



Marianne Ritchie, MD '80, Becomes JMC Alumni Association President

Dr. Marianne Ritchie — made all the work and effort worthwhile,” she says. After graduation, she entered the male-dominated field of gastroenterology and was the first woman GI fellow at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. “I was lucky to have outstanding mentors,” says Ritchie. “At Sloan-Kettering, I worked with Bob Kurtz, MD '68, who was a great role model for me, as was Sidney Winawer, MD, chief of gastroenterology. He was a man of great distinction and a world-renowned expert in colon cancer screening and early detection. And I'll never forget the first day as a junior student on my medicine rotation at Lankenau when I met Franz Goldstein, MD '53. We had a patient with Crohn's disease, and Dr. Goldstein gave me a personal mini-seminar on the disease. He walked away with the tails of his starched coat flapping, and I thought, I want to be just like him. Little did I know that one day we would be partners.”

In 1988, she and classmate Barbara Frieman, MD '80, connected with women on campus to form a group that would one day become the annual Women's Forum. “Working with the Women's Forum prepared me for my new role as alumni association president,” she says. “It introduced me to women I might not have met otherwise, and I'm proud that the forum gives students an opportunity to form relationships with mentors.” This year marks the Women's Forum's 25th anniversary.

After Sloan-Kettering, she became the first woman in gastroenterology on the Main Line

at Lankenau Hospital, where she practiced for 14 years. Later she taught at Temple University Hospital, but she came full circle by returning to Jefferson in 2008. “Jefferson GI is an extremely collegial division with a superstar chief in Jay DiMarino.” Ritchie has maintained her connection with Jefferson for more than 30 years, serving as reunion chair for her class. “The class of 1980 had great chemistry,” she says. “In fact, we liked each other so much, we had a one-year reunion, and 75 people came!”

Since then, she has been active in the alumni association, and in 2011 created the first “Jeff at the Beach” event. “People like to share stories with each other, and what better place to do that than in a relaxed, fun setting at the shore? Events like this really demonstrate the camaraderie that Jefferson classes are famous for,” she says. Ritchie also encourages alumni to use the online social network set up for JMC last year. “It's a great way to maintain connections that will lead to less Facebook and more face time.”

Ritchie is already working on plans for an annual alumnae brunch starting this September, and she has other ideas to strengthen connections. “Earlier this year, I went to Israel with some of our alumni, and the trip was incredible because of my fellow travelers,” she says. “Maybe we can plan other alumni trips in the future. I hope Jeff alumni will contact me so together we can make the JMC Alumni Association the best it has ever been.” Ritchie can be reached via email at marianne.ritchie@jefferson.edu.

— Gail Luciani

In *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell says, “Sprinkled among every walk of life ... are a handful of people with a truly extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances. They are Connectors.” Marianne Ritchie, MD '80, assistant professor of gastroenterology and new JMC Alumni Association president, is a connector extraordinaire. “I believe in the personal touch, in reaching out and connecting with people,” she says. “I cherish the lifelong friendships from my years at Jefferson, and one of my goals as president is to encourage other alumni to renew their friendships from their med school days by participating in our events.”

Ritchie entered JMC just as the presence of women in the medical profession began to grow. Her class of 240 students, the largest medical school class in the country at that time, was 21 percent women. She made connections even then, when she was the sophomore selected as the moderator to orient the incoming freshmen. “They all seemed so nervous, and I wanted them to relax, so I told them that they were here because ‘we loved them’ — that Jefferson would not let them fail,” she says. “I was teased about that for a long time, but the best part of the story is that I met my husband during that orientation.” Her husband, Stuart Gordon, MD '81, is now the division head of the Joint Replacement Program at Cooper University Hospital.

One of the best moments of her life was on June 6, 1980, at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia, during commencement exercises. “Hearing my name called out —

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