Volume 12, Issue 2 (September 2025)

THE PHILANTHROPIST

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Northwestern Medicine®
Feinberg School of Medicine

Members of the Uihlein and Piper families at the Kathryn Aring Piper Center dedication

Honoring a Sister, Advancing Brain Science


Kathryn Aring Piper

On June 27, Northwestern University Life Trustee Julie Uihlein and 20 members of her family gathered in Method Atrium at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine to celebrate Julie's visionary gift to establish the Kathryn Aring Piper Center for Frontotemporal Cognitive Disorders. The center is named after Julie's late sister and given in honor of Drs. Sandra Weintraub and M. Marsel Mesulam, faculty leaders in the Mesulam Institute for Cognitive Neurology and Alzheimer's Disease.


Dr. Weintraub, Uihlein, and Dr. Mesulam

UPCOMING EVENTS

18th Annual Robert J. Havey, MD Institute for Global Health Benefit Dinner
September 17, The Peninsula Hotel Chicago
Info: **Jenn Burke | 312-503-4635 | jennifer.burke@northwestern.edu**

2025 ALS Walk for Life
September 20, Soldier Field, Chicago
Info: **Andrew Christopherson | 312-503-3080 | andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu**

6th Annual Northwestern Medicine Stroke and Cerebrovascular Conference
September 20, Waterford Banquet and Conference Center, Elmhurst, Illinois
Info: **Andrew Christopherson | 312-503-3080 | andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu**

Associate Board of Lurie Cancer Center 4th Annual Summer Cocktail Reception
September 30, The Ivy Room at Tree Studios, Chicago
Info: **Nicole Langert | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu**

Updates in Neurology Symposium
October 10, Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago
Info: **Andrew Christopherson | 312-503-3080 | andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu**

Lynn Sage Breast Cancer Foundation: 40 Years of Impact
October 16, Theater on the Lake, Chicago
Info: **Nicole Langert | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu**

The Osher Center for Integrative Health "Eat to Beat Disease" Benefit
October 18, Simpson Querry Biomedical Research Center, Chicago
Info: **Elizabeth Breslin | 312-503-4576 | elizabeth.breslin@northwestern.edu**

Les Turner Symposium on ALS
November 3, Feinberg Pavilion, Chicago
Info: **Jordan Sund | 312-503-2706 | jordan.sund@northwestern.edu**

The Harold E. Eisenberg Foundation 25th Anniversary Dinner
November 6, Hilton Chicago
Info: **Nicole Langert | 312-503-1656 | nicole.langert@northwestern.edu**

Alumni Weekend 2026
May 1–2, Northwestern University, Chicago
Info: **Babette Henderson | 312-503-0855 | babette.henderson@northwestern.edu**

From Lab Bench to Legacy

NU Student's Experience Inspires $1 Million Gift to Alopecia Research

While a biology major at Northwestern University, Annalina Che '23 spent her summers and school years immersed in stem cell and aging research in the lab of Rui Yi, PhD, at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. That experience, Che says, shaped her academic interests, launched her career in regenerative medicine, and ultimately inspired her family's decision to support hair loss research.

In 2024, the Che family pledged $1 million to the Hair-Alopecia Innovation and Research (HAIR) program in the Department of Dermatology at Feinberg. The gift supports a growing initiative focused on understanding and treating alopecia through translational research and clinical collaboration.

Dr. Yi, the Paul E. Steiner Research Professor of Pathology and a professor of Dermatology, remarked that their relationship has come full circle since Che's days in his lab as an undergraduate studying biology and business.

"I first knew and mentored Annalina as a curious and ambitious student in the lab; now, the family's generosity is helping us to push the frontiers of hair follicle stem cell research," he said. "It's a reminder that mentorship can blossom into lifelong partnership, and that science thrives when personal connections and philanthropy intersect."

Che, now the founder of a biotech startup in New York, first connected with Dr. Yi's lab during her sophomore year. Drawn to his lab's work on stem cells and aging, she reached out after reading several of his team's publications.

> *"It's a reminder that mentorship can blossom into lifelong partnership, and that science thrives when personal connections and philanthropy intersect."*
>
> **— Dr. Yi**

"I really wanted to get involved in what they were doing," Che said. "It was a wonderful experience. I learned about research in academia and the world of regenerative medicine."

Dr. Yi paired Che with a graduate student studying the development of sebaceous glands, organs connected to the hair follicle that release an oily protective substance called sebum. Che impressed Dr. Yi with her work ethic and research presentation skills. She also helped grow and develop opportunities for other undergraduates to work in the lab.

The Che family visited Northwestern's Chicago campus this past January to tour labs and facilities supporting HAIR and meet with faculty and students. During the visit, they delivered the first $100,000 installment of their pledge, which will support pilot grants through the Skin Biology and Diseases Resource-based Center (SBDRC), Dr. Yi's alopecia DNA sequencing research, and additional projects at HAIR.

Back row: **Edward Li, MD, PhD, HAIR director of Translational Research; Dr. Yi; Annalina Che's brothers, Johnson and James; and Victor Quan, MD, HAIR director of Clinical Research.** ***Front row:*** **Amy Paller, MD, '83 GME, MS, chair of the Department of Dermatology; Maria Colavincenzo, MD, HAIR director of Clinical Operations; Annalina Che; and Annalina's mother, Fang Pei.**

Restoring Identity through Hair Restoration

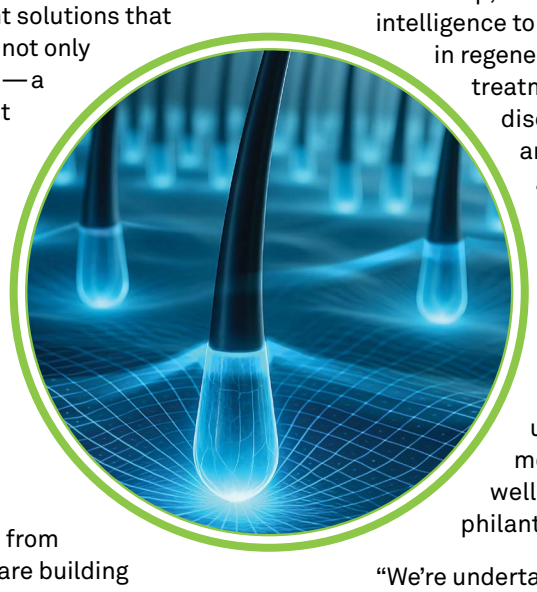
The HAIR program, for which Dr. Yi oversees basic science research, unites dermatologists, pathologists, and basic scientists to address one of dermatology's most persistent challenges: hair loss. The program emphasizes equity across both its research and patient populations and aims to translate laboratory discoveries into real-world treatments. HAIR also aims to bring to the fore the psychological aspect of hair loss: how it is deeply ingrained in the patient's identity.

