



milestones



Connie Newman, MD '78, (center) supports the Weill Cornell Community Clinic and mentors students in the Women in Medicine program

Alumni Giving at Weill Cornell Medicine

Every other fall, hundreds of Weill Cornell Medicine alumni fill the halls of 1300 York Avenue for their class reunion. They're there to reconnect with friends, visit their old stomping grounds and learn about some of the latest advances in medicine from their colleagues. The energy and excitement at the Reunion events are palpable – these former students are back where it all began, where they learned the skills to become some of the finest physicians in the country and where they first joined the Weill Cornell Medicine family. The Weill Cornell Medicine alumni – 5,800 in total – are some of the most passionate advocates for the institution – and also some of its most loyal supporters.

In the past five years alone, Weill Cornell Medicine alumni have contributed nearly \$10 million to the institution. Their support has been extensive and broad-based – bolstering efforts in research, clinical care and medical education.

"Our alumni are committed to staying connected and keeping this institution strong," says Stuart Mushlin, MD '73, president of the Weill Cornell Medical College Alumni Association.

One of the institutional areas that has benefited most from alumni support is the scholarship endowment. During the past few years, alumni donations toward scholarship have skyrocketed – alumni were key players in helping the institution reach and surpass the \$20 million scholarship target for the Campaign for Education, launched in 2014. It is, in part, because of this ongoing alumni commitment that Weill Cornell Medicine students graduate with less debt as compared to their peers.

"As an alumnus and a scholarship donor myself, I know firsthand the power of supporting an institution that has given you so much," says Richard Cohen, MD '75, co-chair of the Campaign for Education. "Watching our alumni help to bring us to our scholarship goal – allowing more students to receive this solid educational foundation – has been incredibly inspiring."

But scholarship funding is only one critical part of alumni giving. Weill Cornell Medicine alumni have given in areas across the board – often to the direct benefit of current medical students. One example of this is the Paul F. Miskovitz '75 Stethoscope Fund for Medical Students. Started in 2009 by The Buster Foundation, this fund provides a stethoscope to every incoming student – presented at the White Coat Ceremony during the first week of school. In total, nearly 400 alumni and friends have contributed to this fund, which has raised \$180,000.

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"There is nothing quite like receiving your first stethoscope – it's so empowering," says Raul Martinez-McFaline, student representative to the Board of Overseers. "And knowing that it was given to you from someone who once stood in your shoes makes it even more meaningful."

Whether supporting the groundbreaking research at the Belfer Research Building, the clinical expertise of the faculty or educational opportunities for the healthcare leaders of tomorrow, Weill Cornell Medicine alumni continue to make this an even stronger institution every day.

"Our alumni are a critical part of what makes this institution thrive," says Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi, interim dean for Weill Cornell Medicine. "We are so proud of everything they have accomplished – and so grateful for their generosity."

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Alumni Giving at Weill Cornell Medicine

Many Weill Cornell Medicine graduates go on to become members of the Dean’s Circle, a group that honors alumni who have generously given \$25,000 or more to the institution or established planned gifts of \$50,000 or more. This giving society continues to grow and flourish as more alumni become involved. The stories of the following Dean’s Circle donors – and there are many more – capture the breadth and diversity of alumni giving at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Drs. Nan and Scott Hayworth

As students, former Congresswoman Nan Hayworth, MD ’85, and Scott Hayworth, MD ’84, knew that studying at Weill Cornell Medicine was a great privilege. During their time in medical school, they benefitted from the generosity of donor-funded scholarships and are happy to now be able to help the next generation of Weill Cornell Medicine physicians through the Henry C. and Anne Hayworth First Honor Prize, which was established in 2004 with a \$5,000 gift in honor of Scott’s parents and continues to grow.



Nan and Scott Hayworth

“Our medical education was made possible in large part by the endless kindness and generosity of our parents Anne and Henry Hayworth, so we’re proud and happy to honor them with a named prize,” Scott notes.

This prize is given annually to a student who has exhibited outstanding scholastic performance during their first year of medical school. “We hope that the recipients of the Hayworth Prize are just as successful in the remaining years of their education – and in their careers – as they have proven at the outset,” says Nan.

In addition to establishing the Hayworth Prize, the Hayworths also gave \$20,000 to support the renovation of the Weill Education Center.

Drs. Natasha Leibel and Harlan Levine

Natasha Leibel, MD ’98, looks back to her time at Weill Cornell Medicine with fondness – especially since that was where she met her husband, Harlan Levine, MD ’98.

