Welcome to this special issue of The Philanthropist, where we proudly spotlight the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine and the indelible impact that donors are having on patient care, research and the training of our next generation of experts.

Through We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, we are partnering with friends and alumni who are as committed as we are to unraveling the mysteries of the most challenging neurologic diseases and conditions of our time. With this inspiring support, we have been proceeding with big, bold plans, including recruiting more than 50 of the world’s most sought-after physicians and scientists to join our team of established leaders in neurological surgery, neurology, psychiatry, ophthalmology and physiology, among others. Patients at our community hospitals are receiving all the resources and quality care of a leading academic medical center. We also have been excited to introduce breakthrough new centers, such as the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, the Regenstein Center for Neurological Care, the Center for Neurogenetics and the Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment. We have led a very successful campaign to endow our Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center, led with distinction by Dr. M.-Masrel Mesulam for more than 25 years. This is just the beginning of what is possible.

We and our philanthropic partners are passionate about forging new paths that will lead to discoveries and innovations that have a direct impact on the millions of patients and families facing a diagnosis of a neurologic illness, such as Parkinson’s disease, ALS, a brain tumor, Alzheimer’s disease, a spinal disorder, mental illness and so many others. Patients here and across the globe deserve our best effort each day to reach across disciplines and collaborate on leading-edge clinical, basic science and “bench-to-bedside” translational research. Our collaborations lead us in new directions, including exploring similarities and characteristics across diseases so that a research breakthrough in Parkinson’s disease, for example, can have an impact on how we improve treatment for other neurologic diseases, thus helping many more patients and families.

In this issue, we are pleased to share just a few examples of important patient care and scientific progress in the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine. All of this is made possible by you, our caring and generous donors who have entrusted us with your confidence and charitable support. We are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Krensky, MD    Connie D. Falcone
Executive for Development   President
Northwestern Medicine    Northwestern Memorial Foundation
Vice Dean for Development and Alumni Relations
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Welcome to this special issue of The Philanthropist, where we proudly spotlight the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine and the indelible impact that donors are having on patient care, research and the training of our next generation of experts.

Through We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, we are partnering with friends and alumni who are as committed as we are to unraveling the mysteries of the most challenging neurologic diseases and conditions of our time. With this inspiring support, we have been proceeding with big, bold plans, including recruiting more than 50 of the world’s most sought-after physicians and scientists to join our team of established leaders in neurological surgery, neurology, psychiatry, ophthalmology and physiology, among others. Patients at our community hospitals are receiving all the resources and quality care of a leading academic medical center. We also have been excited to introduce breakthrough new centers, such as the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, the Regenstein Center for Neurological Care, the Center for Neurogenetics and the Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment. We have led a very successful campaign to endow our Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center, led with distinction by Dr. M.-Masrel Mesulam for more than 25 years. This is just the beginning of what is possible.

We and our philanthropic partners are passionate about forging new paths that will lead to discoveries and innovations that have a direct impact on the millions of patients and families facing a diagnosis of a neurologic illness, such as Parkinson’s disease, ALS, a brain tumor, Alzheimer’s disease, a spinal disorder, mental illness and so many others. Patients here and across the globe deserve our best effort each day to reach across disciplines and collaborate on leading-edge clinical, basic science and “bench-to-bedside” translational research. Our collaborations lead us in new directions, including exploring similarities and characteristics across diseases so that a research breakthrough in Parkinson’s disease, for example, can have an impact on how we improve treatment for other neurologic diseases, thus helping many more patients and families.

In this issue, we are pleased to share just a few examples of important patient care and scientific progress in the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine. All of this is made possible by you, our caring and generous donors who have entrusted us with your confidence and charitable support. We are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Krensky, MD    Connie D. Falcone
Executive for Development   President
Northwestern Medicine    Northwestern Memorial Foundation
Vice Dean for Development and Alumni Relations
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Welcome to this special issue of The Philanthropist, where we proudly spotlight the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine and the indelible impact that donors are having on patient care, research and the training of our next generation of experts.

Through We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, we are partnering with friends and alumni who are as committed as we are to unraveling the mysteries of the most challenging neurologic diseases and conditions of our time. With this inspiring support, we have been proceeding with big, bold plans, including recruiting more than 50 of the world’s most sought-after physicians and scientists to join our team of established leaders in neurological surgery, neurology, psychiatry, ophthalmology and physiology, among others. Patients at our community hospitals are receiving all the resources and quality care of a leading academic medical center. We also have been excited to introduce breakthrough new centers, such as the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, the Regenstein Center for Neurological Care, the Center for Neurogenetics and the Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment. We have led a very successful campaign to endow our Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center, led with distinction by Dr. M.-Masrel Mesulam for more than 25 years. This is just the beginning of what is possible.

We and our philanthropic partners are passionate about forging new paths that will lead to discoveries and innovations that have a direct impact on the millions of patients and families facing a diagnosis of a neurologic illness, such as Parkinson’s disease, ALS, a brain tumor, Alzheimer’s disease, a spinal disorder, mental illness and so many others. Patients here and across the globe deserve our best effort each day to reach across disciplines and collaborate on leading-edge clinical, basic science and “bench-to-bedside” translational research. Our collaborations lead us in new directions, including exploring similarities and characteristics across diseases so that a research breakthrough in Parkinson’s disease, for example, can have an impact on how we improve treatment for other neurologic diseases, thus helping many more patients and families.

In this issue, we are pleased to share just a few examples of important patient care and scientific progress in the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine. All of this is made possible by you, our caring and generous donors who have entrusted us with your confidence and charitable support. We are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Krensky, MD    Connie D. Falcone
Executive for Development   President
Northwestern Medicine    Northwestern Memorial Foundation
Vice Dean for Development and Alumni Relations
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

Welcome to this special issue of The Philanthropist, where we proudly spotlight the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine and the indelible impact that donors are having on patient care, research and the training of our next generation of experts.

Through We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, we are partnering with friends and alumni who are as committed as we are to unraveling the mysteries of the most challenging neurologic diseases and conditions of our time. With this inspiring support, we have been proceeding with big, bold plans, including recruiting more than 50 of the world’s most sought-after physicians and scientists to join our team of established leaders in neurological surgery, neurology, psychiatry, ophthalmology and physiology, among others. Patients at our community hospitals are receiving all the resources and quality care of a leading academic medical center. We also have been excited to introduce breakthrough new centers, such as the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, the Regenstein Center for Neurological Care, the Center for Neurogenetics and the Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment. We have led a very successful campaign to endow our Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center, led with distinction by Dr. M.-Masrel Mesulam for more than 25 years. This is just the beginning of what is possible.

