Volume 12, Issue 1 (March 2025)

THE PHILANTHROPIST

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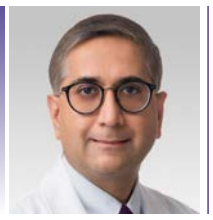
Munshi Awarded Endowed Professorship Honoring Ann Lurie

Dr. Neilson, Ms. Lurie, and Northwestern University president emeritus Henry Bienen, PhD, at the 2021 dinner commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Lurie Cancer Center

A new professorship honoring the late Ann Lurie, a transformative donor in the Northwestern community and beyond, will support Hidayatullah G. Munshi, MD, '02 GME, who in September was appointed chief of the Division of Hematology and Oncology in the Department of Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

The Ann Lurie Professorship in Hematology and Oncology honors Ms. Lurie and her outstanding generosity and longtime commitment to the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University and patients with cancer around the world. Ms. Lurie passed away on June 24, 2024.

The professorship, which supports the chief of the Division of Hematology and Oncology, was first announced in 2021 and established in 2024.



Dr. Munshi

"This professorship is a tremendous honor as I begin my tenure as chief of the Division of Hematology and Oncology in the Department of Medicine," Dr. Munshi said. "Ann Lurie transformed the field of cancer care through philanthropy, and I hope to do my part to honor her legacy through this endowed professorship kindly established by her friends in her name."

A named and endowed professorship, created in perpetuity, represents the highest honor a university can bestow upon its faculty. These positions represent the pinnacle of academic achievement and excellence and are reserved for our most distinguished and productive physicians and scientists. They carry great prestige and impact for the benefactor, the appointed holder of the professorship, and the University and medical school.

Dr. Munshi leads compelling research into pancreatic cancer, which is projected to be the second-leading cause of cancer-related death by 2030. Prior to his appointment as division chief, he oversaw initiatives identifying novel combination regimens to enhance immunotherapy responses in pancreatic cancer and overcome resistance to KRAS inhibitors.

These high-risk projects are unlikely to be funded by the National Institutes of Health without generating substantial preliminary data, he said. "Professorships give my lab the resources we need to move our research in exciting directions that we think will significantly impact the lives of cancer patients."

Support from donors has also enabled many clinical trials in the division and provided resources to cancer patients so that they can receive life-saving care at the Lurie Cancer Center, he added.

"Dr. Munshi is beyond deserving of this high honor, which bolsters his important research endeavors," said Leonidas C. Platanias, MD, PhD, director of the Lurie Cancer Center and the Jesse, Sara, Andrew, Abigail, Benjamin and Elizabeth Lurie Professor of Oncology. "We are thrilled at the Lurie Cancer Center to continue our work with Dr. Munshi as he embarks on this new chapter of his career."

DONOR HONOR ROLL FOR THE ANN LURIE PROFESSORSHIP IN HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

Dr. and Mrs. Henry Bienen
Lester and Renée Crown
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas R. Dillon
Dr. Alan Krensky and Dr. Carol Clayberger
The Malkin Family
Dr. and Mrs. Eric G. Neilson
Cathy and Bill Osborn

Honoring a Cancer Trailblazer

Donors to the endowed Ann Lurie Professorship in Hematology and Oncology expressed admiration for Ann Lurie's vision, philanthropy, and impact. Lester Crown '46, a longtime friend of Ms. Lurie's and life trustee at Northwestern University, said his gift was inspired by Ms. Lurie's character.

"Ann Lurie was one of the true treasures of our city," Mr. Crown said in January 2024. "She was brilliant, knowledgeable, thoughtful, involved, and unbelievably generous. We therefore were very pleased to support this initiative to establish a professorship in her honor."

Eric G. Neilson, MD, vice president for Medical Affairs and Lewis Landsberg Dean at Feinberg, surprised Ms. Lurie with news of the professorship during a special dinner in 2021 commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Lurie Cancer Center's naming by Ann and Robert H. Lurie and its dedication.

Dean Neilson and his wife, Linda, also donated to the professorship.

"Ann Lurie's steadfast commitment over the last three decades was instrumental in transforming Northwestern's Cancer Center into a national beacon of excellence," Dean Neilson said. "Her legacy is a testament to the enduring power of generosity and the profound change it can spark in medical innovation and compassionate care. We are honored to be able to continue this legacy through the new endowed chair in her name."

For more information about supporting endowed professorships, the Division of Hematology and Oncology in the Department of Medicine, or the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, please contact **Terri Dillon** at **terri-dillon@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-4837**.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Northwestern Philadelphia Club: "Is Aging Inevitable or Preventable?"
April 3, The Inn at Villanova University, Pennsylvania
Info: **Babette Henderson** at **312-503-0855, babette.henderson@northwestern.edu**

37th Annual Hope Through Caring Gala, Les Turner ALS Foundation
April 5, Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel, Chicago
Info: **Andrew Christopherson** at **312-503-3080, andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu**

Alumni Weekend 2025
May 2–3, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
Info: **Babette Henderson** at **312-503-0855, babette.henderson@northwestern.edu**

Commitment to Scholarships Luncheon
May 3, The Peninsula Chicago Hotel
Info: **Olympia Asimacopoulos** at **312-503-0754, olympia1@northwestern.edu**

The Founders Society Cocktail Reception
May 3, The Arts Club of Chicago
Info: **Sarah Kalsbeek** at **312-503-3459, s-kalsbeek@northwestern.edu**

Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute Minds Matter Benefit
May 9, The Ritz-Carlton, Chicago
Info: **Ashley Lough** at **312-503-0759, ashley.lough@northwestern.edu**

31st Annual Alzheimer Day by the Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease
May 15, Embassy Suites Chicago Downtown River North
Info: **Jordan Sund** at **312-503-2706, jordan.sund@northwestern.edu**

