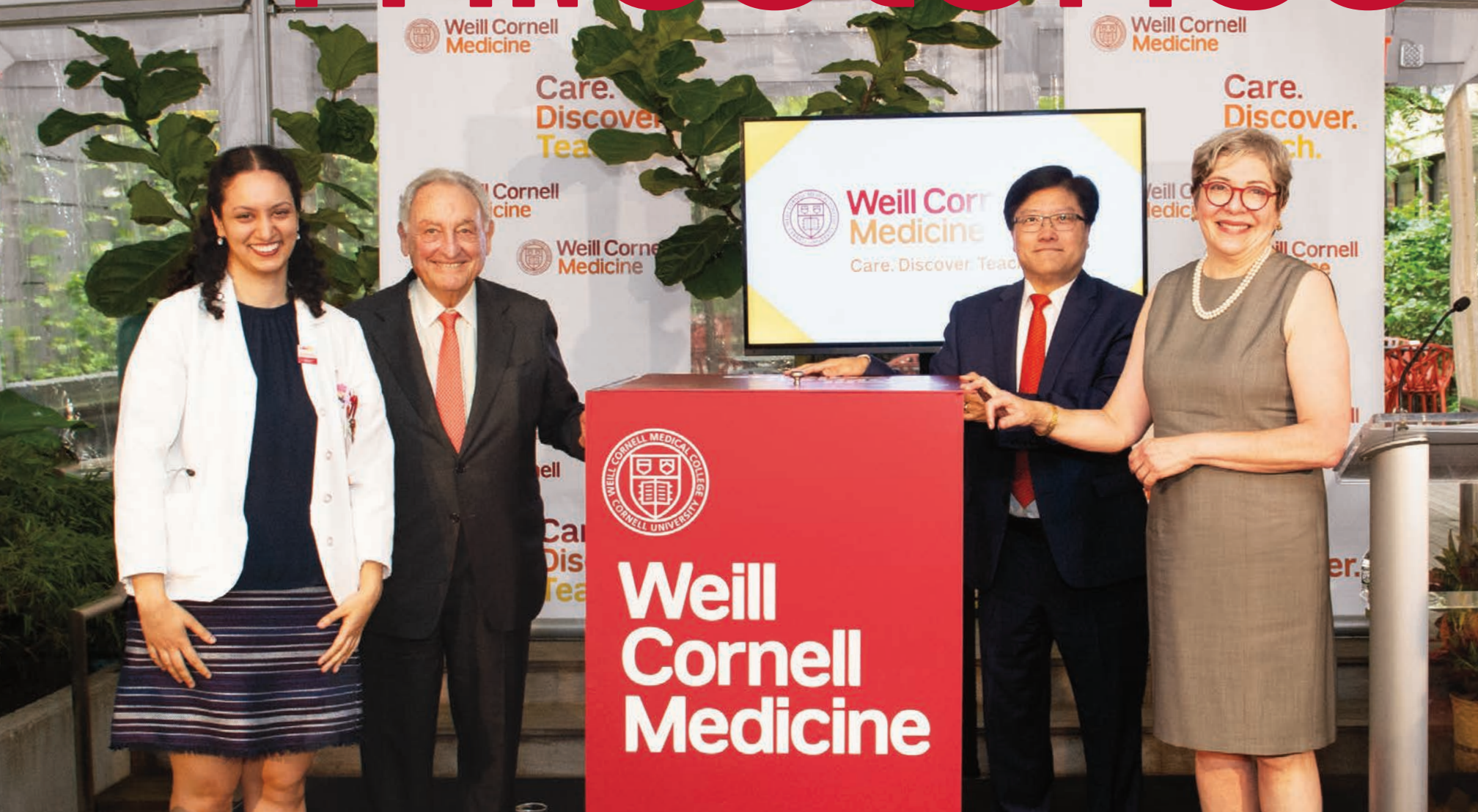




**Weill Cornell  
Medicine**

October 2019

# milestones



From left: Third-year medical student Sarita Ballakur, Overseer Chairman Emeritus Sanford I. Weill, Dean Augustine M.K. Choi and Florence A. Davis, president of The Starr Foundation

STUDIO BROOKE

## \$160 Million in Donor Support Eliminates Medical Student Debt

A transformative new scholarship program established by Weill Cornell Medicine will eliminate medical education debt for all students who qualify for financial aid. A lead gift from The Starr Foundation, directed by Weill Cornell Medicine Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg, in partnership with gifts from Joan and Board of Overseers Chairman Emeritus Sanford I. Weill and the Weill Family Foundation, have made this longstanding goal possible. Through these landmark gifts, including those from other generous donors that together total \$160 million, the institution will ensure that the best and brightest aspiring doctors have the financial support and freedom to seek careers in medicine.

