its creation, the project has resulted in more than 600 publications. Even more unprecedented, all of the data produced is completely public. "It's not embargoed, it's not locked up in our labs. It's on a public website, so the companies can have access and all the investigators have access," says Weiner, principal investigator of the project. "It's been very impactful."

By creating established, standardized methods for imaging and biomarker collection and analysis, ADNI has facilitated a way for scientists to conduct cohesive research and share compatible data with one another across international borders. And due to ADNI's unique data sharing model, researchers and scientists can collaborate on projects instead of competing against one another, speeding the drug development process.

This fall, ADNI will submit a proposal for its third-round of funding, which Weiner hopes will extend the project for another five years. "One of the new exciting things in the Alzheimer's field is the ability to measure tau, which is a protein that's

involved in the destruction of nerve cells in Alzheimer's disease, by PET scan," says Weiner. "In a clinical trial you could use the change in tau to determine whether or not a treatment is effective."

There are other exciting developments as well. In March, Biogen announced successful findings in a Phase 1b trial on an antibody targeting beta amyloid proteins in the brain widely believed to contribute to Alzheimer's neurodegenerative effects, results Weiner called "astonishing. It really slowed the progressive decline in subjects, particularly at the higher dose. It supports the idea of going after amyloid in the brain and means there's hope for the future."

“ It was a real wake-up call . . . It taught me that I don't like to fail. I tell that story to the young people who come work for me. You've got to try different things and if you fail, you keep trying. And if you never fail, maybe you're not reaching out far enough. ”

Those are heady accomplishments for a guy who flunked out of medical school after his second year.

"I almost fainted when I received the letter," Weiner recalls.

He was married between his first and second years and admits to spending more attention on his new wife than his medical studies. Fortunately, after appealing to Dean Carlyle Jacobsen and the department chairs, he was given a second chance.

"It was a real wake-up call and very motivating," says Weiner. "It taught me that I don't like to fail. I tell that story to the young people who come work for me. You've got to try different things and if you fail, you keep trying. And if you never fail, maybe you're not reaching out far enough."

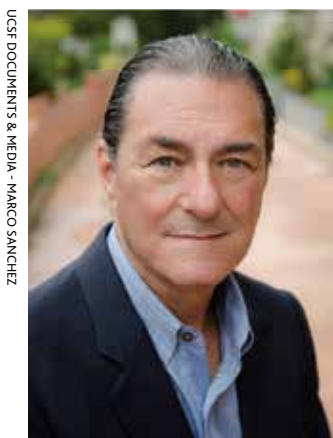
Weiner began his career as a nephrologist (he did fellowships in metabolism, nephrology, and biochemistry). In 1980, while an assistant professor at Stanford, he attended a lecture in England on nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) and biological tissues. When he came back to campus, he went over to the NMR and had the idea to stick a rat in the magnet to get signals from its kidney. "At the time, there were no published reports of anyone putting a living animal in the magnet. People were looking at perfused hearts or kidneys or muscle strips," he



Weiner is also a professional jazz pianist who has recorded two CDs.



“Ultimately what we need are prevention trials, in which we take people who are normal but at high risk and put them on treatment to prevent them from having decline in the future.”



UCSF DOCUMENTS &amp; MEDIA - MARCO SANCHEZ

recalls. “It became obvious to me that once you had magnets that were big enough, this technology was going to have huge impact.”

Excited about the possibilities, Weiner decided to veer off the conventional path to explore the new field of MRI. He moved to a joint appointment at the UCSF and the San Francisco VA, securing funds to obtain one of the very first MRI machines and established the Magnetic Resonance Unit in 1983 (which became the Center for Imaging of Neurodegenerative Diseases in 2000). “In the early days, we had to figure out how to scan different body parts,” says Weiner. “It was a great time. I had a group of young people working with me. Sometimes we’d just scan 10 subjects and write a paper on it. I had papers on liver, heart, muscle.”

But success in medicine comes with being an expert in a disease. “I couldn’t really be an expert

in all of MRI because there were too many applications,” he says. “I realized it was time for me to pick a disease.”

Weiner spent six weeks visiting the UCSF library every morning for an hour before work to read journals and books to “try and give my brain a chance to settle on something.” And then he had it.

Alzheimer’s disease.

This was 1988. Weiner was nearly 50. “I understood how science worked a little better at this point,” he says. “The key to real success in science is to spot a trend before everyone else does.”

He had lucked out with MRI and now his gut told him that Alzheimer’s would be a big field. “At that point we knew that Alzheimer’s disease was associated with amyloid plaques and tau tangles in the brain. There were families that had a lot of Alzheimer’s, so there had to be a genetic component. And they were starting to isolate those genes. Once you isolate the gene and you can make a transgenic mouse, you can use it for discovery of treatment.”

Those hunches were correct. The genetic revolution had begun, and for the last 25 years, Weiner has been on the forefront of using of MRI, PET, and blood-based biomarker methods to diagnose Alzheimer’s disease and other neurodegenerative disorders. He’s published more than 745 papers, 70 book chapters, and continues to lecture around the world.

His accolades include the William S. Middleton Award, the highest scientific honor bestowed by the Department of Veterans Affairs; the Ronald and Nancy Reagan Research Award from the Alzheim-

er's Association; and the Potamkin Award from the American Academy of Neurology and the American Brain Foundation. He's also been named a "Rock Star of Science" by the Geoffrey Beene Foundation.

And he's completely self-taught. "I never took any courses in neurology or NMR," says Weiner, who moonlights as a professional jazz pianist. "You just start reading the papers and talking to people. That's the way it is as you get older, you can't rely on the body of knowledge you retained as a student."

