

UPSTATE MEDICAL Alumni JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2023 PUBLISHED BY UPSTATE MEDICAL ALUMNI FOUNDATION

FROM CAMPER TO CAMP DOC

Christopher Woll, MD '13
provides medical care—
and inspiration—to kids
with serious illness





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ON THE COVER:

Christopher Woll, MD '13, is medical director of Double H Ranch in the Adirondacks, where he previously was a camper and camp counselor. Photograph by Emo Castle.

Medical Alumni Foundation

UPSTATE
 MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
 COLLEGE OF MEDICINE


Dear Alumni and Friends,

It has been my privilege to serve as your Medical Alumni Foundation president over the past two years. The success of the Alumni Foundation and the support of the students in the Norton College of Medicine is the result of the combined effort of all the alumni and the members of the Alumni Foundation board, as well as Paul Norcross and Lori Murphy, who lead our dedicated staff in the Setnor Academic Building. The Medical Alumni Foundation is the most direct way for alumni to support the Norton College of Medicine. This is our Foundation to support our school.

The past two years have been a whirlwind, but the semblance of normalcy is hopefully upon us. As cardiology faculty here in the Department of Medicine, I have witnessed the amazing response of the entire University and Hospital to the challenges of COVID. The University leadership of Mantosh Dewan, MD, as University president, Lawrence Chin, MD, as dean of the College of Medicine, and Robert Corona, DO, as hospital CEO, has been steady, supportive, and inspirational. We have made it through, with a different perspective on the world, and with a rock-solid understanding of the importance of what we do and of Upstate itself.

Upstate has had a multi-generational impact on my family. The institution has truly changed the trajectory of my life path. I could not be more appreciative, committed, or supportive. I hope that you have a similar sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

The Generation-to-Generation Campaign has been quite successful in growing scholarship support for current students. This fundamental support for the Norton College of Medicine is becoming more important every year. The costs involved with medical education have become daunting, with debt loads up to hundreds of thousands of dollars. Given the prolonged medical training in graduate medical education, the debts remain a longstanding cloud for those committed to doing good for others. It is vital for us to support the next generation of physicians. I ask you to consider contributing to our effort to support our school.

Larry S. Charlamb, MD '88
 President
 Medical Alumni Board of Directors



Commencement 2023

The Norton College of Medicine awarded 189 degrees at Commencement 2023 on May 7, which included 164 doctor of medicine and 11 master of public health degrees and three certificates in public health. Six students received MD/MPH degrees, and five students received MD/PhD degrees.

Upstate also awarded an honorary degree to Patrick O. Brown, MD, PhD, a physician-scientist who helped define

the mechanism by which HIV and other retroviruses incorporate their genes into the genomes of the cells they infect. He also founded Impossible Foods to focus on replacing animal agriculture with plant-based foods. Dr. Brown now serves as chief visionary officer of Impossible Foods, Inc., founder and president of the Impossible Foundation, and professor emeritus of biochemistry at Stanford University.



Cynthia Taub, MD, Named Chair of Department of Medicine

Cynthia C. Taub, MD, MBA, chief of cardiovascular medicine of Dartmouth Health's Heart and Vascular Center at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, professor of medicine at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, has been named the Edward C. Reifstein Professor of Medicine and chair of the Department of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, effective August 2023.

"We are pleased to welcome Dr. Taub to Upstate," says Lawrence Chin, dean of the Norton College of Medicine. "Her proven excellence in clinical care, research, and education will be instrumental to advancing our vital missions at the Norton College of Medicine, and her leadership will inspire a new generation of students as they shape the future of healthcare."

As chair of the Department of Medicine, Taub will oversee the largest clinical, research, and education department at Upstate. The 12 divisions that comprise medicine have made advances that help with both common and rare conditions and reach underserved communities across 16 counties in Central New York. The divisions are: general internal medicine; cardiology; dermatology; endocrinology, diabetes and metabolism; gastroenterology; hematology/oncology; hospitalist medicine; infectious disease; nephrology; clinical pharmacology; pulmonary/critical care; and rheumatology.

Taub has served in a variety of leadership positions, including as director of non-invasive cardiology, section head of non-invasive cardiology and cardiovascular imaging, and, most recently, chief of cardiovascular medicine. In addition to Dartmouth, she has held faculty positions at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the University of Connecticut.

Taub is known internationally for her work in clinical applications of advanced echocardiography technologies, valvular heart disease, heart disease in women, and disparity in healthcare delivery, with more than 110 peer-reviewed manuscripts. A dedicated educator, she has trained more than 100 cardiology fellows and mentored many leaders in cardiology, including echocardiography lab directors and sonographers, over her academic career.

Taub received her medical degree from Beijing Medical University, master's degree in biology from Dartmouth College, and an MBA (healthcare track) from Yale School of Management. She completed clinical cardiology training at Hartford Hospital, University of Connecticut, and an Advanced Echocardiography fellowship from the Massachusetts General Hospital. She is board certified in cardiovascular diseases and holds additional certification in adult comprehensive echocardiography.



Cynthia Taub, MD

Michel Nasr, MD, Named Chair of the Department of Pathology

Michel Nasr, MD, HS '07, has been named chair of the Department of Pathology, effective June 1, 2023.

"I am proud to welcome Dr. Nasr as chair of the Department of Pathology," says Lawrence Chin, dean of the Norton College of Medicine. "Under his interim leadership, he has set a foundation for expanded services throughout the region, while embracing expanded uses of technology in this rapidly changing field that will benefit our patients, clinicians, students, and residents. I am pleased to have him remain in this important leadership role, now as chair."

The Department of Pathology is the only academic regional pathology laboratory serving the Central New York community. It employs approximately 300 employees, including more than 30 faculty who provide testing, interpretation and consultation services for the hospital and its associated clinics.

Nasr joined Upstate in 2018 as medical director of clinical pathology and genomics, having served previously on the faculty at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada.

He is author of numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, including one on the development and validation of diagnostic assays for detecting SARS-CoV2 in the *Journal of Molecular Diagnostics*, and is coauthor of the widely used book *Lymph Node Pathology for Clinicians* (Springer, 2019).

As interim chair of pathology, Nasr implemented several initiatives, including the establishment of the SPOR laboratory to provide efficient, high-quality histology and digital pathology laboratory services to Upstate researchers, external academic collaborators as well as the private sector (pharma/biotech companies).

Nasr earned his doctor of medicine degree from the Kursk State Medical University, Kursk, Russia, and completed residencies at American University of Beirut Medical Center and Upstate Medical University, and fellowships in hematopathology and molecular genetic pathology at the University of Iowa.



Michel Nasr, MD, HS '07



Robert Gregory, MD

Innovative Mental Health Program Receives National Award

Upstate Medical University's Psychiatry High Risk Program (PHRP) has received the American Psychiatric Association's Silver Achievement Award.

The Psychiatric Services Achievement Awards recognize creative models of service delivery and innovative programs for people with mental illness or disabilities. The Silver Award, the second highest award, comes with a \$2,000 prize, but what's most important is that the recognition comes at a time when mental health struggles of youth and adolescents are at an all-time high.

Robert Gregory, MD, director of the Psychiatry High Risk Program and director of the Center for Suicide Prevention, says that recent studies reveal startling statistics. A recent study published in the *Journal of American Medical Association* (JAMA), indicated that emergency department visits for suicidality among youth increased five-fold in the last decade. Over the same period of time, the rate of suicide among adolescents climbed 62 percent.

"There is a national crisis of suicide, particularly among youth," Gregory says. "That is why this award

was given to a suicide prevention program instead of other types of psychiatric programs. This award also acknowledges that Upstate is on the cutting-edge of national efforts to prevent suicide, and that other institutions across the country should consider trying to replicate Upstate's innovative Psychiatry High Risk Program model of suicide prevention in their own communities."

Gregory started Upstate's PHRP in 2017 for suicidal youth and young adults, an innovative program focused on transformational healing and recovery, using an evidence-based treatment called dynamic deconstructive psychotherapy, which was also developed at Upstate. The program has served more than 600 individuals and has demonstrated more than a 90-percent reduction in hospitalizations and other outcomes and is the only program of its kind in the country. The PHRP was recently awarded the designation as "a best practice in suicide prevention" by the National Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

Upstate Receives Top Accreditation for Emergency Care of Older Adults

Upstate Community Hospital's Emergency Department has achieved the gold standard of accreditations for its care of older adults.

Upstate's Geriatric Emergency Medicine Unit (GEM) at Community Hospital earned a Level 1 Designation—the highest possible.

The accreditation comes from The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), with support from the Gary and Mary West Health Institute and John A. Hartford Foundation. The group recognizes emergency departments that provide excellent care for older adults with its Geriatric Emergency Department Accreditation (GEDA) program.

Jay Brenner, MD, HS '08, medical director of the Community ED and GEM Care Unit, says Upstate is the only hospital in Central New York with a Level 1 accreditation.

"That means this is the destination," he said. "This is where all of us would bring our senior friends and family members to seek care because we know they are getting optimal emergency care. This means that Upstate is recognized as a senior-friendly organization. We are not just compliant, we are committed."

Upstate created GEM Care in 2013 to meet the complex needs of older adults. The unit is a dedicated section of the emergency department at Community Hospital.



The Upstate Department of Pediatrics held its annual Welton M. Gersony Lecture on June 7: "Kawasaki Disease: Past, Present and Future," presented by Jane Newberger, MD, MPH.

Dr. Newberger is professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and associate chief for academic affairs in the Department of Cardiology at Boston Children's Hospital.

The Welton M. Gersony Lecture is presented annually by the Department of Pediatrics and the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation, which administers the series, through funding given by Welton M. Gersony, MD '58, who had a career as a pediatric cardiologist in New York City with appointments at Columbia University and Weill Cornell Medical College. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation in 2008.

Photo caption: At dinner the evening before the lecture, Gregory Conners, MD, chair of pediatrics; Linda and Willard Cohen, MD '56; Welton Gersony, MD '58; and Mantosh Dewan, MD, president of Upstate Medical University.



New York Governor Kathy Hochul, center, flanked by Sam and Carol Nappi, cuts the ribbon to officially open the Nappi Wellness Institute.

Upstate Opens Nappi Wellness Institute

On June 2, 2023, Upstate Medical University held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Nappi Wellness Institute.

The new five-story, 209,615-square-foot building is the centerpiece of Upstate's outpatient care, bringing key ambulatory services under one roof. The innovative floor plan features 240 exam and consult rooms with workstations located to facilitate provider interactions.

The building is named for Sam and Carol Nappi, whose \$8 million gift to the Upstate Foundation is the largest monetary gift in the hospital foundation history.

"The Nappi Wellness Institute is a transformative healthcare facility that we are proud to have as part of our campus," says Upstate Medical University President Mantosh Dewan, MD. "Wellness is indeed its middle name for healing and wellness is reflected throughout the facility, in its design, in its mechanics, in its operations, in the way our health care professionals work, and in the way our patients will be cared for."

The Nappi Wellness Institute houses an array of services, practices, and programs, including adult and pediatric primary care, geriatrics, radiology, laboratory services, behavioral health, family medicine, pediatrics, the Center for International Health, Inclusive Health Services, and the Joslin Center for Diabetes (adults and pediatrics). The building also features several supportive ancillary services and Connect Care to ensure seamless post-acute follow-up for patients.

A key feature of the building will be the expansion of Upstate's Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease, which has its clinical site within Geriatrics. Several clinical services will collaborate to enhance the care to these patients including a cognitive neurologist, additional space for neuropsychological testing, physical therapy and convenient space for families to drop off and pick up patients.

"The Greater Syracuse area has the highest concentration of older adults in New York state, so we are excited to amplify the services we can offer to this expanding population," says SUNY Distinguished Service Professor and Geriatric Medicine Chair Sharon Brangman, MD '81. "We anticipate that we will see patients with dementia and Alzheimer's disease in greater numbers. This facility will ensure that we have the space to care for patients, consult with families and provide us immediate access to other specialists."

In addition to the gift from the Nappis, funding for the \$158 million project came from a \$70.6 million grant as part of the State Department of Health's Capital Restructuring Financing Program and Essential Health Care Provider Support Program. An additional \$70.6 million in matching bonds was issued by New York state.

Upstate broke ground on the project in early 2020.

Nappi Wellness Center Built for Wellness

Wellness isn't just the purview of practitioners at the Nappi Wellness Center; the building itself is defined by wellness.

