

PULSE

PHILANTHROPY IN ACTION



WINTER 2024

Plus:

Living donor
transplant
saves toddler

Alumni gift
propels new
biotech institute

FORWARD THINKING



HONOR
the FUTURE

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

THE LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE TAKES OFF

ULTRASOUND ISN'T NEW. USING IT FOR BRAIN SURGERY IS.

DR. JEFF ELIAS

*Professor of Neurological Surgery
UVA Health*

to be
**GREAT
AND
GOOD**
in all we do

Help UVA transform the future of healthcare by making a gift at giving.uvahealth.com
or contacting the UVA Health Foundation at 800.297.0102 for more information.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	SPECIAL MESSAGE Realizing Our Vision
4	NEWS BRIEFS Highlights From UVA Health
6	CLINICAL CARE Beyond a Gift
12	FEATURE New Leadership Institute at UVA Health
22	IMPACT Gift Elevates Manning Institute of Biotechnology
24	RESEARCH Discoveries Bring Understanding of Age-Related Diseases
28	EDUCATION The Gift That Kept On Giving
32	EDUCATION Next-Level Nursing
36	CAMPAIGN Milestones and Momentum
38	NEWS BRIEF New Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery
40	FINAL NOTE Building a Healthier Future



4

To share your story, give
feedback, or subscribe to the
digital version of **PULSE**, please
email us at pulse@virginia.edu.

28



TO LEARN MORE
go to giving.uvahealth.com

OR CALL
434.924.8432 or 800.297.0102

Follow us on
social media at:

facebook.com/uvahealth
 [@uvahealthnews](https://twitter.com/uvahealthnews)
 [@uvahealth](https://www.instagram.com/uvahealth)



WINTER 2024

UVA HEALTH FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sheri L. Klein, Chair
Rosemary Postle, Vice Chair
Robert G. Byron (A&S '73, Law '76)
Elizabeth A. Carr, MD (A&S '84, Law '88)
Pamela F. Edmonds (A&S '91)
J. Alden English (A&S '98, Law '02)
Bret W. Holden (A&S '83, Darden '88)
David C. Landin (A&S '68, Law '72)
Richard A. Mayo (A&S '64, Darden '68)
Amanda L. McCorry
Elizabeth Minnigh
Angela Lunnier Oakley (A&S '96)
Jerry Peng (Darden '03)
Denise Geolot Sherer, PhD, RN, FAAN (Nurs '70)
Ariana C. Williams (Edu '09)

EX OFFICIO

Marianne Baernholdt, PhD, MPH, RN, FAAN
Dean, UVA School of Nursing
Wendy Horton, PharmD, MBA, FACHE
Chief Executive Officer, UVA Medical Center
Amy S. Karr (GSAS '04)
Executive Director, UVA Health Foundation
and Senior Associate Vice President,
UVA Health Development
K. Craig Kent, MD
Chief Executive Officer, UVA Health, and
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, UVA
Melina Kibbe, MD, FACS, FAHA
Dean and Chief Health Affairs Officer,
UVA School of Medicine
Babur B. Lateef, MD
UVA Board of Visitors Representative
Mark M. Luellen
Vice President of Advancement

UVA Health Development Communications

Rick Kessel
Senior Director of Communications
Katherine Ludwig
Senior Writer
Andy Levinsky
Senior Writer
Alex Monson
Assistant Director of Communications
Karen Moore
Advancement Associate

Designer: Journey Group

Contributors: Rick Kessel, Katherine Ludwig, Andy
Levinsky, Alex Monson, Karen Moore, William Cocke,
Kim Wendel, Josh Barney, and Alice Berry

Photo Contributors: Dominique Attaway, Jeneene
Chatowsky, Tom Cogill, Elizabeth Collado
Photography, Elkus Manfredi Architects, John D.
Helms, RJ Redstrom, Coe Sweet, Texas Heart
Institute, University of Virginia, and UVA Health

Cover Photo: Tom Cogill
Left to right: Brian Hunter, Susan Pollart, MD,
C. Michael Valentine, MD, Jason Lineen,
Liza Khutsishvili

If you prefer not to receive future communications
from UVA Health Foundation, please contact us at
800.297.0102 or 434.924.8432.

Copyright 2024 by UVA Health Foundation.

UVA HEALTH CHILDREN'S NO. 1 CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN VIRGINIA

For the third consecutive year, *U.S. News & World Report* named UVA Health Children's the No. 1 children's hospital in Virginia. In its 2023–24 "Best Children's Hospitals" guide, the publication also ranked 9 of 10 UVA Health Children's specialties among the top 50 nationally:

23rd
Neonatology

29th
Gastroenterology
& GI surgery

32nd
Nephrology

34th
Diabetes
& endocrinology

34th
Orthopedics

36th
Cardiology
& heart surgery

38th
Pulmonology

40th
Neurology
& neurosurgery

43rd
Urology

UVA Health Children's
patient Kahmari Riedl is a
2023 National Champion
of Children's Miracle
Network Hospitals.

SPECIAL MESSAGE

Realizing Our Vision

AS WE BEGIN THE NEW YEAR, I am filled with optimism and want to thank our generous donors for helping us advance UVA Health's ambitious strategic plan.

We are already making significant progress on our 10-year strategic plan, "One Future Together: Health and Hope for All." This success has been made possible with the support of our philanthropic and strategic partners; you will find many stories in this edition of *PULSE* that reflect this impact.

In October, we celebrated the plan's first anniversary, and I am proud, as we enter 2024, that we are fully engaged in more than 20 transformative initiatives.

One inspiring project, funded largely by philanthropy as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia, UVA, and UVA Health, is the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology. This milestone effort reflects our commitment to improving healthcare by expanding the scope of our high-impact translational research. In December, we broke ground for this highly anticipated facility. The Manning Institute will firmly establish UVA as a leader in life-changing medical research, including gene and cellular therapies. I am thrilled to see this venture moving along quickly, and I deeply appreciate the collective efforts that have made this visionary project a reality. Medicine is evolving at an unprecedented pace, and our aspiration is not just to keep up with these changes but to lead the way.

We also take pride in our ongoing success in expanding research efforts, driven by our many accomplished research teams across UVA Health. Last year, we secured an incredible \$285 million in research awards for the School of Medicine, marking a substantial \$62 million increase from the previous year. This extraordinary growth represents a 25% increase in just one year. Comparing ourselves to other schools of medicine across the country, this level of growth in one year is unprecedented. The research discoveries are significant; last year, we had 10 of our publications in the most prestigious of all scientific journals, *Science and Nature*. Our most substantial advancements were in key areas, including cancer, cardiology, immunology, and the neurological sciences.

One of our primary objectives is to ensure that UVA Health's excellence in complex care extends throughout Virginia and beyond. Last summer, UVA Health became a minority owner of the Newport News-based Riverside Health System, a regional, five-hospital organization that serves over 2 million people in eastern Virginia. We are thrilled with this new partnership and are developing several new collaborations that encompass all of our missions, including clinical care, research, teaching, and community. Under the leadership of Art Martella, MD, Riverside's chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and Ourania Preventza, MD (profiled on page 38), division chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UVA Health, we have initiated a strategic affiliation aimed at establishing a premier cardiothoracic surgery program in eastern Virginia. In collaboration with Riverside Health, we are also creating a statewide clinical trials network so that people of eastern Virginia can access cutting-edge clinical therapies.

We are also committed to enhancing leadership growth within our health system. Last year, we launched the UVA Health Leadership Institute, our cover feature in this edition of *PULSE*. We welcomed our first cohort of 30 team members in November from more than 250 applicants across the system. The quality of applicants was so high that we anticipate being able to launch a second cohort within months. This strategic investment is critical for UVA Health, as it strengthens our culture of mentorship, supports career development, and helps us grow leaders from within.

Our ultimate goal, of course, is to provide excellent care to our patients. Last year, more than 8,700 donors chose to make a gift to UVA Health, and many of you are patients and families who received exceptional care across our UVA Health facilities. We sincerely appreciate our donors' partnership as you contribute to medical advances locally, nationally, and globally. These generous gifts will improve outcomes and shape our future.

As we step into a new year, supported by our dedicated workforce of nearly 17,000 team members and remarkable partners, we will embrace the opportunities ahead. There is no limit to what we can achieve. Together, we are realizing our vision of becoming the nation's leading public academic health system and the best place to work.

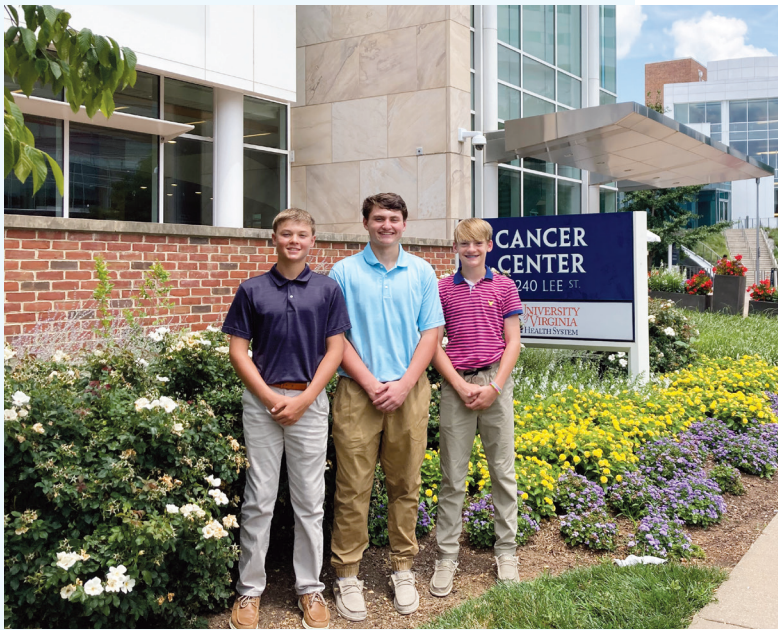
Warm regards,

K. Craig Kent, MD
Chief Executive Officer,
UVA Health
Executive Vice President
for Health Affairs,
University of Virginia



Sports Lovers Unite

LAST SPRING, Tyler Prusik, Jake Woskobunik, and Jackson Lang raised money for UVA Comprehensive Cancer Center with help from the NFL. The three middle schoolers and sports enthusiasts were inspired by a classmate's older brother battling leukemia to design a school project in his honor. They wrote letters to all 32 NFL teams seeking autographed memorabilia to auction for their cause. Eight of those teams—the Jacksonville Jaguars, Chicago Bears, New York Giants, Kansas City Chiefs, Philadelphia Eagles, Arizona Cardinals, Atlanta Falcons, and Minnesota Vikings—responded with gear ranging from branded pens and bracelets to signed player photos, footballs, and helmets. The trio donated all \$1,000 in proceeds to benefit UVA Health cancer programs. ■



