

MOTIVATIONS

The Front Line of Philanthropy at Einstein and Montefiore



IN THIS ISSUE

- 52 From the Vice President of Development, Einstein
- 53 Continued Connection: Stanley Wainapel, M.D., M.P.H. (pictured)
- 56 Spotlight: Neonatology Intensive Care
- 60 Your Impact: Center for Transplantation
- 64 Class Notes
- 67 In Memoriam

To learn more, please visit montefiore.org/giving and einsteinmed.org/giving

For web-exclusive content, visit: magazine.einsteinmed.org/motivations21

MOTIVATIONS

A Message from Suzanne M. Murphy, Ed.D.
VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT, EINSTEIN



Suzanne M. Murphy, Ed.D.

Welcome to the new issue of *Motivations*.

When I joined Einstein this fall, my motivation for taking on the new vice president of development position was the opportunity to enhance and support those who make this school one of the nation's top educational and research-intensive institutions. My introduction to the community was the Class of 2025's White Coat ceremony, where alumni, family, and friends gathered to welcome the next generation of committed physicians and hear them passionately recite an oath that commits them to compassionate and equitable care.

I visited our labs and met many of our esteemed scientists, students in our Medical Scientist Training Program, postdocs, and others who make up this community. I also felt your presence—our extended Einstein family—and the contributions that you have made to the Einstein story. And I was inspired by Einstein's powerful affiliation with Montefiore, and the extraordinary collaboration among all who make this institution stand out among its peers in education, biomedical research, and patient care.

It is in that spirit that I introduce this issue of *Motivations*, in which you will learn about people at Einstein and Montefiore who illustrate our culture in action. They include Stanley Wainapel, M.D., a blind rehabilitation medicine physician (page 53); members of our Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation (page 60); and our neonatology teams (page 56), who all play a role in supplying bench-to-bedside innovation as they, together with you, forge a healthier future.

As you read these inspiring stories, I ask you to join with me in thinking about how all of us can be partners in this work—and how we can accelerate it to expand the institution's impact and influence. If we're successful, we will help prepare the next generation of diverse, compassionate physicians and drive biomedical research that will improve patient care. And that is the very best motivation of all.

Sincerely,

Suzanne M. Murphy, Ed.D.
Vice President of Development

MOTIVATIONS | CONTINUED CONNECTION

STANLEY WAINAPEL, M.D., M.P.H.

A physician and researcher turns his blindness into an opportunity to help patients

BY GINGER SKINNER

When Stanley Wainapel, M.D., M.P.H., gets an email, he “reads” it by listening to the synthesized voice of famed theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, Ph.D. “I would be absolutely sunk without this,” Dr. Wainapel says of the text-to-speech software that also helps him draft emails and use the Internet and—for more than two decades—has aided him in caring for his patients. “This technology is a substitute for my vision.”

Dr. Wainapel learned at age 8 that he had retinitis pigmentosa, a rare retinal disorder that causes blindness over time. While attending the Boston University School of Medicine, he learned that he had a rarer condition than originally diagnosed called choroideremia, which affects an estimated 1 out of 100,000 people, mostly males. After graduating and completing his residency at Montefiore in 1974, he worked at hospitals in Boston and in New York City, including Beth Israel Medical Center and what is now Mount Sinai West, for 20 years before he began to lose his vision in his mid-40s. Today, at age 74, he can “see almost nothing.”

For the past 25 years he has been a professor in the Arthur S. Abramson Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at Einstein and clinical director of rehabilitation medicine at Montefiore, and



Stanley Wainapel, M.D., M.P.H., uses his other fine-tuned senses, such as touch and hearing, to help him make a diagnosis as he examines a patient in his Montefiore office.

Photos by Jason Torres



Dr. Wainapel uses a technique called palpation to examine a patient's neck to determine whether she has an enlarged thyroid.

"I find that, having been a patient myself, I can relate to my patients' experiences and share my vulnerabilities. I think my patients are, in turn, more willing to show me their own."

— DR. STANLEY WAINAPEL

he credits sensory substitution—along with a good memory and his own experience with physical disability—with helping him gain deeper insights into his patients' health.

Throughout his medical career, Dr. Wainapel has advocated for disability rights and has published dozens of journal articles on the topic, ranging from the physiological effects of acupuncture and yoga to the portrayals of disability in Charles Dickens's novels. Dr. Wainapel also served as president of the American Society of Handicapped Physicians in the early 1980s and as president of the New York Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in 1991.

In a recent conversation with *Einstein* magazine, Dr. Wainapel discussed how his loss of sight continues to shape how he approaches life and medicine.

How would you describe your field of medicine to someone who's not familiar with it?

When a person has an impairment, there's an organ system or body malfunction. You're left with a certain physical functional challenge, and that's called a physical disability. In rehabilitation medicine, we work to improve function by utilizing medical treatments, physical or occupational therapy, and acupuncture. Our goal is always to maximize a person's function—not just their physical function, but also their vocational capacities and emotional quality of life.

Given your vision loss, how do you conduct a typical physical examination?

Technology is an invaluable tool for me. I have a patient's demographic information, medical record, background

on when I last saw them, and all of my notes; my screen-reading software dictates that back to me.

I also rely on sound and touch. If I'm doing a physical diagnosis, there's palpation; auscultation, which is listening with a stethoscope; and percussion, which is using a finger to tap for different kinds of sounds. If I have a patient who has an underactive thyroid gland, I can still feel if the thyroid is enlarged (that's palpation) or hear if the person has a very hoarse voice or a low voice. I can ask them if they're losing hair or have an intolerance to cold. With other fine-tuned senses, I leverage these substitute ways of making a diagnosis.

Are there ways in which having a physical disability has changed how you approach your relationship with patients?

Early on, I didn't realize that patients

within my field of physical medicine and rehabilitation could, in a way, see themselves in me. I find that, having been a patient myself, I can relate to my patients' experiences and share my vulnerabilities. I think my patients are, in turn, more willing to show me their own.