The facility has been built to WELL Building Standards with design features to address air, comfort, fitness, light, mind, nourishment, water, movement, sound, and community. Once certified, the Nappi Wellness Institute will be the first WELL-certified building in Central New York.

"The goal in pursuing WELL certification for the Nappi Wellness Institute is to create world-class health-care facility that promotes the health of all those it serves and those who work there," says Marylin Galimi, Upstate's chief operating officer.

For instance, lighting was a priority of the design ensuring that enough natural light spills into the workplace; acoustical separations have been installed for greater privacy and for sound absorption in different areas; staircases are bright and more colorful with each landing listing the number of steps; and air and water quality will be tested regularly with access to results through QR codes, among other features.

And when the in-house café opens, healthy food options will be the only items on the menu to meet nutritional benchmarks.

Upstate officials say the wellness aspects of the design shows the institution's commitment to the wellness of both patients and staff.

The building boasts generous public spaces and patient waiting areas, a plaza with gardens and a covered traffic circle for ease of dropping off and picking up patients. Bridges connecting the building to the parking garages and Upstate Cancer Center are major features and provide patients and staff with access to Upstate University Hospital and other campus buildings without having to step outside.

About 75 pieces of art from more than 50 artists decorate the building, adding a sense of calm and well-being that contribute to the healing process.



READY TO Launch

Meet five outstanding 2023 graduates who exemplify the breadth and excellence of the Upstate medical education experience.

Escaping War, Somali Refugee Earns Medical Degree from Upstate

All these years later, Shukri Mohamed still remembers the nurses who saved her life.

She was 10 years old and carrying her baby brother away from war in Somalia when she was shot in the back. Two Italian nurses stationed there found her and nursed her back to health.

In May, Zacharia Mohamed, MD/MPH '23, the baby she raised in a refugee camp and brought to the United States as an illiterate pre-teen, graduated from Upstate Medical University with two degrees: an MD and a master of public health.

Any time Dr. Mohamed wanted to forgo his education to get a job to support his family, Shukri, the only mother he has ever known, would remind him of those nurses.

She would remind him, too, of the other refugees in the camp in Kenya who had so little but shared it anyway with the two orphans. And of the high school teachers who tutored him late into the night. And of every friend and family member who helped them through their many hardships.

For all of those people, but especially

for Shukri, Dr. Mohamed willed himself to succeed.

“She has always emphasized that this is my way of helping people and that I have to keep going because otherwise, I will never be in a position to help people the way we’ve been helped,” Mohamed says. “Even today, when I talk to her about anything in health care, she always reminds me of those nurses that rescued us. We wouldn’t have survived. She wouldn’t have survived. I wouldn’t have survived. When I would tell her I want to get a job, she would say, ‘this is not what you are meant for. You need to think beyond yourself and our situation.’”

Mohamed was a baby when he and Shukri fled the war in Somalia. After she recovered from being shot, they made their way to Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northwest Kenya. After about 10 years, they came to the United States, first briefly to Arizona, then to Utica, and then to Syracuse. In that time, Shukri married and had two sons, who Mohamed refers to as his brothers.

Mohamed, who doesn’t know the exact year he was born, was about 11 when he arrived in the United States, going to

school for the first time and having to speak a language he didn’t understand.

It was extremely isolating, he says, as he would have to sit and learn letters and sounds at a computer while his classmates did middle-school work.

But he stuck with it, learned to read, and went on to Nottingham High School. Two things happened while he was in high school that would define the rest of his life to date. There, he connected with teachers who believed in him, who would not let him quit, and who often stayed long hours to work with him. Then, his sister, already scarred by war and life as a refugee, suffered a traumatic brain injury that caused her to go blind and require around-the-clock care. Her husband left, and Mohamed had to care for her and handle things like insurance and scheduling appointments and procedures, all while trying to survive high school.

Mohamed credits those teachers for getting him through high school and still keeps in touch with some of them today.

He attended Le Moyne College, where he was part of the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), a state program aimed at helping histori-



Zacharia Mohamed, MD '23, outside Weiskotten Hall on the Upstate Medical University campus

cally underrepresented students succeed in careers in the scientific, technical, and health-related fields. He graduated from Le Moyne College with a degree in biology in 2016.

All the while, his sister's words, and his own memories of the medics helping long lines of sick people at the refugee camp, fueled his desire to continue.

"She has been saying I will be a doctor ever since I was a kid," Mohamed says.

He has continued to juggle caring for Shukri and his brothers while going to school, and even now wrestles with his choices.

"There were times things got really difficult for me and times I felt a lot of guilt," he says.

After graduating from Le Moyne, Mohamed received a conditional acceptance to Upstate and attended a post-baccalaureate program at the University of Buffalo for one year before starting medical school in 2017. Complications to his sister's care during the COVID-19 pandemic, when home health aides were not available, made medical school that much more challenging.

"Even today, when I talk to her about anything in health care, she always reminds me of those nurses that rescued us. We wouldn't have survived. She wouldn't have survived. I wouldn't have survived. When I would tell her I want to get a job, she would say, 'this is not what you are meant for. You need to think beyond yourself and our situation.'"

While at Upstate, Mohamed continued to get support from CSTEP. He won a Diversity in Medicine scholarship from the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY), one of only 10 students statewide to earn the award. He also became a U.S. citizen. In addition to earning his Upstate medical degrees, he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Le Moyne College on May 20.

Mohamed is now a first-year resident

in internal medicine at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey. His goal is to work with underserved populations, including refugee communities.

When he crossed the stage to receive his medical degree, his thoughts were on the long journey that brought him from refugee to MD, and the sister/mother who would never let him stop walking toward a better future.

"I feel very blessed," he says. "I feel very grateful."

—Jean Albanese

Health Justice in Action

Samantha Williams, MD '23, set her sights on becoming a physician at age seven, after losing her father to cancer. "The hospital had become like a second home. I didn't want other kids to go through that," she says.

As a high school student, she began volunteering at the Syracuse Community Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) on Syracuse's predominantly Black south side. "That experience exposed me to social determinants of health at a pretty young age," says Dr. Williams, who committed herself to address those health inequities.

Williams attended Union College as part of its prestigious Scholars Program and applied to Upstate's Norton College of Medicine through the Associated Medical Schools of New York University at Buffalo Pipeline Program. "The postbac prepared me very well academically for medical school," says Williams.

Coming to Upstate was a full-circle moment for the Syracuse native. Williams resumed her volunteer work at the Syracuse Community Health Center and other community organizations. That work helped fuel her leadership in Upstate's 2021 Health Justice Conference, which focused on systemic racism in health care.

Due to the pandemic, the event was held virtually for the first time, presenting both challenges and opportunities to its organizers. While Williams and her co-chairs were forced to learn Zoom technology quickly, they also benefited from being able to reach a larger audience. "Going virtual allowed us to reach out to programs and organizations from across the globe," says Williams, a second-year student at the time and conference co-chair. The program received 850 registrants from around the world.

Fundraising efforts for the conference yielded three \$500 scholarships, raised by items featuring Williams' artwork, for three under-represented students dedicated to addressing health inequities. "I was

really proud to help other students in that way," she says.

As a fourth-year student, Williams served as a co-chair of diversity in Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) and became engaged in clinical curriculum reform. "I presented findings using Upstate's graduation metrics and anecdotal evidence about how going through clinical rotations felt as a person of color, offering tools from the AAMC and how other medical schools integrate diversity and equity into their clinical rotations," she says. "I sat down with individual clerkship directors and planned how to integrate some of these changes into their clerkships. The physicians were always so accepting of my insights. These interactions were key to shaping my understanding of the type of physician I want to be, and I will always be open to learning from the generations that follow me."

Samantha Williams, MD '23



Williams is indebted to countless Upstate mentors who supported her, including Lynn Cleary, MD, vice president for academic affairs; Thomas Curran, MD, associate professor of bioethics and humanities; George Stanley, MD '94, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology; and Thomas LaClair, MD '77, assistant professor of family medicine.

She was clearly held in high regard in return. As a second-year medical student, she was awarded the Sarah Loguen Fraser, MD Alumni Scholarship from the Medical Alumni Foundation. In addition to AOA, she was elected to the Gold Humanism Society, and this spring received the 2023 Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence, SUNY's highest student award.

"It is an honor, says Williams, who credits Upstate for providing the space to use her efforts to create better relations with all communities they serve. "I strive to improve the health of historically neglected populations through leadership and advocacy, and receiving this award only motivates me further to continue my efforts as a physician."

Interested in primary care from the start, Williams chose to pursue family medicine so that she could treat all age groups. "All the clinicians at Upstate are so good, they made me feel like I didn't want to lose a certain population," she says.

Williams is doing her residency training as part of the Phelps Family Residency at Northwell Health in Sleepy Hollow, New York, a unique partnership between Phelps Hospital, Hofstra University's Zucker School of Medicine, and Open Door Family Medical Centers, an FQHC. "It's a nice mix of academic and community medicine," she says. "I was drawn to their mission and look forward to continuing to work with underserved populations."

—Renée Gearhart Levy

Budding Ophthalmologist Became Interested in Her Specialty Through Organizing TEDx Talks

Srutu Akula, MD '23, is the Johnny Appleseed of TEDx Talks, having organized nine TEDx events in almost as many years as she progressed from high school to college to medical school.

Akula applied for her first license to host a TEDx youth event as a 16-year-old high school student in Horseheads, New York. At the time, she served as a judge on a community youth court that sentenced youthful offenders to community service. She happened to also be participating in a virtual TEDx Youth Conference. The juxtaposition of those experiences “made me realize that many of the youth coming through our court had no exposure to the many options available to them,” she says.

Akula recalls how intimidated she felt reaching out to accomplished speakers for that first program, TEDxYouth@Horseheads, held in 2015. “But it laid the foundation for the rest,” she says.

Akula was accepted into Clarkson University’s BS/MD program. She was able to earn her undergraduate degree in three years and graduate a year early.

She organized TEDxClarksonU as an undergraduate, and when she came to medical school, she pulled together a team to organize TEDxSU-NYUpstate. Once she had approval from the TEDx organization, she approached Lawrence Chin, MD, dean of the Norton College of Medicine to serve as the team’s advisor.

The first event was held in 2021 on the heels of the pandemic. Conducted virtually, speakers included Upstate faculty members Patricia Numann, MD '65; Robert Corona, DO; Rajnish Mago, MD, and Robert Swan, MD '08, along with Olympic swimmer Dara Torres and podcaster Mark Shapiro, MD. A second virtual event followed in 2022, and for the first time, a live TEDxSUN-YUpstate event in 2023.

“We also livestreamed so we had a global audience,” Akula says.

As an adjunct to the talks, Akula launched the \$5,000 Innovative Scholar Award, to be presented to an innovative individual or group to facilitate their



Srutu Akula, MD '23, was hooded at Commencement by her father, Venkata Akula, MD.

“Upstate is a wonderful tight-knit community,” Akula says. “I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunities and mentorship to get me where I am.”

pursuit of enriching the lives of their community or society at large. The first award in 2022 was presented to a group from Upstate for their project “Loop Cushion;” the 2023 award was received by “FullFlock,” a group from the University of Pennsylvania.

In addition to her other involvements, Akula was the lead engineer on her high school robotics team, an experience she leveraged to prototype a flexible storage unit that adjusts both horizontally and vertically. “I was trying to take advantage of the dead space at the top of my bedroom closet,” she says.

Akula created a startup company, Srulutions, and obtained a patent on her design. She used funds obtained from that patent to start the Innovative Scholar Fund. “It was my way to pay it forward,” she says.

In a bit of serendipity, Akula says working with a speaker from one of the TEDxClarksonU events, Upstate Professor Andrea Viczian, PhD, piqued her interest in the field of ophthalmology. Akula was so impressed by Dr. Viczian’s research and talk that she reached out afterward about the possibility of volunteering with her over the summer.

As an undergraduate, Akula volunteered at Upstate’s Center for Vision Research and spent the summer after her first year of medical school assisting with research in Viczian’s lab through an Upstate Summer Research Fellowship.

Akula participated in research exploring genes and genetic networks that affect eye formation using mouse models, research published in *Investigative Ophthalmology* and *Visual Science* in May 2023.