"We're looking for different solutions that are going to help patients not only look better but feel better — a comprehensive treatment profile," Che said.

By combining clinical expertise with leading-edge genomics, Dr. Yi said, the scientists aim to give every patient a clear molecular explanation for their hair loss and a treatment plan tailored to their unique biology.

Thanks in part to support from the Che family, scientists are building the first high-resolution single cell and spatial atlas of human scalp, capturing both healthy follicles and those affected by diseases, Dr. Yi said. The data are already yielding unprecedented insights into how human hair follicles form, function, and fail.

Hair loss disorders are treated with a one-size-fits-all approach. But HAIR's goal, Dr. Yi said, is to replace that uniformity with patient-specific treatments.



"We are approaching the inflection point of personalized medicine, and few aspects of health feel more personal than our own hair," he said.

Che said her family has long supported educational initiatives, including scholarships at local schools and their alma maters. This is their first major investment in medical research.

Now working in biotech, Che sees the HAIR program as a model for how academic research can connect with clinical practice and patient care. Her startup, Stemtology, uses artificial intelligence to accelerate breakthroughs in regenerative medicine, developing treatments for inflammatory diseases like osteoarthritis and creating a molecule aimed at reversing skin aging.

She said her involvement in Dr. Yi's lab demonstrated to her the importance of translational research, and that she strives to uphold the bench-to-bedside model in her startup as well as through her family's philanthropy.

"We're undertaking really important work here," Che said. "And I'm just super excited to see what [HAIR] is going to accomplish."

For more information about supporting HAIR, please contact **Ashley Lough** at **ashley.lough@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-0759**.

Flanagan Foundation Deepens Feinberg Impact with Support for Neuroscience and Scholarships

With two generous gifts directed to the Department of Neuroscience and to scholarships at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, the Flanagan Foundation doubled down this year on its mission to advance medical research and jumpstart the careers of future physicians.

The gifts reflect the philanthropic vision of John Flanagan, a 1958 graduate of Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management. An investment executive who once juggled four jobs to pay for college, Flanagan spent more than 40 years giving back to the university that helped shape his life. Before his death in 2019, he established the foundation to ensure that support would continue for generations to come.

"John was incredibly proud to be a Northwestern alum," said John Boyle '11 MD, who serves on the foundation's board. "His faith and his connection to Northwestern meant the world to him."

In January, the Flanagan Foundation pledged $600,000 to support fellows in the Department of Neuroscience and gifted $300,000 to support the John R. Flanagan Charitable Foundation Medical Scholarship, which supports fourth-year medical students who have matched into residency programs. The Flanagan Fellowship Fund in the Department of Neuroscience supports early career researchers working on Parkinson's disease, an area of personal interest to Flanagan in his later years.

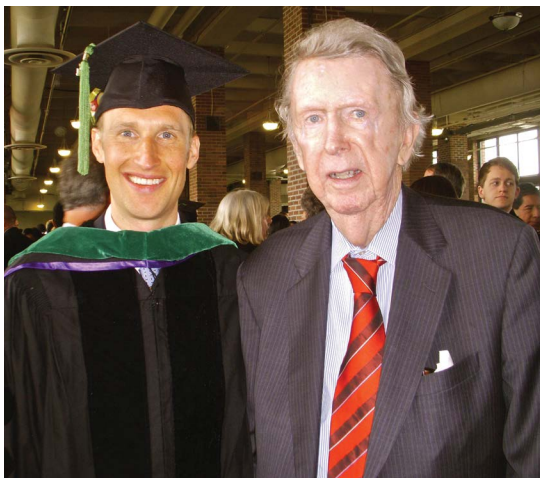
"He had a very curious mind," Dr. Boyle said. "As he got older and faced medical challenges of his own, he became even more interested in the work being done at Feinberg. He loved learning from students and researchers alike."

"We talk often about what John's interests were and how we can carry those forward… supporting students, early-career researchers, and global health—those are all things that mattered to him, and they still matter to us."

—Dr. Boyle

D. James Surmeier, PhD, chair of the Department of Neuroscience and the Nathan Smith Davis Professor of Neuroscience, said the department is honored to be included in Flanagan's legacy.

"Our fellows represent the future of neuroscience," Dr. Surmeier said. "John Flanagan understood that. His investment in these exceptional trainees is helping drive the next wave of innovation in Parkinson's disease research."



Dr. Boyle and Flanagan at Dr. Boyle's MD graduation in 2011

Founded in Friendship

The Flanagan Foundation is managed by a small board that includes Dr. Boyle, longtime Flanagan friend and attorney Dave Crossett, and estate attorney Rebecca Wallenfelsz.

Dr. Boyle met Flanagan while a second-year medical student at Feinberg. In 2008, while riding a crowded bus into downtown Chicago on a holiday weekend, Flanagan invited Dr. Boyle—after noticing his Feinberg white coat—to sit next to him. They struck up a 45-minute conversation about current events, sports, and medicine.

The young Dr. Boyle thought little of it at the time, but a few weeks later, Feinberg Development staff reconnected them, explaining that Flanagan had enjoyed their conversation and hoped to meet again. They made dinner plans, and the rest was history.

"That was the beginning of a friendship that lasted for the rest of his life," Dr. Boyle recalled. "He became close with me and my wife. We shared holidays with him."

Flanagan's approach to philanthropy was molded by his own experience as a student. Born in Bath, New York, Flanagan traveled to Chicago on a whim in the 1950s after receiving a full scholarship to Northwestern's business school. Equipped with a single suitcase and no money, he shared that, as a student, he was keenly aware of the "haves" and the "have-nots." While in business school, he also lived with medical students whom he saw struggle with the steep cost of medical school tuition.

