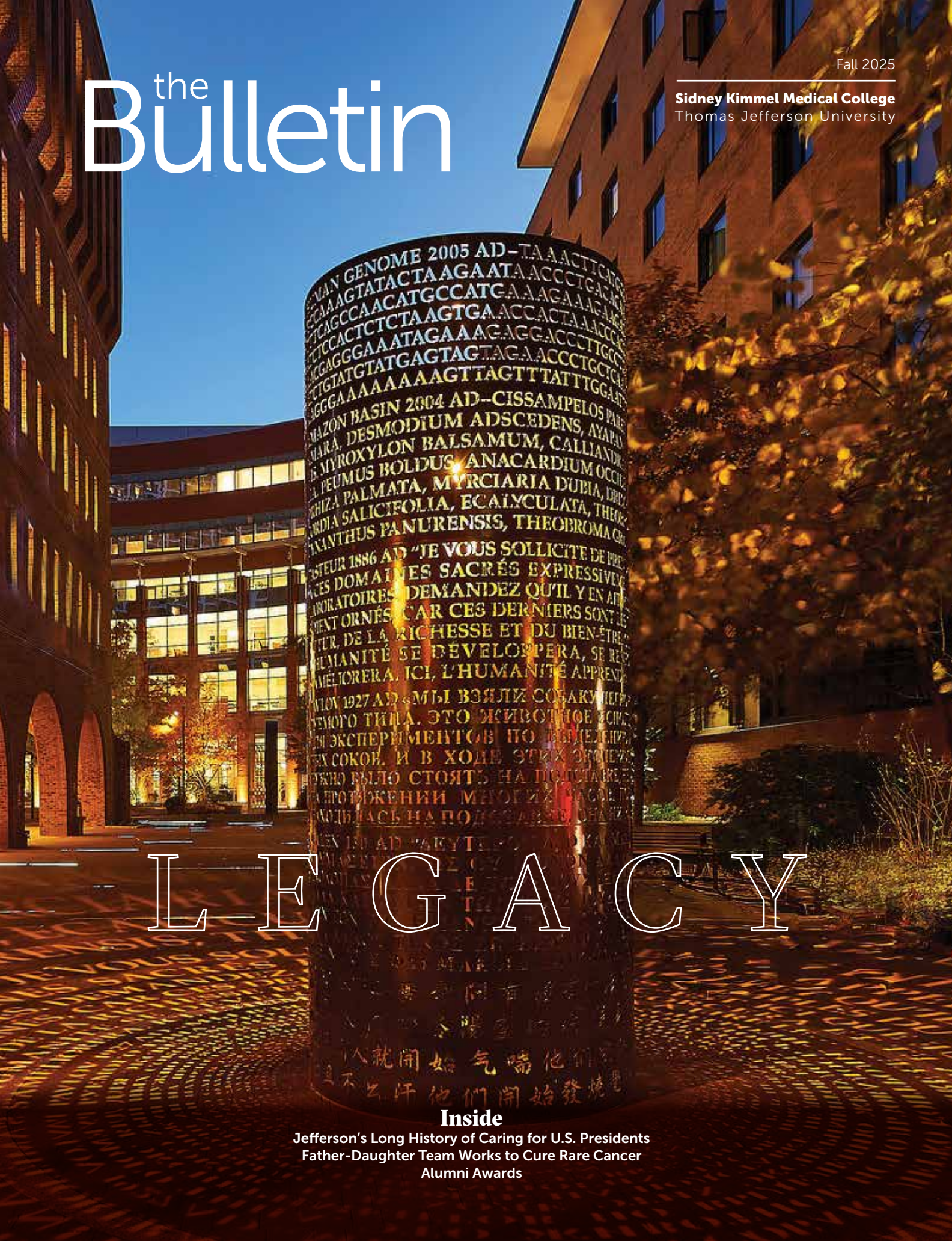

the Bulletin

Fall 2025

Sidney Kimmel Medical College
Thomas Jefferson University

LEGACY

Inside

the Bulletin

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Dean's Column

Challenge, Collaboration, Renewal

ONE OF THE JOYS of working at Jefferson is the chance to study its 200-year history. The archives tell a story not just of milestones — the firsts, the discoveries, the breakthroughs — but of a temperament. Jefferson physicians have always been more than skilled clinicians. They've been collaborators. They've been restless, curious minds. And, when confronted with the defining challenges of their era, they have risen to meet them.

That spirit feels especially relevant now.

This fall, in my State of the College address to faculty and to alumni at Alumni Weekend, I spoke about turning challenge into opportunity. It is not a slogan but a necessity. The landscape of healthcare and medical education is shifting under our feet: financial pressures, research funding uncertainties, workforce shortages, the mounting complexity of patient care. These are not abstract problems. They shape how we teach, how we practice, and how we discover.

Yet, when I look at Jefferson today, I see not a crossroads but a foundation of real strength.

Applications to the Sidney Kimmel Medical College reached record numbers this year. In a time when some fear a waning interest in medicine, this is heartening. It tells us that young people still see this profession — difficult, demanding, and profoundly human — as a calling worth pursuing.

At the same time, our alumni and donors have stepped forward to ensure that research, the lifeblood of progress, continues to thrive. Their support for bridge funding has kept promising investigations alive through the inevitable gaps in federal grants. These acts of belief, large and small, sustain the momentum of discovery.

And on Oct. 28, we took an even larger step forward with the creation of the SKMC Clinical and Translational Sciences Center. This new center will be an engine for turning scientific insight into better health outcomes. It will link scientists with clinicians, making research more collaborative, efficient, and impactful — shortening the time between discovery and real-world benefit.

Research alone cannot transform lives; it must be carried into practice. The center's design recognizes this, embedding education and mentorship at its core. Our next generation of clinicians and investigators will learn not only how to conduct studies, but also how to build bridges between disciplines, between discovery and delivery, between Jefferson and the communities we serve.

The generosity of longtime donors Sidney and Caroline Kimmel, who have offered to match every gift to the new center dollar for dollar, stands as a profound vote of confidence in this work. Their support, and the support it will inspire, will help secure Jefferson's place as a leader in clinical and translational science.

Challenges will not disappear. They never have. But if our history teaches us anything, it is that adversity can sharpen purpose. The investments we are making — in people, in ideas, in collaboration — are not only about resilience. They are about renewal.

Jefferson's next chapter, like its first, will be defined by the conviction that discovery and compassion are inseparable, and that, together, they can change the world.

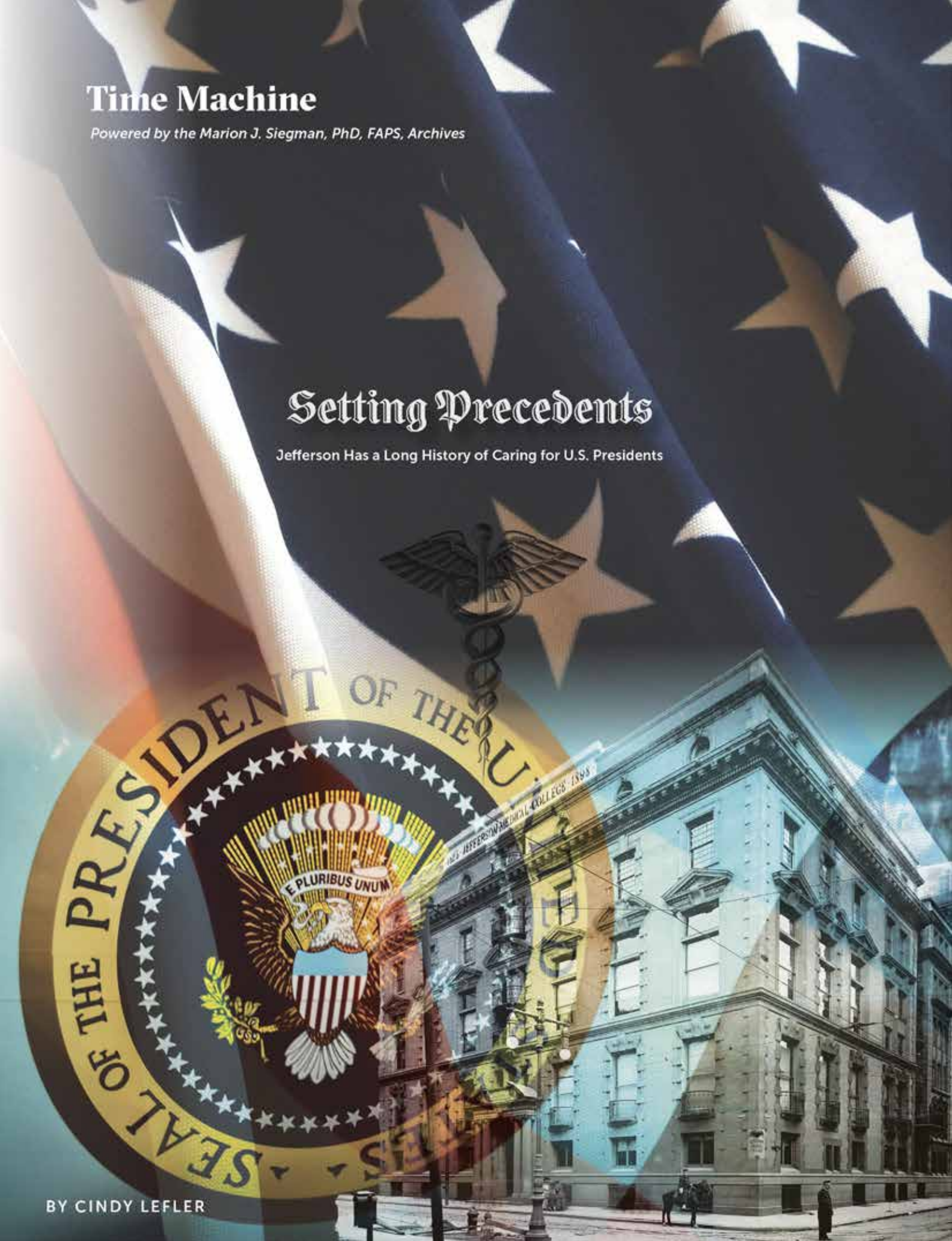
Said A. Ibrahim, MD, MBA, MPH
Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean
Sidney Kimmel Medical College
President, Jefferson University Physicians

Time Machine

Powered by the Marion J. Siegman, PhD, FAPS, Archives

Setting Precedents

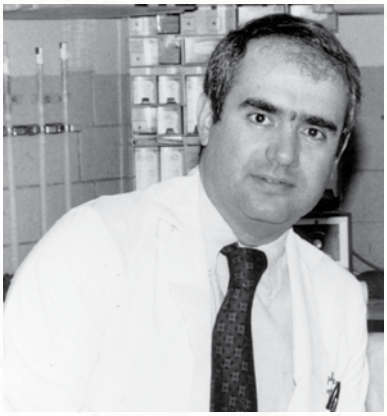
Jefferson Has a Long History of Caring for U.S. Presidents



BY CINDY LEFLER

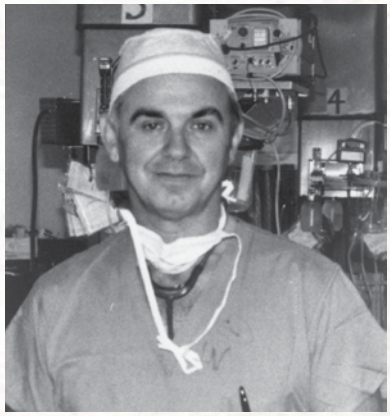
WHEN SHOTS RANG OUT on March 30, 1981, in front of the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C., Secret Service agents pushed President Ronald Reagan into the limousine and rushed him to George Washington University Hospital where doctors stood by ready to remove a bullet lodged near his heart. Three members of that life-saving team were Jefferson alumni. **Joseph M. Giordano, MD** ’67, who recently passed away (see obituary on page 42), led the surgical team, with the assistance of surgical resident **Kathleen F. Cheyney, MD** ’74, and anesthesiologist **Manfred W. Lichtmann, MD** ’63.

That team followed in the footsteps of many Jefferson alumni and faculty in the service of the United States presidents, stretching back as far as Thomas Jefferson himself.

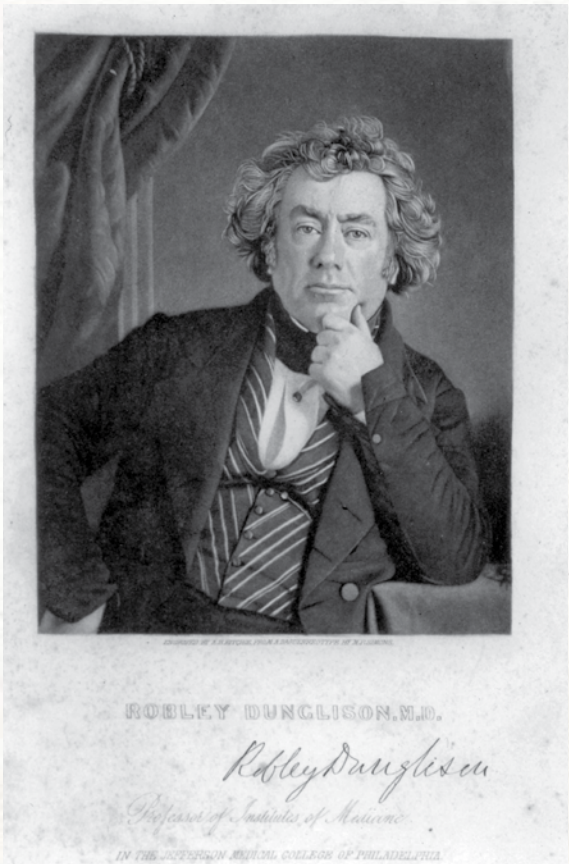


Joseph M. Giordano, MD ’67

Kathleen F. Cheyney, MD ’74



Manfred W. Lichtmann, MD ’63



The nation’s third president enlisted English physician **Robley Dunglison, MD**, for a medical professor position at the newly established University of Virginia in 1824. He quickly became a close friend and personal physician to Thomas Jefferson.

