

THE PHILANTHROPIST



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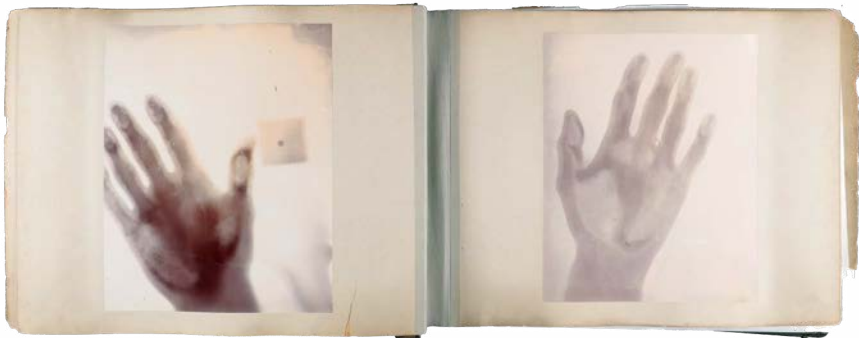
Every dollar donated to Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine empowers our physicians, scientists, students, and trainees to make a difference in Chicago and across the globe. Thanks to you, our generous donors, we can pursue groundbreaking efforts in global health, artificial intelligence, and human immunobiology. Thanks to you, talented students — our future medical leaders — can attend medical school on scholarship, avoiding financial barriers to their success. Thanks to you, our investigators can obtain vital resources that enable them to explore new research ideas, test novel therapies, and help those suffering from neurological disorders, cancers, heart disease, and other challenging conditions. Our institution is transforming the medical field through discovery and education, and we couldn't do it without **you**.

Preserving the X-rays That Helped Transform Healthcare

As an orthopaedic surgeon, Joseph J. Gugenheim, '72 MD, spent his career relying on medical imaging to care for patients. So when he learned that Galter Health Sciences Library at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine kept an album documenting some of the earliest physician-produced X-rays in the U.S., the collection resonated with both his professional experience and lifelong interest in medical history.

Created in 1896, just weeks after X-rays were introduced to the world, the images capture the dawn of a technology that would become indispensable to modern patient care. “Northwestern has always been an innovator,” Dr. Gugenheim said, explaining that the collection encapsulates that spirit of discovery so ingrained at Feinberg.

Recognizing the collection's historical significance, Dr. Gugenheim made a generous gift to support its conservation and digitization. The album contains 18 X-ray images and is believed to include the first X-rays made in Chicago as well as some of the earliest physician-produced X-rays in the country, according to Katie Lattal, head of Special Collections at Galter Library. “These X-rays are really special — to Chicago, to radiology, and to medicine,” Lattal said.



Original X-ray images from Dr. Burry's experiments

evidence of what is believed to be one of the first surgeries guided by prior X-ray imaging, held at Mercy Hospital (now Insight Hospital and Medical Center) and reported in local and national media.

In 1896, producing an X-ray was a far more laborious process than the near-instant imaging physicians use today. Early X-rays were recorded on photographic plates and later developed much like photographs in a darkroom. The process required chemicals, silver-based film, and careful handling. The album at Galter Library evinces that era of experimentation, when physicians and engineers were still learning how to create clear images and standardize the technology. The X-rays featured in the collection required 30-45 minutes of exposure.

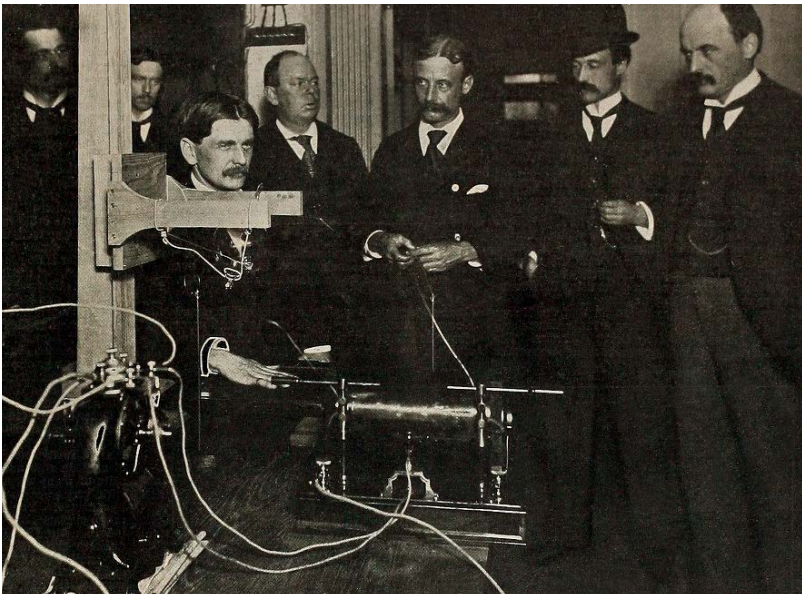
By contrast, Dr. Gugenheim said, modern hospitals have largely replaced film with digital imaging systems. During much of his career, healthcare institutions maintained vast X-ray film storage rooms containing files that sometimes had to be physically transported when patients sought care elsewhere. The films could be misplaced, damaged, or lost, creating challenges for both patient care and recordkeeping. Today, digital images can be captured, stored, and transmitted electronically within seconds, allowing physicians across departments — or even across healthcare systems — to access the same information almost immediately.

More than 130 years later, the fragile photographic prints in Galter Library's collection have faded and deteriorated. Dr. Gugenheim's gift will allow conservators to stabilize the album, create high-resolution digital copies, and produce facsimiles for study, protecting the originals while expanding access for scientists.

By preserving these pioneering images, Dr. Gugenheim said he hopes his gift will ensure that future generations can explore one of the earliest moments in the evolution of medical imaging.

“I feel like I and others have an obligation to continue showing the high quality of our medical school. It's been a leader since 1859, and this collection further documents that,” he said.

For more information about supporting Galter Library, please contact [David McCreery](#) at david.mccreery@northwestern.edu or 312-503-6099.



Engineer Charles Scribner (seated) X-rays his hand under the supervision of Dr. Burry (far right) in 1896.

