

Syracuse University Honors Mantosh Dewan, MD, HS '79, with Honorary Degree

Syracuse University honored Mantosh Dewan, MD, HS '79, with an Honorary Doctor of Science degree during its May 10 commencement ceremony, recognizing a career that has shaped mental healthcare, medical education, and research across Central New York and beyond.

As president of Upstate Medical University and the Alan and Marlene Norton Presidential Chair, Dr. Dewan has advanced clinical psychiatry, neuroimaging, psychotherapy and access to care while helping position Upstate as a regional leader in innovation and public health.

Dewan began his career at Upstate in 1975 as a mixed medicine/psychiatry intern, becoming chief resident in psychiatry before joining the faculty as an assistant professor. Over the decades he has served as director of undergraduate education, director of residency training, chair of the Department of Psychiatry, and interim dean of the College of Medicine from 2016 to 2017.

His scholarly work includes more than 80 papers, 35 books and book chapters, and hundreds of presentations on topics ranging from brain imaging and the economics of mental healthcare to psychotherapy and medical education. His research has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the Health Resources and Services Administration. He also co-edited *The Difficult to Treat Psychiatric Patient* and *The Art and Science of Brief Psychotherapies*, a bestseller now in its third edition and translated into five languages.

Dewan's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic helped transform Upstate's role across SUNY. Under his direction, the University developed a highly sensitive saliva diagnostic test and provided more than four million tests to 60 SUNY campuses, enabling the system to remain open for in-person learning. Syracuse University partnered directly with Upstate in the effort. Upstate



Syracuse University Chancellor Mike Haynie with Upstate President Mantosh Dewan, MD, HS '79, at Syracuse University Commencement, where Dr. Dewan received an Honorary Doctor of Science degree.

also now provides telepsychiatry diagnostic and treatment services to students at 56 SUNY campuses. More recently, Dewan launched Upstate Biotech Ventures with \$6 million in seed funding to cultivate biotech companies incubated at the medical center.

A Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Dewan has received numerous honors, including the APA's George Tarjan Award, designation as an "Exemplary Chair" by SUNY, Syracuse University's Chancellor's Medal in 2021, and an honorary degree from Onondaga Community College. He is also an affiliated professor at Jönköping University.

Norton College of Medicine Graduates 176 New Physicians

The Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine celebrated the graduation of 176 new physicians during Commencement 2026, awarding a total of 192 degrees and certificates, including 14 master of public health degrees and three MD/PhD degrees.

Nine graduates earned both MD and MPH degrees.

Sharon Brangman, MD '81, a nationally recognized leader in geriatric medicine and elder care, delivered the commencement address.



Upstate Graduates First Class from Accelerated Three-Year MD Pathway

Upstate Medical University graduated the first students from its accelerated three-year medical school pathway (3YP) this spring, marking a milestone for a program designed to reduce both the time and cost of medical training.

The 3YP allows students who commit early to a specialty and residency at Upstate to complete medical school a year ahead of the traditional schedule.

Nine students were part of the inaugural class. Tyler Swanson, MD '26, now an internal medicine resident at Upstate, says he applied to the pathway to save both time and money.

"It was exciting to be a part of the first cohort of the 3YP," Swanson says. "It allowed me to complete my medical training without worrying about where I would end up and allowed me to focus on whatever I was interested in without trying to look good for residency programs."

Although the accelerated schedule meant working through summers, Swanson says the benefits outweighed the demands.

"3YP has allowed me to not only save a year of tuition but also save a year of my life," he says. "The path to becoming a doctor is already a very long and expensive journey, so any place to save is a great benefit in the long run."

Currently, the 3YP is available for emergency medicine, family medicine, general surgery, internal medicine, neurology, pathology, pediatrics, psychiatry, radiation oncology, and urology. Students apply directly into a residency pathway at Upstate or at UHS in Binghamton.

3YP Director Zachary Shepherd, MD '12, says students can apply to the program by January of their first year of medical school. Participants take the same core courses as four-year students, with only some electives eliminated. Students who decide the pace is not right for them can return to the traditional four-year track.



Daniel Lundy, MD '26, and Tyler Swanson, MD '26, were among the first students to graduate from Upstate's accelerated three-year MD program.