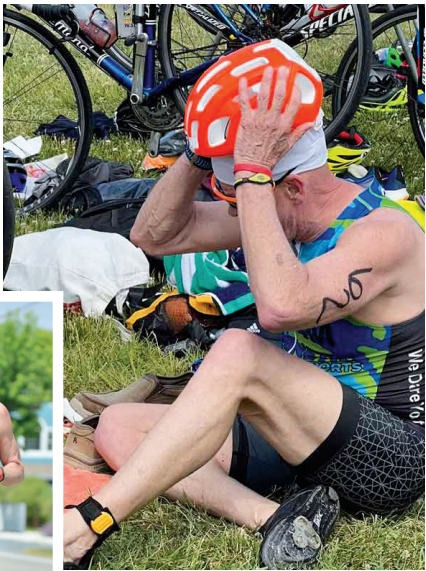
SPECIAL DELIVERY

LEGENDARY UVA PLAYER and South Carolina women's basketball head coach Dawn Staley (Col '92) teamed up with UVA women's basketball head coach Amaka "Mox" Agugua-Hamilton and retired head coach and Women's Basketball Hall of Famer Debbie Ryan to deliver a *My Special Aflac Duck*® to five patients at UVA Health Children's last June. According to Aflac Inc.'s press release, the cuddly social robot is a free-of-charge resource the company designed to comfort children over 3 with pediatric cancer and sickle cell disease. UVA Children's Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Division Chief Michael Engel, MD, said, "Spending a lot of time in the hospital can be overwhelming for our patients and emotional for their families. *My Special Aflac Duck* will surely bring happiness to children during their treatments and help comfort them at home." ■



INVESTMENT OF CONFIDENCE

THE BEN AND CATHERINE IVY FOUNDATION, one of the largest private funders of research into the deadliest type of brain cancer, known as glioblastoma multiforme, issued grants to all three UVA Health scientists who applied in 2023. **Natasha Sheybani**, PhD, an assistant professor of biomedical engineering, **Hui Li**, PhD, a Harrison Distinguished Professor of Pathology, and **Roger Abounader**, MD, PhD, a professor of microbiology, immunology and cancer biology, each received a \$600,000 Translational Adult Glioma Award. Three grants for three applications is a rare success rate for a single institution. This research will contribute to the identification of drug strategies for the Ivy Brain Tumor Center's early-phase pharmacodynamic- and pharmacokinetic-driven clinical trials. ■



From Transplant to Triathlon

RICHMOND-AREA RESIDENT R.J. Redstrom is back to swimming, cycling, and running after receiving the region's first COVID-induced, double-lung transplant at UVA Health. As *UVA Today* reported this past summer, Redstrom had completed an estimated 157 triathlons over 13 years before he became seriously ill with COVID in August 2020. After exhausting all available treatment options, he was lying in Henrico Doctors' Hospital near death when a physician determined he was a candidate for the novel double transplant. UVA Health pulmonologist Hannah Mannem, MD, and transplant surgeon Mark Roeser, MD, stepped up to lead the groundbreaking procedure. Redstrom completed his first post-transplant triathlon in June 2023 and another in September, cheered on by his UVA Health patient care team. ■

BEYOND A GIFT

Two-year-old William Bell received an anonymous, non-directed living donor liver transplant in December 2022. His successful surgery and rapid recovery in the PICU are a testament to a little boy's fighting spirit and to the extraordinary efforts of a team of doctors, nurses, and medical professionals at UVA Health.



In December 2022, William Bell lay in a crib in the PICU at UVA Health Children's. His mother, Maria, made her own makeshift bed to stay by his side. For three weeks, amid a welter of monitors, tubes, and wires, she held his hand, never letting go, through the long nights and hectic days.

By William Cocke

A Winning Team: Flanked by Dr. Frank DiPaola (left) and Dr. Nico Goldaracena (right), William Bell holds his cherished UVA football.

Just two months shy of his 2nd birthday, William was in the PICU recovering from over six hours of surgery. When he was just a few weeks old, he was diagnosed with biliary atresia, a rare liver disease that affects approximately 1 in 15,000 babies in the U.S. each year. It has no known cause and no cure. If caught early in infancy, it can be treated with surgical intervention and, if necessary, a liver transplant.

William received an anonymous, non-directed living donor liver transplant in December 2022. His successful surgery and rapid recovery in the PICU are a testament to 2-year-old William's fighting spirit and to the extraordinary efforts of a team of doctors, nurses, and medical professionals at UVA Health.

HEEDING THE WARNING SIGNS

By the time William received his transplant, he had endured more medical emergencies and invasive procedures than most adults do in a lifetime. His parents, Maria and Ryan Bell, attribute his outcome not just to the care he received at UVA but to an early series of lifesaving observations by healthcare professionals along the way.

"Many babies don't receive surgical intervention because they aren't diagnosed in time," Maria said from her home in Fairfax County. "We're incredibly thankful that wasn't the case for William because of his pediatrician here, Dr. Timothy O'Mara. William's good outcome today is a direct result of Dr. O'Mara, who saw that something just wasn't right, knew what to do, and acted to put him on the path that led us to

UVA to be under the care of Dr. Frank DiPaola, William's hepatologist.

"One of the major signs was that he already had an obliterated gallbladder, and there was no bile flow from his liver," Maria said. "At that point, he was transferred to UVA Medical Center and placed in the care of their pediatric gastroenterology and hepatology program."

After further evaluation with Dr. DiPaola, and consultation with the surgical team led by Dr. Daniel Levin, the doctors were confident in their diagnosis of biliary atresia. A week later, Levin's team performed what's known as a Kasai procedure on William, giving his liver a way to drain bile, stabilizing him, and buying time until it could be determined whether he needed a liver transplant.

A LONG ROAD AHEAD

Maria began keeping a journal to deal with the new reality facing William and her family.

In those wearisome weeks after William was born, we lost many of the celebratory moments a family enjoys when they welcome a new baby, but we gained understanding about a world we had never known before. Inside the walls of a children's hospital, medical professionals across countless specialties are devoting long days and longer nights to sustaining life for some of the most precious in our society: babies who would otherwise face the tragic realities of incurable disease, babies like our son.

When we were discharged after William's Kasai, our being overwhelmed with the diagnosis and all that might lie ahead was accompanied by a deep sense of gratitude for the caring doctors and nurses who were committed to walking the long road with us.

William's Kasai surgery was a success. For a few months, the Bells' life entered a new normal. "William continued to grow well, but his bilirubin never normalized, which is one of the primary indicators for having a transplant before age 5."

By October 2021, William began experiencing cirrhosis and portal hypertension. The Bells went into daily high-alert mode for life-threatening complications, aware that a transplant was needed soon. Their sense of uncertainty was eased by good communication from the UVA team.

"Because of how they framed this problem at the outset, none of these outcomes, or the complications along the way, were surprises," Ryan said. "The team anticipated them and put them on our radar so that we could anticipate them, too. That

was helpful in a way that gave the entire family confidence,” he said.

Ryan continued, “This was nothing like anything we’d ever walked through as individuals or as a family. What we know from interacting with other families who were in the hospital at the same time as we were is that they were getting the same level of treatment, the same care, and the same types of conversations. That approach to excellence is inspiring.”

A FULL-COURT PRESS

After his bout with portal hypertension, William began to experience daily high fevers that led to a diagnosis of a serious liver infection known as cholangitis. Though it’s typically treated with oral antibiotics, William didn’t respond well.

Over the next few months, from August to late November 2022, he was rushed to the ER and hospitalized repeatedly because the cholangitis continued to break through every antibiotic the team attempted. To minimize trips to the hospital, the seventh floor nurses trained Maria to run a PICC line. She began to administer William’s antibiotics herself.

To help shoulder some of the burden, Maria’s parents, Gaylon and Cathy, moved from their home in Florida and secured a place for the whole family to stay in Charlottesville.

Gaylon, a pharmacist, noticed something different about the healthcare professionals at UVA. “I’ve been involved with quite a few hospitals in my career, not necessarily for personal care but professionally, and there was a distinct difference in UVA’s approach to patient care, especially on the pediatric side. It was a high-quality staff and inpatient care, nursing care, and it struck us all along the way.”

His wife, Cathy, added: “We can’t stress enough the brilliance and the skill level of the doctors, combined with their humility. It makes you feel like

you’re with loving family.” Because of the extraordinary care William received, Maria’s parents have since made a gift to pediatric gastroenterology to support biliary atresia and pediatric liver transplant research at UVA under the direction of Dr. Frank DiPaola in collaboration with Dr. Sean Moore.

Drs. DiPaola and Moore are focusing their research on establishing protocols at UVA and partnering institutions in Virginia to widen the net of families who can participate in studies of the role of the microbiome in biliary atresia. The doctors have recently hired a research assistant to help them move forward on the microbiome project.

The assistant has been tasked with searching through UVA’s massive electronic health records

Top: William Bell returns to UVA Health Children’s for regular check ups with Dr. DiPaola. He always brings his lucky UVA basketball.

Right: Thanks to his care at UVA, William Bell is a happy, sandy-haired bundle of energy.



“What we know from interacting with other families who were in the hospital at the same time is that they were getting the same level of treatment, care, and types of conversations. That approach to excellence is inspiring.”

—Ryan Bell

SCORE ONE FOR THE TEAM

UVA HEALTH CHILDREN’S is one of the few children’s hospitals in the mid-Atlantic with the ability to perform pediatric living donor liver transplants. Currently, 70% of UVA Health Children’s pediatric liver transplants are performed with a living donor liver, and in the last year, 90% of them were performed with an anonymous living liver donor.

“It’s crucial to have an anonymous living donor transplant option within a pediatric transplant program,” Dr. Goldaracena said.

He added that living donor liver transplantation leads to more successful outcomes. “You cannot run a pediatric liver transplant program without it, because living donation provides faster access to transplantation and can reduce waitlist mortality, and patients receive an otherwise perfect, healthy organ,” he said. “It lessens the risk for the recipient, and it also keeps an organ in the pool, creating access for other patients.”

Like many people who’ve gone through difficult, life-changing experiences, Maria has channeled her energy into becoming an advocate for families who need living donor transplants. She’s working with Dr. Goldaracena and others to form an advocacy group at UVA to raise awareness of the living donor program and invest in education, research, and program development. “We hope that more people know about this work at UVA Health Children’s and act on their awareness so that more children can leave that waiting list, leave their hospital rooms, and live their full lives at home with their families,” she said.

database and pathology archives to identify liver and biliary specimens for children with biliary atresia and is working toward a goal of performing metagenomic analyses on these samples to identify a broad range of microbial nucleic acids that might be the inciting factor for biliary atresia.

