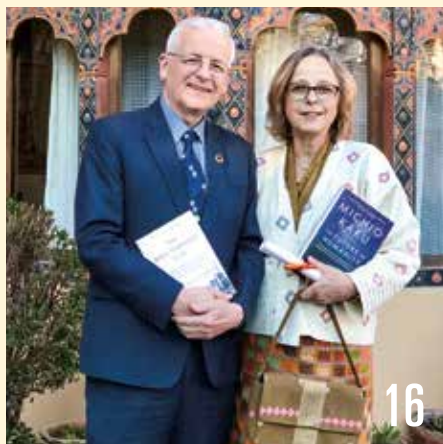


UPSTATE MEDICAL Alumni JOURNAL

SPRING 2023 PUBLISHED BY UPSTATE MEDICAL ALUMNI FOUNDATION



TRAINING
PUBLIC HEALTH
LEADERS



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

Phone: 315/464-4361
Fax: 315/464-4360
Email: norcrossp@upstate.edu

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ON THE COVER:

Christopher Morley, PhD, chair of the Upstate Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, with MD/MPH students Christine Ortiz and Samantha Hanley

Matthew Glidden, MD '03, Named Chief Quality Officer for University Hospital

Matthew Glidden, MD '03, was appointed chief quality officer for Upstate University Hospital, effective December 22, 2022.

Dr. Glidden had served as interim chief quality officer since June 2021. In that capacity, Glidden redesigned Upstate's Quality Management System and championed efforts to develop data-supported strategies to improve quality. He also actively championed efforts to reduce overall and sepsis-related mortality, and was an active partner in Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) efforts.

"We are fortunate to have Dr. Glidden in this important role at Upstate," says Chief Medical Officer Amy Tucker, MD. "He has made great contributions to our quality mission in his interim role, and we look forward to further successes ahead."

Glidden serves as chair of multiple Upstate quality committees, including the Quality Management Oversight, Weekly Event Review, and Clinical Quality Improvement Committees.

Glidden joined Upstate Medical University in 2006 and has served as the director of the Internal Medicine Clerkship, the medical director of Utilization Management and Clinical Documentation Improvement, and as the associate chief medical officer.

A graduate of the Norton College of Medicine, Glidden remained at Upstate to complete an internal medicine internship, residency, and chief residency. He has received numerous awards for his work and leadership, including the Faculty Gold Standard Award, Upstate President's Award, Best Hospital Award, and Resident Teaching Award.



Matthew Glidden, MD '03

Upstate Medical Students Bring Books and Inspiration to Local Elementary School

Students from Upstate Medical University's chapter of the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) distributed dozens of books to students in kindergarten through third grade at Van Duyn Elementary School in Syracuse as part of their outreach efforts to instill in students that anything is possible for anyone.

The children's books, which were donated during an early semester book drive and distributed November 30, reflected a rainbow of multicultural inspirational stories that kids could read and likely see their reflection in the pages.

"Books that reflect who you are are so important to children at this age," said Julian Yeboah, a second-year medical student from Brooklyn. "I know from my own experience how important these opportunities are."

In addition to reading to the classes, the medical students also spoke about the work and education it takes to succeed in the medical field and in science when the principal asked each to highlight the educational journey that had brought them to medical school.

"She made us all realize the sacrifices and determination each of us has invested in our studies," Yeboah said. "I think that helped her students understand what it takes to succeed."

On its Facebook page, Van Duyn thanked the Upstate students for the visit: Our stu-



Nakeia Chambers, Upstate's director of multicultural affairs and student inclusion, center, and second-year medical students, from left, Tiara Jennings '25, Angelina Ellis '25, Julian Yeboah '25 and Phoebe Ilevbare '25 in the library at Van Duyn Elementary School with the books they donated.

"Books that reflect who you are are so important to children at this age. I know from my own experience how important these opportunities are."

—Julian Yeboah '25

dents were "thrilled to speak with the future doctors and to hear their journey to medical school. The books, autographs and time will remain a treasure in all of our hearts."

SNMA is a national organization aimed at supporting future students from underrepresented populations to enter medical school. The organization at Upstate is supported by Nakeia Chambers, Upstate's director of multicultural affairs and student inclusion.

Findings of Upstate-led Clinical Trial Provide New Treatment Options

A clinical trial led by Upstate Medical University radiation oncologist Jeffrey Bogart, MD '89, may have major implications for the treatment of small cell lung cancer.

The study, "High-Dose Once-Daily Thoracic Radiotherapy in Limited-Stage Small-Cell Lung Cancer," was published January 9 in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*.

About 30,000 people are diagnosed with small cell lung cancer each year, which accounts for about 15 to 20 percent of all lung cancer patients.

The Bogart-led clinical trial was the largest trial in limited-stage small cell lung cancer ever performed, including more than 700 patients throughout the United States from 2008 to 2019. Results showed similar outcomes and long-term survival in patients treated with once-a-day versus twice-a-day radiotherapy. Previously, the twice-a-day regime was recommended as standard, but only 15 percent of patients nationwide opted for twice-daily radiation treatments due to the challenge of coming in for appointments two times each day.

Bogart says that a higher dose of radiation given once a day over seven weeks showed no statistical difference in survival rates than the twice-a-day regimen. He

says technology today is much more advanced than it was 30 years ago, allowing very focused treatment with image guidance that can produce targeted radiation, resulting with fewer side effects.

Bogart says the study's publication in the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* has the capacity to change care.

"It is one of the top cancer journals in the world, with high visibility and oncology physicians will see the study outcomes and it will impact the patterns of care," he says. "It allows patients a real choice, understanding that there may be some differences in side effects, or their ability to complete the longer therapy, but now they know both regimens can be associated with good outcomes," he said.

Bogart says the next step in assessing the benefit of this treatment protocol is to look at subpopulations, for example, based on gender or age.

"The goal over time is to get away from the one-size-fits-all approach to now offer better, more personalized therapy," Bogart says. "The findings of this study move us in that direction. Our findings need to be confirmed in subsequent trials, but it can provide a lot of information to help design future trials as well."

Upstate Foot Care Program Wins Community Hope Award from Rescue Mission Alliance

Upstate Medical University's Helping Hands for Forgotten Feet, which provides monthly footcare and health screenings to women and men experiencing homelessness, was honored by the Rescue Mission Alliance with a 2022 Community Hope Award.

Helping Hands for Forgotten Feet (HHFF) was started by a group of Upstate medical students about 10 years ago and is now one of Upstate's Service-Learning groups. Run by four student leaders, a group of first- and second-year medical students meet monthly at the shelter to run the clinic with the help of Barbara Feuerstein, MD '84, associate professor of medicine, who oversees the program, and several local podiatrists who volunteer their time.

Dr. Feuerstein, an endocrinologist at the Joslin Center, does a general health screening that includes a diabetes screening with the help of the students. She says men and women who experience homelessness often



Accepting the award from the Rescue Mission Alliance are medical students Dominique Alexis '25, Elsa Diaw '26, Jessica Leipman '25, Rachel Fisher '24, Julie Ehrlich '23, Anna Kanter '24 and Simone Seward, director of Upstate's Center for Community Engagement.

have foot issues because they are on their feet all day, often wearing old shoes that are either too small or too big and without a way to care for their feet. The clinic provides services from bathing to nail and callous trimming, to fungus and wound care and neuropathy care.

Second-year medical student Dominique Alexis says the clinic serves about 20 to 25

patients each month. Recently, a return patient addressed a volunteer by name and asked to be screened by him.

"It was a small interaction, but I think that it is a testament to the program being a consistent and trusting place for these individuals and to our student volunteers who are dedicated to serving," Alexis says.

Feuerstein says students treat the patients with amazing respect, dignity, and care. "They open their hearts to them," she says.

The Rescue Mission Alliance is thrilled with contributions of

the clinic volunteers, said Mackenzie Naum, senior director of development, regarding the award.

"This team is an important piece of putting love into action here in the Syracuse community," Naum says.

Upstate Awarded \$1.1 Million to Establish Suicide Prevention Center

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY HAS

received \$1.1 million in federal funds to establish a Suicide Prevention Center to provide better access to effective prevention and treatment strategies for high-risk youth and young adults in Central New York.

The primary mission of the new center will be to create and foster a continuum of care, from primary prevention to case identification to early intervention to recovery-based treatment. The center will coordinate and expand current cutting-edge interventions developed and applied at Upstate, and also support the prevention initiatives currently being planned in school districts across Central New York through training, outreach, and other activities.

“With all of our current efforts, and now the grant to help coordinate them, I am hopeful that we can move the needle on suicide here in Onondaga County,” says Robert Gregory, MD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences. “We have many efforts in diverse directions but there isn’t a single umbrella they all fall under. To have the entire spectrum of a continuum of care that’s well coordinated would be a great goal.”

According to Gregory, suicide rates among youth and young adults have almost doubled in frequency since 2013 and Onondaga County has one of the highest suicide rates overall in New York state.

“There has been a problem with either long waiting lists or a revolving door where people are stuck in chronic depression and other illnesses,” Gregory said. “They go in and out of the hospital or in and out of CPEP for suicide, too often ending in death or despair or losing hope through that cycle.”

The Suicide Treatment Center is the newest of Upstate’s ground-breaking initiatives.

In 2017, Gregory started the Psychiatry High Risk Program (PHRP) for suicidal youth and young adults, an innovative program focused on transformatonal healing and recovery, using an evidence-based treatment called dynamic deconstructive psychotherapy, which was also developed at Upstate. The



Robert Gregory, MD, at podium, speaks about the establishment of a suicide prevention center at Upstate.

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.

Additionally, Upstate is New York’s principal site for the Zero Suicide (ZS) Initiative. As part of the initiative, Upstate established universal suicide screening protocols and safety planning in its adult emergency rooms and psychiatric units. In 2019, the ZS initiative was expanded to the adolescent behavioral unit.

In 2020, Upstate helped expand a brief, innovative, evidence-based treatment program called Attempted Short Suicide Intervention Program (ASSIP) for adults attempting suicide. ASSIP has been shown to reduce suicide attempts and hospitalizations in high-risk adults. Upstate is one of the leading institutions in the U.S. providing ASSIP to suicidal individuals and is a site for a National Institute of Mental Health grant further evaluating its effectiveness.

In 2020, Upstate also established the first partial hospitalization program for suicidal adolescents in the region, and involves daily application of dialectical behavior therapy for adolescents (DBT-A), for teens, and their families. DBT-A is the most firmly established treatment for suicidal adolescents and is an important component in a continuum of care. Upstate also established a dedicated interventional psychiatry program for adults suffering from treatment-resistant depression and suicide ideation, adding enhanced electroconvulsive therapy, transcranial magnetic stimulation, and vagal nerve stimulation services, and instituting an esketamine treatment program. Upstate was one of the sites for the initial development of vagal nerve stimulation therapy and one of the only clinical sites offering ongoing programming on a wide scale.

“We should be proud of our efforts at Upstate,” Gregory said. “We have some extraordinary faculty members who have made great strides in suicide prevention. We are really at the forefront.”



Infectious disease expert Kristopher Paolino, MD, left, says the treatment center will strengthen the care for patients with Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. Dr. Paolino participated in a press conference with U.S. Rep. John Katko in July 2021. Katko was instrumental in bringing funding for the treatment center to Upstate.

Upstate To Launch Multidisciplinary Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Treatment Center

Upstate Medical University will launch a Multidisciplinary Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Treatment Center, thanks to a \$898,000 grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration.

The center will centralize and supplement Upstate's existing resources for combatting tick-borne disease, including the Vector Biocontainment Laboratory, which is devoted to studying both vector-borne and zoonotic pathogens. This preexisting expertise will allow Upstate to devote federal funding for the design, construction, and equipment costs associated with establishing the center.

The tick surveillance program at Upstate has tested more than 27,000 ticks since it began in 2019, and about a third of those ticks have been found to carry one or more pathogens or disease-causing organisms.

"We have an increased number of patients who require treatment for tick-borne diseases and we need better education, not only for patients, but for providers on how to identify some of these diseases we are seeing," says Kristopher Paolino, MD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology and a specialist in Lyme disease care. "Having a Lyme disease and tick-borne disease clinical center will be a way to provide patients and providers the tools they need to protect themselves and also encourage patients to seek appropriate treatment in a timely manner. The longer someone goes with untreated Lyme disease the more likely they are going to have chronic symptoms."

The new center will be multidisciplinary in approach. Represented specialties will include infectious diseases, rheumatology, neurology, physical and occupational therapy, pain management, psychiatry, and integrative medicine. Additional specialties will be engaged as required. Using this approach, diagnostic and treatment plans will be highly coordinated, will improve care efficiency, and move patients toward faster recovery.

"We have an increased number of patients who require treatment for tick-borne diseases and we need better education, not only for patients, but for providers..."