"Weill Cornell Medicine has been a leader in medical education since its inception in 1898, dedicated to training outstanding physicians and scientists from all walks of life," says Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine and provost for medical affairs at Cornell University. "It is with extraordinary pride that we are able

to increase our support of medical education for our students, ensuring that we can welcome the voices and talents of those who are passionate about improving human health."

The announcement of the debt-free initiative was made at an event held on September 16.

By replacing student loans with scholarships, the program ensures that all students, including those from economically diverse backgrounds, can pursue their medical education without financial burden, and can ultimately focus their careers on their interests and talents, rather than on the requisite future salaries to repay their debt.

"It is a great privilege to make such an important and impactful contribution to the futures of our medical students," says Mr. Greenberg, chairman of The Starr Foundation and the architect of this

ambitious new scholarship program. "Scholarships are crucial to the success of our trainees, freeing them from the weight of excess debt that has traditionally accompanied medical education. We couldn't be more pleased to support our students as they work to improve the lives of patients worldwide."

"Joan and I and the Weill Family Foundation have been honored to support Weill Cornell Medicine's mission over the last 30 years, making an impact where the need is greatest," says Mr. Weill. "Providing debt-free medical education isn't just what's

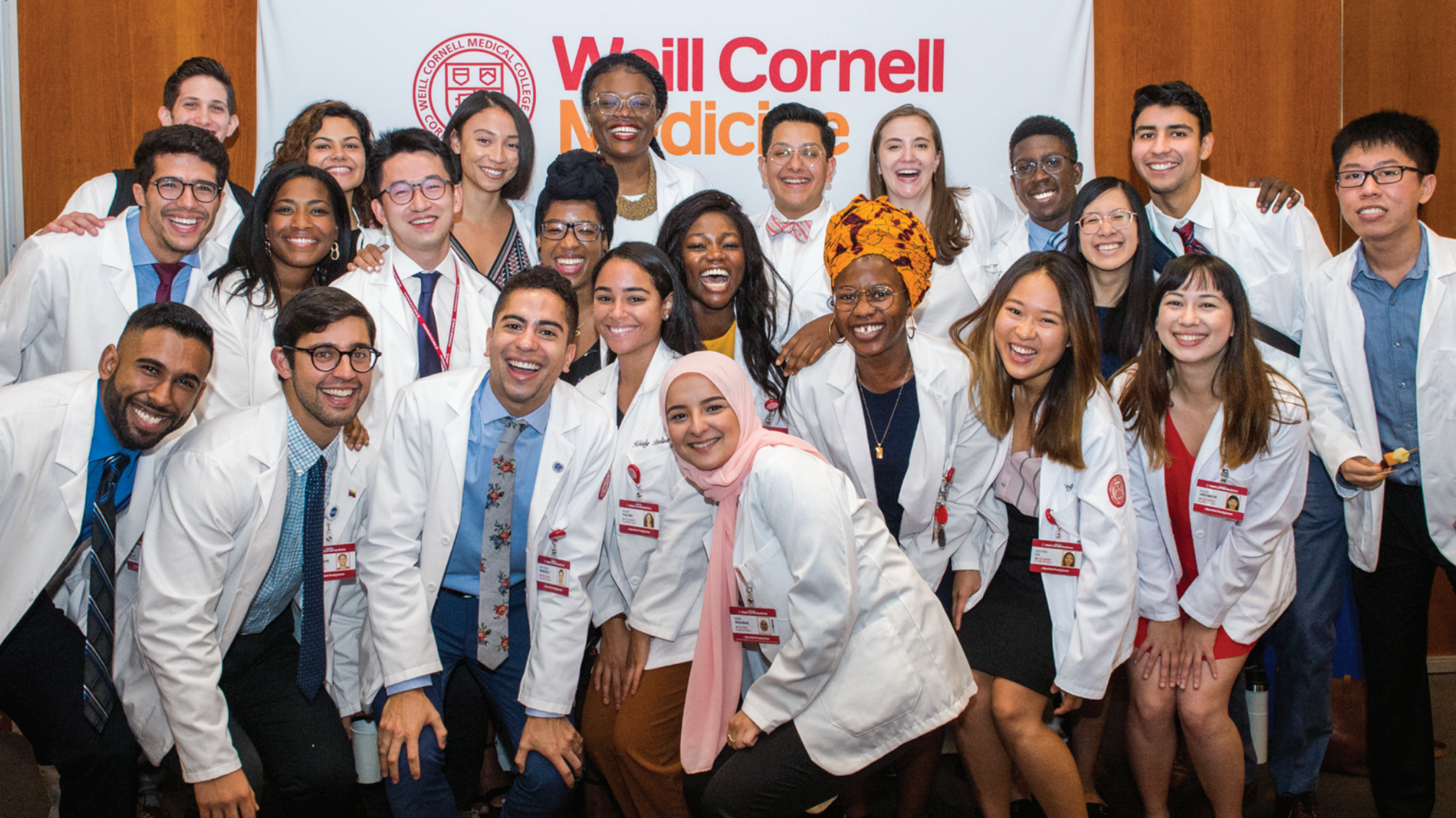
right for our students, it is critical to creating the finest doctors for all generations to come and helping level the playing field between underserved and wealthy communities. We really believe that this is the best thing we have ever done."