REACHING END STAGE

Despite the team's best efforts, William's health began to falter. The pediatric infectious disease group, which included Dr. Jim Nataro, Dr. Ina Stephens, and Dr. Debbie-Ann Shirley, had been working tirelessly with the GI-hepatology team to treat William's cholangitis episodes, but it was becoming clear that he needed a new liver.

"William was technically at end-stage liver disease, not liver failure, and giving him an opportunity to be transplanted before he reached liver failure was going to be the only lifesaving option for him," Maria said. "So, he was listed on the national waiting list."

William received a pediatric end-stage liver disease, or PELD, score of 35, which was good, but it also meant that many other patients were ahead of him. Meanwhile, he began suffering from multiple bone fractures, or hepatic osteodystrophy. His team, which now included doctors from the University of Pittsburgh and UVA's living donor surgeon, Dr. Nicolas (Nico) Goldarecena, began to advocate to the transplant board on William's behalf.

A THANKSGIVING TO REMEMBER

A living donor transplant, in which most donors choose to remain anonymous, was William's best chance for survival. However, anonymous living



Brothers and Sisters: William is joined by his siblings, Eleanora, Samuel, and Hannah, in the healing garden at UVA Health Children's.

donor transplants accounted for fewer than 4% of pediatric liver transplants and fewer than 1% of all liver transplants in 2022.

From Maria's journal:

Just after Thanksgiving, we were notified that an altruistic living donor had stepped forward and, after extensive evaluation, was determined to be a perfect match for William. That a person entirely unknown to our family would offer to undergo a major operation to give a stranger a second chance at life seemed rather unbelievable. ... We officially accepted the offer and prayed toward a transplant with great anticipation.

Early on the morning of Dec. 14, William was taken to pre-op with what would be his last PICC line for cholangitis. Dr. Levin, the transplant surgeons, and many of William's favorite nurses stopped by with well wishes and hugs, bringing warmth to a stiff space where I had cried many tears. Because of UVA's unique partnership with UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, initiated in 2016, William and his "Good Samaritan" donor received world-class transplant treatment that day, under the direction of lead surgeons Dr. Nico Goldarecena of UVA Health and Dr. Kyle Soltys of UPMC Children's.

After over six hours in surgery, William was discharged to the PICU to begin his recovery. "The PICU experience can be overwhelming, but they have an incredible team there," Maria said. "From

the moment William was brought to the PICU, we felt cared for as a family."

Ryan added that the spectrum of care included William's mother. "Maria never left William's side," he said. "That's a high-stress situation when you forget about yourself. So the team didn't take care of just William's medical needs; they took care of her nutritional needs and ensured she was on a good schedule."

While William was in the PICU, the Child Life staff set up a small basketball net in his crib and gave him a miniature UVA basketball. "When he was undergoing IV therapy, he would just sit in his little crib and shoot baskets," Maria recalled. "And it just became his thing, so that every time he was admitted, somebody from Child Life or one of the nurses would grab the basketball net and have it in his room."

Today, William is a smiling, sandy-haired little boy with seemingly unlimited reserves of energy. He still returns for regular treatment where every clinic visit includes shooting baskets with his physician and teammate, Dr. DiPaolo. ■

Learn more about UVA Health Children's NICU/PICU and how you can support this vital program by contacting Richard Long, Director of Development, UVA Health Children's, at rlong@virginia.edu or call us at 434.924.8432 or 800.297.0102.

"We can't stress enough the brilliance and the skill level of the doctors, combined with their humility. It makes you feel like you're with loving family."

—Cathy, William's grandmother

The devotion is mutual between William and Andrea Jones, his pediatric nurse practitioner.



FORWARD

THINKING

UVA HEALTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE TAKES OFF

BY RICK KESSEL



Left to right: Brian Hunter, Susan Pollart, MD, C. Michael Valentine, MD, Jason Lineen, Liza Khutsishvili

WITH THE STRATEGIC GOALS OF CULTIVATING THE NEXT generation of leaders in academic medicine and continuing to advance the organization as a best place to work, UVA Health has launched an ambitious new initiative: the UVA Health Leadership Institute (HLI). In this Q&A, we explore its genesis and ambitions featuring key voices spearheading the HLI, including Jason Lineen, chief strategy officer for UVA Health; C. Michael Valentine (Med '84), MD, MACC, general cardiology professor of medicine, and senior director of this endeavor; Susan Pollart (Med '82), MD, MS, FAAFP, senior associate dean for faculty affairs and faculty development at UVA School of Medicine and the Ruth E. Murdaugh Professor of Family Medicine; and Brian Hunter (Col '01), the Leadership Institute's newly appointed executive director.

nation's leading public academic health system and best place to work? And what was the impetus for this idea?

Jason Lineen: Similar to all other components of UVA Health's new 10-year strategic plan, we have an extremely bold vision for the newly launched HLI. First and foremost, we want to cultivate and develop the next generation of outstanding leaders from within UVA Health. Achieving our vision of becoming "the nation's leading public academic health system and a best place to work" will require exceptional leadership across all four of our mission areas—patient care, research, education, and community. UVA Health is rapidly expanding in these areas, creating many opportunities for new leaders to serve in meaningful roles.

Second, through collaboration with leaders and luminary faculty across Grounds including, but not limited to, Darden School of Business, McIntire School of Commerce, and Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, we see an incredible opportunity to build and grow HLI into the nation's preeminent leadership development program for administrators and clinicians aspiring to become health system C-suite leaders. This leadership development program will train the next generation of health system executives who will lead these complex and rapidly changing organizations in the 21st century. Most importantly, UVA and UVA Health have incredible expertise to develop a nationally recognized program.

Q: Dr. Mike Valentine and Dr. Susan Pollart: What were your backgrounds and roles in developing and executing this concept?

Dr. Valentine: I was fortunate to be involved in similar leadership development programs at the American College of Cardiology and Centra Health in Lynchburg. During our planning process here, we heard from many people that they needed career development, mentorship, and leadership programs to help them progress. So, we looked at what UVA had to offer—not only do we have a renowned health system, but we also have the renowned Darden School of Business, McIntire School of Commerce, and Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy. So, we started discussing leadership programs to help our employees build their careers and partner with the strengths across Grounds. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

Dr. Pollart: We're always in learning mode as team members at an educational institution. My colleagues and I have participated in local, regional, and national leadership programs, giving

Continued on page 18

The HLI will shape the future of executive leadership in academic medicine, setting a benchmark nationally and globally. It is the beginning of an exciting journey for UVA Health, supported by an unwavering commitment to its mission of "transforming health and inspiring hope for all Virginians and beyond."

Q: How will the Leadership Institute support UVA Health's strategic vision to be the



Mesha Lawan Jones, MSN, RN; Arun Krishnaraj, MD, and Crystal Toll, EdD, MSN

PREPARING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

MEET MEMBERS OF THE FIRST COHORT FROM THE UVA HEALTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

IN NOVEMBER 2023, UVA HEALTH LAUNCHED ITS GROUNDBREAKING LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE, a visionary initiative that will empower future leaders. The institute not only will strengthen professional development opportunities across UVA Health but also will serve as a beacon of innovation, setting new benchmarks in healthcare leadership on a regional and national basis.

The inaugural cohort of 25 exceptional individuals, including professionals like Mesha Lawan Jones, MSN, RN; Crystal Toll, EdD, MSN; and Arun Krishnaraj, MD, MPH, marks a significant milestone in reshaping the landscape of academic medical center leadership. These individuals, with varied backgrounds from across UVA Health and unwavering commitments to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation, symbolize the essence of this program.

These conversations offer a compelling glimpse into the first cohort's backgrounds, leadership interests, and career goals. Their unique experiences and shared dedication shed light on the institute's potential to strengthen leadership at all levels and areas across UVA Health. As they begin this journey, their collaborative approach and visionary outlook will redefine healthcare leadership.

Q + A



Mesha Lawan Jones, MSN, RN
Clinical Instructor of Nursing, Acute & Specialty Care

Q: Mesha, what interested you about this leadership program, and how will it help you in your career here at UVA?

I am the 2023 president of the Nursing Professional Governance Organization and interim ambulatory float pool and Earn While You Learn medical assistant manager. I've been at UVA Health for 21 years, including eight years as a registered nurse and, before that, a certified nursing assistant, so I've had some leadership experience.

I first heard about the Leadership Institute through my work with the UVA Health strategic plan. I had an opportunity to co-chair the community engagement portion of the plan with Dr. Tracy Downs, which was a great experience. At first, I didn't see myself participating in this program, as I didn't know if I would be accepted. But when I saw the application, I thought, "I could do that," so I'm thrilled to be part of the first cohort.

I'm also learning how to be a nurse leader through my other educational program. However, I was interested in learning what it would be like to be a leader outside of nursing and how that can impact my aspiration to help people, communities, and my personal and professional growth.

Q: What aspects of leadership are you hoping to learn from this program to build your skills?

I want to learn more about different leadership

styles so I might find ways to adapt them in my profession. I would also like to improve my strategic thinking and innovation skills because we need them to grow as a health system. And I'm excited to understand how effective leadership thinking will help in anything I do.

Q: How will the Leadership Institute help you achieve your personal and career goals?

I consider myself a novice when it comes to leadership and management. Hopefully, being part of this institute will provide me with more knowledge to take my career to the next level. I believe once I complete the program, I will be more prepared to take on advanced levels of leadership.

Q: What are your thoughts about hearing from and collaborating with faculty coming in from Darden, Batten, and McIntire who will be involved in the institute?

I'm very excited about the networking opportunities that will be part of this program. Being inside the hospital's walls for so long has given me a particular understanding of leadership. Therefore, gaining varied perspectives on leadership outside of healthcare and how I could adapt some of those ideas will be highly beneficial.



Crystal Toll, EdD, MSN
Assistant Professor, School of Nursing

Q: Why did you apply to the Leadership Institute, and how does it tie in with your career?

I am an assistant professor in the UVA School of Nursing RN-to-BSN program. I've not only had the opportunity to engage in bedside nursing, but I spent time in a nurse management role and a quality role before transitioning to the academic side.