—Kristopher Paolino, MD



James Knoll, MD

James Knoll, MD, Elected President of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law

Upstate's James L. Knoll, IV, MD, has been elected as the 49th president of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law (AAPL), an organization of psychiatrists dedicated to excellence in practice, teaching, and research in forensic psychiatry.

Knoll joined Upstate in 2006 and is professor of psychiatry and director of forensic psychiatry. He serves as clinical director of Central New York Psychiatric Center, a secure inpatient forensic psychiatric hospital in Marcy, New York, and has served as an expert witness in cases of national prominence such as the "Cleveland strangler" serial murder case of Anthony Sowell, and the "137 shots" Cleveland Police shooting case.

Knoll is emeritus editor-in-chief of *Psychiatric Times* and has been widely published on the subject of mass violence. He serves as committee chair on threat assessment for the Onondaga County School Safety Task Force, is an affiliate fellow of the International Criminal Investigative Analysis Fellowship, and teaches basic psychiatry and the law to FBI agents at the National Academy in Quantico.

Upstate Research Leads to Patent for Saliva Concussion Test

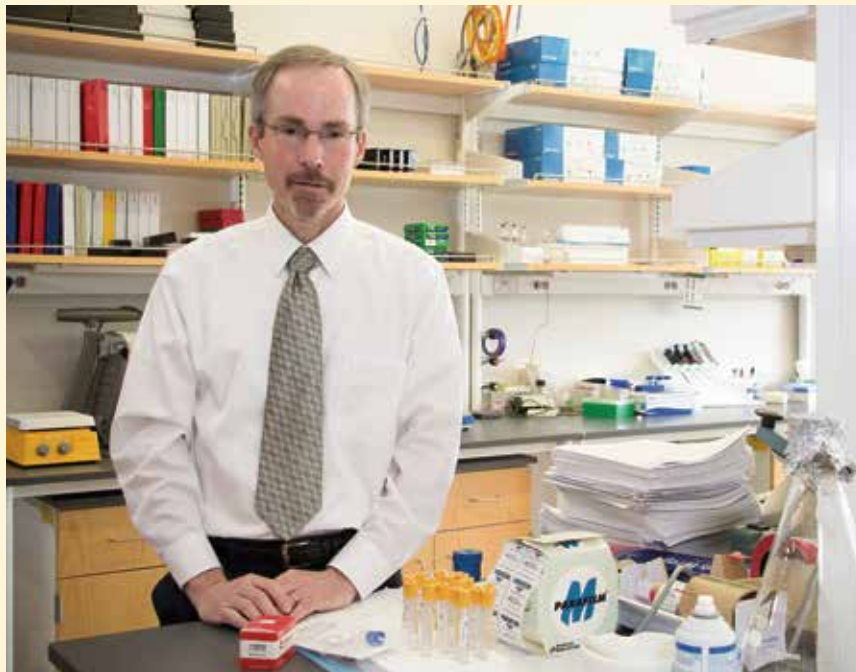
A patent for a saliva test used to analyze and predict the occurrence of mild traumatic brain injury and concussion symptoms that was developed through research at Upstate Medical University and Penn State College of Medicine has been awarded to Quadrant Biosciences, SUNY Research Foundation, and Penn State College of Medicine. Quadrant is a StartUP NY company based at the Central New York Biotech Accelerator.

The patented research was led by Upstate Professor Frank Middleton, PhD, and Steve Hicks, MD/PhD '12, now at Penn State College of Medicine, and focused on young adult and pediatric populations, who are most at risk for head injuries. Hicks earned his doctorates and completed his residency at Upstate.

"Our motivation for developing this technology was to prevent further harm to the kids, athletes, and adults who experience mild, moderate, or repetitive head impacts," says Middleton. "While most of the field has focused on peripheral blood measures, for the past decade we worked extensively to establish the utility of quantifying small RNA molecules in saliva as predictors of concussion or long-lasting symptoms from head impacts."

The patent is a transformative piece of intellectual property that Quadrant is using to develop its Clarifi™ mTBI Saliva Test, expected to be available in late 2023. Quadrant has started discussions about potentially licensing this technology to third-parties.

This is the second patent awarded in less than one year to Quadrant and its partners. In March 2022, a patent was issued from the USPTO for its development of a saliva-based, epigenetic autism diagnostic aid; this same technology received FDA Breakthrough Device designation in April 2021.



Upstate's Frank Middleton, PhD, played a key role in the development of a saliva test for concussion that was awarded a patent for Quadrant Biosciences, Penn State College of Medicine, and the SUNY Research Foundation.

Kathryn Anderson, MD, PhD, Named Onondaga County Health Commissioner

Upstate infectious disease expert Kathryn Anderson, MD, PhD, began a four-year term as Onondaga County health commissioner on November 7, 2022.

Dr. Anderson, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, was part of the Upstate team that put together the first model of how COVID-19 could spread through Central New York in the early days of the pandemic and became integrally involved helping Onondaga County officials in their response to COVID.

Anderson was recruited to Upstate in 2019 by Timothy Endy, MD, MPH, and Stephen Thomas, MD, who had been colleagues at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in Maryland. She also previously

worked at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Anderson's research includes field epidemiology and respiratory viral disease spread and transmission, including extensive research on Dengue, a mosquito-borne virus common in the Caribbean, Central and South America, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Anderson earned her MD and PhD in epidemiology at Emory University and completed residency in internal medicine/global health at the University of Minnesota.



Kathryn Anderson, MD, PhD

An Ounce of PREVE

Upstate's Norton College of Medicine is committed to training the next generation of public health leaders to address issues ranging from local infant mortality rates to worldwide pandemics.

BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

As a landscape architect working in land planning and design, Meghan Hazer Álvarez, MS, MPH '15, was frustrated that her work for private design firms might actually be reinforcing some of the environmental injustices she was so concerned about. She set out to get her master's degree from the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) in Syracuse, drafting a thesis proposal on exposure to greenspace and human stress.

Then she learned that neighboring Upstate Medical University offered a master's degree in public health (MPH). After sampling a few classes, Álvarez decided to pursue dual degrees. "It seemed a natural fit," she says. "Designers focus on the connection between design and how it affects environmental outcomes and human behavior, while public health focuses, in part, on how behavior and environments affect human health outcomes."

Álvarez says learning about built environment factors, social determinants, and health outcomes was like finding a missing puzzle piece. Since earning her degrees, she has served as a public health consultant for design projects and pursued



grant-funded research investigating the degree to which health can be prioritized alongside sustainability in green building platforms. She is currently a city planner for the Baltimore City Department of Public Works, where she integrates public health concepts into stormwater planning work.

"Whether someone cares about the environment or people, it is critical to understand how decisions we make to shape the built environment affect both," she says.

NOTION



As a city planner in Baltimore, Meghan Hazer Álvarez, MS, MPH '15 (left and above), incorporates public health concepts into her work in stormwater planning.



Erica Bird, MPH '18

A more typical MPH student is Erica Bird, MPH '18, who started working in public health when she joined the National Health Corps (AmeriCorps) after college and was placed in the Allegheny County Health Department in Pittsburgh. She later became a project coordinator in the chronic disease prevention program, and, looking to gain skills in program development and evaluation and data analysis, enrolled in Upstate's MPH program.

As part of her studies, Bird interned with the Madison County Health Department, working on a project to address the high burden of lung cancer. "The experience enhanced my ability to translate research into recommendations for effective programs and policies," she says.

It also landed her a job. After earning her degree, she accepted a position as a health statistician with the department. Today, she serves as the deputy director of public health for Madison County. "I use skills learned in Upstate's MPH coursework every day," she says.

Upstate's MPH program was launched in 2009 by the Norton College of Medicine to prepare students to investigate and manage public health problems from a population-based perspective. While all MPH degree programs have a similar mission, the Upstate program is rare in being part of a medical school, rather than a school of public health or some other location within a university. With the Norton College of Medicine an established provider of physicians to the Central New York region, the goal was to become equally integral to public health training.

The many facets of public health work include conducting scientific research, tracking disease outbreaks, studying statistics related to health outcomes such as nutrition, vaccination, or alcohol and drug use, and using that information to create science-based solutions to problems, as well as communicating that information to the public in a way that leads to adoption of healthy behaviors.

"Public health and medicine are parallel pathways that don't necessarily function in overlapping ways," says Christopher Morley, PhD, chair of Upstate's Department of Public Health and Preventive

Medicine. “While medicine is focused on individual patient care and diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health looks through a population or community-based lens to address problems. The location of the MPH program within the Norton College of Medicine automatically provides students with opportunities that are different from many

other programs because of access to our clinical programs, hospitals, and a wide variety of research areas.”

Dr. Morley has been involved with the MPH program since the planning stages, along with Martha Wojtowycz, PhD, director. The idea for the program began germinating shortly after Public Health and Preventive Medicine was reestablished as a department within the Norton College of Medicine in 2006. The MPH program accepted its first students in 2009. The following year, the joint MD/MPH program was established, and accepted its first dual-degree students in 2010.

Over the course of its first dozen years, the program has expanded from a general curriculum to one that allows students to choose from three tracks of study: public health methods; population health for clinicians; or global health and translational science.

“Our students come from varied backgrounds and have different career goals,” says Wojtowycz. “Having these tracks designed around our areas of strength helps students get the training they desire to achieve those goals. The commonality is that they all have an interest in thinking about the population as a whole rather than individual patients.”

DEVELOPING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

The program attracts three main groups of students: those who are strictly MPH students, attending full or part time; medical students at Upstate who have chosen to pursue a dual MD/MPH degree; and Upstate Public Health Scholars, a pathway program for students from under-represented, historically repressed, or disadvantaged backgrounds to earn admission into the MD program, intended to diversify medicine.

“The Public Health Scholars Program has shifted my perspective on health and deepened my understanding of the pathophysiology of disease,” says Samantha Hanley, MD/MPH ’25. “It has been eye opening yet heartbreaking

“It has been eye opening yet heart-breaking to see how factors outside the traditional boundaries of healthcare delivery shape and propel disease. Health truly does start within our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities.”

— SAMANTHA HANLEY, MD/MPH ’25



Kyle Plante, MD '20, MPH '16,
chief resident in family medicine
at Northwestern University



to see how factors outside the traditional boundaries of healthcare delivery shape and propel disease. Health truly does start within our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods and communities.”

Now a second-year Upstate medical student, Hanley says her goal is to adopt a public health approach to medicine to address the psychosocial symptoms that precipitate and drive illness. “I believe that working to bridge the gap between traditional medicine and public health will ultimately lead to more effective and equitable healthcare,” she says.

Kyle Plante, MD '20, MPH '16, also completed his MPH through the Public Health Scholars program before enrolling in the Norton College of Medicine. “When I was considering the program, I met with Dr. Morley, who sat down with me and discussed the things that I could do with an MPH degree and the skills that I would learn through the program. I had always been interested in health services and outcomes research, and the program offered many opportunities to explore this field more,” says Dr. Plante, who is currently a chief resident in family medicine in the Department of Family and Community Medicine of Northwestern University.

“Having the training in public health and preventive medicine provided an extremely valuable lens through which to view medical school. Without that experience, I am not sure if I would have ended up in a primary care field or within academia.”



“While medicine is focused on individual patient care and diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health looks through a population or community-based lens to address problems. . . .”

— CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, PHD

Medical students who enroll as MD/MPH students begin their programs with a year of MPH coursework, followed by four years of medical school. Those who choose to pursue an MPH later typically pause their medical studies for a year to complete the public health curriculum and then resume medical school.

One of those is Nicole Cifra, MD/MPH '16, MHPed, who recently graduated from an adolescent medicine fellowship and is now an attending physician at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and a specialist in eating disorders. “I started medical school thinking I would do primary care pediatrics but became interested in getting an MPH during my first year to develop a context for my medical practice on a larger scale, focusing on prevention, systematic issues that impact health, health communication, and advocacy,” she says.

A spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics, Cifra says one of the most important things she took from her public health education was knowledge about health



Nicole Cifra, MD/MPH '16, MHPed, is a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

communication. “The only media training I received was during the MPH program, which was also critical in developing my interest in the eating disorders field.”

Regardless of the pathway, there is no separation among different types of students within the program. “They enter as a cohort and are purposefully mixed up for group activities,” says Telisa Stewart, MPH, DrPH, associate director of the MPH program. “Every individual has a set of experiences and training that is unique to them. We want a whole host of perspectives to yield a more robust learning experience.”

That diversity mimics the interdisciplinary nature of public health. “When we have class discussions, it’s great to see multiple views of the problem at hand,” says Wojtowycz. “What is the clinical view? What is the social work perspective? What are people trained in education bringing? What are people trained in sociology or economics bringing? And we also have students from other countries, so we often get an international perspective.”