Dunglison was later appointed professor of the Institutes of Medicine and Medical Jurisprudence at what was then Jefferson Medical College, where he served from 1836 to 1868. He was also dean of the medical school from 1854 to 1868. Upon retirement, he continued to serve as professor emeritus.

Dunglison, known as the “Father of American Physiology,” was also the personal physician to James Madison and James Monroe, and consulted in the treatment of Andrew Jackson.

The first official White House physician was **Jonathan Messersmith Foltz, MD** 1830, during the administration of President James Buchanan.

Foltz, a surgeon in the U.S. Navy who served in the Mexican–American War and American Civil War, had served as health advisor to President James K. Polk.

Buchanan and Foltz briefly met when Buchanan was a congressman and President Andrew Jackson recommended that the doctor be appointed assistant naval surgeon. They met again when Buchanan was secretary of state.

When Buchanan became president, Foltz took on the role of presidential physician, even living at the White House for a while.

Not just one, but four Jefferson graduates attended to President Ulysses S. Grant.


Brinton


Mendes Da Costa


Gross


Lippincott

John Hill Brinton, MD 1852, was a brigadier surgeon in the American Civil War who later served as a member of General Ulysses S. Grant's staff. Brinton succeeded the iconic Samuel D. Gross, MD 1828, as chair of surgery at Jefferson.

Brinton's brother-in-law, **Jacob Mendes Da Costa, MD** 1852, also tended to Grant. The physician was known for identifying Da Costa's syndrome (also known as soldier's heart), an anxiety disorder that he first observed in soldiers in the American Civil War. The disorder would later be renamed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Da Costa was a respected professor and lecturer at Jefferson.

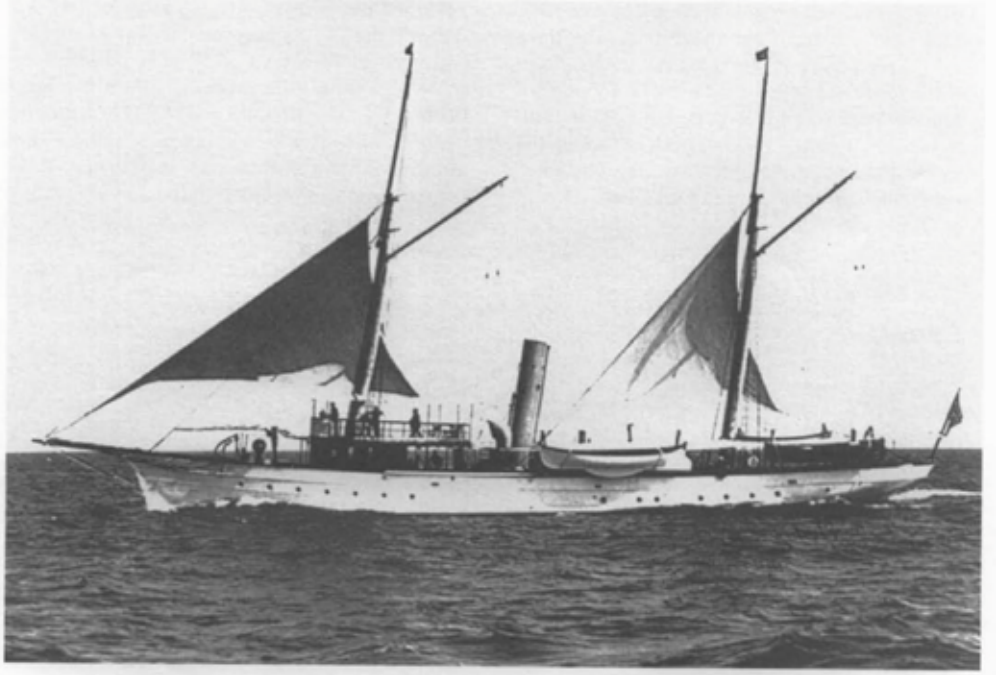
In 1884, DaCosta was visiting a friend in Long Branch, New Jersey, when Grant, who was staying at his summer home there, noticed a stinging throat pain. The friend asked DaCosta to examine Grant. A heavy cigar smoker, the former president was subsequently diagnosed with throat cancer, which led him to another Jefferson physician, **Samuel Weissel Gross, MD** 1857.

Gross, the son of Samuel D. Gross, was a renowned surgeon at Jefferson who was known for his use of antiseptic surgery and radical surgery in cancer cases.

Sometime before his death in 1885, Grant embarked on a cruise around the world with his family. **George C. Lippincott, MD** 1875, had the privilege of accompanying the Grants as their family physician.

Not much is known about **Thomas Stilwell, MD** 1839, except that he attended to both President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife, Lucy.

While **Thomas A. Emmett, MD** 1850, was not an official presidential physician, in 1858 he delivered the baby that would become the 26th president of the U.S. — Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt.



Oneida Yacht on which Professor W.W. Keen operated upon President Cleveland in 1893. (Courtesy of W. W. Keen James)

W.W. Keen's Luer cheek retractor, from *The Surgical Operations on President Cleveland in 1893* by W.W. Keen. (Courtesy Lippincott/Harper & Row.)

Cleveland

Wilson

Roosevelt

Perhaps one of the most famous Jefferson graduates was **William W. Keen Jr., MD** 1862, renowned for being a surgeon, innovator, and part of a team that performed a clandestine operation on a president on a yacht.

In 1893, Keen operated on President Grover Cleveland to remove a verrucous carcinoma (a type of oral cancer). The surgery was performed surreptitiously aboard the yacht Oneida while it sailed up the East River in New York City.

Keen, who served in the American Civil War, was a member of the medical college's faculty from 1866 to 1907. He gained worldwide attention for his pioneering procedures, including drainage of the cerebral ventricles and several successful removals of large brain tumors.

Aside from Cleveland, Keen served three other U.S. presidents or their families.

In 1909, President William Howard Taft requested a consultation with Keen for his sister-in-law, who had been diagnosed with a brain tumor. The outcome of the consultation and any treatments remains unknown.

Keen also had a relationship with President Woodrow Wilson and several members of Wilson's family before he entered the White House. Wilson had cardiovascular disease and sought a consultation with the renowned physician. The two continued a professional and personal relationship, and in 1912, Keen operated on future first lady Ellen Wilson. A few years later, he also operated on two of Wilson's daughters at Jefferson.

In August 1921, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had just begun a summer vacation in New Brunswick, Canada, when he developed paralysis of the lower extremities that progressed to his trunk and part of his hand.

A local physician called Keen, who was then 84 years old, to examine the president. Keen first diagnosed the issue as a blood clot in the spinal cord. He later changed the diagnoses to a lesion on the spinal cord. Later, another specialist made the correct diagnosis of polio.

Keen continued to write and lecture throughout his retirement until he died in 1932 at the age of 95.

Thomas Leidy Rhoads, MD 1893, served in the Spanish-American War and World War I. He was the commanding chief surgeon of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, and received the Distinguished Service Medal at the close of the war. He later became the surgeon in charge of Walter Reed General Army Hospital.

President William Howard Taft selected Rhoads as his personal physician while he was in the White House. Rhoads also became Taft's aide de camp when the man holding that position died in the Titanic disaster.

In addition to Keen, three other Jeffersonians tended to President Woodrow Wilson and the Wilson family — **Francis X. Dercum, MD**, **John C. Da Costa, MD** 1885, and **Edward P. Davis, MD** 1888.

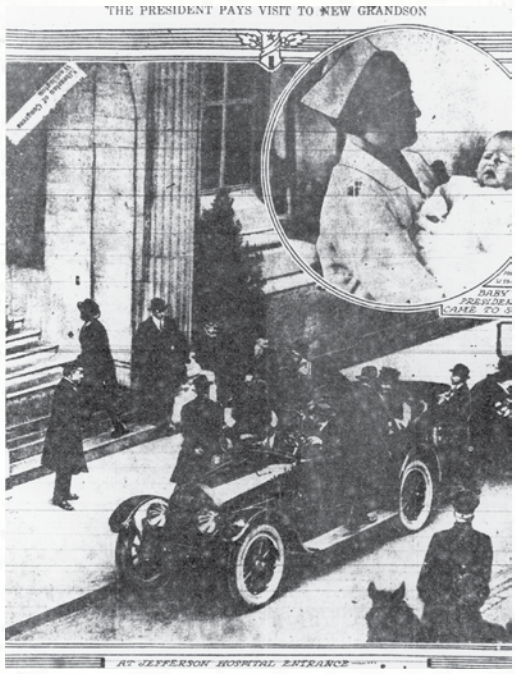
Francis Xavier Dercum, MD, was a neurologist who specialized in the treatment of nervous and mental disorders. He joined Jefferson in 1892 when the medical college established a chair in nervous and mental diseases; he was the first to hold the position, and he remained as emeritus after retiring.

When President Wilson collapsed in The White House in October 1919, Dercum was called to treat him. He diagnosed Wilson with thrombosis but advised him to remain in office as an incentive to recover.

John C. Da Costa, MD 1885 (no relation to Jacob Mendes Da Costa), was the successor to Keen as the chair of the Department of Surgery in 1907 and in 1910, became the first Samuel D. Gross Professor.

During World War I, Da Costa served as a junior lieutenant in the Navy and eventually rose to the rank of commander. In 1919, he sailed on The George Washington on a special mission to tend to an ailing Wilson during negotiations for the peace treaty of World War I and the League of Nations.

While Edward P. Davis, MD 1888, did not attend to Wilson, in 1919 he delivered one of the president's grandchildren, Woodrow Wilson Sayre. Davis, who had been a classmate of Wilson at Princeton, served as professor of Obstetrics from 1898 to 1925.



Edward P. Davis, MD 1888 (left) delivered one of the president's grandchildren, Woodrow Wilson Sayre.

Howard McCrum Snyder, MD 1905, forged a lasting bond with Dwight D. Eisenhower during World War II. Commissioned into the U.S. Army Medical Corps in 1908, Snyder served 25 years in various posts before becoming Eisenhower's personal physician in Europe during the war.

Though technically retired because of his age in 1945, he continued caring for Eisenhower and his family, including treating Mamie Eisenhower for pneumonia.

Recalled to duty in 1951 as a special adviser at Allied Powers Europe, Snyder later joined Eisenhower on the campaign trail. Following Eisenhower's 1953 inauguration, Snyder was appointed physician to the President, serving throughout his administration.

As a leader in healthcare, education, and research for more than 200 years, it is not surprising that Jefferson has been at the forefront of caring for the leaders of the country regardless of their political party. Just before President Ronald Reagan was taken into surgery following the assassination attempt, he joked with the doctors: "I hope you are all Republicans." Giordano — a staunch Democrat — famously replied: "Today, Mr. President, we are all Republicans."

Marion J. Siegman, PhD, FAPS, Archives

The Marion J. Siegman, PhD, FAPS, Archives in Scott Memorial Library, Room 405, points to where Thomas Jefferson University is heading by documenting where it has been by acquiring, preserving, and making available for research official University records, personal papers, memorabilia, and other materials of enduring historical value that document the development of Jefferson and its constituent institutions, affiliates, and alumni.

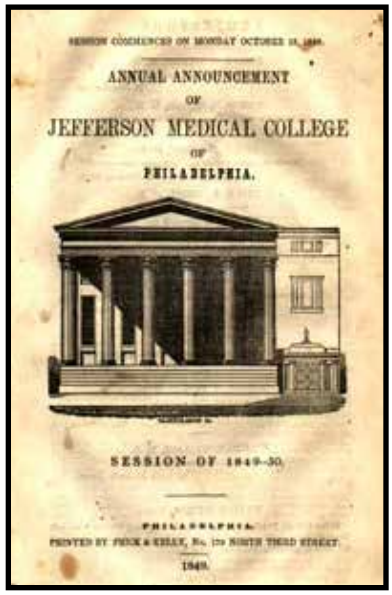
Artifacts

Left to right: syringe with case, medical scale, microscope, amputation tourniquet, apothecary box, scalpels, and weights for medical scale.

Photographs

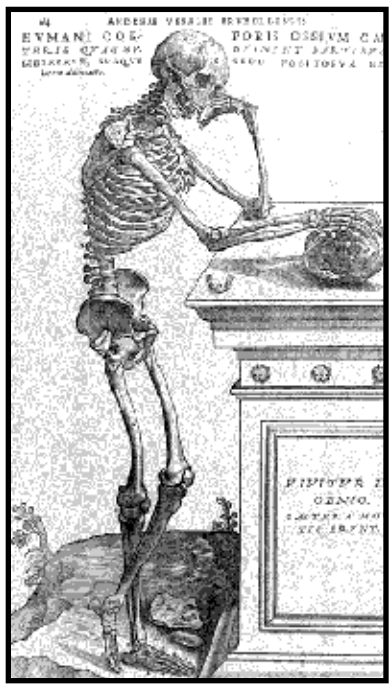
Nurses from Base Hospital No. 38 on camels in Egypt, ca. 1942

University Archives



Announcement of Jefferson Medical College, 1849

Rare Book Collections



Andreas Vesalius. De humani corporis fabrica. Libri septem. Basel, 1543

ICYMI

(Left to right) Susan Aldridge, PhD, Said Ibrahim, MD, and Baligh R. Yehia, MD, at the Clinical and Translational Sciences Center (CTSC) opening reception

Jefferson Launches Clinical and Translational Sciences Center to Accelerate Discoveries into Patient Care

On October 28, 2025, Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University established the Clinical and Translational Sciences Center (CTSC) to accelerate the translation of scientific discoveries into life-changing treatments and healthcare innovations.

The center was made possible through a portion of a transformative $28 million gift from Sidney and Caroline Kimmel, who also committed to match new contributions to the CTSC dollar for dollar to inspire additional philanthropy.