Your presence in the field has helped break down barriers for people with disabilities who wish to enter the medical field. Do you have any advice for medical students with disabilities?

There will be barriers; some of them are physical and more are attitudinal. Many people don't think about what a person with a disability can do but instead focus on what the person can't do. For instance, when people see someone with a severe hearing impairment, it may not occur to them that the person might be able to lip-read. A person's limitations are not flaws of character; they're aspects of character.

You've worked in Boston and other places. What drew you back to the Bronx?

In the early 1990s, my visual acuity had begun decreasing quickly and exponentially. Within a couple of years, it was less than half the level it was before, and I began needing my cane more. I had lost a lot of self-confidence in being able to continue on my professional path. Through the National Federation of the Blind—and on the advice of a friend who has been blind since birth—I began using a computer with screen-reading software and started to gradually gain back my confidence.

At that point, a former resident of mine and long-standing friend, Dr.

Avital Fast [M.D.], had just taken a leadership role in Montefiore and Einstein's combined clinical and academic program in physical medicine and rehabilitation, and he asked me to join him. Since I've been back in the Bronx, my colleagues have been supportive by providing me with the equipment, software, and tools I need—and have continuously trusted that I could be productive in a high-powered clinical and academic atmosphere. Here I am, more than a quarter century later, still working full time in clinical care (I have 70 or more patients every week), writing articles and book chapters, and teaching.

Outside of medicine, you are a classical pianist. Do you still play?

It's one of the great joys of my life. I play complex pieces, and my virtual piano teacher has to teach them to me gradually. I know the sounds, but I can't read the page. He'll say, "Here's this chord. Here's what you're doing in your right hand. Here's what you're doing in your left."

I think of it as brain work. I find that there is a lot that I can do in my head—whether it's traveling by daydream, listening to music, or taking piano lessons. I smile from the fact that I am still growing through the wonderful challenges of life. **E**



TO DONATE

➔ einsteinmed.org/giving
✉ development@einsteinmed.org
☎ 718.430.2411



Text-to-speech computer software enables Dr. Wainapel to draft emails and use the Internet in his Montefiore office.

GIVING BRONX BABIES THE BEST START

Montefiore's neonatology intensive care units are committed to the most vulnerable infants

BY GARY GOLDENBERG



"Bronx born and bred" is a badge of honor for countless Americans. Unfortunately, all too many of the borough's babies get off to a rocky start in life; one in 10 Bronx newborns is premature, with an even higher rate of prematurity among Black infants.

Ethan Santana is a case in point. Ethan was born 10 weeks premature in August 2018. "The next 107 days would be the longest 107 days of our lives," says Albania, his mom. As with many "preemies," Ethan's lungs were severely underdeveloped—just one of his many life-threatening health issues. Meanwhile, Albania was, in her own words, "hysterical on a daily basis," unable to cope with this terrifying ordeal.

Albania and her husband were lucky that their baby was delivered at Montefiore's Jack D. Weiler Hospital, home to the Bronx's most-advanced neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

"Una, the first night nurse, made sure I was comfortable with my baby," she recalls. "There wasn't a day that Mary, one of the NICU nurses, didn't open her arms to me and wipe my tears as soon as I walked into the unit. Michelle and the whole respiratory therapy team made sure I understood the purpose of every machine Ethan was on. And Deborah Campbell [M.D.], one of the neonatologists, sat with me for hours, sharing advice on everything from breastfeeding to the importance of reading aloud to my baby. How lucky was I that this woman, as busy as she was, took time to sit with me and talk about my son. She made my family feel like he was the only baby in the NICU."

The doctors aren't sure why Ethan arrived in such a hurry. Premature births usually stem from genetic anomalies, infections, or underlying maternal

conditions such as diabetes, obesity, or lack of prenatal care. Such risk factors were absent in Ethan's case but abound in the Bronx, and they help explain why New York City's infant mortality rates are highest in this borough.

Nearly 10 percent of Bronx women—double the nationwide rate—do not get any prenatal care until their third trimester. Over the past decade, the maternal mortality rate from complications of pregnancy or delivery has increased 12 percent in the Bronx while decreasing 31 percent in the rest of the city.

Those statistics would probably be far worse if not for the neonatology division of the Children's Hospital at Montefiore (CHAM), which *U.S. News & World Report* consistently ranks among the top 20 such divisions nationwide.

"Our neonatologists are highly regarded for their care and their outcomes, even under the very trying conditions in which they work," says Michael deCastro Cabana, M.D., M.P.H., physician in chief at CHAM, professor of pediatrics at Einstein, and the Michael I. Cohen, M.D., University Chair of Pediatrics at Montefiore and Einstein. "Imagine what we could do if we had more resources."

GREAT OUTCOMES FOR TINY PATIENTS

Dr. Campbell has wondered about the same thing for decades. The Bronx native started practicing at Montefiore in the early 1980s, watching—and contributing to—the neonatology division's rise to prominence.

"Like the Bronx itself, we've learned how to do more with less," says Dr. Campbell, who is now chief of neonatology at Montefiore and a professor of

"While we equip our NICUs with the latest technologies and exceptional staff, we could certainly use more resources to meet the rising demand for neonatal intensive care."

— DR. DEBORAH CAMPBELL



Deborah Campbell, M.D., cares for a premature newborn at Weiler Hospital.



“Montefiore has had to deal with so much over its history. ... But with every hardship, the medical center has found ways to innovate.”

— DR. MICHAEL deCASTRO CABANA

pediatrics and an associate professor of obstetrics & gynecology and women’s health at Einstein. “It always impresses me how we can accomplish so much with so little. While it’s true that we equip our NICUs with the latest technologies and exceptional staff to provide state-of-the-art care, we could certainly use more resources to meet the rising demand for neonatal intensive care.”

Montefiore currently has two NICUs—the 35-bed unit on the Weiler campus and a 15-bed unit on the Wakefield Hospital campus—which together serve about 1,000 critically ill newborns a year. Both NICUs often operate at full capacity, which means that Bronx newborns must sometimes be taken out of the county for the highest level of neonatal intensive care. “We should be keeping families and infants together and close to home,” says Dr. Campbell.