All MPH students complete a clerkship-like experience, called the Applied Practical Experience (APE), based on their interests. These range from working with bench science researchers to translate that information to public health, to working in the hospital

doing quality improvement projects, to working at county health departments on projects ranging from lead poisoning and maternal-child health to case management of radon and asbestos exposure. Students in the global health track can work locally with refugee communities or at sites abroad.

As part of their APE, they also produce two high-quality “deliverables,” such as adapting existing agency publications to be culturally appropriate, writing a grant application, or creating a handbook. Joshua Anbar, MPH ’15, DrPH, recalls working on a series of grand rounds about the imple-

mentation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. “This experience, along with a legion of others, broadened my perspective on understanding how public health research is implemented into patient care as well as highlighting the critical role physicians and other healthcare providers play in communicating public health information to the community at large,” he says. Anbar went on to earn a doctorate in public health and is an assistant teaching professor at the College of Health Solutions at Arizona State University, where he teaches courses on healthcare administration and policy.



Joshua Anbar, MPH '15

“Given the leadership role Upstate has played with COVID response, students have received first-hand exposure to dealing with a public health crisis.”

— CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, PHD

In addition to the full degree program, the department also offers a Certificate of Advance Study in Public Health, earned by taking any 15 credits in the program. “This is a popular option for mid-career professionals, including people working in public health who wish additional training as well as for working clinicians,” says Morley. Residents in Upstate’s new family medicine residency at Community General Hospital are given the option to

complete the CAS in public health as a component of their training.

This summer, a new micro-credential will be offered to medical students, a two-course introductory sequence in epidemiology and biostatistics. “They will learn some basic concepts and then do a project that demonstrates they understand them,” says Wojtowycz. “The goal is to help them learn key concepts to more critically interpret medical literature and apply that to their patients.” Students who complete the sequence will receive a special designation on their transcript and diploma.

While he values the mix of all students who come to the program, Morley says the MD/MPH students provide one important validation to its value: an extra year of education and tuition. “These are students who already have a very long path, and in many cases, substantial student debt. The fact they are willing to add to that to earn an additional degree speaks volumes,” says Morley.

PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Norton College of Medicine graduated its first MPH students in 2011 and its first dual degree MD/MPH students in 2012. A decade-plus later, there is no doubt about the success of the endeavor. Students in the program don’t just earn a credential, they become part of a community of public health professionals who seek each other out for advice and expertise. “I can’t tell you the countless numbers of students who reach out wanting to get some insight into a particular project or issue that they’re working on,” says Stewart. “Sometimes those students bring us on to collaborate on projects.”

In addition to the cadre of graduates working in the field, the creation of the MPH program has paid dividends throughout the College, strengthening the research profile of faculty and the preventive health components of the medical school curriculum.

“Historically, medical education has focused on human anatomy and on diagnosing and treating disease,” says Stewart. “More recently, clinical medicine fields have started to understand how much public health influences

“We can best serve our communities when we are able to properly share important information on health problems in culturally sensitive ways, such as when we have to convey the importance of vaccination.”

—CHRISTINE ORTIZ, MD/MPH '25



Christine Ortiz, MD/MPH '25, and Samantha Hanley, MD/MPH '25, are earning dual degrees in public health and medicine through Upstate's Public Health Scholars Program.

human behavior, health impacts, and peoples' ability to adhere to prevention and treatment protocols. When we are teaching medical students, we are bringing our real-world expertise and tailoring it to their needs.”

The Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine has been part of every incident command at Upstate related to COVID-19, and more recently, RSV. As a result, faculty members have initiated various research projects related to the rollout of vaccines and vaccine acceptance that have involved MPH students. “Given the leadership role Upstate has played with COVID response, students have received first-hand exposure to dealing with a public health crisis,” says Morley.

That was evident to Christine Ortiz, MD/MPH '25, a first-generation Dominican-American student who earned her degree through the Public Health Scholars program and is currently a second-year Upstate medical student. “Getting a public health degree in the middle of the pandemic was very eye-opening in terms of the work that goes into preventative medicine and public health, especially in communicating with communities that are historically underserved,” she says. “We can best serve

our communities when we are able to properly share important information on health problems in culturally sensitive ways, such as when we have to convey the importance of vaccination.”

If the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated anything, it's the importance to build the infrastructure of a strong public health workforce trained to analyze health data and statistics, create programs and evaluate their effectiveness, and to understand how social determinants and environment impact health behaviors and outcomes.

“This has become a pinnacle point for the field of public health,” says Stewart. “It's not just COVID, but RSV, flu, and in our area, the increase in tick-borne illnesses, and a whole host of other emerging problems. It became evident that people needed to have specific public health skills to address health issues on a population level, such as training on evidence-based health messages, behavioral change science, data and analytic skills, and epidemiological surveillance, to name a few. We've seen an increase in people coming forward as they realize they need this additional training and we're excited to teach them these skills.” ■

Public Health in ACTION

It's a given that doctors pursue medical careers because they want to help people. But when physicians want to influence health on a larger scale, they often look to public health careers. Long before Upstate Medical University offered a master's in public health program, Norton College of Medicine graduates have sought out the credential to impact health care at the population level. Here are a few of their stories.

PROFILES BY RENÉE GEARHART LEVY

Bradley Woodruff, MD '80, MPH

NUTRITION EPIDEMIOLOGIST

Wheat flour in much of the Western world is fortified with both iron and folic acid since the association between folic acid insufficiency and neural tube defects was discovered 25 years ago. In Vietnam, fish sauce is fortified with iron to combat anemia.

Making the fortification of staple foods by manufacturers mandatory is typically the result of data from epidemiological micronutrient studies conducted by experts such as Bradley Woodruff, MD '80, MPH.

An epidemiologist and international health and nutrition expert, Dr. Woodruff has spent nearly four decades working in the field of international population health, the last half focused on nutrition and micronutrient assessment.

"There are a lot of mistaken ideas about public health that are not based on data," he says. "I see my mission as gathering data that can be understood by program decision makers and then used to implement or modify programs and interventions that are based on scientific evidence," he says.

Dr. Woodruff did not set out to have a public health career. He was in his second year of surgical residency at Upstate Medical University when the GMENAC report was released, a comprehensive study of medical manpower needs in the United States for the next 10 or 20 years.

Woodruff was dismayed to see that there was an oversupply of general surgeons in the areas of the country he was interested in living and working. "There were two logical paths: pursuing a surgical subspecialty or moving somewhere that I didn't want to go to," he recalls. "I didn't want to do either."



Bradley Woodruff, MD '80, MPH (center), in Kosovo during the refugee crisis in 1999.

What he wanted to do—after four years of medical school and two years of residency—was to travel. He left his residency and ended up volunteering at mission hospitals in Benin and Kenya. “That’s where I realized that curative medicine didn’t really make much difference in the overall health of a population,” he says. “Sure, you can make a difference in one person’s life, but if you really want to make a big difference, it’s public health all the way.”

Woodruff returned to the United States to pursue a master’s degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University, with a concentration in epidemiology and global health. He was then accepted into the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)’s two-year Epidemic Intelligence Service training program, which he followed with a one-year preventive medicine residency at the CDC in Atlanta.

Woodruff was hooked. Although he was assigned to the CDC’s hepatitis branch from 1989 to 1996, he was regularly “borrowed” to respond to humanitarian emergencies around the world. “Many of the missions were at the request of a UN agency, often UNICEF. And UNICEF at heart is not really a public health agency, so they don’t really know what epidemiologists do,” he says. “I would hit the ground and figure out what UNICEF was responsible for and what role I could play.”

In Goma, Zaire, for example, UNICEF had responsibility for supervising centers for unaccompanied children. “These were basically orphanages for children whose parents had died of cholera or dysentery,” says Woodruff. “There were 12 or 13 such institutions with very little coordination or health supervision among them.”

Woodruff made himself health coordinator, visiting

each site, making recommendations, and establishing a surveillance system for illness and death to centralize records and monitor health status.

In 1996, Woodruff officially joined what had become the International Emergency Refugee Health Branch, his work becoming increasingly focused on nutrition assessment, having worked on a major nutrition assessment of Palestinian refugee camps in the Middle East; conducted health needs assessments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan after their civil wars; and investigated adolescent and adult malnutrition in Kenya and Nepal.

Having narrowed his area of interest and expertise, he joined the CDC’s International

Micronutrient Malnutrition Assessment program in 2004 as the senior medical epidemiologist, conducting nutrition surveys in Papua New Guinea and Jordan.

Woodruff retired from the CDC in 2007 and continued the same type of work independently as a consultant, assisting with nutrition and micronutrient assessment surveys of Georgia and Mongolia. In 2011, he joined forces with two colleagues from Geneva who had formed a consulting company to assist with nutrition research and evaluations. Although the COVID-19 pandemic put a temporary hold on travel, they recently completed a micronutrient assessment survey in Montenegro.

“We’re providing the facts, and then we’re formulating those facts into specific recommendations for that population and that government,” he explains.

Woodruff, who now lives in Victoria, British Columbia, has received numerous service honors from the United States Public Health Service for his work, as well as the Secretary’s Award for Distinguished Service from the Department of Health and Human Services in 2000, the Charles C. Shepard Award for Outstanding Scientific Contribution to Public Health in 2003, and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Upstate Medical Alumni Foundation in 2010.

He says the pandemic has demonstrated the need for public health practitioners. “We will need public health practitioners forever to assist in the detection and control of communicable disease outbreaks,” says Woodruff. “And even more so, we need well-trained experts for monitoring the consequences of poor nutrition and chronic disease and designing interventions to prevent these consequences.”

Lori Fantry, MD '85, MPH

HIV EXPERT

As a young internist caring for homeless patients in Baltimore in the early 1990s, Lori Fantry, MD '85, MPH, was inundated with patients with HIV. "It was overwhelming," she recalls.

While many physicians were afraid of treating patients with HIV/AIDS, Dr. Fantry chose to make it her focus. She left her position as director of the internal medicine residency program at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center to join the Baltimore City Health Department, serving as medical director of the city's Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Program and running the Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) program. But it didn't take long for her to become frustrated by the lack of progress. "The people were great, but it was a system where it was hard to make any breakthroughs," she says.

Seeking the skills to set policy and be a leader in the sphere of public health, Fantry earned her master's in public health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, followed by a fellowship in infectious diseases at the University of Maryland Medical Center. She joined the faculty of University of Maryland School of Medicine, and for nearly 20 years, ran the Evelyn Jordan Center, which served some 2,000 HIV patients annually, most of them indigent. "Having my MPH was what really prepared me to do that," she says.

In addition to treating patients in the clinic, Fantry focused on quality improvement. Years before the advent of EPIC, she created an electronic record system specific to HIV for the clinic. At the same time, she became involved with HIV medicine both regionally and nationally, serving as a committee member of the American Academy of HIV Medicine, as a peer reviewer for the National Institutes of Health for HIV/AIDS clinical trials and research, and for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Center for AIDS Research.

Fantry says the motivation for her work was simple: the patients. "These are people who in many cases are not accepted by society. They're so grateful to have a doctor who will actually talk to them as a person," she says. "It's not all medical; it's about respect."

In 2016, Fantry and her husband, George Fantry, MD '84, left Baltimore for Tucson, Arizona, where they both joined the University of Arizona College of Medicine: George as Dean of Student Affairs and Lori as professor of medicine, and associate clinical director, Infectious Diseases Division. She currently is the HIV clinical and education programs director. She also served as the HIV Translational Research Program Director and medical director of the Banner Refugee Screening Clinic and Pacific AIDS Education Training Center.

Despite her extensive expertise, Fantry says she faced a steep learning curve treating a different patient



Lori Fantry, MD '85, MPH

population. In Baltimore, her patients were primarily poor, black, and had acquired their infections from injection drug use, while in Tucson, many were Hispanic and the majority had acquired HIV from sex with other men. The patient population is also much more transient. "Treating STI's has become a bigger focus of what I do here," she says, which included 20 cases of Monkeypox last August and September.

One of her major efforts has been working with the Pima County Health Department to give out HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis, HIV-1 PrEP. "In 2018, we did a survey and found that only 20 percent of people knew there was a medication to prevent HIV," Fantry says. This helped raise awareness and help led the health department to start a PrEP program, which launched January 31, 2022.

Another research project focuses on the use of statins to reduce the risk of heart disease in people with HIV, part of a multi-center, multi-nation study.

Fantry says the advent of successful medications and treatment protocols for HIV has changed her work from trying to save people's lives to mostly preventive medicine. "I'm focused on anal cancer and colon cancer screenings, heart disease and bone loss," she says. "Maybe that's my public health mindset."