"The CTSC bridges the gap between science and society by making research more collaborative, efficient, and impactful," said Said Ibrahim, MD, the Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean of Sidney Kimmel Medical College. "It ensures that discoveries are rapidly translated into better health for all — whether through developing new vaccines, advancing personalized medicine, improving chronic disease management, training the next generation of researchers, or teaching best practices in team science and patient engagement."

In addition to advancing healthcare outcomes, the creation of the CTSC strengthens Jefferson's role as an economic and innovation driver in the region. The center supports high-skill employment across academia, biotech, pharma, and healthcare sectors, while helping attract private sector investment and stimulate regional growth through infrastructure development and demand for specialized healthcare services.

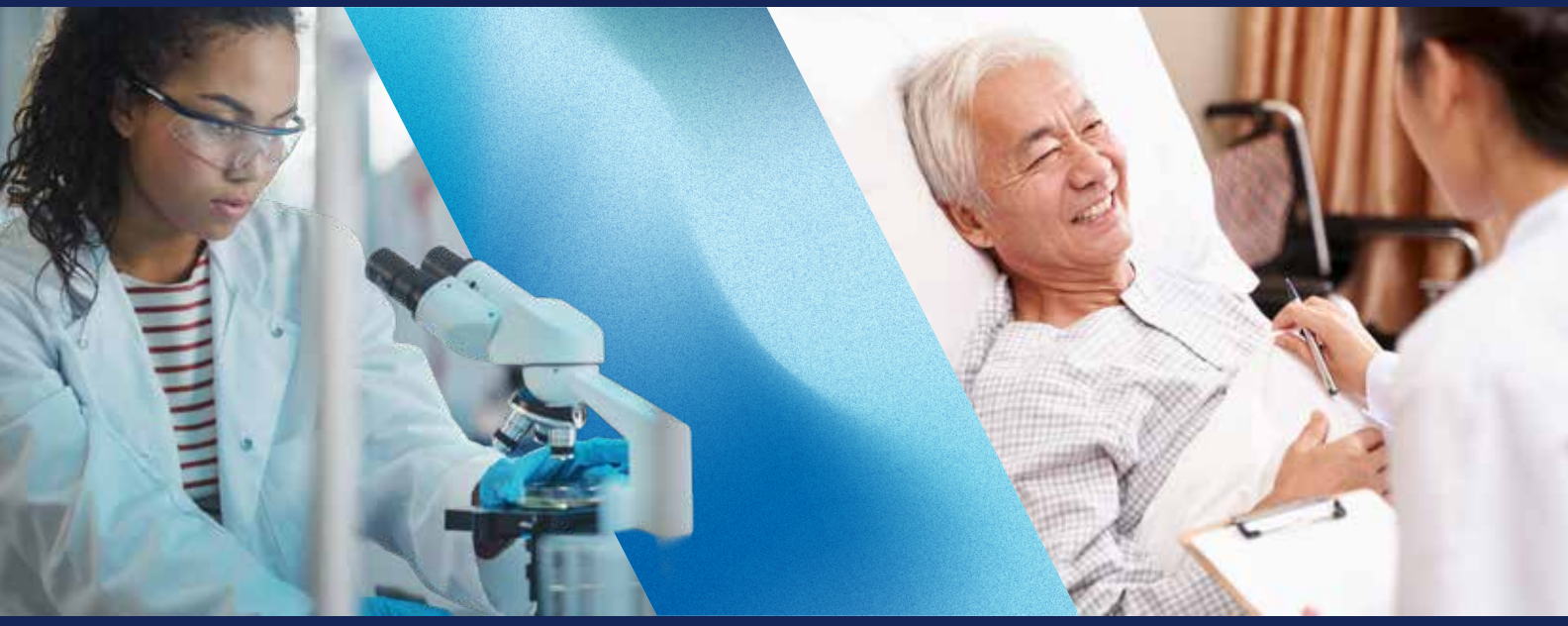
"Jefferson's commitment to maintaining leadership in medical innovation is what powers our academic engine," said Susan Aldridge, PhD, president of Thomas Jefferson University. "The Kimmels' deep generosity and trust in our academic mission ensure we are equipped to pursue even greater excellence as a comprehensive research institution for years to come."

By leveraging its vast clinical scale and the remarkable diversity of its patient population — spanning urban, suburban, and rural communities — Jefferson is uniquely positioned to build a leading clinical and translational research program.

"This investment enables Jefferson to better respond to future public health emergencies and address persistent chronic disease burdens such as cancer, diabetes, and mental health," said Baligh R. Yehia, MD, president of Jefferson Health. "It also creates a mechanism to reduce health disparities, ensuring that new treatments are effective for diverse patient populations while training and mentoring the next generation of biomedical researchers."

Designed to expand Jefferson's research capacity and funding potential, the CTSC positions the university to increase its footprint in industry-supported clinical trials across vital areas, including cardiovascular diseases, neuroscience, and cancer.

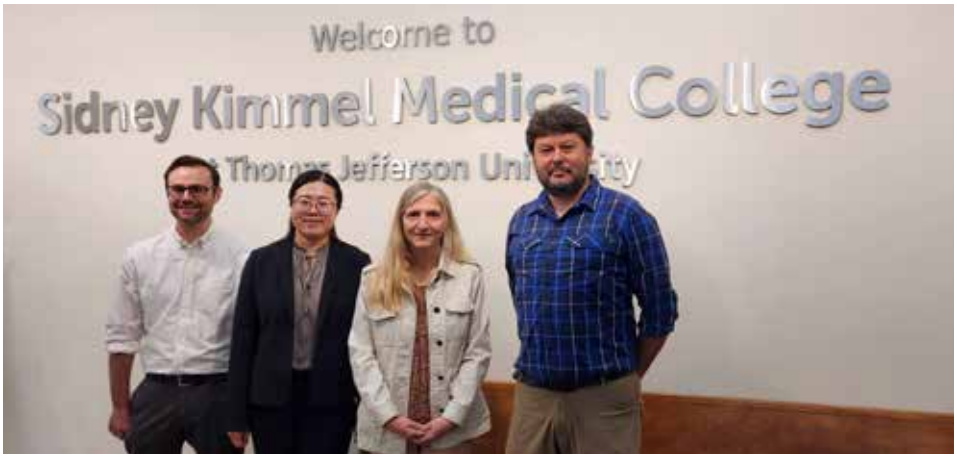
FUEL DISCOVERY.
TRANSFORM LIVES.
DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT.



The **SKMC Clinical and Translational Sciences Center** will be a powerful engine for turning scientific discoveries into better health outcomes for everyone. Its mission is simple but profound: to speed up the process of moving research from bench to bedside to community.

Scan the QR code to make your gift today. Every dollar you give to the center will be matched by Sidney and Caroline Kimmel, putting the most promising ideas and treatments to use even faster.

To learn more, please contact Lisa Repko, Vice President, Thomas Jefferson University and Planned Giving, at lisa.repko@jefferson.edu or 215-955-1635.



(Left to right) Michael Soniat, Yingxuan Chen, Adriana Mantegazza, and Dmitry Temiakov. Not pictured: Erik Blomain and Fan Lee

The winning researchers include:

Hien Dang, PhD
J. Wallace Davis and Gail G. Davis Assistant Professor of Surgery, Department of Surgery

Gudrun Debes, DVM
Associate Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Kyunghee Koh, PhD
Professor, Department of Neuroscience

Peisong Ma, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine

Adriana Mantegazza, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

M. Paula Martinez Cantarin, MD
Associate Professor, Department of Medicine

Timothy J. Mosca, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Neuroscience

Ulhas P. Naik, PhD
Professor, Department of Medicine

Holly Ramage, PhD
Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology

Jianxin Sun, PhD
Professor, Department of Medicine

Ryan Tomlinson, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Mudit Tyagi, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Medicine

Alumni and Donor Support Helps Jefferson Researchers Bridge the Federal Funding Gap

Historically, biomedical research has relied on multiple funding sources, including substantial support from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Today, however, scientists face unprecedented challenges as federal resources diminish. As of June 4, 2025, approximately 2,300 NIH grants — representing nearly $3.8 billion in funding — were terminated, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. These cuts included at least 160 clinical trials in critical areas such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, and chronic disease research.

Thanks to the generosity of alumni and donors, Jefferson has established two new programs to help sustain momentum in biomedical discovery.

The Sidney and Caroline Kimmel Research Jump-Start Pilot Awards, made possible through the generosity of Sidney and Caroline Kimmel, are designed to strengthen research capacity and nurture the next generation of skilled faculty investigators. These competitive one-year grants provide SKMC faculty with early-stage funding to enhance their ability to secure future support from federal, foundation, or industry sources. Nearly 30 proposals were submitted in this inaugural cycle, with selected investigators receiving $50,000 each for projects beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. The awards support all areas of biomedical research — from basic science to clinical, translational, and outcomes studies.

Complementing the pilot awards, Jefferson has also launched a Bridge Funding Program to sustain promising research efforts disrupted by the federal funding shortfall. Bridge funding helps investigators continue vital projects that might otherwise be paused, preserving valuable data, talent, and momentum. This year, twelve proposals were selected to receive between $25,000 and $100,000 to maintain progress and competitiveness in the face of uncertainty.

Together, these donor-supported initiatives underscore Jefferson's commitment to advancing discovery and ensuring that vital research continues despite national funding challenges.

Past Deans Recognized

Two former medical college deans recently received prestigious national honors recognizing their lasting impact on medical education and research.

Thomas J. Nasca, MD '75, received the 2025 Special Recognition Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges for extraordinary contributions to medical education and leadership.

During his 17 years as president and CEO of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), Nasca oversaw transformative growth and innovation in residency and fellowship programs across the U.S. and internationally. He established the ACGME's department of education, the Journal of Graduate Medical Education, and a research division focused on milestones, outcomes, and physician well-being. He co-chaired the National Academy of Medicine's Action Collaborative on Clinician Well-Being and Resilience and founded the ACGME Center for Professionalism and the Future of Medicine. Nasca was Anthony and Gertrude DePalma Dean from 2000 to 2007.

Mark L. Tykocinski, MD, professor of pathology and genomic medicine and dean emeritus, received the 2026 Gold-Headed Cane Award from the American Society of Investigative Pathology (ASIP), the society's highest honor recognizing lifetime contributions to experimental pathology, teaching, and leadership. Notably, he also received ASIP's 1995 Warner-Lambert Parke-Davis Award for outstanding early-career research.

A molecular immunologist, Tykocinski has pioneered eukaryotic expression vectors and fusion protein therapeutics advancing cancer immunotherapy and autoimmune disease treatment. He is a founding scientist of KAHR Bio, a biotech startup. Before serving as Anthony and Gertrude DePalma Dean from 2008 to 2023, he chaired the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors.

Jefferson Secured $12 Million NIH Grant to Advance Asthma Research

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded a Research Program Project (P01) grant to Raymond B. Penn, PhD, of the Center for Translational Medicine and the Jane and Leonard Korman Respiratory Institute at Thomas Jefferson University. The $12 million award supported a multidisciplinary project titled "Exploiting Emerging Ideas in G Protein-Coupled Receptor Biology and Pharmacology to Treat Asthma." The project began in September 2025 and will run through July 2030, with total funding of $11,947,585.

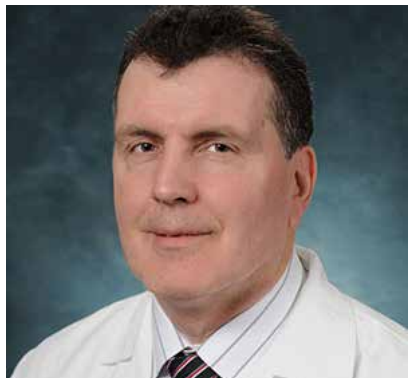
Penn, the Robley Dunglison Professor of Pulmonary Research and vice chair of research for the Department of Medicine, served as lead principal investigator. The research team focused on new approaches to regulating G protein-coupled receptors to improve management of airway smooth muscle function and asthma.

The grant funded four collaborative research projects supported by three Cores. Jefferson investigators included Penn, Deepak Deshpande, PhD, and Jeffrey Benovic, PhD, from the Sidney Kimmel Medical College; Roger Armen, PhD, from the College of Pharmacy; Charles Scott, PhD, and Ajay Nayak, PhD, from the College of Life Sciences; and Suresh Joseph, PhD, from the Department of Pathology and Genomic Medicine.

The P01 team also included national collaborators from the Mayo Clinic, Rutgers University, and Stanford University.

Asthma affects an estimated 25 million Americans and carries an economic burden of more than $115 billion annually. Penn said the project allowed investigators to address a major NIH priority — advancing the science behind more effective asthma treatments and reducing disparities tied to the disease.

University President Susan Aldridge, PhD, said the award reflected Jefferson's strength in multidisciplinary collaboration and its mission to advance translational research from discovery to clinical care.

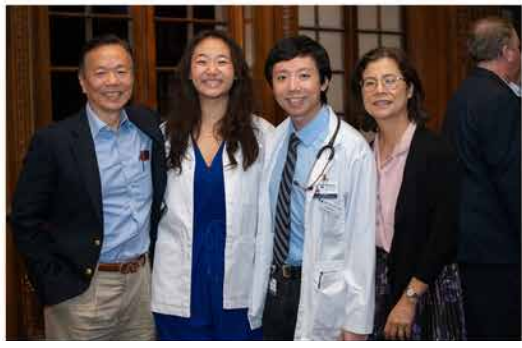












Future Healthcare Leaders Begin Their Journey at Jefferson

Sidney Kimmel Medical College's Class of 2029 Honored at White Coat Ceremony

BY MIKE BEDERKA

NICK NESBIT KNOWS he's an outlier among the Sidney Kimmel Medical College Class of 2029. At 39 years old, he will start med school later than most — for good reason.