The Center for Neurodegenerative Disease is the largest imaging research center in the whole VA system, housing one of the biggest research programs in the world. "We also probably have the most beautiful piece of real estate of any hospital in the world, overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the Golden Gate Bridge," says Weiner of the facility that he secured funding to build a dozen years ago. Although retired from the VA, Weiner still works out of the facilities through its association with UCSF.



Weiner and his wife, Barbara, have two children: Matthew Weiner, associate dean for religious life at Princeton University; and Sara Ivanhoe, a celebrity yoga instructor in Hollywood; pictured here in the 1990s.

A couple years ago, he gave a public lecture on traumatic brain injury and Alzheimer's in veterans. Afterward, a man in the audience introduced himself and invited him to lunch. He was Kevin Shanahan, the CEO of Cummins-West, a diesel engine company.

Shanahan asked, if he could help in some way, what would Weiner want to do?

Weiner told him about this idea he had for a website that could attract a cohort of subjects and become a database for potential clinical trials. But he wasn't an Internet guy and had no idea how to go about it. Weiner left that lunch with funding for the

project, and a benefactor whose brother just happened to be a web designer.

That's how the Brain Health Registry became a reality. Volunteers provide a brief personal history and take online neuropsychological tests in an online game format. The games give the Brain Health Registry scientific team a snapshot of the participant's brain function. It's hoped that the data collected will help scientists study brains as they age, identify markers for diseases, develop better diagnostic tools to stop disease before it develops and increase the ready pool of pre-qualified clinical trial participants.

Open to anyone over 18, the registry gives brain researchers around the world a growing pool of people whom they can tap for studies not only on Alzheimer's disease, but illnesses ranging from depression and Parkinson's disease to traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"It's completely new. It's completely different. It's about 1,000 times harder than I thought it would be," says Weiner of the endeavor.

But he's more than pleased with the result. "We've enrolled 22,000 people and more than half have already come back and repeated everything," he says. "We are now working with Merck and another study to actually move people into trials. In the next few weeks, we'll actually see how many people, when asked, will actually go into a trial. It may be 1 in 5. Maybe it will be 1 in 10, or 1 in 100. We just don't know."

But the further he progresses, the more he's convinced that this is the future, particularly for Alzheimer's disease. "If you take a completely normal 73 year old, 25 percent of them have a brain full of amyloid, which means they're at high risk to develop Alzheimer's down the road," he says. "Ultimately what we need are prevention trials, in which we take people who are normal but at high risk and put them on treatment to prevent them from having decline in the future. It's one thing to take people who are demented and try to slow their rate of dementia progression, but we want to prevent them from getting demented at all." ■

For more information, visit [www.brainhealthregistry.org](http://www.brainhealthregistry.org) and [www.adni.loni.usc.edu](http://www.adni.loni.usc.edu)

## From Patient to Doctor

UPSTATE MEDICAL STUDENTS SHARE HOW EXPERIENCES AS CANCER PATIENTS SHAPED THEIR ASPIRATIONS AS FUTURE PHYSICIANS.

She was getting her required physical to begin medical studies at Upstate when the nurse practitioner felt an enlarged thyroid. A subsequent biopsy looked suspicious. The incoming student had her thyroid removed by Kara Kort, MD '92, at Upstate University Hospital, where pathologists were unsure about the results. The tissue sample was sent to a specialist in Michigan, and the day before her White Coat Ceremony, the patient learned she had thyroid cancer.

"It certainly wasn't what I expected, to begin medical school with a cancer diagnosis," she says. "It was a terrible thing but it's also been a great learning experience," she says.

Whether it's in the classroom or in a clinical setting dealing with her own care, she always has extra questions. "I always want to see the scans because I'm interested in the medicine of it," says the first-year student, who spent her winter holiday break in isolation receiving iodine ablation therapy.

"We just did the endocrine unit and I found I knew things that weren't covered in the lectures."

When the student first planned a career in medicine—before her cancer diagnosis—her dream had been to pursue pediatric surgery. Now she believes she will specialize in pediatric oncologic or endocrine surgery. "This experience has given me greater understanding and compassion for the patients I have seen because I have been in their shoes,

and even greater determination to be a great doctor," she says.

Technically, the student still has cancer, and because it's still so new, she prefers to remain anonymous. "I have family members who don't even know about it yet," she says. Although close medical school friends are aware of what she's been going through, it's not something she chooses to share widely.

"I've actually met other students at Upstate who've had cancer and I've talked about the experience with them," she says.

One of those is Katie Iles '18, who was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia at the age of three. "My parents tell me I had been lethargic and was getting a lot of bruises, but I don't remember much of the illness itself," she says.

She does remember her year of chemotherapy, of losing her hair, feeling sick, and not being able to play outside, and the many follow up visits in the years to come.

"For a long time, I had a really negative association with doctors," she says. But as she matured, that changed. "I came to appreciate that it was the care and perseverance of many health care providers as I was growing up that helped keep me healthy and here today," she says.

Medicine played such a significant role in her own life that she could see the potential for making the same impact in the lives of others. As a high school student, she began volunteering and shadowing in health care settings,

experiences that confirmed her interest in medicine.

Now a first-year student at Upstate, that interest is reaffirmed almost every day. "Every time we start a new unit or shadow a different doctor, I think, 'Now that's interesting,'" she says. "There's so many fields that interest me, it's hard to narrow it down."