Penny Borenstein, MD '88, MPH

COMMUNITY HEALTH LEADER

Following her first year of medical school at Upstate Medical University, Penny Borenstein, MD '88, MPH, spent the summer volunteering at a family planning center in Columbia, South America. As a fourth-year student, she did an elective rotation with the director of the Onondaga County Health Department and another working at a rural health clinic in the Philippines. "Culturally, the practice of medicine was quite different," she says. "It furthered my notion that healthcare was only a piece of what contributes to the health and wellness of communities."

After medical school, Dr. Borenstein began a residency in pediatrics at the University of Connecticut. But she realized her interests were more aligned with public health and stopped after one year, switching to a residency in preventive health at the State of Maryland Department of Health, which included getting her master's in public health at Johns Hopkins.

Borenstein spent the next seven years working in the Baltimore City Health Department, including posts as director of the Bureau of Immunization and assistant commissioner of health. She then spent six years as health officer for Howard County, Maryland.

Since 2008, Dr. Borenstein has served as health officer/public health director for the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department in San Luis Obispo, California. In all of her posts, she has kept a hand in clinical medicine, whether practicing part-time pediatrics, working in reproductive health or immunization clinics, or treating patients with tuberculosis.

"I have found it to be a nice marriage of understanding what individual patients experience with the healthcare system, and also doing a lot of policy work at a community or population level," she says. "Both are important to me, but doing the population health management has been very rewarding to see wholesale improvements and communities experience better health models."

One of those is tobacco policy. San Luis Obispo was the first community in the world to ban smoking in any business environment. Before the state of California passed a similar law, the community banned the sale of flavored vape products. "Those kinds of things really impact morbidity and mortality," she says.

For two years, Borenstein was totally focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including substantial pushback on COVID restrictions, mask

wearing, and vaccinations. "People think of California as liberal, but the northern part of the state is quite conservative and geographic areas differ greatly in their response to COVID. Our county is a 50/50 mix," she says.

Borenstein says she tried to counter that pushback with consistent messaging that came from a scientific or medical perspective. She was honored for her tireless efforts, steady leadership, and calming influence on the community with the 2020 Physician of the Year Award from the Central Coast Medical Association and with the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce's inaugural Community Excellence Award in 2022.

Although she still has a team working on COVID response, Borenstein is grateful to have returned to normal operations over the last six months, focusing on efforts to improve community-wide health in other areas, such as opioid addiction, dementia prevention, and addressing obesity.

"For a long time, we thought health education was the most important thing to do, but I have learned that it is not sufficient," she says. "You can provide information to people, but you also have to provide the environment and the social norms to make behavior change easier for people. It's not enough to say, 'eat healthy so you'll avoid adult-onset diabetes,' you have to work with schools to provide healthy lunch options. You have to locate fresh produce stores in communities that don't otherwise have access. You have to make it affordable for communities to buy the healthy options they need. Those actions make it possible for people to take the information you're providing and actually make changes in how they live."

Celine Costello Daly, MD '84, MPH

CREATING INTERNATIONAL PROTOCOLS

In the 1990s, the AIDS epidemic ravaged parts of Africa and Asia. Major global efforts were launched to provide access to prevention, treatment, and care. For 25 years, Celine Costello Daly, MD '84, MPH, was on the front lines as a public health specialist in HIV/AIDS/STI and reproductive health, working in Malawi, India, Bhutan, Thailand, Cambodia, and other Asian countries.

In various locales and capacities—either as a consultant to an NGO or as a program director—Dr. Daly worked with governments to set policies, train providers, secure medications, and conduct research. "The goal was to get programs up and running and to train providers on the latest protocols. We did research to determine the best approaches and then made adjustments based on evaluation of program effectiveness," she says.

It was literally a world away from the career as a small-town doctor that Daly imagined for herself when she came to Upstate Medical University. During her family medicine residency at Middletown Hospital in Connecticut in the 1980s, she undertook a research project on prophylactic treatment for tick bites. "It was the early



Penny Borenstein, MD '88, MPH

days of Lyme disease,” she recalls. “That was my first foray into looking at the big picture and thinking about disease patterns, prevention, and optimizing treatment.”

By the time she completed her residency and began receiving job offers, she knew she wanted a different path. She was also burned out from medical school and residency and wanted time off. “People told me I was going to ruin my career by not going directly into practice, but I didn’t care. I wanted an adventure,” she says.

Daly bought an open airline ticket and traveled to Kathmandu, where she had arranged to volunteer as a doctor on a trek to Everest base camp. After that, she backpacked throughout Asia, and then connected with a nonprofit to work with Eritrean refugees in Sudan, and later, at a village health clinic in Kenya.

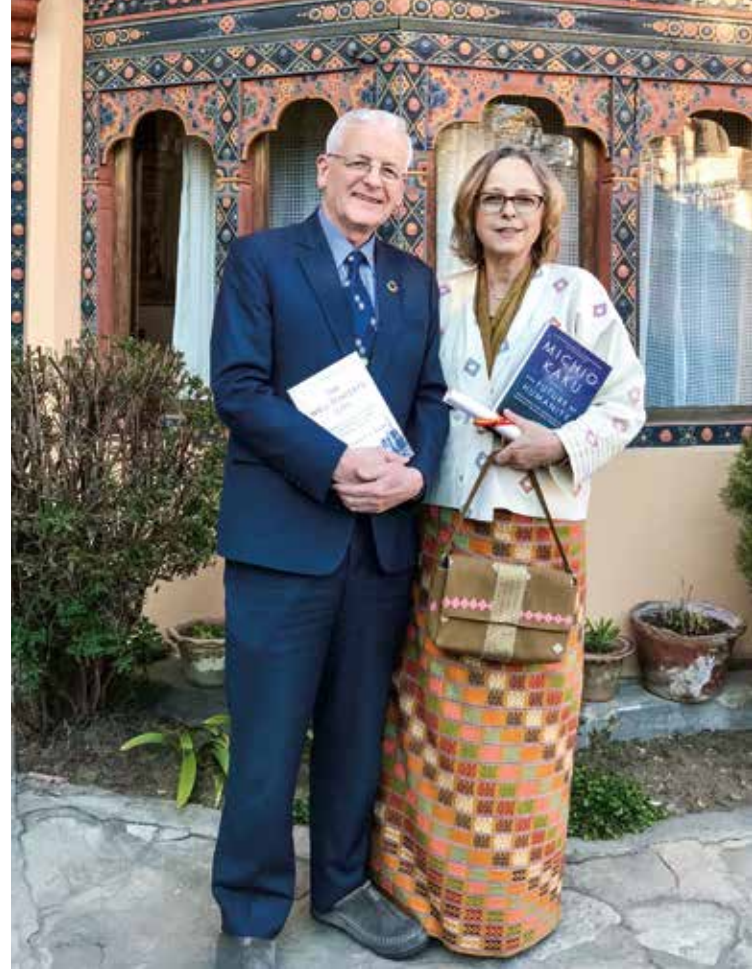
It was there that she met the man who would become her husband, a career United Nations professional. It was clear that their life together would be spent overseas. “Everything I was doing in Africa at that point was essentially as a volunteer and it was becoming obvious that I wasn’t going to get paid a salary to do clinical work,” says Daly.

The couple returned to Boston for two years so Daly could earn a master’s degree in public health at Harvard while her husband completed a master’s in international law and diplomacy, then returned to Malawi. “We took turns following each other for jobs,” she says.

In the early 1990s, the United States and others were heavily supporting international HIV efforts. “From Malawi, my husband was transferred to India. Everywhere I went, I was greeted with ‘You’re an international AIDS specialist? We need your help,’” Daly recalls.

In those years, HIV was a death sentence, and nobody survived, she says. “In Africa, it was rampant in the general population. But even with those very high rates, people wouldn’t admit to having HIV. There was a lot of stigma and denial,” says Daly. By contrast, in Asia, the epidemic was confined to high-risk groups: injection drug users, sex workers, and men having sex with men. “Nearly everyone with HIV was from a marginalized group and there were a lot of structural barriers to care,” she says. “We worked on education, prevention, and access to testing and treatment.”

Later, the couple moved to Bangkok, Thailand, where Daly spent three years as the regional technical director for Family Health International supporting programs in 12 Asian countries. She also worked as a consultant for an innovative HIV prevention and treatment program for marginalized populations in India for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, for UNAIDS to develop the national HIV strategic plan for the government of Cambodia, and as a consultant to the World Health Organization writing international guidelines for monitoring HIV in the health sector and creating global STI guidelines. After returning to the United States in 2017, she worked on a subcontract with Johns Hopkins University to assist in the devel-



Celine Costello Daly, MD '84, MPH, with her husband in Bhutan in 2018

opment of the New York State Department of Health’s HIV Clinical Resource guidelines for clinicians.

Retired for two years, Daly says her career provided great rewards as well as challenges. “It required a lot of resilience,” she says. “I never held a job more than three years—it was a project or contract and then you move on. All of that moving around is hard on families.”

But there was never any doubt about the value of her work. Says Daly, “everything we were doing, it didn’t affect just the one person in front of you, it affected the whole country.”

Brian Harper, MD '88, MPH

FIGHTING HEALTH DISPARITIES

As the newly appointed vice president of diversity and inclusion at New York Institute of Technology, Brian Harper, MD '88, MPH, is helping the institution formalize efforts around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across its four campuses: in New York City, Old Westbury, Long Island; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and Vancouver, Canada.

Dr. Harper is also chief medical officer of the university and teaches in the New York Tech College of Osteopathic Medicine, bringing a long history working in public health to counter health disparities and promote culturally competent care.

“In medicine, the more you know about a given patient and their culture, the better the rapport is, and ultimately, the better the outcomes are as well,” he says.

“The same is true for student learning in a diverse campus environment.”

A Brooklyn native, Harper studied biology and Afro-American history at Brown University before coming to Upstate for his medical education. When he was chosen by lottery to do his clinical rotations in Binghamton, he was not enthused. “In retrospect, it really worked out to my benefit,” he says.

One of those rotations was with the Binghamton Department of Health. “It was a great experience and gave me tremendous exposure to what a health department does and the importance of preventive health,” he says.

Harper began his internal medicine residency at Harlem Hospital at the height of the AIDS epidemic. “There were no adequate treatments and people were dying right and left,” he says. If patients didn’t have HIV or AIDS, they were afflicted with multiple chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. “We would treat them, and they’d get better in a hospital setting, only for them to go back to their lives, neglect their health, and return sick again. It was like a revolving door,” he says.

Harper realized he wanted to work in prevention to stop that cycle from starting in the first place. After his intern year, he moved to a two-year residency in preventive medicine at SUNY Stonybrook, which included earning his MPH at Columbia University.

Harper worked as a physician at the Rikers Island Medical Unit and then became the first director of the Bureau of HIV Services at the Nassau County Department of Health. It was in that capacity that he developed a relationship with New York Tech, as a visiting lecturer at the medical school. “During my HIV epidemiology presentations, I would bring patients with HIV/AIDS to talk to medical students about their experiences in healthcare settings in an effort to sensitize students to the stigma these patients faced,” he says.

Harper served as the first community co-chair for the New York State HIV Prevention Planning Committee,

which provided oversight and guidance for the use of approximately \$80 million in HIV Prevention funding annually from the Centers for Disease Control for New York state.

In 2004, Harper became the first African American Commissioner of Health for Suffolk County. During his tenure, he managed a department of 1,500 employees with a budget of approximately \$450 million and created programs including an office to address minority health inequities, a commission to find ways to curtail the HIV epidemic, and an institute to investigate long-standing public health problems in collaboration with Stony Brook University.

Harper left that post and became chief operating officer and medical director of the Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care and Prevention, a partnership created between Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and North General Hospital in Harlem with a \$5 million grant from the designer Ralph Lauren. “The program was created to provide quality cancer care to the residents of Harlem and surrounding areas, irrespective of a patient’s ability to pay,” says Harper. “It was a great initiative, but the Center was underutilized.”

Harper developed partnerships with area churches and community organizations so that residents would feel comfortable coming in for health screenings.

“The African American community has the highest mortality rate from prostate cancer, from lung cancer, colon cancer, and breast and cervical cancer in women, so this really was a target population,” he explains. “We had the ability at our health center to screen for all of those diseases except for lung cancer, and if we found someone who was positive, to channel them right into Memorial Sloan Kettering for care.”

Unfortunately, the closing of North General Hospital ended the community clinic in Harlem. Harper joined New York Tech in 2012 as chief medical officer to oversee the New York Tech College of Osteopathic Medicine Academic Health Care Centers in Old Westbury and Central Islip, New York, and as associate professor of medicine.

In the last few years, he’s played a leading role in the university’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to ensure the safe operation of New York Tech campuses as well as updating both the campus community and the public on the latest health recommendations and safety measures.