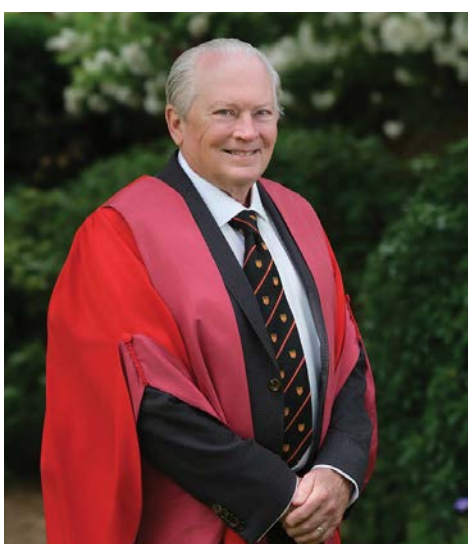
Lurie Cancer Center's 32nd Annual Cancer Survivors' Celebration Walk & 5K
June 1, Grant Park, Chicago
Info: **Carla Dumas** at **312-503-4952, carla.dumas@northwestern.edu**

Day 1 Survivors' Bocce Tournament for Cancer Care
July 19, Martin Lakefront Stadium at Northwestern University
Info: **Ashley Lough** at **312-503-0759, ashley.lough@northwestern.edu**

H Foundation 23rd Annual Goombay Bash
July 26, AON Grand Ballroom, Navy Pier
Info: **Nicole Langert** at **312-503-1656, nicole.langert@northwestern.edu**

18th Annual Robert J. Havey, MD Institute for Global Health Benefit Dinner
September 17, The Peninsula Chicago Hotel
Info: **Jenn Burke** at **312-503-4635, jennifer.burke@northwestern.edu**

Stahl Returns to Alma Mater to Establish Premier Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience



Dr. Stahl

Stephen M. Stahl, ’75 MD, PhD, DMedSci (Hon.), DSci (Hon.), a world-renowned physician in the fields of psychiatry and psychopharmacology, is honoring his roots with the establishment of the new Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern.

Dr. Stahl and his wife, Shakila, generously funded the new center in 2024. The center marks a homecoming for Dr. Stahl, whose career was launched at Northwestern following his upbringing in small-town Ohio. Now, he aims to give back to the institution that helped shape his path, fostering future advancements in psychiatric research and education.

The Stahl Center aims to boost research into novel therapies for some of the most pressing psychiatric illnesses of the 21st century, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The center supports investigators across Northwestern who share the common goal of understanding the neural mechanisms underlying such illnesses.

“The excitement is that the neurosciences have just exploded,” Dr. Stahl said. “In the old days, there were only a few targets for medications. Now, what’s happening is we get to understand the brain and what goes wrong in these illnesses. The future is bright, even in areas like substance abuse, thanks to new experimental animal models helping us to understand it.”

One population that stands to greatly benefit from such research is two-thirds of unhoused people who are living with serious mental illness. Many of these people are unable to shift their circumstances because of their psychiatric conditions, and they aren’t getting the care they need, Dr. Stahl said. Access to healthcare often forms the primary barrier to treatment, but gaps in the science remain as well. There is still great need to develop effective drug therapies to treat some of the most devastating psychiatric conditions, he said, and he hopes that the center will help.

“We are thrilled that the Stahls have partnered with Northwestern to launch the Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience,” said Sachin Patel, MD, PhD, center director, chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and the Lizzie Gilman Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. “Understanding the biological basis of mental illness is one of healthcare’s greatest challenges, and the center represents our joint commitment to advance our understanding of the underlying brain mechanisms contributing to severe mental illnesses.”

Mrs. Stahl and Dr. Stahl

New insights into neuroplasticity and neurodevelopment are helping Northwestern scientists better understand complex mental illnesses. Another new frontier for these scientists is improving information processing in neural circuits. By targeting these circuits with specific neurotransmitters, they have found that they can alleviate some symptoms of serious mental illness. As they learn more about the circuits that mediate memory, cognition, and mood, they can identify the mechanisms that regulate these circuits and design medications to exploit them.

“That’s the great threshold of the next 50 years, perhaps,” Dr. Stahl said.

Dr. Patel praised the Stahls’ philanthropic investment in Northwestern’s psychiatric neuroscience program, acknowledging it heralds a new era for personalized therapeutic approaches for neuropsychiatric disorders.

“With the generosity of the Stahls, the new center will serve as a platform to elevate Northwestern’s national reputation in psychiatric research and support recruitment of top talent to the institution,” Dr. Patel said.

(continued on next page)

Stephen Stahl

From Humble Beginnings

Dr. Stahl was raised in Bryan, Ohio, a town of about 8,000, and became the first in his family to attend college. He credits his mentors at Northwestern for the formidable foundation that enabled his accomplished career.

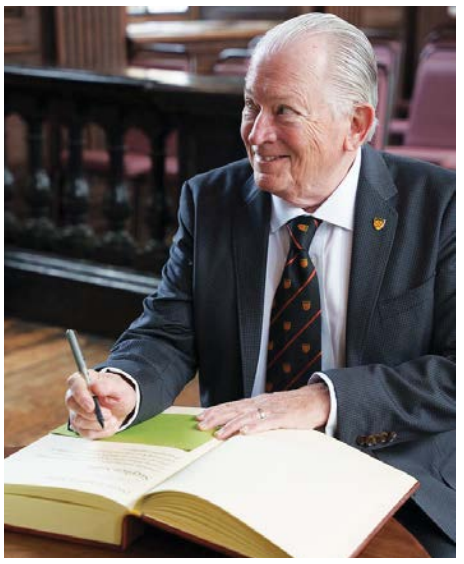
In 1969, he was admitted into the Honors Program in Medical Education (HPME), where he met his mentor, the late Albert Zeller ’66, MD, a professor of biochemistry who mentored him while he was an undergraduate. Thanks to Dr. Zeller and the opportunities afforded to him through HPME, Dr. Stahl published a number of impressive papers as a young student. The late Benjamin Boshes, ’31 MD, the former chair of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry and, later, chair of the Department of Neurology, also provided crucial guidance in his early years.

“I felt that, from the beginning to the end, it was a great program. And I feel I owe a great deal of gratitude to Northwestern for launching my career,” Dr. Stahl said. “It took me from nothing and catapulted me into the big time.”

A 1975 graduate, Dr. Stahl celebrates his 50th medical school reunion at Northwestern this year.

Shakila Stahl, too, was a first-generation college student and attended Georgetown University on scholarship, and now, the Stahls’ philanthropy aims to help students succeed in the world of higher education at Northwestern and other universities.