She may have a better sense of her interests after a volunteer medical trip to Haiti this summer, an opportunity she received as one of two national recipients of the Welch Allyn Ripple Effect Award. Her submission video explained how her experience as a cancer patient inspired her to help others through medicine. "The ripple is your impact on others," she explains.

Second-year student Katie Howe '17 was similarly impacted by her own childhood experience with cancer. Diagnosed with a Stage 2 neuroblastoma in her abdomen at only five months, Howe underwent emergency surgery followed by six months of chemotherapy. Being an infant, she doesn't remember a thing. "If it weren't for my scars and all the photos showing that I didn't have hair until I was two years old, I'd think my parents made the whole thing up," she says. "It was clearly a much more difficult experience on them."

Howe comes from a family of physicians; her mother is Karen Heitzman, MD '83, and Howe is the ninth member of the Heitzman clan to attend Upstate. So it's natural that

people assume it's the family legacy that drew her into medicine.

But Howe says it's quite the opposite. "As a kid, I saw how hard my mother worked, how she always had responsibilities, and honestly, it seemed kind of awful," she says.

But as she got older, she felt a nagging sense of duty to pay it forward and help other sick kids and their families.

In college she spent two summers shadowing Upstate physicians involved in her own follow-up care: Jody Sima, MD, and Gloria Kennedy, MD '89. "From the first time, I got that feeling that told me that this is where I belong and need to be," says Howe, who plans a career as a pediatric oncologist.

Because of possible side effects from drugs she took as an infant, Howe has regular echocardiograms and hearing testing. Those experiences inform her grand plan: she'd really like to do a med/peds residency, followed by a fellowship in pediatric hematology/oncology, with the goal of treating acutely ill children and then remaining their primary care doctor longitudinally as they grow up. "I'm not sure that's something that would be feasible, but that is my dream," she says.

Vasilii Bushunow '18 was 16 when he was diagnosed with leukemia. Heavily involved in dance (both classical ballet and Ukrainian folk dance) he hadn't realized his energy was off until he woke one morning with an acute pain in his side.

He called his father, Peter Bushunow, MD, HS '89, '92, a medical oncologist who did his internal medicine residency and oncology fellowship at Upstate. A blood test at his father's office revealed unexpected news.

Bushunow received treatment over a two-year period, the first six



Upstate medical students (and cancer survivors) Vasilii Bushunow '18, Katie Iles '18, and Katie Howe '17

weeks as an in-patient at Rochester's Golisano Children's Hospital. "It's not what an active 16-year-old wants to be doing, particularly when you're not feeling sick," he says. "All my summer plans were gone."

And he essentially lost a year of intensive dance training, putting to rest his aspirations of a professional dance career. While he already had some interest in medicine because of his father, Bushunow says it was his time in the hospital that convinced him to pursue a career in medicine.

"It sounds cliché, but interacting with so many people on different levels of care made a very strong impression on me," he says. "The time they took with me and my family made a huge impact. This was a group of people that was very dedicated to taking care of others. I still

keep in touch with many of them."

Bushunow says that while cancer was certainly not a pleasant experience, he feels he got off easy compared with what he saw many others go through. "Yes, I lost my hair, but in nine months of active chemotherapy, I never had a fever, I wasn't throwing up constantly, I didn't have to be in isolation," he says. "For the most part, I was a stubborn kid who tried to continue a normal life." Less than a month after his treatment was complete, he left for college.

"We tend to feel sorry for people who are going through traumatic experiences like this but I feel like my experience was really beneficial for me," he says. "I learned a lot and would like to think it made me a better person." ■

# CLASS NOTES

## 12/'43

**William A. Schiess**, of Cicero, NY, and his wife, Betty, are still doing well at ages 91 and 94. "We moved to our place on Oneida Lake," they write. "Come visit."

## 1945 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

## 1949

**Thomas E. Snyder**, of Syracuse, NY, says there were only two class members at the 65th reunion, himself and **Robert W. Rakov!**

## 1950 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Ronald H. Spiro '55**, of Jerusalem, Israel, shares that two years have passed since his move overseas to join two of his four children, 14 grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. "We are enjoying our new life here and will be happy to extend hospitality to any class members who may be visiting this part of the world," he writes.

## 1955 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

## 1956

**Arthur I. Segaul**, of Carbondale, CO, and his wife, Barbara, are very active with golf, water aerobics, and other exercise. Their three children are scattered in Fort Lauderdale, Denver, and Carbondale, and five grandchildren are in Denver, California, Winter Park and Jacksonville, FL, and Elon College in North Carolina.

## 1959

**Angeline R. Mastri**, of Rochester, NY, retired after practicing neuropathology for 19 years at the University of Minnesota and 10 years at the New York City Medical Examiner's Office and has returned to her hometown to be close to family.

## 1960 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Leonard Levy**, of Dewitt, NY, retired after 50 years of active pediatric practice in 2013, and then promptly scored his first hole-in-one on the golf course! Fortunately after surviving a couple of major medical events, he delights in his five (soon to be six) great-grandchildren. "Looking forward to our 55th reunion this year," he writes.

## 1961

**William Tedesco**, of Glens Falls, NY, shares that his wife, Pat, passed away in May 2014. They were both very involved with medical/surgical missionary trips to Guatemala over a period of 20 years. Tedesco will retire this summer after practicing family medicine in Glens Falls for the past 50 years, but will stay involved in the Upstate RMED teaching program and with Hospice and palliative care activities. This fall he plans to go to Spain and walk the 500-mile Camino de Santiago and "see just where that leads me," he writes.