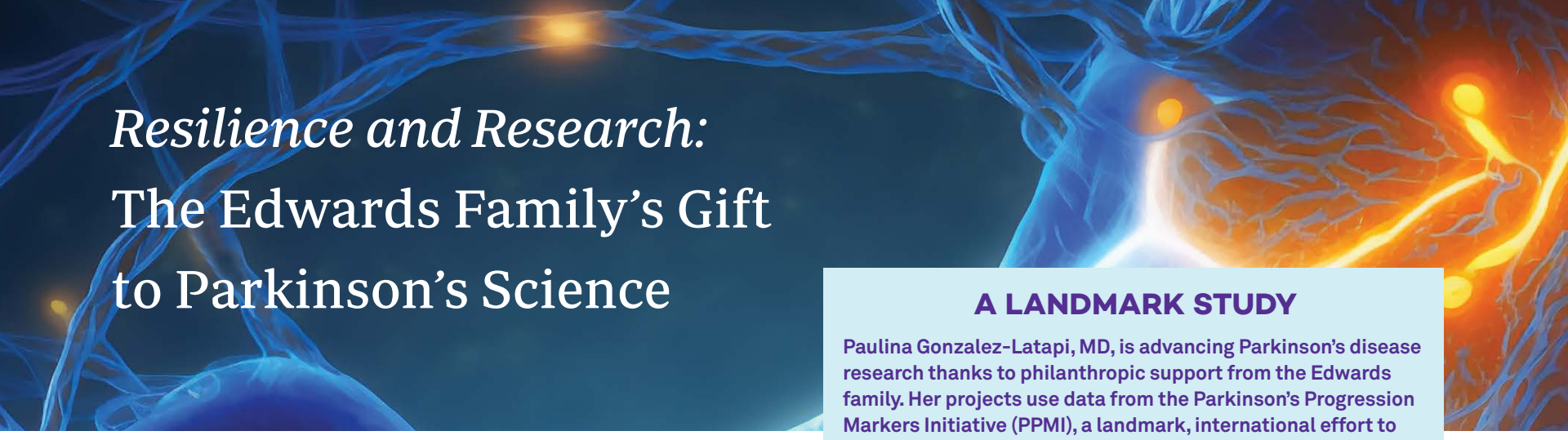
After graduating with his Master of Business Administration in 1958, he served for many years as a partner at investment firm Stein Roe & Farnham and later founded Fundamental Equities International.

"When I think about philanthropy, I always remember where I started," he once said. "My family had limited means. I worked four jobs at once in college. Now that I have some modest wealth, and I know I can't take it with me, I want to do something good with it."

In addition to its support for scholarships and neuroscience, the foundation has also contributed to global health initiatives. A recent $1 million gift to the Center for Global Oncology at the Robert J. Havey, MD Institute for Global Health is helping address HPV-related cancers in West Africa.

"We talk often about what John's interests were and how we can carry those forward," Dr. Boyle said. "Supporting students, early-career researchers, and global health—those are all things that mattered to him, and they still matter to us."

For more information about supporting fellows, please contact **Andrew Christopherson** at **andrew.christopherson@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-3080**. For more information about supporting scholarships please contact **Larry Kuhn** at **larry-kuhn@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-1717**.



Resilience and Research: The Edwards Family's Gift to Parkinson's Science

When Sandra Edwards of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's disease in her late 30s, it marked the beginning of a decades-long journey that has inspired a powerful legacy: a gift to support neurodegenerative disease research at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Sandra Edwards passed away in 2022 at the age of 79. Her husband, Robert, has made it his mission to continue her quest to slow, and perhaps even stop, the progression of the disease. The family turned to Parkinson's disease scientists at Northwestern, where their daughter, Laura Edwards '85, PhD, earned her bachelor's degree. The Edwards family has made generous gifts to support research by D. James Surmeier, PhD, Tanya Simuni, MD, Paulina Gonzalez-Latapi, MD, and David Gate, PhD.

Sandra Edwards

"As [Sandra] had training as a microbiologist, she had a keen interest in trying to learn all she could about the disease to see if there was some secret she could help unlock," Robert Edwards said of his late wife. "I've determined, as has Dr. Surmeier and many of his colleagues, that solving the mystery lies in understanding Parkinson's disease in its earliest stages."

Parkinson's is the second-most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's disease, according to the Parkinson's Foundation. Nearly 90,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with the disease each year.

Adding to the Edwards' sense of urgency, federal funding freezes have threatened to upend vital research and clinical trials that are advancing scientists' understanding of the disease.

"When the news came that many government grants were being suspended, I became immediately concerned that the type of work Dr. Surmeier is engaged in would result in a great loss if interrupted, as continuity is a key aspect to much of what he is doing," Robert Edwards said. As a direct result, he increased his support for Dr. Surmeier's work.

Dr. Surmeier, chair of the Department of Neuroscience and the Nathan Smith Davis Professor of Neuroscience, investigates why certain brain cells — dopaminergic neurons in the substantia nigra — are especially vulnerable in Parkinson's disease. Two main theories exist: one blames energy stress and mitochondrial failure, while the other points to toxic buildup of misfolded proteins like alpha-synuclein.

His lab's research suggests these two problems are linked. The team has found that calcium entering neurons — brain cells — through Cav1 channels not only stresses mitochondria, which generate energy for the cells, but also boosts the uptake of proteins from outside the cells, potentially including harmful alpha-synuclein. They also discovered that certain molecules on the cell surface, like heparan sulfate, may enhance this uptake.

Dr. Surmeier's research aims to tackle what occurs during the prodromal, or pre-diagnosis, phase. Typically, by the time of diagnosis, about 75 percent of the essential dopamine-producing cells have already died.

"If we want to solve the Parkinson's disease puzzle, we need to do it before the horse has left the barn — which means before the time of diagnosis, before movement problems occur," Robert Edwards said.

The Edwards family also supports other Parkinson's disease-related research at Northwestern. Dr. Simuni, director of the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center, and Dr. Gonzalez-Latapi, an assistant professor in the Ken and Ruth Davee Department of Neurology, are developing a staging protocol for Parkinson's disease based on recently discovered biomarkers. This protocol will facilitate selection of participants for clinical trials and later guide the use of precision therapies.