“Stephen and I just feel incredibly grateful and blessed for the opportunities that we’ve been afforded and also the opportunity to give back in such a meaningful way,” Shakila Stahl said. Today, Shakila is a member of the Georgetown University Board of Regents.



Dr. Stahl participates in the honorary degree conferral ceremony at Cambridge University in 2024.

HPME stopped enrolling new students in 2020, but beginning in 1961, the program concurrently enrolled undergraduate Northwestern students at the medical school, truncating the number of years it typically takes to graduate. Dr. Stahl made the most of his time in the program, then went on to earn his PhD in pharmacology and physiology from the University of Chicago.

From there, Dr. Stahl trained in three specialties: internal medicine at the University of Chicago; neurology at the University of California, San Francisco; and psychiatry at Stanford University. A prolific author, he has written more than 60 textbooks, including the best-selling and award-winning textbook *Stahl’s Essential Psychopharmacology* and clinical manual *Essential Psychopharmacology Prescriber’s Guide*.

“With the generosity of the Stahls, the new center will serve as a platform to elevate Northwestern’s national reputation in psychiatric research and support recruitment of top talent to the institution.”

— Dr. Sachin Patel

He spent the majority of his medical career in California, where he held faculty positions at University of California, Riverside; Stanford University; and the University of California, San Diego. He has also held faculty positions at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology, and Neuroscience in London; State University of New York, Upstate Medical University in Syracuse; and the University of Cambridge in England, where he received an honorary doctorate of medical sciences in 2024. He also directs psychopharmacology services and academic programs for the California Department of State Hospital System, where he leads initiatives dedicated to addressing violence and the decriminalization of people with serious mental illness.

“The Stahl family invites fellow alumni and mental health advocates to consider supporting the mission of the Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience,” Dr. Stahl said. “Northwestern Medicine is best poised to lead the charge for treatments for debilitating serious mental illnesses.”

For more information about the Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience, please contact **Andrew Christopherson** at **andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-3080**.

‘Johnnie Walkers’ Leader Bids Farewell after **30 Years** of Fundraising for MS Research

The Johnnie Walkers after their 2024 walk

After nearly four decades and more than $1 million raised to support research into multiple sclerosis (MS), Bob Gregory, ’88 MBA, is retiring his annual “Johnnie Walkers” fundraising walk in Lincolnshire, Illinois.

Dozens of fellow persons living with MS, friends, and family members attended the walk each year, which since 2015 has supported research led by Mr. Gregory’s longtime friend and renowned immunologist Stephen D. Miller, PhD, professor emeritus in the Department of Microbiology-Immunology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Miller has served with distinction on the medical school’s faculty for more than 40 years and is a highly regarded scientist, leader, and mentor.

Mr. Gregory built a legacy of philanthropy that has fueled numerous exciting developments in MS treatment at Northwestern and other institutions. His clever grassroots organizing, friendship with Dr. Miller, and persistence as he himself endured the symptoms of the chronic neurological disorder stand to have far-reaching benefits for the estimated one million people in the US afflicted by MS.

Mr. Gregory (left) and Dr. Miller

In 1990, while working as a Director of Marketing at Baxter Healthcare in Waukegan, Illinois, Mr. Gregory began experiencing numbness on his right side. He was diagnosed with MS, and his first neurologist was Bruce A. Cohen, MD, today the chief of MS and Neuroimmunology in the Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology. By 1995, Mr. Gregory’s condition had progressed aggressively, putting him in a wheelchair and forcing him to take long-term disability leave from his job.

Feeling lost, Mr. Gregory decided to participate in an annual MS walk to raise funds for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Along with family and friends, he formed a team called “The Johnnie Walkers,” inspired by the drink they were enjoying at the time. Their first effort raised $500, marking the beginning of a long and impactful fundraising journey. In 2024, the group raised $86,000.

“The objective was to fund research that will result in me and a million other people in this country getting my rear end out of this scooter,” Mr. Gregory said.

The Johnnie Walkers gathered every spring thereafter to raise funds to support MS organizations. In 2005, the walk relocated to Lincolnshire, at the home of Mr. Gregory and his wife, Pat Gregory, ’87 JD. The walkers gather early on a May morning for coffee and bagels, then set off through the neighborhood, covering about four miles. The walk concludes with a celebratory cookout.

In 2005, Mr. Gregory learned about the Myelin Repair Foundation (MRF), an organization dedicated to discovering myelin repair therapies. Myelin is the protective coating of the body's nerve cells, which accelerate signal transmission and enable movement. At the time, MRF aimed to assemble a team of top scientists to collaborate in the development of a myelin repair therapy and secure funding for the research. Dr. Miller was one of these scientists.

Mr. Gregory began volunteering for the MRF and shifted the focus of the Johnnie Walkers to support the foundation’s mission. He and Mrs. Gregory met Dr. Miller and his wife, Kimberley, through the foundation, and after being assigned a dinner table together at a fundraising event one pivotal evening, formed a bond that exceeded their shared Northwestern University affiliation and mutual passion for MS research.

“Turns out, we share a slightly irreverent sense of humor, don’t take ourselves too seriously, and — like all good friends — love talking about our families, music, movies, and food,” Mr. Gregory said.

Dr. Miller corroborated Mr. Gregory’s telling of this fateful dinner. To this day, the couples get together at least once every few months.

“We started talking to Bob and Pat and just hit it off,” Dr. Miller said, adding that he and Mr. Gregory share an affinity for sports, especially college football and basketball.

Research Reroute

The MRF dissolved in 2015, marking another turn for the Johnnie Walkers. The group redirected their fundraising efforts to exclusively support Dr. Miller's research, which aims to use nanotechnology to induce immune system tolerance, preventing “friendly fire” on healthy cells in the body of a patient with MS and delivering myelin repair proteins to neurons. The technology has potential applications for various autoimmune diseases, including Type I diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and food allergies.

“This is the method that’s going to get all MS patients back on their feet,” Mr. Gregory said.

Dr. Miller’s research is nearing a critical stage, with plans to transfer knowledge to pharmaceutical companies. Major companies like Takeda and Genentech have already procured rights to his research relating to celiac disease and other autoimmune diseases, respectively.