He served in the military since 2014. After living all over the world, Nesbit finished active duty as a U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander in July.

"I've always been proud of what I do," says the South Jersey native. "It has given me a sense of purpose."

Nesbit and 285 of his Sidney Kimmel Medical College classmates received their white coats on Aug. 1 in a ceremony at Philadelphia's Crystal Tea Room, marking the official start of their medical school careers.

Austin Ludwick had anticipated this day for years. With his mom a nurse, he had seen how her work improved lives and knew he wanted to use his skills to help others.

He attended Jefferson for pre-medical studies and made the most of his time as an undergrad. Ludwick served as philanthropy and community service chair for Sigma Nu and president of the Global Medical Brigade, visiting Honduras and Guatemala to provide care. He checked vitals, helped with tooth extractions, ran a pharmacy clinic and assisted primary care physicians.

With the White Coat Ceremony finally here, Ludwick couldn't contain his excitement.

"It's everything I've ever dreamed of," he said. "It feels so right."

Mason Garcia's path was different. He earned an undergrad degree and PhD in mechanical engineering and spent nearly five years in an orthopaedic biomechanics lab. His work focused on clinical problems from an engineering perspective. He also researched at SONA Global, a nonprofit that improves trauma care

through education and affordable medical devices.

"I know the mechanical principles of orthopaedic tissues, but I wanted something more patient-facing," Garcia explained. "I want to learn and really understand all the different ways the human body works."

During the two-hour ceremony, the Class of 2029 recited the Hippocratic Oath and heard words of inspiration from Jefferson leadership, faculty, and fellow medical students.

Charles Pohl, MD '87, senior vice provost for student affairs, stressed the importance of the day and what lay ahead.

"Remember that you're embarking on a profession that relies on relationships, is grounded in trust placed by our society, and embraces the human touch," he said. "Each of you sitting in front of us today will be our future healthcare leaders."

Said Ibrahim, MD, the Anthony F. and Gertrude M. DePalma Dean, acknowledged the start of an extraordinary journey for the Class of 2029, "one that will challenge you, inspire you and, ultimately, shape you into the physicians of tomorrow." He also emphasized that medicine melds art and science.

"Our mission is to not only provide you with cutting-edge medical education but to foster an environment for compassion, integrity, and cooperation," he said.

Margaret Ackley joined her older sister, Olivia, at SKMC, eager to make an impact in her community. She knew she wanted to pursue medicine after working at a motocross track in high school, where she flagged courses, monitored accidents, and signaled to prevent pileups.

"I saw a lot of people get injured on four-wheelers and dirt bikes," she said. "My heart went out to them. That inspired me to want to learn more about how we can help people."

Like her sister, Ackley entered Jefferson through the Physician Shortage Area Program, which strives to increase the supply and retention of physicians in rural areas and small towns.

"It's filling a need I directly see in my area," she said.

Mateja Stefanovic shared a desire to give back to his community. His grandfather had been a physician in the former Yugoslavia, and Stefanovic grew up hearing how he served as a trusted figure in his patients' lives.

In high school, Stefanovic became interested in nutrition and started a health club focused on cooking and lifestyle choices. Many of his friends joined, strengthening his excitement for the field.

"This was a pivotal moment," he said. "It really got me thinking about medicine."

Carly Miller also plans to explore her options. After working as an anesthesia technician at Lehigh Valley Health Network, anesthesia and surgery piqued her interest.

"I'm excited to begin medical school and look forward to applying what I learn to patient care," she said.

Jefferson CEO Joe Cacchione, MD, welcomed students to a new chapter and congratulated them on choosing a noble path.

"Your white coats represent a symbol of trust that patients put in you every day," he said. "They're entrusting their lives and family's lives with you."

Cacchione encouraged the Class of 2029 to maintain humility.

"You will listen better if you think you don't have all the answers," he said. "You will gather more information and do better for your patients."

By donning their white coats for the first time, students pledged to uphold Jefferson's high standards for ethical, equitable, and compassionate patient-centered care, noted University President Susan Aldridge, reflecting on Jefferson's 201-year legacy.

"I have no doubt you're ready to begin this adventure and make a difference in the lives of your patients by delivering the very best care with empathy, integrity, and professionalism," she said. "And in doing so, you will further the Jefferson shared vision of reimagining health, education, and discovery to create unparalleled value."

In the ceremony's keynote, former dean Thomas J. Nasca, MD '75, told students that medical school should be about learning for the patients' benefit.

"This isn't about filling your head with knowledge just to fill your head with knowledge," said Nasca, senior fellow and director of the ACGME Center for Professionalism and the Future of Medicine. "This is no longer just about grades. This is about performing for a greater purpose."

Physicians can transform the lives of thousands of people, bringing gratification, joy, and indescribable happiness, he said.

"That door is now open to you," Nasca said. "Walk through it. We'll be here to help you."

MEDICINE

Rooted in Connection

Scott Orlov's path from Disney to family medicine proves that small interactions can make big change.

BY CASEY HEILIG

FOR SCOTT ORLOV, a fourth-year Sidney Kimmel Medical College student, cultivating meaningful human connection is the very foundation of medicine.

From his undergraduate days studying public health at the University of Michigan through his medical school years, Orlov's interest in how social determinants and health disparities shape individual and community health inspired him to focus on family medicine — a specialty in which he can build lasting patient relationships while working toward system-level change.

In recognition of his dedication to the health and welfare of the community, Orlov has been named a 2025 Pisacano Scholar. Only 10 medical students across the country are recognized each year by the Pisacano Leadership Foundation for their exceptional scholarship, leadership, clinical excellence, and a deep commitment to advancing family medicine. He is the first Jefferson student in the foundation's 32-year history to receive the honor.

As a Pisacano Scholar, Orlov will receive scholarship support, access to leadership development opportunities, mentorship, and connection to a network of family medicine innovators.

As an undergraduate, he conducted clinical research on health disparities in ophthalmology and interned with Advancing States, where he advocated for health policies supporting older adults by lobbying congressional staff on Capitol Hill. "I'm fascinated by how things as simple as a ZIP code and credit score could predict long-term health outcomes," he says.

He further gained appreciation for meaningful human connection during a gap year while working as a cast member at Walt Disney World in the College Program. "It gave me a deep appreciation for creating joy, storytelling, and the impact of small interactions on people's lives," he says, noting those skills can translate to patient care.

A native of Buffalo Grove, Illinois, Orlov says he was drawn to Sidney Kimmel Medical College's community focus and location in the heart of Philadelphia.

Once here, he immediately immersed himself in community health and advocacy, seeking opportunities to support marginalized patient populations in the city.

Through Jefferson's student-run free clinic, he volunteered weekly at a shelter for women and children, counseling patients on smoking cessation, birth control, and mental wellness. He later launched in-house patient education initiatives, leveraging community partnerships to empower his patients.

"Connecting with and learning from individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences has been the most rewarding aspect of my medical education," he says.

Recognized for his leadership, Orlov was asked by a faculty mentor to help reinvent JeffBEACON (Bringing Equity and Care to Our Neighborhood), a program that brings medical students into underserved areas to improve health literacy and rebuild trust in medical institutions.

At Jefferson's family medicine practice, he contributed to a project to evaluate the implementation of a multidisciplinary hypertension management program, earning the Dean's Research Award for his work.

He also founded and co-directs Jefferson's student-led family medicine journal club and serves as student assembly chair of the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians.

Orlov continues to pursue community outreach, most recently completing a correctional medicine elective at the Philadelphia Department of Prisons and a community health rotation at Prevention Point, a harm reduction nonprofit.

He credits his success to the support he has received from Jefferson's Department of Family and Community Medicine, and says he is excited to dedicate his career to family medicine. He looks forward to partnering with patients to overcome barriers to care, advancing equity through system-level interventions, and leading with compassion, ambition, and humility.

Outside of medicine, Orlov enjoys fostering cats, watching reality television, trying new brunch restaurants, and spending time in nature.

Explore, Learn, and Experience the World with Thomas Jefferson University Alumni!

As part of our commitment to lifelong learning, the Office of Alumni Relations offers opportunities for group travel for Jefferson, Textile, and Philadelphia University alumni, friends, and families. Our varied itinerary of travel destinations combines educational forums, unique adventures, and excursions to places of historical and cultural interest, with opportunities to discover nature's majestic landscapes and incredible wildlife. These trips offer the highest-quality travel experience through our partnerships with experienced travel providers.

- **Galapagos Islands (Northern Itinerary)**
  February 28–March 7, 2026
- **Wonders of Peru**
  February 28–March 11, 2026
- **A Shogun's Welcome to Japan**
  March 22–April 3, 2026
- **Vivid Western Caribbean & Panama Canal**
  April 14–24, 2026
- **Flavors of Northern Italy**
  May 22–30, 2026
- **English Channel Discovery**
  May 24–31, 2026
- **Cruise the Norwegian Fjords**
  May 24–June 3, 2026
- **Majestic Vista & Wildlife of Alaska**
  July 28–August 6, 2026
- **Scotland**
  August 2–10, 2026
- **Polar Bears & Beluga Whales**
  August 3–9, 2026
- **Canadian Rockies by Rail**
  August 19–25, 2026
- **Flavors of the Spanish Coast**
  September 19–27, 2026

For detailed trip information and to join our Travel Interest List, visit Jefferson.edu/AlumniTravel or contact Alumni Relations at 215-955-7750 or alumni@jefferson.edu.

all in the family BY CINDY LEFLER

TAKAMI SATO, MD, PHD, AND RINO SEEDOR, MD '15

Father-Daughter Team Works to Find Cure for Rare Cancer

Takami Sato, MD, PhD, came to the United States from Japan in 1991 to further his medical training in oncology. He intended to stay five years. He's still here.

Sato, the K. Hasumi, MD, Professor of Medical Oncology and research director of the Metastatic Uveal Melanoma Program at Jefferson, is one of the country's leading experts in uveal melanoma — a rare eye cancer that spreads to the liver, where it is always fatal.

He has dedicated his life to treating patients and conducting research into metastatic melanoma, and he leads the Melanoma Research Institute of Excellence (MRIE) — one of very few institutions in the nation dedicated to research on uveal melanoma prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Combining two internationally recognized specialties within Jefferson's National Cancer Institute-designated Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center — uveal melanoma and skin melanoma — the MRIE is led by some of the foremost experts in the field, including Andrew E. Aplin, PhD, deputy director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center, and postgraduate alumna Marlana Orloff, MD, RES '12, FEL '15, the Alexander and Johnston Family Endowed Clinical Director in Uveal Melanoma.

And now, Sato's daughter, alumna Rino Seedor, MD '15, has joined the team. Seedor is following in her father's footsteps as a medical oncologist and research scientist focused on the prevention and treatment of uveal melanoma.

Like Father, Like Daughter

Neither Sato nor Seedor set out to become uveal melanoma specialists.

In fact, Sato didn't even start out planning to settle in the United States.

After graduating from Jichi Medical University in Japan, Sato — then a pediatric oncologist — decided to continue training in the U.S. through the Noguchi Medical Research Institute, which provides clinical study abroad programs.

It was there he met two men he considers mentors: Jefferson's Michael J. Mastrangelo, MD, who was a professor of medicine and medical oncology and a former director of both the Division of Medical Oncology and the Solid Tumor Service, and Joseph S. Gonnella, MD, former dean of the medical college.

"Dr. Gonnella asked what I wanted to do. I mentioned I was interested in cancer immunotherapy, then he connected me to Dr. Mastrangelo, who was doing a cancer vaccine trial," Sato says.

At the time, Mastrangelo was seeing uveal melanoma patients whose cancer had metastasized to the liver. Sato's experience conducting abdominal ultrasounds made him a good candidate to join the team.

During that time, Sato spent several years in the laboratory of David Berd, MD '68, investigating the method of stimulating patients' immune systems with their own cancer cells modified with a chemical called DNP. The vaccine with DNP-modified cancer cells showed promise in slowing the progression of metastatic uveal melanoma. The work became part of Sato's doctoral thesis.

Ongoing discussions with Mastrangelo led to possible treatments for metastatic uveal melanoma. Since traditional systemic chemotherapy didn't seem to work for liver metastases, they focused on liver-directed chemoembolization in 1995.

Chemoembolization involves injecting a mixture of chemotherapy drugs and oily contrast into the hepatic arteries to kill cancer cells and, at the same time, block the vessels supplying blood to the tumor with gelatin sponge embolic materials, thereby cutting off its supply.

The treatment was effective, but not effective enough. Because of Mastrangelo's background in tumor immunology, the pair decided to try another therapy — "one that would mess up the cancer microenvironment in the liver," Sato explains.

In 2000, they turned their focus to dendritic cells, which can infiltrate cancer antigens and prime T cells to attack cancer cells. Their idea was to create a vaccine in the liver tumor site using granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) — a protein cytokine that plays a crucial role in the production and regulation of white blood cells — to stimulate the patient's immune system to recognize and destroy cancer cells.

"So, we kill the cancer cell by stopping blood flow — that is embolization — and we add the GM-CSF to let the cancer antigens taken up by the dendritic cells stimulate systemic immunity," he says. "We started the first-in-human immunoembolization clinical trial in collaboration with Dr. Kevin Sullivan, an interventional radiologist at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. We now have treated more than 600 patients whose liver metastases were treated with immunoembolization over the past 25 years."

When Sato first arrived at the program, the median survival rate for a patient with metastatic uveal melanoma was four to five months; currently, the median survival rate has increased to about 22 months. Sato emphasizes that this is the result of teamwork.

"We have developed a unique multidisciplinary clinical program for metastatic uveal melanoma that includes medical oncologists, interventional radiologists, and radiation oncologists," he says. "Close communication with ocular oncologists Drs. Carol Shields and Sara Lally (SKMC '01) at Wills Eye Hospital is also critically important for comprehensive care of uveal melanoma patients."