We and our philanthropic partners are passionate about forging new paths that will lead to discoveries and innovations that have a direct impact on the millions of patients and families facing a diagnosis of a neurologic illness, such as Parkinson’s disease, ALS, a brain tumor, Alzheimer’s disease, a spinal disorder, mental illness and so many others. Patients here and across the globe deserve our best effort each day to reach across disciplines and collaborate on leading-edge clinical, basic science and “bench-to-bedside” translational research. Our collaborations lead us in new directions, including exploring similarities and characteristics across diseases so that a research breakthrough in Parkinson’s disease, for example, can have an impact on how we improve treatment for other neurologic diseases, thus helping many more patients and families.

In this issue, we are pleased to share just a few examples of important patient care and scientific progress in the neurosciences at Northwestern Medicine. All of this is made possible by you, our caring and generous donors who have entrusted us with your confidence and charitable support. We are very grateful.

Sincerely,

Alan M. Krensky, MD    Connie D. Falcone
Executive for Development   President
Northwestern Medicine    Northwestern Memorial Foundation
Vice Dean for Development and Alumni Relations
Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
There are more than 120 different types of brain tumors, making the determination of each person’s treatment very complex. Primary brain tumors affect approximately 25,000 Americans each year, resulting in more than 15,000 deaths among adults and children. After being diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, only about 30 percent of adults survive for five years.

Patients with brain tumors who receive their care at an academic medical center like Northwestern Medicine benefit from specialized physicians and the very latest treatments. Additionally, they have access to discoveries and treatments that can offer hope when standard therapies are not effective. A multidisciplinary team like that of the Northwestern Medicine Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University at Northwestern Memorial Hospital provides the most effective interventions, infusing new knowledge and perspectives into the treatment of brain and spinal tumors and advancing basic, clinical and translational research efforts.

“What makes the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute of the Lurie Cancer Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital unique is its modern, multidisciplinary approach to care and treatment. All patients are evaluated and discussed by our team of experts, allowing from the beginning for a coordinated therapeutic plan that involves all disciplines and modalities. This not only means fewer doctor visits, but also less time required for establishing a diagnosis and obtaining a consensus opinion and recommendation among several experts.”

Malnati Family

Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria has developed a longstanding tradition of generosity, giving back to the communities it serves and supporting local non-profit organizations through its Lou Malnati Cancer Research Foundation, which funds cancer research and education. At Northwestern Medicine, the Lou Malnati Cancer Research Foundation is deeply linked to numerous clinical programs ranging from advanced educational offerings for oncology nurses to oncology and brain cancer research, and—how more than ever—for touching the lives of thousands of families. On September 23, 2017, the Lou Malnati Cancer Research Foundation held its 47th annual cancer benefit and honored the family’s matriarch, Jean Malnati Miller, by paying tribute to her outstanding leadership, passion, relentless commitment and support, and announcing the decision to make a transformational gift to name the Northwestern Medicine Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. This largest gift made by a donor to the brain tumor institute since its inception in 2008 will help Northwestern Medicine to advance medical education, to collaborate on research initiatives and to create innovative clinical models of care for patients with brain and spinal cord tumors.

To help patients receive quicker diagnosis, specialized treatment and one-of-a-kind support programs within the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, the newly named institute will relocate to an expanded space in Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Galter Pavilion. The gift also will create the Jean Malnati Miller Professorship, an endowed professorship to be held by the scientific director of the institute at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Additionally, collaborative efforts to advance pediatric brain tumor research at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago will be strengthened.

“By making this contribution, our goal is to help the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute of the Lurie Cancer Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital attract and retain even more world-class talent, who have the capability to both create breakthroughs in battling brain tumors and advance patient care in the neuroscience field,” said Marc Malnati, co-chair of the Lou Malnati Cancer Research Foundation and member of the institute’s board of directors. “We believe that our ‘dream team’ will build one of the top three brain tumor institutes in the country.”
“What makes the real difference in research and in human life are the personal relationships. I am honored to be a part of the Northwestern Medicine family and to have the support of the Malnatis.”

—Dr. Roger Stupp

The family’s tradition of philanthropy traces all the way back to 1971, when Mrs. Malnati Miller and her first husband, the late Lou Malnati, opened their first Lou Malnati’s Pizzeria in Lincolnwood, Illinois. Steeped in the desire to give back to the community that embraced and supported them, they hosted their inaugural family-oriented benefit that same year in support of the Brian Piccolo Scholarship Fund, initially raising money for local athletes to attend Wake Forest University, the alma mater of Brian Piccolo, a dear friend of Lou Malnati and the legendary Chicago Bears running back who died from embryonal cell carcinoma cancer the previous year. Lou Malnati was diagnosed with melanoma just a few years later and began treatment at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. In 1978, he passed away at the early age of 48, and his widow and their two sons, Marc and Rick, redirected their fundraising support toward cancer research and treatment programs at Northwestern Memorial, making their first gift of $10,000 to the hospital. In 1980, in Lou Malnati’s memory, and to show their gratitude for the nursing care he received while a patient at Northwestern Memorial, the family established the Lou Malnati Cancer Research Foundation, which has continued to support oncology research and nursing professional education initiatives in cancer at Northwestern for decades.

In 2005, the Malnatis helped Northwestern to recruit its very first brain tumor researcher. In that same year, Mrs. Malnati Miller was named “Distinguished Philanthropist of the Year” by Northwestern Memorial Foundation in recognition of her remarkable leadership of the Lou Malnati’s Annual Cancer Benefit. Anne M. Bolger, former senior vice president of Women’s Health at the hospital and one of the nurses who had cared for the late Mr. Malnati, presented Mrs. Malnati Miller with the award, remarking, “Jean truly exemplifies the definition of a philanthropist. She embodies a genuine spirit that touches the lives of many. Her time and support to numerous causes impact our community. And she has instilled that same philanthropic spirit in her family and others.”

“Thanks to the Malnati family and other generous donors, the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute of the Lurie Cancer Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital now has world-class scientific and clinical expertise that has allowed us to reach the top tier of neuro-oncology programs in the country, offering state-of-the-art therapies to help countless patients with cancers of the brain and spine,” said Dr. Chandler. “With the Malnati support, we will continue to be able to recruit and train neuro-oncology experts of the highest caliber and ultimately find solutions that save lives and improve quality of life for our patients.”

“What makes the real difference in research and in human life are the personal relationships. I am honored to be a part of the Northwestern Medicine family and to have the support of the Malnatis,” said Dr. Stupp. “My goal is to help realize our shared vision of being the leading brain tumor institute and to help people live longer and stronger lives, despite a cancer diagnosis.”