At Northwestern, Dr. Miller is laying the groundwork for exciting clinical trials using his tolerance technology through COUR Pharmaceuticals, a company he established in 2010 with Lonnie D. Shea, PhD, a polymer chemist formerly of the McCormick School of Engineering. This next step will be made possible through close collaborations with Dr. Cohen, Roumen D. Balabanov, MD, and Brian J. Popko, PhD, of the Division of MS and Neuroimmunology in the Davee Department of Neurology.

Dr. Miller’s lab also looks to two related proxy diseases, neuromyelitis optica (NMO) and myelin oligodendrocyte glycoprotein antibody-associated disease (MOGAD), to inform treatments for MS.

“Funding from entities like the Johnnie Walkers gives the lab freedom to try new approaches. For instance, we used a lot of the monies they raised to establish animal models of those other two diseases, NMO and MOGAD,” Dr. Miller said.

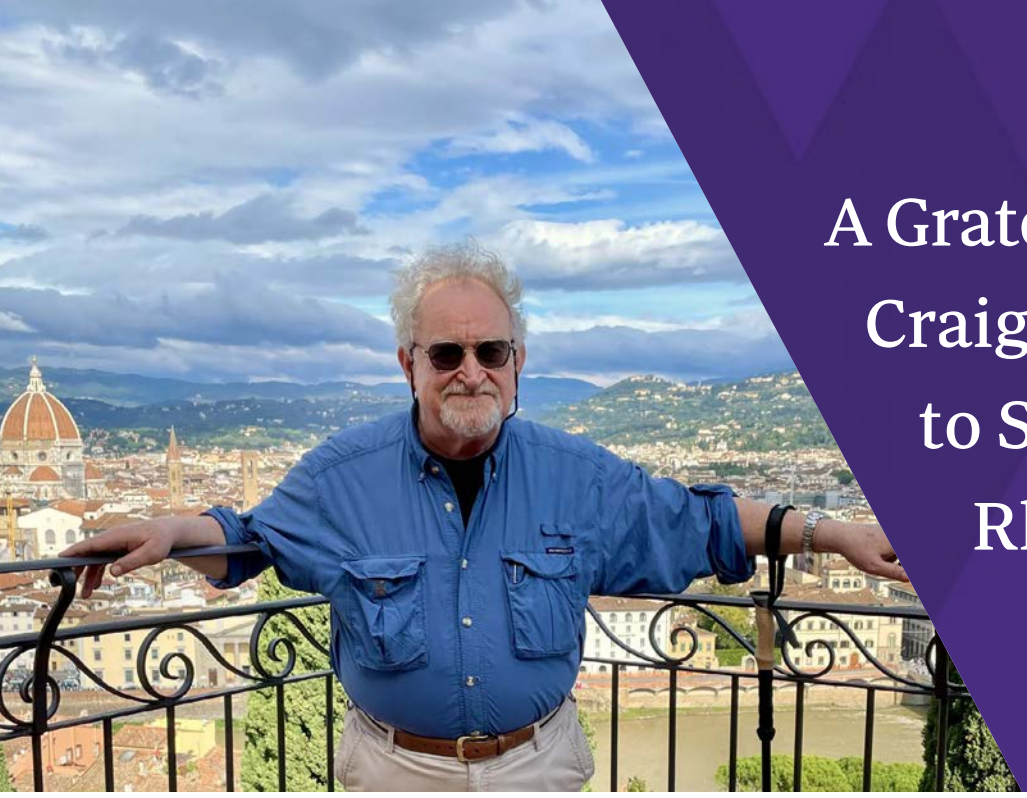
Now, his team has preclinical data from these animal models that they can leverage to gain US Food and Drug Administration approval to plan clinical trials for those diseases.

With the 30th and final Johnnie Walkers fundraiser on the horizon, on May 18, Mr. Gregory reflected on the mixed emotions of closing this chapter. Raising funds has never been easy, he said, but he has found it immensely rewarding to support a cause like Dr. Miller’s cutting-edge research that he and the fundraisers all believe in. Plus, he said, he has thoroughly enjoyed building connections with almost 200 family members and friends through the annual walks.

“The bottom line is that we feel extreme gratitude for the financial donations to MS research and, more importantly, the lifelong connections that will continue for the rest of our days,” Mr. Gregory said.

For more information about supporting multiple sclerosis research, or Dr. Miller’s other immunology research, please contact **MaryPat Mauro** at **marypat.mauro@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-1090**.

Support MS research: Make a gift in honor of the Johnnie Walkers



Dr. Baskin

A Grateful Patient's Generosity: Craig Baskin's Gift to Support Rheumatology Fellows

In a gesture of gratitude for the expert and compassionate care of his rheumatologist, Eric Ruderman, MD, Craig Baskin, PhD, '86 MBA, pledged a generous gift of $100,000 to support fellowships in the Division of Rheumatology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Dr. Ruderman

Dr. Baskin, who has psoriatic arthritis, came under the care of Dr. Ruderman, a professor of Medicine in the Division of Rheumatology, in 2020 after being referred by Boston rheumatologist Michael Weinblatt, MD. Dr. Weinblatt supervised a young Dr. Ruderman early in his career, during his fellowship at Brigham & Women's Hospital in the early 1990s.

"His care is competent, attentive, and caring. You know, he's what you want in a doctor," Dr. Baskin said of Dr. Ruderman.

So, Dr. Baskin inquired about supporting the next generation of physicians treating arthritis and autoimmune diseases. Fellowships play a critical role in the rheumatology career path, Dr. Ruderman explained.

"Fellowship is a critical stage for trainees in our specialty, as this is when they begin to make the transition from general physician to rheumatologist," he said. "At Northwestern, we encourage our fellows to include research and teaching in their future academic plans. Fellowship is the time when they find the particular areas of rheumatology that excite them enough to become a focus of their future careers."

The Rheumatology fellowship at Northwestern not only equips trainees with the clinical skills needed to manage complex rheumatologic diseases but also fosters a culture of research and academic excellence. Fellows are encouraged to explore specific diseases or research areas of focus, laying the foundation for future academic careers supported by institutions like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and various foundations.