**"Weill Cornell Medicine has been a leader in medical education since its inception in 1898, dedicated to training outstanding physicians and scientists from all walks of life."**

Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi

Continued on p. 2





Medical students are jubilant following Dean Choi's announcement eliminating medical student debt.

STUDIO BROOKE

## \$160 Million in Donor Support Eliminates Medical Student Debt *Continued from cover*

The program is the cornerstone of a comprehensive suite of initiatives aimed at enhancing the life and wellbeing of students, and includes the new Feil Family Student Center, planned construction of a new, modern residence hall, and a variety of mentorship and wellness initiatives.

The expanded financial aid program is the culmination of decades of philanthropy from numerous Weill Cornell Medicine benefactors, whose gifts have established and strengthened the institution's scholarship endowment. The Starr Foundation's lead gift toward scholarship – the single largest in its history – together with the Weills' and their family foundation's pivotal support, makes this new program possible. Significant gifts from Christina Seix and Overseer Robert S. Dow, who in March made an eight-figure commitment toward scholarship support, and a multitude of other donors have enabled Weill Cornell to reach this milestone.

The institution is committed to raising additional funds to support its scholarship endowment and ensure that the new program is sustained permanently.

"Students whose passions, skills and talents point the way to medicine can now pursue their career aspirations unencumbered by the pressure that comes with significant debt burdens," says Jessica M. Bibliowicz, chairman of the Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Overseers. "We are immensely thankful to our visionary donors, who were committed to making this program possible for students."

At the announcement of the debt-free initiative, third-year medical student Sarita Ballakur shared her own story of financial struggle.

"More than anything, I am completely relieved and grateful to the donors who made this possible," Ms. Ballakur said. "This means so much to me, to my family and to all my fellow students. I'll be going into the future with a lighter load on my shoulders. I can't wait to pay forward this generous benefit that I have received from Weill Cornell today."

Although Weill Cornell Medicine currently has among the lowest annual tuition costs, compared with its Ivy League peers, students still spend an average of \$90,000 per year on tuition, housing, insurance, living expenses and other fees. The new financial aid program – provided to students through scholarships – will cover the entire cost of attendance for those who qualify.



Weill Cornell Medicine students celebrate at the institution's September 16 scholarship announcement.

ASHLEY JONES

To help students realize their educational aspirations, Weill Cornell Medicine is also developing modern learning and living environments that promote student wellness, collaboration and engagement. A \$12.5 million gift from the Feil family in 2017 funded construction of the newly opened Feil Family Student Center, which expands the institution's dedicated student space by nearly 75 percent. It will complement the Weill Education Center, established in 1996 by the Weill family and other generous donors, and renovated in 2015.

A vibrant new residence hall within walking distance of Weill Cornell Medicine's main campus is also in development, pending additional fundraising, with expected occupancy in 2023. It will house 300 students and augment the institution's recently renovated student living space, Lasdon House, which features a wellness and fitness center that opened last year.

"As we work to reshape healthcare and grow as a center of learning and healing – as we become more diverse and dynamic – we stay centered on a fundamental idea: Weill Cornell Medicine is where everything connects," says Dean Choi. "It's how we build on our legacy."



# \$7M Gift Establishes Innovative Breast Surgery Program

Nina Von Maltzahn considers herself a lucky woman. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer a few years ago, she immediately sought medical care at Weill Cornell Medicine, confident that the institution would offer her the best options for a successful outcome.

