A transformative $100 million gift from longtime leaders and partners Joan and Board Chairman Sanford I. Weill and the Weill Family Foundation has launched the new $300 million Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives Campaign at Weill Cornell. The Weills’ gift will establish the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Center for Metabolic Health and will provide significant funding for research, recruitment and program enhancement. This gift will champion the central mission of the Campaign: to drive the innovative research breakthroughs that will transform treatments and cures for patients worldwide. The Weills’ visionary philanthropy and enduring dedication to advancing medical discoveries have left an indelible mark on Weill Cornell and the patients it serves, and this gift continues that legacy.

“We are profoundly appreciative of the generosity of Joan and Sandy Weill, and of all our loyal donors who are committed to advancing medical discoveries and, above all, making a difference in our patients’ lives,” says Laurie H. Glimcher, M.D., the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medical College. “It is incumbent upon us to find therapies and cures for the world’s most intractable diseases, and the Weills’ phenomenal leadership and unwavering support will ensure that we enhance the health of our patients for future generations.”

The Weills have a storied partnership with Weill Cornell. Mr. Weill joined the Board of Overseers in 1982, and in 1995 he became Chairman. The Weills gave their groundbreaking $100 million gift in 1998, leading to renaming the institution Weill Cornell Medical College. Just four years later, they gave another $100 million gift to support the Advancing the Clinical Mission Campaign, launched to transform the patient experience and enhance medical education. And in 2007, to further the Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign and position Weill Cornell as a leader in biomedical research, the Weills pledged an unprecedented $250 million, a gift believed to be the single largest ever given to a medical school. In addition to giving of their time, including Mr. Weill’s 31 years on the Board of Overseers and Mrs. Weill’s 15 years as Co-Chairwoman of the Women’s Health Symposium Executive Steering Committee, with their most recent gift the Weills have given more than $600 million to Weill Cornell Medical College and Cornell University.

“Joan and I have had the honor and privilege to contribute to Weill Cornell Medical College, helping to sustain this extraordinary institution as one of the world’s leaders in biomedical research,” says Mr. Weill. “We are immensely proud of what Weill Cornell has achieved – and what more we can accomplish in the years to come.”
Innovation is often the result of a collaborative effort – and it is with this in mind that the unprecedented Tri-Institutional Therapeutics Discovery Institute was born.

Launched with a combined $20 million gift from Ali and Overseer Lewis Sanders and Abby and Overseer Howard Milstein, this initiative brings together three world-class institutions – Weill Cornell Medical College, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and The Rockefeller University – in partnership with Takeda, a research-based global leader in the pharmaceutical industry. In this unique alliance, the scientists who discover therapeutics will work side-by-side with medicinal chemists, speeding the conversion of therapies from the laboratory to effective treatments for patients. The Institute will be housed on the 16th floor of the soon-to-be-opened Belfer Research Building.

On October 1st, the leaders of all three institutions and of Takeda came together to announce this groundbreaking partnership. Dean Glimcher addressed attendees alongside Craig B. Thompson, M.D., President and CEO of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Ph.D., President of The Rockefeller University; and Tadataka Yamada, M.D., Director and Chief Medical and Scientific Officer of Takeda.

“This institute will streamline the process of advancing promising laboratory discoveries to the point where they can enter the drug development pipeline,” said Dean Glimcher. “This innovative approach to scientific collaboration will lead to new therapies that will save or improve the lives of untold numbers of patients throughout the world.”

Takeda is located in Osaka, Japan, and is the largest pharmaceutical company in the country. Dr. Yamada applies not just his pharmaceutical background to this institute but also his expertise in medicine and global health, an invaluable combination.

On this extraordinary collaboration, he said, “There’s an old saying. If you want to go fast, walk alone; if you want to travel far, walk together. True partnership involves equal sharing, and I’m hoping in this institute that rewards will go to groups of people who will work together as colleagues. I think this institute will allow us to see many days in which we will administer medicines to people who will benefit from them, who will have relief of their suffering, who will have a longer and better life because we were able to partner.”

The institutional leaders signed a proclamation that officially established the Institute, doing so on stage amongst Chairman of the Board of Overseers Sanford I. Weill, Overseers Milstein and Sanders, and lead Weill Cornell researcher Carl Nathan, M.D., R.A. Rees Pritchett Professor of Microbiology, Director of the Abby and Howard P. Milstein Program in Chemical Biology and Translational Medicine, and Chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

“Abby and Howard Milstein and Ali and Lewis Sanders have shown that they truly understand the impact this partnership can have on the future of medicine,” said Dr. Nathan, one of the pioneers of the Institute. “Their belief in this institute goes hand-in-hand with their dedication to philanthropy, and it is because of their ongoing commitment that we have been able to make this a reality.”