When I saw the email inviting me to apply, I was intrigued, as I'm seeking to build relationships with

leaders across UVA Health. One of the fundamental pillars of good leadership is developing positive relationships with colleagues. Participating in the Leadership Institute will enable me to engage with established leaders and people like me who are coming up through the ranks. Also, it seems like a great platform, as it will help facilitate a positive culture and foster a sense of community between UVA Health and the School of Nursing. Furthermore, I want to learn the business of academics and health system operations.

I aim to learn how strategic planning takes shape from its inception to implementation and how an institution's resources are effectively allocated. It will be great to also meet the members of our workforce on both sides of the street—academic and health systems have equitable access to the resources they need to succeed.

Q: What are your long-term career goals, and how does this leadership intersect with those goals?

My personal goals are consistent with UVA's goals. I have no desire to be anywhere else with UVA. Still, I want to develop a leadership path focused on education—whether on the academic side or the health system. I want to formally be a leader and contribute to our methods and decisions around nursing education. Specifically, I hope to enhance my skills to enable a pathway to future leadership opportunities, possibly as a program director, chair, dean, or in nursing-care quality.

Q: How do you see this program helping internally and on a regional or national scale?

A personal goal I set as I entered this program is to foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork actively. Once we accomplish this, we can promote equitable recognition of leadership potential that is sometimes not seen. This program will also build my confidence as a leader and enable me to mentor others in professional transitions. Broadly, we will see the greatest gain from this program in the culture of collaboration across UVA Health and set us as a model for other institutions.



Arun Krishnaraj, MD
Associate Professor, Radiology and Medical Imaging

Q: What is your interest in the Leadership Institute, and how does it tie in with your career?

I was recruited to UVA from Mass General in 2013 to lead the Division of Body Imaging. When I arrived in Charlottesville, my chair, Alan Matsumoto, MD felt I would benefit from participating in the UVA Leadership in Academic Matters (LAM) course. LAM is a leadership development course that brings together emerging faculty leaders from across Grounds to participate in various enrichment and networking activities. I thoroughly enjoyed that opportunity and hope to build upon that experience through the Leadership Institute. As a leader within my department, I look forward to learning more from other leaders across the healthcare enterprise and how my skills and talents and my teams can benefit UVA Health.

During my conversation with Jason Lineen, chief strategic officer at UVA Health, he indicated

"Participating in the Leadership Institute will enable me to engage with established leaders and people like me who are coming up through the ranks."

—Crystal Toll, EdD, MSN

that part of our strategic plan is to grow leaders from within the institution. I saw this as an excellent opportunity to strengthen my leadership skills. It would help me learn more about strategic planning and new ways to work with my team to achieve our goals for the institution, the citizens of the commonwealth, and the patients we serve.

Q: What are you hoping to learn from this program?

I'm looking forward to the networking aspects of the program and learning from others across the institution. Healthcare is a team sport, and connecting with other leaders will be something that I know I will benefit from.

I've had the opportunity to guest lecture and participate in courses at the Darden School, and I've always found their education to be world-class. I'm also aware of McIntire and Batten Schools' outstanding reputation, so learning from domain experts from those schools will be a great benefit. There's always more to learn in healthcare, but I am particularly interested in learning more about the financial aspect of UVA Health.

Furthermore, we're in a period of healthcare consolidation and growth. I was in the Boston area and, before that, in the Chapel Hill area, and in both of those regions, there was mass consolidation and integration of healthcare systems, and that's just beginning here at UVA. So, to be involved at the ground level and to see how those processes work will be beneficial.

Lastly, I've been in leadership and advocacy roles in my specialty since I was a resident. I'm fortunate to serve on the Board of Chancellors for the American College of Radiology, and one of our organization's goals has always been advocating for the role radiology plays in improving patients' health and assisting other physicians in making the best care decisions for patients. I think being able to represent my specialty and the role our department plays in delivering exceptional care will be something I look forward to. A strong radiology department makes for an efficient healthcare system.

Q: What are your career goals in leadership?

I hope to one day lead a health system, either at the CEO or EVP level, so learning how a strategic plan is rolled out broadly is something that I'm excited to learn more about. I believe the skills I will learn by participating in the Leadership Institute will benefit me or any healthcare provider with aspirations for health system leadership. ■

Continued from page 14

us a strong background for moving forward with the Leadership Institute. My experiences have been in the discipline of family medicine and in professional development programs offered by the Association of American Medical Colleges, where I have taught in their early-career women's development seminar since 2016, and the Healthcare Executive Diversity and Inclusion Certificate (HEDIC) program since its inception in 2013. I also teach at the Drexel University Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) and Executive Leadership in Healthcare (ELH programs), renowned women's leadership programs that have been highly successful in preparing women for leadership roles in healthcare and academic medicine. Through work in these programs, I've seen women grow from early-career faculty members to department chairs and deans.

Q: Brian Hunter, please tell us about your experience, what brought you here, and your vision for this program?

Brian: I fell in love with this community and the University as an undergraduate here at UVA, and I'm thrilled to be back in Charlottesville. I spent the last 11-plus years working in strategy and business development at UNC Health, so I was particularly excited about leveraging my background to develop UVA Health's Leadership Institute.



SHE'S READY TO BE PART OF "THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE LEADERS."

Liza Khutsishvili (McIntire '23) has been playing a critical supporting strategy role as an intern for the new UVA Health Leadership program. As a prospective medical student with undergraduate degrees in global health and business (Col '23), she sees the

Leadership Institute reflecting her own interests. "This program aligns with my passions, which are medicine, strategy, and business," she said. "My five-year plan is to attend medical school and obtain my MD." Liza's undergraduate work at McIntire School of Commerce provided her with similar leadership skills that many will learn in this new program.

"I realized that to be a change maker and a driver of innovation within my career as a clinician," she explained, "I would need to acquire leadership skills and an understanding of how systems work to drive change, especially because healthcare innovation is critical to lifesaving care, and in some institutions, it lags behind other industries."

Liza believes the strong demand to participate in the institute demonstrates a broad understanding that leadership skills are essential: "Our applicants know this is the next step in developing their career and will help build UVA Health into an institution renowned for training the next generation of healthcare leaders." ■



Members of the first cohort of the Leadership Institute.

As Jason and Dr. Valentine mentioned, the institute's vision is to cultivate future leaders from within. It will help to make UVA a place where we can attract and retain top talent and ultimately become nationally recognized for this program.

Jason: Rapidly launching and expanding the HLI is a strategic imperative for UVA Health. We are fortunate to have Dr. Valentine and Dr. Pollart working with us, as they have exceptional physician leadership experience. Additionally, we recently completed a highly competitive national search to find an executive director for the HLI. We're thrilled that Brian Hunter has joined us, and he has quickly hit the ground running. I also want to highlight a key team member, Liza Khutsishvili, who has joined as a recent McIntire alumna. A distinguished graduate, Liza has international work experience and an entrepreneurial drive that have helped shape the HLI launch.

Q: Who is participating in this program, and what are their career development goals and interests?

Jason: UVA Health has grown rapidly in recent years with multiple hospital acquisitions and new strategic alliances across the commonwealth. Our new Leadership Institute is one of many ways we are building the "One UVA Health" culture throughout a growing statewide enterprise. The HLI is a system-wide initiative that has been designed to bring cross-functional teams (from clinicians to administrators to researchers and beyond) together to learn leadership skills relevant to the academic healthcare environment. A testament to the enthusiasm for this new program, we had an incredible response with over 250 applicants for our inaugural HLI cohort. The individuals who applied are early- to mid-careerists that span all aspects of UVA Health—from clinicians in our emergency department at Prince William Medical Center to faculty members in our Schools of Medicine and Nursing to Claude Moore Health Sciences Library staff to University Medical Center and University Physicians Group (UPG) nurses, managers, and many more. They will learn more about our institution, build connections with colleagues across UVA Health, and develop their leadership competencies.

Dr. Pollart: It was a challenge narrowing the field of applicants and selecting the first cohort members! For example, we had many outstanding applicants pursuing advanced degrees, and we hoped they would finish those programs and bring that learning to a future HLI cohort. We also considered individuals' careers, how they had advanced, and where they saw themselves in five years.

Q: How are you collaborating with the various partners across the University?

Jason: The HLI advisory council is helping to oversee and shape all aspects of the Leadership



Institute. It includes clinical and administrative executives from UVA Health and exceptional thought leaders from Batten, Darden, and McIntire. We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to collaborate across Grounds to tap into such eminence on the topic of leadership development. We would not have been able to make such great progress without the guidance and contributions of our advisory council.

Dr. Pollart: We've talked with our partners about the importance of healthcare leadership in this country. Each of these groups brings to that conversation ways we might connect and thoughts about the UVA Health Leadership Institute. This collaboration may also help develop ideas for new programs, seminars, or workshops. It strengthens the potential of all of us to be united under this umbrella.

Q: What are your plans for expanding this program in the future?

Dr. Valentine: We are planning many cohorts in the future, but it was essential to get the first one off the ground and build from there. Although we could only accommodate around 25% of the individuals who applied, we are engaging all applicants with other opportunities.

Dr. Pollart: When we launched the program, we determined that there are times we should bring people with different disciplines together for a program and other times when we could aggregate individuals by their area of specialty due to the unique nature of those specialties.

That will be something we will move toward in the future. There are many amazing possibilities to build this program.

We have our internal view of this program, but donors and corporate partners could help us think about what else is possible—things we haven't considered. So, we look forward to connecting with them to build a more robust institute.

Jason: This is where visionary donors and partners who are passionate about this program could help us expand. Our aim is to build a nationally renowned leadership development program for aspiring health system C-suite leaders. There is a wide range of opportunities for potential donors interested in supporting the Leadership Institute's expansion—from sponsoring lectureship series to funding entire cohorts and beyond. We envision programming that will include highly customized tracks focused on various professional backgrounds, including nursing, administrative, physician, and more.

In addition to philanthropic support, we are meeting with a wide range of distinguished UVA alumni with significant leadership experience outside of healthcare to glean insights and leadership lessons that can be applied to the hospital sector.

Q: Could you describe the experiential learning components of this program?

Dr. Valentine: The students have capstone projects in a variety of fascinating areas. Not only are they learning, developing, and growing our

culture, but they will be helping us solve some of the significant challenges in our health system.

We also see the multiple levels of development opportunities, including lectureships and partnerships with the Darden, McIntire, and Batten Schools.

Q: Please tell us your thoughts on leading this program.

Brian: It's the art of the possible. We will learn from the first cohort and other experts who study and teach leadership. Our faculty are preeminent leaders and will help us evolve the curriculum, programs, offerings, and services. The potential is incredible. As Jason noted, we have a tremendous advisory council with broad representation from across Grounds and the health system guiding our efforts. We know some strong candidates weren't chosen for the first cohort, but we aim to keep them engaged and provide additional learning opportunities.

