



milestones



Dr. Philip Stieg and Dr. Robert J. Hariri (MD '87, PhD '87)

STEPHANIE DIANI

Alumnus Establishes Neurosurgery Professorship

Inspired by his time at Weill Cornell Medicine as a medical student, graduate student and faculty member in the Department of Neurological Surgery, Dr. Robert Hariri (MD '87, PhD '87) and his wife, Margaret, have established the Margaret and Robert J. Hariri, MD '87, PhD '87 Professorship of Neurological Surgery with a generous \$3 million gift to the institution.

"I consider Weill Cornell Medicine to be an integral part of my life and the catalyst for building a career in medicine, surgery and biotechnology," says Dr. Hariri, a graduate of the Tri-Institutional MD-PhD Program at Weill Cornell. He currently serves as CEO and co-founder of Celularity, a clinical-stage cell therapeutics and functional regeneration company based in New Jersey. "Training and working with such an array of talented scientists and innovative faculty and clinicians at Weill Cornell was incredibly valuable to me."

The inaugural holder of the professorship established by Dr. and Mrs. Hariri is intended for Dr. Philip Stieg, chairman of the Department of Neurological Surgery at Weill Cornell and a renowned neurosurgeon, clinical investigator and educator.

"Phil is a brilliant surgeon and scientist and he's also a very innovative thinker," says Dr. Hariri. "He is committed to changing the way neurological diseases are treated, and he's open to new technologies and tools, such as cell therapy and regenerative medicine. With this gift, I saw a rich opportunity to do something meaningful for Weill Cornell and open new

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Dr. Robert Hariri (MD '87, PhD '87)

opportunities for collaboration between academic and industry scientists."

The professorship will support research in the department and will encourage exploration of new therapeutic technologies at Weill Cornell Medicine.

"This is a milestone in the development of the Department of Neurological Surgery," says Dr. Stieg. "It's been an honor to cultivate a deep friendship and a scientific relationship

with Dr. Hariri. The impact of this gift is immeasurable."

The Department of Neurological Surgery has grown immensely during Dr. Stieg's 19 years as chairman. In that time, the department has expanded from three neurosurgeons to 25 full-time clinical faculty members and three neuropsychologists who are supported by more than 100 clinical and administrative staff. The department conducts over 4,500 surgical interventions each year and trains 15 residents and eight fellows in advanced neurosurgical techniques annually. *Continued on p. 2*

"I think Weill Cornell is the finest healthcare institution in New York City and the perfect environment to support technical and clinical innovation," says Dr. Hariri. "The institution is poised to be a leader in the next evolution of cellular and regenerative medicine, and in the field of neurosurgery."

A serial entrepreneur and a leader in the field of cell therapeutics, Dr. Hariri's first business idea came to him while he was a student at Weill Cornell. Dr. Hariri developed unique dual-ended microsurgical instruments, using his engineering background from his undergraduate studies, which he then went on to sell to a large surgical instruments company.

"I was fortunate to have also built a neurosurgical device company with a brilliant former Weill Cornell faculty member and neurosurgeon, Dr. Jamshid Ghajar, with whom I shared many years studying traumatic brain injury," says Dr. Hariri. "My interest in stem cells was catalyzed, in large part, by my interest in finding ways to treat traumatic brain injury."

Other mentors and peers also inspired Dr. Hariri during his time at Weill Cornell, notably Dr. David Hajjar, university professor and executive vice chair of pathology and laboratory medicine, and former dean of the Weill Cornell Graduate School of Medical Sciences. Their relationship remains strong today.

"I was very fortunate to train under Dr. Hajjar, who is one of the foremost vascular biologists in the world," says Dr. Hariri. "So much of what I learned in Dr. Hajjar's laboratory was the basis for my work in the company that became Celularity."



From left: Dr. David Hajjar, Dr. Philip Stieg and Dr. Robert Hariri (MD '87, PhD '87)

When regenerative medicine was in its infancy, Dr. Hariri recognized the importance of creating scalable, cellular products for pharmaceutical use. His recognition of the placenta as an ideal source of those products has led to formidable progress in everything from immunotherapy to the treatment of degenerative diseases. Dr. Hariri admired Weill Cornell's interest in developing novel strategies to treat diseases and its willingness to take risks, and was inspired to follow this model when building his own company.