The album documents the work of James Burry, 1875 MD, a Chicago surgeon and alumnus of Chicago Medical College, which later evolved into Northwestern's medical school. Dr. Burry and a team of engineers at Western Electric Co. used the new technology to photograph hands and study exposure times, creating images that today might appear crude but were groundbreaking at the time. The collection also includes

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wilson Disease Association Annual Conference
September 25–26, Feinberg Pavilion Conference Center, Chicago
Info: [Jordan Sund](#) | 312-503-2706 | jordan.sund@northwestern.edu

The H Foundation Karting for Cancer
September 26, Autobahn Country Club, Joliet, IL
Info: [Nicole Langert](#) | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu

Updates in Neurology Symposium
October 9, Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago
Info: [Andrew Christopherson](#) | 312-503-3080 | andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu

Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation Fall 2026 Benefit
October 22, Theater on the Lake, Chicago
Info: [Nicole Langert](#) | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu

2026 ALS Walk for Life
October 24, Soldier Field, Chicago
Info: [Jordan Sund](#) | 312-503-2706 | jordan.sund@northwestern.edu

The H Foundation Comedy for Cancer: Martin Short
November 5, Tivoli Theatre, Downers Grove, IL
Info: [Nicole Langert](#) | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu

The Harold E. Eisenberg Foundation Annual Dinner
November 5, Hilton Chicago
Info: [Nicole Langert](#) | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu

Alumni Weekend 2027
April 30–May 1, Northwestern University, Chicago
Info: [Babette Henderson](#) | 312-503-0855 | babette.henderson@northwestern.edu

Etka Frimerman’s Life and Legacy

Inspire Brain Tumor Breakthroughs

Through a generous gift from anonymous donors, neurosurgeon Adam M. Sonabend, MD, was afforded the unique opportunity to name his own professorship — an honor he used to pay tribute to his late grandmother, Etka Frimerman.

Frimerman, who passed away in 2007 at the age of 81, came of age during one of history’s darkest chapters. Born in 1926 in rural Poland, she was a teenager during the Nazi invasion, during which her life was irreparably altered. She survived years of extreme hardship — ghettoization, starvation, and ultimately Auschwitz — while most of her family was lost. She eventually escaped and joined a distant relative in Colombia, where she met her husband, Zelik Worthalter, and raised a family that she looked after with a sharp and resolute eye. Her dedication to her family, the love she expressed through practical action, and her resilience captivated Dr. Sonabend as a child and even more so as an adult, when he learned more about her past.



The Frimerman family before World War II. Etka (bottom right) stands next to her father (second from right, bottom row). Her mother is second from the left on the bottom row, and the others are Etka’s siblings.

“Her life is a testament to the indestructible human spirit,” Dr. Sonabend said. “I owe everything to her — her values define who I am.”

The Etka Frimerman Professorship of Neurosurgery is both an honor and a critical source of support for Dr. Sonabend. As an associate professor and director of Translational Neuro-oncology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, he leads a research program focused on developing new therapies and clinical trials for patients with brain tumors, while also spending ample time in the clinic and operating room. The Frimerman Professorship, established in late 2025, provides essential financial stability for his endeavors, enabling him to sustain his work both in the lab and in the operating room.

“Being a physician-scientist is almost like being the CEO of a small company — you’re responsible for everything. This is a breed under extinction, because it’s becoming harder and harder to do both clinical work and research,” Dr. Sonabend said. “The professorship provides financial support that allows me to focus on the science and on patient-centered research.”



In addition to unlocking important resources, professorships represent the pinnacle of academic achievement and are reserved for the most distinguished physicians and scientists. Dr. Sonabend leads a collaborative and international team of investigators dedicated to improving patient outcomes. He has published numerous findings in leading academic journals in his almost 10 years at Northwestern, and in January, his team reported in *Nature Communications* a clinically impactful breakthrough in glioblastoma care with the development of a non-invasive method to predict chemotherapy response.

“What we’re trying to do is make a real difference for patients with malignant brain cancer,” he said. “Every project in my lab starts and ends with the patient.”

From Survival to Stability



Etka Frimerman and her daughter, Fanny, in 1958

After sitting down to her first peaceful postwar Shabbat dinner — the Friday evening meal that marks the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath — in Ibagué, Colombia, Etka Frimerman resolved to move forward with determination. She decided she would rebuild her life and focus on raising her family, never yielding to self-pity, Dr. Sonabend and his mother, Fanny, said.

“After World War II, she decided that she had to live for her family. She knew what she wanted, and she would do whatever demanded to achieve that,” Fanny Sonabend said.

Frimerman built a livelihood in Ibagué and later in Bogotá through hard work, running a convenience and gift shop that supported her children’s education and future success. Known for her strength and directness, she offered guidance and support to those around her, family and community members alike.

Though she seldom spoke about her wartime experience, its lessons were evident in her actions, which centered around stability and opportunity for her family. Her store provided a reliable financial foundation as well as employment for her family, and through her modest income, she ensured that all of her children could attend university. In 1985, after a deadly earthquake destroyed basic infrastructure including running water, electricity, and communications for millions of people in Mexico City, including Fanny and her children, Etka Frimerman demonstrated her commitment to ensuring her family would survive, arriving in a matter of days from Colombia with two suitcases full of canned food.

Later in life, Etka and Zelik adopted a nomadic lifestyle, moving between Bogotá, Mexico City, and Miami, spending extended periods living near whichever of her children needed her. Their final settlement was an apartment in Mexico City.

“She was a strong, pragmatic woman — the hardest-working person you could imagine,” Dr. Sonabend said.

Today, her story lives on through the professorship and Dr. Sonabend, who emigrated from Mexico City to the U.S. at the age of 26. After building a reputation as a caring and effective neurosurgeon, first at Columbia University in New York and then at Northwestern, anonymous donors — patients of Dr. Sonabend — established the professorship to further amplify his impact in the field.

“As I carry Etka Frimerman as a professorship, I will honor this mission of working to improve the outcomes of brain tumor patients and hope that, in the future, this endowment and name are passed on to a brain tumor researcher-physician whose career objective is to make a difference for these patients,” Dr. Sonabend said. “The values of survivorship and the pursuit of life with dignity that Etka Frimerman represents are timeless, universal, and essential. I hope her story inspires future generations.”

For more information about supporting professorships or the Department of Neurosurgery, please contact [Andrew Christopherson](mailto:andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu) at andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu or 312-503-3080.