Willie Underwood III, MD '94, Inaugurated as 181st AMA President

Willie Underwood III, MD '94, MPH, a urologic surgeon based in Buffalo, New York, was sworn in June 9 as the 181st president of the American Medical Association (AMA), the nation's largest and most influential physician organization.

Dr. Underwood pledged during his inaugural address at AMA Annual Meeting to unite physicians across specialties to advance patient care, strengthen the physician workforce, and ensure that physicians' clinical expertise helps shape the policies affecting health outcomes nationwide.

"We are living through a defining moment in American healthcare, one that demands leadership grounded both in clinical experience and in a commitment to equity," said Underwood. "As president, I will focus on bringing physicians together to close the gaps in access, outcomes, and opportunity so that every patient, in every community, receives the care they deserve. We must build a system that works, not only for some of us, but for the sum of us."

A surgeon, educator, and advocate, Underwood has spent his career fostering collaboration among physicians to address complex health challenges. As only the second urologist and third Black physician overall to serve as AMA president, he is committed to advancing patient-centered

care and addressing longstanding health disparities through improved access, prevention, and coordinated care.

"Progress in healthcare is never the work of one individual; it is the product of collaboration, trust and a shared commitment to our patients," Underwood said. "At the same time, we must recognize that advocating for patients also means advocating for the physicians who care for them, ensuring they have the support, resources and environment needed to meet the growing demands of this moment."

Underwood brings more than 25 years of urologic surgery experience to the role, including 15 years specializing in robotic urologic oncology procedures. He was first elected to the AMA Board of Trustees in 2019 and served as board chair from 2023 to 2024.

Underwood is a graduate of Morehouse College and Upstate Medical University. He earned master's degrees from Upstate and the University of Michigan School of Public Health. He completed medical training in general surgery and urologic surgery at the University of Connecticut Health Center and was one of the first five urologists to be admitted into the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program.



Willie Underwood III, MD '94

Upstate Medical Students Judge Regional Science Fair

More than a dozen Upstate Medical University medical students traded classrooms for science fair aisles this spring, serving as judges for a regional competition at Syracuse's Museum of Science and Technology.

The students reviewed more than 100 projects submitted by nearly 200 Central New York students, with winners advancing to the International Science and Engineering Fair in Phoenix.

Projects covered topics ranging from plastic polymers and carbon footprints to electrolytes, diagnostic delays in heart attack prevention, space travel and artificial intelligence.

"It was a great opportunity to see not only how passionate the students are in the Syracuse community, but also how advanced some of these projects are," says Brian Ganeles '28. "It's amazing to see the passion and interest of these students at such a young age."

Leah Solomon '28 says the competition helps spark interest in STEM fields early.

"I think it's really important that our young people get involved and interested in STEM fields at a young age, especially with the shortage we have in STEM fields and medicine," she says.

Jayne Charlamb, MD, who helped recruit the student judges, says the experience benefits both the competitors and the medical students.



Students who participated as judges for the regional science competition included, from left, Leah Solomon '28, Hannah Robins '29, Estelle Khairallah '27, Jack Michaels '28, Maggie Markgraf '27, pictured with Upstate Professor Jayne Charlamb, MD, HS '99.

"Having our medical students participate here creates a connection," Dr. Charlamb says. "Younger students can see what's possible, and it reminds our students why they chose careers in science and medicine."

Robert Cooney, MD, Retires; Jason Wallen, MD, MBA, Named Interim Chair of Surgery



Jason Wallen, MD, MBA

Thoracic surgeon Jason Wallen, MD, MBA, has been named interim chair of surgery at Upstate Medical University following the retirement of longtime department leader Robert Cooney, MD.

Dr. Wallen, chief of thoracic surgery since 2017, succeeds Dr. Cooney after nearly two decades of leadership that expanded the department's clinical, research and educational footprint.

"I am grateful to Dr. Wallen for serving in this interim position," says Lawrence Chin, MD, dean of the Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine and the Robert and Molly King Endowed Professor of Neurosurgery. "Under his leadership, our thoracic surgery program has expanded the use of robot-assisted lung cancer surgery, leading to remarkable recoveries for our patients."