And no doubt his work promoting quality health care for all informs his current efforts toward university diversity and inclusion. “A broad and diverse array of intellectual perspectives is essential to our pursuit of excellence as an institute of higher learning,” he says. ■



Brian Harper, MD '88, MPH

STUDENT ROUNDS

External Support

UPSTATE MD/PHD STUDENTS RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIPS TO FORWARD THEIR DOCTORAL RESEARCH.

In any academic environment, external grants are vital to funding research. For graduate students, the ability to secure their own funding—through a grant or fellowship—can signify a student’s promise as an independent scientist as well as the strength of their scholarship.

Upstate Medical University is no exception. Early in their doctoral program, MD/PhD students take a course in scientific writing steered by Leszek Kotula, MD, PhD, which includes writing a grant for submission. It’s not just an academic exercise, as evidenced by two prestigious awards recently received by Upstate students.

In June 2022, Akshay Patel was awarded a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award (NRSA) Individual Fellowship from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. The fellowship funds Patel’s work examining the role of the enzyme Rab4A and its association with the onset and worsening of lupus.

Patel is a fourth-year PhD student in biochemistry, studying how the immune system, metabolism, and biochemistry work together in the body. At Upstate, MD/PhD students complete their first two years of medical school, followed by their doctoral work—generally four years—and then finish their two clinical years of medical school. Patel has conducted his doctoral research in the lab of Andras Perl, MD, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Medicine, and anticipates graduating with his dual degrees in 2025.

Patel has focused on the effect lupus has on the liver, which he calls “the most metabolically active organ in the body.” Rab4A is increased in lupus patients. Patel is looking at how Rab4A works within

cells to “turnover mitochondria that don’t work and adjust proteins on the surface of a cell,” he says.

Initially, Patel undertook an experiment to create model mice that don’t have the Rab4A enzyme within T cells, key parts of the body’s ability to fight disease, including cancer.

He theorized that removing the Rab4A from T cells would help reduce the prevalence of lupus and was surprised to find liver inflammation in the mice. “It had just the opposite effect,” says Patel.

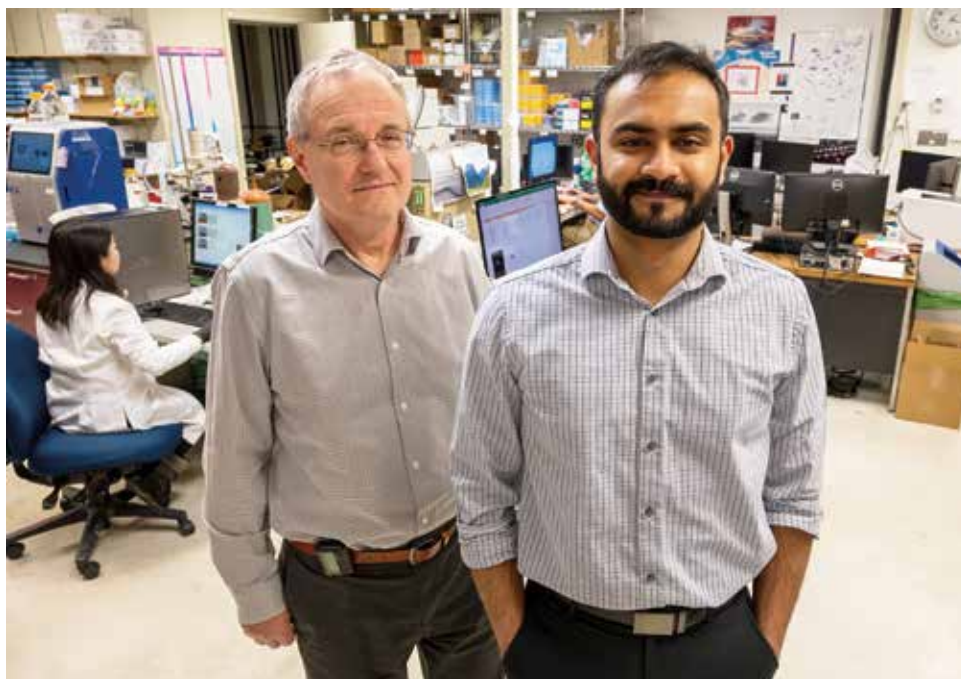
He applied for funding to support further investigation. While reviewers at the National Institutes of Health did not support his first application, they provided positive, specific feedback, resulting in success when he reapplied.

What Patel’s research has found is that the T cells without Rab4A are “overstim-

ulated,” as if the immune response that would normally shut off that reaction is dysfunctional because of the lacking enzyme. This overstimulation might be resulting in liver damage. “That’s the last bit we’re trying to solve,” he says.

Prior to Upstate, Patel attended a five-year program at Villanova University, which earned him both an undergraduate and master’s degree in microbiology. Planning on attending medical school, it was a summer research program at Drexel University that convinced him to pursue an MD/PhD. “It makes sense because my interest in becoming a physician was inspired by the things that were happening on the research side being applied clinically,” he says.

Patel was attracted to working with Dr. Perl, both for his expertise in immunology and his own reputation.



MD/PhD student Akshay Patel (right), with his advisor, Andras Perl, MD, PhD

"I'm his seventh MD/PhD student and he's an excellent mentor," Patel says. "The lab also has a lot of resources, with technicians, postdocs, and other graduate students."

Patel plans to apply to residency in internal medicine through the Physician Scientist Training Program, thinking he may ultimately pursue gastroenterology. Like his mentor Perl, he plans on an academic career, combining clinical practice with his own research lab.

"The possibilities are endless for what I'd like to study in 15 years, which is probably when I'll be setting up my lab," he says. "I have a lot of interests to delve deeper into what I want to study for a career."

When MD/PhD student Gargi Mishra joined the lab of Xin Jie Chen, PhD, Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, her plan was to study mitochondrial function using a mouse model developed in a lab at the University of Connecticut. But the pandemic created issues generating the mouse model, forcing Mishra to switch to a more mechanistic basic science project using yeast.

The change in methodology brought unexpected benefits. "I found that I was able to do a lot more genetics and biochemistry and that I enjoyed exploring new biology in a way that I wouldn't have been able to in a mouse model," she says.

Mishra's research focuses on the dysfunction of mitochondria in cells and the possible contributions to heart

disease. In January, she was awarded a two-year American Heart Association (AHA) Predoctoral Fellowship to help fund her work.

Mishra's proposal was highly ranked by the AHA (0.14 percentile), which she views as an endorsement of the importance of basic science research. "Following the science can lead to discoveries of unexpected connections to real-world problems," she says.

Mitochondria are essentially hubs in a cell that help provide energy and other resources for the cell to function. "They're especially important in tissues that are undergoing high metabolic turnover and expending a lot of energy, which is why they're extremely relevant to the heart," she says. "You need healthy mitochondria for healthy heart cells."

Mitochondria require about 1,500 different proteins to function. "If import is halted, perhaps by a protein getting clogged in a transport channel, mitochondria cannot function properly," Mishra explains. She compares the phenomenon to food debris that accumulates in a clogged sink drain.

Mishra is using yeast to mimic the process to determine how mitochondria can either degrade or compartmentalize those accumulated proteins. She's hoping a better understanding of the basic science

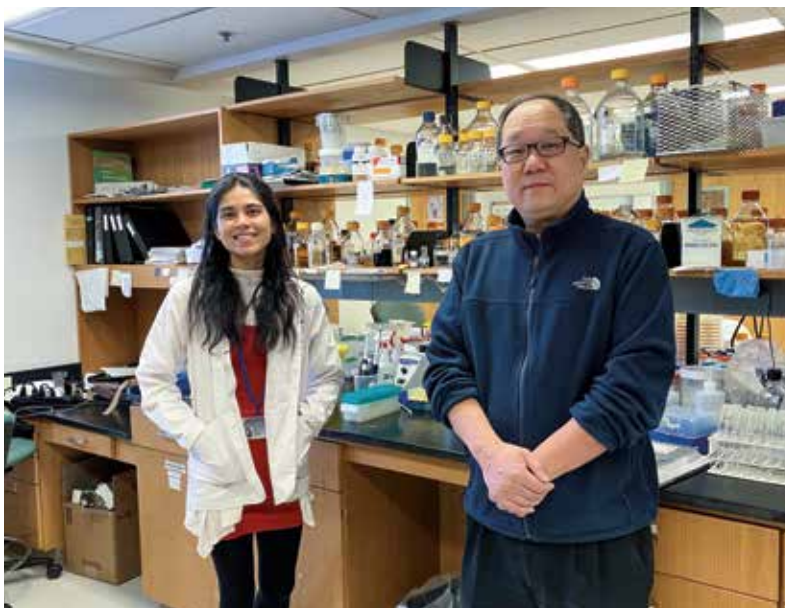
behind mitochondrial dysfunction can lead to future drug and therapeutic discoveries.

"While there are many drugs that treat heart disease, very few target mitochondrial function in the heart," she says.

An international student from India, Mishra studied biochemistry at Mount Holyoke College, then spent a year conducting research on cancer immunology at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts, before coming to Upstate. Although she initially thought she would pursue cancer research, she chose a rotation in Dr. Chen's lab at the suggestion of MD/PhD student Liam Coyne '23.

"I could feel right away that this would be a good environment for me," she says. "There have been some curve balls, but the support and mentorship I have received have been invaluable. Developing this grant really was a team effort, and I am grateful to my advisor, Dr. Chen, for innumerable discussions, and my outside reader, Dr. Steven D. Hanes, emeritus professor of Biochemistry, who provided insightful critiques for my proposal."

Mishra is planning a career in academic medicine, with current interests focused on either neurology or physical medicine and rehabilitation. "I do want a significant portion of my career to be focused on research," she says. "I really enjoy basic biology, asking questions in the lab and trying to figure out mechanisms of disease, which can eventually lead to better health outcomes."



Gargi Mishra, an MD/PhD student in the lab with her adviser, Professor Xin Jie Chen, PhD

CLASS NOTES

1953 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

1955

Ronald H. Spiro, of Jerusalem, Israel, reports that his nuclear family is now 50, including 16 great grandchildren. "Best wishes to all my classmates," he writes.

1956

Michael L. Del Monico, of Raleigh, NC, still misses New York State.

1958 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023



Lillian and Bernard W. Asher '63

1960

Leonard R. Friedman, of Middleton, MA, writes, "As the historian of the class of 1960, one can say we had a good run. From operating the Massachusetts General Hospital to the Framingham Study, one-third of our class members highlighted their careers in the Boston Area.

Roger Moore, the class president and resident artist of more than 800 paintings, wished for a class alumni weekend. However, only four of the 31 living class members indicated they could travel to Syracuse. With the dawning of age-related diseases, I wonder if the school would run a moderated ZOOM program for this as well as for other classes. The firepower for discussion is still there in my experience talking with classmates. Of course, we should consider the time of day and schedule when **Julian Aroesty** would not be riding his bike multi-miles or writing short touching essays on life."

1963 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

Bernard W. Asher and Lillian have recently moved from Batavia, NY, to the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community, located adjacent to the Cornell campus. "We can highly recommend this place. It is filled mostly with Cornellians," he writes. "We welcome visitors."

GEORGE B. JACOBS, MD '58

Pioneering Spine Surgeon

When George B. Jacobs, MD '58, began his career as a neurosurgeon in the 1960s, the field was very small. "Today, there are probably 3,500 members of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, but the AANS did not exist at the time. The Harvey Cushing Society (named for a founding father of neurosurgery) had about 350 members and you had to be invited to join," he recalls.

Dr. Jacobs helped pioneer the field of spine surgery, which was a perfect amalgam of his interests. An engineering student as an undergraduate at New York University, Jacobs came to the Norton College of Medicine thinking he'd pursue orthopedics. "I liked structure and problem solving," he says.

In his first year of medical school, he had an infection and became systemically ill. "I was treated with the new 'wonder' drug penicillin," he says. Nonetheless, he got sicker and sicker. When his father, a cardiologist, came to see him, he immediately asked the doctors to stop the penicillin. "No one appreciated the systemic effects of penicillin allergy at that time," he says.

Jacobs got better, but he had missed a great deal of course material. He buckled down and made up most of it, then found a summer course at the University of Michigan to take histology. Knowing that Jacobs would have a lot of downtime, his anatomy professor reached out to a colleague at Michigan and got Jacobs a part-time job in the neuroanatomy lab. "That focused my interests in a new direction," he says.

Jacobs did his residency in neurological surgery at the Montefiore Medical Center at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, working under world-famous neurosurgeon Leo Davidoff, MD, and then joined the faculty of Markland College of Medicine, at the time the only medical school in New Jersey.

Shortly after, he was recruited to the faculty at Einstein, where he would remain for 20 years (minus a two-year stint at the University of Pittsburgh as chair of spine surgery to help them keep accreditation). He attained the rank of professor at both Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the University of Pittsburgh, developing his own skills and technique as a spine surgeon and teaching others to help grow the field. He became a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a Fellow of the Scoliosis Research Society, and a Fellow of the International College of Surgeons.

