A Legacy of Giving from Father to Daughter

Thirty-five years after Samuel Topkins, M.D., graduated from the University of Vermont College of Medicine in 1915, his daughter, Marjorie Topkins, M.D.‘50, followed in his footsteps. At a time when women made up only about six percent of the physician workforce nationally, she went on to a successful career as an anesthesiologist at Cornell Medical Center that spanned 46 years. Dr. Marjorie Topkins never forgot her and her father’s alma mater: she’s been a loyal annual fund donor every year since 1975, and her philanthropy prompted the naming of a classroom in the Larner Medical Education Center as the Topkins Family Room, in memory of her father. Her sister, Edith, also received her undergraduate degree from UVM in 1941, as did her daughter, Michaele Goodman, who graduated from UVM in 1976, and her husband, Avrom Goodman, who graduated in 1981.

To ensure continued support of her alma mater for decades to come, Dr. Marjorie Topkins established a bequest in 2013 and has revised her estate plans twice to increase her legacy giving, bringing her total bequest to $800,000. Her connection to the College has remained strong in large part because she sees the value of a UVM medical education— not only through her lifetime of caring for patients, but also through the colleagues she has met along the way. She recalls a resident who summed up what set his education apart. Instead of teaching students about a disease, he noted that “up to UVM they emphasize patients who have diseases,” preparing graduates for a lifetime of compassionate caregiving.
Ten years ago last August, I first took on the role of dean of this College. Now, after more than a decade at UVM, I look ahead to the time later this year when a new dean will be appointed to lead the institution. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve as dean of our College. It is the capstone of my career and I am very proud of what this College has accomplished in the course of my tenure. From the start it was my goal to build upon the remarkable strength of the people and culture in our College to guide it to further progress. I also hoped to be successful enough in that pursuit to remain as dean for a decade. As I look at the College today, I see an institution that has never wavered in its missions. We are stronger today as educational institution, with national recognition for our leadership in active learning in the New England Journal of Medicine, Washington Post, Inside Higher Ed, Boston Globe, and other venues. Our curricular innovations were a key reason over 600 medical educators from around the world, members of the International Association of Medical Science Educators, held their annual meeting on our campus last summer.

In an era of tightened funding, we have continued to be successful in our research efforts, and in fostering increased recognition of the importance of research and graduate education here on our campus. Most recently, we have begun an exciting project to expand and renovate our facilities to grow our research enterprise.

Our College is on a remarkably strong foundation for the next dean to continue to accelerate its progress. In the year ahead, I look forward to continuing our momentum across all areas of our mission and continuing to implement our strategic initiatives. Come the fall when I hand the deanship over to my successor, I intend to continue on in a more limited role in our College and University. From the start it was my goal to build upon the remarkable strength of the people and culture in our College to guide it to further progress. I also hoped to be successful enough in that pursuit to remain as dean for a decade. As I look at the College today, I see an institution that has never wavered in its missions. We are stronger today as educational institution, with national recognition for our leadership in active learning in the New England Journal of Medicine, Washington Post, Inside Higher Ed, Boston Globe, and other venues. Our curricular innovations were a key reason over 600 medical educators from around the world, members of the International Association of Medical Science Educators, held their annual meeting on our campus last summer.

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This issue of Vermont Medicine showcases several areas of our mission in action. Our graduates of 2017 are now in the first year of their residencies in institutions across the nation. Here we present a look at the process they went through in the fourth year of medical school as they gained clinical experience and focused on their future specialties. Also featured is the work of our clinical caregivers and researchers who are improving palliative care, remembrances of beloved faculty members, and recognition of staff members who embody the tenets of UVM’s “Common Ground” of shared values.

It is an exciting time to be a part of the educational, research, and community building work of the UVM Larner College of Medicine. I look forward to my coming months as dean, and the work that lies ahead.

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Capstone of a Career — Dean Morin to Step Down Later in 2018

As the 2017–2018 academic year began, Dean Rick Morin, M.D., announced that he will step down as dean of the Robert Larner, M.D. College of Medicine at the University of Vermont once a successor has been named later in 2018. Morin became the College’s 48th dean ten years ago, in August of 2007.

“Rick Morin’s accomplishments at UVM are truly extraordinary,” said UVM President Tom Sullivan. “His creativity, persistence, and strong leadership have created a legacy for the Larner College of Medicine that will last for generations. I will be forever grateful for his remarkable leadership of the College and his many contributions across the University.”

Among Morin’s many achievements over the past decade are his work in philanthropy, which resulted in an unprecedented commitment of $100 million in lifetime giving from his alumni Robert Larner, M.D. and his wife Helen, and related naming of the College in Dr. Larner’s honor. Morin’s service on the board of trustees of the UVM Medical Center, the board of the UVM Health Network, and the board of the UVM Health Network Medical Group (the faculty practice plan) has strengthened ties with the College’s primary clinical teaching partner and facilitated expanded educational opportunities for our students across the region.

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Two Department Chairs Named in 2017

Two departments at the Larner College of Medicine had chairs named in 2017: Kathleen DeStigter, M.D., F.A.C.R., was appointed chair of the Department of Radiology and health care service chief of radiology. The John P. and Kimberly H. Tampens-Geen and Gold Professor of Radiology at the UVM Larner College of Medicine, DeStigter had served as interim chair of radiology since 2014 and was selected following a national search. Inducted as a fellow in the American College of Radiology (ACR) in 2015, she has served as president of the Vermont Chapter of the ACR, and serves on the ACR International Recruitment Committee. She is also chair of the Committee of the International Radiology Education of the Radiological Society of North America (RSNA). She is co-founder and president of Imaging the World, a nonprofit organization that developed and uses a new sustainable model for education and making basic-life-saving diagnosis accessible in the poorest regions of the world.