Welcoming the First Stahl Professor in Psychiatry



Dr. Siddiqi

Shan H. Siddiqi, MD, joined Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in July 2026 as the inaugural Stephen M. Stahl, MD, PhD Professor in Psychiatry.

Dr. Siddiqi comes from Harvard University, where he served as associate professor of psychiatry and as director of psychiatric neuromodulation research at the Brigham & Women’s Hospital’s Center for Brain Circuit Therapeutics.

Stephen M. Stahl, ’75 MD, PhD, DMedSci (Hon.), DSci (Hon.), established the professorship in 2022. In 2024, he and his wife, Shakila, generously funded the new Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

“As the inaugural holder of the Stahl Professorship, I am honored to inherit not just a title but a responsibility: to carry Dr Stahl’s legacy of ushering in the next generation of neurobiologically-informed psychiatry, bringing faster, safer, and more effective treatments to help those suffering from mental illness,” Dr. Siddiqi said.

Dr. Stahl is a respected psychiatrist, psychopharmacologist, and educator who has written more than 60 textbooks, including the best-selling and award-winning textbook *Stahl’s Essential Psychopharmacology* and clinical manual *Essential Psychopharmacology: The Prescriber’s Guide*

“I am one of countless psychiatrists who learned to care for patients through his books, and I’ve watched loved ones build full lives despite serious mental illness because of that knowledge,” Dr. Siddiqi said.

A New Era Focused on the Future of Medicine

Our Commitment to Scholarships Campaign

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine is proud to introduce a new scholarship campaign to empower the bright students who will shape the future of medicine. At Feinberg, we aim to raise an ambitious **\$200 million by 2032** to alleviate the burden of debt for our outstanding students.

Scholar Spotlights | CLASS OF 2029



Joanna Jeyachandran

Joanna Jeyachandran, J. Douglas Gray Scholar, decided to pursue a medical degree following her family’s experience with hereditary colon cancer. Inspired by the compassion of her aunt’s physicians, she says she hopes to one day provide care that addresses the whole person, not just the disease. At Feinberg, she is involved in community service and patient support programs and is exploring research opportunities in oncology. “Thank you for your support and for believing in the potential of students like me,” she says.



Cristian Carpio

Cristian Carpio, Dr. William and Jayne Gilligan Scholar, is a first-generation college and medical student who was born in Cuenca, Ecuador. Since starting medical school, he has developed a strong interest in oncology through research, shadowing, and service experiences, including work as an emergency medical technician and in federally qualified health centers. “My family did not have the financial means to support my college education, much less graduate school,” he says. “Because of you, Feinberg was able to offer me significant scholarship support, making my dream of attending medical school a reality.”



Lina Magid

Lina Magid, MD Class of 1964 Scholar, says her path to medicine began as a teenager, when she had to perform CPR upon her mother following a car accident, and by the compassion and cultural humility shown by her family’s physicians at the time. Having lived in several countries, including England, Sudan, and Qatar, she developed a strong interest in health equity, patient advocacy, and the social determinants of health. “It is my aspiration to provide the same quality of care and advocacy that my own family once received, and your generosity has brought me significantly closer to that goal,” she says.



You can make a profound difference upon a medical student’s career through gifts to an existing scholarship by establishing a new named and endowed scholarship or expendable scholarship.

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Endowed scholarships provide long-term scholarship support. These require a higher minimum investment because the principal must remain untouched. Northwestern invests this principal, awarding a percentage of the earned interest as student aid.

EXPENDABLE SCHOLARSHIPS

Expendable or immediate use scholarships are deposited and distributed directly to students until the account is depleted, providing an immediate cash injection. This can offer a more flexible entry point for donors. In contrast, endowed scholarships yield smaller annual distributions but can support generations of scholars.

The Cost of a Feinberg Education Today

\$116,302

Average total annual expenses including tuition, fees, health insurance, activity fees, and indirect costs such as housing, food, and books.

71.5%

of all Feinberg students received scholarship awards during the 2025-26 academic year.

\$200,000

New federal cap for federal direct unsubsidized loans.

Learn more at feinberg.nu/ScholarshipsCampaign

Frable Family's Scholarship Legacy Fuels Feinberg's Next Chapter



Dr. Jack Frable (above) and Dr. Mary Ann Frable (left) in 1959

Long before scholarship support became a defining priority at leading medical schools, William J. “Jack” Frable, ’59 MD, ’60 GMER, ’64 GMER (’97 P) (’24 GP), and the late Mary Ann Frable, ’59 MD, ’64 GMER (’97 P) (’24 GP), were already trailblazers — creating opportunities for talented students to pursue their ambitions at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

After many years of generous giving, the Frables in 1997 established the Frable Medical Students Scholars Program, an endowed fund designed to provide merit-based scholarships. The investment reflected a belief the Frables embraced early and have instilled within their family to this day: that scholarships are essential to attracting and training the best doctors and advancing medicine.

The Jack and Mary Ann Frable Medical Student Scholarship and the Mary Ann Frable, MD Dean’s Scholarship have supported 20 students, many of them receiving full-tuition support. The Frables have enjoyed getting to know their scholars learning about their medical school journeys and lives even as they move on to residencies, fellowships, and careers. Dr. Mary Ann Frable passed away in 2020, but her and her husband’s vision lives on and has paved the way for many other donors to establish scholarships in their own names or in honor of beloved mentors, family members, classmates, and more.

In May 2026, Feinberg launched an ambitious effort to raise \$200 million in scholarship funding by 2032, building on remarkable growth over the past decade. The Frables were vital in laying the groundwork for Feinberg’s scholarship program and ensuring its continued success, but significant support is still needed to broaden scholarship support across the student body.

“The need for scholarships has never been greater,” Dr. Jack Frable said. “Supporting students is essential to ensuring the very best minds can train at Northwestern and go on to transform patient care.”

A Legacy Begins at Northwestern

Over almost 30 years, the Frables have grown their scholarship fund annually through outright gifts, IRA contributions, and charitable remainder trusts, and they have pledged additional gifts through their estate. Their legacy is rooted in their own formative experience at Northwestern: The two met as first-year medical students in 1955 and graduated together in 1959.