## 1962

**Jack Wittenberg**, of Newton Highlands, MA, has reluctantly declared (but not institutionally mandated!) retirement in 2016. He also writes that he is worried because he doesn't play golf.

## 1964

**Stephen F. Kucera**, of Binghamton, NY, was honored with the title Assistant Clinical Professor Emeritus by SUNY Upstate Medical University after more than 30 years teaching house staff and medical students at United Health Service-Clinical Campus in Binghamton. He was the director of nephrology at UHS and retired in 1999. He now enjoys spending the winters in Sarasota, FL, and his summers in Binghamton.

"I am grateful to President Eastwood and Dean Dave at the Clinical Campus in Binghamton for their support. I also want to thank the staff at UHS for their recommendations on my behalf," he writes.



Stanley B. Burns '64 is a medical and historical advisor on the new PBS Civil War medical drama, *Mercy Street*, currently filming in Virginia.

## 1965 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Anthony R. Caprio**, of Fall River, MA, retired in 2000. He remarried in 2002 and lives in between Vermont and Fall River. He has four grandchildren.

**Janice A. Lindstrom**, of Hilton Head Island, SC, is enjoying retirement in South Carolina and has taken up golf at age 70. "Best wishes to all," she writes.

## 1966

**A. Michael Kaplan**, of Dix Hills, NY, is still practicing pediatrics on Long Island and wintering in Florida.

He has two offices and a pediatric urgent care.

**George H. Newman**, of Bedford, NH, had a great cruise to the Arctic and is planning his next trip to Hawaii. He has five wonderful grandchildren and is readying his greenhouse for the orchid show.



Robert L. Bard '68

## 1967

**Leslie M. Burger**, of Vancouver, WA, retired in 2006 after 40 years of federal service with the U.S. Army and Veterans Health Administration. He was appointed by the governor to the Washington State Medical Board, where he served two four-year terms, including stints as vice chair and chair. He has been "retired" since March 2015, and continues to do foundation work while trying to stay out of trouble. He and wife, Julie, lay claim to being the longest married couple in the class of 1967, "54-plus years," he writes.

## 1968

**Robert L. Bard**, of New York, NY, gave the Surgical Grand Rounds at Mt. Sinai Medical Center on July 8, 2015, *3D Imaging of the Skin and Subcutaneous Tumors*. He is also giving a talk, *Vascular Mapping of Melanoma Locoregional Metastases*, for the French Radiology Society in October, where 19,000 radiologists attend.

## 1969

**Joann T. and Robert C. Dale**, of Rochester, NY, battled the snowy and frigid weather with more than 40 feet of snow on the ground this past winter. "Bob will retire from his pulmonary practice on December 31, 2015, so we can enter a new phase," they share.

## 1970 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Mark L. Wolraich**, of Nichols Hills, OK, writes that his older son, Michael Wolraich, published his second book, *The Unreasonable Men: Theodore Roosevelt and the Republican Rebels Who Created Progressive Politics*. This past September he and his wife had a wonderful and moving trip to Poland and St. Petersburg, including visiting the city where his parents came from, Piotrkow-Trybunalski. His cousin from Israel, who is a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor, also joined them with his son. Mark is still working as the chief of the section of developmental and behavioral pediatrics at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center but is trying to recruit a replacement so he can retire.

## 1973

**Benjamin R. Gelber**, of Lincoln, NE, is a neurosurgeon, and was named Supervisor Physician of the Year by the Nebraska Academy of Physician's Assistants.

## 1974

**Bonnie V. Bock**, of Newport Beach, CA, was a solo practitioner specializing in infectious diseases and HIV from 1979 until 2014. She sold her practice and changed careers to Phase 1 clinical research in California in January 2015. She is past president of the Infectious Diseases Association of California, and has been very active in many hospital committees. She is not sure she wants to retire yet and wonders how many classmates have made that decision.

**Mary Virginia Smith Green** and Tim D. Green, DDS, live in the Syracuse area and are working as a pediatrician and dentist. They are the proud parents of Jennifer, Daniel, Julia, and David, and are happy to have five beautiful grandchildren scattered in Colorado, Houston, and Rochester. They were able to spend time last September at Reunion with **Roni Sehayik**, **Jim Brodsky**, and **Fred Sloan**. "It was great to see old classmates and reminisce. Come back to Syracuse next time—it's fun to see old friends!" she writes. "Life is good."

## 1975 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015



Mark H. Katz '75, with husband Bob, and son Marcus

**Mark H. Katz**, of Los Angeles, CA, says he reads about grandchildren a lot on these pages and wonders "Is anyone a great-grandparent yet?!" He and his husband, Bob, have the pleasure of having an adolescent son—Marcus is thirteen and a half. "I definitely started late in this department," he writes. "I am in my last year as a partner physician at Kaiser Southern California (have lived in LA for 30 years). We must retire at the end of the year in which we turn 65, but can still work as a per diem or so-called partner emeritus. I have had a richly rewarding career as an emergency physician, now a hospitalist, also doing outpatient HIV medicine since 1987. And I love to lecture—my favorite topics are *Burnout & Resilience*, *Empathic Communication*, and *Culturally Competent Care for LGBT Patients*."

# CLASS NOTES

**David A. Lynch**, of Bellingham, WA, is looking forward to reunion. He recently retired from practice and is now serving as president of the Chuckanut Health Foundation in Bellingham.

**James A. Terzian**, of Vestal, NY, shares that his son, **James M. '07**, is now an interventional radiologist in Binghamton, NY. His son and daughter, Susan, are both engaged to be married in 2015.