Save the Date | May 11

2018 Minds Matter Benefit
Ritz-Carlton Chicago
braintumorinstitute.org/minds-matter

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the brain tumor institute. We are deeply grateful for philanthropic partners like the Malnatis and so many others who have made significant research, education and patient care accomplishments possible. Come celebrate with us!
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis

Every 90 minutes someone in the United States is diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or ALS, and every 90 minutes someone with ALS dies. ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, is a rapidly progressive neuromuscular disease that attacks the nerve cells that activate a person’s muscles. When those nerve cells—known as neurons—die, the muscles become weak and ultimately paralyzed, gradually robbing the person of his or her ability to walk, speak, eat and breathe. While some symptoms are treatable, there is currently no prevention or cure for ALS.

At Northwestern Medicine, we are passionate about finding a cure for ALS and developing effective ways to prevent this disease, which continues to devastate the lives of patients and their loved ones. With the incredibly impactful support of our philanthropic partners, we have built the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center at Northwestern Medicine, one of the world’s leading efforts to study this very complex disease, train a new generation of experts and provide the most innovative care and support available today for patients and their families. We are honored to have a formidable number of supporters who believe in our mission and our daily work. We highlight just a few of our amazing donor partners here.

“...The Les Turner ALS Foundation has made possible hard-hitting breakthroughs in ALS research, including the discovery of the first ALS gene. The establishment of the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center at Northwestern Medicine opens new doors for collaboration both within our institution and across the country and world.”

Les Turner ALS Foundation

For more than 40 years, the Les Turner ALS Foundation has been Chicagoland’s leader in research, patient services and education about ALS. The storied history between the Les Turner ALS Foundation and Northwestern Medicine dates back to 1979 when the Les Turner ALS Foundation established the first Les Turner ALS Research Laboratory. In 1986, the relationship was further cemented when the Foundation opened the Lois Insolia ALS Clinic, one of the nation’s first multidisciplinary ALS clinics.

Throughout its longstanding relationship with Northwestern Medicine, the Foundation has funded more than $30 million in research and clinical care. Additional programming offered by the Foundation includes in-home consultations to people living with ALS by a team of nurses and social workers, support groups, equipment loans, patient service grants and educational activities.

In 2014, the Foundation made a leadership commitment of $10 million to help establish the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center at Northwestern Medicine. The center offers an extraordinary opportunity to enhance today’s care and propel scientific knowledge that can lead to future treatments for ALS. The Foundation continues to partner with Northwestern to raise $10 million to endow the center in perpetuity.

“We take pride in our relationship with the Les Turner ALS Foundation,” said Alan Krensky, MD, vice dean for Development and Alumni Relations and executive director for Development at Northwestern Medicine. “Our partnership gets stronger every day, and every day we get closer to a cure. The Foundation and all those who support it have a profound impact on this important work.”
Paul and Joan Rubschlager

“By supporting the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, we are ensuring that there will always be hope and help for those who need it most.”

Paul and Joan Rubschlager have made several remarkable commitments through the Les Turner ALS Foundation to support the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center at Northwestern Medicine. These gifts and their continued support are providing tremendous momentum to help the Les Turner ALS Foundation and Northwestern Medicine achieve the $10 million goal to endow the center in perpetuity.

Mr. Rubschlager’s father, Paul, passed away from ALS in 1975, at which time little was known about the disease. The Rubschlagers became involved with the Les Turner ALS Foundation in the 1980s and have been dedicated to this important cause ever since.

“When Paul’s father was diagnosed with ALS, we knew of nowhere to turn for information,” said Mrs. Rubschlager. “By supporting the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, we are ensuring that there will always be hope and help for those who need it most.”

“We believe that the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center will further advance the impressive research taking place at Northwestern,” continued Mrs. Rubschlager. “It holds great potential for finally finding treatment and hopefully a cure for this catastrophic disease.”

Mr. and Mrs. Rubschlager have been married for 54 years. Both are lifelong Chicagoans and former owners of Rubschlager Baking Corporation, a Chicago-based bakery founded in 1913 by Mr. Rubschlager’s uncle, Fred Rubschlager.

In addition to supporting the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center, the couple has contributed to ALS research initiatives across the medical campus at Northwestern. They also have supported myriad areas of need being addressed at institutions across the city of Chicago, including the American Heart Association, Rush University Medical Center, University of Chicago Cancer Research Foundation and the Alzheimer’s Association.

James Koster

As a Kellogg School of Management alumnus, James Koster, ’74 MMgt, has been supporting Northwestern University for nearly 40 years. In 2016, he began supporting ALS research and patient care at Northwestern Medicine in memory of his late wife, Heather Wilson Koster, whom he met at Northwestern while both were students. Heather passed nearly 16 years ago from familial ALS. Familial ALS is an inherited form that accounts for 10 percent of people living with the disease.

“After losing my wife, I became passionate about supporting research toward finding a cure—no matter where it came from,” said Mr. Koster. “I chose to invest in Northwestern for its quality research, outstanding track record and, most importantly, the extraordinary commitment of its people. Amazing progress is being made at Feinberg, and I need to be a part of that effort in making a difference.”

With his gift, Mr. Koster established an endowed fund—the Familial ALS Research Fund in Memory of Heather Wilson Koster, which will support the work of the Les Turner ALS Research and Patient Center in perpetuity.
Alzheimer’s disease is a form of brain degeneration that affects the areas in the brain that control memory. It is the most common form of dementia, a term used to describe the deterioration of cognitive abilities that affects daily life. In Alzheimer’s disease, abnormal particles called neurofibrillary tangles and neuritic plaques form in the brain and destroy healthy brain cells. While the majority of people living with this disease are over the age of 65, it can occur in younger populations, which is known as early-onset Alzheimer’s. Once symptoms become apparent to others, those suffering from Alzheimer’s live an average of eight years, and anywhere from four to 20 years depending on age and other health conditions.

The Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center (CNADC) at Northwestern offers a unique synthesis of patient care, training, research and outreach. The CNADC’s first mission is to care for patients with neurological diseases that undermine memory, language and behavior. The second is to explore the biological foundations of these diseases and to clarify the principles that link brain circuits to mental functions. The CNADC is a world-class effort that represents more than 50 core and affiliated faculty members from 14 departments on the Chicago and Evanston campuses of Northwestern University.

Buddy Program participant Sumiyo Amaral poses with her “buddy,” second-year Feinberg medical student Samantha Agron.

Is 1 of 30 prestigious research institutions within the Alzheimer’s Disease Centers Program of the National Institute on Aging, a part of the National Institutes of Health.

