Dean Glimcher’s priorities for Weill Cornell are clear – retain our top physician-scientists, recruit more world-class researchers and create an organization and culture that enable collaborative research across fields, across institutions and among physicians and scientists. It is this message, and her unwavering commitment to science and medical education, that has prompted donors like Overseers Beth Curry and Barbara Friedman to generously support the Medical College with recent gifts toward faculty recruitment.

“When I first heard Laurie speak about the importance of boosting the research program at Weill Cornell, I was inspired,” says Board Vice Chair Barbara Friedman who, with her husband Stephen, gave a generous $5 million gift through the Friedman Family Foundation toward faculty recruitment. “Her vision for the future of the Medical College makes sense in today’s world of rapidly evolving science, and I am excited to be a part of it. I believe that we can truly bring about tremendous positive change.”

Along with Dean Glimcher’s plans to recruit and retain top-tier physician-scientists, she has placed an emphasis on translational science, moving research from the lab bench to the patient bedside and back to the bench again. By establishing the state-of-the-art Belfer Research Building next door to the award-winning Weill Greenberg Center, Weill Cornell is positioned to excel in translational science. This is key to accelerating discoveries and delivering the most comprehensive care to patients.

According to Overseer Beth Curry, who, with her husband Ravenel, made a $5 million gift to bolster recruitment efforts, “We have always wanted our gifts to make the biggest difference possible.” Beth, who joined the Board of Overseers this year, continues, “Under Laurie’s leadership, we felt that this money could be effectively used to bring more of the brightest and most well-respected researchers to Weill Cornell. I was especially taken with Laurie’s collaborative approach. If she can help these top researchers be more productive, the impact will be immense.”

Gifts toward recruitment support the Research Leads to Cures Initiative, which was launched in spring of 2011 and is part of the Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign. The Initiative, which will allow Weill Cornell to attract and retain some of the world’s best and brightest scientific minds, has currently raised $104 million toward the goal of $225 million.

“Recruitment gifts, like those from the Currys and the Friedmans, will enable Weill Cornell to recruit top tier scientists and keep us in the vanguard of finding solutions to the most complex challenges facing medicine today. I am hopeful that these gifts will inspire others to give.”

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

Overseer Beth Curry, Dean Glimcher and Vice Chair of the Board of Overseers Barbara Friedman
R.A. Rees Pritchett, M.D. ’48 was not only a dedicated physician to real estate leaders Leona and Harry Helmsley, he was also their trusted friend. So, when John Codey, Trustee of the Leona and Harry B. Helmsley Foundation, learning of Dr. Pritchett’s retirement after 58 years of patient practice, asked how the Foundation might show its gratitude, Dr. Pritchett, understanding the growing costs of medical school, suggested endowing a scholarship. Thus, with a gift of $1.5 million the Foundation established the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Scholarship in honor of R.A. Rees Pritchett, M.D.

The Foundation also made a $500,000 gift toward the Friends Fund to support the work of Dr. Pritchett.

Although Weill Cornell’s tuition is lower than that of its peer medical schools, students still graduate with large amounts of debt. This debt can directly impact their choice of career path, driving young doctors who may want to pursue lower-paying fields into higher-paying specialties. The Helmsley scholarship is intended to support students who want to pursue important, but lower-compensated careers like primary care medicine or geriatrics.

“Endowing a scholarship provides students with an opportunity they may not otherwise have. I am grateful to the Helmsley Foundation for endowing the Helmsley scholarship and honored to be linked to such an important gift.”

— R.A. Rees Pritchett, M.D. ’48

Increasing funds for student scholarships is one of Dean Glimcher’s top priorities. “The future health of our country literally depends on keeping today’s pipeline full of talented doctors and researchers across all fields,” says Dean Gilmcher. “Endowed scholarships, like the Helmsley scholarship, are key to making this happen.”
With their recent gift of $1 million to establish and endow the Siegel Family Award for Outstanding Medical Research, Jeanne and Overseer Herb Siegel have rounded out their support at Weill Cornell by making generous gifts in three key areas – student scholarship, faculty development and, now, medical research.