A LANDMARK STUDY

Paulina Gonzalez-Latapi, MD, is advancing Parkinson's disease research thanks to philanthropic support from the Edwards family. Her projects use data from the Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI), a landmark, international effort to identify biomarkers for the progression of Parkinson's disease for use in clinical trials for novel therapies. Northwestern is one of 50 international sites participating in the study.

Dr. Gonzalez-Latapi's first project focuses on individuals with early-stage, sporadic Parkinson's disease who demonstrate hallmark alpha-synuclein pathology. Hers is the first long-term study tracking biomarker changes in this group, aiming to define how the disease progresses biologically. The findings are directly relevant to developing targeted therapies and have already been presented at a major scientific conference.

Her lab's second project investigates people who carry a mutation in the GBA gene — the most common genetic risk factor for Parkinson's — but who have not yet developed symptoms. Since most GBA carriers never manifest the disease, the goal is to identify biomarkers that can predict who is at highest risk of progression. Together, Dr. Gonzalez-Latapi's studies aim to improve early detection and enable more precise, personalized approaches to treating and preventing Parkinson's disease.

Learn more at ppmi-info.org

A third effort funded by the family is directed to Dr. Gate's research via a grant made through the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. Dr. Gate's research investigates the involvement of the immune system in Parkinson's disease, with a focus on the brain's hypothalamus.

Sandra's Resolve

Sandra Edwards's diagnosis came after years of experiencing subtle but troubling symptoms — diminished handwriting and a loss of taste and smell. After inconclusive consultations with local doctors, a visit to her sister in New Hampshire led to a diagnosis from a Dartmouth researcher: early-onset Parkinson's disease.

About 10 to 20 percent of people with Parkinson's disease experience symptoms before age 50, according to the Michael J. Fox Foundation. This form of the illness progresses slowly, often spanning decades, and Sandra lived with it for many years. Despite the challenges, she remained active, engaged, and optimistic, never losing her characteristic warmth and sunny disposition. Her resilience in the face of Parkinson's, as well as earlier battles with polio and cancer, became a defining part of her legacy.

Sandra earned a degree in zoology as the top graduate in her class, later completing a master's in microbiology while raising her daughter. She was a passionate advocate for women's rights, a leader in environmental causes, and a meticulous family historian who traced her roots across continents. Even as Parkinson's gradually slowed her body, her spirit remained undimmed — her smile, her warmth, and her curiosity never fading.

As Sandra's condition progressed, Robert became her devoted caregiver, picking up family and household responsibilities. Meanwhile, their daughter, Laura, went on to become a professor at Princeton University.

Now, the family, led by Robert and his sister-in-law, Vicki Mayfield, is answering the call to support scientific progress — at the same time preserving Sandra's memory and honoring her long battle with Parkinson's.

"This is an exciting time for Parkinson's disease research, and the Edwards family is ensuring that we can maintain momentum in our search for a cure for this devastating disease," Dr. Surmeier said.

For more information about Parkinson's disease research, please contact **Jordan Sund** at **jordan.sund@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-2706**.

PURPOSEFUL GIVING:

Dr. Myint's Scholarship Legacy for Future Doctors

Dr. Myint in Bhutan

Dr. Myint in 1953

> *"I hope to help future doctors walk their paths with purpose, as I did. Because when you support medical students, you are investing in the healing of the world."*
>
> **— Dr. Myint**

In tribute to a life defined by service, the Myint family established the Simon K. Myint, MD Scholarship at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in April 2025.

The generous gift honors the legacy of 97-year-old Simon Myint, MD, a thoracic and general surgeon, a 1953 graduate of Feinberg, and a first-generation immigrant whose journey from Burma to the U.S. embodies the transformative power of education and opportunity.

"I hope to help future doctors walk their paths with purpose, as I did," Dr. Myint said of the scholarship. "Because when you support medical students, you are investing in the healing of the world."

Born in Thongwa, Burma (now Myanmar), Dr. Myint survived the devastation of World War II in Japanese-occupied Burma. He remained focused on his studies and held tight to his dream of becoming a doctor. He eventually earned a coveted place at Northwestern's medical school, a rare achievement for an international student in the postwar era.

During the war, Dr. Myint and his family lived in near isolation for four years. Schools and businesses were shuttered, foreign aid disappeared, and survival became a daily struggle. In his hometown, there was only one doctor, and diseases like malaria, typhoid, and cholera were rampant. Medical supplies were scarce, limited to basic remedies such as aspirin, quinine, and castor oil.

Dr. Myint contracted malaria as a child, an experience that left a lasting impression. He vividly recalled the chills, rigor, and weakness that overtook his body. That moment shaped his desire to help the sick — not just through a career in medicine, but also through a lifelong commitment to healing.

"I began to wonder: What could I do to help others who suffer from illness?" he recalled.

After graduating from high school in 1946, Dr. Myint began planning his next steps. An excellent student and fluent in English, he set his sights on a medical education. Rangoon University — once one of Southeast Asia's finest — had been devastated by war and foreign occupation. He had little money and few resources, but he held fast to his ambition.

As a teenager, Dr. Myint came across a Phoenix Junior College yearbook at his brother's school, the Methodist Missionary School in Rangoon. He wrote a letter to the school's dean, Harry B. Wyman, asking for admission. Weeks passed with no reply, and Dr. Myint left for Lucknow Christian College in India. Then, to his surprise, a telegram arrived: he had been accepted to Phoenix Junior College in the United States. Thanks to help from friends, he secured passage to Savannah, Georgia, on a freighter embarking from Calcutta (now Kolkata). He borrowed $200 for the journey — a debt later repaid by his father.

Forty-eight days later, Dr. Myint set foot on U.S. soil for the first time and trekked across the country to Arizona. Dressed in secondhand U.S. Army khakis and combat boots, he knocked on Wyman's door in Phoenix late one night. "I'm the student from Burma," he said, to which Wyman replied, smiling, "Come in. We've been expecting you."