Another issue, says Dr. Cabana, is that neonatal care has changed dramatically since Weiler’s NICU was last modernized. “It was once standard practice to separate babies from their mothers at birth and put as many as 16 preemies in a single, open-bay treatment room,” he notes. “Now we know it’s better to have single-family rooms, or smaller pods housing four to six babies, where mothers can stay near their newborns. That promotes breastfeeding and other mother-infant interactions that have a profound effect on newborn development.”

A third difficulty with the current NICU system: Both NICUs are physically separated from CHAM and its pediatric subspecialists, which means that babies who need highly specialized care must be transported several miles to CHAM. Since 2012, requests for

pediatric transports to CHAM have increased by more than 50 percent, causing delays in care when every second counts.

“Our long-term dream to improve things is to build a NICU at CHAM, ideally as part of a single large perinatal center combining obstetrics and neonatal medicine,” says Dr. Campbell. “For all sorts of reasons, we’ve never had an opportunity to establish a NICU at CHAM with centralized care for our most-at-risk babies and mothers.”

RISING DEMAND FOR NEONATAL CARE

The Bronx birthrate dropped during the pandemic, in part due to economic uncertainty and fears of exposing newborns to the coronavirus. But as COVID-19 recedes, demand for neonatal care is expected to rise, putting even more pressure on the NICUs.

“This virus has devastated the economic status and health of Bronx residents,” Dr. Cabana says. “We’ve already begun to see the pandemic’s harmful effects on expectant mothers.”

With more families battling even deeper poverty and food insecurity because of unprecedented job loss (during the pandemic’s 2020 peak, one in every four Bronx residents experienced unemployment), many parents lack adequate access to nutritious meals, prenatal vitamins, and other critical resources needed to raise healthy children.

The pandemic has only reinforced Dr. Cabana’s desire to expand CHAM’s outreach efforts so that fewer infants need neonatal intensive care in the first place. “Our goal is to provide the best-possible care following birth—but that’s not enough. There are so many factors that affect how a child fares,

beginning with proper prenatal care, good housing, and safe neighborhoods,” says Dr. Cabana, whose own studies of asthma, sickle-cell disease, and other pediatric diseases show that early intervention can make a world of difference in a child’s development.

These challenges confronting Bronx babies convinced Dr. Cabana to join the Einstein and Montefiore faculty in 2019. “I first learned about Montefiore’s social pediatrics residency program and its commitment to social justice back when I was a medical student,” he says.

“And when I started working here I got my first glimpse of the institution’s resilience. Montefiore has had to deal with so much over its history, from poverty to the HIV crisis to rampant chronic illness. But with every hardship, the medical center has found ways to innovate,” he adds. “We started a children’s hospital from scratch, we developed new school-health programs, and we created a base of local primary-care providers.”

Today, Dr. Cabana and his colleagues make a point of collaborating with other departments at Montefiore to reach out to parents and infants. One such effort is the Maternal Fetal Infant Network, a program in which the departments of pediatrics and of obstetrics and gynecology collaborate to optimize care before, during, and after delivery.

Clinicians such as Kevin Fiori, M.D., M.P.H., M.S., assistant professor of pediatrics and of family and social medicine at Einstein and an attending physician at Montefiore, are leveraging new technology to improve care.

Dr. Fiori is developing a smartphone app that will enable community health workers to connect parents with local health resources. Reaching farther afield,

Montefiore’s neonatologists partner with the city’s Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the New York State Perinatal Quality Collaborative to bolster maternal-infant health.

Meanwhile, Einstein and Montefiore researchers are working to prevent neonatal complications. Praveen Ballabh, M.D., professor of pediatrics and in the Dominick P. Purpura Department of Neuroscience at Einstein and a neonatologist at Montefiore, for example, is studying how to reduce the number of crippling and often deadly brain hemorrhages that affect a quarter of all preemies. Mamta Fuloria, M.B.B.S., associate professor of pediatrics at Einstein and a neonatologist at Montefiore, is examining how nutrition and various environmental factors influence fetal growth.

“These are just a few examples of our singular focus on quality of care—on assuring the best practices and the best outcomes for our tiniest patients,” Dr. Campbell says.

Albania, for one, appreciates these efforts. “Our NICU experience was not one that we wanted to have, but we are grateful it was at Montefiore,” she says. “To all of the nurses and doctors who touched our son and our hearts: my family thanks you.”



At top, Albania and Edgar Santana with their newborn son, Ethan, at Weiler Hospital in 2018. Above and below, they celebrate Ethan’s third birthday.



TO DONATE

✉ einsteinmed.org/giving

✉ development@einsteinmed.org

☎ 718.430.2411

INNOVATION IN TRANSPLANTATION

Top-ranked Montefiore Einstein center brings lifesaving options to every patient in need

BY EMILY WEISGRAU

It's not easy for a doctor to take on the role of a patient, but it happened seven years ago when Hanan Rotem, M.D., received a liver cancer diagnosis.

After attending medical school in his native Israel, Dr. Rotem became a resident at Montefiore Medical Center in 1975 and stayed on for 21 years to build a practice in obstetrics and gynecology. Transplantation was completely unfamiliar to him—until he suddenly found himself needing it.

"I had a scan done, and there was a suspicious mass," he says, so he took the results to Daniel Berkowitz, M.D., a trusted friend and Montefiore gastroenterologist. Dr. Berkowitz told Dr. Rotem that he would need a liver transplant, and he recommended the Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation as the preferred choice.

SUCCESS BUILT OVER THE DECADES

The Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation is one of the longest-running transplant centers in the world, having carried out its first transplant—involving a kidney—in 1967. It now performs as many as 400 adult and pediatric transplants each year, including combined kidney-pancreas and heart-lung transplants, and boasts an enviable survival record.

