Weill Cornell Medical College

September 2014 Medical College September 2014 Medical College September 2014

M.D., Clinical Director Call Program and **Clinica**

Healthy Aging at Weill Cornell

The EGL House Call Program is a shining example of Weill Cornell's commitment to providing comprehensive care to the senior population and helping individuals live longer, healthier lives.

The program, which recently received a significant gift from the EGL Charitable Foundation to initiate its endowment, was founded in 1997 by Mark Lachs, M.D., M.P.H., Co-Chair of the Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine, and Veronica LoFaso, M.D., M.S., the Roland Balay Clinical

Scholar. The mission of this program is to bring the doctor's office directly to the patient's doorstep, serving elderly patients who are homebound.

The House Call Program delivers several hundred home visits annually, including those from Weill Cornell physicians, nurse practitioners and medical students. In addition, the program has benefitted from a longstanding partnership with social service provider DOROT. This collaboration reinforces a comprehensive care model in which isolated patients

receive medical care and are connected with the surrounding community through intergenerational visits, meal provision and care assistance, alleviating loneliness and increasing quality of life.

"The EGL House Call Program, like so many of our programs here, matches caring practitioners with patients in need," says Dr. Lachs, the Irene F. and I. Roy Psaty Distinguished Professor of Medicine. "Through this important work, we have the opportunity to really change the lives of so many patients and their families."

From Our Dean



I quickly learned that the 'Weill Cornell way' is to achieve this greatness through collaboration.

When I came to Weill Cornell in January 2012, I was struck by the incredible potential that I saw at this already strong institution. I knew right away that the Medical College could harness its diverse resources to become a research powerhouse, translating groundbreaking science to the finest patient care. I quickly learned that the 'Weill Cornell way' is to achieve this greatness through collaboration. I see it with our physicians and scientists, who are working together, across disciplines, to make discoveries; I see it with our students, who are sharing ideas as they become the next generation of healthcare leaders; and, I see it with our donors and friends, who partner with us to keep us on the frontlines of medicine.

Our donors, through their remarkable generosity, help us recruit top-tier scientists, support our students through scholarship and other educational initiatives, and bolster our world-class clinical care. In this issue of Milestones, you will read about donors who have championed our efforts in each of these areas, and the gifts that continue to make these achievements possible. Energized by powerful collaborations like this, Weill Cornell will continue to be a leader in breakthrough science and healthcare.

With gratitude,

Lucan & fer

Laurie H. Glimcher, M.D. Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean Provost for Medical Affairs

Focus on the Future: Donors Support Recruitment of Star Researcher

With the support of two generous families, Weill Cornell welcomes an exciting new leading light, John Blenis, Ph.D., an expert in cancer cell biology.

The recruitment of Dr. Blenis is thanks, in part, to a \$3 million gift from Susan and Roger Hertog. The Hertogs have a long history of philanthropy with Weill Cornell – having generously supported the last three Campaigns – and chose this recent gift because of its results-oriented focus on cancer research.

In his new role, Dr. Blenis will hold the **Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Professorship in Cancer Research**, established in 2012 with a \$2 million gift from the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, of which Overseer Michael Kellen is President. The Kellen family is passionate about cancer research, and they established this professorship to support the recruitment of world class scientists.

Dr. Blenis comes to Weill Cornell from Harvard Medical School. His research strives to identify new biomarkers as well as novel therapies that will not only treat cancer but may help combat aging, neurodegenerative diseases, diabetes and obesity. He has been recognized with a merit award from the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health.



Dr. John Blenis

"We are thrilled that we played a part in the recruitment of Dr. Blenis, a once-ina-generation researcher," says Mr. Hertog. "We have a great deal of interest in the research being done at the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center, and with his impressive credentials we know Dr. Blenis will be an integral addition to the center."

Dr. Blenis will work closely with Lewis Cantley, Ph.D., Meyer Director of the Meyer Cancer Center, Margaret and Herman Sokol Professor in Oncology Research and Professor of Cancer Biology in Medicine.