## 1976

**Irving Huber**, of Ambler, PA, recently completed his master of science degree in healthcare quality and safety at the Jefferson School of Population Health. He now hopes to pontificate more and see fewer patients.

## 1977

**Debra Kuracina**, of Palm Desert, CA, shares that her son Damian D'Auria was recently accepted into New York University Dental School!

## 1978

**Patricia Ledden Chapman '79** and **Jay W. Chapman '79**, of Pulaski, NY, were presented with the Rosemarie Forstner Award by The Community Health Care Association of New York State at its statewide conference and clinical forum in White Plains, NY, on

**Vicki C. Ratner '84**, of Los Gatos, CA, was honored by the Interstitial Cystitis Association for her 30 years of advocacy and leadership on behalf of the organization with a feature article in the Winter 2014 *ICA Update*.



Patricia Ledden Chapman '78 and Jay W. Chapman '79

October 20, 2014. This award honors and celebrates both its pioneers and those who are fighting today to ensure access to high quality healthcare for all. The Chapmans, of Northern Oswego County Health Services, were recognized as exemplary community health center physicians who have shown a distinctive level of excellence and consistent participation in a community healthcare center. They have been providing healthcare services to Oswego County families for 30 years and are also members of the Upstate Medical University faculty and precept medical students through the Rural Medicine Program.

## 1979

**Marc A. Subik**, of Huntington, WV, shares that his daughter Rachele won state titles at number-two singles and number-one doubles in class AAA, but the team fell short by one point in quest for the fifth straight team title. His son Grant won the state title at number one doubles and the boys' team finished second by one point as well. Rachele won six individual state tennis titles during her career and will be playing tennis at Belmont Abbey College, just outside Charlotte, NC, this fall.

## 1980 *Reunion*

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

## 1981

**Stephen A. Spaulding**, of Horseheads, NY, shares that his daughter, Laura, is a second-year resident in

family practice at Fort Belvoir. His son, Bill, is a sports play-by-play broadcaster in the Boston area for ESPN. His daughter, Mary Claire, is in the zoo tech program at Jefferson Community College in Watertown.

## 1982

**Brett P. Godbout**, of Bethlehem, PA, says he always feels good about making his annual campaign contribution.

**Alan T. Lefor**, of Utsunomiya, Japan, was awarded a PhD in theoretical astrophysics from Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan. His dissertation is entitled *Comparative Studies of Strong Gravitational Lens Models*. "What a ride!" he writes.

## 1983

**Eric L. Fremed**, of Teaneck, NJ, and his nurse practitioner wife, Nancy, are celebrating son Michael's graduation from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Michael will soon be starting a pediatric residency at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York, not far from older brother Daniel, who is a vascular surgery resident at Mount Sinai. Younger sisters Ariel and Jordana are both at Columbia University; Ariel pursuing her master's in speech pathology and Jordana pursuing her BA at Columbia College.



MARTIN D. FRIED, MD '85

## Food as Medicine



Martin Fried '85

**Y**ou've heard the phrase you are what you eat. Martin D. Fried, MD '85, is taking that axiom one step further by helping patients eat for who they are.

Dr. Fried is a pediatric gastroenterologist in Ocean, New Jersey, who combines the practice of medicine with a specialization in nutrition. His practice encompasses both pediatric gastroenterology—ailments such as pediatric obesity, reflux, and

constipation—as well as nutrition and metabolism evaluation for patients of all ages.

In the last year, Fried has begun using genetic/DNA information to help people with problems in metabolism, suggesting dietary changes based on underlying single nucleotide polymorphisms in the genome. "It's a biochemical approach to dealing with problems in metabolism using food as medicine," explains Fried, who is fellowship trained in both pediatric gastroenterology and nutrition.

It all began with a 15-year-old patient Fried diagnosed with intestinal permeability, or leaky gut. "Every time she'd eat something, she would break out with a rash," he says. Although Fried realized his patient had multiple food allergies, it wasn't until her mother did DNA testing that he could pinpoint the problem. "I discovered she had different gene single nucleotide polymorphisms that resulted in her intolerance to foods containing sulfur," he says. Once his patient eliminated sulfur from her diet, the rashes stopped.

Fried was fascinated and began learning more about genetic analysis. When a weight-loss patient mentioned that she'd had three miscarriages in a row, he suggested genetic testing to see if she had a defect toward the methyl folate gene. "If you have that gene defect, you can't make the 5L methyl folate, which you need for neural tube development," he says.

"Instead of just giving more folic acid—which doesn't help because the enzyme that metabolizes folic acid isn't working completely—you want to bypass the area in metabolism where the problem is. For example, there are certain supplements that have 5L Methyltetrahydrofolate, and that bypasses the metabolism problem," he explains.

If a patient has allergies or asthma, Fried might suggest gene testing to see how they handle histamines. "If someone has a problem with histamine and histamine release, I would advise a diet that avoids histamine foods," he says.

He'd also prescribe an apple a day. "Apples contain a property called quercetin that stabilizes mast cells from releasing histamine. That's a good example of using food as medicine. Instead of giving an antihistamine after the histamine has already been released, the apple might prevent it from happening," he explains.

Fried says DNA analysis can be used to tailor treatments to help many conditions that lead to difficulty with metabolizing drugs, medications, and excreting toxins such as lead and aluminum. In addition, neurotransmitters such as dopamine, epinephrine, and serotonin, which are responsible for many mood and sleep disorders, can be investigated scientifically based on the enzymes that control their productions and affect their breakdown.