Her interest in ophthalmology was solidified during third and fourth-year clinical rotations when she was able to explore the field further. “I liked the balance between operating and having hands-on time but still having continuity of care and meaningful relationships with patients that you can’t always get in other surgical specialties,” says

Akula, who was elected to the Gold Humanism Society and president of Alpha Omega Alpha.

She’s now a first-year resident in ophthalmology at New York Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City.

“Upstate is a wonderful tight-knit community,” Akula says. “I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunities and mentorship to get me where I am.”

—Renée Gearhart Levy

Physician-Scientist Hopes to Combine His Passion for Research With the Clinical Practice of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine

As a high school freshman, Liam Coyne, MD/PhD '23, was accepted into a program at Roswell Park Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York, located across the street from his school, that paired students with Roswell Park scientists on research projects.

"I went there most days after school and all day on Fridays instead of going to class," says Dr. Coyne, who was assigned to work with John Yates, PhD, who studied the Epstein-Barr virus.

"He invested an enormous amount of time with me. He shepherded me into my own little project at 15 years old and showed me my first discovery about a year in. It was just exhilarating and a really formative experience," says Coyne, who continued working with Yates through college during breaks and summers.

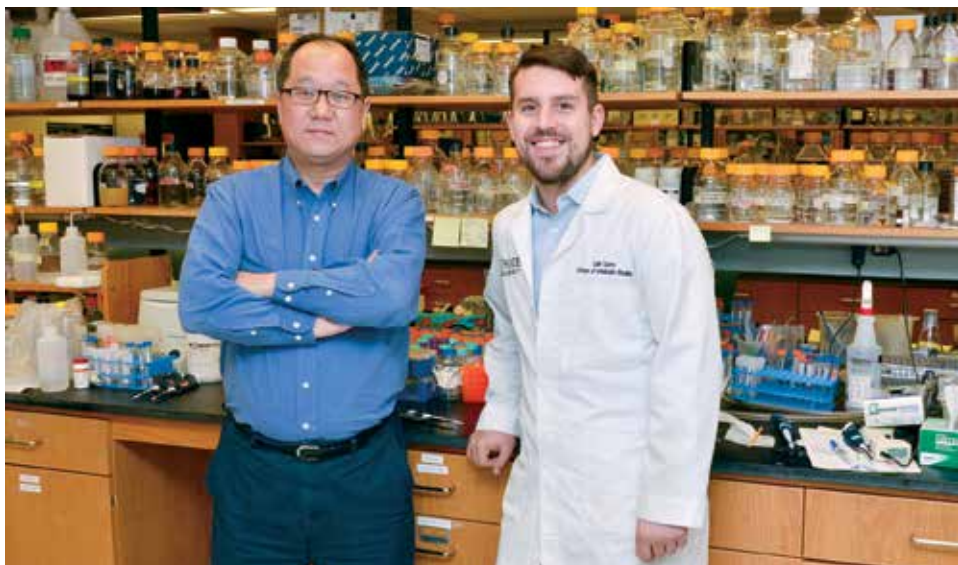
But Coyne wasn't just a science nerd, he was a three-sport athlete—soccer, hockey, and baseball—who ultimately gave up soccer because of his lab commitment. As an undergraduate at Cornell University, he played club hockey and majored in biochemistry with thoughts of pursuing a PhD.

Coyne is also extremely amiable. "I define myself by the relationships I have with the people in my life," he says. "Although my passion was science, I love engaging with people and naively thought you couldn't do that in science."

Believing clinical medicine would provide his desired people connection, he applied to MD/PhD programs. "As it turns out, that is not a very good reason to go into medicine, but fortunately, I ended up loving clinical medicine as well," he says.

Coyne enrolled at Upstate in 2014. After his first two years of medical school, he spent the next five years engaged in his doctoral research, working in the lab of Xin Jie Chen, PhD, to study how mitochondrial dysfunction may contribute to diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and ALS.

Coyne first became interested in mitochondria—the "powerhouse" of the cell—as an undergraduate at Cornell. At Upstate, he paired his interest with Chen's important discovery that a disease-related cause of mitochondria dysfunction, called protein misfolding, can kill cells in a unique and unexpected way. Coyne's



Liam Coyne, MD/PhD '23 (right), with his doctoral advisor, Xin Jie Chen, PhD

research studied that process's connection to the development of neuromuscular degenerative diseases, all of which occur later in life. In 2018, he was awarded a four-year National Institute on Aging Fellowship grant to support his research.

In one of his most significant findings, Coyne discovered that certain genetic mutations in the gene encoding a certain mitochondrial protein cause disease by blocking the transport of other proteins to the mitochondria, results published in *eLife* in May 2023. "This redefines our understanding of diseases associated with mitochondrial proteins, potentially altering how treatments for these conditions are designed," he says.

After five years of graduate school, building a reputation for himself, and presenting his research at meetings, returning to his medical studies was a shock. "I was right back at the bottom of the totem pole," says Coyne. "And I remembered absolutely nothing from the first two years."

Despite the challenge, Coyne caught up, making friends with new classmates (his original cohort had long graduated), and discovering he loved working in the ICU. "I just fell in love with critical care, and later, pulmonology as well," he says.

Coyne applied to Physician Science Training Programs in internal medicine for residency, designed for physician-scientists interested in academic medicine. "One of the benefits is the

ability to expedite residency from three years to two, as well as a guaranteed fellowship placement and three years of protected time for research," he says.

After graduating with his MD/PhD in May, Coyne moved to Baltimore with his wife and year-old daughter to begin the Johns Hopkins Osler Residency Program in internal medicine, after which he will stay for a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine. "I'm hoping to marry my scientific interest in mitochondria with my clinical interest in pulmonary and critical care," he says.

Despite his high-level scholarship, Coyne wasn't all work during his nine years at Upstate. For the last seven, he organized a hockey team—the Sturgeons—composed of Upstate physicians, nurses, scientists, and graduate and medical students that played in men's hockey leagues year-round in the Syracuse area. "That was a huge source of fun and stress relief and allowed me to build a community outside of academics," he says.

But his fondest memories are of late nights in the Chen Lab going over unexpected results with lab mates and his mentor. "All of us transitioning from initial disappointment to coming up with crazy ideas to explain the data, just getting lost in trying to explain the observations that we were making. It was great fun."

—Renée Gearhart Levy

Scholarship Winner Carries on the Legacy of Dr. Sarah Loguen Fraser

Four years ago, Jada McMahon, MD '23, didn't know much about Sarah Loguen Fraser, MD. But ever since receiving a scholarship in the trailblazing physician's name, Dr. McMahon has used Loguen Fraser's story as inspiration to survive—and thrive—in medical school at Upstate Medical University.

McMahon was a senior at SUNY Binghamton when she was selected as the first recipient of the Dr. Sarah Loguen Fraser Dean's Student Distinction Award at Upstate Medical University's Norton College of Medicine. The award is given to an incoming African American female medical student with exemplary academic standing who best epitomizes the spirit and determination of Dr. Loguen Fraser, the first Black woman to graduate from what is now Upstate Medical University's Norton College of Medicine and the fourth Black female physician in the United States.

Once McMahon learned about Loguen Fraser's history and life, she felt the weight of such an award, and worried about remaining in good standing in order to keep the scholarship, which includes full-tuition, housing at Upstate's on-campus residence hall, and a stipend.

But any time things got tough—as they often do in medical school—she thought about what Loguen Fraser endured and pressed on.

"Every time I passed her portrait in the library, I was reminded that, not only could it be much more difficult, but the reward is so great because people before me endured," says McMahon, who is from Hempstead, Long Island. "Especially walking into the library to study for eight hours."

Loguen Fraser was educated shortly after the end of slavery, graduating from medical school in 1876. After internships in Philadelphia and Boston, she opened a practice in obstetrics and pediatrics in Washington, DC, where she met her husband, a pharmacist.

The couple moved to his native country, Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic), where Loguen Fraser became the first woman doctor to practice, offering free treatment to poor women and children for the next 12 years. After her husband's death, she returned to Syracuse and practiced pediatric

medicine for a time before returning to Washington, DC, to practice at a women's clinic run by female doctors of color.

McMahon says it is important to understand and acknowledge the obstacles, racism, and sexism Loguen Fraser undoubtedly faced.

"There's so much power in it," she says. "It makes me sad to know that's what someone had to go through for me to get to where I am. It's a lot of emotions. I just become more honored as the years go on, as I mature and learn more about myself and what I want to do."

While at Upstate, McMahon more than lived up to the criteria of her scholarship. She was inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society and the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society. She served as president of the Student National Medical Association chapter, received three alumni scholarship awards from the Medical Alumni Foundation, and three graduating student awards on Match Day.

McMahon is now a first-year resident in psychiatry at Yale New Haven Hospital. She was drawn to psychiatry early on during medical school when she found personal interactions with patients much more fulfilling than prescribing medicine or doing a procedure. Like Loguen Fraser, McMahon wants to work with underserved populations,

especially Black and brown children impacted by concentrated poverty and increased incarceration rates. She is also interested in politics and health policy.

"I think I can have the largest effect on community health through my interactions with people and by understanding the community psyche to affect change or just advise change," she says.

McMahon was drawn to medicine due to the experiences of another prominent Black woman in her life: her mother, Joanne, who died of breast cancer when McMahon was 12. McMahon says the pull to medicine wasn't just about her mom's illness, but her experience as a Black woman.

"The more I study Black womanhood, the closer I get to her in a lot of ways," McMahon says. "That's also why psychiatry calls me because working with Black youth and Black women brings me closer to myself and closer to her and that community experience helps me understand my family's experience, helps me understand my mom's experience."

"I feel her presence when I am studying these things," McMahon says. "That is the real inspiration. Not just because she had breast cancer. It was bigger than that."

—Jean Albanese



Jada McMahon, MD '23, the first recipient of the College of Medicine's Dr. Sarah Loguen Fraser Dean's Student Distinction Award, hopes to carry on the legacy of the pioneering physician.



From Childhood Cancer Survivor to Camp Doctor:

A Journey of Resilience and Healing

BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

It's hard to imagine much worse for a seven-year-old boy than being diagnosed with cancer. For Christopher Woll, MD '13, it was an alveolar sarcoma in his left calf, which required surgeries to remove the tumors, followed by several rounds of chemotherapy and radiation.

In addition to those traditional therapies, his oncologist offered one more prescription: summer camp. Specifically, the Double H Ranch, a camp that had been founded the previous year in the Adirondacks to treat children with life-threatening illnesses, staffed by volunteer physicians from Albany Medical Center and beyond.

At only seven years old, Dr. Woll had never been away from home other than his hospital stays. But his parents, reassured by the presence of medical professionals on site, thought it might do him good. Although petrified to go, "it was absolutely wonderful," Woll recalls of his first camp experience.

Double H Ranch was a sanctuary where laughter, friendships, and shared experiences transformed the lives of its campers. "I think the biggest thing that stuck out to me was the counselors and how invested they were in making sure that everybody had a good time," says Woll. "In addition to not standing out as the sick kid, I was exposed to a lot of new cool things, such as horseback riding, a high ropes course, and fishing and boating out on the lake. I loved every second of it."

At the end of the week, he told camp director Max Yurenda: "I want to be you when I grow up."

This summer was the camp's 30th year. It also marked a full-circle moment for Woll, who took the helm as medical director, responsible for the camp's medical staff, volunteers, and medical protocols. But Woll does more than just provide exceptional medical oversight—his personal journey, along with compassion, empathy, and understanding, exemplifies life beyond disease and that dreams can be realized even in the face of adversity.

"Nothing means more to me than to provide a normal experience for campers, and to do so, hopefully, for generations to come," he says.

Impact and Inspiration

That first summer was just the spark. Woll would go on to spend a week at Double H Ranch every summer until he aged out of being a camper, then became a counselor. His camp support system helped him emotionally through a reoccurrence of his cancer at age 16—tumor metastases in his lungs that required surgical removal.

The experiences of being a patient and a camper surrounded by other patients had a profound impact. "I was essentially surrounded by medicine during my formative years of childhood," he says. "I never really had any ambitions outside of something medical," he says, "although I never expected to become a doctor."

As a high school senior, Woll applied and was

Dr. Woll as a camper (opposite page left), camp counselor (opposite right), and currently as medical director (below)





In addition to providing medical care to campers (opposite page), Dr. Woll enjoys the opportunity to participate with campers during their daily activities.

accepted into Upstate Medical University's radiation therapy program. He first completed two years of prerequisites at the University of Buffalo, followed by two years at Upstate, continuing to spend his summers as a camp counselor at Double H Ranch. But within his first year working as a radiation therapist, Woll realized that his career choice wasn't the right fit.