Has been officially recognized and supported by both the National Institutes of Health and the State of Illinois for more than 20 consecutive years.

Is a national referral center for Primary Progressive Aphasia and Frontotemporal Degenerations.

Has been a consistent leader and innovator, introducing the SuperAging Research Program for seniors with unusual preservation of memory, as well as the acclaimed Buddy Program, which pairs medical students with patients and has become a model that has been replicated at 13 other academic programs nationwide.

“Our Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease Center offers a unique synthesis of patient care, training and research in an area of immense importance for health care and systems neurobiology.”

M.-Marsel Mesulam, MD

An internationally recognized clinician and scientist, Dr. Mesulam serves as director of the CNADC, chief of Behavioral Neurology in The Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology and as both the Ruth Dunbar Davee Professor of Neurosciences and professor of Neurology. His research is currently focused on exploring the organization of interconnected networks within the brain that affect complex cognitive functions.
Northwestern just announced that the campaign has reached its initial target of $10 million and that the Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease will move into its new quarters by November 2018.

In 2015, Northwestern Medicine launched an initiative to raise $10 million to solidify the future of the CNADC. The campaign was designed to provide much-needed additional space for the CNADC in a setting that would integrate clinical and basic science research. Additionally, the campaign aimed to establish a professorial chair and a robust endowment for both research and education to aid in the recruitment of both young faculty and established leaders in neurodegenerative medicine and cognitive neuroscience. The plan also sought to name the center after Director Dr. M.-Marsel Mesulam, a fitting tribute to a renowned leader in Alzheimer’s disease research.

“Multidisciplinary integration is essential for addressing Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders,” said Dr. Mesulam. “The new space will allow basic science laboratories of the CNADC to be located next door to laboratories for imaging and cognitive testing. Faculty from different disciplines will work collaboratively, learn from each other and train the next generation of clinicians and investigators. The custom-built space will enable a much-needed expansion of the research enterprise and accelerate the pace of discovery. The goal is to make our patients and their families the beneficiaries of all advances.”

The new CNADC headquarters will be located on the 8th floor of the Tarry Medical Research Building and will double the existing size of the CNADC, allowing current programs to grow while novel ones be initiated through strategic recruitments. The new Tarry location will allow the CNADC to accommodate a staff and funding that have quintupled since its founding more than 20 years ago, leading to many fledgling initiatives that have flourished into independent research programs. It also will allow the CNADC to maximize the synergies among individual programs and pave the way for new directions in promising areas.

Features of the new space, each of which was chosen to address the pressing needs of the most successful CNADC programs and their most likely future trajectories.

- Enlarged basic research laboratory, which will integrate the brain bank of the CNADC with the cognitive morphometry laboratory and its microscopy suite
- Video-linked testing rooms
- Electrically and acoustically shielded space for electrophysiological recordings
- Imaging suite for advanced computerized analyses
- State-of-the-art conference space with teleconferencing capability
- Beautiful reception area

The Davee Foundation has given more than $47 million in support of Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine

The Davee Foundation

The Davee Foundation has been a consummate supporter of the CNADC for nearly 30 years. The Foundation has propelled cutting-edge research in Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders, has endowed several professorships in this area and, most recently, made an extraordinary commitment to support the long-term future of the CNADC. Thanks to a vital commitment from The Davee Foundation, the CNADC has been named and endowed as the Mesulam Center for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer’s Disease.

The Davee Foundation was established in 1964 by Ken M. Davee, an alumnus of Northwestern University, and his wife, Adeline Berry Davee. After Adeline’s death, Mr. Davee continued management of the Foundation with his second wife, Ruth Dunbar Davee, also an alumna of Northwestern. Ruth would go on to serve as president of the Foundation after Ken’s death. Through their philanthropy, the Davees challenged organizations to be innovative and to set a very high bar for excellence.

“The Davees were strong supporters of medical research, particularly in regards to neurology. They were pleased when Dr. Mesulam agreed to come to Northwestern and start the CNADC, and I am sure that they would be thrilled with his research and clinical work.”

—The Davee Foundation President James W. Dugdale Jr.
As of December 31, 2017, nearly 800 faculty have participated in this effort, which is about giving at any level and supporting areas across the school that matter most to our faculty—research, education, clinical care and outreach. At the event in November, it was announced that 100 percent of department chairs at Feinberg have contributed to the Faculty Campaign.

"Not everyone learns or understands the culture of an institution until they are touched by it. You, as such dedicated members of our faculty, are our ambassadors," said Eric C. Neilson, MD, vice president for Medical Affairs and Lewis Landsberg Dean of Feinberg. "I applaud and thank you for your inspiring support of our medical school and am so appreciative of all that you do to serve as part of a special group that really cares about what we are trying to accomplish together at Feinberg.

"I think it sends a powerful message to patients, students and alumni when they learn that the faculty who are providing care, teaching students and conducting research also are investing in this world-class institution and its future," said Amy S. Paller, MD, ‘83 GMER, Walter J. Hamlin Professor and chair of Dermatology. "We need to do even more to help this institution help us to provide the best care. It is a great feeling to take the time and energy to give back in this special way."

At the investiture, Dr. Beth Johnson, Dr. Douglas Johnson's widow (left), honored her late husband's life and career as she paid tribute to Dr. Mercury (right) and celebrated Dr. Mercury's many achievements and contributions as a renowned neuropsychologist.

On August 29, Michael Mercury, PhD, a neuropsychologist who was director of Clinical Psychology at Northwestern Medicine Regional Medical Group and co-director of the Neurodegenerative Diseases Center at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital, was formally invested as the Douglas L. Johnson Endowed Chair in Neuroscience. In this prominent role, Dr. Mercury succeeds Andrew J. Fishman, MD, a neurologist and cranial base surgeon, who served as the inaugural Johnson Chair from 2014-2017.

Established in 2014, the Johnson Chair became a reality through the contributions of generous benefactors seeking to pay tribute to the life and career of Douglas L. Johnson, MD, a renowned neurosurgeon who served at Central DuPage Hospital for 23 years. A true pioneer in the neurosciences, Dr. Johnson was also a mentor who taught and inspired many medical professionals throughout their careers. Though he passed away in 2013, Dr. Johnson left an enduring, inspirational legacy.

Beth Johnson, MD, Dr. Johnson's widow, expressed her heartfelt appreciation. "This award has such meaning because it supports the dreams of my family and the dreams of other talented members of the neuroscience team at Central DuPage Hospital. I am thankful for the many people who have contributed to this dream. You are an inspiration to all of us."

