

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

# Gary C. Brown, MD, MBA

### Class of 1975

#### Gary C. Brown, MD '75, MBA,

professor of ophthalmology at Jefferson Medical University and Director Emeritus of the Retina Service at Wills Eye Hospital, has had multiple careers. Primarily a vitreoretinal surgeon since 1981, he is also Chief Medical Officer and Director of Pharmacoeconomics at the Center for Value-Based Medicine®, a healthcare economic research organization. In between, he also organized an effort to raise \$23 million to initiate, then served as Chairman of the Board, for the Pennsylvania Physician Healthcare Plan, a physician-owned PPO/HMO in Pennsylvania. (Robert Pyatt, MD '75, an exceptional radiologist and quality expert from Chambersburg, PA, was instrumental in this effort as well.)

Dr. Brown was born in Mineola, New York, in 1949. At age two, he moved from Garden City to Rockville Centre, where he lived until age 18. In 1967, he entered Colgate University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a Bachelor of Science degree in biology. For five summers after high school he worked on the highway department, as a trash collector, and for the Long Island Lighting Company. His experiences made him most appreciative of the privilege of entering medical school at Upstate in 1971. During his tenure as a medical student, he organized a Chicago-style rock band, playing tenor saxophone at area events including those at Upstate. After his second year, he spent an eight-week fellowship in anesthesiology with Dr. Carl Geiger at St. Joseph's Hospital. It was an invaluable experience that helped him more than once during his career.

He fondly remembers Dr. Robert Rohner's awesome lectures and has adopted many of his superb teaching



techniques into the 450+ lectures he has had the privilege to deliver. Acronyms are just one wonderful tool. Everyone in the Class of '75 likely still remembers FART for the complications of myocardial infarction: Failure, Arrhythmia, Rupture of a papillary muscle and Thromboembolism. Of course, Rohner suggested that all nuns in the audience use the acronym RAFT.

Following graduation, Brown interned at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. His MASH-like Grady experience, especially during his four months of adult medicine, provided him with a great field education, as well as wonderful cocktail conversation and unending material for his medical thriller novels. After all, how often do you have running gun battles on the Emergency Room ramp?

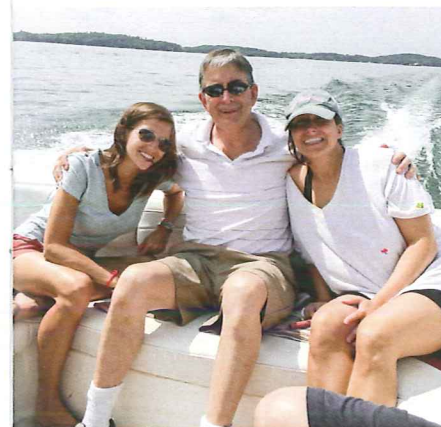
After Grady, Brown went to Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia, where he served as a resident from 1976 through 1979. During his last year, the staff and his peers elected him Chief Resident. From 1979 through 1981, he was a fel-

low in vitreoretinal diseases at Wills. Following graduation from the fellowship, he joined Drs. William Tasman and William Benson, each who later served as Chair of the American Board of Ophthalmology. During his first two years he won the Wills Eye Resident Teaching Award, a tribute to the skills he learned from Dr. Rohner.

As Brown built his practice and continued his vitreoretinal research endeavors, his wife Lissa attended Jefferson Medical College. She graduated with her MD in 1986. Many were the times they would switch cars in the middle of Philadelphia with their two- and four-year-old daughters in the back seat. Lissa pursued an ophthalmology residency at Wills and went into private practice upon finishing. They both attended St. Joseph's University's Haub School of Business from 1996-1998 and received their MBA degrees in strategic management.

Brown was co-director of the Retina Vascular Unit at Wills Eye from 1989 to 1990 and director of the Unit from 1990 through 2002. Hitting a rough patch, he developed Guillain-Barre Syndrome after a kidney transplant, necessitating intensive rehabilitation for a year at the same time Lissa was her party's nominee for U.S. Congress. Fortunately, he recovered and was able to return to practice full-time, serving as director of the Retina Service at Wills Eye Hospital for a decade between 2003 and 2012. The Wills Eye Retina Service has trained approximately eight percent of the vitreoretinal specialists in the United States and Canada.

With interests in research and medical writing, Brown has been an investigator in multiple NIH trials and has authored or co-authored 12 medical



books and 700 medical papers or chapters. He has been chief editor for three medical journals, has delivered numerous named lectures, and is a reviewer for 40 peer-review journals. Throughout his career, he has served as president of the Philadelphia Ophthalmic Society, the Wills Eye Hospital Ex-Residents Society, the Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology and the Wills Eye Hospital Medical Staff. He has been named by his peers to Castle-Connolly's America's Best Doctors annually for the past 20 years. Among his 100 honors are The American Academy of Ophthalmology Honor, Senior Honor and Lifetime Achievement Awards, Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the World, 1,000 Great Minds of the 21st



Century, and the Arnall Patz Medal for retinal vascular research.

Along with Lissa, Brown is the founder of Value-Based Medicine®, the natural extension of Evidence-Based Medicine. Value-Based Medicine® integrates both: 1) patient value and 2) financial value across all specialties in healthcare. Patient value is conferred by healthcare interventions in terms of improvement in: 1) length of life and/or 2) patient perceived quality-of-life. In regard to financial value, it utilizes standardized cost-utility (cost-effectiveness) analysis and also incorporates the considerable financial resources returned to patients and society above the costs of healthcare interventions. In the process he gets to play with a number of fun tools, including utility analysis, decision analysis, Markov modeling and Monte Carlo simulation.

Their Center for Value-Based Medicine® textbook, *Evidence-based to Value-based Medicine*, was published by the AMA Press with a foreword by Thomas Scully, JD, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Services. Brown's interest in writing led to authoring medical thriller fiction novels: *Blind Rage*, *Tribunal* and *An Eye for Justice*.

He and Lissa have three daughters, Heather, Heidi and Katie, and five grandchildren. They also have acquired two great sons-in-law, Alex and Joe, along the way. They hope to soon be moving their home base to Hilton Head and continue work with the Center for Value-Based Medicine®.

\*BIO SUBMITTED BY DR. BROWN