Since that time, Dr. Hariri has led a number of companies, including one of the world's largest human cellular therapeutics companies, Celgene Cellular Therapeutics – a division of Celgene Corporation – where he was founder and served as chairman and chief executive officer. Dr. Hariri also co-founded the health intelligence company, Human Longevity, Inc., and sits on numerous boards of companies in the healthcare and technology sectors. A high-performance jet aviator, Dr. Hariri has also been an innovator in aerospace, and has served as a military surgeon in the Army National Guard.

"It is very gratifying to be in a position to support institutions like Weill Cornell. My family and I have been fortunate enough to be able to make meaningful contributions to my undergraduate alma mater, Columbia University, and Princeton University, where my children have studied. But my relationship with Weill Cornell is particularly important to me because I remain in contact with many of my classmates and mentors from my time there," says Dr. Hariri. "Those who are giving back to an institution should allow their donor activities to foster more direct interaction. Then, you can continue to help shape something that will serve the institution to which we owe so much."

Ways to Give: Scholar Awards

Ways to Give explores the many ways our donors help Weill Cornell Medicine advance breakthroughs in research, provide compassionate care to patients and educate the next generation of medical leaders. Through a variety of programs, every donor is able to make a powerful impact. To learn more about giving opportunities, please visit give.weill.cornell.edu.

Weill Cornell Medicine's commitment to its patients starts with identifying and retaining world-class physician-scientists who combine clinical skills with research interests. We depend on generous donors to endow the numerous faculty awards and programs that help us recruit and nurture medical professionals for years to come.

Endowments ensure faculty excellence by generating income for their work, in perpetuity. When a donor invests in an endowment, he or she directly participates in scientific discovery and contributes to the advancement of human health.

Three types of endowments include Clinical Scholar Awards (CSAs), Education Scholar Awards (ESAs) and Research Scholar Awards (RSAs).

CSAs help outstanding junior and mid-level faculty members balance their rigorous clinical, teaching and research activities. Established in 2002, CSAs provide clinical faculty with more time in the lab and the classroom, ensuring an uninterrupted pipeline of innovation and care from bench to bedside.

Current CSAs include the Helen and Robert Appel Clinical Scholar, awarded to Dr. Marc Dinkin (MD '02), associate professor of ophthalmology; and the Donna Redel Clinical Scholar in Obstetrics and Gynecology, awarded to Dr. Eloise Chapman-Davis, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology.

Weill Cornell established the RSA program in 2006 to nurture bright, rising-star research scientists at an important juncture in their careers – while they are building independent research programs and competing for peer-reviewed extramural funds, such as NIH grants.

RSA funding allows talented junior investigators the "protected time" and financial support necessary to pursue important research and collect relevant



Dr. Jennifer Downs (MD '04)

JOHN ABBOTT

data in preparation for grant review, while still honoring their commitments to educational, administrative and other responsibilities.

Current RSAs include the Friedman Family Research Scholar in Pediatric Infectious Diseases, awarded to Dr. Jennifer Downs (MD '04), associate professor of medicine; and the WorldQuant Foundation Research Scholar, awarded to Dr. Christopher Mason, associate professor of physiology and biophysics, of neuroscience and of computational genomics in computational biomedicine.

ESAs, established in 2010, allow scholars to create new curricula, publish educational innovations and focus on faculty development.

Current ESAs include the Nanette Laitman Education Scholar Award in Entrepreneurship, awarded to Dr. Juliet Aizer (MD '01), assistant professor of clinical medicine; and the Louis and Rachel Rudin Foundation Education Scholar Award to Dr. Joseph Safdieh.

Scholar award programs reflect the high institutional priority of providing faculty with the resources they need to make a real difference in medicine. Potential awardees are nominated by their department chairs, assessed by a review committee and receive administrative and board approval. Awards last for three years and are renewable for an additional three years.

For information about funding Scholar Awards or other Weill Cornell endowments, please contact Rebecca Rutherford, director, fundraising strategies and capital campaigns, at rlr4001@med.cornell.edu or 646-962-9571.

What Inspires Giving?