The center consistently ranks as the country's best center for liver transplant survival. It also has the best heart, liver, and pancreas transplant survival rates in New York State, including a 100% survival rate for live-donor liver transplants and a 100% one-year survival rate for pediatric kidney and heart transplants.

Today, the center has become "one of the most comprehensive multiorgan transplant centers in the region," says Milan Kinkhabwala, M.D., F.A.C.S., chief of transplantation surgery and director of abdominal transplantation at Montefiore and professor of surgery and of medicine at Einstein. In most cases, Montefiore's transplant outcomes are superior to regional and national outcomes because, according to Dr. Kinkhabwala, "We have an extremely patient-centric approach. We have a view that these patients are our patients for life, so we remain deeply committed to their overall well-being and recovery."

The center has established impressive social supports that increase patients' odds of a healthier life pre- and post-transplant. With approximately 85% of patients across Montefiore relying on Medicare, Medicaid, or both, the hospital welcomes many individuals who lack financial resources, are facing immigration challenges, or do not have

familial donors, among other complications to treatment. Through an integrated infrastructure of psychosocial, clinical, and social-service team members, the transplant center is breaking down barriers and building the support structure these patients need.

"We do everything we can—from providing housing to transportation to family counseling—to stand with our patients," Dr. Kinkhabwala says. "It's a point of pride to work in a center that brings both compassion and action to a community in need. We are the only transplant center that guarantees free transplant medication in the first year post-treatment, for example. We want our patients to focus on getting healthy, and we're here to help support that journey."

Donor organs are critical to transplantation success, and New York has a particularly long waiting period; at any one time, Montefiore has approximately 1,500 patients across the region seeking a healthy kidney or liver. To increase organ availability, Montefiore has instituted a robust living-donor program for kidney and liver transplants, and it also offers innovative "bloodless" lung and

"It's a point of pride to work in a center that brings both compassion and action to a community in need. We are the only transplant center that guarantees free transplant medication in the first year post-treatment."

— DR. MILAN KINKHABWALA

Opposite page: A Montefiore transplant team at work. Below, husband-and-wife surgical duo Milan Kinkhabwala, M.D., and Sarah Bellemare, M.D.





“People told me that many places rejected them for organ donation because they were considered at high risk for failure. But Dr. Kinkhabwala’s team accepted them.”

— DR. HANAN ROTEM

heart-lung transplant surgical approaches to avoid blood transfusions (opening opportunities for patients with religious or medical restrictions), as well as other, more-traditional kidney and liver transplants. “Many people don’t make it because there aren’t available organs. That’s a huge problem,” Dr. Kinkhabwala says. “We’re developing novel solutions so we can offer more options and opportunities for a healthy life.”

INNOVATIVE, LIFESAVING OPTIONS

After his diagnosis, Dr. Rotem began seeing Montefiore and Einstein’s Juan Rocca, M.D., surgical director for kidney transplantation, and Sarah Bellemare, M.D., an assistant professor of surgery at Einstein who specializes in gastrointestinal (liver and pancreas) cancer, liver transplants, and hepatobiliary surgery. Dr. Bellemare leads the adult liver transplant team along with Dr. Kinkhabwala, her husband.

Dr. Bellemare began working in transplant medicine, with a focus on liver transplantation, late in her residency at the University of Montreal after discovering the dramatic results

that a transplant can achieve. “You take people with yellow complexions, with a lot of fluid in the abdomen, and then see them after a transplant and they look healthy again,” she says. “They are able to enjoy life.”

Dr. Bellemare knew that a new liver would allow Dr. Rotem to enjoy many more years of life. Dr. Rotem was hopeful—and that hope turned to reality. “My surgery went smoothly,” he remembers. “After a few days I was back home. And after a few weeks I was back on the tennis court.”

The transplant center team prides itself on bringing cutting-edge, lifesaving options to every patient in need. The team’s living-donor program for kidneys and livers “offers a way for people to get transplants more quickly, before they get too sick,” Dr. Kinkhabwala says.

Fueled by family and friends of patients as well as by anonymous living donors, the living-donor program reduces the gap between the hundreds of thousands of patients in the United States waiting for a kidney or liver and the number of organs available. While saving patients’ lives, donors don’t endanger their own; people can live



Dr. Bellemare, center, and Dr. Kinkhabwala discuss upcoming surgeries with members of the Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation.

perfectly functional lives with just one kidney, and the liver is the body’s only organ that can regrow when a section of it is removed.

Montefiore is also among the first health centers to demonstrate that surgeons can safely transplant livers infected with hepatitis C into “naive” (uninfected) patients. Performing such a transplant first on a critically ill 21-year-old, the transplant team replaced the patient’s organ with an infected liver and then gave the liver recipient the hepatitis C drugs ledipasvir and sofosbuvir. This innovation saved the young patient’s life—and thousands more since then. The approach is now becoming standard practice around the country, increasing the pool of donor organs available at any given time.

Dr. Kinkhabwala says he hopes that organ transplants will one day be obsolete. Instead, scientists will be able to “grow” new tissues and organs for patients using stem-cell therapy, which Einstein and other research center teams are now studying.

REACHING THE NEXT LEVEL

In the days immediately following his successful surgery, Dr. Rotem walked through the ward and talked with other hospitalized transplant patients. “Again and again, people told me that many

places had rejected them for organ donation because they were considered at high risk for failure. But Dr. Kinkhabwala’s team accepted them.”

His admiration and gratitude motivated Dr. Rotem to donate to the transplant center, beginning in 2016. “The decision was a simple one for me,” he says. “They are providing excellent surgical and medical care.”

Dr. Rotem especially hopes his philanthropy will make more organs available to people who need them. “I compare it to a factory that’s not operating at full capacity,” he says. “Here and at transplant centers everywhere, more people are on waiting lists than should be.”