Dr. Myint became involved with Phoenix's Central Methodist Church, where the Women's Group supported his education for seven years — passing around the offering plate at meetings to raise funds for his tuition. Dr. Myint took courses at Phoenix Junior College and at the University of Arizona, surpassing the requirements for graduation.

In 1949, his dreams of becoming a doctor crystallized in the form of acceptance into Northwestern's medical school. The Women's Group from Phoenix continued to support his education in Chicago, instilling within him a deep sense of gratitude and desire to pay their generosity forward.

"That act of faith — accepting a young man from Burma with an unusual background and little means — changed my life forever," he said.

Dr. Myint graduated from the medical school in 1953 and completed his surgical residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In 1959, he returned briefly to Burma, where he became the first surgeon in the country to perform congenital cardiac surgery. He later settled in Los Angeles in 1964, where he practiced surgery for decades, serving both in private practice and in Los Angeles County hospitals, juvenile detention camps, and underserved communities. During the Gulf War, he served as a surgeon in the U.S. Army Reserve.

Even after retiring in 2009, Dr. Myint continued his lifelong mission of service. He joined medical missions to Nepal, Ecuador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, and the Thai-Burma border. In January 2020, mid-flight and en route home to Los Angeles from his final mission to Nepal, he was asked to evaluate a passenger whom he later speculated may have been one of the first cases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Myint's daughter and grandson both attended Northwestern. His daughter, Mary, earned a Master of Business Administration from Kellogg School of Management in 2025. His grandson, Arthur Pollard, received a Bachelor of Arts from Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences in 2015.

Mary Myint shared that future Myint Scholars will carry forward her father's legacy, and that supporting scholarships helps sustain a global cycle of education, healing, and impact.

"All he wanted to do every day was to wake up a doctor and go to sleep a doctor," she said. "I hope that sharing my father's life of service and purpose will move others to extend care to those in need and contribute to a healthier, more compassionate world."

Scholarships are a top priority for Feinberg, whose scholarship endowment stands at $267 million. The school aims to one day provide free tuition to all students, which will require nearly tripling the current endowment.

The need is especially acute as legislation going into effect in July 2026 caps federal medical student loans at $200,000. On average, medical school debt from private medical schools is much higher.

"I became a doctor because of what I lacked as a child and because of what others gave me," Dr. Myint said. "Purpose, opportunity, and the unwavering support of people who believed in me — these were the pillars of my journey."

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

Snorf, Hicks Children Unite to Honor Parents' Lifelong Commitment to Service

Extended members of Dr. Snorf's family at the 2016 investiture ceremony of Michael A. Terry, MD, as the Dr. Charles and Leslie Snorf Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Northwestern. *Back row:* Lowell Snorf III, nephew; Dick Livermore, son-in-law; Cynthia Livermore, daughter; Peggy Snorf, niece; Chris Wilson, niece-in-law; Susan Snorf Lansbury, daughter; Jim Lansbury, son-in-law; Phoebe Foltz Lenhard, niece; John Lenhard, nephew-in-law; Erica Van Baalen, stepdaughter-in-law; David Hicks, stepson; Kevin Hicks, stepson. *Front row:* Bob Zengeler; Terry Foltz Zengeler, niece; Charlie Snorf; Leslie Snorf.

Through an endowed scholarship and professorship at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, the family of a beloved orthopaedic surgeon is empowering future physicians and faculty leaders to advance education, research, and healthcare for all.

Charles "Charlie" Snorf, '58 MD, '63 GME, a community fixture in Carmel, California, and Feinberg alumnus, passed away at the age of 90 in 2020, leaving his children a donor-advised fund he established with his second wife, Leslie, who passed two years later. Leslie Snorf herself was a force for philanthropic good and volunteer service, especially post-retirement, leaving her two sons as eager to honor her memory as their stepfather's.

Dr. Snorf, as his children and stepchildren attested, was more than a skilled physician. He was hands-on, curious, and artistic, and he found joy in connecting with others and using his talents to heal. Yet his legacy extends far beyond the operating room. Through the family's enduring support of the Snorf Medical Student Scholarship and the Dr. Charles and Leslie Snorf Professorship in Orthopaedic Surgery, his impact continues to shape the future of medicine.

Dr. Snorf was known for his love for his medical alma mater. His steadfast commitment to provide scholarship support included the MD Class of 1958 Scholarship, which has become one of the largest scholarship endowments providing support for medical students at Northwestern.

"Dad believed in the importance of helping others and knew how important the medical community was to improving people's lives," Susan Snorf Lansbury, Dr. Snorf's eldest daughter said. "The donor-advised fund was a way for Dad and Leslie to give into the future, and to enable their children to have the privilege of helping others reach their goals and live better lives."

Cynthia Snorf Livermore, Dr. Snorf's middle daughter, shared that her father's passion for scholarship support stemmed from witnessing classmates leave medical school due to financial hardship.

"He talked about people who had to drop out because they just couldn't afford it," she said, explaining that that memory stayed with him, fueling his desire to ensure that no student would be forced to abandon their dreams.

At Feinberg, scholarships are a top fundraising priority and are a competitive necessity for attracting the best and brightest students. Unbeknownst to Dr. Snorf and Leslie when they established the scholarship in 1997, average private school medical school debt would surpass $227,000 in 2025, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. Feinberg's average debt at graduation is about $192,000.

Dr. Snorf and Leslie's marriage in 1987 united Dr. Snorf's daughters, Susan, Cynthia, and Carolyn, and Leslie's sons, Kevin and David Hicks. Today, the five share the bond of philanthropy with their parents, who dedicated their lives to helping others and inspired transformative gifts benefiting the future of medicine. The siblings continue to support the Snorf Scholarship and other priorities at Northwestern, carrying on their parents' reputation for giving back.

Lives of Service

Dr. Snorf and Leslie spent more than a decade together before tying the knot, then spent more than 30 years together, leading busy and fulfilling post-retirement lives, their children said.

Charlie and Leslie Snorf

The couple shared a deep bond and mutual respect, and their remaining decades were characterized by travel, philanthropy, and volunteer service, including month-long stints abroad in Bhutan, Saigon, and St. Lucia. Dr. Snorf provided orthopaedic care to populations in need, while Leslie taught English and supported hospital administration, Cynthia Livermore said.