"Dr. John Blenis is a world leader in teasing out the detailed biochemical mechanism by which cancer cells grow," says Dr. Cantley. "Over the past twenty years, his laboratory at Harvard has uncovered genes that mediate tumor growth and explained the biochemical mechanisms for this control, leading to the development of new drugs for cancer therapy. His addition to the Meyer Cancer Center will provide important leadership in basic and translational research."

Honoring Our Clinical Leaders

Weill Cornell's excellence in clinical care extends to all departments, and our outstanding physicians have inspired generous donors to create endowed professorships – one of the highest academic awards that the Medical College can bestow on a faculty member – to support the continuation of their important work. These physicians have gone above and beyond the call of duty, making groundbreaking advances for patients in their respective fields.



Dr. Louis J. Aronne

Louis J. Aronne, M.D., is an internationally recognized weight management specialist and director of the Comprehensive Weight Control Center at Weill Cornell. His approach to weight issues has helped countless patients reach their weight loss goals, taking a problem-solving approach to a struggle that many know all too well. Dr. Aronne views obesity as a progressive disorder of the mechanisms that normally regulate weight, and he has pushed the concept of a "feed-forward" phenomenon in which appetite is stimulated, rather than inhibited, by eating.

As part of their transformative \$100 million gift that launched the *Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives* Campaign, Joan and Chairman of the Board of Overseers Sanford Weill established the **Sanford I. Weill Professorship of Metabolic Research**, created to be held by an outstanding faculty member who embodies the

highest standards of physicianship and research.

"I think the world of Lou and have learned so much from him," says Mr. Weill. "Hopefully he's as proud as I am that our names are now linked together."

Dr. Aronne's center develops new ideas and treatments for obesity. The center has held more than 60 trials of new medical and behavioral treatments, recently developing a comprehensive medical weight loss program called BMIQ that can be used by any healthcare institution to manage its patients.

"I am honored and humbled to have been chosen as the Weill Professor of Metabolic Research," says Dr. Aronne. "Metabolic health affects our bodies on a cellular level, and the more we understand it, the better our chances of keeping it in check. This professorship will give me the opportunity to enrich that understanding, ultimately benefitting our patients."

The Weills have made a substantial commitment to metabolic health at the Medical College, having also recently established the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Center for Metabolic Health. Center physicians will continue to provide advanced treatment for patients, while scientists in the center will seek to understand the molecular underpinnings of metabolic diseases, translating their discoveries into new therapeutic approaches. \diamond



Joan and Board Chairman Sanford I. Weill



Ursel and David Barnes

David Barnes and his wife, Dr. Ursel Barnes, live in the U.K., and when David was diagnosed in January with a meningioma – a tumor in the brain – they searched far and wide for a surgeon who could remove it safely and with minimal scarring. They were told by doctors throughout Europe that he would need a bifrontal craniotomy, an invasive procedure in which the skull is opened to remove the tumor.

With limited time remaining – Mr. Barnes had already lost his sense of smell and was losing hearing in one ear – the Barneses were referred by a physician in Austria to Weill Cornell neurosurgeon Theodore Schwartz, M.D., F.A.C.S., Professor of Neurosurgery, Otolaryngology and

Neuroscience and Director of Surgical Neuro-Oncology, Pituitary and Epilepsy Surgery.

The fears amongst the previous doctors were that the tumor was too close to the optic nerve to operate in any other way. However, after reviewing Mr. Barnes's scans, Dr. Schwartz was confident that he would be able to employ a minimally invasive technique that involved removing the tumor from Mr. Barnes's brow line. By mid-March, the Barneses were at Weill Cornell, and his surgery was successful. With an almost imperceptible scar, Mr. Barnes walked out of the hospital four days later.

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Dr. Theodore Schwartz

"I cannot describe to you how amazed I was,"

Mr. Barnes says. "I feel like I was given another life." The Barneses were so impressed with Dr. Schwartz that they endowed a \$3 million professorship, the **David and Ursel Barnes Professorship in Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery**, in support of Dr. Schwartz's work.

"Although Dr. Schwartz is one of the top in his field, he really works in a team-based environment," says Mr. Barnes. "He has a clear commitment to transferring his skills.