Donations like Dr. Rotem’s will also help fund patients’ care during hospitalization and after treatment, and underwrite research on alternatives to transplants. “Charitable giving provides us with the tools to reach the next level in terms of innovation and academic promise,” Dr. Kinkhabwala says. “Only by working together can we hope to bring lifesaving therapy to every patient in need.” **E**



TO DONATE

einsteinmed.org/giving
development@einsteinmed.org
718.430.2411

Help for Kidney Recipients With COVID-19

In the spring of 2020, Montefiore’s hospital beds were full of COVID-19 patients. The transplant team found that kidney transplant recipients had a mortality rate of 20 percent, while the general population’s death rate from COVID-19 was about 1 percent.

The center’s doctors attributed the alarming difference to transplant recipients having to take immunosuppressive drugs to prevent their bodies from rejecting their organs, and many also having coexisting health problems. So the team tried a different treatment approach for kidney recipients with COVID-19, which included withholding certain medications while administering others.

Their findings, described in a letter published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, revealed promising results: “Kidney-transplant recipients with COVID-19 [now] had less fever as an initial symptom ... and more rapid clinical progression than persons with COVID-19 in the general population.”

Key Facts About the Montefiore Einstein Center for Transplantation

400

adult and pediatric transplants each year, including combined kidney-pancreas and heart-lung transplants



100%

survival rate for live-donor liver transplants and a 100% one-year survival rate for pediatric kidney and heart transplants



85%

of patients across Montefiore Health System rely on Medicare, Medicaid, or both



CLASS NOTES

1960s

Fredric E. Levison, M.D. '60, retired since 2000, lives in Washington, D.C.; he is well, and happily married.

Melvin Schapiro, M.D. '60, is nearly 91. He has great memories of his class and notes that everyone has accomplished a lot.

Robert Chalfin, M.D. '61, and his wife, Leita, have been married nearly 63 years. He works as a psychiatrist part time and teaches at Zucker Hillside Hospital, the NYU Grossman School of Medicine, and the Psychoanalytic Association of New York. He has three daughters and eight grandkids.

Zalman R. Schrader, M.D. '61, recently retired as senior partner in a 12-person gastrointestinal group after nearly 50 years of clinical practice. His daughter, **Elana Schrader, M.D. '87**, is chief medical officer of GuideWell Health/Florida Blue.

Evelyn Wolf-Rokito, M.D. '61, is doing disability physicals for Nassau County and New York State. She has two sons, both orthopedic surgeons, one daughter, who is an attorney, and seven grandchildren.

Jacob Joseph Barie, M.D. '65, retired from radiology in 2014. He is involved in transgender issues. His granddaughter is Jazz Jennings, who stars in the reality TV series *I Am Jazz* on the Learning Channel. Dr. Barie, his wife, Jacky, and his family appear on the show.

Michael Gochfeld, M.D. '65, is an occupational physician. He lectures medical students on evidence-based medicine, viruses, toxicology, and refugee health.

Susan Rako, M.D. '66, made the shift to online psychotherapy during the pandemic. Granddaughter Alexandra is a

recent graduate of Connecticut College, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Dr. Rako's books include *The Hormone of Desire* and *That's How the Light Gets In*.

Sally E. Shaywitz, M.D. '66, is the Audrey G. Ratner Professor, co-founder, and co-director of the Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity, and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. This year she published, along with her son, Jonathan Shaywitz, M.D., the second edition of *Overcoming Dyslexia*. Her study "The Yale Outcome Study: Outcomes for Graduates With and Without Dyslexia" was published in 2020 by the *Journal of Pediatric Neuropsychology*. The American Association for the Advancement of Science honored her as a fellow, and she received the Liberty Science Center Genius Award.

Stephen Baker, M.D. '68, retired four years ago as chair of radiology at New Jersey Medical School after 25 years. After a lifelong fascination with geography, he is pursuing his other career as a professional geographer. He lectures at City University of New York and recently had two books published, *The Encyclopedia of Quizzes, Volume 1* and *Volume 2*.

Gary A. Rosenberg, M.D. '68, was awarded a grant from the National Institute on Aging to establish an Alzheimer's research center, where he will work with American Indians in New Mexico. His son is an associate professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, and his daughter covers immigration for Reuters. His grandson is almost 3. His wife, Evelyn, has over 40 public sculptures in the United States and one in Tanzania.

1970s

Ira Asher, M.D. '71, is a retired ophthalmologist, age 75, married to his wife,

Karen, for almost 50 years. They have two children and two grandchildren. He was on staff at Rhode Island Hospital and was chief of surgery at South County Hospital.

Norman Hartstein, M.D. '71, trained at UCLA-NPI for both adult and child psychiatry. Before retiring, he worked for 32 years at Kaiser West LA. He lives in West Hollywood with his husband, Robert, a retired lawyer. They have been together for more than 40 years.

Nathan Litman, M.D. '71, works half time after a career as the chief of pediatric infectious diseases and vice chair at Montefiore. He initiated the pediatric hospitalist service and received awards for excellence in teaching. He and his wife, Norma, live in Westchester County, New York, and have three children and four grandchildren living nearby.

Romana Primus, M.D. '71, retired in 1996 as a clinical immunologist and allergist. She then volunteered at a community clinic for over 20 years. Simultaneously, with her husband, Chuck, she ran her father's auto dealership. Dr. Primus has been president of the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut for the past 10 years. She and Chuck have four children and eight grandchildren.

Howard Wiener, M.D. '71, retired from a group pediatric practice in 2013 and enjoys working in stained glass, researching Jewish history, and spending time with his family, including his wife, Judy, three children, and four grandchildren.

Eric Heyer, M.D., Ph.D. '75, has been in academic medicine throughout his career. Before retiring in 2016, he headed the division of neurosurgical anesthesiology at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, where he performed a

National Institutes of Health—supported study measuring cognitive changes associated with patients having carotid endarterectomy.

Robert Katz, M.D. '75, retired from pathology but continues an association with medicine as president of the Morris Township (New Jersey) Board of Health. He has edited five books about Sherlock Holmes, with a sixth on the way.