This program will support the recruitment of medicinal chemists, computational chemists and molecular modelers with private-sector experience who will apply their expertise to the development of research discoveries.

“This collaboration between three great institutions of excellence is the next step in the process of bringing together the best of what each knows for the progress of the science,” said Mr. Milstein.

The value in supporting this kind of initiative, Mr. Milstein said, is threefold.

“The first benefit is increasing human knowledge. Additionally, it has the possibility of that knowledge leading to new lifesaving cures, and lastly, maybe the discovery that’s made from your resources can end up saving someone you know, or a family member. Regardless, these future discoveries in research will affect the health of people all over the world, and we’re all connected.”

As a supporter of medical advancement, Mr. Sanders stressed the need for philanthropic support of endeavors like this institute.

“Historical sources of financing are under budget constraints, which increases the need for private philanthropists to step up to the plate and ensure that great innovation is appropriately financed,” said Mr. Sanders. “Such philanthropic investment in intellectual capital holds the promise of fostering game-changing advances in patient care.”

Howard Milstein:

Overseer Howard Milstein and his wife Abby have been part of the Weill Cornell family for almost a quarter of a century. They have been dedicated to the advancement of science and medicine throughout, establishing the Abby and Howard P. Milstein Chemistry Core Facility and the Abby and Howard P. Milstein Program in Chemical Biology and Translational Medicine, and through their most recent gift of $5 million, which will fund the Abby and Howard P. Milstein Program in Medicinal Chemistry in the Institute.

Lewis Sanders:

Overseer Lewis Sanders serves on the boards of Weill Cornell Medical College, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and The Rockefeller University and was instrumental in the establishment of the Tri-Institutional Therapeutics Discovery Institute. He has previously supported faculty recruitment, a top priority at Weill Cornell. The $5 million gift from Lewis and Ali Sanders, split evenly between the three institutions named above, will fund the Sanders Innovation and Education Initiative located in the Belfer Research Building at Weill Cornell, providing organizational infrastructure, project management, director salary support, education for a new generation of drug researchers, and in-lab support of faculty to drive their discoveries and innovations.

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Overseer Howard Milstein

Overseer Lewis Sanders

Weill Cornell Medical College

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Guests who enter the new Belfer Research Building, slated to open in January 2014, will have the opportunity to visit the magnificent Starr Foundation – Maurice R. Greenberg Conference Center, named in recognition of generous gifts totaling $100 million from The Starr Foundation and Corinne and Overseer Maurice R. “Hank” Greenberg in support of groundbreaking research in the building. This space, housed on the second and third floors of the building, will be a premier conference site for Weill Cornell and its tri-institutional partners, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and The Rockefeller University. Here, physician-scientists, educators, students, and researchers from around the globe will work together to innovate, exchange ideas and break through academic silos.

“Weill Cornell, already the epitome of excellence in research and clinical care, is setting a new global standard in collaborative, leading-edge biomedical science with the Belfer Research Building,” says Mr. Greenberg, Chairman of The Starr Foundation. “And we’re gratified to be a part of it.”

The Greenbergs and The Starr Foundation have a historic partnership with Weill Cornell and are ardent supporters of scientific innovation and collaboration. With this gift, they continue this legacy by driving multidisciplinary translational research in the Belfer Building. Their philanthropy has also led the way in efforts including cardiology research and cross-institutional initiatives such as the Starr Cancer Consortium, a multi-institutional partnership that provides critical support for biomedical investigators tackling cancer research, and the Tri-Institutional Stem Cell Initiative, an interdisciplinary effort which funds competitive research projects focused on using stem cells to treat a wide array of illnesses. Notably, the award-winning Weill Greenberg Center is named, in part, to honor the Greenbergs’ extraordinary generosity and support of clinical care. In addition to their support for research and patient care, the Starr Foundation is also one of the Medical College’s biggest student scholarship supporters. Through their philanthropy and commitment to leadership, the Greenbergs and The Starr Foundation have had a transformational impact on Weill Cornell.

Florence A. Davis, President of The Starr Foundation, remarks, “The Starr Foundation is proud to promote interdisciplinary partnerships that are critical for the future of science and medicine, and are a true hallmark of the new Belfer Building.”