"I like organized chaos, which is why working at camp was right up my alley," he says. "Radiation therapy is very regimented. It's the same thing every day. I also realized that I very much wanted to work with a pediatric population."

Woll began taking additional science classes at SUNY Albany and applied to Upstate's Norton College of Medicine. It wasn't just that he was familiar with Upstate—there was another reason he only applied to one school. His girlfriend (and now wife) Kate Myers Woll, MD '12, had just started medical school at Upstate. The two had met as counselors at Double H Ranch the summer before his senior year as an undergrad.

Woll began medical school guided by a deep sense of purpose and unwavering determination to become a pediatrician. During the summer after his first year, he was able to create an elective that allowed him to spend the summer at Double H Ranch, shadowing camp medical director Kathleen Braico, MD, and serving as a medical volunteer.

Woll began each day at the camp medical facility doing rounds with the camp doc to check in on anybody staying there for overnight observation. "The biggest thing at camp is infectious outbreaks, so we would go through the logbook for every visit over the past 24 hours to make sure that there was no indication of any infectious outbreaks, and if there was, we would talk about what we had to do in order to mitigate that. If there weren't any medical procedures or first aid emergencies, we would be out getting involved with all the different activities and seeing how we could be most helpful," he says.

More than anything, assisting with those activities and in the cabins exposed Woll to how kids with different abilities get through their daily lives. "As a healthcare

provider, it was very important seeing these patients move through activities out in the world as opposed to sitting in an office. It's very easy for me to say do X, Y, and Z to a patient, but to see how that actually plays out in someone's life is a very different perspective."

Being "backstage" to the medical side of camp planted a seed that this could be a future career.

Woll followed medical school with a pediatric residency at Duke University and a fellowship in pediatric emergency medicine at Yale University. He and wife Kate settled in Albany, where Woll works as a full-time physician at the Massry Family Children's Emergency Center at Albany Medical Center and as associate professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine. Kate is a pediatrician in nearby Latham, New York.

From the camp's founding, Albany Medical Center has played a major role in supplying volunteer medical professionals, which has included Woll since his return to Albany. In addition to its full-time medical staff, campers are cared for by a cadre of physicians who volunteer for a week at a time, coming from across the United States for the experience. Woll had planned to be one of those weekly volunteers, but camp leadership had other ideas.

When Dr. Braico—medical director during the camp's entire existence—began thinking about retirement, it was time to develop a succession plan. "They reached out to ask if I would be interested in taking over," Woll recalls.

He was, but there were logistical issues to work out. Braico was a general pediatrician who lived local to the camp and was able to be onsite daily while camp was in session. With a full-time hospital job and two small children of his own, Woll's time commitment would have to be different.

He began by joining the camp's medical advisory board, which provides guidance on policy and protocol development. "I became a lot more involved in the behind the scenes planning," he says.

During 2021, Woll shadowed Braico during several summer sessions, which included a reduced number of campers due to COVID-19. He took the reins full time that fall, spending the winter focused on policy training, securing volunteers, and orientation development, making sure everything was ready to go come summer 2023. When the Double H Ranch opened its doors to campers in June, Woll was there to welcome them as medical director.

A Commitment to Inclusion

In 1991, entrepreneur Charles Wood purchased 320-acres in Lake Luzerne, New York, with a goal to expand Paul Newman's Connecticut Hole in the Wall Camp to the Adirondacks. Wood, who had developed amusement parks and resorts in nearby Lake George, enlisted Newman's help to establish the Double H Ranch and create a medically state-of-the-art facility. Since the Ranch officially opened its doors on July 4, 1993, it has served over 60,000 children dealing with life-threatening illnesses from around the world, offering its camp experience free of charge. The second "Hole in the Wall Camp," it is now part of what has become

a worldwide network of not-for-profit recreational and therapeutic experiences for children with serious illness called the Serious Fun Children's Network.

The goal is simple: to provide a safe summer camp experience for children and teens who would otherwise be unable to attend due to the seriousness of their illnesses. Double H Ranch has doctors and nurses on site 24 hours a day and a medical facility on site. Approximately 50–100 campers attend each session, including those with cancer, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia or bleeding disorders, HIV, immune disorders, collagen vascular disease, inflammatory bowel disease, neuromuscular disorders, mitochondrial disorders, muscular dystrophy and congenital heart disease.

According to Woll, the Double H Ranch is one of the few camps within the Serious Fun Children's Network that brings kids together in the same session with mixed diagnoses. The only exception is a session for kids who are ventilator dependent, which is held the first week of the season.

In addition to orienting the medical staff, Woll assists in training the camp's counselors, most of them recent high school graduates or college students. While some are former campers, others are interested in medical careers, social work, or teaching. "None of them have in-depth knowledge of the disease entities we serve at camp, so we have to give them a crash course in the medical knowledge they need and what to be on the lookout for," he says.

Medical needs range from kids who require total care—only one or two per cabin—to those requiring medication only. "We provided approximately 7,000 medication passes last summer," Woll says.

The camp has five nurses on site for the entire summer, supplemented by volunteers so that any given week there are up to 12 nurses and two physicians on site, one generalist and one from a specialty trained in acute care management—typically critical care, emergency medicine or pediatric hospitalist. Woll was in residence during the ventilator camp and is on site the first day of each new session. "I love seeing the campers faces as they arrive the first day," he says.

During camp season, he works nights at the hospital, so he has the freedom to visit camp during the day if the need arises. He credits his wife for his ability to take on the additional role and looks forward to his own children being old enough to stay in cabins so that she can return to camp as a volunteer as well.

"This has been a life-changing experience for me in terms of the relationships I developed as a camper and a counselor," says Woll. "These are people I am still best friends with, including my wife."

But Woll says the benefits of spending time at Double H Ranch are not limited to its campers. The Serious Fun Children's Network recently conducted research on camp medical volunteers that shows the experience helps increase resilience and reduce burnout among providers.

"It is very easy to get stuck in the daily grind of things at the hospital or in the clinic, to get beat down by the bureaucracy," Woll says. "But a week at camp provides a reminder of the positive impact of what we do and a recharge for the year ahead. For me, the camp experience allows me to be more balanced in everything else I do. And I'm always looking forward to next summer's camp adventure." ■



STUDENT ROUNDS

Charting Her Own Course

HANNAH CONNOLLY WANTS TO IMPACT HEALTH INEQUITIES BY CHANGING THE WAY MEDICAL STUDENTS LEARN.

The road to becoming a physician is long, and one that most students seek to expedite rather than expand on. But Hannah Connolly '24 has never let the lack of an established path stop her. When she graduates from Upstate Medical University next spring, she will be the first MD/PhD student to earn a joint degree in social science in collaboration with Syracuse University, having also earned an MPH along the way.

"Every time that I've had a passion, there's been somebody at Upstate who has been willing to help me manifest it," she says. "Even though it's been difficult, and I've had to do a lot of legwork, it's only happened because people were willing to support me. It's been such a gift."

From an early age, Connolly became interested in social disparity, particularly related to health care. She says some of that was instilled by her upbringing.

Connolly grew up in Watertown, New York, spending her summers on Grindstone Island, part of the nearby Thousand Islands, where her grandparents were born and her mother had grown up.

"The island is only accessible by boat," says Connolly. "People had to share resources—firewood, gasoline—and it gave me a perspective on community and how we can do better as a society by working together. I thought I could carry that over to health care."

As an undergraduate at Hobart and William Smith College, Connolly played women's lacrosse and double majored in biology and health disparities, a major she created. She applied to Upstate through the RMed Program, with the goal to understand healthcare delivery in a smaller, rural community. "I was very interested in improving care to resource-poor areas," she says.

As a first-year medical student,



Hannah Connolly's experiences in Kenya informed her decision to earn both an MPH and PhD in addition to an MD.

Connolly began reaching out to researchers working in the area of global mental health, inquiring if anyone needed assistance. Through a project being conducted out of the University of California-San Francisco, she spent the summer after her first year of medical school in Kisumu, Kenya, assisting on a maternal and child mortality project.

The project compared the infant/maternal mortality medical records with social histories to try to pinpoint social determinants of health. Connolly worked with community health workers who interviewed people who had lost a baby or family member during pregnancy about the circumstances. "I would compare that with what the medical record said," explains Connolly. "The medical record might say the woman died of sepsis, but through the interview, we'd learn

the woman tried to get to a hospital but couldn't afford the fees to get in. It was a transformative experience."

Upon her return, Connolly sought out Upstate's Office of Global Health and met with Andrea Shaw, MD '09, assistant professor of internal medicine and pediatrics, to find out how she might be able to continue similar work. As fate would have it, Dr. Shaw was in the process of trying to build an educational exchange program for medical students and residents in Kisumu. Connolly began discussions with Shaw to figure out how she could return to have a more in-depth experience.

In the meantime, she spent her third year in Clifton Springs, New York, through the RMed Program. "It was close to where I had gone to college, so I was able to volunteer as an assistant coach for

the William Smith lacrosse team,” she says. “I’m all about community and connections.”

Instead of going into her fourth-year, Connolly took a leave from medical school to return to Kisumu, where she would pilot a distance-learning MPH. During the day, she served as Upstate’s student researcher on the ground to develop a project to train community health workers to identify depression and anxiety in their communities to refer them to the proper resources, especially useful in rural areas.

“Kenyans with mental health issues have few resources to turn to for help,” says Connolly. “There is one psychiatrist per three to five million people in Kenya, outside Nairobi. Many in Kenya do not have a medical understanding of mental illness and those afflicted are often out-cast from their communities.”

Late at night, Connolly would log into Zoom where she joined MPH students on the Upstate campus in real time for classes. “Basically, my face was on a big projector in the front of the room, which was very embarrassing,” she says.

Connolly arrived in Kenya July 2019. She left in early March 2020, to return by the COVID-19 pandemic. Back in Syracuse, she picked up where she’d left off, finishing up fourth-year electives.

With things quieter than usual due to the pandemic shutdown, Connolly says she had more time for reflection. She realized that rather than fulfilling her desire to work with resource-poor communities, earning her MPH and conducting global research only made her want to do more at a higher level. “I craved more theory and methods to drive the types of projects to address the social suffering that I witnessed at home and abroad. To me, that required a PhD.”



Upstate students and faculty in Kenya. Connolly is second from right.

Exploring her options, Connolly discovered that Syracuse University has a unique interdisciplinary doctoral program in social science, combining sociology, anthropology, education and other disciplines that seemed like a perfect fit. She met with administrators at Syracuse and Upstate and was able to enroll through Upstate’s MD/PhD program.

“I jumped ship again,” she laughs.

Connolly’s doctoral research explores how the integration of social sciences in medical education shapes the thinking of medical students around social justice issues. After two years of interdisciplinary coursework connecting social science principles to health equity in medical education, she spent last year conducting a year-long ethnography to study how third-year medical students take up health equity curricula and integrate it into their developing clinical purview.

Connolly spent the year shadowing a cohort of 10 third-year medical students through their rotations to observe how they are being trained to think about social determinants of health. “I went to rounds with them, to surgeries, outpatient clinics, and lectures, and I conducted interviews and focus groups to assess

how these developing physicians perceive their role in social justice,” she says.

“There’s so much evidence that what we do in medical school shapes the type of doctors we’ll become,” says Connolly, the only student appointed to the Dean’s Curriculum Revision Executive Committee at the Norton College of Medicine. “With curriculum work, I got to apply my research in real time about how these students are learning as we designed and developed curriculum to match Upstate’s aims.”

This fall, Connolly is simultaneously writing her dissertation while applying to psychiatry residency programs. She will graduate in May 2024 with a joint MD/PhD/MPH, the first of its kind and the first Upstate MD/PhD in social science. She has been elected to both the Alpha Omega Alpha and Gold Humanism honor societies.

Meanwhile, in Kisumu, Kenya, the mental health outreach program that Connolly laid the groundwork for during her MPH studies is finally getting rolled out, having been stalled by the pandemic. “Fortunately, it was meaningful enough to be sustainable,” she says.

Connolly hopes to specialize in child psychiatry and remain grounded in medical education research and implementation, contributing to training the growing cadre of medical professionals committed to health justice. She aspires to a career in academic medicine leadership so that she can impact future generations of physicians. “If we can push students towards thinking critically about social determinants of health and broader social structures, I believe we can train a cohort of future physicians that are more attuned to addressing social justice issues,” she says.