Peter Rotwein, M.D. '75, retired in March 2020 after 40 years of biomedical research at medical schools in St. Louis; Portland, Oregon; and El Paso, Texas. He and his wife, Bonnie, spent the past year shuttling, mostly by car, among San Antonio, Chicago, and Portland to see their children and two grandchildren.

Jonathan Rosen, M.D. '76, recently retired after a 40-year career as a family physician in Connecticut. He helped found ProHealth Physicians—the largest primary-care practice in the state. He and his wife, Linda, celebrated their 47th anniversary with their two sons and two grandsons. He recently published a sixth novel, *The Museum of an Extinct Race*.

Harvey Stern, M.D. '78, retired from Bronx Care (Bronx Lebanon) this year after 32 years as chair and vice chair of radiology. Dr. Stern is proud of the residency program, which has produced more than 60 radiologists. Dr. Stern served in the army reserve for 25 years and retired as a lieutenant colonel. He has two sons, both lawyers, and three grandchildren.

1980s

Kevin Davis, M.D. '80, found after four months at home that he was not ready for retirement. He is now working in the Edison, New Jersey, office of Plainfield Pediatrics, still doing what he loves. His grandson is almost 2.

Fred Barken, M.D. '81, is enjoying retirement from medicine and is working with his youngest son in real estate

in Ithaca, New York. He and his wife are expecting their fourth grandchild shortly.

Barbara Bartlik, M.D. '81, was rated one of *New York Magazine's* "Best Doctors in Psychiatry." She is a co-editor of *Integrative Sexual Health* (2018). A distinguished life fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, she is affiliated with NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell and Lenox Hill Hospitals. She and her husband, David Carroll, an attorney, have two children: Thomas, who works in online marketing, and Beatrix, a software engineer.

Daniel Behar, M.D. '81, is head of the interventional radiology unit at the E. Wolfson Medical Center, a government hospital in Tel Aviv. A fellow in the Society of Interventional Radiology, he also teaches medical students. He lives with Esther, his wife of over 40 years, in Hashmonaim, Israel. They enjoy time with their children and grandchildren.

Stephanie Green, M.D. '81, who is retired from pediatrics, is happy to report the birth in July 2020 of grandson Maddox Green, who joined his dad, Andrew (Dr. Green's son), mom, Brittany, and brother, Beckham, age 4, at home in New York City. Her son Christopher graduated from Cornell's psychiatry residency program in June 2020. Dr. Green and her husband, Stephen, who is retired from interventional cardiology, live in Dix Hills, New York.

Michael Kram, M.D. '81, now happily retired, served as the medical director of a gastroenterology group in Rockland County, New York. He married **Elyse Teicher, M.D. '82**, and has four children and eight grandchildren. In 2014, he came down with an illness that baffled experts in New York City. Dr. Kram had to figure it out himself, and he fought for his life. He published his own case report on his illness (baroreflex failure) in the *Journal of Clinical Hypertension* in 2016. He detailed his experiences in the book *Zebra: It's Not All Black and White*. Dr. Kram says there are many vignettes from Einstein in the book.

Iris Lesser, M.D. '81, retired from her position at Einstein's Children's Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center in mid-2017, shortly after her husband, Bruce, retired. In the fall of 2019 they hosted a wedding for their daughter.

Abraham Port, M.D. '81, is practicing complete women's imaging in Garden City, New York. He previously held positions as director of breast imaging at the South Nassau Communities Hospital; director of breast imaging at Mount Sinai Medical Center; and director in the department of radiology at Mount Kisco Medical Group.

Deborah Rubin, M.D. '81, is the William B. Kountz Professor of Medicine and Developmental Biology in the division of gastroenterology at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. She and her spouse, Marc Levin, M.D., have had a longstanding collaborative research program that focuses on gastrointestinal stem-cell dynamics in gut injury and carcinogenesis. Dr. Rubin also heads an intestinal rehabilitation/short-bowel clinic and is associate director for faculty affairs for the division of gastroenterology and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The couple have two sons: Robert Levin, who is a news editor at *Newsday*, and Ben Levin, a musician and composer in Boston.

David Sherr, M.D. '81, worked for close to 15 years at North Shore University Hospital, followed by almost 10 years at Weill Cornell Medical Center, where he received an M.S. in clinical epidemiology. David is now chief of radiation oncology at the Brooklyn Hospital Center.

Lee Simerman, M.D. '81, is retired after 30 years in a Philadelphia hospital-based radiology practice, first at Graduate Hospital for over 13 years and then at the nation's oldest hospital, Pennsylvania Hospital, for more than 16 years. He now spends winters in Fort Lauderdale.

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep your classmates up to date by submitting your news to *Einstein* magazine. We look forward to including you. Email us at einsteinalumni@einsteinmed.org.

Stuart Kaplan, M.D. '85, is a partner in Rheumatology Consultants in Hewlett, New York, and serves as chief of rheumatology at Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital. He and his wife, Dalia, have six children and five granddaughters. Their oldest daughter, Atira Kaplan, M.D., who completed her residency and fellowship in physiatry and women's rehab at Montefiore, is married to **Jerry Karp, M.D. '18**, son of Dr. Kaplan's roommate at Einstein, **Adam Karp, M.D. '87**.

Peter Sherman, M.D., M.P.H. '86, received a grant from the World Childhood Foundation to start the Bronx Human Trafficking Task Force, a multidisciplinary group.

Lewis Stein, M.D. '86, became an ambulatory anesthesia specialist over the past 10 years and moved away from obstetric anesthesia. His group practice covers many sites throughout metropolitan New York City and Long Island. He lives in Lawrence, New York, and enjoys spending time with his wife, children, and grandchildren. He is considering a run for the U.S. Senate in 2022.

Eryn Oberlander, M.D. '88, is thankful to be able to practice psychiatry via video sessions. Her eldest daughter got married in Colorado this summer and works in healthcare investing; her youngest daughter graduated summa cum laude from Wharton amidst COVID-19; and her middle daughter received a master's degree in education from Boston University.