Dr. Valentine: We also met with one of our advisory council members, Gabrielle Adams, an associate professor at the Darden and Batten Schools; she brought a perspective about how to train people and get them engaged through the Darden/Batten lens of leadership. So, I think this cross-collaboration will make us much more effective.

Q: What kind of commitment is it for the students, and how will they balance the program with their current work obligations?

Dr. Valentine: We are looking for committed leaders, and we were pleased to see the support from their managers and supervisors. This is an eight-month program with two all-day and six half-day sessions. We supply them with a wealth of

reading materials and lots of engagement outside of the classroom. It is student-centered learning involving casework, problem-solving, and learning through collaboration.

Q: What are your final thoughts?

Dr. Valentine: This initiative has gained the full support of the top leadership at UVA Health, the Board of Visitors, Dr. Kent, and our entire leadership team at UVA Health. They're incredibly excited and supportive, which is why we've made significant progress. We hope our generous, visionary UVA supporters will help us on this vital journey. With their support and vision, we will make this a world-class, innovative healthcare leadership institute.

Jason: Peter Drucker, one of the most influential thinkers in the field of management and leadership in the 20th century, once said, "Healthcare organizations are the most complex human organizations ever derived." The U.S. hospitals and health systems need exceptionally talented leaders to navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead in the 21st century. UVA has the right ingredients to build a world-class leadership development program for UVA Health team members and beyond. Ultimately, our vision is for UVA to be nationally recognized as *the* training ground for future healthcare leaders. ■

Learn more about the UVA Health Leadership Institute and how you can support this vital program by contacting Ashley Cullop, Principal Gift Officer, UVA Health Development, at ashleycullop@virginia.edu or call us at 434.924.8432 or 800.297.0102.

"UVA has the right ingredients to build a world-class leadership development program for UVA Health team members and beyond. Ultimately, our vision is for UVA to be nationally recognized as *the* training ground for future healthcare leaders."

—Jason Lineen

Cook Family Gift to Elevate Manning Institute of Biotechnology

By Kim Wendel

Maggie Cook, MD (Col '95), and her husband, Will Cook (Col '95), share a remarkable journey that began as undergraduates at the University of Virginia, where their friendship took root at the end of their very first year. Their bond endured and blossomed as they pursued their individual careers, culminating in their marriage in 2001. Over the years, their connection to UVA has deepened, fueled by a shared passion for biotechnology and data science—fields with the potential to improve the lives of countless individuals across the globe.

The couple recently made one of the first leadership gifts to the new Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology. The University broke ground on this state-of-the-art facility on Dec. 8, 2023.

The vision of the institute is to “catalyze innovation and stimulate collaboration throughout the state by bringing together world-class researchers in biotechnology who will bring life-changing and lifesaving treatments to those who need them the most.”

The Cook Family Biotechnology Institute Fund will provide unrestricted support to be used at the discretion of the University and UVA Health leadership. The Cooks are confident in the Manning Institute’s potential to launch lifesaving gene therapies, create jobs for Virginians, and increase opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. “While the Human Genome Project was launched in 1990, the promise of our understanding of genetic drivers of disease and our ability to translate that knowledge into effective therapies are in the early innings. We have so much to solve,” said Maggie. “And as you look at building out the biotech industry in any community, there’s a huge range of jobs that



will be created—the creative scientists making discoveries, a variety of hands-on lab jobs, entrepreneurial opportunities for spinouts. The integration of advanced data science is essential in advancing life science projects as well.”

“Advancing in biotech and data science is forward-thinking. This is where so much innovation in the future is going to be,” said Will. “An important part of President Ryan’s goal of becoming the top public university by 2030 will be continuing to advance UVA’s research efforts.

“And the Manning Institute will continue to broaden the opportunity set for UVA undergraduates in ways that are unique to UVA,” he added. “If you’re a curious student like I was, motivated by and interested in a lot of different things, the University is a place to explore those different options.”

The Cooks have also created the Cook Family Bicentennial Scholars Fund, a need-based scholarship for students at the College of Arts

& Sciences, and they are longtime supporters of Harlem Academy, an independent school that drives equity of opportunity for promising students in the local community. “We both believe that everyone should feel like they can access a high-quality education,” said Maggie.

“As the saying goes,” added Will, “education is the great equalizer. Everyone should be given an equal opportunity to find success in life, and education provides the foundation for that opportunity.” ■



Proposed design for the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology

For more information on how to support the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology, please contact Ashley Cullop, Principal Gift Officer, UVA Health Development, at ashleycullop@virginia.edu or call us at 434.924.8432 or 800.297.0102.

'SUNDOWNING' AND 'INFLAMMAGING'

Two UVA discoveries bring new understanding of Alzheimer's and age-related diseases.

RESEARCH TEAMS FROM TWO DEPARTMENTS at UVA School of Medicine have uncovered new clues about the biological causes and consequences of aging and Alzheimer's symptoms. Together, these discoveries are raising new hope for effective treatments and eventually cures for age-related conditions that devastate millions of Americans daily, including heart disease and dementia. Private support of experimental research is crucial for making scientific breakthroughs like this at UVA Health. The following two studies were made possible by the generous support of The Owens Family Foundation.



Inflammation Discovery Could Slow Aging, Prevent Age-Related Diseases

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE researchers have discovered a key driver of chronic inflammation that accelerates aging. That finding could let us slow the clock to live longer, healthier lives, and may allow us to prevent age-related conditions such as deadly heart disease and devastating brain disorders that rob us of our faculties.

So what drives this harmful inflammation? The answer is improper calcium signaling in the mitochondria of certain immune cells. Mitochondria are the power generators in all cells, and they rely heavily on calcium signaling.

The UVA Health researchers, led by Bimal N. Desai, PhD, found that the mitochondria in the immune cells called macrophages lose their ability to take up and use calcium with age. This, the researchers show, leads to chronic inflammation responsible for many of the ailments that afflict our later years.

The researchers believe that increasing calcium uptake by the mitochondrial macrophages could prevent the harmful inflammation and its terrible effects. Because macrophages reside in all organs of our bodies, including the brain, targeting such "tissue-resident macrophages" with appropriate drugs may allow us to slow age-associated neurodegenerative diseases.

"I think we have made a key conceptual breakthrough in understanding the molecular underpinnings of age-associated inflammation," said Desai, of UVA's Department of Pharmacology and UVA's Carter Immunology Center. "This discovery illuminates new therapeutic strategies to interdict the inflammatory cascades that lie at the heart of many cardiometabolic and neurodegenerative diseases."

THE INFLAMMATION OF AGING—'INFLAMMAGING'

Macrophages are white blood cells that play critical roles in our immune systems and, in turn, our good health. They swallow up dead or dying cells, allowing our bodies to remove cellular debris, and patrol for pathogens and other foreign invaders. In this latter role, they act as important sentries for our immune systems, calling for help from other immune cells as needed.

"I think we have made a key conceptual breakthrough in understanding the molecular underpinnings of age-associated inflammation."

—Bimal N. Desai, PhD



Scientists have known that macrophages become less effective with age, but it has been unclear why. Desai's new discovery suggests answers.

Desai and his team say their research has identified a "keystone" mechanism responsible for age-related changes in the macrophages. These changes, the scientists believe, make the macrophages prone to chronic, low-grade inflammation at the best of times. And when the immune cells are confronted by an invader or tissue damage, they can become hyperactive. This drives what is known as "inflammaging"—chronic inflammation that drives aging.

Further, the UVA Health scientists suspect that the mechanism they have discovered will hold true not just for macrophages but for many other related immune cells generated in the bone marrow. That means we may be able to stimulate the proper functioning of those cells as well, potentially giving our immune systems a big boost in old age, when we become more susceptible to disease.

NEXT STEPS

Fixing “inflammaging” won’t be as simple as taking a calcium supplement. The problem is not a shortage of calcium so much as the macrophages’ inability to use it properly. But Desai’s new discovery has pinpointed the precise molecular machinery involved in this process, so we should be able to discover ways to stimulate this machinery in aging cells.

“This highly interdisciplinary research effort, at the interface of computational biology, immunology, cell biology, and biophysics, wouldn’t have been possible without the determination of Phil Seegren, the graduate student who spearheaded this ambitious project,” Desai said. “Now, moving forward, we need an equally ambitious effort to figure out the wiring that controls this mitochondrial process in different types of macrophages and then manipulate that wiring in creative ways for biomedical impact.”

Enhanced Light Sensitivity May Play Key Role in Alzheimer’s

NEW ALZHEIMER’S research from UVA Health suggests that enhanced light sensitivity may contribute to “sundowning”—the worsening of symptoms late in the day—and spur sleep disruptions thought to contribute to the disease’s progression.

The new insights into the disruptions of the biological clock seen in Alzheimer’s could have important potential both for the development of treatments and for symptom management, the researchers say. For example, caregivers often struggle with the erratic sleep patterns caused by Alzheimer’s patients’ altered “circadian rhythms,” as the body’s natural daily cycle is known. Light therapy, the new research suggests, might be an effective tool to help manage that.