CLASS NOTES

1953 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Daniel J. Mason, of Coral Springs, FL, writes, "Sad that only two of our 75-member class are still with us. A wonderful group."

1956

Milton Ingberman, of New York, NY, is retired from a wonderful and rewarding 53-year career in otolaryngology.

1957

Arthur J. Florack, of Lake Wylie, SC, celebrated his 65th wedding anniversary on May 31. "Happy in retirement at age 90. We enjoy travel and are in reasonably good health. Ellie and I have four married children, 14 grandkids, six great grandkids, and three more on the way. Life is good," he writes.

1958 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

1959

Richard J. Lubera, of Grosse Pointe, MI, was invited to perform violin at an event on May 20

Kathy Donigan, Eliot Heaton, and Richard J. Lubera '59



that unveiled a midcentury modern masterpiece, the rediscovered and newly restored mural designed in 1952 by acclaimed architect and designer, Alexander Girard. He played with pianist Kathy Donigan and the concertmaster of the Detroit Opera, violinist Eliot Heaton. "I also feel very privileged to still have an active medical practice and be assisting my patients at my office and through the hospital," he writes. "My wife, Liz, and I both feel very blessed by our wonderful family, and we celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary on June 14."

1961

Howard R. Nankin, of Columbia, SC, enjoyed a visit with **Larry Weiner '70** and his wife Fran last winter, who stopped while driving from New Jersey to southern Florida.



Howard R. Nankin '61 and Larry Weiner '70

1962

Steven N. Berney, of Lafayette Hill, PA, and his wife, Hollis, have sold their Delray Beach vacation home and moved into an independent living facility in Lafayette Hill, a Philadelphia suburb.

He continues part-time in the rheumatology section at Temple University and is former section chief and a master of the American College of Rheumatology.

1963 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

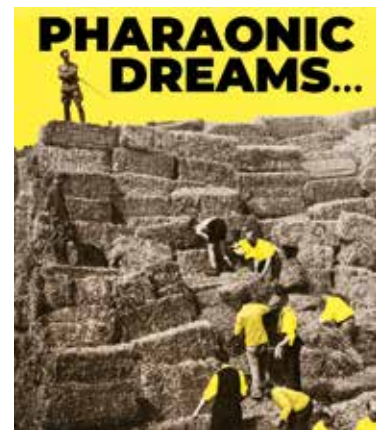
Michael A. Kirsch, of Encino, CA, is in his seventh year of retirement from his internal medicine practice. "One of my granddaughters just graduated from New York University Medical School, making the third generation of Kirsch MDs," he writes.

Carl Salzman, of Cambridge, MA, is still working and doing well.

Bruce Stewart, of Frostproof, FL, retired from his much-loved orthopedic practice in Ithaca 29 years ago and embarked on a series of adventures with his wife, Judy. "We spent eight winters on our catamaran Hairball in the Bahamas," he writes. "We traveled the Atlantic Intracoastal 22 times. We also traveled many places with Elderhostel and covered the U.S. in an RV. Life remains fun."

1964

Stanley B. Burns, of New York, NY, is an ophthalmologist and is well-known as a historian and collector of photography. In his 85th year, he is now recognized as an artist. Selected artworks from his project *Without Guilt Without Shame* will be exhibited next year in a major exhibition on Holocaust art. Born in 1938, World War II and the



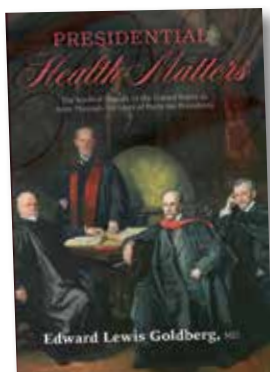
PHARAONIC DREAMS, colorized photo by Stanley B. Burns '64

Holocaust were major influences on his life. He began collecting Holocaust documents in 1970 and regularly lectured on the subject of the fate of Jewish physicians in Poland and Germany. In 1975, he started collecting historical photography and, in 1977, founded the Burns Archive, which now consists of over one million photographs. In the early 21st century, he began using the photographs as the basis of artwork to present the Holocaust from a modern perspective by reconstructing, examining, and contextualizing the past. He digitizes, enlarges, colorizes, and adds words to the images to provide direction for understanding. The CEPA Gallery (The Center for Exploratory and Perceptual Arts) in Buffalo is including his work in a major comprehensive exhibition, *Photography & the Holocaust: Then and Now* (January-June 2024).



1965

Edward Lewis Goldberg, of San Diego, CA, who was a medical intern at Upstate during 1965-1966, has written a book, *Presidential Health Matters*. "There has been a long history of the intersection of medical events and political events," he shares. "The best example is that Woodrow Wilson's stroke and incapacity led to the failure of the U.S. to ratify the 1919 Treaty of Paris. I brought my perspective as a primary care physician, demanding the best care for the patient. How could 15 physicians examine President Garfield on the floor of a train station and think that was right. Where was the duty to care for the patient? I thought of all the great role models at Upstate who provided a guideline for



me: Drs. Rohner, Abildskov, Scheiss, Samson, Mueller, the Teppermans, and Harold Smulyan. Thanks, for the great education."

1966

John W. Petrozzi, of Had-donfield, NJ, and his wife, Dottie, will celebrate their 55th anniversary with a 14-day cruise from Tokyo to Hong Kong. "Although I am a high handicapper in golf, I almost shot my age last year, and I am still trying for my fourth hole in one," he writes. "What a great sport to be enjoying in my 16 years of retirement."

1967

Martin L. Cohen, of Morristown, NJ, is now officially retired. "Joan and I are snowbirds with our second home in Florida where we hosted **Charles Sitrin** and his wife, Jackie. We also spent time with them on our trip back to New Jersey. In Florida, I meet **Dan Nijadlik** for lunch. Sorry to have missed the last reunion but I look forward to the next one."

Robert S. Rhodes, of Audubon, PA, and wife Paula have moved into a retirement community and celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary in June.

1968 Reunion

October 13-14, 2023

Robert L. Bard, of New York, NY, produced the Bard Diagnostics Education Series: How to Detect and Manage Inflammation the Non-Invasive Way. He also

presented Wound Healing in Skin of Color at the NIDI Spring Symposium VIII, Evidence-Based Dermatology Lecture that was held May 19-20.

Harvey K. Bucholtz, of South Orange, NJ, and **Michael H. Ratner** enjoyed a visit in New Jersey over the Passover holiday in April. They are looking forward to their special reunion in October.



Harvey K. Bucholtz '68 with Joan and Rissa and Michael H. Ratner '68

Kenneth J. Hoffer, of Santa Monica, CA, has introduced the Hoffer QST formula using AI for calculating intraocular lens implant power for cataract surgery and its free website www.HofferQST.com, as well as the new *IOL Power Club Open Access*, a 72-chapter textbook by Springer on biometry and IOL Power. The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) in Santa Monica will be celebrated at its annual meeting in Boston, April 2024. The organization will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of its prestigious journal, the *Journal of Cata-*

ract & Refractive Surgery in Los Angeles in 2025. "At 80, I find I can still have some productive fun in this field," he writes.

Rick (Richard) B. Tenser, of Los Angeles, CA, wrote a book, *Neurovirology—Measuring, Interpreting and Understanding Viruses*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2023. "It is likely my academic swan song," he writes.

1969

Joan Tomaszewicz Dale, of Rochester, NY, writes, "Despite my age, I continue to enjoy traveling. In 2022, as soon as COVID restrictions were eased, I cruised the Rhine, treated my daughter to a 50th birthday cruise on the Seine because I wanted to visit the solitary peak in the sea that is Mont-Saint-Michel and to see Monet's gardens, and ended the year with a November wine cruise in Bordeaux."

Robert H. Osofsky, of Boca Raton, FL, and wife Susanne are now Florida residents, living at St. Andrews Country Club. They still spend five months of the year in Longmeadow, MA.

1970

Dominick Indindoli, of Plymouth, MA, is enjoying retirement fishing, golfing, and serving as the proud Papa of seven grandchildren, who are all fun and delightful. "I also enjoy cooking for family and friends and traveling with my wonderful wife," he writes.

Alexander E. Kuehl, of Amelia Island, FL, would like to express gratitude to the orthopedic surgeons and to Upstate Hospital who addressed his spinal stenosis emergency, and urges the medical alumni to be aware (both as patients and clinicians) to the growing 'epidemic' of amyloidosis, which is striking otherwise healthy older men. It is rarely diagnosed but may soon be easily treatable.

1971

Richard B. Bernstein, of Atlanta, GA, and wife Carol have a new granddaughter, Dylan Sophia.



Richard B. Bernstein '71 and his wife, Carol



Dylan Sophia, the granddaughter of Richard B. Bernstein '71

Daniel Rutrick, of West Newton, MA, switched from private practice psychiatry to research in clinical psychiatry 10 years ago. He is the medical director of Adams Clinical in Watertown, MA, which his son manages. His daughter does fundraising in Washington, DC, and his wife of 42 years is a family lawyer.

1972

Philip R. Caropreso, of Keokuk, IA, is a member of the American Legion Post 41 in Keokuk. "I was selected to be a member of the Honor Guard, which participates in burial ceremonies for veterans in Iowa's only nation VA cemetery," he writes. "Most recently I marched and fired my weapon during the Memorial Day honor event."

1973 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Joseph Maloney, of Sacramento, CA, retired five years ago and still misses his pediatric practice. "I have 13 grandkids that fill the gap," he writes.

1974

Fess (Charles) Edwards, of San Diego, CA, writes, "Noel and I celebrated 48 years of marriage in August. We met in my third year at Upstate. I am semi-retired (surgery assists only) after 40 years of group practice with Scripps Clinic San Diego in the OB-GYN department. Noel is still working as the paramedic quality assurance advisor for the city

MICHAEL A. WEINER, MD '72

Fighting Childhood Cancer

When pediatric oncologist Michael Weiner, MD '72, graduated from medical school, nearly 90 percent of children diagnosed with cancer succumbed to their illness and died. Today, some 50 years later, the cure rate is close to 80 percent. "That shift happened during my lifetime in the specialty. To be one of the early enablers to contribute to that transformation is hugely rewarding," he says.

There was no pediatric oncologist on staff at Upstate while Weiner was in medical school. But he has a vivid memory of working alongside Arlan Gottlieb, MD, the head of medical oncology, when Dr. Gottlieb had to tell the parents of a five-year-old girl that she had leukemia, a diagnosis tantamount to a death sentence. "He's telling the parents of this beautiful little girl that there's really nothing that we can do," Weiner recalls. "I thought 'here's an opportunity to do something and make a difference.'"

Weiner completed a pediatric residency at Montefiore Medical Center in New York, followed by a fellowship in pediatric hematology-oncology at New York University and additional oncology training at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. At the time, the field of pediatric oncology was in its infancy; Weiner was among the second class of physicians completing fellowship that sat for the pediatric oncology board exam, becoming among the very first to be board certified in the subspecialty.

Weiner has spent his entire career in New York, primarily at Columbia University and Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. In 1996, he was appointed the Hettinger Professor of Pediatrics and director of pediatric oncology at Columbia University Medical Center, serving in that position until 2016, when he became a vice chair of pediatrics and part of the five-member department executive committee.

Weiner has written more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and abstracts, is the co-author of *Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Secrets* (Elsevier, 2001, 2023), and led the national Children's Oncology Group Hodgkin's disease committee. Although he devised a chemotherapy regimen for osteosarcoma in the 1980s that remains the backbone of treatment today, his clinical interests primarily involved the care of children with leukemia and lymphoma, caring for nearly 1,000 children with hematological malignancies.



Wynne and Michael A. Weiner, MD '72

But his efforts haven't been limited to clinical care. In 1996, Weiner founded the Hope & Heroes Children's Cancer Fund (HHCF), a nonprofit to support patient care, clinical trials, research, and education, which has raised more than \$100 million to date for child and adolescent cancer initiatives, supporting five endowed chairs, a fellowship program, and an integrative therapies program that allows patients and families to access adjunct types of therapies such as nutritional support, and mind-body therapies like reiki and acupuncture. "We were the very first division in the country to do that, and that program continues to be the benchmark to which others are compared," he says.