In 2010, the Siegels gave $5.75 million to establish the Siegel Family Student Prizes and the Siegel Family Faculty Award. The $25,000 student prizes are awarded annually to eight students who demonstrate leadership in their chosen medical specialty (see “Salute to Scholarship” on page 4). The Siegel Family Faculty Award, a $50,000 prize given to one deserving faculty member at Commencement each year, recognizes teaching excellence.

With this new gift, the Siegel Family Award for Outstanding Medical Research will be awarded annually to a member of Weill Cornell’s research faculty to acknowledge professional achievement and innovation in research. As with the other Siegel family awards, receiving this award will be a tremendous and much-anticipated honor.

“There supporting research at Weill Cornell just feels right,” says Mr. Siegel. “There have been so many wonderful and impressive developments in medicine because of the talented physician-scientists who work at this institution. We are thrilled to support their efforts and to promote Dean Glimcher’s vision to make this institution an even stronger research center.”

Overseer Herb Siegel
FROM OUR CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

It is with great pride that I share with you, our generous donors, that the Discoveries Campaign currently stands at $1.2 billion – only $100 million away from our goal.

When I look back at the first letter that I wrote for Milestones in the winter of 2007, I remember the enthusiasm I felt as we had recently topped the halfway-point of our fundraising. Today, that excitement is renewed as we are in the final stretch, only months away from completing this incredibly ambitious Campaign.

The Belfer Research Building, already being toured, stands as a tangible reminder of all that we have accomplished together during the past six years and much of what is to come. As we focus our efforts on recruitment, this building, with its state-of-the-art design, will serve as the structural centerpiece on campus. But, it is the people who will work within this building and throughout Weill Cornell who are at the heart of what we do. They are the ones who propel science and medicine forward to deliver the best care and treatments to our patients.

With your continued support, we can bring more top-tier scientists to the Medical College and can foster those who are already here. Together, with Dean Glimcher, Sandy Weill and the Board of Overseers leading the charge, we can help cultivate a community of world-class physician-scientists who are working together to solve some of the most pressing health challenges of our time.

Sincerely,
Robert J. Appel
Campaign Chairman

FROM OUR BOARD LEADERSHIP

Donor tours of the Belfer Research Building began this summer. While the building is still very much an active construction site, these tours provide a tangible opportunity to glimpse the future of research at Weill Cornell. However, seeing the framework and materials that go into the building also serves as a reminder of the scientific groundwork that has led us to this point in translational medicine. We would not be in the position to recruit 30 renowned translational researchers if we had not bolstered our basic science programs through the New Horizons in Medicine Campaign (launched in 1993) and provided state-of-the-art patient care through the Advancing the Clinical Mission Campaign (launched in 2001).

As we fast approach our target goal of $1.3 billion for the Discoveries Campaign and plan for the occupancy of the Belfer Research Building, it is important to keep in mind that reaching this point has been decades in the making and would not have been possible without the generosity and extraordinary commitment of donors – many of whom have supported each campaign of our three-phase strategic plan. Such support has altered the physical landscape of Weill Cornell but, more importantly, has enabled us to provide superior care and leading-edge research for tomorrow’s cures.

Sanford I. Weill
Chair, Board of Overseers
Antonio M. Gatto, Jr., M.D., D.Phil.
Co-Chair, Board of Overseers
Lewis Thomas University Professor
Vice President, Cornell University
Salute to Scholarship

This year’s third annual Salute to Scholarship was a festive event, honoring the generous donors who provide scholarships and the student scholarship recipients. Thanks to these gifts, many more medical students at Weill Cornell Medical College will be able to continue on to their intended careers, including lower-paying medical specialties like primary care and family medicine, with less debt to pay.

“Scholarship support is so important to our educational mission and the future success of our remarkable students,” Dean Glimcher said to guests at the event, which had record attendance this year. “I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and I know our students feel the same.”