During his tenure at Upstate, Wallen has participated in numerous initiatives, including the general surgery residency program and the Department of Surgery's Quality ICU Steering Committee and Robotic Surgery Committee. He has also overseen significant growth in the use of robotic surgical techniques.

His research on early-stage lung cancer and robot-assisted lung cancer surgery has appeared in publications including the *Journal of Oncology Practice*, the *Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery*, and the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Among his honors is the Upstate Gold Standard Award, recognizing his professionalism, mentoring and commitment to colleagues and patients.

Cooney led the Department of Surgery—one of the university's largest—for nearly two decades, helping expand subspecialty services including trauma, pediatric, oncologic, transplant, thoracic and cardiovascular surgery while supporting the region's only Level 1 Trauma Center.

He also established a Division of Surgical Research, recruited PhD and clinical investigators, and fostered collaboration with basic science departments. His own research has focused on trauma and sepsis.

"We thank Dr. Cooney for his steadfast leadership of the Department of Surgery, his role in expanding services, and his dedication to patient care and training the next generation of surgeons," Chin says.

Stewart Loh, PhD, Named Chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Stewart Loh, PhD, has been named chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Upstate Medical University after serving as interim chair.

Dr. Loh joined the Upstate faculty in 1996, was named professor of biochemistry and molecular biology in 2008, and served as vice chair of the department from 2011 to 2023.

"Dr. Loh is an accomplished investigator and educator whose work exemplifies the strength of Upstate's research enterprise," says Lawrence Chin, MD, dean of the Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine and the Robert and Molly King Endowed Professor of Neurosurgery. "His leadership and vision will be instrumental as the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology continues to advance discovery and train the next generation of scientists."

Loh has maintained an active research program continuously funded by the NIH, the U.S. Department of Defense, and private foundations. His laboratory develops strategies for converting ordinary proteins into molecular switches that can be used for biosensing, cellular regulation, and targeted therapies for viral and other diseases.

His most recent NIH award is a \$3.1 million, five-year grant to investigate the molecular origins of amyloidosis, a group of diseases caused by protein misfolding in the bloodstream.

Loh has authored or coauthored nearly 100 peer-reviewed publications and received two Upstate President's Awards for excellence in teaching and research.



Stewart Loh, PhD

Upstate Awarded \$16.7 Million to Study ADHD Treatment Strategies

Upstate Medical University has received a \$16.7 million grant from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to lead what is believed to be the largest clinical trial contract in the University's history.

The study will examine whether children with ADHD achieve better long-term outcomes when treatment begins with stimulant medication or a non-stimulant alternative. Led by ADHD experts Stephen V. Faraone, PhD, SUNY Distinguished Professor in the Departments of Psychiatry and Neuroscience and Physiology and vice chair for research in the Department of Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical University; and Jeffrey H. Newcorn, MD, professor of psychiatry and pediatrics and director of the Division of ADHD and Learning Disorders at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the trial will enroll approximately 1,700 children and adolescents ages six to 16 at seven sites across the United States.

Researchers hope the findings will help families and clinicians make more informed treatment decisions for ADHD, a condition that affects millions of children nationwide.

"Our study has the potential to reduce the amount of stimulant medication prescribed to youth with ADHD by providing long-term data about the effects of stimulant and non-stimulant medications on outcomes that are important to patients and their families," Faraone says.

ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental conditions in childhood, yet treatment decisions remain challenging. Current guidelines overwhelmingly



recommend stimulant medications as the first-line therapy. While stimulants can be highly effective, they do not work for every child and may cause side effects such as appetite loss, sleep difficulties, or mood changes.

Concern also has been raised about long-term use, potential misuse or diversion, and recent nationwide stimulant shortages. Non-stimulant medications are available and effective for many children, but they are typically used only after stimulant treatment fails. As a result, many children who might do well with a non-stimulant begin treatment with a stimulant unnecessarily. This study addresses a major gap in evidence by directly comparing stimulant-first and non-stimulant-first approaches.

Upstate President Mantosh Dewan, MD, HS '79, and SUNY Chancellor John B. King present an award to Dr. Faraone in honor of his \$16.7M contract to conduct a landmark ADHD medication study.