The increase in survival rate is good, he says, "but not good enough. That's the reason why we keep working."

While Sato says he didn't plan to spend his career in the field of uveal melanoma, it quickly became his life's work. And somewhere along the line, it became his daughter's as well.

"It's not something I planned on — it all just fell into place as the years went by," Seedor says.

While Seedor was exposed to the world of medicine throughout her childhood, she didn't think early on, "Oh, I definitely want to be a doctor," she says.

In high school, she signed up for a class called Medical Careers

(Left to right) Chiyo Sato, Takami Sato, Takahiro Sato (TJU PhD program graduate), Crystal Kraft (TJU PhD program graduate), Shingo Sato (Jefferson CTO), Brett Seedor RN (TJUH), Rino Seedor, and Youki Sato

that placed students in hospitals to shadow medical personnel. She enjoyed the class and inched a little closer to choosing a career in medicine. In college, she inched even closer.

By medical school she was leaving her options open — oncology was a possibility. Then it became a probability. Then a reality. But still, she didn't really consider uveal melanoma as a specialty.

"I actually thought I'd never want to do something like what my father does — something so specialized and niche," she says. That changed after a few rotations at Jefferson and working on several uveal melanoma projects during fellowship.

"As I became more mature and understood the different oncologic specialties, the uniqueness of uveal melanoma, how rare it is, how aggressive it is, and how few treatments there really are, I became more appreciative of all of the time and dedication my father has put over the past 30-plus years into this rare cancer — how much improvement there has been, and how much more there is to discover," she says.

"I became more and more interested, and I saw myself being part of the team that carries on his legacy and work."

While their work intersects, it doesn't exactly follow identical routes.

"We work on similar clinical trials together, but one of the projects I've worked on is the geospatial analysis of uveal melanoma patients," she says.

Uveal melanoma is a rare cancer with an incidence of about five to six people per every one million in the United States. However, Sato and Orloff noticed an unusually high number of patients with the disease coming from similar areas in North Carolina, Alabama, and New York.

To investigate further, Seedor applied for and received a pilot award from the MRIE to study the clusters and determine if there were more across the country. The information could potentially help find the cause behind the disease and determine what can be done to prevent it.

Dreams and Visions

The MRIE had been Sato's dream for 10 years before it became a reality in 2022. Established with a generous gift from an anonymous grateful patient and family, the institute built on an existing program that continually produced innovative research and new treatments at Jefferson.

"Achievement made by one person is limited," he says, adding that organizing through an institute gives more power to the effort and allows for better teamwork among researchers, clinicians, and patient advocacy groups.

While Sato has been immersed in uveal melanoma for more than three decades, Seedor's work is just beginning. It's work that isn't easy, but there is a lot of motivation — both professional and personal — that keeps them going.

"A doctor feels happy if the patient is cured. But this disease is so difficult, and a cure is not frequently seen, so the next incentive, the next motivation, is trust," Sato says. Working together with patients and their families with compassion as they move through the stages of the disease inspires him.

"And hope," he adds. "Hope for finding better treatments for the future. That's a very important thing to continue working on."

Seedor says she too is inspired to keep doing the work because of the hope for better treatment. "There's the hope that we're the ones who are going to find it, and that keeps us going."

She admits that caring for patients with such bleak prognoses is difficult.

"It's especially hard for me when I meet a younger patient with young children like myself," says Seedor, who has two young sons. "But someone has to do it. Someone has to walk these patients from their diagnosis through treatment until the end. And I want to be that person for them."

Other motivation comes in the form of patient support, as the MRIE is run solely on philanthropy. Much of the research into uveal melanoma is funded through government and private grants; however, the MRIE itself relies completely on private donations.

"Government funding from places like the NIH supports scientific research, not the infrastructure of the MRIE," Sato explains. "Scientific discovery is important, but it doesn't immediately benefit the patients."

Developing a strategic plan to improve patients' lives, determining a course of treatment, and supporting them throughout the process is part of the overall mission of the MRIE. The institute also conducts information sessions to keep patients and their families informed of the latest research, therapies, and clinical trials.

The ultimate goal of the MRIE is to advance patient care, support basic science and research, and continue to conduct clinical trials that could offer better treatments for the disease, Sato says.

Seedor says she admires her father's unwavering devotion and perseverance that made his vision for the MRIE a reality.

"I've watched my father work really hard all my life, and now I'm able to understand why he works hard and what comes of his hard work and all the years of dedication," Seedor says. "I think it's very unique to see and to be able to continue that work in my career. That's very special."

She says the biggest lesson she has learned from her father is that "hard work eventually pays off." Another lesson is to continually ask "why."

"He's always asking why. Why did a patient progress? Why did they recur so quickly? Why, why, why? That inquisitiveness is what drives understanding of a cancer — how to better treat it, how to further the research field," she says.

For Sato and Seedor, Jefferson is a "second home" — not only because they spend so much time there, but because several family members have a connection to the institution.

Indeed, for the Sato family, the combination of science, medicine, and Jefferson is a family affair. Seedor's husband, Brett Seedor, is an inpatient oncology nurse at Jefferson. Sato's oldest son, Takahiro Sato, PhD '13, earned his doctorate in molecular pharmacology and structural biology from Jefferson College of Graduate Studies in 2013, and his son's wife, Crystal Sato, PhD '16, received her doctorate in cell and developmental biology in 2016. A younger son, Shingo Sato, is a clinical research coordinator as well as an AI specialist. He serves as associate program manager and director of database design and utilization at the MRIE.

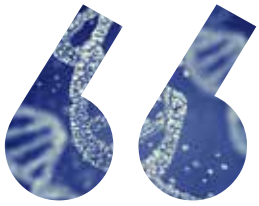
Sato says he is grateful to Jefferson for giving him a home and helping him realize so many dreams — from accepting him as a young doctor and receiving invaluable mentorship from Gonnella and Mastrangelo to supporting his research and the creation of the MRIE.

"At the beginning, I was going to go back to Japan in five years, but after five years, I found out I didn't finish my project. And then the next five years, more projects ... and then more ... I couldn't move because this is a never-ending project," he says, laughing.

But he says he is aware that his time is limited, and he hopes the next generation will continue his work.

"I hope Dr. Orloff and Dr. Seedor will continue to strengthen the institute to help patients with melanoma," he says. "That is my dream."

For more information on the MRIE, or to make a gift, please visit **Jefferson.edu/MRIE**



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Jefferson
Health

WHEN JEFFERSON AND MEDICINE

Struck Gold

CELEBRATING DR. GENO J. MERLI'S 50 YEARS AT JEFFERSON

Sometimes, the arc of a career tells a larger story of a place and its purpose. For Geno J. Merli, MD '75, RES '78 and '80, Jefferson isn't just where he built his life's work. It's home.

Fifty years ago, in 1975, Merli graduated from Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Jefferson, a young doctor with a mind for science and a heart for service. Today, as senior vice president and associate chief medical officer of Jefferson Health, his influence extends across the health system and far beyond. This year, Jefferson honored him with the Achievement Award in Medicine at the 23rd Annual Jefferson Gala — a fitting tribute to a physician whose career embodies the institution's enduring spirit of clinical excellence, collaboration, and discovery.

The spark that lit Merli's lifelong devotion to medicine came, as such things often do, by accident. As a high school junior, he suffered a hand injury that required the care of the renowned New York hand surgeon William Littler.

"I remember I was in the room, and his residents were all around him," Merli said. "He showed the X-rays to me and then drew a picture of my hand and how he was going to repair my thumb. I was so impressed by his teaching."

Inspired by his father, Gino J. Merli, who received the Medal of Honor for his valor during World War II, Merli attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. But medicine continued to call him. He transferred to the University of Scranton to study premed and soon set his sights on Jefferson. "I really wanted to go there," he said. "The chairman of the biology department told me it would be great for me. I was accepted, and there my journey began."

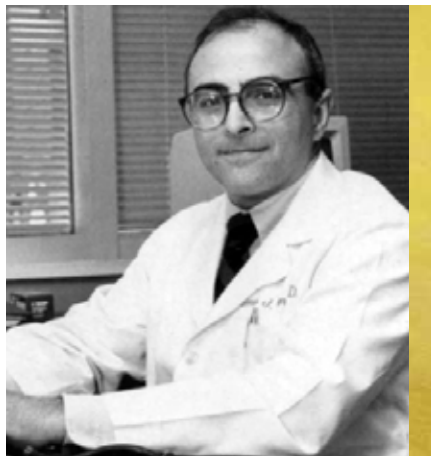
Merli worked two summers during medical school in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine. The experience awakened a new fascination. "I had gotten married and needed to make some money," he said. "I liked it so much that I applied for a residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation." He returned for a second residency in internal medicine before graduating and joining a division of internal medicine at Jefferson.

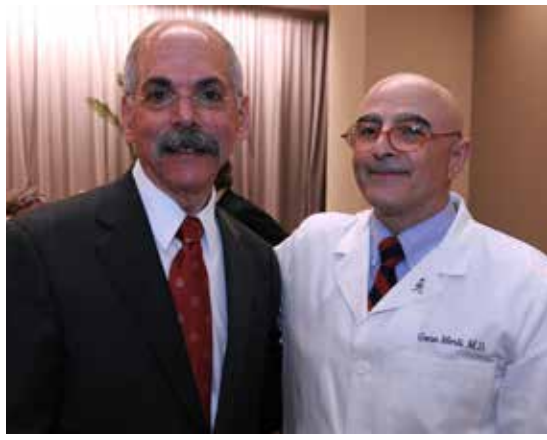
During those early years, Merli witnessed the quiet tragedies of patients recovering from surgery only to succumb to pulmonary embolism. "That's how my interest in blood clots began," he said. The question that would drive much of his research career was simple but profound: How could such deaths be prevented?

The answer helped reshape clinical practice. His research focused on the development of medications to prevent blood clots. He published a seminal article in Annals of Internal Medicine in 2001 on the use of a new blood thinner at the time, enoxaparin, and showed that it could be used to treat patients with acute blood clots. His work expanded into vascular diseases, artery disease, vein disease, and hereditary disorders, resulting in the creation of Jefferson's Division of Vascular Medicine, which he co-founded with Gregory Kane, MD '87, FEL '93, the Jane & Leonard Korman professor and chair of medicine, and Charles J. Yeo, MD, the Samuel D. Gross professor and chair of surgery.

Today, Merli is a nationally recognized expert in the prophylaxis and management of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary

My pathway went in the direction of bringing disciplines together to focus on the patient and achieve a better outcome.





Howard Weitz, MD '78 and Merli

embolism. But it is his instinct for collaboration — for creating systems that bring specialists together around the patient — that most distinguishes his work.

Two programs illustrate this philosophy. The first, CATCHem (Comprehensive Atherosclerosis Treatment Collaborative Health), identifies patients who have early peripheral artery disease and intervenes to prevent progression of the disease before invasive procedures become necessary. The other, Jeff FAST (Facilitated Anticoagulation for Safer Transitions program), is a safe and effective way to treat blood clots and reduce the number of unnecessary admissions.

"It's so easy to just be focused on our own area of expertise," he said. "My pathway went in the direction of bringing disciplines together to focus on the patient and achieve a better outcome."

Among the many partnerships that have shaped his career, perhaps none has been more meaningful than his friendship with Howard Weitz, MD '78, the Bernard L. Segal endowed professor in clinical cardiology. The two met during residency. "He had called me in the middle of the night to evaluate a case on a patient who was very ill," Merli said. "From that day forward we became close friends — brothers from another mother."

Their collaboration would become one of Jefferson's great medical partnerships. Together they wrote the first "Medical Clinics of North America on Perioperative Care" and co-edited "Medical Management of the Surgical Patient," now in its third edition. They host the popular program "Consult Guys," which offers expert, humorous, and practical advice on complex medical issues, at the American College of Physicians annual meeting and monthly on the Annals of Internal Medicine site.

"Geno is the model of all who we strive to be," Weitz said. "He has all the attributes of a great brother and none of the negatives."

Service and caring for others remain Merli's calling, and he never lost his desire to serve his country. Following residency, he joined the Army Reserve and became a commander for the 348th General Hospital and the 300 Field Hospital, where he learned to deliver healthcare in the field. After 17 years, he retired from active duty with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

"Geno has helped make Jefferson the place that it is," Weitz said. "Our responsibility first is to the patient and their families. That is Geno Merli. He builds community."

"Fifty years have gone by pretty fast," Merli said. "It has been a journey, and I'm happy for all the things that I've accomplished."

