

# Milestones



## Changing Lives Through an Extraordinary Legacy Gift

From foundational research to clinical trials, Weill Cornell Medicine's infectious disease and immunology research impacts millions of patients' lives.

ROGER TULLY

With a gift of more than \$40 million from his estate, the late Francis Sorin has made a profound impact on Weill Cornell Medicine. One of the largest unrestricted planned gifts in the institution's history, the bequest from Mr. Sorin – a grateful patient and an attorney, who established the gift in his will in 2019 – will advance several key priority areas of the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign, helping to fulfill Weill Cornell Medicine's ambitious goals as it transforms the future of health care.

One of the key priority areas of the campaign is an investment in infectious disease research, with a goal of establishing an expanded and integrated immunology enterprise.

The eighth floor of the Belfer Research Building will include expanded space for the laboratories of research collaborators

Dr. Douglas Nixon, professor of immunology in medicine, and Dr. Brad Jones, associate professor of microbiology and immunology, and of immunology in medicine, who are working to find ways to harness the body's defenses to cure HIV.

A portion of the gift from the Sorin estate will support the construction of pediatric laboratory research space for Dr. Sallie Permar, chair of the Department of Pediatrics and the Nancy C. Paduano Professor in Pediatrics, and her team, also on the eighth floor of the Belfer Research Building. Dr. Permar's research focuses on the prevention of neonatal viral infections and the development of HIV vaccine strategies.

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**We're  
Changing  
Medicine.**



## Changing Lives Through an Extraordinary Legacy Gift

Unrestricted gifts, like Mr. Sorin's, have an enormous impact on every aspect of the institution's mission to care, discover and teach.

"I believe in the power of unrestricted donations because the institution knows best where the funds can have an impact," says Ronnie Stewart, a donor and member of the Dean's Council, a body that supports the Dean in advancing the goals of Weill Cornell Medicine. "These donations allow for flexibility, and they support the organization when plans and needs change. The emerging crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point. In practice, an unrestricted gift enables the institution to shift resources in this sort of unprecedented situation."

To date, the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign has generated more than \$112 million in unrestricted gifts, most of which has been allocated to high-profile areas, such as essential faculty recruitments, the new student residence, other critical infrastructure projects and an enhanced focus on the institution's research endeavors.

These investments come at a critical time in infectious disease research, a priority area of the campaign, and will help facilitate Weill Cornell Medicine's plans for its research enterprise. The Sorin gift will bolster the institution's goal of transforming foundational, translational and clinical research by expanding and enhancing laboratory space in the Belfer Research Building, which has allowed for the recruitment of dozens of top-tier researchers and physician-scientists, such as Dr. Permar, Dr. Nixon and Dr. Jones. The building was constructed through the extraordinary philanthropy of the *Discoveries that Make a Difference* campaign and opened in 2014.

### Belfer Research Building Fosters Expanded Research

Weill Cornell Medicine's ability to uncover medical breakthroughs is rooted in its close collaboration between researchers and clinicians, who work together to bring the latest therapies to the bedside and integrate results of that work back into the lab. In addition

to children's health and infectious diseases, Weill Cornell Medicine's physician-scientists are leading groundbreaking work in other areas, including precision health, cancer, women's health and diseases that affect the brain, heart and metabolic system – all priority areas of the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign.

Through state-of-the-art, high-tech renovations of existing lab spaces, the addition of new labs in the Belfer Research

Building and opportunities for continued laboratory expansion, Weill Cornell Medicine will create opportunities for new researchers and programs through a modern scientific infrastructure. The institution will also add dry lab space for data science, bioinformatics and other advanced technologies

that will provide patients with unique, preventative health measures and treatment, as well as the vital expansion of clinical research programs that bring cutting-edge therapies directly to the patients who need them most.

### New Residence to Enhance Student Life

The gift from the Sorin estate will also be critical in advancing the institution's goal of investing in the next generation of health-care leaders. With plans to break ground on the new, modern student residence at the corner of York Avenue and East 74<sup>th</sup> Street in 2023, the Sorin gift comes at a critical time, allowing unrestricted funds to be allocated for urgent construction projects, such as this one.



The planned student residence at the corner of York Avenue and East 74th Street.

A Legacy Match Challenge, inspired by Mr. Sorin's gift, will allow Weill Cornell Medicine to recognize donors' future estate gifts now, enabling them to have an immediate impact on the campaign, through a special matching fund offer (see details on the flap opposite this page).

"Improving the student experience and making game-changing discoveries is what the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign is all about," says Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine. "Thanks to Mr. Sorin and all of our generous donors, we will have extraordinary resources to provide our students with a superior living and learning experience, and invest in cutting-edge approaches that will illuminate the precise origins of disease and advance the study of health for all."



Belfer Research Building

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# From Our Dean

As dean of Weill Cornell Medicine, I have been fortunate to meet with many of our donors to learn what inspires their incredible philanthropy. Many are moved to give because they are grateful for the care they have received from their remarkable Weill Cornell Medicine physicians, they've learned about a research program that is pioneering in an emerging field, or they feel passionate about supporting a specific student scholarship program. While others like Francis Sorin, who is mentioned in this issue's cover story, come to us with a fervent commitment to our institution and simply want to help us meet some of our greatest needs. There are so many different and important reasons to give. In every instance, with every vital gift, we are incredibly grateful for this generosity.

