

Five Decades, and Still Ticking

Three busy senior medical students decided to complicate their lives a little more in 1962 when they began the continuing tradition of the *Pulse* yearbook. That heartbeat is going strong after 50 years.

by **Edward Neuert**

“I was a little hesitant, frankly, because I knew what was going to be involved in doing this, and I already had a lot on my plate,” says Michael Grady, M.D.’62, as he sits in his Chestnut Hill, Mass., home. The retired pediatrician is recalling the moment in late 1961 when, talking with his two friends and classmates, Sherwin Ritter and Norman Schwartz, the idea suddenly came up: they should start a real yearbook for the College of Medicine, and Grady would be their “voice of experience.”

The years medical students spend at UVM remain treasured memories long afterward, which is reflected in their record support for their alma mater — the College of Medicine consistently ranks in the top three medical schools in the nation for percentage of alumni giving. Another facet in that reflection is the tradition that Grady, Ritter, and Schwartz as co-editors first inaugurated back in the early days of the 1960s: the *Pulse*, the student organized and staffed annual that celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Nationally, the yearbook is an institution in decline; the number of annuals produced in the U.S. is only about 40 percent of what it was 15 years ago. But despite the rise of the Internet, and the pervasiveness of Facebook, there is still something to be said for a memory book that won’t disappear with a crashed hard drive, or be inaccessible when CDs join 8-track tapes in the land of outmoded storage media.

In 1961, there was no Facebook (nor even, yet, a Mark Zuckerberg), nor was there yet computer-aided design and typesetting to speed the production of a publication. Making a yearbook meant doing everything by hand — from taking and developing photographs, to banging out copy in triplicate forms on a typewriter, to setting up the layout boards and mailing the whole lot off to a faraway printer. Michael Grady knew all too well what a time-consuming process it could be: four years earlier, he’d gone through the whole effort as the editor of his Boston College yearbook, the *Sub Turri*. Now, in addition to finishing their clinical studies and interviewing for internships and residencies, the three students would immerse themselves part-time in the graphic arts.

First, though, recalls retired orthopedic surgeon Sherwin Ritter, M.D.’62, there was the little matter of paying for it all. “It doesn’t seem like much now, but each copy cost fifteen dollars then, and we weren’t really sure how we were going to get it,” says Ritter. But Dean Robert Slater, M.D., was supportive, and the trio found a strong champion in A. Bradley Soule, M.D.’28, who was then chairman of the Department of Radiology



The senior editors of the 1962 *Pulse* meet with faculty advisor A. Bradley Soule, M.D.’28. Standing from left are: Joseph Guardino, Michael Grady, Sherwin Ritter, Daniel Palant, and Norman Schwartz.



The first issue of the *Pulse* showed a very different medical campus from today’s. Above center: a spread shows the then main College building (now Dewey Hall), the 1958-era Medical Alumni Building, and the early framework of the Given Building.

Take a trip down Memory Lane (even if they're someone else's memories) by flipping through the inaugural 1962 edition of the *Pulse* yearbook online.