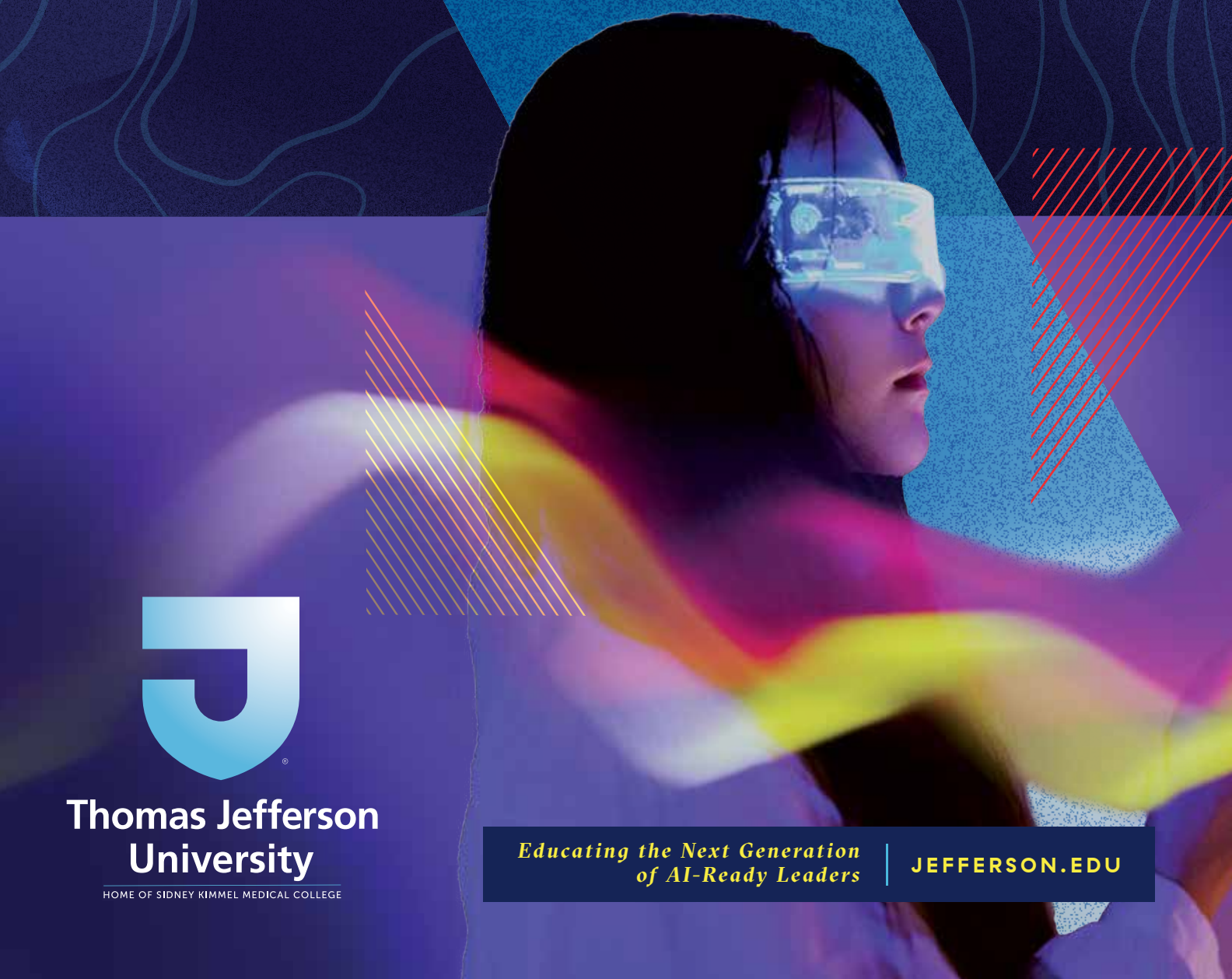
AI Won't Replace Higher Education.

But It Will Redefine It.

Artificial intelligence is accelerating change across every sector of our economy. For higher education, the challenge is clear: We must prepare graduates who can thrive in industries being reshaped by AI and do so with both technical fluency and human-centered judgment.

At Thomas Jefferson University, we see this as higher education's defining opportunity. We are embedding AI literacy, ethics and application into programs across health, design, business and science. Our goal is not only to keep pace with technological change — but to lead it.

The world is changing fast. At Jefferson, so are we.



Thomas Jefferson University

HOME OF SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

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2025

SIDNEY KIMMEL MEDICAL COLLEGE

Alumni Weekend

SKMC Alumni Board Dinner

SKMC Student Affinity Groups and Alumni Mixer

The 2025 Sidney Kimmel Medical College Alumni Weekend was an unforgettable celebration, offering the opportunity for alumni hailing from classes throughout the decades to reconnect and reminisce with classmates.

The festivities were held on October 24-25, 2025, and offered something for everyone, including networking opportunities, tours, award ceremonies, lectures, and more. Alumni class years concluding in 5 and 0 marked milestone reunions, with the Class of 1975 commemorating their 50th reunion. Stay tuned for information on the 2026 Alumni Weekend. We hope to see you there!

50-Year Society Induction Ceremony

Campus tour

Class of 1975 dinner

The Rieders Family Alumni Art Gallery Artist Meet and Greet

Class of 1970 dinner

Alumni Awards

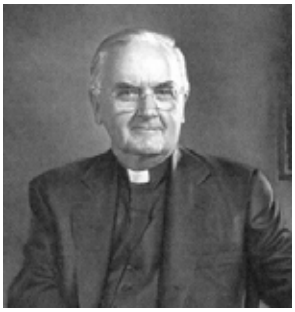
EARLY CAREER ALUMNI AWARD
Matthew Keller, MD '05, RES '09

Keller, interim chair of Dermatology and associate professor at Jefferson, serves as director of the Jefferson Psoriasis Center. A mentor to more than 100 Jefferson students and 65 dermatology residents, Keller previously served as president of the Alumni Association. His research interests include medical communication, ethics, cost-conscious care, and complex medical dermatology. He is associate editor for Dermatitis and an active reviewer for leading dermatology journals, advancing the field through scholarship and mentorship alike.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
Leonard Zon, MD '83

Zon, the Grousbeck Professor of Pediatric Medicine at Harvard Medical School, is an investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and director of the Stem Cell Program at Boston Children's Hospital. His groundbreaking research in stem cell biology and cancer genetics has transformed understanding of disease development and treatment. Widely recognized for his scientific leadership, Zon has served as president of the International Society for Stem Cell Research and the American Society for Clinical Investigation. His work continues to advance discoveries that bring new hope to patients worldwide.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD
Rev. Dr. Edward C. Bradley, SJ, MD '55



Rev. Bradley dedicated his life to medicine, faith, and service. After earning his Jefferson medical degree in 1955, he became a Navy flight surgeon, cardiovascular researcher, and humanitarian. His pioneering work included Europe's first cardioversion of atrial fibrillation and founding a medical clinic in war-torn Vietnam. Later ordained as a Jesuit, he combined faith and healing as a physician in North Philadelphia and counselor to Jefferson students. His lifelong commitment to compassion, ethics, and humanity reflects the very best of Jefferson's mission — to heal, to serve, and to lead with purpose.

POSTGRADUATE ALUMNI AWARD
Lorraine C. King, MD, RES '75, FEL '77

Over five decades at Jefferson, King has built a legacy of leadership, compassion, and innovation in reproductive endocrinology. As Jefferson's first NIH-approved fellow in the specialty, she helped pioneer fertility care while mentoring future physicians and advancing women's health. A devoted alumna, she became the first female postgraduate president of the Alumni Association, fostering engagement across generations. King has served as trustee, medical staff president, and Dean's Advisory Council member, and established the Lorraine C. King, MD Scholarship Fund to support creative, empathetic future doctors. Her impact continues to shape Jefferson's enduring spirit of care.

TIME, TALENT, AND TREASURE AWARD
M. Dean Kinsey, MD '69

A gastroenterologist, Kinsey exemplifies leadership through service. After earning his medical degree from Jefferson, he completed postgraduate training in internal medicine and gastroenterology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. His career has spanned clinical practice, medical education, and executive leadership, including roles at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Memorial Hospital of Burlington County, and the University of South Florida. He is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Kinsey served on the Alumni Association board and has been a generous donor to his alma mater.

SKMC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

2026 Alumni Awards
Call for Nominations

The Sidney Kimmel Medical College Alumni Association is accepting nominations for the 2026 SKMC Alumni Awards! The Awards will be presented at the Dean's Brunch during SKMC Alumni Weekend. All members of the Jefferson community are invited to participate in the Alumni Awards process by nominating exceptional alumni for consideration.

Alumni Achievement Award
Early Career Alumni Award
Distinguished Alumni Award
Time, Talent, and Treasure Award
Postgraduate Alumni Award

Nomination materials must be received by midnight on April 30, 2026, to be considered.

Jefferson.edu/SKMCAlumniAwards

Born a Jeffersonian

BY IRISA GOLD

William Valentine Harrer, MD '62 treasures his Jefferson legacy, which can be traced back to more than a century ago.

Born at Jefferson Medical College Hospital (now Thomas Jefferson University Hospital) in 1937, Harrer's Jefferson journey actually originates earlier. Two of his uncles graduated from Jefferson — John Cushing Baker, MD, in 1926, and Daniel Clifton Baker, MD, in 1933.

Harrer says that it was his mother's pride in her brothers that led him to Jefferson's door. "I was very fortunate to have that kind of background and inspiration," he shares. "Ever since I was a kid, I never thought of anything else than becoming a physician. It stayed with me."

After graduating from St. Joseph's University with a BS in biology, he graduated from Jefferson in 1962 with honors. "The professorial staff was tremendous, and I felt the education I received would hold me steady for my entire professional career," he says.

Following his acceptance for a residency in OB-GYN at Jefferson, Harrer was forced to resign when he was drafted and became a second lieutenant in the Army. However, when medical conditions kept him from being called to active duty, he immediately returned to his studies. After completing his internship, he secured a position in a pathology program, beginning his first year at St. Joseph's Hospital in Reading, Pennsylvania, before transferring to the Philadelphia Veterans Administration Hospital for a broader course of study in anatomic and clinical pathology.

The continuous learning opportunities offered by the specialty intrigued Harrer. "You can apply the things you learn to clinical practice and aid in the treatment team for the patients admitted to your institution," he explains. "You diagnose the disease and then learn how that impacts the patient."

Following residency, he was interviewed and hired at Jefferson

by Gonzalo Aponte, MD '52. After spending three and a half years in the hospital and teaching program, he was recruited to the position of laboratory director at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center in Camden, New Jersey, where he spent 42 years before retiring in May 2012.

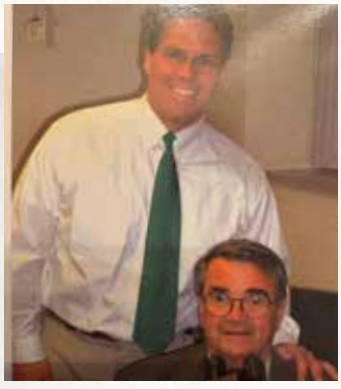
"It was as a wonderful experience," he shares. "It was like Jefferson came with me, because there were six members of the class of 1962 working at Lourdes."

While there, Harrer organized programs including sickle cell disease screening in the Camden schools. "The idea was to try to develop a program that would be of value to the population in the city and also help with future medical problems that might develop if individuals did have sickle cell disease," he explains. "It was a cooperative effort from my laboratory, the hospital community, and the citizens of Camden."

From the beginning, education was a priority for Harrer. After his early expertise in effusion cytology led to his publishing and teaching on the subject, he not only joined Camden County College as a clinical adjunct professor participating in the training of many medical technicians, but he also served as a professor of Pathology and Cell Biology at Sidney Kimmel Medical College. "I love the continued learning," he shares. "To be able to impart that to somebody that's going to be around a lot longer than me, who can pick up that knowledge and add to it, it's a continuation of the practice of medicine."

Harrer has remained active in pathology professionally throughout his career, serving as president of the New Jersey State Board of Medical Examiners for two years and as a member for nine, and as president of the New Jersey Society of Pathologists. In addition, he served on the Board of Governors of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) for six years, chaired the Government and Professional Affairs Committee, led the CAP delegation to the American Medical Association for over 15 years, and served as a member of the CAP Foundation Board of Trustees. He continues in an advisory role for the CAP Foundation and received the CAP Outstanding Service Award in 2023.

Enjoying the Port of History Museum, the setting for the Senior Class Party on June 3, are Dr. and Mrs. William V. Harrer '62, daughter Mary (second from left) with her husband James J. Purtill '93 (left), and Dr. and Mrs. Michael F. Harrer '93.



Four Presidents: Alumni Association President Jerome M. Cotler '52 at the Alumni Banquet on June 4 with James E. Clark '52 (President 1990), William E. Delaney III '53 (President 1992), and President-Elect William V. Harrer '62

"Once Jefferson is in your blood, it's continuous."

"That was all a recognition of myself individually, he says. "But because of my Jefferson education and connection, I felt all of that was part of Jefferson."

Harrer's devotion to Jefferson has spanned decades. He remains the Class Ambassador for the Class of 1962 and also served as president of the Alumni Association, editor of the Alumni Bulletin, and represented the alumni on the Board of Trustees. "Jefferson has given me so much, and I just wanted to give back to the institution," he shares. "I hope my children saw the love and inspiration being a physician gave me, and they decided that career was for them.

In addition to his uncles and his brother, Daniel Clifton Harrer, MD '67, Harrer's Jefferson legacy lives on through his sons, William Valentine Harrer, Jr., MD '89, and Michael Francis Harrer, MD '93; son-in-law James Purtill, MD '93; and granddaughter Samantha Harrer, MD '22. In addition, his granddaughter Caroline Purtill and grandson William Purtill are currently enrolled in the SKMC classes of 2026 and 2029, respectively.

"Pop truly was an inspiration to me," says son William. "Jefferson seemed to be a good fit for me, and knowing that my father went there and did so well was definitely a driving force. It is exciting to be a part of his legacy."

"My father is a perfect example of a Jefferson alumnus," says son Michael. "He works very hard, cares for everyone, and is guided by only doing the right thing. I am where I am today because of my parents. My father would say also because we went to Jefferson."

"When I knew medicine was my calling, I only applied to Jefferson for medical school," shares his granddaughter Samantha. "One incredibly special memory I have is my grandfather hooding me at my medical school graduation. I feel so blessed to have had that experience with him. I received a fantastic medical education at Jefferson. It will also hold a special place in my heart because when I think of Jefferson, I think of my family."

White Coat Ceremonies were not held during Harrer's time at Jefferson, yet he recalls that one of the highlights of his medical career took place this past August, when he attended one for the first time for his grandson William's Class of 2029. "To see 290+ bright, enthusiastic, intelligent students wanting to pursue a career in medicine was just heart-lifting," he says.

Harrer's dedication to his alma mater has never waned. "I still want to be part of Jefferson," he says. "I was recently invited to run for the alumni board and have been on the board for a year and a half. I am on some committees, and am getting to know new people. It's over a hundred years of tradition; of a family lineage; of being part of Jefferson; giving back to Jefferson; and still wanting to give more to Jefferson. Once Jefferson is in your blood, it's continuous."