Speakers at the event included Weill Cornell Overseer Herb Siegel, Overseer Lawrence Inra, M.D., Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, and William Rudin, President of Rudin Management Company and Vice President of The Rudin Foundation and The Louis and Rachel Rudin Foundation.

Mr. Siegel and his wife Jeanne, long-time donors to Weill Cornell Medical College, endowed the Siegel Family Faculty Award – a great honor bestowed upon Dr. Estomih Mtui, Associate Professor of Anatomy in Cell and Developmental Biology – and the Siegel Family Student Prizes – prestigious awards given to eight medical students each year. Colleen Wichser, a third year medical student, was a recipient of one of the Siegel Family Student Prizes and gave opening remarks at the event.

“My thanks go to all the donors here for your confidence and belief in the students at Weill Cornell. Our scholarships come with a message of trust and confidence – they are a big boost to morale,” she said. “I can now subtract some of my debt, and stay on the path of my interest rather than letting money dictate my decision on which field of medicine I will pursue.”

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign scholarship goal of $20 million has now been surpassed and is currently at $26 million and growing.

“Scholarship support is so important to our educational mission and the future success of our remarkable students.”

Dean Glimcher

Overseer Dr. Lawrence Inra and his wife Barbara with Richard Cruz ‘12, recipient of the Barbara and Lawrence A. Inra, M.D., Scholarship

In Their Own Words

Hear inside stories from our scientists and doctors about their latest research and how it’s helping our patients.

To see the full videos, please visit

weill.cornell.edu/campaign/research
Henning Voss, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Physics in Radiology, is renowned worldwide for his discoveries in the field of physics. His work focuses on developing novel techniques for use in functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), resulting in higher quality brain mapping images, specifically in a model of speech disorders and in brain injury.

Dr. Voss is originally from Hamburg, Germany. He has been at Weill Cornell since 2003 and is the first recipient of the Nancy M. and Samuel C. Fleming Research Scholar Award in Intercampus Collaborations. This award, established by long-time donors Nancy and Overseer Samuel Fleming in 2009, and other Research Scholar Awards (RSAs) like it, provide outstanding junior faculty members with financial support early in their careers, which gives them the time and resources necessary for vital research and training. Dr. Voss is the first of many scientists at Weill Cornell to hold an RSA established by a gift toward the Discoveries that Make a Difference Campaign.

Dr. Voss recently sat down with Larry Schafer, Vice Provost for Development, to talk about his work, the importance of scientific collaboration and why supporting research is critical for the future of healthcare and medicine.

Q&A

What Inspires Giving?

Meet Dr. Henning Voss

LS: As the first recipient of the Fleming Research Scholar Award, you have been given the opportunity to dedicate more of your time and resources to your own research at Weill Cornell. Can you tell me a little bit about your work?

HV: I’m in the field of biomedical imaging, but more specifically, I study functional MRI of the brain. I’m looking at how the brain works by examining the blood flow in the brain in response to different stimuli such as noise and light. This can tell us a lot about how the brain functions, which may allow us to more quickly discover a variety of treatments and procedures for various neurological conditions.

My big goal is to establish more widespread use of functional MRI in clinical settings.

LS: You conduct your research in the Citigroup Biomedical Imaging Center, right?

HV: Yes, I am the Faculty Director of the Pre-clinical Imaging Division at the Center. It’s a really impressive facility – with some of the newest MRI technology available. In fact, some of the technologies we use can only be found in a few places around the world. But, I also like it because it’s a core facility – which means I get to work with scientists from many different departments throughout Weill Cornell.

LS: We speak a lot about ‘translational research’ and the importance of moving work from the lab bench to the patient bedside and back to the bench again. What does translational research mean to you?

HV: In imaging, you are always trying to see something new, to discover some novel biomarkers. My work in the lab requires continuously staying in touch with the most recent developments in the field – but our bigger goal is to move this work to the clinical setting and help our patients. That’s what this is all about. In order to do that, physicians and scientists must work hand-in-hand – these collaborations are the best way to move science forward, and our medical college seems to have exactly the right mix of people to accomplish this.