During his three-year term as the Johnson Chair, Dr. Mercury plans to use a $450,000 grant to conduct work that will help to establish Northwestern Medicine as a nationally recognized Center for the study, diagnosis and treatment of neurodegenerative diseases.

"I am tremendously grateful for this extraordinary opportunity," Dr. Mercury said. "I intend to enhance direct patient care, improve clinical efficiency and establish research that will endure beyond my tenure as the Johnson Chair. Such an ambitious plan is made possible with the help of my outstanding colleagues, who strive every day to live out Dr. Johnson's vision for neuroscience care."

Dr. Mercury proudly follows in the footsteps of Dr. Fishman and his many accomplishments as the Johnson Chair. Most notably, Dr. Fishman established the Douglas L. Johnson Neuroanatomy Lab, a 550-square-foot, cadaveric dissection facility equipped for the performance of 3-D microsurgery and minimally invasive endoscopic cranial surgery. Dedicated on August 25, 2016, the lab welcomes surgeons and trainees to perform dissections and strengthen their skills as members of multidisciplinary teams.

"I am so honored to have served as the first Douglas L. Johnson Endowed Chair in Neurosciences," Dr. Fishman remarked. "It has been a moving experience for me to do meaningful work that honors the legacy of Dr. Johnson, and that promotes medical education and training in many different ways. The support of our donors made this endowed position possible, and I thank everyone who showed such thoughtfulness and vision for the future. As the years go by, many talented specialists in the neurosciences—Dr. Mercury, for example—will be able to make lasting contributions to our field.

On November 4, Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital, part of Northwestern Medicine, hosted its annual Legacy Ball to raise crucial funds that will help Marianjoy continue to serve as a nationally recognized leader in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation for children and adults with disabilities. This year's event, titled "The Black Pearl," drew nearly 300 guests to the Embassy Suites in Naperville and grossed a remarkable $200,000.

The evening's festivities brought together many of the area's most dedicated and prominent philanthropists, as well as business leaders and loyal friends and supporters of Marianjoy. The evening's program paid a well-deserved tribute to Kathleen Yosko, outgoing president of Marianjoy, who provided decades of service and leadership in the healthcare arena. The event also featured a silent auction, a live auction and a casino.

The event was characterized by a sense of shared purpose, commitment and camaraderie as guests showed their support for one another and for Marianjoy. First Trust Bank proudly served as the evening's Black Pearl Presenting Sponsor, while Worldwide National Van Lines, Inc. and Dorothy O'Reilly were recognized as Opal Sponsors.

"Disease knows no geographic boundaries, and global means everywhere. The work we do benefits us all."

On October 25, more than 200 Northwestern alumni, parents, faculty and staff gathered in San Francisco, California, to hear about Northwestern's interdisciplinary global health work and to celebrate the launch of the Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, since the campaign's launch in September 2014.

Robert J. Havey, ‘80 MD, ‘83 GMER, ‘84 GMEF, associate professor of Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and founder of the Global Health Initiative (GHI) at Feinberg, which helped to host the event, spoke to the need for sustainability and collaboration, noting that Northwestern leads the nation in global health rotations for medical students.

The Institute for Global Health at Northwestern, like Feinberg have contributed to the Faculty Campaign. On November 2, nearly 100 Northwestern alumni, parents, faculty and staff gathered in San Francisco, California, to hear about Northwestern's interdisciplinary global health work and to celebrate the launch of the Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, since the campaign’s launch in September 2014.

Robert J. Havey, ‘80 MD, ‘83 GMER, ‘84 GMEF, associate professor of Medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and founder of the Global Health Initiative (GHI) at Feinberg, which helped to host the event, spoke to the need for sustainability and collaboration, noting that Northwestern leads the nation in global health rotations for medical students.

The Institute for Global Health at Northwestern, like no other in the world, will be singular in its design and scope as it will support global health education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Driven by the medical school, the Institute will focus on nine distinct centers in global health: education, infectious disease, primary care, global surgery, cancer, cardiovascular risk, brain and neurological disease, rehabilitation and eHealth distance learning.

"The endowed Institute for Global Health will serve as the epicenter for global health research and medical education at Northwestern, and will link with all of our schools, programs and majors," said Dr. Havey. "The Institute will ensure that our work will not only be sustained, but expanded, in perpetuity and that promotes medical education and training in meaningful work that honors the legacy of Dr. Johnson, and that promotes medical education and training in many different ways. The support of our donors made this endowed position possible, and I thank everyone who showed such thoughtfulness and vision for the future. As the years go by, many talented specialists in the neurosciences—Dr. Mercury, for example—will be able to make lasting contributions to our field."

The event was characterized by a sense of shared purpose, commitment and camaraderie as guests showed their support for one another and for Marianjoy. First Trust Bank proudly served as the evening's Black Pearl Presenting Sponsor, while Worldwide National Van Lines, Inc. and Dorothy O'Reilly were recognized as Opal Sponsors.

"Disease knows no geographic boundaries, and global means everywhere. The work we do benefits us all."

On November 4, Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital, part of Northwestern Medicine, hosted its annual Legacy Ball to raise crucial funds that will help Marianjoy continue to serve as a nationally recognized leader in the field of physical medicine and rehabilitation for children and adults with disabilities. This year’s event, titled “The Black Pearl,” drew nearly 300 guests to the Embassy Suites in Naperville and grossed a remarkable $200,000.

The evening’s festivities brought together many of the area’s most dedicated and prominent philanthropists, as well as business leaders and loyal friends and supporters of Marianjoy. The evening’s program paid a well-deserved tribute to Kathleen Yosko, outgoing president of Marianjoy, who provided decades of service and leadership in the healthcare arena. The event also featured a silent auction, a live auction and a casino.

The event was characterized by a sense of shared purpose, commitment and camaraderie as guests showed their support for one another and for Marianjoy. First Trust Bank proudly served as the evening’s Black Pearl Presenting Sponsor, while Worldwide National Van Lines, Inc. and Dorothy O’Reilly were recognized as Opal Sponsors.

"Disease knows no geographic boundaries, and global means everywhere. The work we do benefits us all."

On November 2, nearly 100 Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine faculty came together to be honored for their generosity to the medical school. Representing nearly 50 departments, each of the evening’s guests has made a gift to the Faculty Campaign, a part of We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern Medicine, since the campaign’s launch in September 2014.

James G. Giblin, MD, senior vice president of Administration at Northwestern Memorial HealthCare and a urologist affiliated with Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital, was among the many guests who celebrated Kathleen Yosko, outgoing president of Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital, for her years of dedication and leadership.
Gathering together and enjoying the celebratory spirit of the “Home Care for the Home Team” event, members of the staff of HomeCare Physicians (HCP) showed their support for Dr. Cornwell and his clinical team, and for the many patients and families whom HCP has served through the years.