Represent Your Class. Shape Our Alumni Community.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE CLASSES OF 1958, 1959, 1960, 1963, 1999, 2008, 2011, 2012, OR 2023? CONSIDER BECOMING A CLASS AMBASSADOR.

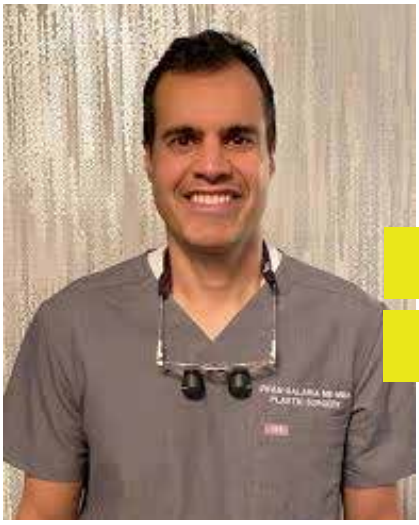
Get involved today!
If you're interested in representing your class, please contact Alec Bottari at alec.bottari@jefferson.edu or 445-304-4904.

Class Ambassadors

Gerald J. Marks, MD, Class of 1949
Eugene F. Bonacci, MD, Class of 1956
Max M. Koppel, MD, Class of 1957
Stanton N. Smullens, MD, Class of 1961
William V. Harrer, MD, Class of 1962
William Freeman, MD, Class of 1964
Richard P. Wenzel, MD, MSc, Class of 1965
Michael P. Dolan, MD, Class of 1966
Elliot J. Rayfield, MD, Class of 1967
Harold A. Yocum, MD, Class of 1968
M. Dean Kinsey, MD, Class of 1969
Edward B. Ruby, MD, Class of 1971
Lawrence R. Schiller, MD, Class of 1972
Lynne E. Porter, MD, Class of 1973
Michael LeWitt, MD, Class of 1974
Linda Sundt, MD, Class of 1974
Richard H. Bennett, MD, Class of 1975
Lorraine King, MD, RES '75, FEL '77, Class of 1975
Robert L. Goldberg, MD, Class of 1976
Robert Boova, MD, Class of 1977
Frank DeLone, MD, Class of 1977
Carol Love, MD, Class of 1978
Duncan Salmon, MD, Class of 1978
Marc A. Landsberg, MD, Class of 1979
Joseph R. Spiegel, MD, Class of 1979
Martin J. Carney, MD, Class of 1980
Richard F. Spaide, MD, Class of 1981
Russell Breish, MD, Class of 1982
Bruce J. Gould, MD, Class of 1983
John J. Kelly, III, MD, Class of 1984
Robert A. Ball, MD, FACS, Class of 1985
Bernard L. Lopez, MD, Class of 1986
Maria Scott, MD, Class of 1987
Patricia Curtin White, MD, FACP, Class of 1988
Sharon Gould, MD, Class of 1988
John H. Marks, MD, Class of 1989
Laurie Sangimino, MD, Class of 1990
Galicano F. Inguito, Jr., MD, Class of 1990
Polly J. Krupnick, MD, Class of 1991
Nita S. Schwartz, MD, Class of 1991
Vinay N. Desai, MD, Class of 1992
Douglas T. Corwin, Jr., MD, PhD, Class of 1993
Minesh C. Patel, MD, Class of 1993
Rupal Chiniwala, MD, Class of 1994
Mahesh Krishnan, MD, Class of 1994
Jon Woo, MD, Class of 1995
Edward W. Kiggundu, MD, Class of 1996
David H. Finkelstein, MD, Class of 1997
Vicki H. Rapaport, MD, Class of 1998
Karen Ravin, MD, Class of 1998
Harris Cohen, MD, Class of 2000
Eddie Chang, MD, Class of 2000
Danielle M. DeHoratius, MD, Class of 2002
Alexander P. Sah, MD, Class of 2002
Matthew Eichenbaum, MD, Class of 2003
Brian Kucer, MD, Class of 2004
Rupal Mehta, MD, Class of 2004
Matthew Keller, MD, Class of 2005
Jeremy D. Close, MD, Class of 2006
Kristine Swartz, MD, Class of 2006
Joshua Marks, MD, Class of 2007
Patricia C. Henwood, MD, Class of 2009
Franklin Lee, MD, Class of 2010
Sarah J. Fuzesi, MD, Class of 2013
Madeline E. Carroll, MD, Class of 2014
Zinta L. Zapp, MD, Class of 2015
Tejal U. Naik, MD, Class of 2016
Mai Tsukikawa, MD, Class of 2017
Lea C. Matthews, MD, Class of 2018
Michelle M. Ponder, MD, Class of 2018
Phillip S. Gordon, MD, Class of 2019
Kaitlyn Votta, MD, Class of 2019
Tayoot Chengsupanimit, MD, Class of 2020
Nathan L'Etoile, MD, Class of 2020
George Titomihelakis, MD, Class of 2021
Sage Vincent, MD, Class of 2021
Mary B. White, MD, Class of 2021
Mary Blumenfeld, MD, Class of 2022

A Message from the Alumni Board President

Irfan Galaria, MD '01, MBA



Family, Alumni, and the Power of Legacy

The great poet Maya Angelou advised: "If you're going to live, leave behind a legacy. Make an impact on the world that can never be erased."

This issue of The Bulletin focuses on legacy — generations of graduates from the same families that have chosen Jefferson for their medical training; alums who have stayed here their entire career; and alums carrying on their parent's work. It is a testament to the outstanding education we provide, and to our graduates' commitment to making an enduring impact on healthcare, education, and discovery.

Family ties bind, and so do alumni ties. One of the best ways to strengthen those bonds is through participation on the alumni board. Our work helps us to shape the generations that follow us, to give back to our alma mater, and to leave a lasting legacy.

Our alumni board helps us connect with, and mentor, current students and recent graduates, providing them with guidance and career opportunities. By cultivating these relationships, we are able to have a positive impact on their experiences at Jefferson and beyond. But we do so much more.

We provide a supportive environment for both new and established alumni. We participate in fundraising and philanthropy to sponsor scholarships, professorships, research, and programs that benefit the community at large.

We engage in networking and community building to bring together graduates from diverse fields and backgrounds. We organize social events to provide a place for alumni locally and across the country to meet up and catch up, encouraging lifelong engagement with each other and with our alma mater.

And we advocate for Jefferson to promote its goals and values so that we can continually build upon a legacy of excellence.

In short, by joining the alumni board you can have an impact on the world that can never be erased now — and for years to come. If you'd like to be part of that legacy, please contact associate director of Alumni Relations Mirka Cortes at mirka.cortes@jefferson.edu. In addition, for all the latest alumni news and upcoming events, check out Jefferson.edu/Alumni.

Dr. Galaria can be reached at SKMCalumnipresident@jefferson.edu

Lead the Future

Call for Nominations for the SKMC Alumni Board

Are you ready to make an impact?
The Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC) Alumni Association is seeking passionate leaders to serve on the Alumni Board — a dedicated group of alumni representatives who strengthen connections among graduates, students, and the University community.

This is your opportunity to:
- Shape the future of the alumni experience
- Foster connection and lifelong engagement
- Support the mission of your alma mater

Alumni may nominate themselves or a fellow graduate for consideration. We're looking for a diverse group of voices who bring unique perspectives and a shared commitment to our continued excellence.

Nominations due
Friday, December 19, 2025

Submit your nomination: Scan the QR code or visit **Jefferson.edu/BoardNominationForm2026**

Questions?
Contact Alumni Relations at alumni@jefferson.edu or 215-955-7750.

Join us in leading the next generation of Jefferson physicians — because the legacy of our alma mater begins with alumni like you.

Sisters in Stride

Sisters Run New York City Marathon to Illuminate Resilience, Community, Illness

On Nov. 2, 2025, sisters and alumnae **Samara Hamou, MD '25,** and **Kiley Hamou** (class of 2029), ran the New York City Marathon together as a deeply personal mission of advocacy, healing, and hope.

Samara, now in residency at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital/Wills Eye Hospital, shared that she was diagnosed during medical school with ulcerative colitis, a chronic inflammatory bowel condition. She initially attributed her symptoms to "medical student syndrome," but after multiple tests — including colonoscopy and MRI — she received her diagnosis and began care within Jefferson. She was treated at the Jefferson Infusion Center in the Honickman Center, with a TNF-α blocker, a therapy that transformed her health trajectory.

Kiley's path to the marathon was equally rooted in perseverance.

Before starting medical school, she had been a Division I soccer player at Princeton University but endured multiple serious injuries, including tears to both ACLs, recurring shoulder dislocations, and rotator cuff surgery. During her recovery, she took a gap year before medical school, gaining clinical experience that shaped her future in medicine.

Throughout months of demanding shifts, coursework, and rotations, the sisters trained along the Schuylkill River, incorporated strength work, and raised funds for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation.

Their shared goal was to finish the marathon in under four hours while raising awareness for inflammatory bowel disease.

For Samara, the run was a way to give back to the community that supported her during her illness.

For Kiley, it was a way to honor her sister's strength and contribute to a cause that had become deeply personal. "We weren't just logging miles — we were raising awareness, building community, and proving that resilience is something we run toward, not away from," they shared.

’65

Jon S. Adler, MD, made it to retirement 20 years ago. He is enjoying family with his grandchildren finishing college and getting married. His great-grandchildren are beginning their education as well.

Nancy Szwec Czarnecki, MD, recalls that “It was such an honor and challenge to be the first woman graduate of Jefferson Medical College! I practiced family medicine with my husband Joseph Czarnecki in Port Richmond, Philadelphia. Many of our patients grew to love Jefferson as well. I served as JMC Alumni President in 1989 and later the Board of Trustees. I helped plan our 60th reunion which took place this October! A life well spent as a Jefferson physician. May all our future Jefferson alums continue to share their affection for Jeff and share our knowledge and caring for patients beyond our 200th year of clinical excellence. I can tell our future is strong since I look at grandson John, now a junior med student at Jeff, eager to practice healing and wellbeing of our patients.”

Sheila Jaffe, MD, conducted research on cervical cancer with M. Younes, MD, a gynecologist from Egypt in 1967. Despite the outbreak of the war against Israel, they continued their crucial work, which ultimately led to the development of the Gardasil vaccine. The process of curing diseases can be protracted, and not all research endeavors yield successful outcomes. Despite their differing religious and national backgrounds, Jaffe and Younes collaborated effectively for a noble purpose.

Their research project at Jefferson was supported by the American Cancer Society and the National Institutes of Health.

Arthur M. Triester, MD, shares, “I retired from Jefferson in 2003 and moved to Tucson, Arizona, in September, 2006 with my lovely wife, Sharon. We participate in many physical and intellectual activities. Unfortunately, my golf swing has not improved.”

’67

Michael R. Leone, MD, is happy to announce that his granddaughter, Anna Elizabeth Leone, MD, recently started her internal medicine residency at TJUH.

David Irwin Lintz, MD, completed his residency in internal medicine at the Wilmington Medical Center from 1970 to 1973. He then served a two-year fellowship in infectious diseases, 1973-1975, at the New Jersey School of Medicine. He served in the National Guard from 1970 to 1976, leaving with the rank of major. He married his wife, Audrey, on Oct. 5, 1975. Audrey is also a physician, having graduating from the New Jersey School of Medicine. Audrey worked for Novartis Pharmaceutical Company in East Hanover, New Jersey, for 35 years, retiring in 2012. They just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. He joined a multispecialty practice in Westfield, New Jersey in 1975, practicing infectious diseases. He was certified both in internal medicine and infectious diseases and also was a fellow in both FACP and FIDSA. He had leadership positions at affiliated hospitals as chair of medicine and also served as the leader of the Infection Control Committee. He was active teaching both medical students and residents. He retired from his practice in 2008. He then worked at an HIV clinic in Jersey City, New Jersey, for eight years. He and his wife have two children: a daughter who is an entertainment lawyer living in Los Angeles, and a son in the music business. Lintz and his wife moved to Los Angeles in 2017 to be closer to their grandchildren. After obtaining his medical license in California, he worked at the AIDS Healthcare Foundation in Los Angeles as head of their Liver Institute. He retired in 2018. He writes: “I am most appreciative of my medical education at Jefferson, which prepared me well for my career as a clinician. Currently I keep active playing pickleball and golf, and traveling. I also volunteer on projects that help disadvantaged youth in Los Angeles.”

’74

John P. Lubicky, MD, is mostly retired as of December 2024. He is currently professor emeritus of orthopaedic surgery and pediatrics at West Virginia University School of Medicine.

’75

Gary S. Clark, MD, retired in September 2022 as founding professor and chair of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Case Western Reserve University/MetroHealth Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio. He is currently emeritus professor of PM&R at Case Western, consulting part-time with Paradigm Outcomes to facilitate rehabilitation/recovery for catastrophically injured workers (with focus on multiple trauma and amputation). Clark and his wife Janet live in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, a short 10-minute drive from their daughter, son-in-law, and three grandsons (ages 15, 12, and 8).

Greg Lewis, MD, is a retired gastroenterologist and lives in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. “I am married with a son and stepdaughter and two grandchildren. My wife and I are enjoying retirement and have traveled extensively. Our other activities include Ikebana and volunteer work at a community health center.”

David Mayer, MD, retired seven years ago from a long career as a diagnostic radiologist and physician leader. He lived in Florida for a few years after retiring, then last year moved back north to Chevy Chase, Maryland, to be closer to family and friends and to enjoy the seasons. He stays busy with grandchildren, traveling, woodworking, photography, baking, and volunteer radiology teaching.

Robert T. Sataloff, MD, DMA, FACS, professor and chair at Drexel University, was ranked the No. 1 expert in otolaryngology worldwide

Class Notes

by Expertscape. He continues to serve as conductor of the Thomas Jefferson University Choir and Orchestra, a role he has held for more than 50 years. He recently moderated a panel hosted by the Triological Society called "Beyond the Otoscope."