LS: You have known the Flemings and have shared your discoveries with them throughout the years. How does it feel to share your work with the people who, through their extreme generosity, have made so much of it possible?

HV: I really enjoy sharing my work with Nancy and Sam. I have met with them in person and send them progress reports with recent updates and new findings from my research. With Sam's background in biochemistry and his extensive work on the impact of science on health care, they are both very informed, interested and ask focused questions. They really want to dig into the science and learn more. Sometimes their questions even make me sweat a little bit (laughter). It’s really amazing to see how engaged they are in this work.

LS: At the heart of the Research Leads to Cures Initiative is supporting research like yours. Why should our donors make gifts toward research?

HV: The impact of financial support on research is critical – but there’s another part of this that isn’t always mentioned – which is the psychological effect that this support can have on a scientist. The Fleming's support not only helped me financially, but it really gave me a boost of self confidence to continue with my direction of research. Their support has kept me even more focused, hitting more milestones. If I hadn't gotten this funding, I might not have been able to do this research – so I am very grateful for their generosity.

LS: The Flemings have clearly learned a lot from you – what have you learned from the Flemings?

HV: After meeting the Flemings and seeing how they have helped me with my own research, I started to think about what I can do for science after I retire. I would like to be able to stay involved with the field of science – and giving back is a good way to do that.

I am amazed by the high level of philanthropy in science in my adopted home country. Since I’ve been here, it’s been really great to see people so engaged in helping others – it really gives me a lot of hope. There are good people out there, like the Flemings, who do really good work.
Meet two of Weill Cornell’s many scientists whose pioneering research is leading toward effective treatments for some of our most challenging diseases: Alzheimer’s disease and tuberculosis – both increasing challenges globally, both in need of rapid discoveries, novel treatments and cures.

Here, these leading scientists describe their findings, their goals, and the ever-closer link between the research lab and patient care.

**Carl Nathan, M.D.**
R.A. Rees Pritchett Professor of Microbiology
Director, Abby and Howard P. Milstein Program in the Chemical Biology of Infectious Disease
Chair, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

**Focus: The Global Battle with Tuberculosis**

"Outsmarted" by Bacteria

"Most of the bacteria in our bodies live in a friendly consortium with us. In fact, we need them.

"But a few species have learned to evade our defenses and invade our bodies. And long before we were walking the earth, bacteria learned how to resist the antibiotics that they produce to compete with each other. Now these two bacterial skill sets are coming together – the bacteria that invade us are becoming increasingly antibiotic resistant. Among them are the worldwide killer that causes tuberculosis (TB) and bacteria that cause infections we are more familiar with in this country, such as pneumonia and sepsis.

"We assume there is a pill or injection for these more familiar infections, and up to now there has been. But it’s increasingly becoming the case that there is no treatment. We are emptying our medicine chest of effective drugs to use against them.

"This has become an urgent issue for the whole world – we are all united in the need to find new, more effective ways to develop anti-infectives. In our lab, we are focusing on TB, but the broader goal is to illustrate new ways of thinking about treatments for a wide range of infections."

Glimmer of Good News

"Thanks to a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and support from the Milstein Program, we are screening hundreds of thousands of compounds, including some that have been used for a variety of other treatments, to find new drugs to battle infections.

"One that we found is an anti-inflammatory that has been used for aches and pains by hundreds of thousands of people for many years and, it turns out, is also effective in killing TB bacteria. It might help to hold off drug-resistant TB while new agents are being developed."

Why Weill Cornell?

"It is a privilege to conduct this research at Weill Cornell because it is a scientifically rich community with a global perspective, a collegial style, and a uniquely collaborative environment."

"This has become an urgent issue for the whole world – we are all united in the need to find new, more effective ways to develop anti-infectives."