In the 1990s, Jacobs became professor and chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at Rutgers University New Jersey Medical School, the Hackensack University Medical Center Division. He retired from that position in 2012, wanting to clear the opportunity for one of his former residents to become chair, joining a large orthopedic practice as a spine surgeon.

Concurrent with Jacobs building his own career, his wife, Rosanne Wille-Jacobs, had served as dean of the College of Nursing and Health Care Professions and provost and senior vice president of Lehman College City University of New York. When she retired, the couple decided to relocate to Florida.

"I was ready to do something else," Jacobs recalls.

Retirement lasted two months. Jacobs joined the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System as a senior consultant in spine neurosurgery, a part-time post he held for six years, into his late 80s.

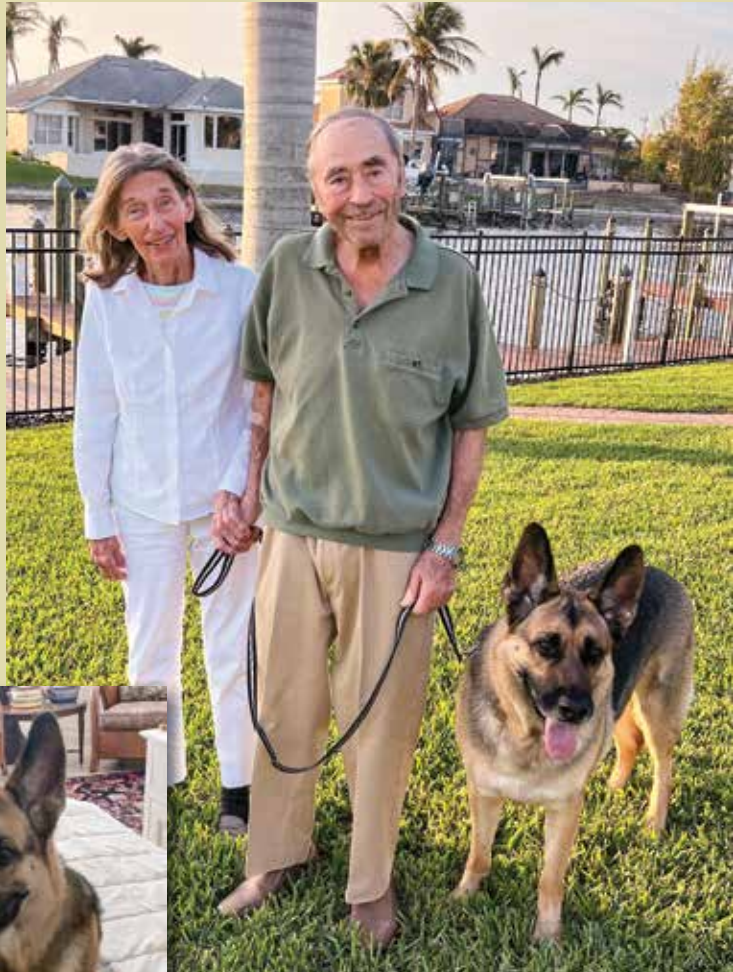
Now 90, Jacobs remains active on committees of various spine societies and serves on the editorial board of the spine section of *Surgical Neurology International*. He also serves on the architectural review board and board of directors of his community in Fort Myers. An Airline Transport-rated pilot, he believes he's the oldest flight instructor in the country still certified.

Jacobs current passion is training his new rescue dog, a four-year-old German shepherd, Thor III.

"We adopted him two months ago, and you'd never know he's a rescue, he's a completely different dog," he says.

A native of Switzerland, Jacobs grew up with German shepherds, which he says are a misunderstood breed. "They're not easy dogs; they're demanding. But if you have a good German shepherd, you never want another breed."

Through the years, the Jacobs have had a number of German shepherds, and at one time his wife bred dogs for show. Jacobs describes their last dog, Thor II, as a once-in-a-lifetime dog. "He was a huge, oversize dog, but incredibly gentle and the smartest dog you've ever seen. He worked independently as a service and therapy dog,



Rosanne and George Jacobs '58 with their German shepherd rescue, Thor III



and he befriended all the animals that came to our yard: coyotes, raccoons, even a white river rat."

Devastated by the dog's passing, the Jacobs chose an older rescue based on their own age. "We didn't want a puppy that would outlive us," he says.

Looking back on a very full life, Jacobs is proud of the cadre of spine surgeons he's trained, now in leading positions across the country. "That gives me an incredible amount of satisfaction," he says. "You can't accomplish much more in your lifetime than to educate young people."

—Renée Gearhart Levy

CLASS NOTES

1964

Robert M. Spurgat, of Saint Joseph, MO, and his wife, Susan, recently celebrated 53 years of marriage. They both retired from medicine in 2004, he from the practice of internal medicine/pulmonary disease, and she from clinical nurse teaching and infection control. Bob has been active with the department of conservation as a Missouri Master Naturalist. They have both been active in their local church as choir member and handbell ringer. Their daughter, Lynn, gave her third soprano recital at Carnegie Hall in November 2022. Son Mike lives in Nashville, pursuing his lifelong dream of playing guitar at local venues, traveling with several bands around the country, and appearing as a finalist with one of them on The Voice. "Greetings to our friends from Upstate," they write.

1966

Neal M. Friedberg, of New York, NY, is still active, with many friends in New York City, the Hudson Valley, and Santa Barbara. He has been married to his intelligent wife for 57 years. They have two children and two grandsons. "I am an inept golfer, subpar pianist, and a collector of photographs," he writes.

Austin M. Pattner, of Englewood, NJ, writes, "Fifty-six years after Upstate graduation and still practicing until I get it right."



Frank G. Yanowitz '66 on his 83rd birthday

Frank G. Yanowitz, of Salt Lake City, UT, is approaching 50 years with the University of Utah School of Medicine. "I continue to teach ECG interpretation to our medical residents three hours a week remotely using materials from my website (ECG.utah.edu). Betty and I recently returned from the Palm Springs International Film Festival. Life is good," he writes.

1968 Reunion
October 13•14, 2023

1973 Reunion
October 13•14, 2023

Gerald (Gerry) E. Slater, of Las Vegas, NV, recently relocated after spending 32 years in the beautiful mountains of Colorado. "Moving from 7,600 to 2,700 feet of altitude did wonders for my pulmonary status," he writes. "The

Philip R. Caropreso '72, of Keokuk, IA, was re-elected to the Lee County Iowa Board of Health Directors vice chairman position on January 5 for a second consecutive three-year term.

weather is ideal. My days plowing snow from my driveway in the middle of May are a thing of the past, and we are loving the world-class restaurants. Should have made this move 15 years ago."

1974

Joseph A. Blady, of Franklin Lakes, NJ, is a partner in the Intelligence and Security Academy, LLC. The defense contracting firm employs 75 people and specializes in intelligence, business management, budget, and training of government personnel.

James H. Brodsky, of Potomac, MD, is working as hard as ever. His son, Spencer, will start a physical medicine and rehabilitation residency at Montefiore Medical Center in July.

Robert A. Edelman, of Mill Neck, NY, is alive, well and continues to practice urology full-time. "I am looking forward to our 50th reunion," he writes.

J. Peter Gregoire, of Romulus, NY, and his wife, Patricia, write "Every year is special and as we mature (age), we are so grateful for each day. This year we had the extraordinary pleasure of taking our five grandchildren, and daughters Maryse and Christine, along with her husband, Marcial, on a trip to our old Peace Corps country, Tanzania. We were able to tour Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Tarangire, Serengeti, Ngorongoro, and Lake Manyara. It turned out well and fortunately no big travel hiccups. Family update: daughter Christine retired after 30 years of teaching. As parents this is hard to believe! Daughter Maryse has purchased a home in Ithaca, where she teaches English as a new language in the Ithaca City School District. She also has a side gig—check out her business website: ShimaShimabags.com. Her husband travels to the United States as often as he can while continuing to run the family manufacturing business in Japan. Son Jim also has moved to Ithaca and is enjoying all the area has to offer. Son Mike turned 50 this year



J. Peter Gregoire '74 and family overlooking the Ngorongo Crater in Tanzania

(another milestone hard to comprehend) and continues to enjoy traveling and living in Hermosa Beach, CA. He has more than 25 years working for the high security aerospace industry. May you have a healthy, productive, and satisfying year. Fond regards to everyone in the class of 1974."

1976

James F. Cornell, of Orefield, PA, retired from GI practice on January 1, 2022, after 40 years. "I am enjoying free time and hope to resume traveling soon if the virus permits," he writes.

1977

George C. Wortley, of Hardeeville, SC, is back at the South Pole as lead physician for the U.S. Antarctic Programs Amundsen Scott South Pole Station. This is his third deployment to Antarctica and his second time at the South Pole. He is looking forward to returning to warmer climates and sitting around the pool with a good margarita.

1978 Reunion

October 13-14, 2023

Mary Jo Dunbar, of Syracuse, NY, writes, "I retired and am really enjoying the freedom. Spending the winter in Vermont skiing, swimming, doing yoga and generally having fun with my husband, who waited so patiently for me to retire. I have a granddaughter in Vermont, which was the big reason to finally to do it. Thankful that I can still ski. I learned it at



George C. Wortley '77

Labrador Mountain on Wednesday afternoons after lectures, a big draw for a Buffalo, NY, girl where there weren't many hills around. Summers at Owasco Lake are pretty sweet too!"

Keith A. Nichols, of Owego, NY, is pleased to report that he retired from his family medicine practice on December 31, 2022. He continues on in Owego with aviation medicine and occupational medicine activity. He and his wife, Jane, enjoy spending time with their children and grandchildren and he is still rocking out with his current band, Ghosties on Third.

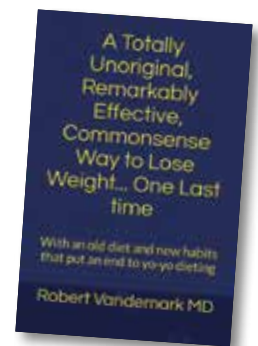
1980

Andrew W. Gurman, of Hollidaysburg, PA, reports that he is still enjoying full-time practice of hand surgery and was appointed clinical professor of orthopedics at the Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. He also stays active in the American Medical Association and the World Medical Association.



Keith A. Nichols '78, his wife Jane, and family

Robert M. Vandemark, of Hillsborough, NC, writes, "I have been enjoying my retirement by doing the grandfather thing of babysitting the grandkids a few days every week, and that has been most rewarding. However, after being retired for six years I decided to write a book. It took two years to complete, but I am now a published author of a non-medical book! *A Totally Unoriginal, Remarkably Effective, Commonsense Way to Lose Weight... One Last Time* is available on Amazon. Hope you all have a happy and healthy new year!"





Callinish Stones on the Isle of Lewis and Harris, photo by Mark A. Rothschild '82

1982

Mark A. Rothschild, of Lady Lake, FL, recently traveled to the Scottish Highlands with a group of photographers. "The photo of the Callinish Stones on the Isle of Lewis and Harris near Stornoway was shot at twilight with a neutral density filter, giving an exposure of about five minutes. The Callinish Stones are reminiscent of Stonehenge in England. To see more photos and learn of my experiences in the Scottish Highlands, check out my website and blog at markrothschildphoto.com," he shares.

1983 Reunion
October 13•14, 2023

Barbara L. Rosenthal '83, of Williamstown, MA, is working in northern Vermont in substance use disorders. The state's first free Narcan vending machine will be installed in Johnson, VT, this spring as part of her efforts.



Brian D. Woolford '84 and Sergio Alvarez Garcia

1984

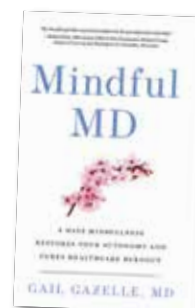
Brian D. Woolford, of San Diego, CA, married Sergio Alvarez Garcia in San Diego on January 27 with 50 friends and family members in attendance. A celebration following the ceremony was enjoyed by all in La Jolla, CA.

1987

Mark D'Esposito, of El Cerrito, CA, is a distinguished professor of neuroscience and psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. He received the Fred Kavli Distinguished Career Contributions Award on March 27, at the annual meeting of the Cognitive Neuroscience Society, where he delivered a lecture entitled, "A Tale

About the Frontal Lobes as Told by A Neurologist." This award is sponsored by the Fred Kavli Foundation and honors senior cognitive neuroscientists for their sustained and distinguished careers, including outstanding scientific contributions, leadership, and mentoring in the field of cognitive neuroscience.