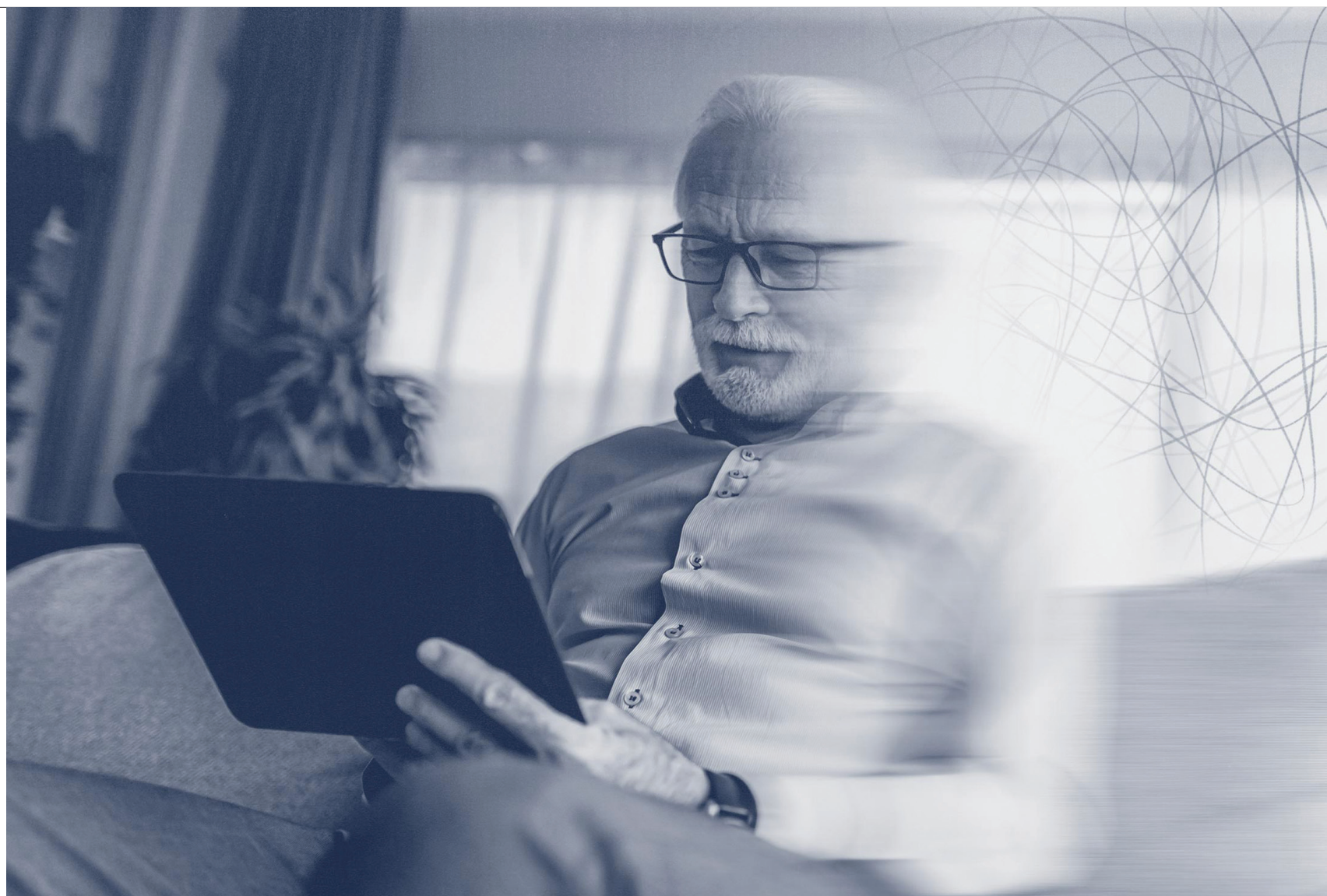
Further, better understanding Alzheimer’s effects on the biological clock could have implications for preventing the disease. Poor sleep quality in adulthood is a risk factor for Alzheimer’s, as our brains, at rest, naturally cleanse themselves of amyloid beta proteins that are thought to form harmful tangles in Alzheimer’s.

“Circadian disruptions have been recognized in Alzheimer’s disease for a long time, but we’ve never had a very good understanding of what causes them,” said researcher Thaddeus Weigel, a graduate student working with Heather Ferris (Med ’06), MD, PhD, of the University of Virginia School of Medicine’s Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism. “This research points to changes in light sensitivity as a new, interesting possible explanation for some of those circadian symptoms.”

UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Alzheimer’s is the most common form of dementia, affecting 50 million people around the world. Its hallmark is progressive memory loss, to the point that patients can forget their own loved ones, but there can be many other symptoms, such as restlessness, aggression, poor judgment, and endless searching. These symptoms often worsen in the evening and at night.

Ferris and her collaborators used a mouse model of Alzheimer’s to better understand what happens to the biological clock in Alzheimer’s



“We hope that this research will help us to develop light therapies that people can use to reduce the progression of Alzheimer’s disease.”

—Heather Ferris, MD, PhD



disease. They essentially gave the mice “jet lag” by altering their exposure to light, then examined how it affected their behavior. The Alzheimer’s mice reacted very differently than did regular mice.

The Alzheimer’s mice, the scientists found, adapted to a six-hour time change significantly more quickly than the control mice. This, the scientists suspect, is the result of a heightened sensitivity to changes in light. While our biological clocks normally take cues from light, this adjustment happens gradually—thus, jet lag when we travel great distances. Our bodies need time to adapt. But for the Alzheimer’s mice, this change happened abnormally fast.

The researchers initially thought this might be because of inflammation in the brain—“neuroinflammation.” So they looked at immune cells called microglia that have become promising targets in our efforts to develop better Alzheimer’s treatments. But the scientists ultimately ruled out this hypothesis, determining that microglia did not make a difference in how quickly mice adapted. (That’s not to say that targeting microglia won’t be beneficial for other reasons.)

Notably, the UVA scientists also ruled out another potential culprit: “mutant tau,” an abnormal protein that forms tangles in the Alzheimer’s brain. The presence of these tangles also did not make a difference in how the mice adapted.

The researchers’ results ultimately suggest there is an important role for the retina in the enhanced light sensitivity in Alzheimer’s, and that gives researchers a promising avenue to pursue as they work to develop new ways to treat, manage and prevent the disease.

“These data suggest that controlling the kind of light and the timing of the light could be key to reducing circadian disruptions in Alzheimer’s disease,” Ferris said. “We hope that this research will help us to develop light therapies that people can use to reduce the progression of Alzheimer’s disease.” ■

Learn how you can support UVA Health’s groundbreaking research on Alzheimer’s and related diseases by contacting Jas Heim, Executive Director of Development, Healthcare Philanthropy, at jheim@virginia.edu or call us at 434.924.8432 or 800.297.0102.

The Gift That Kept On Giving

A \$50 check nearly a century ago inspired Peter and Anna Sim to create a scholarship for the UVA medical students of tomorrow.

By Andy Levinsky

DURING THE DEPTHS of the Depression, Alan Sim was pursuing a college degree in mechanical engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology when his money ran out.

Alan was already helping to pay the tuition for his brother, a medical student, and had to quit his night-shift job on an assembly line because of college regulations. To complete his degree, he asked for and received a \$50 loan from the archbishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, where Sim had served as an acolyte. When he tried to pay it back a year later, the bishop declined. Instead, he said, “Please remember what was done for you, and do the same for someone else.”

Peter Sim, MD (Med ’73), and his wife, Anna, took the words from his father’s story to heart when they considered their philanthropic priorities with UVA Health. The story spans a period before Peter and Anna were even born, and now it has come full circle.

RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Growing up, Peter Sim wanted to be an engineer like his dad, but the summer after his freshman year at Carleton College, he worked as an orderly in a hospital emergency room. He had one year of college and no medical training, but because the ER was so small (“10-foot square with three cots separated by curtains”) and Peter was the first person every patient saw, he got an on-the-job education.



After he graduated, his older sister, Martha Ann Sim (Nurs ’68), then a nurse at the University of Virginia, recommended he consider UVA for medical school. As a runner, the first things he noticed were the spectacular trails and temperate climate of Charlottesville. He had interviewed at large city medical schools (and one where his annual in-state tuition would be \$350), but after visiting, UVA shot to the top of his list. Reflecting on his medical school experience today, what resonates most are the experiences he had with extraordinary faculty like the late Professor of Pediatrics Elsa Paulsen, MD.

“She once took a number of us on a field trip in rural Greene County,” he recalled. “She said,



Peter's father, Alan Sim

‘I think you need to know where some of our patients live,’ so we went out on a secondary road and turned off onto a dirt road. We were in a van, and I didn’t think we’d make it up the hill. We went down into a valley, and you saw smoke coming up from the chimneys, people pulling the curtain up to see who’s driving by. She said, ‘These are our patients, OK? You need to know what their home environment is like.’ That had an impact on me.”

Peter was doing a three-year residency at a hospital where a young woman named Anna Cain had received a two-year scholarship for a lab tech program. She injured her head on a machine and was sent to the ER, where Peter treated her. “It was not love at first sight,” she quipped. Yet they had a mutual friend who was a resident who later told Peter, “I think you might really like her.” Both were avid athletes (he a marathon runner, she a triathlete) with a penchant for travel and, as they would discover, an underlying interest in sharing their good fortune with others.

Anna received a master’s in museum studies and art history and became an appraiser. Peter made a transition from primary care to emergency medicine. “I saw a lot of people who had health problems they had neglected for a long time because they didn’t have the resources,” he said. “One of the things I really love about emergency medicine is ‘We’ll see you no matter what.’”

It’s that empathetic ethos that led him to volunteer at Victory Junction in North Carolina, one of the original Hole in the Wall Gang (now SeriousFun) camps for children with critical illnesses founded by Paul Newman. In 2005, he became its first medical director from outside of the pediatric hematology/oncology field. Given

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Decisions, Decisions

A generous financial aid package and scholarship enable Harrison Cook to keep his options open.

For Harrison Cook (Med ’26), currently in his second year at UVA School of Medicine, the goal is “to keep my horizon as broad as I can.”

Given his wide-ranging interests, from orthopedics to cardiology to nephrology, it’s easy to understand why. An anatomy class and the chance to shadow a neurosurgeon during high school sparked Cook’s interest in medicine. Exploring how complex structures fit together in a cadaver lab made him sure he wanted to become a doctor. He enjoyed microbiology and his master’s research in endocrinology. Yet over time, Cook said, “I found that I was really missing the human connection. I love interacting with people, and the thing that I love about medicine is the ability to use science and directly apply these fundamental principles of science in a way that you can help people in their day-to-day lives.”

The first in his family to pursue medicine, Cook said they were completely behind his decision, yet they did not have the resources to assist him financially. Faced with supporting himself and the prospect of mounting debt, he was awarded UVA’s maximum financial aid package, which he said covers roughly half of his costs to attend. The scholarship he received added to a level of support he described as “astounding” and which directly expanded his options.

“The resources that I very gratefully received while I’ve been at UVA have given me the freedom to pursue my interests in medicine in a very honest way,” he explained. “I don’t feel the pressure to pursue the most high-paying specialty or the specialty with a short residency program that will allow me to get a higher salary at an earlier age and start paying my debt down, because I’ve had these factors.”

Although Cook is deferring a final decision on his career path, he is not waiting to give back. As part of a student-run organization that provides community health screenings in Charlottesville and surrounding rural areas, Cook is already practicing both the clinical and “people” skills that drew him to medicine. He said he is happy to answer clinical questions and practice

medical skills but also just to get to know patients as people.

“Through that time of just talking to people in a very casual way, you can really gain insight into who they are as a person, what their values are,” he said, “and a lot of clinical insight can come out of those conversations.”

Harrison Cook is a recipient of the Ron Ohslund Medical Scholarship.



the range of campers’ medical conditions, Peter’s background in emergency medicine turned out to be the ideal fit.

“We had kids on their second heart transplant, kids on ventilators—and it’s all free,” Peter recalled enthusiastically. He served there for five years and describes it as “an absolutely phenomenal experience.”

