

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

1970

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

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

1971

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



Richard B. Bernstein '71 and his wife, Carol



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

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

1972

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

1973 Reunion

October 13•14, 2023

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

1974

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

MICHAEL A. WEINER, MD '72

Fighting Childhood Cancer

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

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

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

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

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



Wynne and Michael A. Weiner, MD '72

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Renée Gearhart Levy