'90

Kalok Tse, MD, is enjoying his nephrology practice in Pasadena, California. He is always proud of and always takes pride in his education at Jefferson in front of family, friends, and peers. His children, Vincent and Victoria, have been exposed to this gesture for many years. In fact, Vincent is proud of becoming a member of the SKMC family and currently matriculates at SKMC in the class of 2027, and Victoria is ecstatic for her acceptance by SKMC into the class of 2029.

'92

David Joel Bardsley, MD, is living and working in Marinette, Wisconsin.

'94

Braden Kuo, MD, after 28 years at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, moved to Columbia New York Presbyterian to be the next chief of digestive and liver disease. During his time in Boston, he did his GI fellowship at MGH and stayed there as faculty, over time becoming associate professor of medicine at HMS and director for the Center for Neurointestinal Health. He developed one of the largest programs in GI motility and visceral pain with a clinical motility lab, GI motility fellowship, and numerous NIH, foundation, and industry grants. He is proud of his two children, who were born in Boston, grew up in Newton/Boston, left for college, and now are employed working adults on the West Coast. He looks forward to the next chapter with new opportunities as an empty nester in NYC!

'95

Robert Snyder, MD, was named chief of Florida primary care for Nemours Children's Health in Orlando on Aug. 27, 2025. He will be leading Nemours' primary care network of 19 offices in Central Florida and the Treasure Coast.

'96

Kirk Milhoan, MD, PhD, was appointed as a member of the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

'00

James Lally, MD, announced his run for Nevada's 3rd Congressional District seat in the 2026 midterm elections.

'01

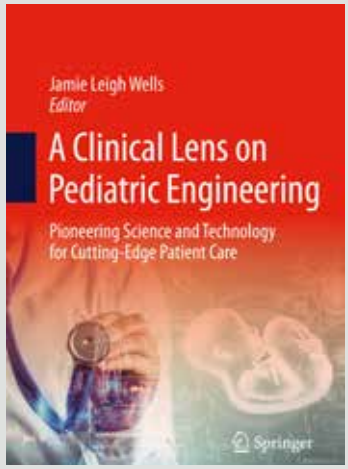
Lillian Liang Emlet, MD, went back to school during the pandemic and became a certified coach. She started her company, Transforming Healthcare Coaching, which provides leadership and wellbeing coaching for all healthcare professionals throughout their leadership development.

Bookshelf

Amilu Stewart, MD '65 recently published her autobiography, "Breaking Barriers." You can find a copy in the Scott Memorial Library!

Over the 30-plus years **Samuel Markind, MD '83**, practiced neurology, he became involved with a continuing education organization that focuses on the intersection of healthcare and the arts. His presentation at the 2021 conference explored the evolutionary value of music to the brain, a topic he found so interesting that he wrote a book about it. "Music Between Your Ears" was published Oct. 28, 2025.

Jamie Wells, MD, FAAP recently published her book, "A Clinical Lens on Pediatric Engineering – Pioneering Science and Technology for Cutting-Edge Patient Care" with Springer Nature. She explores the depth and breadth of the newly applied science of pediatric engineering and its dawning era. Placing into context the origins of pediatric medicine and engineering, this deep dive into and beyond medical digital-to-device innovation integrates scientific rigor with clinical perspective, incorporating case examples of diagnostic and therapeutic breakthroughs, cautionary tales, and lessons in translation. The ebook and hardcover book are now available for purchase.



changes lives

Unlock the True Potential of Your IRA
Imagine transforming your retirement savings into a gift that changes lives for generations. Through your IRA, you can support our medical students, research, and programs in ways that leave a lasting mark on the future of medicine and healthcare.

Thanks to recent tax law changes, there are smart, tax-efficient ways to make a meaningful gift today!

Make an Impact with a Qualified Charitable Distribution
If you are 70 ½ or older, you can transfer up to $115,000 per year directly from your IRA to Jefferson — tax-free. Because Jefferson is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this transfer reduces your taxable income while fueling the discoveries, education, and patient care that make a real difference.

Create a Legacy with a Life-Income Gift
Your IRA can also fund a unique opportunity that creates a lasting impact at Jefferson, provides lifetime income, and defers taxes on a portion of your required minimum distribution!

Under the Secure Act 2.0, donors 70 ½ and older can make a one-time, tax-free QCD of up to $54,000 to establish a life-income gift, such as a Charitable Gift Annuity, benefiting you or your spouse. This gift is excluded from taxable income and counts toward your $115,000 annual QCD limit, offering both personal and philanthropic rewards.

Plan Ahead with a Beneficiary Designation or Bequest
You can name Jefferson as the beneficiary of all or a portion of your IRA. It's a simple way to create a legacy that strengthens our medical school's future without affecting your cash flow during your lifetime.
Your IRA can do more than grow your retirement savings — it can grow the future of Jefferson.

Contact us today to learn more.

Lisa Repko | Vice President, Thomas Jefferson University and Planned Giving
Office of Institutional Advancement, Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health
215-955-1635 | plannedgiving@jefferson.edu
jefferson.planmylegacy.org

In Memoriam

Joseph M. Giordano, MD ’67

Joseph M. Giordano, MD ’67, who played a central role in saving President Ronald Reagan’s life after an assassination attempt in 1981, died June 24, 2025, at the age of 84.

The son of Italian immigrants, Giordano was the first in his family to attend college. He graduated from Georgetown University in 1961, and Jefferson in 1967. After completing residencies in Hartford, Connecticut, and Washington, D.C., Giordano spent three years at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center for Research. He joined George Washington University Hospital in 1976.

A vascular surgeon, Giordano was tasked with establishing a trauma unit at George Washington. He created what would become one of the country’s premier Level One trauma units.

On March 30, 1981, Giordano was in charge of the hospital’s trauma team when President Ronald Reagan was shot and badly wounded. Over the course of several hours, doctors stabilized Reagan and operated to remove a bullet that lodged an inch from his heart.

Giordano later became head of surgery at George Washington. He retired in 2010, but continued to teach at the hospital. He also joined the board of Partner for Surgery, an organization that sends physicians to work in impoverished parts of Guatemala. Colleagues called Giordano a great humanitarian who joined medical missions in Haiti and Honduras throughout his training and medical career.

While he is known for being the doctor that saved the life of a president, Giordano insisted his real legacy was “improving healthcare access and delivery for as many patients as possible.”

Giordano is survived by his wife, Orfa Munoz, three sons, Christopher, Andrew, and Michael, and eight grandchildren.

Jerome Vernick, MD ’62

Jerome “Jerry” Vernick, MD ’62, passed away on May 8, 2025, at the age of 88.

After graduating from Jefferson, Vernick served in the U.S. Army, spending time as a surgeon at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and in Vietnam. When he returned, he was instrumental in establishing Jefferson’s Trauma Center and served as its first director.

Vernick’s surgical career spanned more than 50 years. A gifted, renowned, and respected surgeon, Vernick specialized in hepatobiliary surgery with a focus on pancreatic cancer. After many years at Jefferson, he became chief of surgery at Graduate Hospital and later at Jersey Shore University Medical Center, from which he retired.

Vernick will be deeply missed by his colleagues and friends, who remember him as “a surgeon’s surgeon.” “Jerry was a highly skilled hepatobiliary surgeon with a quiet confidence and a wry sense of humor,” Murray Cohen, MD, shared. “His knowledge and skills were legend,” said Lewis Rose, MD. “He was a mentor beyond his field to others who were fortunate enough to have known him.”

Vernick is survived by his wife, Sandy; sons, Michael and Adam, and their spouses, Audrey Chang and Chris Callandrillo; his brother, Richard Vernick, MD ’67, and his wife, Barbara; and his nephew, William Vernick, MD ’00, and his wife, Colleen, an anesthesiologist at Jefferson.

Patrick R. McManus, MD

Patrick R. McManus, MD, joined Jefferson in 1991 as an intern in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, quickly distinguishing himself as a skilled clinician, compassionate teacher, and tireless advocate for underserved populations. As medical director of Youth Emergency Services, he transformed a local partnership into a model service-learning experience, integrating clinical training with community engagement. He later developed the Urban Underserved Program — now JeffBEACON — which continues to inspire medical students to serve marginalized communities.

Rising through Jefferson’s academic ranks, McManus served as residency director until his retirement in 2018, leading with humility, rigor, and heart. He was a national voice for expanding diversity in medicine, securing grants and fostering a culture where all could thrive. His mentorship launched countless careers in community and academic leadership.

To honor his legacy, colleagues are raising $35,000 to endow the Patrick R. McManus Advocacy Award, which will annually recognize a graduating medical student. To learn more, visit Jefferson.edu/McManusMemorial.

'56

Robert (Bob) Lee Meckelnburg, MD, died Aug. 14, 2025, at age 94.
Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was the only child of Robert and Virginia Meckelnburg. At Jefferson, Meckelnburg was elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. Following medical school, he served a medical internship in the U.S. Air Force. He completed his medical residency at the Detroit Medical Center.

After moving to Delaware, Meckelnburg joined the staff of Wilmington Hospital, specializing in internal medicine and cancer treatment. In the 1970s, he developed a practice in nuclear medicine before opening his own endocrinology practice focusing on thyroid, osteoporosis, and diabetes patients. He also established and served as chief of nuclear medicine at Christiana Care. He continued practicing medicine in Delaware until his retirement in 2019 at age 88.
Outside medicine, Meckelnburg led an active life: rowing, skiing, mountain climbing, and wrestling. He loved camping trips with his family and later traveled the world with his wife, Kay, including to Antarctica, the North Pole, and destinations across Europe, Africa, and Asia.

An avid scuba diver, pilot, golfer, and wine enthusiast, Meckelnburg lived by his favorite saying: "Keep moving; death is very still."

'66

Louis John Centrella, MD, 85, of Hockessin, Delaware, died Sept. 1, 2025, surrounded by family.
Born June 17, 1940, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Centrella dedicated his life to service, family, and joy.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Kathy; their children, Louis (Peggy), Lori (Jeff), and Mark (Katie); and grandchildren Jillian, Nick, Maya, Jeffrey, Julia, Lauren, Leah, Siena, Amelia, and Marco. He is also survived by his siblings, twin sister Tedi, brother John, and sister Joan Marie.

Centrella graduated from Villanova University and Jefferson. After two years in the U.S. Public Health Service, he established a family practice where he cared for generations of patients for 42 years. He also served as president of the Delaware Medical Society.
He enjoyed tennis, motorcycling, boating, and summers at the beach with family and friends. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Centrella's life was defined by kindness, humor, and love.

John Victor Zeok, MD, 84, died Nov. 3, 2024, after a period of declining health.

Born Aug. 23, 1940, in Braddock, Pennsylvania, he was the son of John Zeok, MD, and Helen Valiska Zeok.

He served as a major in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War before completing a cardiothoracic surgery residency at the University of Kentucky, where he later joined the faculty. He spent 26 years in private practice in Raleigh, North Carolina, specializing in heart surgery.

He was named Wake County Physician of the Year in 1999 and served as a physician for the Boy Scouts of America, including at two National Jamborees. Zeok loved skiing, music, and spending time with his family.

He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Suzanne Springer Zeok '69; their children, Suzanne Victoria of Raleigh, Katherine Elizabeth (Kevin Shiplett) of Charlotte, and John Christopher (Toni Wagner) of Vienna, Virginia; two grandchildren, Harrison John and Alexander Ross; his sister, Dorothy Zeok Chudoba of Mechanicsville, Virginia; and extended family.

'67

Carl Leon Stanitski, MD, died July 6, 2025, in Charleston, South Carolina.

Born May 3, 1939, in Shamokin, Pennsylvania, to Leon and Florence Stanitski, he grew up with his identical twin brother, Conrad.

He completed residencies and fellowships at Jefferson, the University of Pittsburgh, the University of Southern California, and Boston Children's Hospital.

He practiced pediatric orthopaedic surgery for more than 40 years, including 17 years at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, eight years as chief of pediatric orthopaedics at Children's Hospital of Michigan, and later as professor and emeritus professor at the Medical University of South Carolina.

A prolific author, Stanitski published books, articles, and textbook chapters in pediatric orthopaedics and sports medicine. He participated in medical outreach in more than 30 countries and collaborated for 15 years with the Polish-American Children's Hospital in Krakow.

An accomplished athlete, Stanitski was a runner, skier, sailor, and lifelong tennis player. He often said, "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care."

'70

Alan Mark Gold, MD, 73, died May 26, 2021, in Long Beach, California, surrounded by family.

Born Aug. 31, 1947, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, he was the son of Murray and Sara (Lieb) Gold.

Gold graduated from the Penn State – Jefferson Five-Year Medical Program, becoming one of the youngest physicians in the country. He completed a cardiology fellowship at the University of California, San Diego, and co-founded Los Alamitos Cardiovascular in 1977.

As chair of the board at Los Alamitos Medical Center, Gold oversaw significant growth and innovation, including the establishment of cath labs and early adoption of new cardiac procedures.

He married Debbie, an emergency department nurse, on June 6, 1982. Together they founded the hospital's cardiac rehabilitation department and raised four children. A devoted husband and father, Gold was also active in his Jewish community.

'74

Walter F. Wrenn III, MD, died July 10, 2025, at age 84.

Born Aug. 9, 1940, in Helena, Arkansas, to Walter F. Wrenn Jr. and Mattie B. Wrenn, he was the second of three children.

After completing his residency at Mercy Catholic Medical Center, he opened a private practice in West Philadelphia, serving his community for more than four decades.

He was a lifelong member of the Mu Omega Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. and served on the board of trustees of the National Medical Association. Wrenn was widely respected for his advocacy for equitable treatment of Black physicians and his compassionate care for generations of families.

He was a resident of Voorhees, New Jersey, for more than 40 years.

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