More than 400 guests attended “Home Care for the Home Team,” the 4th Annual Northwestern Medicine Gala, hosted by Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage and Delnor Hospitals, on September 23 at the Westin Lombard. Featuring a “game day” theme, the event raised nearly $400,000 to support the mission and daily work of HomeCare Physicians (HCP), a unique service—and a highly valued “home team”—that has provided exceptional care to homebound patients throughout Chicago’s western suburbs for more than 20 years.

Serving as the evening’s keynote speaker, Thomas Cornwell, MD, HCP’s founder and director, highlighted the importance of teamwork, perseverance and compassion in the work of HCP—and, in fact, in every effort and achievement. He spoke of his team’s tireless commitment to fulfilling HCP’s guiding mission of “improving the quality of life of homebound patients and their caregivers, while reducing healthcare costs by enabling patients to remain in the comfort of their homes and to avoid hospitals and nursing homes.” Dr. Cornwell also paid tribute to every patient and family member who has received care from HCP and thanked the members of the HCP team—his partner, Paul Chiang, MD, nurse practitioner Ancy Zacharia and physician assistant Kim Mulligan—for their skill, dedication and caring natures.

Dr. Cornwell’s remarks also shone a light on the role of “Vitamin L.” Love, which he called “the most powerful medicine that adds to all other therapeutic efforts.” By coming together with such generosity and enthusiasm, all those who attended “Home Care for the Home Team” showed their personal belief in the power of “Vitamin L” and helped to ensure that homebound patients across the western suburbs will continue to benefit from HCP’s outstanding care and services for years to come.

At the “Home Care for the Home Team” event, attendees—including Thomas Cornwell, MD, founder and director of HomeCare Physicians (pictured: second from right)—wore their favorite jerseys, cheered for their “home teams” and shared in the warmth that characterized the evening.
Neurological Surgery

The nervous system is a powerful yet delicate and highly complex part of the human body. While it is the driving force behind every thought and movement we have, it also can fall victim to any number of disorders that affect the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerves and extra-cranial cerebrovascular system.

At Northwestern Medicine, our neurological surgeons and their teams work collaboratively and engage with colleagues across multidisciplinary clinics to utilize unmatched resources and breakthrough clinical approaches to neurosurgical problems. Physicians and scientists in neurological surgery are leading world experts who are dedicated to providing patients with one-of-a-kind care. And, when options are limited for patients and families, Northwestern can offer innovative approaches and opportunities to test novel therapies that are not available elsewhere.

“Neurological Surgery at Northwestern provides an environment rich in tradition and deeply rooted in the belief that our ability to advance the care of neurosurgical patients depends not only on the delivery of exemplary clinical care but also scientifically driven progress across a spectrum of neurological diseases.”

Maciej S. Lesniak, MD
Chair of the Department of Neurological Surgery, Dr. Lesniak also serves as Michael J. Marchese Professor of Neurosurgery and professor of Neurological Surgery and Neurology. His work is focused on neurosurgical management of patients with both benign and malignant cancer of the brain and spinal cord, as well as care for neurovascular patients, including aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations.

NORTHWESTERN’S PROGRAMS IN NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY ARE ROUTINELY RANKED IN THE TOP 10 IN THE COUNTRY BY US NEWS & WORLD REPORT:

- Neuro-Oncology
- Functional/Epilepsy/Peripheral Nerve Surgery
- Cerebrovascular Neurosurgery
- Spine
- Pediatrics
- Northwestem’s Programs in Neurological Surgery

NORTHWESTERN’S PROGRAMS IN NEUROLOGICAL SURGERY ARE ROUTINELY RANKED IN THE TOP 10 IN THE COUNTRY BY US NEWS & WORLD REPORT:
The Kevin G. Braden Memorial Fund

When Chicago resident Kevin Braden needed critical spinal surgery, he sought treatment at Northwestern Medicine from Zachary A. Smith, MD, assistant professor of Neurosurgical and Orthopaedic Surgery at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Smith has great expertise in complex spine surgery as well as in minimally invasive procedures, including stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS), which uses many precisely focused radiation beams to treat tumors and other problems in the brain, spine and other areas of the body. With the latter type of treatment, no “traditional” surgical incision is required. Rather, the treatment uses 3-D imaging to direct high doses of radiation to the affected area, with minimal effect on adjacent healthy tissue.

Though Kevin passed away in January 2016, he had an indelible impact on the lives of those around him, and his legacy lives on through his wife, Megan, who established the Kevin G. Braden Memorial Fund, administered through the Chicago Community Trust. The fund raises contributions in Kevin’s honor with the goal of providing support for young adults facing devastating illness. Aided by the generous support of Megan, the Braden family and dear friends and relatives who have contributed to the fund, Dr. Smith is applying his expertise to a pivotal study that addresses the importance of enhancing treatment for individuals with spinal tumors. In addition to being a collaboration between Dr. Smith and his colleague, Sean Sachdev, MD, assistant professor of Radiation Oncology at Feinberg, this initiative also involves members of Northwestern’s Department of Computer Science.

“Many of us in neurosurgery and radiation oncology have been asking the question, ‘What if we could form a unified approach to treating patients with spinal tumors—an approach in which both the surgeon and the radiation oncologist are involved, upfront, in creating a patient’s treatment plan?’” remarked Dr. Smith. “We are so grateful to Megan, the Braden family and everyone who contributed to the Memorial Fund in Kevin’s name, for enabling us to launch a project that addresses those needs. We want to strengthen collaborations and communication for the benefit of patients who are fighting spinal lesions, as Kevin did so bravely.”

Through their project, Drs. Smith and Sachdev and their team are working to develop an approach that will leverage the strengths of various treatment modalities in a modern way—by facilitating 3-D image importing, for example, as well as other processes, all of which will exist within a secure Northwestern Medicine application. Ultimately, this new approach will allow members of different specialties to offer input on proposed treatment plans, and to sign off internally on a plan that has earned the support of all involved parties.

Melinda Daniels

Chronic pain affects approximately 100 million Americans and is responsible for more than $250 billion in annual healthcare costs. And yet, despite this significant toll, the treatment of chronic pain remains a profoundly challenging endeavor. In the last several decades, we have witnessed the introduction of numerous long- and short-acting opioids, which not only have failed to adequately treat the problem of chronic pain, but also have generated a host of societal costs and tragic consequences—most notably, powerful struggles with addiction that are afflicting people of all ages, from all backgrounds, across the nation. Therefore, the search continues for more promising methods of relieving the chronic pain that burdens millions of people, day after day.