So does David Mann, then director of Victory Junction. “Peter set the bar high for all other medical directors at SeriousFun Children’s Network camps,” he said. “Peter was a superstar when it came to helping others find ways to lift themselves up. This is very different from just telling parents how to improve their child’s health but more of an empowering mindset. His dream of helping the world person by person rubbed off on his peers and others.”



SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Both Sides Now

As a child, Andy Hoang practiced generosity. As a medical student, he is a beneficiary of benevolence.

In 2009, 11-year-old friends Andy Hoang and Eric Salgado won the National School Scrabble Championship. Appearing as guests on ABC’s *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, they were asked what they planned to do with the \$10,000 prize. Hoang designated much of his share to his school, his church, and a Mother’s Day gift.

Fifteen years later, Andy Hoang (Med ’26) is experiencing the other side of philanthropy. A North Carolina native from a family of engineers, he is the recipient of two merit scholarships. Hiking with his friend Jeremy in British Columbia, he received an email from John Densmore, MD, associate dean of admissions and student affairs, UVA School of Medicine, awarding him a scholarship. “I handed Jeremy my phone so he could verify that I wasn’t dreaming and asked him to read the email aloud,” Hoang said. “That was the moment I realized that coming to UVA to continue my education would be possible.”

“You’re not only helping that individual who is getting that scholarship but funding the thousands they will care for in their professional career.”

—Peter Sim, MD

A significant factor in his initial interest in UVA was his friend from the Charlottesville Scrabble community, Nancy Harnsberger Bowen (Col ’72, Ed ’74). Nancy, a lifelong resident of Charlottesville and one of the first women to attend UVA as an undergraduate, always spoke highly of her alma mater.

“She made UVA feel like home,” Hoang wrote. “I’ve visited other schools, and I will tell you that what UVA has is special and different. The words ‘community’ and ‘care’ may be thrown around a lot so that they may lose their meaning, but I think at UVA School of Medicine, those words are used a lot because they are what we embody. Applying to medical school, you hear a lot about how schools are X, Y, and Z. The different programs always talk about their community. But here at UVA, the students mean it.”

Hoang, who was drawn to geriatrics, sees a direct connection between finances and flexibility in selecting a specialty. “I think medical school debt is a fair factor for medical students to weigh when thinking of what kind of doctor they want to become,” he said. “The scholarships I have received from UVA will allow me to graduate with minimal debt. This means that I can become any kind of doctor without having the burden of med school debt influencing my decision.”

So, this sage of Scrabble has a few words to share with those who have enabled him to pursue his path:

“I would not be able to afford UVA, a place where I feel like I can make the most impact and grow the best as a future physician, without your support. For that, I sincerely thank you for paying it forward. You will not regret your generosity.”

Andy Hoang is a recipient of the Henelt Scholarship and Lawson Memorial Scholarship.

ON THE SAME PAGE

Whether he is working with physically challenged children or economically disadvantaged adults, there is a clear through-line in Peter Sim’s perspective. “I’ve always had a soft spot for those who are less advantaged. That would transfer over laterally to students who are interested in medicine,” he explained. “I feel blessed that I didn’t graduate with tens of thousands of dollars or more in debt, and I’m eternally grateful to my parents.” His mother, he noted, was a secondary school teacher, and his father prioritized education.

After 49 years of marriage, Peter and Anna tend to finish one another’s sentences, and when it comes to philanthropic priorities, they are clearly on the same page. Anna noted that they have several friends with Parkinson’s disease and that Peter is a cancer survivor (treated for melanoma and prostate cancer).

In considering different charities, investing in future medical students “seemed the best fit overall,” and, she said, “we wanted to give this opportunity to as many people as possible in perpetuity.”

The Sims’ motivation is driven by a sense of responsibility: “For those of us [who] are privileged enough to make a decent amount of income during our professional lives, I just think it’s an obligation to do the same for others who are coming behind us,” Peter said. And, in terms of impact, he added, “You’re not only helping that individual who is getting that scholarship but funding the thousands they will care for in their professional career.”

The Sims have made a seven-figure provision from a portion of their estate to establish a merit scholarship. The Peter Alan Sim MD and Anna Cain Sim Scholarship will annually support a minimum of two medical students. Open to all, the Peter Alan Sim MD and Anna Cain Sim Scholarship will annually support a minimum of two medical students. Every recipient is given the story of the individual who inspired it.

“My dad was always a champion of education, and he died in 1987,” Peter said. “What better way to memorialize him than to create a scholarship in his honor?” ■

For more information on how to support scholarship initiatives at UVA School of Medicine, please contact Chris Neal, Director of Development, School of Medicine Alumni, at cneal@virginia.edu or 434.466.1832.



SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Support System

For Amber James, a spirit of generosity led to “a culture of kindness.”

In 10th grade, Amber James (Med ’24) tore her ACL and had reconstruction surgery. “After the wonderful care I received, I decided I wanted to pursue medicine and help others in a similar way,” she recalled. Her mom, a paralegal and single parent, was excited about the prospect of the first physician in the family, yet it took a combination of need and merit-based scholarships for James to realize her dream.

“Without scholarship funding, I would not have been able to attend medical school and wouldn’t be on my way to becoming a doctor,” she said. “It relieves a large financial burden for me and my family.”

The Richmond native values the diverse patient and student population at UVA School of Medicine. “There’s a collaborative environment among students, a culture of kindness [where] everyone wants to help each other succeed, and faculty really enjoy teaching students. These were all things I was looking for in a school.”

Today, James reflects, “It’s been a privilege learning about medicine and caring for patients here at UVA. I’ve had numerous patients who have struggled through cancer diagnoses, chronic diseases, and multiple surgeries, and each patient care experience has increased my desire to care for them and become a physician with great empathy and compassion for my patients, taking into account social determinants of health and being a patient advocate.”

This past fall, James applied for a residency in general surgery, UVA School of Medicine topped her list. Ultimately, she would like to practice clinically in underserved communities and conduct research on surgical outcomes focusing on health equity and global health.

Although she hasn’t met the individuals who provided scholarship support, James has a message for them: “I want my donors to know they have made a huge difference in my life and are contributing greatly to my journey to becoming a physician. I will always remember what they have done for me and my future career.”

Amber James is a recipient of the Arthur Ebbert Jr., MD, Scholarship, the Edwin S. Maynard Scholarship, the Elizabeth White Scholarship, and the Medical School Foundation Scholarship.



NEXT-LEVEL NURSING

An RN-to-BSN scholarship recipient follows his dreams thanks to a generous alumna and fellow Southwest Virginian.

By Katherine Ludwig

DAVID AND MARY ANN WINE of Roanoke know firsthand that opportunities for higher education can be hard-fought.

That's why their gift of a new scholarship to UVA School of Nursing is so personally meaningful. The *J. David and Mary Ann Wine Endowed Scholarship for Nursing* supports licensed nurses (RNs) with associate's degrees from Virginia Western Community College (VWCC) who are expanding their educations and careers through UVA's RN-to-BSN (bachelor of science in nursing) program.

The Wines' new scholarship honors their alma maters and their shared belief in the value of community colleges as pipelines to advanced degrees and living-wage jobs for many Southwest Virginians. David is a VWCC alum and serves on the VWCC Educational Foundation Board of Directors. He also serves on the board of six other organizations supporting healthcare, arts, education, and economic development in

“Anything that we in the nursing community can do to try to fix the problems we've lived and seen, I think it behooves us to do what we can.”

—Mary Ann Wine (BSN '71, MSN '82)

The Wines' new scholarship fund will help Virginia Western Community College graduates obtain their bachelor of science in nursing degrees at UVA.

Southwest Virginia. Mary Ann received her BSN and a master of science in nursing degree (MSN) from UVA. She became a longtime nursing instructor at New River and Wytheville Community Colleges in Southwest Virginia, helping to build their nursing programs.

“I've always seen a need to facilitate the movement of nurses forward with their education. And I've also seen its value in my students' lives,” said Mary Ann.

Scholarships like the Wines', along with UVA School of Nursing's innovative suite of accelerated, hybrid, and flexible degree programs, including the RN-to-BSN option, are helping nurses at all levels overcome financial and logistical impediments to career growth. They're also aiming at the national nursing shortage, which experts attribute to factors including an aging baby boomer population in greater need of health services, a lack of qualified nursing educators, high turnover, and an inequitable workforce distribution.

Mary Ann lived through a similar nursing shortage in the 1980s and said, “Anything that we in the nursing community can do to try to fix the problems we've lived and seen, I think it behooves us to do what we can.”

OVERCOMING ROADBLOCKS TO EDUCATION

One of Mary Ann's first challenges as a high school graduate and aspiring nurse in the late

1960s was generational. Before being allowed to enroll at UVA for her BSN, she'd had to complete two years at Radford College, a women's teaching college without a nursing program at that time.

“It was a time when women were not accepted as first-years at the University, so we went somewhere else for two years and sent in our grades every quarter. At the end of the two years, they would deem us worthy or unworthy to enter the program at UVA,” she said.

Mary Ann was able to transfer to UVA as a third-year and obtained her BSN in 1971. After working as a practicing nurse for several years and starting a family, she returned to UVA to pursue graduate education, earning her MSN in 1982.

“It was an interesting point in history because everyone realized the nursing shortage would impact us in many ways, and nursing teachers were badly needed. So the University started an outreach program with graduate-level courses for nurses in Southwest Virginia who were working full-time but wanted to further their education,” said Mary Ann. “It was the only way I could get a master's degree because I could not quit my job and leave my two children to come to Charlottesville.”

Mary Ann was able to continue living and working in the New River area of Virginia. It took her five years to get the MSN. As an instructor in



Mary Ann (center) poses with UVA nursing classmates Cindy Tolton Greer (left) and Capt. Rosalie “Posie” Emerick Lewis (right), February 1970.



Mary Ann Wine earned her BSN from UVA in 1971.

the community college system, she encountered many beginning nursing students longing for opportunities to pursue BSNs, MSNs, and even DNPs (doctor of science in nursing degrees) but finding it prohibitive to leave their homes, jobs, and families to travel to a top university nursing program like UVA's.

In recent years, UVA School of Nursing has taken substantial steps to remove financial and logistical obstacles, allowing nurses at all levels to expand their educations to become specialists,

leaders, and teachers. One of those steps is guaranteeing all qualified Virginia Community College System graduates admission to UVA's RN-to-BSN program. Another is providing a flexible, part-time learning option combining online classes with once-a-month in-person sessions in Charlottesville, Fairfax, or Richmond. UVA nursing alums are also guaranteed admission to the school's MSN, post-master's certificate specialties, and DNP programs.