Gail Gazelle, of Brookline, MA, has a new book coming out this spring, *Mindful MD: Six Ways Mindfulness Restores Your Autonomy and Cures Healthcare Burnout*.



1988 Reunion
October 13•14, 2023

Louis Bonavita, Jr., of Cazenovia, NY, and his wife, Angie, share that their son, Matthew, will graduate from the University of Toledo School of Medicine in May and will marry his high school sweetheart, Shelby Yates, RN, two weeks later in Sorrento, Italy. "Matthew plans to enter the field of family medicine and will be joining my practice in Syracuse after completion," he writes.

Gary Kurmis, of Reno, NV, mostly retired from the practice of anesthesiology in 2022 and relocated from Los Angeles. "I still work one week a month at my old hospital in Los Angeles doing only obstetric anesthesia," he writes.

Anthony Nostro, of East Stroudsburg, PA, retired in March 2022 and decided he wasn't ready for retirement. He accepted a position as director of cardiac anesthesia at Wilkes Barre General Hospital in Northeast Pennsylvania. "It's easier than having to run an entire department as I previously did and gives me the opportunity to use my skills," he writes.

Nancy E. Strauss, of Hartsdale, NY, shares that her son, Jason Altabet, graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 2022.

1989

Kim Kramer, of New York, NY, writes, "Several Upstate colleagues enjoyed a mini reunion when we gathered for a fun vacation in Las Vegas. The gang credits our years at Upstate Medical for fostering lifelong friendships!"



Flanked by Vegas show girls, left to right: Kevin Math '88, Frank '88 and Sandra Dolisi, Geneviève Krebs '88 and Peter Fernandez, Kim Kramer '89, Jerry and Connie Compito '85.

Juan March, of Greenville, NC, is one of only approximately 1,000 physicians board certified in EMS nationwide. He received the Keith Neely Out-

standing Contributions to EMS Award from the National Association of EMS Physicians at the 2023 annual meeting in Tampa, FL.

Stephen R. Weinman, of New Paltz, NY, celebrated his 60th birthday with an outdoor concert featuring local great musicians and friends. "It was pretty rowdy for old folks, and I couldn't help but think back to when we played in the attic of a house rented by some of our classmates in Syracuse and the floor was bouncing so hard, we thought it might collapse," he writes. "The class of 1989 knew how to throw a party. I saw two concerts with **Brad Carson**, Steely Dan and The Fab Faux and I also saw **Maureen Daye** in New York City where she now lives. Maureen and Brad are both healthy and well and look almost as young as me. In July, 12 of our family chartered a boat to follow and swim with a pod of dolphins in the Bahamas and **Herbert Weinman '65** was as relaxed as a retired Type-A family doctor could possibly be. Trip of a lifetime for sure. I also got a new hip. Brad Carson referred me to one of the Hospital



Stephen R. Weinman '89

for Special Surgery doctors he works with as an anesthesiologist. I was up in a couple days and will be snowboarding in February no matter what the surgeon says. My medical center is now seeing close to 200 patients daily. We reinvented ourselves during COVID as an urgent care/telemedicine center and COVID testing site. The surge never let up. While I am down to working half time, the R-word is still years away as I actually like going to work, and besides, I have a 12-year-old, Sophia. Where am I going to go?"

and is board certified in both. He has held several hospital and administrative appointments in Rochester, including medical director of palliative care at Unity Hospital/Rochester Regional Health System, division chief of general internal medicine for the Unity Health System, and associate director of medicine in the psychiatry service at the University of Rochester Medical Center. He has been very active in medical education, authoring multiple papers as well as regional and national lectures on topics in palliative medicine and internal medicine. He and his wife, Sandee, have four children and are expecting their first grandchild in March.

1990

Jeffrey R. Allen, of Victor, NY, joined the Greater Rochester Independent Practice Association (GRIPA) and Cognisight as chief medical officer in January 2020. He is a practicing physician in the specialty of internal medicine with a subspecialty in hospice and palliative care medicine



Juan March '89

CLASS NOTES

1991

Paul C. Buechel, of Nolensville, TN, accepted a position with St. Thomas/Ascension Hospitals, on their elite acute stroke treatment/neuro-hospitalist team, which covers three major facilities in middle Tennessee, in addition to providing tele-stroke coverage for nine other regional medical centers.

1993 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023



Peter Hogenkamp '93

Peter Hogenkamp, of Rutland, VT, is a practicing physician, public speaker, and author of medical fiction and thrillers. His writing credits include *The Intern* (April 2020); *The Vatican Conspiracy* book and audiobook (October 2020); *The Vatican Secret* (April 2021); *The Vatican Secret* audiobook (March 2022); and *Conspirazione Vaticano* (July 2021). *The Woman from Death Row*, the first book of the new Jade Stryker thriller series, will be published this summer. He is the creator, producer, and host of *Your Health Matters*, a health information program that airs on cable television, streams on YouTube, and streams as a podcast. He was a finalist for the prestigious 2019 Killer Nashville Claymore Award as well as the 2020 Vermont Writer's Prize. He tweets, against the

wishes of his wife, four children and feisty cairn terrier, Hermion, on Twitter. You can find his personal blog at peterhogenkampwrites.com.

1995

Carolyn L. Danzi Marasco, of Wesley Chapel, FL, has worked for BayCare Health Systems for 22 years and is core faculty for the BayCare pediatric residency program, a wellness champion, and will be lead physician at the residency clinic at the start of this academic year.



Carolyn L. Danzi Marasco '95

1996

Gregory G. Carnevale, of Canandaigua, NY, began a new role with United Healthcare as the market chief medical officer for New York State after working almost five years at Excellus BCBS as chief medical officer for value based contracting and the Medicare line of business.

Heather L. Mackey-Fowler 03,

of South Kingstown, RI, recently made a job change and is working as a primary care physician in Rhode Island for the Chicago-based Oak Street Health. "I am looking forward to seeing a lot of people at our 20th Reunion this fall," she writes.

1998 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

2003 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

2004

Farzad Sarmast, of Fayetteville, NY, is doing primary care team red at the VA in Syracuse. "I hope everybody is well," he writes. "Thank God COVID is on its way out. My wife and kids are well; Kian is now 15 and Jonas is 12."

2005

Lisa R. (Weisfelner) Allen, of Yardley, PA, and **Mita R. Patel**, both FACS, were recently appointed as National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers site surveyors by the American College of Surgeons.



Lisa R. Allen '05 and Mita R. Patel '05

JACLYN SISKIND, MD '09

The Doctor Who Prescribes Books

Upstate Golisano pediatrician Jaclyn Siskind, MD '09, doles out prescriptions at every office visit, using her special pad that's always in her pocket.

But she's not dispensing pills to chew or liquids to swallow. Instead of the pharmacy, she sends patients to the library.

For Siskind, the pages of a book are perhaps the most important tool in her medical bag. She uses them as a diagnostic tool to check developmental milestones of babies, the social-emotional intelligence of toddlers, and to help teens find their bearings.

What grew from her own passion for reading and her desire to connect with patients has grown into a whole new identity for her.

Now known as the "Readiatrician," Siskind has her own website (readiatrician.com), 15,000 followers on Twitter, and a monthly virtual book club for local pediatricians. She has connected with authors, been asked to speak at reading conferences, and has written blog posts about her experiences, including a January 3 piece published in the *School Library Journal*, the premiere publication for librarians and information specialists who work with children and teens.

"I always ask kids what they're reading because it's an important question. And when a doctor asks them something it makes them realize this is something they should be doing," she says. "It also makes the caregiver realize, 'Wow this is important enough that the doctor is asking about it.'"

Prescribing books started causally about nine years ago. Siskind carries Post-it notes in her pockets and she started jotting down titles of books she thought her patients would enjoy. When she realized how powerful that could be, she created her reading prescription pad and applied for grants to supply books for young readers. Since most grants only cover early readers, her book supply only covers patients from babies through age five, and each receives a book at their well-child visit. Siskind's office, the Baldwinsville location of Upstate Pediatrics, is in the process of becoming a Reach Out and Read site. Reach Out and Read is a national program that provides grant money for books for young patients.

Siskind shows parents of babies and toddlers that books can be used for so much more than reading. She uses board books to check milestones like passing an object from hand to hand, identifying colors, counting, and even just using them to make noise or toss around.

She gives older patients recommendations, hoping they will find the book at their local or school library.



Upstate Golisano's Jaclyn Siskind '09 is known as the "Readiatrician," for prescribing books and trips to the library for her patients.

Using books with her teen population is perhaps her most profound use of books. Siskind uses books to build trust with patients and to help them with physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

She recounts an episode with a patient she met as a teen, who had faced medical issues since birth. Siskind struggled to connect with the patient and even conducted some appointments through the office door. Nothing worked to build trust until she saw a book poking out of the patient's bag. She knew the book and started to talk with the patient about it. Everything changed from that moment, and now the patient is a thriving college student.

Whatever the issue—sexual identity, bullying, body image, loss of a parent, racism, fitting in—Siskind always has a book at the ready to help patients see they are not alone. Sometimes she just recommends a funny book that she and the patient can laugh about together.

A huge fan of children's and young adult literature, Siskind can easily recall relevant texts from the books she is reading or ones she read as a kid.

"My brain tends to hang on to that information," she said. "I wouldn't have to look up the Krebs cycle so often if I could have memorized that in medical school. But I can recall lines and titles and themes and authors. It is just the way my brain is wired."

Siskind says she always has a book with her and reads during lunch, with her three boys, who are in eighth grade, fourth grade and kindergarten, and before bed.

"I need to read in the same way some people need to exercise," she says. "I wish I had the relationship with my treadmill that I have with books. I am a happier person when I am reading."

—Jean Albanese

CLASS NOTES

Mark A. Barreto, of Otego, NY, quit his job at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Albany during the pandemic and opened a direct primary care family medicine micro practice out of his home. There are about 900-plus people that live in Otego, which is located along the Susquehanna River, and he is the only medical provider in the village. He also makes house calls and enjoys the practice of old-fashioned medicine in current times. He was recently featured in an article in Scientific American on rural health strains during the coronavirus.

Rachel M. Pessah-Pollack, of Roslyn Heights, NY, was named vice chair of the International Society for Clinical Densitometry's at the annual meeting in March in Chicago.

2013 Reunion October 13•14, 2023

Rhonda L. Philopena, of Jamesville, NY, and her husband, Andrew, welcomed their son, Logan, in October 2022, making them a family of five!



Rhonda L. Philopena '13 and family

Emily A. Comness and Michael Comness, of San Gabriel, CA, welcomed their third son on May 6, 2022. Proud big brothers Mikey and Liam love their little brother Thomas Ryan. Emily is finishing her sleep surgery fellowship at University of Southern California and will be returning to Duke as part



Emily A. Comness '17, husband Michael, and sons Mikey, Liam and Thomas Ryan

2019

Rohan A. Gheewala, of Slingerlands, NY, recently met up in Manhattan with classmates and spouses for an evening out. "We lived together in medical school and still talk almost every week," he writes. "We all miss Syracuse."



Rohan A. Gheewala '19, Nicole R. Lifson '19, Kuldip Singh '19, Alec M. Jacobson '19, and spouses Reema and Meg

2008 Reunion October 13•14, 2023

2009

Dodji V. Modjinou, of Las Vegas, NV, was named a Castle Connolly Top Doctor in rheumatology in southern Nevada in August/September 2022.

2010

Courtney A. Hill, of Saint Paul, MN, and her husband, Matthew Soule, MD, welcomed their daughter, Lila Grace, on December 11, 2022.



Lila Grace, daughter of Courtney A. Hill '10

2017

Kristine M. (Faulkham) Birdsall, of Rocky Hill, CT, was recently married to David Birdsall on September 24, 2022. Her bridesmaids were all classmates.



David Birdsall and Kristine M. (Faulkham) Birdsall '17

of the otolaryngology faculty in the fall. The family has been enjoying their East and West Coast adventures and look forward to moving back to North Carolina.



Bridesmaids Macy L. VanArman, Rosemarie Mastropolo, Kristine M. (Faulkham) Birdsall, Emily L. Kellogg, Caitlin A. Nicholson, and Sarah J. Lopez, all class of 2017

2020

Richard P. Jean-Louis, of Roslyn, NY, and **Elizabeth M. Presutto '19**, both accepted assistant professor faculty positions at Wake Forest University. Richard will be joining the emergency medicine department and Elizabeth will be joining the anesthesiology department. They are both in their last year of residency training at the University of Maryland Shock Trauma in Baltimore, MD.

2021

Sonia S. Narsipur, of San Diego, CA, writes, "I recently got engaged to someone also from Syracuse but we didn't meet until I was in San Diego in residency. Small world!"



Sonia S. Narsipur '21 and her fiancé

2022

Haley L. Burdge and **Nicholas M. Angeloni**, of Syosset, NY, became engaged on January 7. "Upstate was where we met and obviously where we have shared most of our memories of our first four years together," she writes.