"There are situations where minimally invasive surgery is not an option; but there are also many where it should be used but it isn't, either because people don't

> have the practice of it or the equipment for it. That is why my wife and I, as incredible beneficiaries of this technique, would like to help."

Dr. Schwartz, globally renowned for his expertise in minimally invasive skull-based surgery, is grateful for the Barneses' support and the opportunity to spread his knowledge.

"The donation provided by the Barnes family will be crucial to growing the minimally invasive, endoscopic tumor program, thereby bolstering our ability to teach national and international fellows these cutting edge techniques," says Dr. Schwartz. "I am honored to be the first holder of this endowed professorship." * Diane Abbey and her husband Arthur have been friends and ardent supporters of Dr. Peter I. Pressman, Clinical Professor Emeritus of Surgery, since they first met him decades ago – shortly after Mrs. Abbey was diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer at an early age.

After consulting with several surgeons, the Abbeys felt most comfortable with Dr. Pressman's outlook and advice. Dr. Pressman performed surgery – and it was a success. Mrs. Abbey has remained cancer-free ever since.

"In saving Diane's life, Dr. Pressman saved both of us," says Mr. Abbey. "We will always be grateful, and we wanted to do whatever

we could to support him." In the summer of 2013, Overseer Alberto Cribiore generously offered to fund half of a professorship in the Department of Surgery as an incentive for a matching gift that would complete the funding. Fabrizio Michelassi, M.D., F.A.C.S., the Lewis Atterbury Stimson Professor of Surgery and Chairman of the Department of Surgery, suggested the professorship



Arthur Abbey and Overseer Alberto Cribiore

be named in honor of Dr. Pressman, who had just retired and been appointed Clinical Professor Emeritus of Surgery. This catalyzed the creation of the **Peter I. Pressman**, **M.D. Professorship in Surgery**. Dr. and Mrs. Pressman and the Abbeys contributed to the professorship and also reached out to others to contribute, including friends and former patients.

Now, the first Pressman Professor is Dr. Todd Evans, Vice Chair of Research and Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology in Surgery. As Dr. Pressman wished, Dr. Evans is both a top cancer researcher



Dr. Todd Evans, Dr. Peter Pressman and Dr. Fabrizio Michelassi

and a leading educator, making him an ideal choice for this role. Weill Cornell is one of the few institutions to include a research program in its Department of Surgery, and Dr. Evans will be forging new paths in patient therapies while educating the next generation of physician-scientists.

"It means the world to me that the Abbeys have helped to fund the professorship and garnered support from others," says Dr. Pressman. "Dr. Evans is a very worthy recipient, and I'm thrilled to see what the future holds."

"In saving Diane's life, Dr. Pressman saved both of us," says Mr. Abbey. "We will always be grateful, and we wanted to do whatever we could to support him."

Healthy Aging at Weill Cornell continued from the cover

The program is now a significant part of the wide array of clinical services provided for seniors by the Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine at Weill Cornell, which is also co-chaired by Ronald Adelman, M.D., Emilie Roy Corey Professor of Geriatrics and Gerontology and Professor of Clinical Medicine.

Comprehensive clinical care is only one critical piece of the complex, multidisciplinary puzzle required to promote health in an expanding aging population. At Weill Cornell, medical care goes hand-in-hand with advancing research in the field and teaching medical students how to care for patients as they age.

The Weill Cornell clinicians who treat seniors work alongside world-class scientists who are tackling the diseases that often impact this population. Recently recruited stars like Gregory Petsko, D.Phil., Director of the Helen and Robert Appel Alzheimer's Disease Research Institute, are unlocking the biological mysteries behind diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and helping to speed cures and treatments to patients.

"Discovering the right treatments, or possibly even cures, for these neurological disorders has the potential to drastically alter the course of aging in our society," says Dr. Petsko, the Arthur J. Mahon Professor of Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute. "But, finding a way to *prevent* these diseases altogether would be an absolute game-changer."