Melinda Daniels lived with significant chronic pain for years before she found relief at Northwestern through the care and expertise of Joshua Rosenow, MD, FAANS, FACS, director of Functional Neurosurgery at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and professor of Neurological Surgery, Neurology and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Feinberg. Dr. Rosenow is widely recognized, on both the national and international stages, as a leader in the surgical treatment of chronic pain.

To help Ms. Daniels combat her chronic pain and improve her quality of life, Dr. Rosenow surgically implanted a spinal cord stimulator in her back. Using a small handheld device, Ms. Daniels is able to regulate a mild electric current in the implanted wires, helping her to alleviate her ongoing pain.

“Were it not for the care provided by Dr. Rosenow, including the spinal cord stimulator, I would not have been able to enjoy all of the international travel that I have enjoyed for the past seven years,” said Ms. Daniels.

To demonstrate her gratitude, Ms. Daniels recently made a generous commitment to establish a Functional Neurosurgery Fellowship at Northwestern that will enable neurological trainees to choose to focus their careers on the surgical treatment of individuals suffering from chronic pain. This gift will provide support for the salary and benefits of a post-graduate neurosurgical fellow and, thus, will contribute to the enhanced training that is greatly needed in the area of chronic pain.

“I am so thankful to Ms. Daniels for her support and generosity in funding this fellowship—and, more than anything, I am grateful that we were able to provide her with relief from the chronic pain that had intruded on her life,” said Dr. Rosenow. “We have to do everything we can to conquer chronic pain, and important victories start with training future neurosurgeons to be leaders in the research and treatment of chronic pain. That is exactly what this fellowship will help us do. I am confident that, with partners like Ms. Daniels, we will be able to win the battle against chronic pain, so that millions of people can find the relief, peace and improved quality of life that they need and deserve.”
Mental disorders have a significant impact on the lives of countless individuals and their families, and rank among the top 10 illnesses causing disability worldwide. In the United States, approximately 42.5 million adults suffer from some form of mental illness each year, enduring conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other conditions.

Northwestern’s Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences is driven by a three-fold mission aimed at:

- Improving the diagnosis and treatment of patients with psychiatric disorders;
- Advancing our understanding of the neurobiological origins of these disorders and the mechanisms by which they produce symptoms and alter the trajectories of human lives;
- Teaching future generations of psychiatrists and psychologists.

Faculty in the department have contributed vastly to our current knowledge of the structure and function of the brain, how brain function forms the basis for cognition and behavior, and how cognition and behavior impacts the lives of patients, families and the community. The department’s current challenge is to translate this new knowledge into new diagnostic tools and therapies so that patients and families can lead more rewarding lives.

Lisa A. Rone, MD, Professorship in Psychiatric Education and Research

In December 2017, a commitment of $3 million was made by a Chicagoland family to establish the Lisa A. Rone, MD, Professorship in Psychiatric Education and Research. This generous gift was made in honor of Dr. Lisa Rone, who serves as clinical assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern. Dr. Rone specializes in treating post-traumatic stress disorder and mood and anxiety disorders, particularly pregnancy-emergent and postpartum disorders.

An important component of this new professorship will be the faculty member’s engagement in original research on the integration of new knowledge about the mind into psychiatric educational programs. Once formally appointed, a scholar of true eminence in the field of psychiatry will hold this position and invest time into teaching Feinberg residents in psychiatry, integrating new research in psychiatry into psychiatric education and establishing a culture of prioritizing individual patients and their concerns.

“I have been so fortunate to be a psychiatrist who has known many of my patients over several years, through daunting times and when they have prevailed,” said Dr. Rone. “The endowment of this professorship establishes a permanent tribute to the physician-patient relationship. I am deeply honored to have it endowed in my name.”

“This professorship symbolizes Northwestern’s institutional commitment to educating psychiatrists of the future, helping them to humanely integrate and apply research from a complex field of medicine to the treatment of patients.”

—Dr. Lisa Rone
For nearly a decade, William G. and Mary A. Ryan of Hinsdale, Illinois, have been supporting cutting-edge research and education in the Department of Ophthalmology. Most recently, the couple made a generous commitment to honor the research and teaching efforts of ophthalmologist and exemplary faculty leader Rukhsana G. Mirza, MD.

In addition to providing exceptional care to hundreds of patients battling debilitating eye diseases and conditions each week at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Dr. Mirza serves as associate professor of Ophthalmology and Medical Education, as well as director of Medical Student Education in Ophthalmology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. She also is associate program director for Vitreoretinal Fellowships. In her academic roles, Dr. Mirza is actively involved in teaching medical students, residents and fellows.

Engaged in promising clinical research, Dr. Mirza is uniquely skilled in diseases of the retina, including macular degeneration. Her work is directed at understanding both the causes of and treatments for these types of diseases using the latest ocular imaging techniques. This will ultimately benefit patients and their families across Chicagoland and beyond.

“We have received exemplary care from Dr. Mirza for over 10 years. We are especially grateful for her expertise in macular degeneration. We are honored to support her research and teaching efforts in ophthalmology.”

—William and Mary Ryan

Diseases of the eye, including macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, corneal blindness, optic nerve disease and ocular inflammation, among others, can have a profound impact on a patient, interfering with every aspect of daily life.

With a commitment first and foremost to our patients, the Department of Ophthalmology is a nationally recognized leader in ophthalmology and vision sciences and is at the forefront of vision care, research and education. Our faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized specialists in cornea, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology, orbit and ocular plastics, ocular inflammation, retinal diseases, refractive surgery, neuro-ophthalmology and adult strabismus.

We are dedicated not only to providing the most advanced medical care, but also to conducting high-impact basic, translational and clinical research that informs new therapies for vision-threatening disease. As important, we are committed to educating our students, residents and fellows.

“Our vision for the future is clear and compelling—to become one of the nation’s preeminent research intensive academic ophthalmology departments as measured by the excellence of our faculty and students, the success and innovative nature of our research and educational programs and the quality of compassionate clinical care we provide to our patients.”

Nicholas J. Volpe, MD
Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, Dr. Volpe also serves as George W. and Edwina S. Tarry Professor of Ophthalmology. His work focuses on neuro-ophthalmology, which merges the fields of neurology and ophthalmology to address complex systemic diseases that have ocular manifestations.