Meet Dr. Yoon Kang

Dr. Yoon Kang has dedicated her career to training the next generation of healthcare leaders. One of Weill Cornell Medicine's most highly esteemed educators, she was appointed senior associate dean for education and leader of Weill Cornell's Office of Medical Education in December 2019.

Dr. Kang, who is the Richard P. Cohen Associate Professor of Medical Education, holds a bachelor's degree from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a medical degree from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. She served as chief resident at the school's teaching hospital, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, and later joined its faculty.

Recruited to Weill Cornell in 2003 to launch the institution's simulation education program and lead the design of the Margaret and Ian Smith Clinical Skills Center, Dr. Kang was named the center's founding director in 2006. In 2015, she was appointed to the newly created position of assistant dean of clinical curriculum, and served most recently as associate dean for program development, operations and continuous quality improvement.

The recipient of numerous teaching awards, Dr. Kang is actively engaged in medical-education arenas on a national level and has held committee leadership positions on the National Board of Medical Examiners since 2012.

Dr. Kang sat down with Mark Veich, Weill Cornell Medicine's vice provost for external affairs, to speak about her vision for medical education and the importance of philanthropy in furthering the institution's mission.

MV: Congratulations on your appointment as senior associate dean for education. What excites you most about this position?

YK: I am so honored to continue to be an integral part of the dynamic Weill Cornell Medicine community. This role allows me to collaborate with our leadership, faculty and students – and with our alumni and board – to move medical education at Weill Cornell into the national spotlight. Our students are a true gift. Their energy and creativity drive our ability to sustain innovation and excellence in education and, ultimately, in patient care. I'm also excited that I've been appointed to this role at a time when Weill Cornell Medicine is poised for exponential growth. Between being a top-ranked medical school – and all the momentum surrounding our upcoming campaign – there is tremendous positive energy and engagement throughout the institution.

MV: How have students reacted to the news of our debt-free scholarship program for those who qualify for financial aid?

YK: The response has been overwhelmingly positive and has touched students deeply. The generosity of our donors has allowed us to set ourselves apart by not only supporting tuition, but also supporting the

other big-ticket expenses that make up the cost of living and attending medical school. This is particularly important in a city like New York, where these expenses are amplified.

MV: At the Margaret and Ian Smith Clinical Skills Center, which you've directed for 14 years, students can practice their skills with trained actors. How has that center, and the Smiths' insightful philanthropy, changed the ways in which we teach students?

YK: The gift that the Smiths made to the Clinical Skills Center and its programming has revolutionized the way we teach patient-centered clinical skills. Students translate what they learn in the classroom to a clinical setting, and receive feedback that they use to improve their skills. That is particularly important with communication skills, since connecting with your patient is a key element in delivering effective care and is part of the joy of medicine.

MV: How does the Weill Cornell Medicine philosophy help students to succeed?

YK: Our goal is to excel in all three parts of our mission – Care, Discover and Teach – and this is the mental model we apply to medical education. This will always result in comprehensive and cutting-edge programming that addresses every aspect of medicine. Our students could not be better prepared to become innovators and leaders, regardless of specialty choice or practice or career setting.

MV: Why is donor support critical to furthering our mission, particularly in medical education?

YK: Without donor support, medical education cannot continue to excel and innovate. Philanthropy is what allows us to continue to enhance the living and learning environment for our students. It also funds and trains the best teachers and educational leaders, and creates transformative educational programming that benefits patient care. We are poised to do so many great things in medical education, and we need the support of our donors more than ever.

MV: How has philanthropy made an impact on your role as an educator?

YK: Weill Cornell Medicine's generous donors and culture of philanthropy created incredible opportunities for me. The gifts that funded the Clinical Skills Center and my endowed professorship were critical in launching my career and allow me to make meaningful contributions to our institution. I have experienced and understand the power of philanthropy, and I am very grateful for the directed funding that came from our donors. I would not have achieved as much here without the benefit of philanthropic support.

MV: You have also cultivated deep relationships with our donors. Why does that continue to be important to you?

YK: Close relationships with our supporters matter. The personal connection is what inspires donors to give and to trust that we are going to create a program or initiative that will truly make a difference. Our donors also provide thoughtful input – I'm continually reminded that we have dedicated partners who value what we do.

MV: What would you like to accomplish in the next several years?