DNA testing does not, however, provide an exact prescription for health. "Just because you find a single nucleotide polymorphism doesn't necessarily tell you the extent to which it's expressing itself," he explains. For example, "just because someone has the gene for celiac doesn't mean that they necessarily get it."

Nonetheless, he's finding that knowing a patient's DNA is helpful in determining the best nutrition plan to combat disease and improve health. "This is not cookie cutter medicine," he says. "Gene analysis provides an approach to specific nutrition making a one-size-fits-all nutritional plan obsolete."

—Renée Gearhart Levy

# CLASS NOTES

## 1984

**Lynn M. Sutley-Hartmann** and **Anthony W. Hartmann**, recently moved from Hillsborough, NJ, to Naples, FL. "We'd love to see any classmates visiting the area," they write.

## 1985 *Reunion*

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Luz Alvarez**, of Amsterdam, NY, is leaving private solo practice to join the hospital.

## 1987

**Gail Gazelle**, of Brookline, MA, is a part-time assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, and is a professional coach for physicians and physician leaders ([www.gailgazelle.com](http://www.gailgazelle.com)). She is very involved in physician wellness and is fiercely committed to helping colleagues manage the ever-increasing demands they face. She coaches on such issues as leadership development, burnout, conflict management, authentic leadership, teamwork, career transitions, and work-life balance.

## 1988

**Maureen L. Sheehan** has happily relocated to the Lake Tahoe area and is working in Reno, NV, as the medical director of Renoun Hospice.

## 1989

**Ronald C. Samuels**, of Newton, MA, writes that not much has changed. His kids are older with the eldest about ready to leave home. "Having three teens in the house at the same time has been an interesting experience, as in the old Chinese curse about living in interesting times," he writes. Samuels went through knee surgery about a year-and-a-half ago, and got to hear from all his friends and neighbors about their knee surgeries, but is now back to playing tennis and even got out to ski once or twice this winter (about average when we don't spend February vacation skiing). He is actually in more contact with old friends than in past years, thanks to Facebook. "I'm still not good at picking up a phone and calling people," he writes.



Daniel T. Burzon '91 in Haiti

## 1990 *Reunion*

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

## 1991

**Daniel T. Burzon**, of Brielle, NJ, and his wife, Teddi, are living on the shore with their three children: Mikki-Jean, 30; son DJ, 24; and daughter Jaylin, 20. Burzon has been in private group practice at Coastal Urology Associates for 17 years and is the medical director of Shore Outpatient Surgicenter and senior partner in his group. He has been going to Haiti for urologic medical missions for 15 years (17 trips), and was operating in Haiti when the earthquake hit on January 12, 2010. He has also served on the board of directors of the New Jersey Fellowship of Christian Athletes for 15 years.

**Vincent Frechette '91** and his wife Didi, have visited often and they see each other at least two to three times a year. Their daughters Hannah and Mikki-Jean, both born during medical school, are close friends.

## 1992

**Jane S. and Douglas Bennett**, of Pittsford, NY, announce the graduation of their daughter, Rachel, from Tufts University and her acceptance to Boston University School of Education to get her masters degree in early education. Their son, Jesse Bennett, will be going to Hamilton College, and their youngest, Justin, who is 14, starts high school. Jane continues as a radiologist at Borg and Ide Imaging and Douglas continues as a pediatrician at Irondequoit Pediatrics.

**Brian A. Meltzer**, of Wilton, CT, was appointed chief medical officer and vice president of business development at Perseon Corporation on April 1, 2015. Perseon is a leading provider of medical systems that utilize heat therapy to treat cancer.

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**Brian Quigley '93**, of Raleigh, NC, recently finished his first season as one of the team physicians for the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes. He practices emergency medicine in Raleigh and is the current medical director for Rex Hospital's critical care transport.

KEIRA L. BARR, MD '99

## An Ounce of Prevention

Like many teenagers, Keira L. Barr, MD '99, pursued the perfect tan. She has the scars to prove it. "Although I have dark hair, I inherited my red-haired father's fair skin and suffered numerous terrible sunburns," she says.

When she studied dermatology, she learned just how dangerous that popular pastime had been. Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, with more than 3.5 million cases diagnosed each year. More than 90 percent of cases are caused by the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

"Even the most educated and concerned can easily lose track of UV exposure while focused on other things—rushing to work or chasing after our kids," says Dr. Barr, who is board certified in dermatology and fellowship trained in dermatopathology. "And when our routine changes, on vacation for example, we may be unaware of how the UV exposure has changed in our new environment," she says.

That was the impetus behind Brightly, a UV-exposure app Barr developed in conjunction with Andy Hickl, CEO of a Seattle-based technology innovation company. The app, which launched in July 2014, continuously calculates UV exposure and makes personal recommendations based on skin type. The app also gives timely alerts and educational information to promote skin health. Brightly warns users when UV levels have become dangerous and rewards good habits like finding shade, wearing appropriate clothing, and re-applying sunscreen.

Barr spent nearly 10 years as a practicing dermatologist and dermatopathologist, most recently on the faculty of University of California-Davis Medical Center. Her foray into the tech world came after relocating to Washington State in 2012 with her husband, Robert M. Tamurian, MD '98, an orthopedist. While attending a networking event in Seattle, she met Hickl, who, in partnership with Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen, had founded A.R.O., a company that developed mobile apps to help people lead happier, healthier lives. "I asked him if he had ever considered using his technology for sun protection," Barr recalls. "It turned out he had undergone treatment for Stage 3 melanoma, so he became very interested in collaborating." The two pooled their expertise to create Brightly.