Weiner admits that he largely applied to medical school to receive exemption from the Vietnam War and that he was not an exemplary student once he arrived. He attributes his acumen in his field to having a very high emotional quotient. "I was able to speak with patients and families like few others, to find a vital core of connection that resonated," he says.

In a cruel twist of fate, Weiner was diagnosed with follicular lymphoma in 2018. And then his daughter was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. After decades working in the field, he suddenly had a new intimacy and perspective on the disease.

Weiner channeled those experiences—as well as his decades as a pediatric oncologist—into a book, *Living*

"Funding for clinical trials is scarce. Our goal is to provide physician scientists an opportunity to pursue groundbreaking work that will help us move the needle to improve the cure."

Cancer: Stories of an Oncologist, Father, Survivor (Atlantic Publishing Group, 2020). "Cancer is a horrible disease. What I've realized is that even in remission, the anxiety doesn't go away. I experience it myself every time I go to have a blood test or CT scan to determine whether or not my disease is in fact in remission, it's terrifying."

That fear helps fuel his continued fight. Although he retired from medical practice in 2022, Weiner helped spearhead creation of the Hope & Heroes Research Initiative earlier this year, a seven-institution consortium to advance research and treatments for childhood cancer. "Funding for clinical trials is scarce. Our goal is to provide physician scientists an opportunity to pursue groundbreaking work that will help us move the needle to improve the cure," he says.

Two trials are already underway. The first is exploring genetic predisposition, sequencing variants that patients with cancer harbor within their genetic code that can predict who will develop cancer. "It's been shown in some adults to be the case, but it's not been studied in children," says Weiner.

The second trial is looking at genetic variants that allow patients to be receptive to chemotherapy or immunotherapy and have a successful outcome. "There are variants that are known to inhibit these treatments from working, so we're trying to identify those in the hope that we can manipulate them to make the therapy more effective," he says.

"We have more than 150 physician scientists over seven institutions working on these trials," says Weiner. "That will be my legacy."

—Renée Gearhart Levy



CLASS NOTES



Fess Edwards '74 and Noel

of San Diego. We have one son practicing anesthesia in Bethesda, and another son practicing administrative medical law in San Diego. Our youngest son died of a fentanyl overdose five years ago after struggling with substance abuse for 20 years. We finally got a granddaughter a few years ago after six grandsons. I am still involved in my passion of skydiving now for 35 years. We just set a world record for jumpers over 60 years old with a 101-person formation. I also volunteer at the San Diego Zoo, teaching guests about Sumatran tigers and African cheetahs, as well as volunteering one afternoon a week at a local food bank. We exercise almost every day riding bikes around a local lake. I ride about 25 miles, but Noel does 40 miles per day. Not bad for a couple of 70-year-olds."

1975

Joseph A. Cincotta, of Wellsville, PA, returned to Upstate in 2018 to be part of the team that started the Upstate Family Medicine Residency Program, but retired at the end of 2021. "I am pleased to report the residency program is thriving and growing," he

reports. "The second group of third-year residents will graduate in June and the residency again filled in the 2023 Match for a new class of first-year residents to start in July. After a few months of retirement, I returned to action to pay it forward by volunteering at the Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, to help teach first-year medical students in their Problem-Based Learning course. It is a privilege and a blessing as well as an opportunity to interact with students and perhaps influence a few of them to pursue a career in family medicine."

Phillip Gioia, of Auburn, NY, is working with the PNHP.org, the AAP.org, MSSNY.org, and NYSPHA.org to help create a health promoting system similar to that suggested by <https://www.nationalacademies.org/> in emerging stronger from COVID-19. Pediatrics



Philip Gioia '75 and Warren Seigel, MD

cian **Eve Shapiro '76** had a webinar June 21 with Dr. Rhea Boyd, Dr. Jane Oski (Dr. Frank Oski's daughter), Dr. Marian Earls, and Dr. Phil Verhoef, co-moderated by Dr. Sanjeev Sriram.

Joseph W. Helak, of Wilmington, NC, is mostly retired. "I welcomed a new grandson in March. Many blessings," he writes.

1977

Larry Consenstein, of Waitsfield, VT, and wife **Celeste** have been living in Mad River Valley, VT, for several years. "We were drawn here by our ski racing, then coaching daughter, and we found a great community of friends," he writes. "About five years ago, Celeste had a bad ski accident, with a spinal cord injury and destruction of her left brachial plexus. She's doing well despite that, though life can be frustrating. I'm still working a little, doing locums neonatology out of state one to two days a month. We now have grandchildren; twin boys to our son, a family practice doctor in Maryland, and a new little girl to our daughter in Vail, CO."



The twin sons of Caleb M. Cosenstein '17, grandsons of Larry Cosenstein '77 and Celeste M. Madden '77. At right, Celeste with daughter Alyssa and granddaughter Oakley.

William R. Latreille, of Malone, NY, was re-elected as Speaker of the Medical Society of the State of New York on April 23. He is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and a specialist in adult and adolescent medicine. He continues his active practice in Malone, and one day weekly at the Indian Health Service Clinic in Hogsburg (Akwesasne), NY. He has also been designated as a senior aviation medical examiner by the Federal Aviation Administration to perform flight physical examinations and issue aviation medical certificates for class 1, 2 and 3 pilots.

1978 Reunion

October 13-14, 2023

1980

Margot L. Fass, of Rochester, NY, is an activist, artist, author, educator, presenter, and psychiatrist. "A Frog House is a center, located on the Erie Canal for local advocacy, worldwide collaboration, and ecological education. We work on behalf of amphibians and

Michael Lustick, '78, of West Haven, CT, writes "I am continuing to practice child and adolescent psychiatry by consulting to schools throughout Connecticut. I will forever be grateful to Upstate for providing me the opportunity to study medicine. Working as a child psychiatrist has been one of the great gifts in my life. In my off time, I can be seen carrying my golf clubs around courses, still trying to shoot my age! Best wishes to all my classmates!"



Margot L. Fass '80

the citizens of upstate New York, advocating for chemical-free properties, clean water, and healthy wetlands. Our projects include planting trees, restoring vital habitats, and building frog ponds. We offer workshops and events for all ages to learn about the crucial role of frogs in the environment and to educate people about methods of environmental protection that they can get involved in. For more information visit afroghouse.org or contact me directly at Margot@AFrogHouse.org."

Alexander E. Weingarten, of Hollis, NY, continues to practice pain management and anesthesia on Long Island. "I remain a dinosaur

in private practice among large hospital network practices," he writes. "My practice is busy, and I enjoy my specialty."

1981

Richard M. Steinbruck, of Staten Island, NY, left private surgical practice after 30-plus years, and for five years has been full-time faculty and site director for surgery at Staten Island University Hospital's Prince's Bay campus. He and his wife, Laurie, have been together more than 40 years, and have three children and two grandchildren. "Not yet ready for retirement," he writes.

1982

Lynn E. Miller, of East Syracuse, NY, retired several years ago from a very satisfying and rewarding medical career spent mostly as an urgent care physician. Her son, Michael, is 29 years old, and a successful local business owner. It was his colic as a baby that started her journey in homeopathic medicine. The colic stopped overnight after she gave a homeopathic remedy.

She is now able to devote concentrated and dedicated time to her strong interest and passion for homeopathy, a discipline all its own that she has been studying on and off for more than 25 years. She is currently completing the two final clinical years at the Northwestern Academy of Homeopathy and will be graduating from its four-year training program at the end of 2023. She also enjoys training and competing with her two-year old Danish-Swedish farmdog. She is looking forward to spending more time traveling in her RV in the coming year and enjoys trading stocks and options. She is an avid cyclist and cross-country skier and coordinates a local group of mostly retirees who cycle about 30 miles every Friday morning in season. It was in her first year of medical school that she did her initial long-distance bicycle ride, and she has been riding ever since. "I am taking the road less traveled. I am very happy to be making a significant difference and at the same time to be enjoying life fully."



Archie and JJ, grandsons of John C. Morris '82

John C. Morris, of North Bethesda, MD, is happy to report that his wife, Laura, and their kids are well, and they are overjoyed about the arrival of their first grandchildren, Archie and JJ (Jack John). The twins arrived early and unexpectedly late Thanksgiving Eve to daughter Caroline and her husband, Mike. After a little touch and go, they are both thriving. Caroline is a nurse anesthetist at the University of San Antonio Medical Center in Texas and very busy in the O.R. Their son, Brian, is a civilian employee of the U.S. Navy

CLASS NOTES

and is completing his second year of law school at American University in Washington, DC. Laura continues to work for a third-party pension provider with the benefit that her firm switched to a full-time work-from-home model. "Due to a serious infection, I had to curtail clinical activities and research and am contemplating retirement. It is amazing how fast a career goes by," he writes. "I really miss my days at Upstate and my residency at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City."

1983 Reunion

October 13-14, 2023



Deborah Young Bradshaw '84, her son-in-law Jeremy Harding, daughter Grace, and her husband, Michael Owen

1984

Deborah Young Bradshaw, of Jamesville, NY, stepped down after 16 years as the neurology residency program director at Upstate and went to working three

days a week. "That means 40-50 hours instead of 70-80," she writes. "My main purpose in cutting back was to spend more time writing. I have a certificate degree in creative nonfiction from the Downtown Writer's Center and am working on a memoir of my family, encompassing three generations of dairy farmers in upstate New York. I row competitively with the Syracuse Chargers to stay in shape. My two daughters are grown, one married, and doing well. Life is good."

Holly D. Kent, of Bayfield, CO, shares, "Retirement is great. We have moved from Arizona back to Colorado in the southwest mountains. We are growing vegetables, fruit trees and berry bushes. Hoping to get **Lydia Grose-close** and **Linda Burrell** here for a visit!"

1986

James B. Carroll, of Bakersville, NC, is nearing 33 years in practice at Bakersville Community Health Center, the founding clinic for Mountain Community Health Center, a FQHC, where he serves as staff physician and quality director. "I have a few years to go before retirement," he writes. "When I'm not trying to catch up on chart records, my wife Bev and I enjoy travelling, mainly to South Carolina beaches and Scotland. Currently we have two cats as our 'children.' My favorite hobbies are cycling and hiking the western North Carolina mountains around Bakersville and in Scotland."



Elizabeth A. Prezio '86 and her daughter, Sarah Whitney Jenkins, MD

Elizabeth A. Prezio, of Clifton Park, NY, is proud to share that her daughter, Sarah Whitney Jenkins, MD, was awarded the Don Powell Excellence in internal medicine residency at the completion of her third year of internal medicine training at the University of Texas Medical Branch on June 2. In addition, she will be serving as chief resident in internal medicine through July 2024.

1987

Joseph T. Flynn, of Seattle, WA, is happy to announce the publication of the 5th edition of his textbook, *Pediatric Hypertension*, in January 2023. "Never thought we would make it to another edition, but we did," he writes.

Marty (Martin) J. Heslin, of Fairhope, AL, is the Mitchell Cancer Institute director at the University of South Alabama in Mobile after 25 years at UAB in

Birmingham, AL as a surgical oncologist. "I keep up with **Mark D'Esposito** with golf once a year," he writes. "My wife and I like living on the gulf coast in Fairhope, but far from friends and family in New York. I have three sons: one is a general surgery intern at University of Texas Southwest in Dallas, one an accountant in Atlanta, and one in construction science in Auburn. Come visit if in LA (lower Alabama)."

John J. Walker, of Saint Johns, FL, is enjoying retired life after practicing gastroenterology, participating in medical leadership positions, and most recently, starting up a whole person telemedicine company, ReviveHealth. He is exploring his passions of Italian language, Italian wine, and exercise.



Teresa J. Karcnik-Mahoney '88, Catherine Ann Mahoney, MD, MPH, Mary Teresa Mahoney '23, and Raymond Mahoney

1988 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Teresa J. Karcnik-Mahoney, of Middletown, NY, writes, "I traveled to Syracuse and hooded my daughter, **Mary Teresa Mahoney '23**, at commencement! We're 'all in the family' at Upstate Medical University: daughter Catherine Ann Mahoney, MD, MPH, commences PGY2 internal medicine residency at Upstate. It was also great seeing fellow classmates **Claire Bolon** and **Mike J. Lastihenos** with their new physician graduates as well! Hope to attend our 35th year reunion in October!"