With gratitude to Dr. Alexander Swistel, an associate professor of clinical surgery and a pioneer in breast-cancer care, who treated her, Ms. Von Maltzahn has made an impactful gift of \$7 million to establish a program in oncoplastic breast surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Oncoplastic breast surgery is an approach that allows for the combination of plastic surgery techniques with breast surgical oncology. Patients typically undergo a single procedure that includes cancer removal and immediate reconstruction of the breast.

"Women who find out they have breast cancer are so afraid of how their bodies will change, they often postpone much-needed surgery," says Ms. Von Maltzahn. "My goal is to support initiatives that will allow more women to live full lives after breast cancer, and to promote research that improves women's health."

The gift from Ms. Von Maltzahn will endow the Nina G. Von Maltzahn Professorship of Oncoplastic Breast Surgery, provide for the recruitment of a leading plastic surgeon with

a specialty in oncoplastic breast surgery and support the Nina G. Von Maltzahn Fellowship in Oncoplastic Breast Surgery.



SUBMITTED BY NINA VON MALTZAHN

Nina Von Maltzahn

importance of charitable giving, Ms. Von Maltzahn grew up amid relatives who continue to make philanthropy a priority.

"I have been very fortunate in my life," says Ms. Von Maltzahn. "I am so happy to contribute to enhancing the wonderful breast-cancer care that Weill Cornell Medicine already provides – and to help women feel good about themselves and their future health."

The oncoplastic breast surgery program will have three key components: world-class patient care, specialized oncoplasty training for tomorrow's oncologic and plastic surgeons, and a robust clinical and basic science research program to drive discovery and advance the field of oncoplasty. The program will use a multidisciplinary approach to treatment, with input from radiation oncologists, pathologists, medical oncologists and other specialists.

"This gift will allow for a unique new program that will enhance our standing as a leading academic medical center," says Dr. Swistel. "Not only do we anticipate that patients will survive their disease, they will thrive."

Raised in a family that stressed the importance of charitable giving, Ms. Von Maltzahn grew up amid relatives who continue to make philanthropy a priority.

## Aaron Stern, MD, PhD Program in Psychodynamic Psychiatry Established With \$5M Gift

A generous gift from Dr. Aaron and Betty Lee Stern will enable the Department of Psychiatry to build a comprehensive program that will use psychodynamics to treat patients with pathological personality disorders.

The Sterns' \$5 million gift will endow a professorship, a postdoctoral research fellowship and a prestigious visiting professorship within the Aaron Stern, MD, PhD Program in Psychodynamic Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry.

"This gift offers us the opportunity to educate fellow physicians and communicate to people who are not part of the medical core, to bring awareness to these personality disorders," says Dr. Stern.

Dr. Stern's motivation to establish this program is inspired by his longtime interest in personality disorders, most notably, narcissistic personality disorder. The couple's gift to Weill Cornell Medicine was inspired by Dr. Stern's gratitude for the extraordinary care he received following a medical episode that required cardiac resuscitation.

"I felt a strong bond with Weill Cornell Medicine after doctors there saved my life," says Dr. Stern, an accomplished psychoanalyst and longtime educator at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. "I was impressed by and grateful for the treatment I received."

Dr. Stern's career has focused on narcissistic personality disorder, in which people suffer from grandiosity, preoccupation with success and power, a sense of entitlement and an overall lack of empathy. They often exploit others for personal gain and their behavior places a significant burden on their families and the communities in which they live and work.

"Over the course of my career, as a teacher, clinician and researcher, I was always motivated to try to help people understand the human condition and shed light about themselves to make their lives more meaningful," says Dr. Stern. "In everything I do, I'm a teacher."

Dr. Stern is the author of the 1979 book "Me: The Narcissistic American," which focuses on narcissism as an inborn trait and its destructive consequences.

What interests Dr. Stern, he says, are people, and what he can learn from them. "I think the greatest part of my learning has come from my patients. It's such a privilege to have people trust you with the most intimate things in their life and want to share that with you."

Dr. and Mrs. Stern believe that giving back – through philanthropy and volunteering – is an important part of personal and professional development.

"Giving back to support others is the essence of what we believe to be important," says Mrs. Stern. "We're proud to be able to support an institution whose science, education and care truly benefit patients."

For potential donors, Dr. Stern offers this advice: "Look inward, find where your interests and your identity lie, and contribute as an extension of who you are. Remain involved and become a part of the philanthropy."

JOHN ABBOTT



Dr. Aaron Stern and Betty Lee Stern

# From Our Dean



This is a historic time for Weill Cornell Medicine.

Our visionary donors have made possible an initiative that will change the way we provide medical education at our great institution. With a revolutionary financial aid program that covers the cost of tuition and living expenses for

all students who qualify, we are allowing our future healthcare leaders to graduate from medical school unencumbered by debt.