Philanthropy plays a crucial role in supporting these trainees. At Northwestern, institutional training grants, or T32 funds, from the NIH have supported fellows' research for more than 24 years, allowing the division to support two to three fellows annually. The fellows complete a two-year curriculum focused on clinical experience, research, and medical education, with an optional third year for those embarking on a research career. However, T32 funds do not cover all costs, so the school relies on private philanthropic support for conference travel, additional research costs, and specialized third-year fellowships. While T32 funding benefits research-focused fellows, its restrictions make private support crucial.

> *"At Northwestern, we encourage our fellows to include research and teaching in their future academic plans. Fellowship is the time when they find the particular areas of rheumatology that excite them enough to become a focus of their future careers."*
>
> **— Dr. Eric Ruderman**

"Philanthropy helps cover our fellows' living expenses while they are focused on research and covers costs pertaining to the research itself, providing resources to pay for statistical and administrative support for their individual projects," Dr. Ruderman said.

The Rheumatology fellowship program is led by Anisha B. Dua, MD, MPH, professor of Medicine in the Division of Rheumatology.

For Dr. Baskin, the decision to support Rheumatology fellowships was driven by his positive experiences with Dr. Ruderman and his belief in the importance of accessible, high-quality medical care. He learned of the fundraising needs through a discovery luncheon attended by Dr. Ruderman and by Harris Perlman, PhD, chief of Rheumatology in the Department of Medicine and the Mabel Greene Myers Professor of Medicine.

"The luncheon was a wonderful opportunity to share with Craig and others the remarkable research our Rheumatology faculty leads in our state-of-the-art labs and our partner clinical sites. Craig immediately recognized the impact of our fellowship program upon the future of rheumatologic care, and we couldn't be more grateful for his support," Dr. Perlman said.

Dr. Baskin, who holds three degrees, including an MBA from Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, reflected on his career in the pharmaceutical industry and the opportunities he has had.

"I think it's important that people have access to good medical care, and I think it's important that we provide opportunities for young doctors to improve their skills and, to quote the US Army, to be the best they can be," Dr. Baskin said. "I was fortunate, and Kellogg opened several doors, leading to a long and successful career and putting me in a position where I'm able to give back."

Dr. Baskin said he hopes that his support for fellows will, ultimately, improve the outlook for patients like him.

"It's an investment. It's a gift that will pay off for years and years and years," he said.

For more information about supporting the **Division of Rheumatology**, please contact **MaryPat Mauro** at **marypat.mauro@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-1090**.

Harper Hubert

Endowed for the Future

‘Go Baby Go’ Full Throttle for New Era for Empowering Kids

Harper Hubert, a 4-year-old with curly blonde hair and a penchant for music and movement, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy soon after she came into this world and, at only a few months old, began experiencing epileptic spasms, often a symptom of the congenital disorder.

At three months of age, Harper began receiving pediatric physical therapy (PT) to help improve her coordination, and today she requires assistance with walking and uses a wheelchair. Still, it was clear early on to Mike and Crystal Hubert that, despite their daughter’s disability, she possessed the same gleeful exuberance as any toddler, lighting up when pushed around in her stroller, dancing to music, or engaging in other physical activities compatible with her abilities. So, advised by physical therapist Alison “Ali” Liddle, PT, MPP, PCS, the Huberts applied for the Go Baby Go program at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, where physical therapy and engineering students collaborate to build custom mobility cars for children with movement disorders at no cost to their families.

The day of their daughter’s car pickup in July 2022 was an emotional one for Mike and Crystal. Harper took to her new mobility aid with a sparkle in her eye and quickly learned to operate the vehicle adapted to her needs.

“I definitely cried,” Crystal Hubert said. “I was just astounded. Ali was there, and we couldn’t even talk about it because we were both really surprised by how fast it just clicked for her and how engaged she was and motivated to push the button to make the car go.”

Launched in 2014 at Northwestern, Go Baby Go celebrated its 10th anniversary last year with a substantial boost: the establishment of an endowed fund to help the program benefit more children in need. The endowed fund was created thanks to the generosity of donor Judith Rubin of Los Angeles.

“When I was introduced to Go Baby Go in 2019, I immediately recognized the difference the program could make in the lives of toddlers with mobility limitations by providing customized electric cars for them to participate in and enjoy activities with their siblings and other children,” Ms. Rubin said. “It has been incredibly rewarding to see the kids ‘tooling around’ in their cars, being part of the action, and to see the joy on the faces of their parents as they watch. I can’t help but feel that, with more widespread awareness of the Go Baby Go program, others wouldn’t be inspired to join the effort to help the program grow.”

Go Baby Go is managed by faculty and students in the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences (PTHMS) at Feinberg with support from Northwestern’s McCormick School of Engineering students. For DPT students at Feinberg, the program provides an opportunity to work with real-world pediatric patients.

Physical therapy students make modifications to Harper’s vehicle while Harper’s physical therapist Ali Liddle (back left) supervises.

The Power of Movement

Movement during early childhood enhances cognitive and physical development, and Go Baby Go aims to encourage this vital growth through modified ride-on cars in children with disabilities, promoting play, socialization, and independence, said Kristin J. Krosschell, PT, DPT, MA, professor of PTHMS and of Pediatrics.

Indeed, studies published in journals including *Frontiers of Psychology*, *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology*, *Health Technology Assessment*, and *Developmental Psychobiology* show that limited movement in children can reduce social engagement, cognitive development, and spatial awareness, while movement is correlated with infant emotion, smiles, vocalizations, and social engagement.

“Locomotion is an essential activity that drives a child’s ability to participate socially with peers and family, engage more fully in education, enjoy leisure and recreation activities, and participate in their communities with friends and families,” explained Dr. Krosschell, who led the team that built Harper’s car. “Mobility is really one of our major connections to the world with an end goal to engage in our lives and participate meaningfully.”

The Hubert family

Harper’s car, like all vehicles designed by the Go Baby Go faculty and students, featured customizations tailored specifically to her needs. Before constructing the vehicle, the students interviewed the Huberts to gather detailed information about Harper, such as personal interests to improve motivation while she learned to operate her car, and environmental factors, to best consider space for driving, storing, and transporting the car.