Nicholas M. Angeloni '22 and Haley L. Burdge '22

RESIDENTS

John M. Barry, of Portland, OR, who interned in 1966, (mixed, surgery and medicine), was recently elected president of the Clinical Society of Genitourinary Surgeons. "As I continue my gentle glide into retirement, current academic appointments are professor of urology and professor of surgery, emeritus, division of abdominal organ transplantation at the Oregon Health & Science University, where I've spent my entire academic career," he writes.

Jasmin Moradi, of Hamilton, ON, Canada, is working as a pediatric intensivist. She welcomed her first daughter, Noa, on August 23, 2022.



Noa, daughter of Jasmin Moradi, MD, HS '18



We Love Your Photos and We Want Them to Look Great in Print

- Photos may be sent as email attachments to ravenc@upstate.edu.
- Please send photos at their original file size or the highest/largest setting on your camera, mobile device, or computer when attaching to email.
- Photos should be at least 4x6 at 300 dpi (1200px X 1800px). Adequate file sizes are usually 1.5MB to 5MB. High quality .jpgs, .tiff, or RAW files will all work!

Share your good news in our next Alumni Journal, visit: medalumni.upstate.edu/class-notes



I N M E M O R I A M

1944

MARY E. COLLINS, of El Paso, TX, died September 9, 2022. Dr. Collins completed her pediatric residency at Bellevue Hospital and Syracuse Memorial Hospital and then joined the Army. She worked as a pediatrician in hospitals abroad and in the United States for 20 years. In Landstuhl, Germany, she was chief of pediatrics and the pediatric consultant to the surgeon general of the U.S. Army in Europe. In 1968, she was assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, where she retired. Collins reached the rank of Colonel, and in 1959, was a charter member of the AAP Section on Military Pediatrics, now the Uniformed Services. Collins was survived by her stepdaughter, Carolyn Wood; stepson William A. Collins III; five grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

1946

JAMES J. NORTON, of Montour Falls, NY, died February 13 at age 100. He was a country kid and country doctor. He added surgeon, family practitioner, and lifelong community volunteer. He always said he practiced in the Golden Age of medicine, witnessing unbelievable advances in medicine and technology and whole diseases eradicated during the course of his career. Being a doctor and an integral part of the community meant the world to him. Dr. Norton served in the Army in occupied Japan, where he honed his surgical skills as captain post-World War II. He and his wife, Marjorie Norton '49, moved to Montour Falls, where they were instrumental in the development of a new Schuyler hospital. He was directly responsible for the construction of the 14A bypass over Route 14, north of Watkins Glen, after a series of accidents were

ignored. He and his family hosted fourth-year medical students in a rural health rotation. The Nortons traveled to Yugoslavia as part of a medical advisory team, and he volunteered in many other capacities. He also served as coroner for years. After retirement, Norton volunteered twice at the Rosebud Indian Reservation. He served on many boards and committees, including Elmira Psychiatric Center, Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency Mental Health Committee, NY-Penn American Red Cross Blood Services, and many others. Norton was survived by his daughters, Nancy and Virginia; son Bob; eight grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and his wife, Joy Hoffman.

1953

DAVID D. GOLUB, of Pikesville, MD, died January 14. Dr. Golub served in the U.S. Air Force in World War II, where he flew 19 missions as a B24 bomber navigator. He was a radiologist in Baltimore for more than 50 years. Golub was survived by his daughters, Beverly, Nancy, Janet, and Diane; son Jerome; and five grandchildren.

1956

LOYD L. SMITH, of Pueblo, CO, died October 19, 2022. Dr. Smith was a general practitioner in Pueblo from 1959-1975, and then practiced occupational medicine until retirement. Smith was survived by his daughters, Renee and JoLyn; four grandchildren; and stepdaughter Valerie.

1957

JACK PERETZ, of Cleveland, OH, died September 19, 2022. Dr. Peretz interned at Philadelphia General Hospital in Philadelphia. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at Washington University in St. Louis. Peretz had a busy ophthalmology practice, performing all types of eye surgery over the years in several Cleveland hospitals. After selling his practice, he continued to see patients part time and retired at 82. Peretz was survived by his daughters, Andrea and Hillary; son Louis; and five grandchildren.

1961

ALBERT GARIB, of Newport Beach, CA, died November 15, 2021. Garib was survived by his son Andre and family.

1968

JOHN J. DETRAGLIA, of New Hartford, NY, died January 22. Dr. DeTraglia was selected for surgical residencies at the Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals of Cleveland. The final years of his surgical training were spent at the University of Vermont. In 1973 he returned to Utica to join the general and vascular surgery practice of the late Theodore Max, MD, and became his partner, mentor, and friend. DeTraglia helped establish the trauma center at St. Elizabeth Hospital and served as its medical director. He also served as medical director of Mid-state EMS, the Utica Boilermaker, and the New Hartford Fire Department. He held board positions at the Oneida County Medical Society, Central New York Academy of Medicine, and Hospice and Palliative Care. DeTraglia was survived by his wife, Cynthia; son Scott; daughter Julie; and four grandsons.

1972

HARVEY M. COHEN, of Boca Raton, FL, died March 2, 2022. Dr. Cohen was a founding partner of Gastroenterology Associates, where he practiced for more than 30 years until his retirement. Cohen was survived by his wife, Susan; sons Neal and Elias; and five grandchildren.

1976

JOHN DIGIOVANNA, of Bethesda, MD, died February 6. Dr. DiGiovanna served his residency training in dermatology at the University of Miami and was certified by the American Board of Dermatology. He was a senior research physician at the National Cancer Institute, NIH, where his research involved inherited skin disorders, particularly those causing skin cancer. He was involved in pioneering studies of the use of oral retinoids (Accutane) for treatment of acne and for prevention of skin cancer. DiGiovanna served as the head of the dermatology clinical research unit in the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases. He was a long-term consultant to several divisions of the Federal Drug Administration over three decades. He also served as the director of dermatopharmacology and professor in the department of dermatology at the Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School, where he was investigator on more than 70 clinical trials. DiGiovanna was survived by his husband, Julian Trail; sisters Natalie and Connie; and brother Joseph.

1977

MICHAEL S. THOMPSON, of Weston, MA, died October 23, 2022. Dr. Thompson remained in Syracuse at Upstate for two years of general surgery residency and then completed his residency training in orthopedics at Tufts New England Medical Center in Boston. His legacy and innovation live on at Lahey Hospital, where he advocated and arranged for the funding of a surgical simulation center to train the next generation of orthopedic surgeons. Thompson was survived by his sister, Karen; brother Arthur; and daughters Mikaela and Isabelle.

1987

BRUCE M. HENRY, of New York, NY, died December 23, 2022. Dr. Henry was a pediatric emergency physician at Montefiore, Nyack Hospital, and other facilities in the New York City area. Henry's dedication to children's health went beyond the border of the U.S. and his professional work. He was born in Jamaica and started working with the Organization for International Development (OID) in 1996. He went on many mission trips with OID, which provides health care and community development in Jamaica and throughout the Caribbean as well as in Africa and other locations. He sent books and clothing and paid education costs for children in Jamaica and beyond. He had been working one week a month at Children's Hospital New Orleans for the past 13 months, traveling to Louisiana to help his brother with caretaking needs for his mother. Henry was survived by his mother, Enid Scott; and his brother, Boswell Atkinson.

Residents

WILLIAM B. BAER, of Portland, OR, died December 21, 2022. Dr. Baer completed his internship in 1965. He then entered the Air Force as Captain. He served as a flight surgeon at both Brooks and Hamilton Fields. While in the Air Force, he designed a blood transfusion device, patented and used in emergency evacuations. He completed his service in the Air Force in November and United Airlines hired him to be a pilot until his residency started in July. He moved to Portland to start his ophthalmology residency at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in 1969. After starting residency, he met Milton Singer, MD, who invited him to join his practice when he was done. He practiced with Dr. Singer, and later on his own, until his semi-retirement at age 70. He also did forensic ophthalmology for 11 years. During his almost 50 years of private practice, he taught at OHSU medical school and Dever's Eye Institute. Baer was survived by his daughter, Allison; son Louis; and two grandchildren.

LISA BARDARO, of San Francisco, CA, died May 1, 2018. Dr. Bardaro graduated with honors from medical school at the American University of the Caribbean. She performed her family medicine residency at Upstate and practiced as a family medicine doctor. She was honored for her work in AIDS research, treatment, and education, and for conducting seminars on AIDS. Bardaro was survived by her parents, John and Barbara; sister Saffa; and Aunt Pamela.

IN MEMORIAM

ZACHARY BATCHO, of San Diego, CA, died January 2. Dr. Batcho attended Northwestern University School of Medicine and completed his residency in emergency medicine at Upstate. He began his career in emergency medicine at Cortland Regional Medical Center in Cortland, NY. Since 2010, he worked at the VA San Diego Medical Center, where he was a member of the clinical faculty supervising interns and residents from UCSD School of Medicine. Batcho was survived by his parents, Krystine Batcho and Ronald Yaworsky; and sister Becky.

BITUIN TOLENTINO BERNARDO, of Tulare, CA, died October 31, 2019. Dr. Bernardo graduated medical school from Far Eastern University in the Philippines. She emigrated to California in the 1970's with her family. She specialized in anesthesia and practiced in California, New York, and Texas. After a brief retirement she returned to medicine and worked in family practice. In 2007, she was recognized with a Congressional award for being a "top doctor" in America. Bernardo was survived by her husband, Rodolfo; and sons Robert and Rodney.

THEODORE W. BERNSTEIN, of Dayton, OH, died May 10, 2020. Dr. Bernstein attended the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine and completed his surgical residency at Upstate. He practiced more than 50 years and treated thousands of patients. He contributed to the advancement of the neurosurgical profession through research and integration of technology in the field. Bernstein was survived by his wife, Luzia; daughters Barbara, Susan and Martha; son Ted; and six grandchildren.

THOMAS FRAZER DRAPER, JR., of Newton, CT, died January 9. Dr. Draper enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served his country during World War II as 1st Class Seaman. He was honorably discharged in August 1946. He received his medical degree from Queens University, Kingston, Ontario in 1955, and a master's in public health from Yale University in 1969. He completed his pediatric residency at Johns Hopkins University/Baltimore City Hospital and served as chief pediatric resident at Upstate. In 1976, he completed an infectious diseases fellowship. Draper was a pediatrician who cared for several generations of families during the 40 years he practiced in Newtown and Danbury. Draper was survived by daughters Kathleen, Mary, Joan, Martha, Donna and Rosemary; son Joseph; 21 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

EDWIN M. MILLER, of Livingston, NJ, died May 29, 2022. Dr. Miller enlisted in the Navy during World War II in 1945 and served for two years as a meteorologist. Following the Navy, he attended and received his medical degree from State University College of Medicine in New York City. He then completed an internship at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn and then served a one-year residency in internal medicine at Upstate. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at New York University's Bellevue Medical Center, and in 1956, opened the doors to his practice, Eye Physicians of Sussex County. Miller had a four-decade career in ophthalmology. He was survived by his wife, Norma; children Robert, Leslie and Andrew; and eight grandchildren.

W. BARTON B. VAN SLYKE, of Watertown, NY, died January 12. Dr. Van Slyke was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1943 and served in the 86th Army Division. As the Battle of the Bulge began, he was deployed to Europe. He saw action in the Rhur Pocket and in Southern Germany until the end of the war in Europe in April 1945. He was then redeployed to the Pacific Theatre in preparation for the invasion of Japan and was honorably discharged in April 1946. Van Slyke attended University of Rochester Medical School. He spent 1953-1954 in a rotating internship at the University of Virginia Hospital and did an internal medicine residency at the University of Colorado Medical Center. He then moved to Gouverneur, NY, and practiced family medicine for thirteen years. In 1970, he began a three-year diagnostic radiology residency at Upstate, and then returned to the north country, where he became a partner at Northern Radiology Associates in Watertown, NY. He retired from that practice but continued to practice radiology intermittently as locum tenens until 1990. Van Slyke was survived by his wife, Anna Jane; sons David, Steven and Martin; two granddaughters; and one great granddaughter.



On March 17, all 175 graduating Norton College of Medicine students learned their residency placements during annual Match Day festivities. More than half of students will enter the primary care specialties comprised of internal medicine (22), pediatrics (20), family medicine (6), medicine (18) and obstetrics and gynecology (6). Ninety-eight students will train in New York State, 38 remaining in Syracuse. "Residency is maybe the most significant period of time for a doctor because it's so intensive," says Norton College of Medicine Dean Lawrence Chin, MD. "That's what makes Match Day such an exciting day."

Match Day 2023!



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