The Frables went on to distinguished careers at Virginia Commonwealth University, where Dr. Mary Ann Frable became a tenured professor of otolaryngology and Dr. Jack Frable rose to national prominence in pathology, earning some of the field’s highest honors. Yet even as their professional accomplishments grew, their connection to Feinberg — and its students — remained a priority.

For students, the Frables’ support creates opportunities that extend well beyond the classroom.



Dr. Frable and Frable Scholars gather at the 2024 Commitment to Scholarships luncheon.

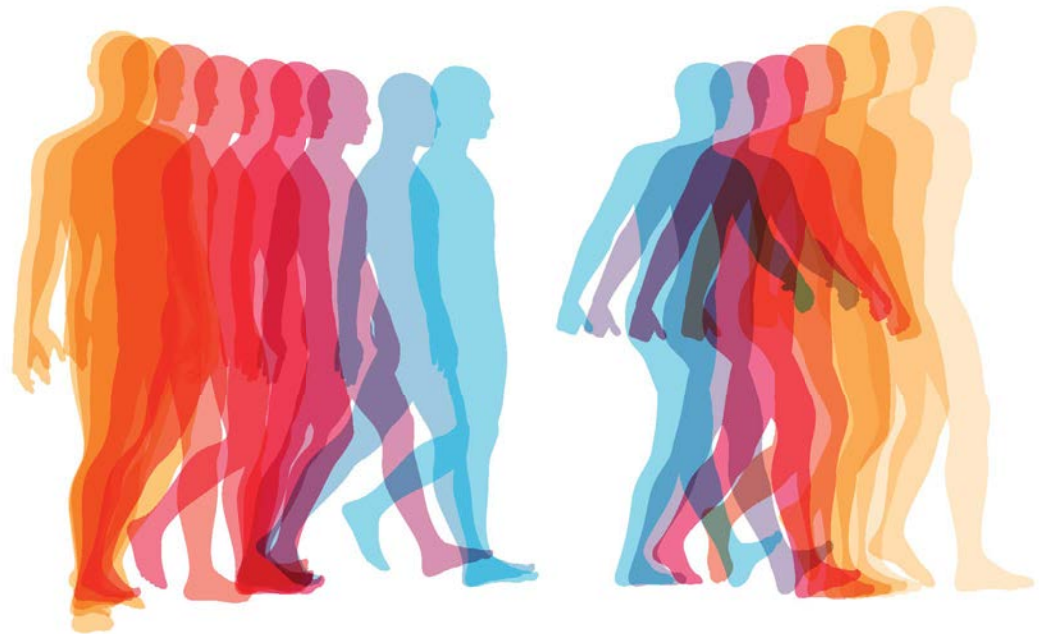
“The scholarship made it possible for me to fully pursue research and service,” said Sarah Ann Duck, a Mary Ann Frable, MD Dean’s Scholar, who during her first year of medical school was able to research a rare genetic condition through the Summer Research Scholars Program and serve as president of Chicago Medicine and Street Outreach, which provides care to unhoused individuals.

The Frables’ legacy is also deeply personal for the family. Their daughter, Geraldine, went into medicine and credits her parents’ example as foundational.

“My parents showed me that medicine is not just a profession — it’s a responsibility to lift others along the way. Their commitment to giving has shaped both my career and my values, and it continues to inspire our entire family,” said Geraldine E. Menard, ’97 MD, ’00 GMER (’24 P), who followed her parents to Feinberg and now works at Tulane University, where she serves as associate professor of medicine, chief of general internal medicine and geriatrics, and vice chair of Clinical Affairs in the Deming Department of Medicine.

For more information about supporting scholarships, please contact **Larry Kuhn** at larry-kuhn@northwestern.edu or **312-503-1717**.

Cherished PT Professor Babette Sanders Honored with New Scholarship



Babette Sanders

“I am passionate about physical therapy and want to help future physical therapists gain access to outstanding physical therapy education at Northwestern.”

— Babette Sanders

Former trainees, colleagues, and friends are recognizing the distinguished career and impact of professor emeritus Babette S. Sanders, PT, DPT, MS, FAPTA, with the creation of an endowed physical therapy scholarship in her honor.

The Babette S. Sanders PT Scholarship will support students in the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, ensuring Dr. Sanders’s influence will continue to be felt in the classrooms, clinics, and communities that train future physical therapists.

“I am passionate about physical therapy and want to help future physical therapists gain access to outstanding physical therapy education at Northwestern,” Dr. Sanders said. “This scholarship will help provide financial support for our smart and capable students, and I was excited to help establish it.”

Dr. Sanders began her 50-plus-year career in acute care practice in New York City after graduating from SUNY Downstate Medical Center in 1972. She later earned advanced degrees from Long Island University and Simmons University, pairing her clinical expertise with a strong commitment to education.

When Dr. Sanders joined Northwestern’s faculty in 1989, she quickly became a cornerstone of the department. Over the years, she taught across the physical therapy curriculum and served in leadership roles that fundamentally shaped the program, including assistant chair for Curricular Affairs and assistant chair for Student Affairs. Known for her guidance and advocacy for students, she helped design academic programs and enhance the broader student experience until her retirement in 2022.

The department is one of the first in the U.S. dedicated to physical therapy, and it is consistently ranked in the top 10 programs in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report* for its Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program.

While at Northwestern, Dr. Sanders also served in key faculty governance roles, including president of the Medical Faculty Council and the Faculty Senate, earning the Linzer Award for Faculty Excellence in Service. Among many national accolades, she served in leadership positions at the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), including on its Board of Directors and the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education.

For many, Dr. Sanders’s most enduring impact is reflected in the people she mentored who went on to establish successful careers in physical therapy.

Nicholas Fendt, ’16 PT, DPT, who donated to the Sanders Scholarship, said he remembers arriving at the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences after a career change from architecture.

“Babette opened my eyes to what leadership in physical therapy could look like,” he said. “Because of her mentorship, I’ve grown into managing inpatient rehabilitation, acute care, and outpatient clinics. Supporting a scholarship in her name felt like a meaningful way to honor the role she played in my journey.”

Kristin Greenwood, PT, DPT, EdD, MS, FNAP, described Dr. Sanders as a “hallmark” mentor and friend with whom she partnered through APTA on many acute care physical therapy and education leadership projects. Most memorably, Dr. Greenwood said, the two developed a system of guidelines to help entry-level physical therapists be safe and effective from their first day of practice onward.