1990s

Victoria Shulman, M.D. '90, and **Elliot Shulman, M.D. '90**, announce the birth of two grandchildren: Caleb, born Oct. 18, 2020, and James, born Dec. 4, 2020. Dr. Victoria Shulman is a pediatric emergency attending at Children's Hospital at Montefiore. Dr. Elliot Shulman is a urologist in New Jersey.

Jane Gold, M.D. '92, is pleased to welcome her daughter, Samantha Gold, to the Einstein Class of 2024. Dr. Gold works for Premise Health as the medical director for the WarnerMedia Health Hub in New York City's Hudson Yards.

Laurie Marzullo, M.D. '92, and **Nathaniel Robin, M.D. '89**, have been at Children's of Alabama since 2003. Dr. Marzullo divides her time between clinical work and medical education. Dr. Robin is clinical director and residency director of clinical genetics. Their three sons live in Manhattan. Their "Einstein baby," Joseph, is an intern in orthopedics at NYU, son Timothy works for a financial tech company, and Alex is a recent Columbia graduate.

Jeff Gindi, M.D. '97, is pleased to announce the upcoming bat mitzvah of his daughter, Sarah, age 12. Dr. Gindi has been an associate medical director for a hospitalist medicine practice and an instructor in medicine with New York Medical College in Westchester County. He founded the New York City/Westchester chapter of the Society of Hospital Medicine and is its president.

David Holbrook, M.D. '97, completed his residency and fellowship in child and adolescent psychiatry in 2002. He has a private practice in Lebanon, New Jersey, with a special interest in the mind-body relationship as well as the importance of the autonomic nervous system. He tends to specialize in working with difficult patients and severe psychiatric pathology.

Reena Karani, M.D. '97, was elected

treasurer of the National Board of Medical Examiners. She is director of the Institute for Medical Education and a professor of medical education, medicine, and geriatrics and palliative medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Sarah Klagsbrun, M.D. '98, is now class ambassador and will email members to submit Class Notes. Dr. Klagsbrun is a child and adolescent and adult psychiatrist, and the medical director of Four Winds Hospital in Westchester County, New York.

George Ruiz, M.D. '98, has joined Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania as chair of cardiology and vice chair of the Geisinger Heart Institute. He specializes in clinical cardiology with a subspecialty in adult congenital heart disease and pulmonary hypertension.

2000s

Victoria Chernyak, M.D. '01, has completed her tenure at Montefiore Medical Center after nearly 19 years.

Joshua Rocker, M.D. '01, became chief of the pediatric emergency department at Cohen Children's Medical Center two years ago. The flu season of 2019–2020 was intense, and then COVID-19 occurred. Dr. Rocker has been running a pediatric emergency medicine conference for the last nine years. This year, the theme was "Lessons Learned from 2020" (cchevent.site/2021-05-26-pem/).

Adam J. Friedman, M.D. '06, was appointed chair of dermatology at the George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences in Washington, D.C. He also received the inaugural advocacy leadership award from the Derma Care Access Network.

Gary S. Schwartz, M.D. '06, was named the director of the extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) program at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, and is a member of the Extracorporeal Life

Support Organization committee for use of ECMO for COVID-19.

Lee Schalop, M.D. '08, announces that Oncoceutics, the biotech company that he co-founded shortly after graduating from Einstein, merged into a larger drug company called Chimex in January.

2010s

Chris R. Hawk, M.D. '11, lives in the Pacific Northwest with his wife, **Carolyn Saylor Hawk, M.D., Ph.D. '11**, and their two girls—almost 4 and 6. Dr. Carolyn Hawk is a primary-care pediatrician, and Dr. Chris Hawk developed a home-visit/palliative-care program for the Lummi, a local Native American Salish coast tribe.

Amanda Guardado, M.D. '15, moved back to New York City in 2019 after completing her residency in obstetrics & gynecology at the University of Maryland in Baltimore. She now works for Columbia University as a general ob-gyn with NewYork-Presbyterian Allen Hospital and is site director for obstetrics & gynecology at the Washington Heights Family Center.

Jonathan Sterman, M.D. '15, is finishing his fellowship in muscular skeletal radiology at Montefiore and will take a position at Hudson Valley Radiology. He and his wife, **Shira Wieder, M.D. '15**, have a daughter. Dr. Wieder is a dermatologist in Riverdale, New York.

Adam Berman, M.D. '16, finished his internal medicine residency and a fellowship at Brigham and Women's Hospital and began his cardiology fellowship at Brigham in July 2020. Dr. Berman's wife, Tova, is a clinical pharmacist. They have two children—Noam, 5, and Lior, 2.

Ethan B. Fram, M.D. '16, and his wife, Laurie, had a baby boy, Julian, in November 2020 at White Plains Hospital.

Miles Gordon, M.D. '16, is at NYP-Columbia as faculty for emergency

medicine and emergency ultrasound. He and his wife have a 2-year-old son. He says he is happy to be near Einstein alumni, such as gastroenterologist to the stars **Andrew Joelson, M.D. '16**!

Yair Saperstein, M.D. '16, married Miriam Friedman on March 14, 2021. Dr. Saperstein is the chief executive officer of avoMD, a health tech startup that digitizes clinical algorithms for internal medicine and pediatric physicians. Miriam is a business strategy consultant at Accenture.

IN MEMORIAM

Robin Briehl, M.D., age 92, professor emeritus of physiology & biophysics at Einstein who focused on sickle-cell research, Dec. 31, 2020, Waccabuc, New York.

Arpan De, Ph.D., age 34, a recent postdoctoral fellow in medicine and in molecular pharmacology at Einstein, June 7, 2021, India.

Joel. S. Feiner, M.D. '64, age 82, former professor of psychiatry and director of social and community psychiatry at Einstein and director of psychiatry residency training at Montefiore; later a professor of psychiatry at University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, Sept. 8, 2020, Ashland, Oregon.