William and Mary G. and A. Ryan

In 2017, Dr. Mirza was chosen to serve as a “College Mentor” at the medical school, an honor bestowed on only eight of the faculty members at Feinberg each year. Through the “Mirza College,” she is leading a group of 21 Feinberg students from the Class of 2021 and will mentor and advise them throughout their four years of medical school. Dr. Mirza has been recognized locally with “Outstanding Teacher” awards, and nationally for her endeavors as the recipient of the “Excellence in Medical Student Education Award” this past year from the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the Association of University Professors of Ophthalmology (AUPO). She currently serves as president of the AUPO Medical Student Education Council.
Parkinson’s Disease

Parkinson’s disease is a widespread, chronic and disabling neurodegenerative disease that afflicts millions of people and their families. A progressive degenerative disorder, Parkinson’s affects nerve cells, or neurons, in the part of the brain that controls movement. Parkinson’s disease causes symptoms such as tremors, slowness of movement, muscle stiffness and balance problems. Across the globe, it is estimated that 10 million people are living with this disease, with approximately 60,000 Americans diagnosed each year.

While there are pharmaceutical and alternative therapies available to manage Parkinson’s disease, there are currently no cures or treatments that definitively slow its progression. Northwestern Medicine is leading the way in the quest for treatments to delay disease progression. For example, our scientists are studying neurons obtained from patients via skin biopsy to develop and test new therapies for Parkinson’s and related disorders. Catalyzed through philanthropic support, our clinicians and scientists are involved in this and other landmark projects that are garnering significant national and international recognition.

“The nilotinib study is another example of a longstanding and fruitful collaboration between Northwestern and The Michael J. Fox Foundation. The Foundation supported our Phase 2 study of isradipine—the results of which led to the currently ongoing Phase 3 study funded by the National Institutes of Health.”

—Dr. Tanya Simuni

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research

The Michael J. Fox Foundation has been supporting breakthrough Parkinson's disease research at Northwestern Medicine for more than a decade. Recently, they made an extraordinary commitment of $10 million to fund a study being led by Dr. Tanya Simuni titled “Nilo-PD2 Cohort 1 Trial,” which studies the effect of the drug nilotinib on people with moderate to advanced Parkinson’s.

Nilotinib, a United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved treatment for chronic myelogenous leukemia, is one of many examples of a repurposed (or repositioned) drug for Parkinson’s. Repurposing is a promising and relatively efficient way to seed the pipeline of drugs by taking an existing medicine approved by the FDA for one condition and using it to treat another. Nilotinib inhibits the activity of c-Abl, a protein that has been linked to cellular pathways associated with Parkinson’s disease. This trial aims to expand on these preliminary findings to better understand the implications of nilotinib’s long-term use in Parkinson’s.

The study also will further explore nilotinib’s potential to treat symptoms or to slow or stop disease progression (something no current PD treatment has been proven to do). Until researchers can conclusively demonstrate repurposed therapies are effective and safe for people with PD to take long term, patients and clinicians are urged to wait before adding nilotinib or any other repurposed treatments to their regimen.

Within the Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders Center at Northwestern—the only National Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence in Illinois and a training model in the region—investigators are enhancing our understanding and treatment of Parkinson’s disease and other movement disorders.

The center embraces a multi-faceted mission that focuses on:

- Research that will translate into improvements in treatment and overall prognosis for individuals affected by Parkinson’s disease;
- A multidisciplinary approach to promote optimum health and quality of life for Parkinson’s patients; and
- Parkinson’s-related education and support for patients and their loved ones, healthcare providers and members of the community.

“...and specific targets for therapeutic development.

Dimitri Krainc, MD

Aaron Montgomery Ward Professor and chair of the Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology. Dr. Krainc also directs the Center for Neurogenetics. He is focused on the study of neurodegenerative diseases, with an overarching goal to define molecular mechanisms and specific targets for therapeutic development.
Dr. James Surmeier (left) and John Flanagan (second from right) with Flanagan fellows (left to right) Drs. Yijuan Du, Cecilia Tubert and Patricia Gonzalez Rodriguez.

Northwestern is home to the prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) Morris K. Udall Center for Parkinson’s Disease Research. Under the leadership of Dr. Surmeier, the Northwestern Udall Center is one of only nine NIH-funded Udall Centers in the nation and has been funded since 2002. The center focuses on gaining a better understanding of the causes of Parkinson’s disease and translating this understanding into new disease-modifying therapies.

One highlight of the program is research pointing to the role of voltage-gated calcium channels in making neurons vulnerable to degeneration in Parkinson’s disease. The stress induced by calcium entry through these membrane channels can be minimized with isradipine, an FDA-approved drug. This insight has led to a multicenter, Phase 3 clinical trial in early stage Parkinson’s patients with isradipine. This trial, which is led by Dr. Simuni, is one of the most important bench-to-bedside accomplishments of the NIH Udall Center program.

Partnering Against Parkinson’s

The translational collaboration of Drs. Surmeier and Simuni exemplifies what is possible at Northwestern through partnership. By building an open and collaborative environment of basic and clinical faculty with cutting-edge tools at their fingertips, Northwestern is creating opportunities for major medical breakthroughs.

Thanks to the generosity of Northwestern Medicine donors and support from the Parkinson’s Disease Research Society, Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital established the Parkinson’s Disease Research Society (PDRS) Distinguished Physician position. In fall 2016, Michael Rezak, MD, PhD, director of both the Movement Disorders and Neurodegenerative Diseases Center and the Deep Brain Stimulation Program at Central DuPage Hospital, became the inaugural recipient of this prominent award.

“IT is a great honor to be named the inaugural recipient of the PDRS Distinguished Physician award, and I am grateful to everyone who made this opportunity possible,” said Dr. Rezak. “Throughout my career, I have tried to do everything I can to improve the health and quality of life of people living with Parkinson’s disease and other movement disorders, and I pledge to only strengthen my efforts. I am moved by the strength, resilience and optimism of all of my patients, and I am honored to be their partner and advocate.”

An internationally recognized physician and scientist in the areas of Parkinson’s disease and other movement disorders, Dr. Rezak has received high praise for his efforts to improve clinical care for people with movement disorders, for his commitment to leading-edge research and education, and for the numerous contributions that he has made to the field of neurology as a whole. As the PDRS Distinguished Physician, Dr. Rezak is accelerating studies of neuro-protective and disease-modifying strategies that could potentially benefit many people with Parkinson’s. Additionally, he is expanding investigations to identify biomarkers that might predict the onset of Parkinson’s before symptoms emerge and is striving to enhance precision medicine treatments for Parkinson’s through the use of ultrasound technology. Dr. Rezak also hopes to develop an autonomic nervous system laboratory to further the development of targeted treatment strategies for individuals with Parkinson’s.