“She represents the very best of physical therapy faculty,” said Dr. Greenwood, who serves as provost and senior vice president of academic affairs at Mercy University in New York. “Her example has shaped my approach to leadership and education, and I remain deeply grateful for what I learned under her guidance.”

For more information about supporting the Department of Physical Therapy and Human Movement Sciences, please contact **Vic Maurer** at victor.maurer@northwestern.edu or 312-503-2417.



WATCH: Living History with Babette Sanders (2026)
feinberg.nu/SandersLivingHistory

BEYOND THE BEDSIDE

Chez and Marks Support Myeloma Doctors, Future Eye Surgeons

Chicago-based philanthropists Ronald Chez and Athena Marks '74 MA embody the life-changing doctor-patient relationships that can lead to extraordinary giving at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Nearly a decade since the couple established the Chez Family Professorship in Myeloma Research for Chez's cancer doctors, they have had the privilege of watching Jayesh Mehta, MD, and Seema Singhal, MD, contribute invaluable insights to myeloma research. And since 2022, thanks to outstanding eye care under Robert S. Feder, MD, the couple has broadened its focus at Feinberg to the Department of Ophthalmology, where an investment in a new laboratory is helping residents get hands-on practice performing surgeries.



Drs. Singhal and Mehta

Chez was diagnosed with multiple myeloma — a cancer of the plasma cells — in 2016. After meeting with several teams at leading medical centers, the couple chose Drs. Mehta and Singhal, professors in the Department of Medicine (Hematology and Oncology), to manage Chez's care.

Right away, Chez and Marks were struck not only by the physicians' expertise but also by their bedside manner and responsiveness, they said. That support never wavered, whether through conversations about Chez's treatment options or daily visits during difficult periods of care. "When we met Jayesh and Seema, we were very impressed with their approach as well as their

commitment to finding innovative ways to treat and ultimately cure multiple myeloma," Marks said. "Ten years later, they have proven every day that they are not only the best in their field but also they have made significant progress in their quest for a cure."

After extensive consultations with Drs. Mehta and Singhal, Chez underwent a short course of bispecific immunotherapy that helped reverse relapsed disease and led to, as of summer 2026, a full year of remission. But undergoing years of treatment was challenging, taking an emotional and physical toll on both Chez and Marks, who navigated the experience alongside him.

"It's very stressful, and you don't want to see your loved one suffering," she said. "But that's why our relationship with Jayesh and Seema was so important, because they knew us, and we felt very supported."

Inspired by their experience, the couple established the Chez Family Professorship in Myeloma Research, a prestigious appointment that Drs. Mehta and Singhal have co-held since 2018. For Chez, himself the beneficiary of novel medical therapies, the professorship reflects his belief in equipping the best scientists to move translational research forward.

Drs. Mehta and Singhal have served on the Feinberg faculty since 2000. The Chez Family Professorship has provided a vital foundation for their research into liquid biopsy test improvements, CAR T-cell therapy for multiple myeloma patients, genetic analysis of bone marrow samples from myeloma patients, and many other projects at the forefront of cancer science.

"The Chez Family Professorship has been game-changing for our myeloma studies," said Dr. Mehta, who also serves as director of the Stem Cell Transplantation and Cell Therapy Program at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center. "Thanks to Ron and Athena's support, myeloma patients have more hope for better outcomes than ever before."

For more information, please contact [Terri Dillon](mailto:terri-dillon@northwestern.edu) at terri-dillon@northwestern.edu or 312-503-4837.

Marks earned her master's degree in radio, television, and film from Northwestern in 1974, while Chez briefly attended Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law. Marks was awarded a full-ride scholarship and recalled telling herself years ago that, if she could ever give back, the University would be a priority.

Now, Chez runs an investment firm and has served as a board member, co-founder, and director of several private and public companies, while Marks worked in media and founded a Spanish-language media company.

State-of-the-Art Eye Training

The couple's generosity now extends to Feinberg's Department of Ophthalmology. Both are patients of Dr. Feder, professor of Ophthalmology, vice chair of education, and director of cornea service in the department, and were deeply impressed by his clinical care as well as his futuristic vision for surgical education. After learning about plans for a wet laboratory where ophthalmology trainees could practice surgical techniques and develop confidence before operating on patients, Marks and Chez provided funds to help make the facility possible.

In the Chez Ophthalmology Microsurgery Laboratory, which opened its doors in 2022, resident physicians can practice all aspects of cataract, glaucoma, oculoplastic, retina, and strabismus surgery. "What the lab allows them to do is practice thousands of times before they actually work on a real patient," Marks said.



Athena Marks (right) with Nicholas Volpe, MD, chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and the George W. and Edwina S. Tarry Professor of Ophthalmology, during a tour of the Chez Lab in 2025



The Chez Ophthalmology Microsurgery Laboratory in 2023

Ophthalmic microsurgery is unique in that it requires the use of both arms and both legs to control the surgical microscope and the phacoemulsification unit. The lab has six workstations with state-of-the-art operating microscopes and phacoemulsification units — used to remove cataracts — with fully functional foot pedals, each with an attached video monitor and an adjustable worktable.

The department hosts more than a dozen educational programs in the lab each year, Dr. Feder said. This summer, the lab sponsored Surgery Olympics, in which residents competed virtually with trainees at the University of Iowa and University of Michigan to perform eye procedures.

"This program is a win-win, allowing trainees to practice skills through friendly competition," Dr. Feder said. "I am profoundly grateful to Ron and Athena for their generous support in helping me to realize a dream for ophthalmology education at Northwestern."

Chez said that he had bet on Dr. Feder's residents to win gold this year. As he and Marks reflected on their relationships with Drs. Mehta, Singhal, and Feder, they returned often to the common theme of excellence paired with humility. "It's so good to have doctors you can talk to and with whom you can identify — and even make bets," Chez quipped.

MBTI Honoree Tebbe Celebrated for Generous Support

Over the past 15 years, Robin Loewenberg Tebbe has turned the tragic loss of her husband into impactful activism and fundraising support for breakthrough brain tumor studies at the Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute (MBTI) of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern University.