But the start-up world is notoriously unstable. Shortly after its launch, Hickl folded his company for a new oppor-

tunity. Although Barr was disappointed not to see the app through further iterations, she learned a lot in the process.

"In medicine we tend to be so linear in our expectations of making things right the first time because there are severe consequences if you don't. But in the technological space, this was just version 1. It's a completely different mindset," she says.

"Right now, there is a big push on mobile technology that's being driven by the business world not the medical world," she says. "My experience showed me that more of us physicians need to get involved to make sure that the data is actually meaningful and actionable. Technology on its own does not replace physicians."

The experience also opened her eyes to new opportunities for using her medical training in a nonclinical environment. Barr founded the Aegis Consulting Group as an umbrella to provide medical expertise across broad applications, including healthcare, biotechnology, and personal care. Currently, she is working on developing a line of sun-protective clothing to improve on the functionality and style of what is already on the market.

"I want to make something that I'd actually want to wear and that my kids would want to wear," she says.

"I'm using my derm skills in ways I never thought I would."

—Renée Gearhart Levy



Keira Barr, MD '99, and her husband Robert Tamurian, MD '98, with their son Cole (9) and daughter Kelen (11).

# CLASS NOTES

## 1993

**Neal Seidberg**, of Fayetteville, NY, is now the medical director of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital.

## 1995 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Brian A. Vasey**, of Oregon, WI, practices at Madison Psychiatric Associates and is also the medical director of an adolescent day treatment program at Northstar Counseling in Madison and a consultant and staff psychiatrist at Aspen Family Counseling in Portage. In addition, he is assistant cross country and track coach at Oregon High School.

## 1996

**Timothy J.D. Gregory**, of Pooler, GA, has transitioned from emergency medicine to wound care and hyperbaric medicine and is enjoying it.

**Mary Jo Lechowicz**, of Decatur, GA, received the inaugural Margaret H. Rollins Endowed Chair in Cancer at the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University.

## 2000 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015



Gene Lee '03 and Michael Krucky, visiting Portland Oregon

## 2003

**Gene Lee**, of San Diego, CA, is engaged to Michael Krucky. They saw the Northern Lights in Iceland last March and went to Ireland in May. Lee started work at Sharp Rees-Stealy in May 2015 and loves San Diego.

## 2004



Sophia Victoria, daughter of Alexander Tsukerman '04 and wife Victoria

**Alexander Tsukerman**, of Brooklyn, NY, shares that he and his wife, Victoria, had a baby girl, Sophia Victoria Tsukerman, born May 29, 2014, who joins



Spencer Harrison Ostrov, son of Elissa Yozawitz '05 and husband Douglas Ostrov

brother, Samuel, age eight. He is practicing emergency medicine in Brooklyn and his wife is a registered nurse.

## 2005 Reunion

SEPTEMBER 25•26, 2015

**Lev Grinman**, of Syosset, NY, is co-founder and medical director of Home-Sleep LLC, one of the largest national providers of ambulatory home sleep-testing services. He is also the medical director of Physiologic Assessment Services, which is a large intra-operative monitoring company in the Tri-state area. He and wife, Lauren, are expecting their second child.

**Elissa G. Yozawitz**, and her husband, Douglas Ostrov, of Mamaroneck, NY, are happy to announce the birth of their son, Spencer Harrison Ostrov, on April 9.



Rubie Sue Jackson '07 with husband Neil and daughter Violet

## 2007

**Rubie Sue Jackson**, of Linthicum, MD, and Neil Jackson, recently welcomed a daughter, Violet. Jackson completed her general surgery residency at Georgetown University Hospital in 2014. She is scheduled to complete a fellowship in breast surgical oncology at Anne Arundel Medical Center, Annapolis, MD, in June, where she has accepted a position on the surgical faculty. Jackson recently presented her research on axillary ultrasound at the American Society of Breast Surgeons annual meeting.

## 2008

**Benjamin Bert**, of San Francisco, CA, and his wife, Sara, welcomed their son on April 17, 2015. Henrik Joel Bert is getting ready for the Upstate class of 2041. This is the first grandchild for **Melvyn D. Bert '67**.



Henrik Joel Bert, son of Benjamin Bert '08 and wife Sara

**Melanie Hawver**, of Albany, NY, and husband Rich welcomed a son, Henry, on February 7. After training in New York and Philadelphia, they moved back to her hometown, where she is now practicing surgical pathology for Maplewood Pathology at St. Peter's Hospital.



Henry, son of Melanie Hawver '08 and husband Rich

**Matthew Mason**, of Nashville, TN, is currently finishing a fellowship in pediatric urology at Vanderbilt University and will be joining the Upstate Medical University faculty as a pediatric urology attending in August.

## 2009

**Robert Van Gorder**, of Rochester, NY, is joining Tier Orthopaedic Associates in September 2015.

## 2010



Opal Amelia Brender, daughter of Amanda '10 and husband Nick

**Amanda J. Brender**, of Issaquah, WA, and husband Nick happily welcomed their first daughter, Opal Amelia Brender, born on October 16, 2014. Amanda is practicing family medicine at Group Health in Bellevue, WA.

## 2012

**Toni Melville**, of Wilmington, NC, finished her residency in family medicine in June and started a position at New Hanover Medical Group in July.

## House Staff

**David E. Galinsky**, of Merion Station, PA, was a first-year resident in the Department of Medicine during 1971-72. He retired from his geriatric medicine practice in Philadelphia last year and is now the chief medical officer at the

Department of Aging for the State of Pennsylvania.