YK: I am looking forward to collaborating with faculty, students, the Board of Overseers and leadership to move us further into the national spotlight – and showcase Weill Cornell as a center of educational excellence and innovation. Our student body makes this role exciting for me. They are the future of medicine and the future of Weill Cornell.



JOHN ABBOTT

From Our Dean



At Weill Cornell Medicine, we recognize that innovation is the key to revolutionizing healthcare. Our physicians and scientists are dedicated to translating breakthrough discoveries to patient care – a mission that requires bold leadership from our community.

Our generous donors are the guiding forces who empower us to move forward with the innovative ideas that can change lives. Their visionary philanthropy makes the impossible possible, and we are grateful for their steady support.

Endowed gifts, such as the professorship established by Weill Cornell Medicine alumnus Dr. Robert Hariri (MD '87, PhD '87) – featured in this issue's cover story – make it possible for us to support the work of some of our brightest stars. Professorship endowments allow exceptional members of the faculty to focus on the research, clinical and educational challenges of medicine. With funding from endowed gifts, Weill Cornell is able to meet the rising costs of education and research while continuing to attract the most talented faculty to our institution.

Faculty members at Weill Cornell are the lifeblood from which the big, transformative ideas emanate. These top physicians and scientists exemplify the best of academic medicine, serving as an inspiration to our students as they provide the educational foundation necessary for success as future healthcare leaders.

With our donors' exceptional support, Weill Cornell Medicine is building on its rich legacy as a world-class academic medical center. As we expand our clinical footprint, advance cutting-edge research and broaden our academic curriculum, we are establishing a new paradigm of excellence.

Together, with our community's leadership and dedication, we are shaping a bright new future.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Augustine M.K. Choi". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Augustine M.K. Choi, MD

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

Care.
Discover.
Teach.



**Weill Cornell
Medicine**

Care. Discover. Teach.

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2020 Healthy Living Symposium in Palm Beach

Our annual Healthy Living Symposium in Palm Beach brings together leading physicians and scientists from Weill Cornell Medicine to share their expertise and provide strategies for disease prevention and healthier living. More than 200 Weill Cornell alumni, patients and other supporters attended.



From left: Overseer Sandra R. Meyer, Helen Appel and Fleur Harlan



From left: Dr. Hooman Kamel, Dean Augustine M.K. Choi, Dr. Faith Gunning and Dr. Ronald Adelman

This year's symposium, held on February 3 at The Breakers, featured the following speakers and topics:

- **Dr. Ronald Adelman**, the Emilie Roy Corey Professor of Geriatrics and Gerontology and medical director of the Irving Sherwood Wright Center on Aging at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian – “Successful Aging”
- **Dr. Faith Gunning**, associate professor of psychology in psychiatry and vice chair for research and psychology in the Department of Psychiatry – “Improving Mood and Cognition in Later Life”
- **Dr. Hooman Kamel**, chief of the Division of Neurocritical Care and associate professor of neuroscience and of neurology and associate professor of neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute – “The Heart-Brain Connection”

Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine, moderated the discussion.

Children's Health Council Family Science Day 2020



From left: CHC member Noah Weiss; CHC Vice Chair of Programming, Casey Weiss, and Dr. Gerald Loughlin, chair of pediatrics

The Weill Cornell Medicine Children's Health Council hosted its sixth annual Family Science Day on February 8 at the Weill Greenberg Center. The popular event, attended by approximately 35 families, offered children the opportunity to join graduate students in a series of educational, hands-on science activities in chemistry, biology and engineering. The Children's Health Council (CHC) is a group of families and individuals committed to supporting the quest for solutions to some of today's most pressing health issues that face children and adolescents.



STUDIO BROOKE



The 2020 Weill Cornell Medicine Alumni Reunion

will take place Friday, September 11, and Saturday,

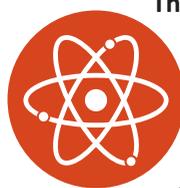
September 12. The biennial event will feature guest

speakers, Weill Cornell updates and tours, class get-togethers, a gala dinner-dance

and opportunities to mingle and network with old friends. All alumni are encouraged

to attend. We will be celebrating class years ending in '4, '5, '9 and '0.

For more information, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 646-962-9560 or alumni@med.cornell.edu.



Reunion

2020



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

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