Members of Robin Tebbe's and late husband Louis Berger's family flew into Chicago from across the country to celebrate Robin's fundraising legacy at the MBTI Minds Matter benefit in May 2026.

In recognition of her longstanding fundraising efforts and advocacy, Tebbe was presented the Minds Matter Award at the annual Minds Matter benefit that drew nearly 400 supporters. The event took place at the Four Seasons Hotel on May 1 and marked a fundraising milestone, raising more than \$1.5 million in support of cutting-edge research and patient care. Institute leaders cited Tebbe's influence as instrumental in achieving this year's record-breaking total.

"I want to continue to raise awareness of the programs and research that the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute is doing. They are conducting such incredible research and have created a world-class program."

— Robin Tebbe

Tebbe's connection to the MBTI began when her first husband, Louis Berger, was diagnosed with glioblastoma and treated by MBTI co-director James P. Chandler, MD, whose steady presence and clinical expertise made a lasting impression during a difficult time for her family. Berger passed away in 2010, but the team at MBTI went above and beyond to ensure that the family was well-informed and cared for throughout Louis's treatment, Tebbe said.



Tebbe and Dr. Chandler at the 2026 Minds Matter benefit

"Dr. Chandler provided a sense of calmness and comfort to Louis and our family after he received this life-changing diagnosis," she said. "So, we decided to honor Louis and his doctors by creating a fundraiser to support research."

Tebbe organized the Magellan Chicago 10K and Half Marathon with the backing of her company, Magellan Development Group. The races mobilized colleagues, friends, and community members, creating an enduring fundraising platform for brain tumor research.

Tebbe also served as a member of the MBTI Advisory Council for many years, and she continues to champion the institute's mission. She remains closely connected to Dr. Chandler and the broader care team, supporting a program she describes as both innovative and compassionate.

"Robin's commitment to MBTI over the past 15 years has been extraordinary. What began as a deeply personal loss has grown into a sustained force for progress, elevating research, improving patient care, and providing real hope for patients facing brain tumors today," said Dr. Chandler, who also serves as the Lavin/Fates Professor of Neurological Surgery. "I'm so grateful for Robin's enormous impact at MBTI, and I'm proud to call her my friend."

Before he passed, Louis Berger was known for his infectious geniality. Robin Tebbe, their two sons, and Dr. Chandler attested to Louis's upbeat spirit — which lasted till the end — at the 2026 Minds Matter event. Alongside her husband, Mark Tebbe, as well as friends and family, Tebbe continues to invest in MBTI's future, ensuring that others will benefit from the kind of care that helped Louis and their family cope with a daunting diagnosis.

"I want to continue to raise awareness of the programs and research that the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute is doing," she said. "They are conducting such incredible research and have created a world-class program. Our entire family will continue to support this important institute at Northwestern."

For more information about supporting the Malnati Brain Tumor Institute, please contact [Liz Breslin](#) at elizabeth.breslin@northwestern.edu or [312-503-4576](tel:312-503-4576).

State-of-the-Art Tools for Tumor Science

MBTI co-directors Amy Heimberger, MD, PhD, and Roger Stupp, MD, recently treated Robin and Mark Tebbe to a tour of MBTI facilities in the Louis A. Simpson and Kimberly K. Querrey Biomedical Research Center on Feinberg's campus in Chicago. During the visit, Dr. Heimberger and Dr. Stupp imparted the many ways in which MBTI's state-of-the-art tools and technologies are catalyzing tomorrow's breakthroughs.

Vital to MBTI's research is a tissue bank more than a decade in the making, housing over 5,000 patient-derived tumor specimens. The MBTI has built infrastructure that supports the direct transfer of fresh tumor tissue and blood from the operating room to scientists so that they can study and conduct longitudinal research on live human organoids and brain tumor slices.

Leading organizations such as the National Cancer Institute (NCI) encourage the incorporation of patient-derived tissues in preclinical research, explained Dr. Heimberger, who also serves as the Jean Malnati Miller Professor of Brain Tumor Research. "Using patient-derived material lets us test therapies before they ever reach a clinical trial," she said. The NCI provides crucial funding for advanced stages of research.

Additionally, the institute's lab spaces are interconnected on a vast floor dedicated to research, reflecting the institute's emphasis on collaboration between scientists. The pooling of equipment and resources into a central core allows scientists to have ready access to advanced technologies such as automated sequential spatial proteomics that allow scientists to map potential therapeutic targets within whole tissue samples.

"It's a highly collegial and a collaborative environment," Dr. Heimberger said. The model also suits the institute philanthropically, she added, because MBTI teams can dip into funds from donors to overcome research barriers.

Closing Gaps in Women’s Heart Health

Gift Advances Research into Cardiovascular Disease in Women

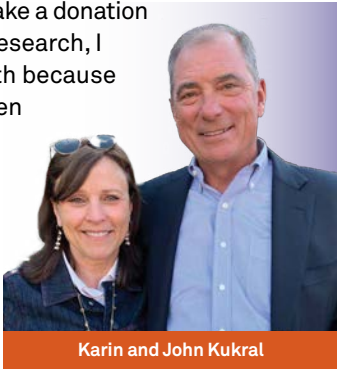


For years, Karin Bain Kukral (’13, ’17 P) observed a troubling reality: that women have too often been overlooked in cardiovascular research.

She knew that heart disease remains a leading threat to women’s health—and that women have historically been underrepresented in cardiac studies and can experience heart disease differently than men. Those disparities were more than a matter of public concern for Kukral; they were personal. Her mother lived with a heart condition related to rheumatic fever and ultimately died following a heart attack at age 79.

Women have long been underrepresented in modern medicine, in part because leading research institutions assumed that scientific findings for men applied equally to women. In 1993, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Revitalization Act required women to be included in NIH-funded clinical research, but decades of exclusion left lasting gaps in scientific knowledge. Today, scientists know that heart disease can develop, appear, and respond to treatment differently in women, making research focused on women’s heart health more important than ever.

“When I wanted to make a donation to support medical research, I chose women’s health because it has historically been under-researched,” Kukral said. “Women were not always included in studies, and we’ve learned that women often present differently than men.”