Medical education is another critical piece of the elder care puzzle. The students at Weill Cornell are among those who will shape the future of healthcare as the proportion of seniors in the population grows. These skills are so central to their education that all students are required to make at least one house call before they graduate and, through the new Longitudinal Education Experience Advancing Patient Partnerships (LEAP) program, many students will be matched with a senior patient who they will care for through all four years of medical school.

"Providing the best possible geriatric care requires a multipronged approach that includes clinicians, researchers and educators working together, across disciplines," says Laurie H. Glimcher, M.D., the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean. "At Weill Cornell, this collaborative work sets the gold standard for patient care."



WHAT INSPIRES GIVING? MEET BARBARA SLIFKA AND DR. RICHARD COHEN

When distinguished Weill Cornell alumnus Dr. Richard Cohen and his wife, Libby, established the Libby and Richard P. Cohen, M.D. '75 Scholarship in 2003, their hope was to help medical students pursue the careers of their dreams. What Dr. Cohen didn't know at that time was that one of his friends and patients, Barbara Slifka, would share this commitment and become his partner and champion in these efforts. Ms. Slifka, a longtime friend to Weill Cornell, has generously supported the Cohen scholarship for the past seven years, helping it become one of the most financially robust endowed scholarships at the Medical College. Ms. Slifka's passion for promoting medical education was made further evident when she established the Richard P. Cohen, M.D. Professorship in Medical Education in 2009 and through her ongoing support for the Weill Cornell International Fellowship Program.

Dr. Cohen and Barbara Slifka recently sat down with Larry Schafer, Vice Provost for External Affairs, to speak about what inspires each of them to give.

LS: Dr. Cohen, you have been involved with the Medical College for quite some time now – as a medical student, an alumnus, a faculty member and most recently in your role as philanthropist. What is it that keeps you so connected here?

RC: Well, it's my home. I came here as a young man, and the place has been wonderful to me and my family. It's allowed me to pursue a dream of a career that I couldn't even imagine. I feel very warmly towards the institution, its history and what it's done for me. I feel that it's appropriate for me to give back.

LS: Barbara, you and your family have also been connected to Weill Cornell for a long time – can you tell me a little about how you first became involved with the Medical College? And, how did you find Dr. Cohen?

BS: My first connection here was as a patient – I had a doctor here, many years ago, that I loved. About 14 years ago, when I was looking for a new general practitioner, my good friend Collette Kean referred me to Dr. Cohen. The first time I met him, he said "I'll take you on one condition. I'm the captain of the ship – it all goes through me." In other words, if I'm having a problem, I need to see him first. And I've stuck with that. It works.

LS: Both of you have shown, through your ongoing scholarship support, that you are committed to helping our medical students achieve great things. What is it about medical education that inspires you? **BS:** I have a soft spot for supporting education. I think it's the most important thing in this country. When I was a high school student, my school strongly promoted ethics and values, and one of my values has always been supporting education and giving back.

RC: To us, setting up a scholarship made the most sense. We wanted to build something that had the potential to help ... and to grow. And, every year, we get a letter about who our scholars are and we just sit there and *kvell*. These are wonderful people who have the potential for truly progressive careers.

LS: Barbara, I understand that over the years, you have met a number of students who hold the Cohen scholarship. How has that experience been for you? **BS**: Oh, wonderful. They're terrific! I'm always amazed by them. It is so interesting to hear about their medical studies, but also their interests *outside* of medicine. These are really well-rounded students.

RC: You meet these students and you don't worry about the future of medicine as far as quality. You don't worry about them continuing the tradition of caring for people. It's very reassuring.

LS. The Cohen Professorship is currently held by Dr. Yoon Kang, the Director of the Margaret and Ian Smith Clinical Skills Center. What do you think is the impact of hands-on clinical skills training for our medical students?

BS: I love Dr. Kang – and I love that whole program, where they actually simulate patient care in a hospital room. What they're doing there is clearly important – and amazing.

RC: At first, I honestly didn't understand the need for a clinical skills center. But, when I learned about what Dr. Kang was planning to do at the Center, I was a big convert. Helping students learn clinical skills in a controlled setting makes a lot of sense.