Weill Cornell Medicine has grown to be such a formidable powerhouse in academic medicine because of the ongoing support of our friends and donors. You are helping shape our future health-care leaders, drive groundbreaking science and research, and provide world-class care to our patients. The *We're Changing Medicine* campaign builds on these accomplishments and enhances our capacity to grow and expand. Through your partnership, we have already made great strides in each of our campaign priority areas, and we will continue to provide and expand our institution's innovative and comprehensive care.

This campaign is more than just a critical philanthropic effort for our institution: It is an *essential* evolution, designed to meet the needs of our ever-changing health-care system with forward-thinking determination. Thank you for joining us in this visionary movement.

With gratitude,



**Augustine M.K. Choi, M.D.**

Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean, Weill Cornell Medicine  
Provost for Medical Affairs, Cornell University

**You are helping shape our future health-care leaders, drive groundbreaking science and research, and provide world-class care to our patients.**



## From Our Co-Chairs



"By supporting critical student resources – like the forthcoming state-of-the-art residence, and the debt-free scholarship initiative for students with financial need – we are making a sound investment in tomorrow's health-care leaders. Weill Cornell Medicine's

students will certainly transform medicine and provide exceptional patient care for many years to come. We are so grateful to our donors for their inspired philanthropy, and we look forward to more joining us, as we support and inspire our students."

**Jeffrey J. Feil**  
Campaign Co-Chair



"Research at Weill Cornell Medicine has already moved the needle in nearly every medical discipline, speeding innovative treatments and cures to our patients. Our growing research enterprise continues to be a top priority at our institution

and a cornerstone of the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign. Thanks to support from our donors and friends, our physician-scientists are working to answer some of the most pressing health concerns of our time, and are truly changing lives with their groundbreaking discoveries."

**Sanford I. Weill**  
Campaign Co-Chair





# Legacy Match Challenge

With the goal of inspiring donors to create their own legacy by making a planned gift to Weill Cornell Medicine, the institution has established a matching gift program called the Legacy Match Challenge.

For a limited time, new or increased planned gifts to Weill Cornell Medicine will activate an immediate cash matching gift equal to 10 percent of the face value of this future gift to support the new student residence, a key priority of the *We're Changing Medicine* campaign. To qualify for Legacy Match Challenge funds, gifts must be new or increased gifts of a minimum of \$50,000. The challenge will provide a matching gift up to a maximum of \$125,000 per legacy gift and will run through June 30, 2023, or as long as matching funds are available.

All Legacy Match Challenge donors will be honored on a plaque in the new student residence – expected to be completed in 2025 – and will be recognized as members of the Lewis Atterbury Stimson Society, which honors those who have established planned gifts at Weill Cornell Medicine. Donors who commit \$750,000 or more through the challenge may also qualify for special naming recognition.

The Legacy Match Challenge is inspired by the transformational gift of more than \$40 million from the estate of Francis Sorin, an attorney who established the gift in his will in 2019. A grateful patient who spoke often of his gratitude to Weill Cornell Medicine, Mr. Sorin lived to the age of 101.

**For more information, please contact  
Lisa Lager, Director of Planned Giving,  
at 646-962-9657 or [lil2033@med.cornell.edu](mailto:lil2033@med.cornell.edu).**

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*Assistant Vice Provost  
for Development*

June 28, 2022



Weill Cornell Medicine faculty, staff and students attended a community celebration on May 25 to commemorate the first year of the ambitious \$1.5 billion *We're Changing Medicine* campaign and its success so far.

Attendees learned more about the campaign's vision and its commitment to impacting all three of our mission areas to Care, Discover and Teach. They also enjoyed refreshments, branded giveaway items and interactive experiences with colleagues.

An outdoor evening reception was later held for donors and faculty who are supporting our largest fundraising initiative ever. From the lab bench to the patient's bedside to the student experience, *We're Changing Medicine* together.



Faculty, staff and students engaged with each other and collected materials to expand their understanding of the plans and vision of the campaign.



STUDIO BROOKE

Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine Rahul Sharma, M.D., joined Weill Cornell Medicine's Board of Fellows as the next full-time faculty representative on July 1.



Attendees posted thoughts about how they are changing medicine.



From left: Iris Cantor Women's Health Center Medical Director Orli Etingin, M.D.; Board of Fellows member Ellen Davis; Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology Robin Kalish, M.D.; Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology Laura Riley, M.D.; and Board of Fellows member Caroline Curry.



From left: Dean Augustine M.K. Choi, M.D., and Professor of Clinical and Orthopaedic Surgery Edwin Su, M.D. '97.



From left: Campaign Faculty Subcommittee Co-Chair John Leonard, M.D., Board of Fellows Chairman Jessica M. Bibliowicz and Campaign Faculty Subcommittee Co-Chairs Orli Etingin, M.D., and Timothy Dutta, M.D. '97.

*Milestones* is a publication of the Office of External Affairs at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Lucille M. Ferraro, Assistant Vice Provost for Development • Mason Essif, Assistant Vice Provost for Communications and Public Affairs • Rebecca L. Rutherford, Director, Fundraising Strategies & Capital Campaigns • John Rodgers, Director, Strategic and Development Communications • Gayle Williams, Development Communications Manager • Jacquelyn Walsh, Campaign Communications Manager • Linda Lombroso and Peter West, Development Communications Associates • Yvonne Singleton, Production Specialist  
If you wish to have your name removed from lists to receive fundraising requests supporting Weill Cornell Medicine in the future, please either 1) write to us at: Privacy Office, Weill Cornell Medicine, 1300 York Avenue, Box 303, New York, NY 10065; 2) call us at 646-962-9565; or 3) e-mail us at [optoutwcmc@med.cornell.edu](mailto:optoutwcmc@med.cornell.edu).