Karin and John Kukral

That conviction led Kukral and her husband, Northwestern University Trustee John Kukral ’82 (’13, ’17 P), to make a significant investment in the new Women’s Heart Care program at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. The Kukrals’ support helps advance a growing effort, led by Priya Freaney, MD, assistant professor of Medicine (Cardiology), dedicated to understanding the unique cardiovascular needs of women and addressing longstanding gaps in knowledge and care.

“The Kukrals are spot on in their conclusion that women have been profoundly underrepresented in cardiovascular research for many decades. At Northwestern, we are working to close that gap by conducting research that recognizes and investigates the unique factors that shape women’s heart health,” Dr. Freaney said.

The Women’s Heart Care program represents a burgeoning hub for women’s cardiovascular health at Northwestern. Through collaborative and interdisciplinary research, innovative diagnostic tools, and personalized care, the program aims to set a new standard of how heart disease is prevented, detected, and treated in women across the lifespan.



Dr. Freaney and a patient at the Bluhm Cardiovascular Institute at Northwestern Medicine

Rethinking Risk Across a Woman’s Lifetime

Feinberg scientists affiliated with the Women’s Heart Care program are tackling questions at the intersection of cardiovascular disease and the uniquely female experiences that can shape long-term health.

One of the program’s current areas of focus is a growing body of research examining premature menopause and its relationship to heart disease. In a recent study published in *JAMA Cardiology*, Dr. Freaney and her team followed more than 10,000 women and found that menopause occurring before age 40 is associated with a 40 percent increase in lifetime risk of coronary heart disease. The study was the first of its kind to calculate lifetime heart risk associated with premature menopause. Now, investigators are working to better understand the biological mechanisms behind that connection, with the goal of informing earlier screening and intervention strategies for women at heightened risk.

The program is also advancing care for women in the critical months following pregnancy. Through the Mobile Health Interventions to Prevent Heart Disease after Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy (mHEART) study led by Dr. Freaney, scientists are investigating digital health interventions and early screening approaches designed to improve cardiovascular outcomes for mothers who experience high-risk hypertensive pregnancies. By focusing on postpartum care, the initiative seeks to address cardiovascular risks that can emerge well beyond delivery and often go unrecognized until later in life.

Sarah A. Goldstein, MD, leads the Heart Disease and Pregnancy Program and serves as an assistant professor of Medicine (Cardiology). Paying close attention to the physiological demands of pregnancy may help treat existing heart conditions and provide clues about new ones that may arise, she said.

“Pregnancy is a significant stress test for the heart—a nine-month marathon for the cardiovascular system. Our Women’s Heart Care program helps patients understand their risk and provides interventions to reduce it,” Dr. Goldstein said.

Looking ahead, investigators plan to expand their efforts into several emerging areas of women’s cardiovascular health, particularly in midlife. Sadiya Khan, MD, MSc, the Magerstadt Professor of Cardiovascular Epidemiology, is working on a first-in-kind initiative to support clinician education among primary care clinicians, obstetricians and gynecologists, and preventive cardiologists to recognize increased risk of cardiovascular disease in women. This study will focus on high-risk windows for

women when engagement with the healthcare system is also high: the menopausal period. Dr. Khan is an associate professor of Medicine (Cardiology) and of Medical Social Sciences and Preventive Medicine and director of the Center for Population Science and Aging.

A Family History of Women in Medicine

For Karin Kukral, supporting research and education are a core part of her value system, which she traces back generations. Her grandfather, who immigrated to the U.S. from Greece, insisted that all four of his daughters receive a college education—an uncommon opportunity for women of that era. Many members of her family subsequently entered healthcare professions, including her mother, an occupational therapist, as well as relatives who became a hematologist, dietitian, and dentist.

“Education is one of those things that you can never lose,” she said, describing her family’s generational commitment to learning. Research improves societies and ultimately saves lives, she added.

Through discussions with Northwestern representatives, Kukral sought a way to direct her giving toward areas where she felt it could make a tangible difference. Now, through their philanthropy, the Kukrals are helping propel research that will help chart the course for women’s health for generations to come.

“Women’s heart health should have been studied a long time ago, but it wasn’t,” she said. “Thankfully, Northwestern is giving it the priority it deserves.”

The Kukrals have also made substantial gifts to the Family Medicine Scholarship and to the Family Medicine Transition to Residency Curriculum, affirming their commitment to medical advancement for all.

For more information about supporting women’s heart care, please contact [Kathleen Praznowski](mailto:kathleen.praznowski@northwestern.edu) at 312-503-0762 or kathleen.praznowski@northwestern.edu.

Our Community in Action

The Associate Board of Lurie Cancer Center celebrated its fifth year of fundraising and presented Jonathan H. Chen, MD, PhD, assistant professor of Pathology (Molecular Pathology) at Feinberg, the \$100,000 2026 Innovative Research Award at its **annual cocktail reception** on August 13. The board also announced a \$46,000 gift establishing the Clinical Trial Support Fund, this year benefiting novel trials in lung cancer.



Members of the Associate Board of Lurie Cancer Center gathered to present \$146,000 in research awards at their fifth annual cocktail reception.

More than 1,000 supporters and friends of The H Foundation gathered July 25 for the **24th Annual Goombay Bash**, a Caribbean-themed festival celebrating efforts to find a cure for cancer. The event, held at the Aon Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier in Chicago, raised nearly \$1.2 million in support of basic science cancer research at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University.



Supporters of The H Foundation celebrate moments after event fundraising totals were announced.

Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine alumni returned to campus on May 1 and 2 for **Alumni Weekend 2026**, an event dedicated to reconnecting classmates and celebrating milestone reunions.



At the annual Commitment to Scholarships Luncheon held May 2 at The Peninsula Chicago Hotel, brothers Kevin Hicks (left) and David Hicks (right) met with Joseph Choi (center), one of the recipients of the Snorf Medical Student Scholarship, named for the Hicks's beloved late stepfather, Charles Snorf, '58 MD, '63 GME.

The Les Turner ALS Foundation raised more than \$800,000 for programs benefiting people living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, at its **38th Annual Hope Through Caring Gala**. Also at the gala, held at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel in Chicago on April 11, Feinberg physician-scientist John M. Coleman III, MD, was presented the Harvey and Bonny Gaffen Advancements in ALS Award for his impact on ALS care, advocacy, and research.



Cecil Puvathingal (right) delivered remarks about his care as a patient under Dr. Coleman (middle) and attended the gala with his wife, Grace Puvathingal (left).