LS: And, Dr. Cohen, how do you feel to have a professorship named for you at the medical school?

RC: It's very nice and very humbling. Though, it should probably be named the Slifka professorship...

BS: (*laughs*) I was thrilled to name the professorship after Dr. Cohen. I couldn't think of anyone better.

LS: Barbara, your philanthropy reaches far and wide. The Joseph & Sylvia Slifka Foundation supports a variety of efforts including organizations in the social services, arts and education. How do you choose which areas to support? Would you say that you have a philosophy for giving?

BS: I try to give back to local organizations and people in the community. There are a lot of organizations, big and small, that need help. It feels nice to be able to do that.

LS: And what about you, Dr. Cohen?

RC: Libby and I feel very strongly about philanthropy. We're not in foundation league, but we've been blessed with success. We also feel very comfortable with alumni giving – we give to our undergraduate schools, we give here and we give to Libby's graduate school, because we feel that's something alumni should do.

PHOTO: RICHARD LOBELI

Ansary Symposium

Many of the country's most renowned scientists gathered at Weill Cornell Medical College to consider the achievements and future possibilities of regenerative medicine at the Ansary Symposium on Stem Cell Research, held on June 6th. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the Ansary Institute, celebrated with a remarkable event made possible by the generosity of Shahla and Ambassador Hushang Ansary, a life Overseer of the Medical College who established the Ansary Stem Cell Institute at Weill Cornell with a \$15 million gift.



Charlie Rose leads a roundtable discussion

The keynote speaker for the symposium was Alan Trounson, Ph.D., from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine. His speech was followed by scientific presentations from scientists all over the country, including Weill Cornell speakers Shahin Rafii, M.D., Director of the Ansary Stem Cell Institute, Professor of Genetic Medicine, Medicine and Reproductive Biology and Jason Butler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Medicine in Genetic Medicine and Surgery.

"The potential for stem cells is tremendous: If someone has a heart attack and major scar tissue, we can use stem cells to regenerate the heart," said Dr. Rafii. "The challenge is to figure out how to get stem cells to make a functional, safe heart muscle. Stem cells can be used for a wide range



Dr. Shahin Rafii

of problems, including heart degeneration, Alzheimer's, diabetes and even targeting tumors. We just have to do the right basic science, have the right safety regulations and move into the clinic."

Broadcast journalist Charlie Rose moderated a roundtable discussion with a panel of five scientists to discuss the burgeoning field. The potential of stem cells is not only its ability to regenerate tissues, the panelists said. Stem cell science is one of the most promising areas of biomedical research with the potential to dramatically improve treatment of the most intractable diseases, and that excitement will drive the next decade of research as this area realizes its potential.



Shahla Ansary, Charlie Rose, Ambassador Hushang Ansary, Dean Glimcher and Dean Emeritus Antonio M. Gotto, Jr.

The Siegel Awards Honor Excellence





Jeanne and Overseer Herbert J. Siegel

Each year, Weill Cornell bestows 10 prizes to top-tier faculty and medical students through endowed gifts from longtime friends and supporters Jeanne and Overseer Herbert J. Siegel. Collectively, the Siegel Family awards are among Weill Cornell's most prestigious and generous accolades given to recognize leadership, achievement and service to the Medical College.

Recognized for his outstanding professional achievement, Dr. Shahin Rafii has been named the inaugural winner of the **Siegel Family Award for Outstanding Medical Research**. The annual award recognizes research faculty at Weill Cornell Medical College who demonstrate exceptional scientific skills and dedication, as well as professional achievement and innovation. Dr. Rafii accepted his award at the spring commencement ceremony. Olaf Andersen, M.D., Professor of Physiology and Biophysics and Program Director of the Tri-Institutional M.D.-Ph.D. Program, received the 2014 **Siegel Family Faculty Award**. It recognizes an exceptional Weill Cornell faculty member who demonstrates pedagogical excellence, outstanding scientific achievement and a record of dedicated educational service to the Medical College.