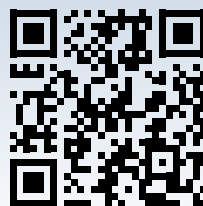
**Hilda Der Zakharian-Heller**, of Escondido, CA, recently authored her autobiography, which was published by her son, James Heller, in paperback. The book, *Leaving Harvard for Motherhood*, includes chapters about her anesthesiology residency at Upstate from 1978 to 1981.



## What Have You Been Up To?

WE'D LOVE TO KNOW!

Submit a Class Note online at [medalumni.upstate.edu](http://medalumni.upstate.edu)



# IN MEMORIAM

## 1954

**LEONARD P. HENSCHEL**, of Kew Gardens, NY, died December 18, 2014. Dr. Henschel was a psychiatrist specializing in adolescent development and maintained a thriving practice well into his 70s. He was survived by his sister, Shirley, and brother, Herbert.

## 1955

**EUGENE R. JACOBS**, of Springfield, VA, died October 6, 2014. In 1959, Dr. Jacobs served as a captain in the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Jay on Governor's Island in New York until his honorable discharge in 1961. He then moved to Northern Virginia, where he was appointed chairman of the radiology department at National Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital and began a private practice. In 1974, he also joined the clinical faculty at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences at George Washington University. He was survived by his wife, Janet; daughters, Lori and Susan; stepson David; 11 grandchildren; and six great grandchildren.

**BERNARD PORTNOY**, of Dana Port, CA, died April 13. In 1961, he joined the faculty of the University of Southern California School of Medicine. For more than five decades, his clinical care was devoted to the underserved children hospitalized at Los Angeles County and University of Southern California Medical Center, where he also served as the director of infectious disease laboratory, chief office of health care planning and evaluation, director of academic planning and development, and chief of the Department of Pediatrics. He was survived by his wife, Rosyln; daughter Deborah; son Daniel; and five grandchildren.

**ROBERT GUNTER SPIRO**, of Sudbury, MA, died on May 16. Dr. Spiro was Professor Emeritus of biological chemistry at Harvard Medical School, where he served for more than 40 years. He conducted research primarily at the Joslin Diabetes Center and he focused on the kidney complications of diabetes as well as the field of Glycobiology, in which he was a pioneer, studying the

structure and biosynthesis of glycoproteins. His laboratory trained more than 60 postdoctoral fellows and students, many of whom hold prominent positions in medicine worldwide. He was the recipient of numerous national and international awards in the fields of both diabetes and Glycobiology. He was survived by his wife, Mary Jane; his sons David and Mark; and four grandchildren.

## 1958

**GEORGE A. SHAHEEN**, of Fayetteville, NY, died March 3. Dr. Shaheen was a neuroradiologist in Syracuse for more than 40 years. Throughout his career, he worked at the forefront of medical imaging technology, and until recently, was engaged in the development of diagnostic laser technology for detecting diabetes. He was survived by his five sons, Mark, Damon, Brian, Scott, and George, and five grandchildren.

## 1960

**CARMEN C. CALESCIBETTA**, of Long Beach, CA, died November 30, 2014.

## 1964

**IRA MORTON REISKIN**, of Newton Centre, MA, died February 15. Dr. Reiskin served in the U.S. Navy as an intelligence officer. He became board certified in both psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry. He was head of psychiatry at the student health services at Boston University for many years and also practiced psychiatry at Nazareth Child Care Residence and in private practice. He was survived by his wife, Helen; son Robert; daughter Elisabeth; and three grandchildren.

## 1965

**JOHN P. HEMMERLEIN**, of E. Syracuse, NY, died on June 11. Dr. Hemmerlein was a Syracuse native who practiced family medicine in Fayetteville for 40 years, often caring for several

generations of the same family. After retiring from private practice, he practiced geriatric medicine as medical director of Sunnyside Nursing Home. He served as a Captain in the Medical Corps of the New York Air National Guard, 108th, on the Board of the Fayetteville Senior Center, and helped support the efforts of the Oxford Inn and the pantry of St. Matthew's Church in East Syracuse. He was survived by his wife, Barbara; his children, Beth, Barbara, Ellen, and Edward; and by four grandchildren.

**ROBERT G. NOBLE**, of Walnut Creek, CA, died March 2. Dr. Noble was a retired captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve. He trained in urology at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis and practiced for many years in Berkeley, CA. He was survived by his wife, five children, and seven grandchildren.

## Faculty

**STEPHEN HART MANGLOS**, of East Syracuse, NY, died on April 14. Dr. Manglos received his undergraduate degree *magna cum laude* in physics from Alma College, and his PhD in Physics from Duke University. He was the patent holder for SPECT and was an associate professor of radiology at Upstate since 1987. He was survived by his wife, Carol; his children, Benjamin, Nicolette, and Christopher; and his two granddaughters, Naomi and Sophia.

**ROBERT A. PASTEL**, of Liverpool, NY, died April 2. Dr. Pastel was a graduate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, NY. He did his internship in Indianapolis, IN, and his residency in Rockford, IL, specializing in pediatrics. He served in the U.S. Navy while in medical school and served in the U.S. Air Force after residency, stationed in Japan and Guam. Pastel served as chief of pediatrics at St. Joseph's Hospital and as an adjunct professor at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse. He was survived by 13 children: Chris, Clif, Katy, Michael, Mary, Sally, Robert, Paul, Margaret, Beth, Joseph, Charlie and David; 30 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

A party like this only happens every five years.

# Reunion 2015

SEPTEMBER 25 & 26

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