During their busy retirement years, Dr. Snorf and Leslie established a donor-advised fund in Monterey County. After their passing, Cynthia, her two sisters, and her two stepbrothers took up the mantle, continuing to support causes close to their parents' hearts — including initiatives at Feinberg and in their parents' community in Monterey, California.

(continued on next page)

"Dad believed in the importance of helping others and knew how important the medical community was to improving people's lives,"

— Susan Snorf Lansbury

Kevin Hicks described his stepfather as an intellectually engaged and compassionate orthopaedic surgeon who practiced for five decades on California's Central Coast. He was a beloved community figure, often recognized by patients and their families for his care.

"You'd go out to dinner or lunch, or you'd go golf with him, and people would just be coming up to thank him for how he had taken care of either them or their kids or their grandkids," Kevin Hicks said.

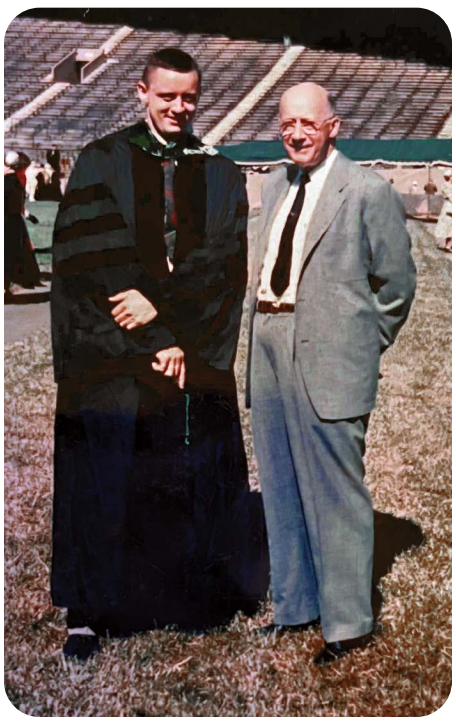
He was known for his kindness toward others — frequently visiting ill friends and offering support in what Kevin described as his personal "ministry." He was also an avid reader, annotator, and conversationalist, always looking to learn from others, Kevin said.

Cynthia, too, recalled her father's compassion. "He loved meeting people and finding out about them," she said. "He could talk to anybody — and wanted to."

Leslie Snorf was one of the first women stockbrokers on the Monterey Peninsula in California and retired there with Dr. Snorf soon after they married. She became a sought-after board member and community leader, and her philanthropic work included leadership roles with the Community Hospital Foundation, Monterey Rape Crisis Center, Harrison Memorial Library, and Big Sur Land Trust. Had she been born in a later generation, Kevin Hicks said, she might have been a "captain of industry."

David Hicks said his mother was a "powerful" presence and maintained a sharp sense of purpose and intention, even after her diagnosis with leptomeningeal cancer. "There was never a thought of passing away — that just wasn't part of the equation. Her focus was on living," David said.

Leslie Snorf's influence extended to her hospice care, where she had previously served on the board and helped develop Central Coast Hospice in Carmel. Her legacy came full circle as she received care from the very organization she helped build, David said. She passed away in 2022 at the age of 80.



Dr. Snorf and his father, Lowell, at his medical school graduation in 1958

Inspired by Leslie's final advocacy for a home-based palliative care program, the five siblings made a significant donation to seed the initiative at Montage Health in Monterey. This experience reinforced their philanthropic mission and helped catalyze their continued support for Northwestern, where Dr. Snorf earned his medical degree and later completed his residency.

Scholarship and Stewardship

Charlie Snorf, MD, established the Snorf Family Scholarship nearly 30 years ago to honor his father, Lowell D. Snorf, MD, who taught internal medicine at Northwestern. Now, all five children continue to deepen their connection with Northwestern in memory of Charlie Snorf.

In May, Kevin and David Hicks attended Feinberg's annual Commitment to Scholarships Luncheon, where they had the opportunity to meet with Snorf Scholars and hear from many other medical scholars hailing from all walks of life.

Kevin Hicks spoke warmly of the scholars' energy, gratitude, and potential, noting how meaningful it is to witness the ripple effects of their support. David remarked that Charlie and his mother would be touched to meet the talented beneficiaries of the Snorf Scholarship. "I think they could see people with intention because they lived with intention," David Hicks said of his mother and stepfather.

Khizar Nandoliya

Snorf Scholar Khizar Nandoliya '21 of Chicago, a third-year medical student and first-generation college student, said he views his medical school career as the culmination of a lifelong interest in neurology and a newer fascination with biomedical engineering he picked up while a double major in biology and chemistry at Northwestern. Between his second and third year of medical school, Nandoliya worked under John Rogers, PhD, and Craig Horbinski, MD, PhD, to develop localized drug delivery devices for high-grade meningiomas.

A Snorf Scholar since his first year at Feinberg, Nandoliya said his academic experience has been greatly enhanced by the tuition support provided by the scholarship.

"Without the financial freedom this scholarship provides, I would not be able to dream of pursuing a seven-year neurosurgery residency," he said.

For Carolyn Snorf Akcan, Dr. Snorf's youngest daughter, giving to scholarships is about providing that financial flexibility for aspiring doctors.

"The sheer cost of medical school is so steep," she said. "Giving to scholarships is a wonderful way to honor my father's legacy and to help people graduate without huge loans hanging over their heads."

The family also supports Feinberg faculty through an endowed professorship, a position reserved for the medical school's most distinguished and productive physicians and scientists. Endowed professorships help the school attract and recruit world-class investigators to Northwestern.

In 2016, the family established the Dr. Charles and Leslie Snorf Professorship of Orthopaedic Surgery to benefit a distinguished faculty member in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. The professorship is held by Michael A. Terry, MD.

Dr. Terry

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

Alumni Keep Northwestern's Vascular Surgery Program Thriving

Dr. Eskandari and Dr. McNamara

For Marian McNamara, MD, '77 GME, of Kirkland, Washington, returning to Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine for the 50th anniversary of its vascular surgery training program was a full-circle moment.

"I was the first woman in the fellowship program," she said, "and I thought, this was where I was meant to be."