The students modified Harper’s car so she could control it using a large button instead of a foot pedal, making it more accessible to her, Dr. Krosschell said. The button was placed on a hinged tray table that could be adjusted to accommodate her reach and encourage the use of both arms. The tray was designed to pivot for easy access and is covered in black fabric for visual contrast. The steering wheel was removed, and a PVC-pipe push handle was added to the back of the vehicle for her parents to steer. Additional modifications included a five-point safety harness, pool noodles and swimming kickboard for posture, and an emergency on/off switch.

The car, painted a vibrant purple — Harper’s favorite color — and adorned with music notes and tie-dye tape, also included an FM radio, allowing her to enjoy her favorite country and jazz tunes while cruising around her garage or neighborhood.

“It’s truly Harper’s car,” Mike Hubert said. “I was really impressed with how the students collaborated with Harper, our family, the PT Department at Feinberg, and the engineers to create the perfect little ‘Harper’-mobile.”

For more information about supporting Go Baby Go, please contact **Vic Maurer** at **victor.maurer@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-2417**.

Trott Professorship Honors Melinda Ring's Leadership in Integrative Health

Tina Trott and Dr. Melinda Ring at the faculty investiture ceremony in September 2024

Susan Quaggin, MD, chair of the Department of Medicine, (right) awards Dr. Ring her ceremonial medal as holder of the Trott Professorship.

Melinda R. Ring, MD, FACP, ABOIM, a leader in integrative medicine and director of the Osher Center for Integrative Health at Northwestern University, was vested in September as the inaugural Tina Trott Professor of Integrative Health, a new professorship named for advocate, partner, and friend Tina Trott.

The professorship, which provides crucial resources for research and training, was established thanks to the generosity of a donor cohort led by Mrs. Trott. Many of these donors are members of the Osher Center for Integrative Health's IM AWARE advisory council (Integrative Medicine: Advising with Awareness, Resources, and Education), which has played a vital role in advancing integrative health initiatives. Since joining the council six years ago, Mrs. Trott has been a dedicated supporter of integrative health in modern medicine.

"Tina's philanthropy is driven by both heart and vision. She recognizes that integrative medicine is about fostering a more compassionate, effective healthcare system — one that truly empowers patients," Dr. Ring said.

Mrs. Trott said the gift from her and her husband, Byron, was inspired by Dr. Ring's extensive contributions to the field as an educator, researcher, and physician. At Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Dr. Ring is a clinical associate professor of Medicine (General Internal Medicine) and of Medical Social Sciences (Intervention Science).

"The Osher Center would not be at the forefront of holistic health without Melinda Ring's vast experience and vision. Being on Northwestern's Osher Center IM AWARE council, I truly realize how lucky we are to have Dr. Ring's exceptional leadership, tremendous knowledge, and vast expertise in the field of traditional and integrative medicine," Mrs. Trott said.

Growing Integrative Health

Integrative health — blending conventional medicine with holistic approaches — is steadily gaining traction in the US, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH). The Trott Professorship not only honors Dr. Ring but also ensures she has the resources to continue to lead the Osher Center for Integrative Health in this evolving healthcare landscape.

Tina Trott's journey into integrative medicine began in 2018, influenced by her friend and fellow council member, Karen Malkin. Mrs. Trott's personal experiences with holistic methodologies such as nutrition, meditation, yoga, massage, and physical activity have reinforced her belief in the efficacy of integrative treatments.

"As with most families, ours has experienced a variety of health challenges — some more straightforward than others. We found that, in addition to traditional treatments, a combination of holistic methodologies yielded better results," Mrs. Trott shared.

Several years ago, following a surgery, she experienced significant relief from pain, anxiety, and fatigue through a combination of pre- and post-operative relaxation exercises that consisted of breathing, guided imagery, and meditations for healing. These integrative approaches, recommended by Northwestern behavioral medicine psychologist Kim L. Feingold, PhD, played a crucial role in her recovery, helping to ease discomfort and promote relaxation during the healing process.

Under Dr. Ring's leadership, the Osher Center is at the forefront of a paradigm shift in healthcare, developing evidence-based programs in planetary health, community engagement, spirituality, health equity, food as medicine, and advanced medical education.

Dr. Ring said that when she first joined Northwestern in 2007, integrative health was still viewed by many as being on the fringe of conventional medicine.

In just two decades, integrative health has moved from the margins to the mainstream, becoming embedded in leading academic health centers. This shift is fueled by robust research, increasing patient demand, and a deeper recognition of its role in chronic disease prevention and overall well-being, Dr. Ring said.

Integrative health science has evolved substantially, especially in areas such as mind-body medicine, the gut-brain axis, nutritional science, and the impact of lifestyle on health outcomes. The National Institutes of Health, through the NCCIH, has expanded funding for studies examining interventions such as mindfulness, acupuncture, and nutritional therapies — giving clinicians stronger evidence to support their use.

On the clinical side, integrative health services are, at their core, patient- and relationship-centered, Dr. Ring said. Patients are seeking whole-person care, and health systems are responding by making integrative services part of standard care models. For example, insurance plans are expanding their coverage of alternative therapies like acupuncture. And, more patients are turning to these modalities for their concerns, especially for pain management.

One of the most transformative changes has been in medical education, Dr. Ring noted. The Osher Center at Northwestern is playing an increasingly vital role in equipping future physicians with integrative health expertise.

"There's a growing acknowledgment that future physicians need to understand nutrition, lifestyle, and mind-body interventions to be effective healers," Dr. Ring said. "Integrative medicine fellowships and programs like [Osher Center culinary medicine course] Cooking Up Health are helping fill that gap, training clinicians to care for patients in ways that extend beyond prescriptions and procedures."

For Dr. Ring, the Trotts' gift signals a meaningful contribution to improving the lives of patients everywhere.

"I'm deeply grateful for the trust Tina has placed in us to advance this mission. Her generosity extends beyond funding — it's her unwavering belief in our work that pushes us to dream bigger and reach higher," Dr. Ring said.

For more information about supporting the Tina Trott Professorship in Integrative Health and the Osher Center for Integrative Health, please contact **Terri Dillon** at **terri-dillon@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-4837**.