“Hank, Corinne and The Starr Foundation are champions in advancing medical breakthroughs and propelling dynamic, collaborative initiatives,” says Dean Glimcher. “With their help, Weill Cornell will continue to speed the latest cures and treatments to our patients.”
With her recent $3 million gift to Weill Cornell, longtime supporter Kathy Wriston has committed to fund the Walter B. Wriston Professorship in Pancreatic Cancer Research to honor her late husband and combat the intractable disease that took his life.

A world-renowned banker and former chairman of Citicorp, Walter Wriston was a seminal figure in the banking industry. During the 19 months that he was struggling with pancreatic cancer, he and Mrs. Wriston were adamant about one day supporting research that would help eradicate this disease. After he passed away in 2005, Mrs. Wriston continued to champion this effort, supporting clinical and research projects including those led by Todd Evans, Ph.D., Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology in Surgery, and Dr. Joseph Ruggiero, M.D., Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine. When Mrs. Wriston recently learned about the new Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medical College and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and its emphasis on precision medicine to develop targeted therapies and treatments for the disease, she was inspired to get further involved.

“I feel that creating this professorship will help speed up this critical research,” she says. “We all know that first-rate researchers don’t come for free; I want Weill Cornell to find someone who is the best in the field to do this work, because I think it’s going to take somebody that good to come up with the answers.”

The Walter B. Wriston Professorship will be held by a faculty member dedicated to earlier diagnoses and discovery of potential causes, breakthrough treatments and cures for pancreatic cancer.

“We are so grateful to Kathy for her ongoing commitment to this effort and are hopeful that the Walter B. Wriston Professorship will pay tribute to the man whose name it bears by bringing us one step closer to tackling this insidious disease,” says Lewis Cantley, Ph.D., Margaret and Herman Sokol Professor in Oncology Research and Director of the Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medical College and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.

In Mrs. Wriston’s words, “Walter would be so proud to have his name associated with this professorship. He was an exceptional person. Many knew him as a brilliant international banker and financier, but he was more than that. He was a patriot, a business leader who acted on his belief in the advancement of women and minorities in the workplace, a conservationist, whom I joined in committing our farm in Connecticut to Audubon, and an electrician and mechanic who could fix anything. Most of all he was a caring person and he showed that in everything he did.”

**Women’s Health Symposium**

In the filled CITI auditorium, attendees of the 31st annual Women’s Health Symposium learned about probiotic health from Louis J. Aronne, M.D., F.A.C.P., Medical Director of the Center for Weight Management and Metabolic Clinical Research and Professor of Clinical Medicine and Robbyn E. Sockolow, M.D., Director of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition. The event opened with remarks by event Co-Chairwomen Joan Weill and Orli Etingin, M.D., Lisa and Sanford B. Ehrenkrantz Professor of Clinical Medicine and Director of the Iris Cantor Women’s Health Center. After presentations from both doctors, Dean Glimcher moderated a thought-provoking panel and took questions from the audience to pose to the presenters.

**Cabaret**

This year’s Cabaret was an elegant gala, held at the Waldorf Astoria for hundreds of guests supporting Weill Cornell and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. The evening’s honorees were Overseer Bob Appel, Vice Chair of the Board of Overseers, Co-Chair of the Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives Campaign and a longtime friend and benefactor of the Medical College, and Overseer Charlotte Ford, a champion and longtime patron and trustee of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. Guests enjoyed dinner and dancing, with music by the John Pizzarelli Quartet with Jessica Molaskey. The event brought in over $3.4 million for the Medical Center.
The Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives Campaign is not only a pressing initiative; it is our call to action.

At Weill Cornell, we are at the vanguard of medical education, research and patient care. These three areas are at the heart of our mission, but they are not always our end game. The true impact of our work often happens beyond the doors of the Medical College when our students become doctors, our discoveries are translated to treatments and cures worldwide, and our patients are able to return to their daily routines. Our driving force is to innovate and lead the discoveries that have the capacity to actually change people’s lives.

This campaign is shaped on key priority areas across the healthcare spectrum, and thanks to our visionary leadership and the generosity of our donors, we are more than halfway toward our $300 million goal. As we continue to recruit new leading lights, strengthen our research programs, and enhance our already strong curriculum, we further shape our institution as a world-class academic medical center, delivering care to those in need.

With the opening of the Belfer Research Building in January, we will usher in a new era of multidisciplinary translational research at Weill Cornell. The Driving Discoveries, Changing Lives Campaign will propel this sea change in medicine, and your ongoing commitment and generosity will help to keep Weill Cornell on the frontlines.

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