Donald Mathews, M.D., professor of anesthesiology, was named chair of the Department of Anesthesiology and health care service chief of anesthesiology. Mathews succeeded Maureen Maktabi, M.D., who served in this role since August 2016. Mathews joined UVM in 2010 as director of the Anesthesiology Residency Program. He also served as an elected member of the UVM Health Network Medical Group Board of Directors and as a special advisor to the president & CEO of the UVM Health Network Medical Group. The author of 20-year manuscripts in total intravenous anesthesia and process CEO monitoring, with a scholarly focus on improving the hypnotic and pain-relieving components of anesthesia.

Two Endowed Professors Invested

Gary S. Stern, Ph.D., director of the University of Vermont Cancer Center, professor and chair of biochemistry and professor of surgery of the UVM Larner College of Medicine, was invested in a formal ceremony on October 27, 2017 as the inaugural Arthur Jason Penman, M.D. ’52 Professor in Cancer Research. The endowed professorship was created in 2016 by Arthur Penman, who received his medical degree from UVM in 1952, and was fully funded through his estate when he died in 2015. In 2012, Penman also established the Charlotte E. Penman Cancer Research Fund — affectionately known as the “Charlotte Fund” — at the Larner College of Medicine and the UVM Medical Center in memory of his wife. Together, these two distinguished endowed funds created by the Penman family will support crucial cancer research at UVM for generations to come.

Benedy Fenold, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology, was invested in a formal ceremony on July 31 as the inaugural Martin E. Bloomefield ’56, M.D. and Judith Bloomefield ’56 Early Career Professor in Cardiovascular Research. The endowed professorship was established by Dr. Merty Bloomefield, a dual degree UVM alum and neurologist, and his wife Judy, is fellow Catamount and retired physiologist. This faculty position is particularly significant because it marks the first time ever at the University of Vermont that an early career professorship has been endowed. An American funding for research becomes more competitive, private philanthropy can help launch promising young careers with the potential to benefit not just UVM, but society at large.

LaMantia Directs Center on Aging at UVM

University of Vermont Provost David Rossow and Larner College of Medicine Dean Richard Martin, M.D., announced the appointment of Michael LaMantia, M.D., M.P.H., as director of the UVM Center on Aging. LaMantia, an associate professor of medicine and neurological sciences, served as assistant professor of medicine and neurological sciences, as well as section head of geriatric medicine, succeeds William LaMantia, M.D., M.P.H., who is also professor emeritus of neurological sciences, will continue in his roles as medical administration of medical management, including the coordination of initiatives aligned with its core focus areas of education, research, social science, policy and collaboration, with an overall goal to improve the health and wellbeing of Vermont’s seniors, as well as support research and training in the field of gerontology and geriatrics. LaMantia, who is also professor emeritus of neurological sciences, will continue his role as medical director of the Memory Program and director of neuroepidemiology at the UVM Medical Center.
**NIH AWARDS $20M TO UVM AND MAINE MEDICAL CENTER TO ADDRESS RURAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

A five-year, $20 million National Institutes of Health (NIH)-Clinical and Translational Research (CTR) Network grant will help fund a joint program between UVM and Maine Medical Center to develop a clinical and translational research infrastructure focused on health problems endemic to Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, and substance abuse. The grant, awarded to the Faculty of Family Medicine, addresses the unique challenges of effective rural health care delivery. The program will be collaboratively led by principal investigators Gary Stein, Ph.D., L媳妇 Library Center director and Department of Biochemistry co-chair; and Clifford Rosen, M.D., director of the Center for Clinical and Translational Research at Maine Medical Center Research Institute. Larner College of Medicine Senior Associate Dean for Research Gordon J. Jasin, M.D., Ph.D., and Thomas Grady, Ph.D., interim director of the Center for Molecular Medicine at Maine Medical Center Research Institute, serve on the grant’s program coordinators.

**CUSHMAN PRESENTS STUDY ON INCREASED TV VIEWING & BLOOD CLOT RISKS AT AHA**

Risk of blood clots increases with the amount of time spent watching television, even if people get the recommended amount of physical activity, according to preliminary research presented by co-principal investigator of medicine Mary Cushman, M.D., M.Sc., of the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2017, held in Anaheim, Calif. in November. “Watching TV wasn't bad, but we tend to snack and sit still for long periods while watching,” Cushman says. “Previous TV viewing studies have been less focused on heart disease involving blocked arteries, but this is the first study to specifically examine total blood clots at sites in veins of the legs, arms, pelvis, and abdomen.” Cushman will present her team’s findings in Anaheim, Calif. in November.

**STAPLETON CO-LEADS INNOVATIVE ICU RECOVERY STUDY**

Renea Stapleton, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Vermont, is one of the principal investigators on RESEARCH NOTEBOOK

**HIGGINS STUDY EXAMINES POTENTIAL OF NICOTINE REDUCTION TO CURB SMOKING ADDICTION**

New research led by Stephen Higgins, M.D., professor of psychiatry and director of the Vermont Center on Addiction, suggests that reducing nicotine content in cigarettes may decrease their addiction potential in especially vulnerable populations. The study, which was published in JAMA Psychiatry, included three vulnerable populations of at-risk smokers including pregnant women, homeless individuals, and socioeconomically disadvantaged women. The multi-site, double-blind study is the first large, controlled study to examine the dose-dependent effects of cigarettes with reduced nicotine content on the reinforcing effects, subjective effects, and smoking topography of vulnerable populations, say the study’s authors.