When Dr. Leibel and Dr. Levine graduated from medical school, they were fortunate enough to not have to worry about paying off a tremendous amount of debt. But they knew that many aspiring doctors could not afford the same luxury, and so they decided to create the Harlan B. Levine, MD ’98 and Natasha I. Leibel, MD ’98 Scholarship.

Dr. Leibel hopes scholarship recipients enjoy being doctors as much as she and her husband do. “We don’t want someone to be deterred from making the choice of going into medicine because they fear being saddled in debt,” she says. “And the scholarship recipients at Weill Cornell Medicine are truly some of the most inspiring young people.”

Dr. Leibel and Dr. Levine also made a gift to name an investigators’ suite in the Belfer Research Building. Dr. Leibel’s father is a scientist and she has seen firsthand the struggle that scientists go through when it comes to research funding, so the cause was very close to her heart.



Harlan Levine and Natasha Leibel with their children

Dr. Connie Newman

Endocrinologist Connie Newman, MD ’78, looked up to her father, a pediatrician, who often shared stories about his time working for a contagious disease hospital during the 1940s polio epidemic. He would often make house calls to low-income neighborhoods and cared for patients who could not afford to pay him. His actions ultimately inspired her to become a physician herself.

“He taught me the importance of caring for people no matter who they are, where they live, what disease they have, or how much money they have,” says Dr. Newman, adding that her father’s actions guided her philanthropy towards organizations that improve access to healthcare.

When Dr. Newman decided to make a \$25,000 gift to Weill Cornell Medicine, she was drawn to support the student-run Weill Cornell Community Clinic, which provides high-quality care to uninsured individuals. “I went on a tour of the clinic and immediately felt that my contribution would be valuable, not only in training Weill Cornell medical students but also for increasing access to care for the underserved,” Dr. Newman says.

Dr. Newman is also a mentor for female medical students who are members of Weill Cornell Medicine’s Women in Medicine group. “My main message to women in medical careers is to establish realistic, but challenging professional and personal goals,” says Dr. Newman. “I tell these students to have the courage to pursue their dreams, to maintain their optimism and sense of humor during difficult times, and to embrace change as it may lead to unexpected opportunity.”



ROGER TULLY

Dr. John Zebala

For John Zebala, MD ’93, PhD ’92, the years he spent training to become a physician-scientist at Weill Cornell Medicine were some of the most enjoyable and transformative years of his life. “I had the freedom to find my life passions as an inventor and biomedical entrepreneur. All of the business and personal successes I have achieved today would never have been possible without the MD-PhD program,” Dr. Zebala says.

Dr. Zebala was inspired to make a \$25,000 gift to the Olaf S. Andersen, MD, Fund for Physician-Scientist Training so that future biomedical entrepreneurs could have the same opportunity that he did. The fund was established in honor of Dr. Olaf Andersen’s 20th year as the director of the Tri-Institutional MD-PhD program.

“It is my hope that this fund will support the full spectrum of student creativity and innovative potential that lies at the heart of the MD-PhD program, giving those students mentorship opportunities across fields that encompass basic science, clinical service and the business of biomedicine,” says Dr. Zebala.



John and Amy Zebala

PROVIDED

For more information on alumni giving at Weill Cornell Medicine, please contact the Office of Alumni Relations at (646) 962-9560 or alumni@med.cornell.edu or visit alumni.weill.cornell.edu.



I am so often impressed and moved by the commitment and dedication of the Weill Cornell Medicine community. The Weill Cornell Medicine leadership, faculty, staff and students are some of the most talented and devoted people I've ever met – and they work tirelessly every day to provide top-tier care to our patients. As you'll read in our cover story, this passion and commitment continues well beyond the halls of 1300 York Avenue; the Weill Cornell Medicine alumni are among our most loyal supporters and we are so grateful for their ongoing allegiance to our fine institution.

This past summer, we launched the "We Are Weill Cornell Medicine" campaign to honor the unique Weill Cornell Medicine community and highlight many of the people and achievements that make our institution the world-class place that it is. In the coming months, we will celebrate this diverse group of individuals through words and photographs in our many digital and print publications. I encourage you, our donors, friends and alumni, to read these stories since so many of these inspirational accomplishments were made possible because of you. The impact of our donors' generosity is felt throughout our institution – we see it in everything that we do. These stories are just a small glimpse at the power of this incredible philanthropy.

Jessica Bibliowicz
Chairman
Weill Cornell Medicine Board of Overseers

The impact of our donors' **generosity is felt throughout** our institution – we see it in everything that we do.

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New Gift to Benefit Thoracic Surgery Division

When Yoram Cohen was diagnosed with a lung disease, he traveled more than 200 miles from his home in Washington, D.C. to receive care from Dr. Nasser Altorki, chief of the Division of Thoracic Surgery, who he and his family deem "the best of the best."