1989

Stephen R. Weinman, of New Paltz, NY, writes, "My medical center has a new support animal. Nala had come to the office a couple of times and was so well received that she now comes

every day I am working. She knows how to open doors and will often make the rounds of the office to say hello to patients and staff. We warn patients and ask if they are okay with dogs, and only rarely does a patient not want a visit. Having a dog in the office seems to make everyone more comfortable, and if I forget to bring her the staff gives me a hard time. No doubt if they had to choose between myself and Nala, they would choose the friendly husky."

Stephen R. Weinman '89 with Nala



Russell Bird '93

1993 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Russell Bird, of Louisville, KY, was elected board chair of Seven Counties Services, Kentucky's leading community mental health center and behavioral health services provider. He has volunteered on the board for more than five years and is proud to support its mission to provide social safety net services, substance abuse treatment, and much more to the 30,000 plus clients served. In addition, for almost 20 years, he has practiced as a family physician as part of the Baptist Health Louisville Medical Group.

1994

Andria N. Chizner and **Michael A. Swerdin**, of Hewlett, NY, recently celebrated the graduation of their daughter, **Hanna R. Swerdin '23** in May, from Upstate Medical University. Hanna began her pediatric residency at New York Presbyterian (NYP)-Cornell in July. Andria is a pediatrician with NYP Medical Group and assistant professor of pediatrics at Weill Cornell and Michael is an ophthalmologist in private practice on Long Island. They have two other daughters, Sarah and Julia. Sarah is a PsyD candidate at St. John's University and Julia is a sophomore at Georgetown University.



Julia Swerdin, Mack Portnoy, Hanna R. Swerdin '23, Andria N. Chizner '94, Michael A. Swerdin '94, and Sarah Swerdin

Jason Lok, of Manlius, NY, was elected the 2023 New York State Society of Anesthesiologists (NYSSA) president.

CLASS NOTES

1996

Valerie K. Merl, of Los Alamos, NM, writes "**Karen A. Williams** and I are still two dopey docs after 27 years!"



Karen A. Williams '96 and Valerie K. Merl '96

1997

Shinette Sirmans-McRae, of Burlington, NJ, was appointed medical director of Merakey Behavioral Health Clinic located in Philadelphia.

1998 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

2000

Kate (Kathleen) O'Leary, shares, "I'm still happily living in Pawleys Island, SC, fully retired! I am going to vacation to Newfoundland later this summer. Going with a friend who wants to 'Follow the Vikings!' I'm just along for the ride and hiking in Gros Morne National Park."

2001

Kelly M. Willman, of Mays Landing, NJ, was appointed trauma medical director of AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center in Atlantic City, New Jersey.



Kelly M. Willman '01

2003 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

2004

Kenar D. Jhaveri, of Great Neck, NY, started a fellowship program called the Galdi Fellowship in Oncology Nephrology and Glomerular Diseases at Northwell Health. This is an endowed third-year expanded fellowship within nephrology. He is also being awarded the Distinguished Leader Award at the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) in 2023. ASN established the Midcareer Awards Program in 2019 to recognize midcareer clinicians, educators, health professionals, and researchers who have made outstanding contributions to nephrology and/or demonstrated exemplary service to the society. The award presentation will take place at ASN Kidney Week 2023, held in November in Philadelphia.

New Scholarship Honors the Memory of Andre de Corla-Souza, MD '00

A scholarship endowment has been created in memory of Andre de Corla-Souza, MD '00, who died on July 19, 2009, after a two-and-a-half-year heroic battle with colon cancer.

Dr. "Dre" grew up in India, Bahrain, and New York. He earned his undergraduate degree at SUNY Binghamton, his medical degree at Upstate Medical University, then completed residency at Winthrop University Hospital in Mineola, New York, and a fellowship at North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System, Manhasset, NY. He was certified in internal medicine, pulmonary medicine, critical care medicine, sleep medicine, and dive medicine.

De Corla-Souza was married in September 2005 to Namita Kedia, MD. They adopted a puppy the following year, named Che. After that he and Che were inseparable. He had a passion for all things outdoorsy—including motorcycles, hunting, hiking, scuba diving, and kayaking.

After being diagnosed with Stage IV colon



Andre de Corla-Souza, MD '00, hiking the Inca Trail, Peru, in 2006

cancer in 2007, he continued to live life to the fullest. He traveled with his wife to Peru, Alaska, Spain, Thailand, India, and numerous locations in the United States.

De Corla-Souza had the utmost respect for his profession and worked until he no longer had the ability to do so. Namita has said that, even

though he faced many obstacles to becoming a physician, he felt they were worth the joy of practicing medicine. Although he didn't get to practice medicine long, he truly loved being a physician. He is remembered by classmates as a funny, charismatic, intelligent man with an infectious smile and a bright outlook on life.

Beginning in 2025, the annual scholarship will be awarded to a medical student to help defray the cost of travel associated with educational and career goals. It has been said that de Corla Souza's love of life was contagious and the best way to honor him would be for each of us to live our lives to the fullest. This scholarship will honor his memory by helping future recipients explore opportunities to experience the world in new ways through travel.

If you would like to donate visit: <https://medalumni.upstate.edu/scholarshipgifts>.

MATTHEW LIEPKE, MD '00

Managing Military Medical Readiness

Matthew Liepke, MD '00, arrived at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in March 2020 to spend eight months as Division Surgeon of the U.S. Army 42nd Infantry Division during its deployment in the Middle East. As a member of the New York Army National Guard, it was not Dr. Liepke's first deployment. He served in Iraq with the 466th Area Support Medical Company in 2007, providing medical care to soldiers at a small outpost, and in Afghanistan with the 402nd Military Police Battalion in 2011, where he provided medical care to detainees.

But nothing could have prepared him for the impact of a worldwide pandemic. "A week after I arrived, everything shut down," he recalls. The 42nd Division headquarters was tasked to command the Covid Response at Army Bases in the Middle East under Army Central Command. Liepke and his team, managed the medical aspect of the U.S. Army's COVID-19 response in six countries and 14 bases across the Middle East.

"Many of these places had only a small clinic with a single physician or a PA," he says. "When faced with a patient with COVID-19, our initial protocol was to send these patients to local facilities in these countries where they could be treated. But it didn't take long for those places to become overwhelmed."

In response, the Air Force developed airplanes that were outfitted with ICU level care, equipped to keep patients under quarantine while being evacuated out of theater. "They picked patients up from only a few locations and brought them to Germany, where they could be isolated and cared for," says Liepke. "The protocols to care and transport service members, families, and civilian employees until evacuation was our responsibility."

"It was my job to make sure everybody had the resources needed to fight COVID-19, make sure that the care was appropriate, and make sure everyone was following the proper protocols," he says.

Back home, Liepke's wife, Christina Liepke, MD '00, was also undergoing trial by fire as medical director of the Oswego County Health Department, while also managing the couple's medical practice, Port City Family Medicine, and the couple's two then-teenaged sons. "It was a rough time," Liepke says.

He signed up for the Army Reserves at 18 as a source of adventure and to earn money for college. He attended Clarkson University and then came to Upstate Medical University, where he met Christina. The couple did residencies at Wright State University; she in family medicine and he in combined medicine/pediatrics. After completing their training, they moved to Oswego, New York, where they opened their practice.

Concurrent with his education and medical training, Liepke served for 11 years as an enlisted soldier before earning a commis-



Matthew Liepke MD '00, with his wife, Christina Liepke, MD '00, and their sons

sion as a captain in the Individual Ready Reserve in 2003.

After returning to New York in 2005, Liepke transferred to the New York Army National Guard and served as the brigade surgeon for the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and a surgeon assigned to the 466th Area Support Medical Company, and in various roles with the Medical Command. He served as the New York Army National Guard State Surgeon from 2016 to 2019, the organization's top medical advisor.

In July 2021, after his return from Kuwait, he took command of the New York Army National Guard's Medical Command, which oversees medical operations and healthcare issues for the 10,500 members of the New York Army National Guard across the state. "We make sure our soldiers are ready for deployment, or if there are medical issues, we come up with treatment solutions to fix it or else process orders for disability or separation," says Liepke, whose military awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the NATO Medal and the Overseas Service Ribbon. He is currently attending the Army War College and holds an MBA from Quinnipiac University.

"I like variety," says Liepke, who, in addition to his medical practice, is director of the Newborn Nursery at Oswego Hospital and a past president and vice president of the Oswego Hospital medical staff. "I get bored if I do the same thing all of the time. My military involvement has allowed me to serve while giving me experiences I'd never have had otherwise."

—Renée Gearhart Levy



CLASS NOTES

Farzad Sarmast, of Fayetteville, NY, writes "After many years in emergency rooms and urgent cares, Justin Fedore and **Eleni Kosmas '01** encouraged me to give primary care at the Syracuse VA a try. I can say I am happy they did. What's not to love about 30-minute visits with veterans of all ages who have war stories and generally like to talk about cars, boats, and man caves. I feel at home. Cheers!"

2005

Elissa G. Yozawitz, of Bronx, NY, recently published a paper in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on recent advances in classification and treatment of neonatal seizures.

2008 Reunion

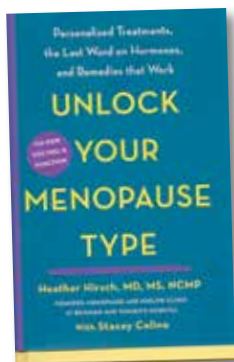
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2009

Ijeoma Anyanwu-Emamezi, of Bronx, NY, and her husband welcomed their first child, son Noah Victory Emamezi on May 14.

2010

Heather Hirsch, of Pittsford, NY, published her first book, *Unlock Your Menopause Type* (St. Martin's Press, 2023) and was featured alongside Oprah Winfrey, Drew Barrymore, and Maria Shriver for Oprah's *Live Your Best Life* series. She recently opened a telemedicine practice focusing on women's health in midlife and menopause. Learn more at heatherhirschmd.com.



2013 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Justin P. Meyer and **Jenny A. Meyer**, of Jamesville, NY, are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Lana Beth Meyer, born on March 9. Big brother Pike is three years old. They both work at Upstate, in psychiatry and neurology (respectively). "We are looking forward to the Reunion in October," they write.



Lana Meyer, daughter of Jenny A. Meyer '13 and Justin P. Meyer '13. At right, Lana with big brother Pike.

2017

Brandon Simonetta, of Tempe, AZ, will be completing a spine surgery fellowship at Sonoran Spine in Arizona this July and joining The Orthopedic Clinic surgery group in Daytona Beach, Florida starting in August.



Brandon Simonetta '17

2019

David A. DiStefano, of West Henrietta, NY, writes, "**Matt Barra '19**, **Clarke Cady-McCrea '21**, **Pat Castle '22** and myself, are current orthopedic residents at the University of Rochester. We were all on call one weekend, forming a SUNY powerhouse team tackling the trauma call over a busy weekend. We are all proud of the grittiness that



Heather Hirsch '10 (third from right) appeared on Oprah's *Live Your Best Life*, to discuss menopause medical care.



Matt Barra '19, Clarke Cady-McCrea '21, Pat Castle '22, and Dave DiStefano '19

going to a state medical school has instilled in us and feel that quality has helped us thrive in residency. The photo is of us in the ED call room we affectionately call 'the pit.'"

2023

Mary T. Mahoney, of Middletown, NY, shares a photo from commencement this past May. "Three classmates of the graduating class of 2023 were hooded by their parents who were all Upstate College of Medicine class of 1988 classmates, small world!"



Christopher J. Lastihenos '23, Michael Lastihenos '88, Teresa J. Karcnik-Mahoney '88, Mary T. Mahoney '23, Claire Bolon '88, and Emily D. Speck '23

Residents

John M. Barry, of Portland, OR, was elected president of the Clinical Society of Genitourinary Surgeons.

Nathaniel John Castro, of Sartell, MN, was made chief of cardiac surgery at the Centracare Heart and Vascular Center in central Minnesota in October 2019.



Nathaniel John Castro, HS '08

The center was doing 500 pump cases a year before the pandemic.

Melissa L. Jones, of Peckville, PA, became engaged to Michael Zschoche in July 2022. She is a ballroom dancer and recently won two competitions. She competes in Bronze American Smooth, which is waltz, tango, foxtrot, and Viennese waltz. She won a regional competition in Greenwich, CT, in February and the larger interregional competition in Mystic, CT in May. She moved back home to Pennsylvania after being away for 13 years and is excited to be near family and to begin a new job in June as an outpatient pediatrician at the Honesdale Pediatric Center in Honesdale.