Almost five decades earlier, Dr. McNamara joined the second-ever cohort of vascular surgery fellows at Northwestern at a time when the specialty itself was still emerging. Under the mentorship of pioneering surgeons John J. Bergan, MD, '59 GME, who was founder of the Division of Vascular Surgery, and James S. T. "Jimmy" Yao, MD, PhD, who served as chief of the division for 10 years and then chair of the Department of Surgery from 1998–2001, she was immersed in a program that emphasized not just technical skill, but also thoughtful planning, documentation, and presentation.

In December 2024, Dr. McNamara and other vascular surgery alumni convened at the medical school from as far away as Australia to celebrate the program's 50th anniversary in conjunction with the Annual Northwestern Vascular Symposium. At the event, she delivered remarks, sharing memories from her time as a fellow.

On her first day, she recalled, Dr. Bergan told her, "'I don't think that I need to teach you anything technical in surgery — I think you already know that, or you wouldn't be here.'" Instead, "he was focused on critical thinking skills in the operating room."

Dr. McNamara's cohort learned how to think, plan, and adapt in the operating room. That philosophy, developed by Drs. Bergan and Yao, shaped both her career and the Northwestern program itself for decades to come.

"We've gone from one to 12 trainees a year," said Mark K. Eskandari, MD, '01 GME, system chief and fellowship program director of the Division of Vascular Surgery and the James S. T. Yao Professor of Vascular Surgery. "That growth reflects the strength of our faculty, our curriculum, and the enduring support of our alumni."

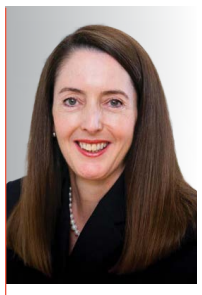
In addition to other pivotal experiences, Dr. McNamara credited Drs. Bergan and Yao's mentorship and eagerness to introduce her to key figures in the field with setting her up for success.

"The fellowship was the most important part of my surgical career, no question about it," she said.

At the dinner, more than 45 past fellows gathered to celebrate the legacy of the program, expressing gratitude for its familial atmosphere and the exceptional mentorship provided by its faculty.

Among them was Melina R. Kibbe, MD, '03 GME, president of the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston) and editor-in-chief of *JAMA Surgery*. She paid tribute to the late Dr. Yao, acknowledging his lasting impact on her career and character. She also recognized William Pearce, MD, '82 GME, who served as division chief from 1998–2010, for the invaluable knowledge he shared with her and many other trainees.

"From the bottom of my heart, I thank them both," she said of Drs. Pearce and Yao.



Dr. Kibbe

Dr. Kibbe went on to reflect on the enduring relationships formed during the fellowship, emphasizing the strong sense of community that continues to unite alumni.

"I have definitely come to view those who trained at Northwestern as part of a family," Dr. Kibbe said. "No matter where we are around the globe or what stage of our career we are in, we are always there for one another."

50 Years of Impact

Alumni have been instrumental in shaping and sustaining the vascular surgery program's excellence, Dr. Eskandari said, and their dedication was evident at the 50th-anniversary event, attended by more than half of the program's 90 alumni.

Some visited from prestigious posts around the world, while many other alumni already were local, having returned to Chicago to practice at institutions like Loyola University Medical Center, the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois, Endeavor Health, and Advocate Health. Still others, like Dr. Eskandari, had returned to Feinberg after graduation to teach and mentor.

Philanthropy plays a vital role in the program's success. From funding simulation technologies, research initiatives, and educational events, generous alumni also ensure that current trainees have access to top-tier resources. One of the most visible examples is the annual vascular symposium, which invites 50 speakers from across the globe for a two-and-a-half-day exchange of ideas and mentorship attended by upwards of 150 guests.

"It's a chance for trainees to learn from leading experts in the field and for alumni to reconnect with one another and inspire the next generation," Dr. Eskandari explained.

The symposium gives vascular surgery alumni a reliable touchpoint for keeping engaged with Northwestern. After completing her fellowship in 1977, Dr. McNamara went on to work in both academic and private practice settings. She said she has attended the symposium many times over the years for the opportunity to learn from leaders in the field, connect with mentors, and meet current and past trainees.

Vascular surgery alumni at the 50th anniversary celebration

Now retired, Dr. McNamara is focused on legacy building. Her philanthropy supports vascular surgery research at Northwestern, a program she trusts deeply.

"I donate to programs with a strong track record," she said. "And, certainly, vascular surgery at Northwestern has an extremely strong track record, both in clinical medicine and in research."

Honoring Trailblazers

Dr. Pearce, an alumnus himself, also attended the 50th-anniversary celebration. While he retired in 2018, the William H. Pearce, MD, Vascular Surgery Student Research Award continues to honor his legacy of teaching, research, and patient care.

Dr. Yao

Dr. Yao's legacy was especially felt by alumni who had trained under him. His widow, Louise Yao, attended the event, held just two years after his passing. At Northwestern, Dr. Yao's influence lives on through an endowed professorship and a research leadership fund that supports trainee-led clinical research.

Dr. Bergan, who initially recruited Dr. Yao to Northwestern, also drew numerous tributes from program alumni. His impact also lives on at the medical school through an annual endowed lectureship supported by alumni and his family. He passed away in 2014.

As the program enters its next chapter, its foundation remains rock solid, built upon decades of devoted leadership, innovation, and alumni who never really leave.

"It's unique to see this level of sustained engagement," Dr. Eskandari said. "But it's the connection, both personal and professional, between the trainees and the faculty here at Northwestern that keeps them coming back."

For Dr. McNamara, the 50th anniversary was more than a milestone — it was an affirmation of a lifelong bond.

"Program leaders followed our careers, mentored us, and stayed connected," she said.

For more information about supporting the Division of Vascular Surgery, please contact **David McCreery** at **david.mccreery@northwestern.edu** or **312-503-6099**.

Our Community in Action

More than 480 alumni and guests returned to Northwestern's medical school campus on May 2–3 to reconnect with former classmates, reminisce about their medical school experiences, and learn about the medical school's latest developments and achievements at **Alumni Weekend 2025**. Alumni Weekend 2026 will be held May 1–2, 2026.