Disease, Discovering Treatments

Steven M. Paul, M.D.
Director, Helen and Robert Appel Alzheimer’s Disease Research Institute
Burton P. and Judith B. Resnick Distinguished Professor in Neurodegenerative Diseases
Professor of Neuroscience, Psychiatry and Pharmacology

Focus: Slowing the Progression of Alzheimer’s Disease

The True Cost of Alzheimer’s Disease

“Alzheimer’s disease is one of the most important public health problems of our generation. As the proportion of older people in populations around the world increases, the number of people afflicted with this terribly disabling and ultimately fatal disease is increasing dramatically.

“Today, about six million Americans have a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease. It is a tremendous burden on patients, their families and caregivers, and on society at large.

“If no successful treatments emerge, the number of Alzheimer’s disease patients in the U.S. will double by 2050 and the cost of caring for these people will reach $1 trillion.”

Unraveling the Mystery – One Discovery at a Time

“We now have a much better understanding of the genetic factors that alter and in some cases determine who will develop Alzheimer’s disease – as well as the neuropathological abnormalities that occur in the brains of patients with the disease. With new powerful diagnostic tests, we can now detect the telltale signs of the disease 10 to 15 years before a patient even exhibits symptoms.

“The possibility of slowing the progression of Alzheimer’s disease is now within reach. My expectation is that in the next five to ten years we will find an effective disease-modifying treatment that, when used early, will either prevent this disease from occurring in the first place or, if already present, will dramatically slow it down over time. Conceivably, such treatments may well prevent the disease in those who are at a high risk.”

Collaborative Pioneers in Research Breakthroughs

“The Weill Cornell community is a terrific place to do research on Alzheimer’s disease because of the critical mass of scientists and clinical investigators that we have here. Also, because of the spirit of collegiality and collaboration – with Cornell University in Ithaca and the tri-institutional partnership among Weill Cornell, Rockefeller University, and Memorial Sloan-Kettering.

“We have an incredible group of people here – scientists and clinicians – working together to combat this devastating disease. I believe it is going to be possible for us to pull together and make very significant advances in this area.”

A Critical Need for Support

“Support for this research is absolutely essential. Because of the federal budget deficit, we have seen a noticeable decrease in public funding for research. Private philanthropy – the kind of support shown by Helen and Robert Appel in establishing the Appel Institute – is an absolute necessity if we are going to find a cure for this disease.”

“The possibility of slowing the progression of, and potentially even preventing, Alzheimer’s disease is now within reach.”

To see the full videos of these interviews and to hear more inside stories from our scientists and doctors, please visit weill.cornell.edu/campaign/research
The spring session of Information Please took place on April 25th and was hosted by Information Please founder and Overseer Daisy Soros. The topic was Heart Health: A Conversation about Prevention, Treatment and Care for the Long Term, led by Bassem Masri, M.D., Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at Weill Cornell and Director of the Cardiac Disease Prevention Center.

Dean Glimcher, attending her first Information Please since becoming dean, spoke of her excitement to be participating in the event. She also announced a new professorship to be held by Dr. Masri.

“I am delighted to continue this wonderful – and important – series, and I am especially delighted to be making my debut in this venue alongside Bassem Masri, not only because he is one of Weill Cornell’s most esteemed clinicians, but also because, effective tomorrow, he will be the inaugural holder of the Daisy and Paul Soros/Recanati-Kaplan Family Professorship in Preventive Cardiology,” she said.

Dr. Masri gave an informative presentation promoting healthy living and highlighting the breakthroughs made in the field. He then held a thought-provoking question-and-answer session with attendees.

“With today’s event, Information Please officially begins its 16th year,” said Mrs. Soros. “Since 1997, this series has provided a forum for exploring important health topics with experts from the Medical College faculty, and an opportunity for people like you and me to have our questions answered by leaders in the field.”

The next Information Please will feature the topic of autism and will be held on Wednesday, October 31st.

Guests at Information Please learned about prevention and new treatments for cardiovascular disease.

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