This transformative initiative, powered by the leadership of our scholarship donors, ensures that medical education at Weill Cornell Medicine will be an equal-opportunity pursuit, accessible to all students who are passionate about improving human health.

This historic achievement would not be possible without our existing scholarship endowment and long history of supporting worthy students. It is thanks to your outstanding vision and commitment that we are able to dream big.

As we become more diverse and dynamic, we remain committed to enhancing the educational experience at Weill Cornell Medicine – and fostering a culture that emphasizes collaboration and community. Our students deserve an outstanding curriculum, harmonious physical spaces and an academic culture that promotes wellness.

Our students are among the very best in the world. It's no wonder that more Weill Cornell Medicine graduates go on to careers in academia than those who attend other medical schools. The doctors we graduate make an important impact on patient care with their extraordinary commitment to research and academic scholarship.

Medicine is moving at a stunning pace, and we are at the forefront. We are grateful to our generous donors and friends who recognize the power of Weill Cornell Medicine to change lives – and transform the landscape of academic medicine.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Augustine M.K. Choi, MD". 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



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Medicine**

Care. Discover. Teach.

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## Lewis Atterbury Stimson Society Luncheon

The Lewis Atterbury Stimson Society held its annual luncheon on June 26 in the Belfer Research Building's Starr-Greenberg Conference Center. The event featured a presentation titled "Fighting Cancer with Innovative Treatments: Advances in Clinical Trials," given by Dr. John Leonard, associate dean of clinical research, the Richard T. Silver Distinguished Professor of Hematology and Medical Oncology and a professor of medicine. The Stimson Society honors a distinguished group of alumni, faculty, staff and friends who have included a commitment to Weill Cornell Medicine in their charitable estate plans. Planned gifts play a vital role to ensure Weill Cornell Medicine's continued leadership in medical education, research and patient care.



Stimson Society Co-Chair Dr. Michael Alexiades (MD '83) and Dr. John Leonard



From left: NYWCC Chair and WCM Overseer Jeffrey Greenberg; NewYork-Presbyterian Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Dr. Laura Forese; WCM Overseer Vice Chair Robert Appel; Dean Augustine M.K. Choi; WCM Board of Overseers Chairman Jessica Bibliowicz

## NewYork Weill Cornell Council 2019 Spring Dinner and Lecture

The NewYork Weill Cornell Council held its Spring Dinner and Lecture on May 28. The spring dinner – a joint event with NewYork-Presbyterian – honored Overseer Vice Chair Robert Appel with its Annual Leadership Award. A presentation to the Council on "Secrets for a Healthy Aging Brain" was delivered by Dr. Matthew Fink, the Louis and Gertrude Feil Professor of Clinical Neurology, chairman of the Department of Neurology, and associate dean for clinical affairs.

## Information Please Luncheon

Dr. Rekha Kumar, an endocrinologist and an assistant professor of medicine, presented on the scope of the obesity epidemic, highlighting its causes and reviewing the science behind popular diets in her presentation at Information Please on June 11. Her presentation, titled "An Intricate Puzzle: The Connection Among Diet, Hormones and Disease," was featured at the luncheon hosted by Overseer Daisy Soros and Dr. Robert Min (MD '90), chair of the Department of Radiology and the John A. Evans, MD Professor of Radiology, and moderated by Dr. Orli Etingin, vice chair of the Department of Medicine, the Lisa and Sanford B. Ehrenkranz Professor of Women's Health and professor of clinical medicine.



From left: Dr. Rekha Kumar, Dr. Orli Etingin, Overseer Daisy Soros and Dr. Robert Min (MD '90)



From left: Dr. Steven J. Corwin, Dr. Peter Schlegel and Dean Augustine M.K. Choi

## Greenberg Award Dinner

The 39th annual Maurice R. Greenberg Distinguished Service Award Dinner, held at The Plaza on May 16, honored Dr. Peter Schlegel, the E. Darracott Vaughan, Jr., MD Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, chairman of the Department of Urology, the James J. Colt Professor of Urology and professor of reproductive medicine. An internationally renowned urologist, Dr. Schlegel has become well-known throughout the medical community for his work, including the development of a procedure used to treat localized prostate cancer and revolutionizing the evaluation and treatment of severe male infertility.

The award, endowed in 1981 by Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg, who is also chairman emeritus of the Board of Trustees of NewYork-Presbyterian, has been presented annually to senior members of the medical staff for outstanding service. The event was chaired by Bernadette Castro.

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

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