Members of The Founders Society, a giving society made up of alumni, faculty, staff, and friends, gathered May 3 at the Arts Club of Chicago for an evening reception celebrating their contributions

Marshall Sparberg '57, '60 MD, a Northwestern alum and longtime Chicago-based gastroenterologist, and Helena Kim, the inaugural Eve Gaymont Sparberg Scholar, at the annual Commitment to Scholarships luncheon at The Peninsula Chicago Hotel on May 3

Les Turner ALS Foundation staff and guests of the Hope Through Caring Gala

Richard B. Silverman, PhD, and his spouse, Barbara Silverman, Hande Ozdinler, PhD, and her spouse, Derya Ozyurt, PhD

Friends and supporters of the Les Turner ALS Foundation gathered April 5 for the **37th Annual Hope Through Caring Gala**, raising $620,000 to support research and care for people living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS.

More than 380 philanthropists, physicians, and patients attended the **17th Annual Minds Matter benefit** on May 9, raising more than $800,000 to support brain tumor 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 at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

MBTI Co-Director James P. Chandler, MD, '96 GME, presented the inaugural Transformational Impact Award to Jean Malnati-Miller, who has been a staunch advocate for cancer research and care since her husband, Lou Malnati, was treated for melanoma at Northwestern in the 1970s.

Melanie Fielder Andrews (right) of Naperville, Illinois, was treated at MBTI for diffuse astrocytoma. "We came from a place where there were no options and no hope to so many options and so much hope," she said in remarks at the benefit.

On May 1, stakeholders for the new **Stephen M. Stahl Center for Psychiatric Neuroscience** in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine gathered for a ribbon cutting. Stephen M. Stahl '73, '75 MD, PhD, and his wife, Shakila, attended the ceremony at the center's headquarters at Searle Medical Research Building, 320 E. Superior St. in Chicago.

Shakila Stahl, Dr. Stahl, and center Director Sachin Patel, MD, PhD, chair of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and the Lizzie Gilman Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences

A standing-room only crowd of more than 1,000 supporters and friends of The H Foundation came together July 26 at the **23rd Annual Goombay Bash** held at the Aon Grand Ballroom at Navy Pier. The H Foundation's Caribbean-themed event raised a Goombay record of more than $1.2 million to support basic science cancer research at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University.

John Rot, president of the H Foundation, Leonidas C. Platanias, MD, PhD, director of Lurie Cancer Center, Cortney Hausser, executive director of the H Foundation, and Dan Chopp, vice president of the H Foundation

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. Lisa Beutler

Investigating the Gut, Weight, and Energy Relationship

Lisa R. Beutler, MD, PhD, assistant professor of Medicine in the Division of Endocrinology, Metabolism, and Molecular Medicine, explores the intricate communication between the gut and the brain in regulating body weight and energy balance. A leading physician-scientist in this field, Dr. Beutler investigates how disruptions in this gut-brain axis contribute to metabolic diseases such as obesity. Her lab employs advanced techniques—including optogenetics, chemogenetics, behavioral analysis, and calcium imaging in genetically modified mice—to dissect the neural circuits and molecular pathways involved. This work aims to uncover novel therapeutic targets for treating disorders of energy homeostasis and metabolic dysfunction.

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

Dr. Adam Lin

Bringing Nanotechnologies to Cancer Clinics

Adam Y. Lin, MD, PhD, assistant professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematology and Oncology, is at the forefront of integrating advanced technologies into personalized cancer care. Through his leadership of his Nanotechnology and Biomaterials Lab for Blood Cancer, Dr. Lin is pioneering the translation of nanotechnologies into clinical applications that promise to transform the treatment landscape for hematologic malignancies. His research focuses on tailoring innovative nanotherapies to enhance CAR T-cell treatments, lymphoma interventions, and stem cell transplantation to the unique needs of individual patients. By refining translatable technologies to address clinical challenges that his patients encounter, Dr. Lin is driving forward a new era of personalized medicine in blood cancer care, offering hope for more effective and targeted treatment strategies.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Terri Dillon** at **312-503-4837** or **terri-dillon@northwestern.edu**.

Dr. Hao Li

Unlocking the Neuroscience of Survival Behaviors

Hao Li, PhD, assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and of Neuroscience, is focused on uncovering the neural mechanisms that govern motivated behaviors—those related to basic survival needs or psychological desires—and emotional regulation. The Li Lab investigates how slow-acting chemical messengers called neuropeptides modulate emotional states over time, particularly in the context of stress, addiction, and mental health disorders. One major area of his research explores how disruptions in valence processing, which is the brain's ability to evaluate experiences as positive or negative, contribute to psychiatric conditions. Another key focus is understanding individual differences in addiction vulnerability, especially how aversive responses to substances like nicotine or alcohol can either protect against or contribute to substance use disorders. By identifying the molecular and circuit-level signatures of these processes, Dr. Li aims to inform the development of more effective, personalized treatments for mental health challenges.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **Eric Fragoules** at **312-503-4565** or **eric.fragoules@northwestern.edu**.

Dr. Alexandra Psihogios

Designing Support Tools for Young Patients with Cancer

Alexandra M. Psihogios, PhD, assistant professor of Medical Social Sciences, is leading transformative research to improve cancer outcomes for adolescents and young adults (AYAs). Her work addresses a critical challenge: helping young patients adhere to complex oral chemotherapy regimens, especially for acute lymphoblastic leukemia, where missed doses can significantly increase relapse risk. With a strong focus on health equity, Dr. Psihogios designs digital health tools that are not only evidence-based but also deeply informed by the lived experiences of patients and families. From mobile apps that deliver real-time, personalized support to cancer survivors using social media for peer-to-peer engagement, her research is reshaping how we support young people through cancer treatment. Her work is advancing more equitable, accessible, and effective care for adolescents and young adults who are managing cancer and survivorship.

For more information on supporting the efforts above, contact **David McCreery** at **312-503-6099** or **david.mccreery@northwestern.edu**.

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THE PHILANTHROPIST

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Inside This Issue

Cover photo: Manasa Pagadala '25 MD (right) and her sister and hood presenter, Meghana Pagadala, MD, PhD, (left) celebrate MD graduation outside the Aon Grand Ballroom on Navy Pier on May 19.