Robert Finberg, M.D. '74, age 71, professor of medicine and chair emeritus of the department of medicine at UMass Medical School, an infectious-disease expert, and a COVID-19 vaccine researcher who was the 2018 recipient of the Dominick P. Purpura Distinguished Alumnus Award, Aug. 30, 2021, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Christine Lawrence, M.D., age 90, distinguished university professor of medicine emerita at Einstein and a hematologist at Jacobi Medical Center, July 31, 2021, New York City.

Philip Lief, M.D., age 81, retired professor of medicine at Einstein, former program

James M. Semple, M.D. '16, married **Elizabeth Chernyak, M.D. '16**, on New Year's Eve in 2019 and welcomed a baby girl, Katerina, on Aug. 9, 2020. Dr. Semple is an emergency medicine attending in New Jersey, and Dr. Chernyak is a neurology attending in Brooklyn.

Elizabeth Goldberger, M.D. '17, is an emergency medicine physician at NYU Langone. She married Zachary Mostel, a fellow physician, in June 2020.

director in internal medicine at Einstein and Montefiore, and retired vice chair of medicine at Einstein and Montefiore, Aug. 23, 2021, White Plains, New York.

Irving Listowsky, Ph.D., age 85, professor emeritus of biochemistry at Einstein and member of the Albert Einstein Cancer Center and of the Marion Bessin Liver Research Center from its 1974 inception, April 28, 2021, Flushing, New York.

Stephen W. Mackey, M.D. '87, age 60, July 23, 2021, infectious-disease specialist who also taught science at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, Pulaski Technical College, and Baptist Health College, July 23, 2021, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Jack Peisach, Ph.D., age 88, professor emeritus of biophysics and physiology at Einstein, a pioneer in the field of electron paramagnetic resonance spectroscopy, and internationally renowned for research on metals in biochemistry, March 4, 2021, New York City.

Murray Wittmer, M.D., Ph.D., age 93, professor emeritus of pathology at Einstein, renowned in the field of parasitology, March 18, 2021, Larchmont, New York.

IN MEMORIAM

Director of Stem Cell Research Institute Paul Frenette, M.D.



Paul S. Frenette, M.D., age 56, professor of medicine and of cell biology and the founding director and chair of the Ruth L. and David S. Gottesman

Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Einstein, died on July 26, 2021, of angiosarcoma, a rare type of cancer, in New York City.

A pioneer in hematopoietic stem-cell research, Dr. Frenette made breakthrough observations that helped advance the understanding of vascular biology, sickle-cell disease, cancer, and stem-cell biology. He was able to make a series of discoveries relating to the production and release of hematopoietic stem cells from their “niche” in the bone marrow; the mechanisms by which the abnormal red cells in sickle-cell anemia clump within

blood vessels, leading to sickle-cell crises; and the role of the autonomic nervous system in regulating the growth of prostate-cancer and leukemia cells.

An effective, engaging, and supportive leader, Dr. Frenette hired and mentored eight successful junior faculty members to grow the Gottesman Stem Cell Institute into a major research establishment.

“Paul Frenette’s untimely passing is a great loss to the Einstein community, not only because of his brilliant scientific research but also because of his exemplary human qualities of kindness, thoughtfulness, and respect for others,” said Dr. Gottesman, chair of Einstein’s Board of Trustees. “My husband and I were strong supporters of Paul’s work, not only because of the quality of his research, but also because of his outstanding qualities as a person. We will miss him tremendously.”

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D., the Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean at Einstein and

vice president and chief academic officer at Montefiore, echoed that sentiment: “Paul was a gifted scientist, wise mentor, exceptional leader, and an even better human being.”

A native of Canada, Dr. Frenette received his medical degree from Université Laval in Quebec City, followed by residency training at McGill University in Montreal; he completed a clinical fellowship in hematology-oncology at Tufts–New England Medical Center in Boston. After a faculty appointment at Harvard Medical School, Dr. Frenette joined the faculty of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in 1998 and was recruited to Einstein in 2010.

Dr. Frenette is survived by his wife, Nadine, and children, Clara and Alberic.



READ MORE

Learn more about Dr. Frenette: magazine.einsteinmed.org/Frenette21

Montefiore Trustee Oded Aboodi



Oded Aboodi, committed Montefiore Medicine Board of Trustees vice-chair as well as Montefiore Medicine and Montefiore Health System treasurer, died August 15, 2021, at age 79 in Greenwich, Connecticut.

Mr. Aboodi brought immense expertise to his volunteer leadership positions, including serving as chair of the finance committee

and member of the executive and compensation committees. A certified public accountant, he acted as chairman and chief executive officer of Alpine Resources LLC, and organizer and chairman of Alpine Capital Bank.

His dedication to Montefiore spanned both his thought leadership and philanthropy. Mr. Aboodi was a generous supporter of Montefiore and Einstein’s cardiothoracic surgery and cancer programs.

He is survived by his children, Henry and Monica, David and Meredith, and Abigail and Steven; his longtime partner, Judy Lewis; and his grandchildren, Gabrielle, Michelle, Jacob, Lauren, Rachel, Avery, Nicole, Talia, Aaron, Eric, and Phoebe.

Einstein Trustee Jay Goldberg



Jay Neil Goldberg, longtime Einstein Board of Trustees member and steadfast supporter of the College of Medicine and the Albert Einstein Cancer Center, died June 17, 2021, at age 80 in New York City.

Mr. Goldberg was a member of the legal, compliance, finance, and investment committees of the Board of Trustees, serving for more than 20 years. He was also a member of the Albert Einstein Cancer Center Research Advisory Board and former chairman of the Einstein Men’s Division, which honored him with the Albert Einstein Humanitarian Award.

Mr. Goldberg was a pioneer in the field of computer data processing, building and selling three companies in the field before becoming co-founder of Hudson Ventures, LP, a venture capital firm that invests in early stage technology.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Cirillo-Goldberg; daughters Susanne Currivan, Melissa Haddad, Laura Ortiz (Angel), and Julie Goldberg Mangini (Justin); six grandchildren; and sister Karen Ostroff.