The **18th Annual Minds Matter benefit** raised more than \$1.5 million on May 1 to advance research and patient care at the Lou and Jean Malnati Brain Tumor Institute (MBTI) of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University. Held at the Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, the event gathered about 400 supporters to celebrate MBTI's research accomplishments and reputation for providing world-class care to patients with brain tumors.



MBTI Advisory Council members and other Minds Matter guests mingle after the main program.

INNOVATION SPOTLIGHT

Empowering Feinberg's Unsung Heroes

Each day, our faculty, students, and trainees at Feinberg dedicate time to innovative new ideas and programs that will move the needle in medicine and science. Here, we spotlight some of the exciting work that often happens behind the scenes and beyond daily clinical care.

Thank you to all the donors who contribute to these efforts, now and in the future. Your philanthropy fuels these projects and programs—enabling their very existence and empowering them to grow for the benefit of patients today and tomorrow.



Dr. Daniela M. Menichella

Unlocking New Paths to Treat Nerve Pain

Daniela M. Menichella, MD, PhD, associate professor of Neurology and Pharmacology, is advancing our understanding of peripheral neuropathy, a group of conditions that can cause chronic pain, numbness, and nerve damage. She studies the cellular and molecular mechanisms that drive neuropathic pain and axonal degeneration in hereditary and acquired peripheral neuropathies, with a particular focus on painful diabetic neuropathy. Her work is reshaping long-held views of the disease by showing that the skin plays an active role in pain and nerve degeneration, rather than serving as a passive target of nerve injury. Using innovative approaches that combine studies of human tissues, advanced imaging, and multi-omic technologies, Dr. Menichella has identified previously unrecognized interactions between skin cells and sensory nerves that may contribute to disease progression. By integrating laboratory discoveries with detailed patient data, she is working to identify new biomarkers and develop more precise, targeted therapies that could improve outcomes and quality of life for people living with peripheral neuropathies.



Dr. Colleen D. Fant

Expanding Global Pediatric Care Through Simulation Training

Colleen D. Fant, MD, MPH, co-director of the Center for Global Pediatric Health and assistant professor of Pediatrics (Emergency Medicine), is working to improve outcomes for critically ill children by expanding access to advanced simulation-based medical training in communities where these educational resources are often unavailable. Through a collaboration between Northwestern University, Lurie Children's Hospital, and partners in Tanzania, Dr. Fant is helping bring the same simulation techniques used to train providers in leading pediatric hospitals to frontline clinicians caring for children in resource-limited settings. Simulation allows physicians, nurses, and trainees to safely practice responding to high-risk medical emergencies—such as respiratory failure, shock, and other critical illnesses—before treating real patients. Under Dr. Fant's leadership, portable simulation laboratories equipped with mannequins and training supplies are being used to strengthen skills in acute pediatric care, encourage teamwork, and improve communication. By training local educators and building sustainable programs, her work helps ensure that healthcare providers are better prepared to respond when children face life-threatening emergencies.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Andrew Christopherson** at 312-503-3080 or andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Jenn Burke** at 312-503-4635 or jennifer.burke@northwestern.edu.



Dr. Farrah J. Mateen



Dr. Brian Popko

Repairing Nerve Damage in Multiple Sclerosis

Farrah J. Mateen, MD, PhD, the Dr. Charles L. Mix Research Professor of Neurology and director of the Center for Global Neurology, is leading efforts to develop therapies that could repair nerve damage caused by multiple sclerosis (MS), a disease affecting an estimated 750,000 people in the U.S. Working closely with **Brian Popko, PhD**, scientific director of MS and Neuroimmunology and the William Frederick Windle Professor of Neurology, whose discoveries helped establish the scientific foundation for this approach, Dr. Mateen is advancing a novel remyelination strategy designed to help the nervous system repair itself. While existing medications can reduce immune attacks, they cannot restore myelin, the protective coating around nerve fibers that is damaged in MS. Her team aims to both protect myelin-producing cells from inflammatory damage and promote the growth of new myelin. Building on encouraging laboratory findings, Dr. Mateen is preparing one of the first human studies of this combination therapy in people living with MS. This approach could pave the way for a new class of treatments that slows disease progression and restores neurological function for people affected by MS worldwide.



Dr. Faraz S. Ahmad

Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Better Heart Care

Faraz S. Ahmad, MD, MS, assistant professor of Cardiology and Preventive Medicine, is revolutionizing a new era of cardiovascular care through the development and implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital health technologies. Dr. Ahmad focuses on improving the diagnosis, treatment, and management of complex heart conditions, including heart failure and cardiac amyloidosis—an often-underrecognized disease that can take years to diagnose. His work bridges leading-edge technology and real-world patient care, creating AI-enabled tools that help clinicians identify high-risk patients earlier, personalize treatment decisions, and improve access to specialized care. Through initiatives that support earlier detection of cardiac amyloidosis, timely identification of patients with worsening heart failure, and increased use of life-saving therapies, Dr. Ahmad aims to make cardiovascular care more precise, efficient, accessible, and patient-centered.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Andrew Christopherson** at 312-503-3080 or andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Kathleen Praznowski** at 312-503-0762 or kathleen.praznowski@northwestern.edu.

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Volume 13, Issue 2 (Fall 2026)

THE PHILANTHROPIST

Preserving the X-rays That Helped Transform Healthcare	2
Upcoming Events	2
Etka Frimerman's Life and Legacy Inspire Brain Tumor Breakthroughs	3
Welcoming the First Stahl Professor in Psychiatry	3
A New Era Focused on the Future of Medicine	4
Our Commitment to Scholarships Campaign	
Frale Family's Scholarship Legacy Fuels Feinberg's Next Chapter	5
Cherished PT Professor Babette Sanders Honored with New Scholarship	6
Beyond the Bedside	7
Chez and Marks Support Myeloma Doctors, Future Eye Surgeons	
MBTI Honoree Tebbe Celebrated for Generous Support	8
Closing Gaps in Women's Heart Health	9
Gift Advances Research into Cardiovascular Disease in Women	
Our Community in Action	10
Innovation Spotlight	11

Right photo: Medical students attend the incoming class of 2026 welcome barbecue hosted by Dean Eric G. Neilson, MD, on August 3 at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

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