After reflecting on his life-changing experience as a patient under Dr. Altorki's care, Mr. Cohen made a generous \$1 million gift to support this work.

"Our family is incredibly grateful to Dr. Altorki and Weill Cornell Medicine for the world-class care that they provided," says Mr. Cohen. "We experienced first-hand how cutting-edge medicine, comprehensive attention-to-detail and tremendous dedication by doctors and nurses improves patient outcomes and helps provide peace-of-mind for patients' families."

When Mr. Cohen initially traveled to New York to meet Dr. Altorki, the Gerald J. Ford-Wayne Isom Research Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery, he planned only to have a consultation about his upcoming treatment in Washington. But when circumstances led to him checking into the medical center as a patient, Mr. Cohen was incredibly moved by the care that he received from Dr. Altorki and his team.

"That experience gave us an enormous sense of confidence in Weill Cornell Medicine," says Adam Cohen, Mr. Cohen's son. "And after that, we were certain that we wanted Dr. Altorki to be my dad's physician throughout the entire treatment process."

"We experienced first-hand how cutting-edge medicine, **comprehensive attention-to-detail and tremendous dedication by doctors and nurses** improves patient outcomes and helps provide peace-of-mind for patients' families."



Yoram Cohen (far right) and family

Mr. Cohen returned to Weill Cornell Medicine for treatment and continued to be impressed by Dr. Altorki's kindness and attention to detail. According to Adam Cohen, "Weill Cornell Medicine provided comprehensive and excellent care. After my dad's surgery, our family felt strongly that we wanted to do something to support Dr. Altorki and the institution – given what we have experienced, we know that medicine can have a huge impact."

The Cohens hope their gift will help Dr. Altorki continue to save lives. "I am so touched by the Cohen family's generosity," says Dr. Altorki. "With their support we will be able to sustain our efforts in combatting lung disease."

"Now, anytime we know of someone with a serious health issue who needs care, we tell them to go to Weill Cornell Medicine – whether they're from New York or not," Adam Cohen says. "We honestly can't imagine a better place."

Stimson Luncheon

In June, attendees at the Stimson Society's annual luncheon were captivated by Dr. Linda Vahdat's presentation, entitled "Breast Cancer: New Strategies in the Era of Precision Medicine." Dr. Vahdat, the director of the Breast Cancer Research Program, focuses on new therapies for patients with high risk of relapse. As a drug development expert, she successfully led the effort to get FDA approval of two leading drugs that fight metastatic breast cancer.

For more information about the Stimson Society and planned giving at Weill Cornell Medicine, please contact Lisa Lager, director of planned giving, at 646-962-9510 or lil2033@med.cornell.edu.



Stimson Society Co-Chair Michael M. Alexiades, MD '83, Dr. Linda Vahdat, Stimson Society Co-Chair Overseer A.J.C. (Ian) Smith and Interim Dean Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi



Partners in Medicine

The annual Partners in Medicine spring luncheon, held on June 21, focused on digestion. During the presentation, entitled “You Are What You Eat: Nutrition, Microbes and Human Health Innovations in Digestive and Liver Diseases,” participants learned about prevention and treatments for digestive and liver disease from Dr. David Artis, director of the Jill Roberts Institute for Research in Inflammatory Bowel Disease and the Michael Kors Professor of Immunology and Dr. Robert Brown, vice chair of transitions of care, director of the Center for Liver Disease and Transplantation and the Gladys and Roland Harriman Professor of Medicine.

For more information about Partners in Medicine and annual giving at Weill Cornell Medicine, please contact Lori Schroeter, director of annual and special giving programs, at 646-962-9531 or las2026@med.cornell.edu.

Dr. David Artis, Dr. Robert Brown, Jr. and Interim Dean Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi

Greenberg Service Award Dinner

The 36th annual Maurice R. Greenberg Distinguished Service Award Dinner was held on May 19, honoring Life Overseer Dr. Harvey Klein, the William S. Paley Professor of Clinical Medicine. Dr. Klein has been connected to NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center for more than 52 years, starting with an internship and residency in 1963.

This award was established in 1980 by Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg, and the late Dr. Peter Guida, who founded the divisions of Cardiac Surgery, Vascular Surgery and Thoracic Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine. The award has been presented each year to a senior member of the medical staff for exceptional and longstanding service.



NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Board Chairman Frank A. Bennack, Jr., Overseer Maurice R. Greenberg, Dr. Harvey Klein and Board Chairman Jessica Bibliowicz

Weill Cornell Medicine

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