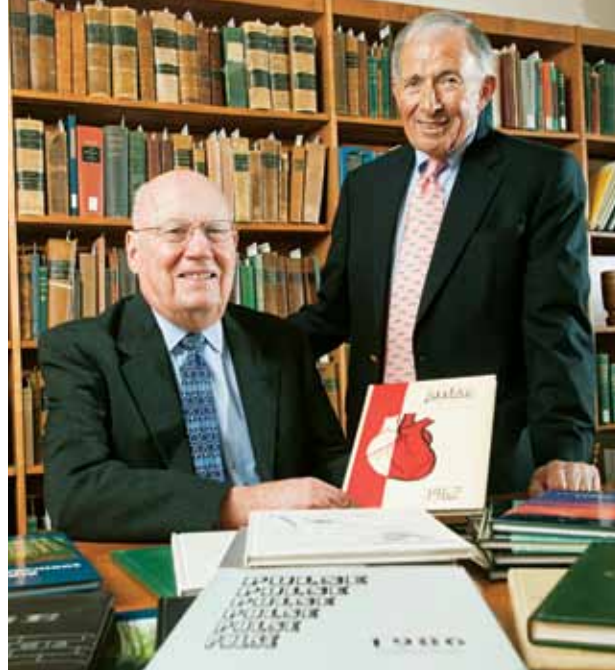
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and an influential voice within both the administration and the alumni community. Slater and Soule arranged for a special fee to be added to the tuition bill. "I can still hear a few people screaming bloody murder about it," remembers Ritter. "But we got the money we needed, and most students supported it." They also had a secret weapon in their fellow senior student, Joseph Guardino. "Joe had been in business before he came to med school," says Grady, recalling his late friend and classmate. "He was a great salesman. Once Joe got in the room with you, he wasn't going to leave before you'd agreed to buy an ad," says Grady. And buy them they did; flipping through the back pages of that first *Pulse* today, one is greeted by a host of gone-but-not-forgotten retail landmarks of the Burlington area, from Magram's department store to Valade's Terminal Restaurant and Cafeteria, and Winooski's Forest Hills Factory Outlet. One other member of the class of '62, Daniel Palant, rounded out the crew as faculty section editor.

After securing funding, what followed were several months of finding a book producer (they ultimately went with a printer from Texas), organizing and writing the book's text, and taking candid photos, group shots, and individual studio portraits of all four classes of medical students. The "studio" was the kitchen of Ritter's apartment on Loomis Street. "I hung up a sheet and got an old folding camera with a leather bellows. I took every portrait and, indeed, almost every other shot in the book with that old thing."

Some of those shots were straightforward depictions of the life on campus at the old College of Medicine building at the corner of Pearl and Prospect Streets and at the new Medical Alumni Building situated next to where the Given Building would soon rise. More photos were taken where medical students were then clinically educated — the Mary Fletcher and Bishop DeGoesbriand




Class of 1962 members Michael Grady, M.D. (at left) and Sherwin Ritter, M.D., the two surviving founding co-editors of the first *Pulse*, look over a selection of issues from across the past five decades in the medical history room of the Dana Medical Library during Reunion 2012.

hospitals. Some shots were more complicated, including a photo of the façade of Mary Fletcher Hospital with lit windows in the shape of the numerals 1-9-6-2. Today, a designer could use PhotoShop to achieve that effect in five minutes. Fifty years ago, it was mostly accomplished by a crew of switch-flicking students running through the hospital corridors a few minutes after dusk and explaining to many patients that they would be sitting in the twilight for a few minutes.

The three co-editors dedicated the first yearbook to the people of Vermont, and they secured a dedicatory letter from then Governor F. Ray Keyser, Jr. "Things were a lot simpler back then," says Grady. "We called up the governor's office, asked if we could come see him, and they told us, sure, come on down."

After all their hard work, Grady, Ritter, and Schwartz's excitement was high in late spring of '62 when cartons filled with the new publications arrived at the College. But, to their collective horror, a printing error had saturated every photo with ink. "Everything was just a murky blob," recalls Ritter. Luckily, the printer agreed to make good, and a new, corrected print run arrived in time for distribution before graduation, which in those days occurred in mid-June.

In the five decades since, in changing graphic styles as the years have unrolled, the *Pulse* has recorded the yearly changes of the heart of the College: its students. And it is that bonding of students and alma mater that Sherwin Ritter recalls most strongly today: "They were four years of memorable experiences and associations with classmates and medical school faculty," he says. "Memories and values that have been with me for all my years in post-graduate training and throughout my years of practice." 

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In 1905, when the College of Medicine completed its third home at the corner of Prospect and Pearl streets in Burlington, the main lecture room was named Hall A. For the next 63 years, students such as the members of the Class of 1955 (shown above listening to the legendary Prof. Ellsworth Amidon, M.D.'32) spent much of their time in the hall. Today's students take in lectures in the Sullivan Classroom or in the recently renovated Carpenter Auditorium, but the College's educational mission of inspiring a lifetime of learning in the service of the patient remains the same. The Hall A magazine section is a meeting place in print for all former students of the College of Medicine.



Bottom: Raj Chawla, UVM Med Photo