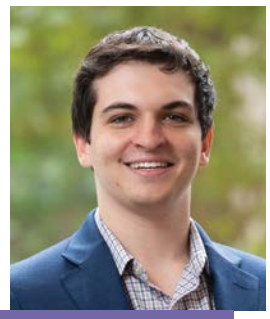
Empowering Future Doctors: The Prokop Family Scholarship at Northwestern

Dr. Prokop and Mrs. Prokop in 2017

In the fall of 1953, a young Brad Prokop, ’54, ’57 MD, faced a pivotal decision. Accepted into both the University of Chicago and Northwestern University medical schools, he chose Northwestern, setting the stage for a lifelong connection with his alma mater.

Not long after beginning his medical school journey, financial challenges emerged, prompting him to seek additional funds for essentials like food. His resourcefulness led him to various jobs, including tidal volume testing at the VA hospital and monitoring the back entrance at Passavant Memorial Hospital, now Northwestern Medicine. But money was tight throughout his schooling.

“I had not realized that there would be many times in various circumstances when eating would depend on ‘out-of-pocket’ funds,” Dr. Prokop said. So, in hopes of alleviating the financial burden for future medical students, in 2024 he and his wife, Adrienne, established the Bradford S. and Adrienne V. Prokop Family Scholarship, a testament to their enduring commitment to education and to Northwestern University.



Ben Weiss

In September, the first two Prokop scholars were named: Ben Weiss of Ocean Township, New Jersey, and Jasmine Machhi of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Both are first-year medical students.

Jasmine Machhi

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine hopes to one day provide more scholarship support to more students but must quadruple the current endowment to reach all enrollees. Additionally, fundraising in the support of scholarships has become a competitive necessity, as other top institutions also aim to provide financial assistance to all students. Many other Feinberg donors, like the Prokops, have been generous in supporting scholarships through outright gifts, through their estate plans, or both.

“Dr. Prokop knows from experience how cost-prohibitive medical education can be, and it remains cost-prohibitive for so many of today’s students,” said Marianne Green, MD, the Raymond H. Curry, MD, Professor of Medical Education and vice dean for Education. “The Prokops are only growing their already impressive legacy by alleviating the debt burden of future Feinberg graduates. We are immensely grateful for their scholarship support.”

A Match Made in Medical School

It was during Dr. Prokop’s junior year of medical school, backstage at a play in Thorne Hall in 1955, that Dr. Prokop met Adrienne Vollmer ’58, a talented nursing student at Wesley Hospital — now Northwestern Medicine. She was taking additional classes at Northwestern University to obtain her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Their shared experiences at Northwestern blossomed into a lifelong partnership. They wed in 1958.

The Prokops at their wedding in 1958

Dr. Prokop went on to complete his medical residency in ophthalmology at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, while Mrs. Prokop became a head nurse in surgery. After an extended military career during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Prokops relocated to Topeka, Kansas, where Dr. Prokop launched a successful ophthalmology practice. Here, the Prokops established the first ambulatory surgery center devoted to eye surgery in the state. Mrs. Prokop served as president of the center and as executive administrator of the practice, which the Prokops ran for 32 years — all the while raising and growing their family.

In total, the family has 10 degrees from Northwestern. The Prokops’ connection to Northwestern deepened as their children and grandchildren attended the University. Their eldest daughter attended the medical school, where she met and married her husband, and went on to become a distinguished professor of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. The Prokops’ son, meanwhile, went on to attend the law school, where he met and married his wife. Their second daughter obtained her Master of Arts in Counseling from Northwestern.

Their generational legacy doesn’t stop there.

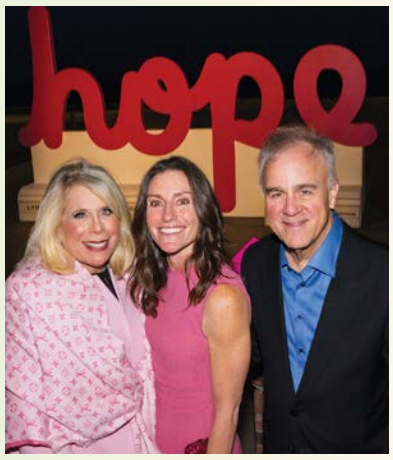
“Adrienne and I are very proud of our granddaughter Claire Pregler who graduated from Northwestern in 2021. Our granddaughter Lily Prokop is now a sophomore studying Neuroscience at Northwestern,” Dr. Prokop said.

Brad and Adrienne Prokop have supported the University for decades, giving to the MD Class of 1957 Scholarship Fund, athletics, and other academic areas. They are members of the Henry and Emma Rogers Society, Wilson Society, and The Founders Society. They now reside in Fort Myers, Florida.

For more information about supporting scholarships, please contact **Larry Kuhn** at **larry-kuhn@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-1717**.

Our Community in Action

Cancer advocates, survivors, scientists, and donors attended the **Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation Fall Benefit: An Evening of Hope in Our Fight Against Breast Cancer** on October 24 at the Theater on the Lake in Chicago. The Fall Benefit raised more than $1.2 million for innovative breast cancer research, early-career doctors, and important initiatives like the Chicago Breast Cancer Research Consortium, a collaboration to make clinical trials more accessible to Chicago-area breast cancer patients. Since 1985, the foundation has raised more than $45 million to support breast cancer research and education.



Left to right: Lili Ann Zisook, founding member of the Lynn Sage Cancer Research Foundation; Halee Sage, board chair of the Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation; and Michael Ruchim, MD, clinical associate professor of Medicine in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology at Feinberg and senior vice president of Northwestern Memorial Foundation

Sheri Whitko Photography

Nicole Langert (left), director of major gifts at Feinberg, and Halee Sage, board chair of the Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation

Sheri Whitko Photography

The **Harold E. Eisenberg Foundation** celebrated 25 years of fueling gastrointestinal cancer research at Northwestern at its annual dinner on October 17 at the Hilton Grand Ballroom in Chicago. Since its establishment in 1999, the Eisenberg Foundation has committed more than $3.5 million to the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University.

Steve Elrod, vice president of the Harold E. Eisenberg Foundation's Board of Directors and anniversary dinner co-chair, addresses attendees of the annual dinner.

Members of the **Henry and Emma Rogers Society** and **The Founders Society** gathered October 10 on the Chicago campus for a lunch and tour of the Louis A. Simpson and Kimberly K. Querrey Biomedical Research Center. The Rogers Society recognizes alumni and friends who have included Northwestern University in their estate plans, and the event was geared toward Rogers Society members who have made a planned gift to Feinberg and are honored as members of The Founders Society.