Betsy (Elizabeth) Rosenthal, of Larchmont, NY, has been retired for nine years from her dermatology practice and remains active in the NY Metro chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program. She is delighted with her three granddaughters.

Jeffrey S. Sneider, of Jamesville, NY, retired from clinical out-patient practice in July 2019. He is still working at Menorah Park, a nursing home, and is active with the County and State medical societies.

I N M E M O R I A M

1954

KEITH R. DAHLBERG, of Kellogg, ID, died April 27. Dr. Dahlberg served a year of internship and one year of residency in both surgery and obstetrics. From 1957-1962, he worked for the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society as medical superintendent of the newly re-opened Kengtung Christian Hospital in Burma. After a military coup in 1962, the Burmese Government refused him re-entry and he moved to Thailand, where he opened a new hospital in Maesariag, Mae Hong Son Province. He returned to the U.S. in 1967 and joined a medical practice in Kellogg, ID. Dahlberg went into private practice in Wallace, ID, in 1974. He returned to Thailand from 1977-1981, and then returned to Idaho and practiced in Pinehurst until he retired. Dahlberg was survived by his wife, Lois; daughters Susan, Patricia, and Nancy; son John; nine grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

1956

ARTHUR STOCKMAN, of Syracuse, NY, died May 31. Dr. Stockman was recruited by **Fred Roberts, MD '42** to join what became Roberts, Charles, Stockman, and Starr, one of the top pediatric practices in Syracuse from 1962 into the 1990s. He served as medical staff president at Crouse-Irving Memorial Hospital, chairman of the department of pediatrics at Community General Hospital, and associate dean and clinic professor at Upstate. He established local allergy and pediatric clinics. After 30 years of pediatric practice, he began a second career as medical director of Rome Hospital and Murphy Memorial Hospital in Rome, NY, then returned to Syracuse and Community General to serve as medical director and vice president of medical affairs. In his third career,

he served as a physician surveyor for the Joint Commission for 13 years until he retired at the age of 80, although he continued to mentor medical students and advocate in the courtroom for under-served youth in Florida. Stockman was survived by his children, Steve, Gary, Linda, and Mike; stepchildren Susan, Rob, Jana, and Kerri; and more than 12 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

1959

DAVID A. SCHEER, of Scottsdale, AZ, died November 13, 2022. Dr. Scheer joined the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Salina, KS. After his service, he moved to Mahopac, NY, where he began what would become a thriving medical practice in pediatrics. He later moved to Scottsdale and partnered with another doctor in another successful pediatric practice. He practiced well past the traditional retirement age and was recognized as a "Top Doc" in local media. Scheer was survived by his four children.

1961

EDWIN H. DOMBROWSKI, of Swansboro, NC, died October 9, 2021.

NELSON P. TORRE, of Williamsville, NY, died April 22. Dr. Torre had a private practice in internal medicine and rheumatology in Buffalo. He was affiliated with Sisters of Charity Hospital, where he served as medical staff president in 1987 and was chief of medicine and director of the internal medicine residency program from 1989-1998. He was the founding medical director of the Daemen College physician assistant program, serving from 1994-2007, and was on clinical faculty from 1986-2007. He worked at the National Institutes of

Health in 1992-93. Torre served as a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, 1966-68. Torre was survived by his wife, Joyce; daughters Christine and Pamela; sons Nelson and Douglas; and 11 grandchildren.

1962

ALBERT J. OLSZOWKA, of River Forest, IL, died February 26. Dr. Olszowka was a medical researcher and professor emeritus at the University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine. After completing his medical degree, he entered the Army as a doctor and served in New Jersey and Germany with the rank of captain. After his service, he became an assistant professor in the physiology department and advanced to full professor at University of Buffalo Medical School. He was a researcher who studied athletes for blood oxygen and carbon dioxide levels. He also worked with NASA on several space shuttle flights to study exercise physiology in zero gravity to help astronauts acclimate more quickly after they returned to earth. Olszowka was survived by his wife **Janice '63**; sons Peter and Paul; and five grandchildren.

HENRY JOSEPH ROBIDOUX, JR., of Barrington, RI, died October 11, 2022. Dr. Robidoux served in the U.S. Navy. He was a renowned oncology surgeon at Rhode Island Hospital until his retirement. Robidoux was survived by his wife, Susan; and family.

1964

STANLEY L. ALTSCHULER, of West Berlin, NJ, died January 8. Dr. Altschuler was survived by his wife, Trudy; daughter Marly; son Jonathan; stepchildren Jess and Matthew; and six grandchildren.

ROBERT M. SPURGAT, of St. Joseph, MO, died March 26. Dr. Spurgat completed a one-year internship at Ancker Hospital in St. Paul, MN. He served in the military through the public health service, Indian Health Service on the Crow Agency in Montana from 1965-1967 with temporary duty on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter, Bering Strait. Following his service, he completed a two-year residency in internal medicine at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, and a one-year fellowship in chest disease. After fellowship, he joined Internal Medicine Associates. In 1985, he became a fellow in the American College of Chest Physicians. He was medical director of respiratory therapy at Heartland Hospital from 1980-1999 and president of the medical staff during 1991-1992. He served on the board of directors of Heartland Centre from 1986-1990. Spurgat was survived by his wife Susan; daughter Lynn; and son Michael.

1966

CHARLES E. CLADEL, of Laconia, NH, and Hummelstown, PA, died February 21. Dr. Cladel did a rotating internship at Marion County General Hospital in Indianapolis and his first year of psychiatric residency at the Indiana University College of Medicine. He then spent two years in the Air Force in Alaska serving military men and families at the Elmendorf Air Force base in Anchorage during the Vietnam War. After his service, he completed residencies in general and child psychiatry at the University of Michigan. He then moved to Hummelstown, PA, where he helped establish the family psychiatry program at the Hershey Medical Center before building a private practice in child psychiatry. He served on the staff of Holy Spirit Hospital, where he was chief of psychiatry for many years. He retired at the age of 80.

Cladel was survived by his wife Nancy; son David; daughter Anne; one granddaughter; and three step-grandchildren.

1968

VINCENT A. ANDALORO, JR., of Lexington, MA, died May 31. Dr. Andaloro served in the U.S. Army as a reserve officer while completing an internship and residencies at Georgetown University Hospital, Boston Medical Center, and Upstate. He practiced medicine for more than 40 years, first at Norwood Hospital, then at Boston VA Medical Center, and at Lahey Hospital. Andaloro was survived by his wife, Patricia; sons Vincent and Steven; daughters Judith and Mary; 14 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

1969

DIANE GIAMBO LORUSSO, of Rye, NY, died March 8. Dr. LoRusso was a senior founding partner of Rye Radiology, caring for patients for over 45 years. Specializing in women's imaging, she was chosen by her peers in Castle Connolly's 'Top Doctors' in diagnostic radiology more than two decades and earned special recognition as one of the 'Exceptional Women in Medicine.' LoRusso was survived by her husband, Patrick; her daughter; her son; and four grandchildren.

DONALD H. JACKSON, of Denver, CO, died January 22. Dr. Jackson completed a residency in internal medicine and a two-year tour in the U.S. Army Medical Corp at Tripler Army Medical Center. He then joined the faculty at the University of Rochester as an assistant professor of medicine. He practiced cardiology in Rochester, NY, Memphis, TN, St. Louis, MO, and Topeka, KS. He supported missionaries around

the world. Jackson was survived by his son, David; daughter Laurie; and two grandsons.

LINDA K. PIER, of Syracuse, NY, died April 17. Dr. Pier worked as a radiologist at several private and public practices. She held positions in Syracuse at Upstate Medical University, Crouse Hospital, VA Hospital, and at Roswell Park in Buffalo. She was an early advocate for women's imaging and gave many presentations. Pier was survived by her husband, Bruce; sons Greg and Dave; and four grandchildren.

1978

ARTHUR D. NEWKIRK, of Blue Hill, ME, died February 9. Dr. Newkirk served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Korea, teaching earth science laboratories at a teacher's college. Following medical school, he completed a three-year family practice residency in Bangor, ME, and moved to Blue Hill, where he practiced for 31 years. He also taught the next generation of doctors at the residency program in Bangor. Newkirk was survived by his wife, Joyce; son Owen; daughter Margot; and four grandsons.

1983

DOUGLAS L. SEIDNER, of Shaker Heights, OH, died August 21, 2021. Dr. Seidner was survived by his wife, Mary Dee; sons Matthew and Greg; and one granddaughter.

1985

KARL GAUSS, of Tully, NY, died September 17, 2022. Dr. Gauss was a primary care physician in internal medicine for 34 years. He was an adjunct faculty member at Upstate Medical University, educating generations of doctors, nurse practition-

ners, and physician assistants. He was also an aviation medical examiner and pilot. Gauss was survived by his wife, **Paula '85**; and children Erich, Kurt and Elsa.

1989

ERIC M. VAN ROOY, of Farmington, CT, died April 26. Dr. van Rooy completed an internship at the Yale University-New Haven Medical Center, followed by his residency in radiation oncology at Upstate Medical University in 1994, where he was chief resident and an American Cancer Society-Clinical Oncology Fellow. He was board certified in radiation oncology in 1996. He was affiliated with St. Francis Hospital for more than 25 years and was the medical director of the department of radiation oncology since 2008. van Rooy was survived by his parents, Marie-Claire and Jean-Pierre van Rooy; sisters Ann and Martine; and six godchildren.

2019

BRADLEY MIDDLETON, of Syracuse, died June 27. He was a third-year resident in emergency medicine at Upstate. Beloved by colleagues and patients, Dr. Middleton collapsed at home three days before his residency graduation. He was survived by his wife, Liz; two daughters and a son.

Resident

RICHARD J. BLAIR, of Manlius, NY, and North Palm Beach, FL, died April 7. Dr. Blair graduated from Loyola University and Medical School. He specialized in nuclear medicine and radiology. He worked at Upstate Medical University, Crouse Hospital, and St. Luke's Hospital in Utica. He also taught while at Upstate University Hospital. Blair was survived by his wife, Andrea; son Richard; daughter Jolene; stepchildren Kelly, Thomas, and David; 10 grandchildren; and three great grandchildren.

MICHAEL J. BLOOM, of East Amherst, NY, died January 2. Dr. Bloom was survived by his children Joshua, Rebecca, Andrew, and Eric; and one grandchild.

HILDA DERZAKHARIAN-HELLER, of Cardiff, CA, died March 29, 2020.

KENNETH E. HOOGS, of Tully, NY, died October 11, 2020. Dr. Hoogs attended Wake Forest Medical School and completed his residency at Upstate Medical University in 1969. He practiced urology in Syracuse for more than 40 years before retiring in 2012. Hoogs was survived by his wife, Sharon; daughters Celeste and Sharryl; sons Ken, Anthony, and Barry; eight grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

JOSEPH T. THORNTON, of Camillus, NY, died April 29. Dr. Thornton graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine, followed by specialty training in obstetrics and gynecology at Upstate Medical University. He practiced medicine for more than 30 years at St. Joseph's and Community Hospitals, serving as the department chair at both. Thornton was survived by his wife, Joan; sons Michael and Thomas; daughters Joan, Patricia and Susan; eight grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

WILLIAM R. WELCH, of Osterville, MA, died February 15, 2022. Dr. Welch was a recipient of Navy ROTC scholarship. He was commissioned as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy. He sailed with the Navy to Japan and was stationed at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in New Hampshire. He earned his medical degree from Duke University School of Medicine and completed his anatomic pathology residency at Upstate Medical University and became a Diplomate in anatomic pathology in 1975 so he could practice medicine as a surgical pathologist. From 1975 to 1979, he was a staff surgical pathologist with an emphasis on gynecological pathology at Massachusetts General Hospital, followed by a similar appointment at Brigham and Women's Hospital from 1979 until his retirement in 2021. Welch also served as a consultant staff pathologist at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and as associate professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School. He was survived by his wife, Laurel; and his stepdaughter, Jennifer; and family.

Faculty

ROGER P. GREENBERG, PhD, of Fayetteville, NY, died May 17. Dr. Greenberg held the rank of Distinguished Professor at Upstate Medical University, where he headed the division of psychology in the department of psychiatry until his retirement several years ago. He served as a psychologist on the faculty at Upstate for more than 50 years. He was survived by his wife, Vicki; son Michael; and two grandchildren.



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