In addition, eight medical school students – two from each class – were awarded **Siegel Family Student Prizes**, which carry \$25,000 scholarships to help support and enhance their medical education at Weill Cornell. These awards were given to the students at the annual Salute to Scholarship event that was held in May.





Stimson Society Co-Chair Overseer A.J.C. (Ian) Smith, Dean Glimcher, Dr. Lisa Roth and Dr. Gerald Loughlin

Stimson Society Luncheon



The new Stimson Society Co-Chair, Dr. Michael Alexiades

"The Stimson Society includes generous friends and donors who have had the great foresight to make a planned gift to Weill Cornell. This group of donors is vital to building the future of this institution."

Dean Glimcher

The annual Lewis Atterbury Stimson Society Donor Recognition Luncheon was held on June 4th at the Griffis Faculty Club. Overseer A.J.C. (Ian) Smith, Co-Chair of the Stimson Society, hosted guests for a presentation on the lasting impact of legacy giving from Gerald M. Loughlin, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and the Nancy C. Paduano Professor of Pediatrics, and Lisa G. Roth, M.D., the Charles, Lillian, and Betty Neuwirth Clinical Scholar in Pediatric Oncology and Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics. Members were also introduced to the new Stimson Society Co-Chair, Michael Alexiades, M.D. '83, Assistant Clinical Professor, an orthopedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery and past president of the Weill Cornell Medical College Alumni Association from 2010 to 2012.

"The Stimson Society includes generous friends and donors who have had the great foresight to make a planned gift to Weill Cornell. This group of donors is vital to building the future of this institution," said Dean Glimcher in her welcoming remarks.

The Stimson Society honors a distinguished group of supporters who have included a commitment to Weill Cornell in their deferred giving plans. To learn more about planned giving, please contact:

Vikki Jones Planned Giving Officer 646.317.7400 or vej2003@med.cornell.edu

Greenberg Award Dinner

The 34th annual Maurice R. Greenberg Distinguished Service Award Dinner took place on June 5th at The Plaza, honoring Roger W. Yurt, M.D., the Johnson & Johnson Distinguished Professor of Surgery, Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery, Director of the William Randolph Hearst Burn Center, Chief of Burn, Critical Care, and Trauma Surgery, and a surgeon at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. This year's award went to Dr. Yurt due to his longstanding service and dedication to Weill Cornell and NewYork-Presbyterian, and his many accomplishments. Under his direction for nearly two decades, the Hearst Burn Center has become a globally recognized leader in burn care and burn research, and has been recognized by the American Burn Association as setting the standard for excellence in care.





Dean Glimcher, Dr. Roger W. Yurt and Dr. Steven Corwin, CEO of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital

"The evening was a truly incredible gathering of friends, colleagues and family," says Dr. Yurt. "The Greenberg Award is particularly special to me since it validates my decision some twenty years ago to reduce my national and international activities and concentrate on programs here at the Medical Center."

The Greenberg Award is made possible by an endowment from one of the Medical College's most generous benefactors, Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg.

Brower Lecture



Dr. Lewis Cantley

The inaugural Mark S. Brower, M.D. Lecture in Hematology and Oncology, established to honor the memory of a beloved physician and faculty member, took place on April 21st at The Starr Foundation-Maurice R. Greenberg Conference Center in the Belfer Research Building.

Established, in part, with generous gifts from Overseer Peter Meinig and Stephen Schwarzman, Chairman, CEO and co-founder of the Blackstone Group, the lecture honors Dr. Brower, who served as a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Weill Cornell and an oncologist and hematologist at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Brower's specialization in hematology and medical oncology put him at the center of complex diagnosis and treatment protocols for hundreds of patients. Many of



Dean Glimcher addresses the audience.

his patients are alive today because of his intervention and wise guidance in administering the latest advancements in treatment and medical protocol.

The lecture, "Advances in Cancer Research: On the Front Lines of the Revolution," was opened by Harvey Klein, M.D., William S. Paley Professor of Clinical Medicine, and the main discussion was presented by Lewis Cantley, Ph.D., the Meyer Director of the Meyer Cancer Center.



Overseer Peter C. Meinig, Dr. Cantley and Stephen Schwarzman

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