One current student who hopes to take advantage of that guaranteed pathway to an MSN and, ultimately, a DNP is Jordan Mackenzie Glynn, the first recipient of the Wine Scholarship.

"I want to take nursing to the highest level possible," said Glynn. "And I want to be able to share my experiences to help others learn. Having that advanced degree also would allow me to teach at that program level, which would be a great way to give back."

PAVING THE WAY FOR A NEW GENERATION

Glynn, who'd been accepted to the RN-to-BSN program but initially planned to defer for a year because of personal and financial reasons, said he was "taken aback" when he learned he'd been awarded the Wine Scholarship. Coupled with the ability to continue working full-time as a medical and surgical ICU nurse at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, Glynn said the scholarship gave him the extra support he needed to begin working on his BSN in 2023.

Juggling a demanding job with his UVA classes, plus a new mortgage and a toddler, Glynn has a full plate, but he's used to chaos. ICUs are "busy and volatile environments where everything is on



"I want to take nursing to the highest level possible. And I want to be able to share my experiences to help others learn."

—Jordan Glynn



Jordan Glynn, pictured with his wife, Melissa, is the first recipient of the David and Mary Ann Wine Endowed Scholarship at UVA School of Nursing.

fire, yet somehow we're managing," said Glynn. He intends to spend the next six years expanding his nursing education at UVA.

The Wine Scholarship for Nursing at UVA aligns with a partner scholarship Mary Ann and David created for high school students who want to begin their path to nursing at VWCC. They've designed these scholarships to increase Southwest Virginians' access to nursing degrees and career mobility. "It thrills me if that can be one of the things we accomplish by this," said Mary Ann.

For Glynn, the Wines' support is also personal. "To know that someone in the community wants to help and is placing a bet that you're going to do well and make a difference with their support adds a degree of accountability and extra inspiration. That someone believes in you, it gives you that push, that extra tank of gas when you need it," he said. ■

Learn how you can support nursing education by contacting Ruth Cassell, Associate Director of Development, UVA School of Nursing, at ruth.cassell@virginia.edu or 434.962.9473 or call 800.297.0102.

TRANSFORMING HEALTH THROUGH PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

CAMPAIGN MOMENTUM

In fiscal year 2023, UVA Health's donors provided \$181 million in commitments, a milestone achievement toward the ambitious \$1 billion target as part of the University of Virginia's Honor the Future Campaign.

The steadfast support of visionary donors is foundational to UVA Health's mission to "transform health and inspire hope for all Virginians and beyond." These funds enable UVA Health to discover and develop innovative treatments, expand healthcare access for underserved communities, recruit top-tier clinicians from around the globe, mentor the next generation of medical experts, and ultimately, enhance the overall well-being of individuals throughout the commonwealth.

FISCAL YEAR '23 MILESTONES

CELEBRATING A
RECORD-BREAKING

\$181

MILLION IN GIFTS

TOTAL
CAMPAIGN

\$795

MILLION IN GIFTS*

*As of November 2023

7,053

TOTAL NUMBER
OF GIFTS

8,667

TOTAL NUMBER
OF DONORS

17

GIFTS OVER
\$1 MILLION

17

NEW
ENDOWMENTS

MILESTONE GIFTS

A commitment from the **Genan Foundation** will support the enhancement and expansion of clinical care for epilepsy patients. This investment will allow the F.E. Dreifuss Comprehensive Epilepsy Program, under the leadership of Director Nathan Fountain, MD, to continue to grow its integrated approach to epilepsy care, expanding access to services, pursuing research opportunities, and recruiting additional specialists.

Susan Gendron and Roger Gendron have made a joint commitment to support the expansion of the NICU/PICU at UVA Health Children's. Their investment will provide vital resources to upgrade and expand these critical care units.

The **Home Paddocks Charitable Foundation** has made a commitment to support the renovation and expansion of the NICU/PICU units at UVA Health Children's. This funding will provide much-needed resources for these units, as they work to meet the rising demand for critical care pediatric services across the commonwealth.

John "Jack" Reid has included a commitment in his estate plans to support the work of Dr. Stephen S. Park, MD, and the Division of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Inspired by his experience as a patient of Dr. Park, Reid hopes this gift will create opportunities for Dr. Park and his colleagues to educate and train future surgeons, fund innovative research, and help advance new methods of reconstructive surgery to benefit future patients.



UVA Health Welcomes Ourania Preventza, MD, as Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery

IN MARCH, after a global search, UVA Health selected internationally renowned physician Ourania Preventza, MD, MBA, FACS, as chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and chair of the cardiothoracic surgery program. As co-directors of the Heart and Vascular Service Line at UVA Health, Dr. Preventza and chair of cardiology Christopher M. Kramer, MD, oversee cardiac surgery, cardiology and vascular surgery as a single entity.

In addition to her responsibilities at UVA Medical Center, Dr. Preventza is providing her surgical expertise and entrepreneurial skills (including an MBA from Brandeis University focused on healthcare policy) to UVA Health's joint venture with Riverside Health System. She helped oversee an opportunity assessment of Riverside's cardiothoracic program, is UVA Health's main point of contact for Riverside surgeons, and will be able to scrub in there to provide expertise on complex cases.

Prior to her arrival at UVA Health, Dr. Preventza served as a professor with tenure at Baylor College of Medicine. She received her medical degree from the Medical School of Athens and performed her general surgery residency at Wayne State University and cardiothoracic surgery residency at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She also completed a surgical critical care fellowship at Mayo Clinic.

Dr. Preventza recently served as president of the International Society of Endovascular Specialists and is a leader in several professional organizations, including the American Association for Thoracic Surgery, Women in Thoracic Surgery, Society of Thoracic Surgeons, and the Southern Thoracic Surgical Association. Dr. Preventza's commitment to excellence in mentorship and resident education earned her the prestigious 2023 Socrates Award from the Thoracic Surgery Residents Association.

Feedback during the selection process emphasized her extensive experience in cardiac and aortic surgery, focus on collaboration across disciplines for building programs, and an uncompromising commitment to education and mentorship of others. For all her achievements and acclaim, search committee member Allan Tsung, MD, chair of the Department of Surgery, was impressed by her humility. "It's not about her," he said, but "making sure that UVA continues to be one of the top programs in the country."

Dr. Preventza joined UVA Health in June. ■

UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER BEST CANCER HOSPITAL IN VIRGINIA, TOP 50 NATIONALLY

Newsweek ranked UVA Health University Medical Center the No. 1 cancer hospital in Virginia and No. 50 in the United States on its "America's Best Cancer Hospitals 2023" list. According to the publication, these rankings are based on a national survey of healthcare professionals with a background in cancer care, results from patient experience surveys, and hospital quality metrics. Patients at UVA Health University Medical Center benefit from the research and patient-care skill of UVA Cancer Center, which is one of only 54 cancer centers in the country designated a comprehensive cancer center by the National Cancer Institute. Cancer centers that earn this honor are recognized for their innovative research, groundbreaking clinical trials, and highly specialized patient care.

Building a Healthier Future

THERE IS AN ORANGE AND NAVY coffee mug that holds a permanent spot in my home office; it reads, *“I married into this.”* As a proud graduate of the University of North Carolina, I find this slogan best describes the foundation of my relationship with the University of Virginia. My family’s UVA legacy started with my father-in-law, a graduate of the School of Law; it went on to include my husband, a McIntire School of Commerce graduate. My youngest daughter is a graduate of the College of Arts & Sciences, and most recently, my eldest daughter, a dual-degree graduate of the School of Medicine and Darden School of Business, is now a second-year resident at UVA Health.

My affiliation with UVA Health began during my daughter’s second year of medical school, during which she led an effort to create an age-appropriate space for adolescents going through prolonged hospitalizations in the medical center. Through this involvement, our family witnessed firsthand philanthropy’s incredible power on patient care and the patient experience. Over the years, our family has had the privilege of supporting both UVA Cancer Center and UVA Health Children’s Neurodevelopmental and Behavioral Care clinic, which carry distinct though equally crucial missions.

As the new chair of the UVA Health Foundation Board, I look forward to working alongside UVA Health’s talented leaders, including Dr. Craig Kent, Deans Melina Kibbe and Marianne Baernholdt, Wendy Horton, and my fellow trustees. We will focus on generating excitement around our mission of bringing hope and healing along with supporting initiatives emerging from our strategic plan.

A few examples include the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology, which will attract world-class researchers to UVA and serve as a catalyst for us to become one of the nation’s great powerhouses for biomedical research; the expansion of UVA Health Children’s critical care NICU/PICU unit to serve the commonwealth’s sickest children no matter where they live; and the new UVA Health Leadership Institute, which will foster our next generation of healthcare leaders. We are also enhancing our community outreach and care with innovative programs in UVA’s backyard. These efforts and many others motivate my interest in and support of UVA Health.

It is an exciting time to be part of the UVA Health community. I am honored to work alongside such passionate clinicians, nurses, researchers, students, volunteers, and board colleagues who have made the selfless decision to dedicate their time and energy to transform healthcare and inspire hope. This institution is now part of my DNA, and I look forward to serving its vital mission in the years to come.

All the best,



Sheri Klein, Chair
UVA Health Foundation
Board of Trustees



Start Your Legacy

“With a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, you’re able to make a gift and benefit from a good investment.”

—Richard A. Lawson
UVA Health donor

Rich Lawson is grateful for the “tremendous support” he and his late wife, Claudia, received from UVA’s Memory and Aging Care Clinic. After Claudia passed away from Alzheimer’s, Lawson established a Charitable Remainder Unitrust (CRUT), the distribution of which will go to the Claudia E. Lawson Fund for Memory Care Programs at UVA Health.

The CRUT provides Rich with lifetime annual income, and the remainder will support UVA’s clinical programs, research, and resources for Alzheimer’s patients and caregivers.

Planned gifts like Rich’s can offer significant tax benefits and greater financial flexibility in meeting personal and philanthropic goals.

Make a Plan to Support the Future of UVA Health

To learn about life income gifts and other planned giving opportunities, please contact Erin Hughey-Commers, Senior Gift Planning Advisor, UVA Health Foundation, visit giving.uvahealth.com/gift-planning, or call us at 434.760.3281 or 800.297.0102.



University of Virginia Health Foundation
PO Box 800773
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0773
Toll-Free 800.297.0102
Fax 434.982.1984
pulse@virginia.edu
giving.uvahealth.com

Nonprofit
US POSTAGE

PAID

Jefferson City, MO
Permit No. 210