Members of the Rogers Society and The Founders Society learn about the state-of-the-art Simpson Querrey Biomedical Research Center at 303 E. Superior St. in Chicago.

Left to right: Fran Kent '72, Paul Kent '71, '79 MBA, and Lorelei Rosenthal '66

More than 275 donors, partners, and friends gathered September 25 at the **17th Annual Robert J. Havey, MD Institute for Global Health Benefit Dinner** to support the institute's numerous initiatives addressing healthcare disparities around the world. The Havey Institute for Global Health had a busy year leading hundreds of projects across its nine centers and, at the dinner, Dr. Havey announced the creation of a new Center for Global Pediatric Care, established in partnership with faculty from Lurie Children's Hospital. This 10th center builds upon the institute's impressive footprint spanning 500 members and more than 50 partner sites and collaborations around the world.

The Havey Institute for Global Health and the Ryan Center for Global Primary Care are both fully endowed thanks to the generosity of Trustees and Northwestern alumni Patrick G. Ryan (right) and Shirley W. Ryan.

Dr. Havey and Feinberg Dean Eric G. Neilson, MD

On September 22, 200 swimmers braved wind and rain to plunge into Lake Michigan to raise $150,000 for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) research at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The event was hosted by **A Long Swim**, a Chicago-based foundation. Since its founding in 2011, A Long Swim has raised almost $2 million for ALS research. The money raised from the event was awarded to Hande Ozdinler, PhD, an associate professor in the Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology and a prominent ALS scientist.

Doug McConnell (second from right), co-founder of A Long Swim, awards Dr. Ozdinler (right) $150,000 to support her ALS research. *Photo: Bob Lee*

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

Empowering Feinberg's Unsung Heroes

Each day, our faculty, students, and trainees at Feinberg dedicate time to innovative new ideas and programs that will move the needle in medicine and science. Here, we spotlight some of the exciting work that often happens behind the scenes and beyond daily clinical care.

Thank you to all of the donors who contribute to these efforts, now and in the future. Your philanthropy fuels these projects and programs—enabling their very existence and empowering them to grow for the benefit of patients today and tomorrow.

Dr. Lillian Eichner

Analyzing the Genetic Mechanisms of Cancer Metabolism

Lillian Eichner, '04, PhD, assistant professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics, studies how certain genes and cellular processes contribute to cancer. Her work focuses primarily on the LKB1/STK11 gene, which is often mutated in a type of lung cancer called non-small cell lung cancer. By studying this gene in mouse models, Dr. Eichner and her lab have discovered important details about how these mutations drive cancer development. Their goal is to find weak points in cancer cells that can be targeted with new treatments. Essentially, the scientists are looking for ways to disrupt the cancer's ability to grow and survive by focusing on its genetic, epigenetic, and metabolic dependencies. The research could lead to more effective therapies for patients with both mutated and non-mutated forms of the LKB1/STK11 gene.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Jeff Masters** at **312-503-1917** or **jeffrey.masters@northwestern.edu**.

Dr. Luisa Iruela-Arispe

Targeting Cellular Signaling Pathways to Treat Vascular Disease

Luisa Iruela-Arispe, PhD, chair of the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology and the Stephen Walter Ranson Professor of Cell Biology, studies how cells move, grow, and malfunction, resulting in disease. Specifically, her lab explores the intricate signaling pathways that regulate vessel formation and remodeling, aiming to uncover novel therapeutic targets for treating vascular anomalies and related disorders. Recently, Dr. Iruela-Arispe and colleagues have focused on the origins of vascular malformations and vascular dementia with the goal to accelerate diagnosis and develop strategies to reduce or delay symptoms for these highly debilitating conditions.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Dave McCreery** at **312-503-6099** or **david.mccreery@northwestern.edu**.

Dr. Gemma Carvill

Using Cutting-Edge DNA Sequencing to Parse Epilepsy and Autism

Gemma Carvill, PhD, assistant professor of Neurology, Pharmacology, and Pediatrics, investigates the genetic causes of epilepsy, autism, and related neurogenetic disorders. Her research uses cutting-edge DNA sequencing technologies and novel computational algorithms to discover new genetic variants that cause epilepsy. While protein coding regions of the genome are well studied, non-coding regions (which make up 99% of the human genome) are generally ignored. Dr. Carvill and her team focus on these non-coding regions, specifically long non-coding RNAs (e.g., CHASERR) and poison exons, which control gene expression in the cell. By studying these non-coding regions, Dr. Carvill aims to develop new gene-targeting precision therapies for individuals living with epilepsy, autism, and other neurological conditions. The overall goal of Dr. Carvill's lab is to shift from treating the symptoms of neurological conditions to treating the root genetic cause of the condition using precision therapies.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Jordan Sund** at **312-503-2706** or **jordan.sund@northwestern.edu**.

Dr. Devalingam Mahalingam

Optimizing Combination Therapies for GI Cancers

Devalingam Mahalingam, MD, PhD, professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology and Oncology, is leading translational research and clinical trials to evaluate new treatments for gastrointestinal and pancreatic-biliary cancers. His team investigates why certain cancers resist treatment as well as the roles of cell death, or apoptosis, and cell recycling, or autophagy, in cancer. Additionally, he is spearheading studies of oncolytic viral therapy, an approach that uses viruses to target cancer cells and boost the immune system's response to cancer. At Northwestern Medicine, Dr. Mahalingam oversees the Developmental Therapeutics unit that treats over 300 patients annually, using novel therapies to combat cancers where standard therapies have failed. Ultimately, he intends to advance the efficacy of combination therapies including the use of precision oncology in cancer treatment.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Nicole Langert** at **312-503-1656** or **nicole.langert@northwestern.edu**.

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THE PHILANTHROPIST

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Inside This Issue

Cover photo: Medical trainee Danielle Pi (left), undergraduate (now medical) student Cyrus Abrahamson (middle), and graduate trainee Annmarie Dominguez (right) work in the lab of Luisa Iruela-Arispe, PhD, the Stephen Walter Ranson Professor and chair of the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology.