

July 2023

Giving Matters



Grateful parents happy to give back



Alumni return to campus for Reunion 2023

A newsletter for supporters of UMass Chan Medical School

Katie Couric to grads: 'You are my heroes'

Celebrating the power of medicine, nursing and science as chosen professions at UMass Chan's 50th Commencement

On June 4, degrees were awarded to almost 300 students by the T.H. Chan School of Medicine, the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing and the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at UMass Chan Medical School's 50th Commencement. Graduates are leaving an institution that has grown tremendously since it awarded degrees to just 16 medical students at the inaugural commencement in 1974.

COVID-19 emerged just months after many graduates arrived at the Medical School; academic journeys changed course unexpectedly, as safety measures were implemented and students joined UMass Chan's pandemic response, such as staffing vaccination sites.

"Today, all of you are bound by an unmistakable realization that you have been changed by your time at this medical school and by once unimaginable challenges," said Chancellor Michael F. Collins, who presided over the ceremony. "Through simple acts of kindness, you demonstrate your humanity and

exemplify what is best about the healing professions. Carry forth into your careers the hard-earned wisdom of recent times."

Award-winning journalist Katie Couric delivered the day's keynote address. Couric, former host of NBC's *Today* show and co-founder of cancer research charity Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C) was awarded an honorary degree.

Couric shared her personal story of overcoming the tragic losses of her husband to colon cancer and her sister to pancreatic cancer, as well as her own battle with breast cancer. She encouraged graduates to challenge an inequitable health care system and to maintain a human connection with their patients, especially as technology in medicine continues to evolve, and to be proud of UMass Chan and their chosen professions.

"You are my heroes," said Couric. "You save lives. Your work changes lives. You are there for others in times of great joy and times of tremendous sadness.

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Commencement

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... Take pride in the fact that you are a graduate of this fine institution. Take pride that you have chosen a profession that isn't a career, but a calling."

Honorary degrees were also awarded to Tania Issa Semaan, chair of Blu Stone Management Ltd, a Dubai-based investment firm, and co-founder and director of The Semaan Foundation; and Luke O'Neill, PhD, chair and professor of biochemistry at Trinity College Dublin.

Class speakers included Sean Boyden for the T.H. Chan School of Medicine, Kathleen Morrill for the Morningside Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Amanda Hazeltine for the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing.

"Through the tragedies and triumphs we experience, we can never lose sight of the human connections that can foster compassion for each other and resiliency in the face of adversity," said Hazeltine.

"We did not stop because we hit walls in our research, we started and kept thinking. ... May your relentless pursuit of the truth in all its forms be recognized and appreciated fully today," said Morrill.

"We will go forth from this place taking with us the knowledge, and friendships, and beautiful memories that were imparted to us here and go make a difference in people's lives. We will change the world," said Boyden. ●



Smiles abound as the UMass Chan Class of 2023 revels in the joy and pomp of commencement.

For Vanderweils, son's excellent medical education brings gratitude and drive to give back

Gary Vanderweil is mostly retired from his career at Vanderweil Engineers, but he still commutes regularly into the company's Boston office from Cohasset, where he and his wife Anne live. As he spoke to us via Zoom about his and Anne's enthusiastic support of UMass Chan Medical School, the evolving skyline of the Seaport District sparkled behind his desk; a fitting backdrop for an engineer who designs buildings around the world. Two of Anne and Gary's children followed in Gary's footsteps, joining Vanderweil, but son Stefan Vanderweil, MD'12 R'16, chose a different path that took flight at UMass Chan.

Gary recalls that Stefan first became interested in medicine in high school when he worked as a research assistant for a molecular biologist at a local lab. Research experiences at other labs soon followed, including the Whitehead Institute and the bio labs at Harvard University, where Stefan earned a bachelor's degree in biochemical sciences in 2005, followed by a post-grad position as a lab technician in California. As Gary explained, Stefan ultimately realized that he "preferred the bedside to the bench," choosing to pursue a medical degree.

While selecting a medical school, UMass Chan stood out, thanks largely to a "strong reputation, affordability and focus on Massachusetts," said Gary. Around this time, UMass Chan's prominence as a leading academic health sciences center was growing swiftly. UMass Chan professor and molecular biologist Craig Mello, PhD, was

co-recipient of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for the discovery of RNA interference, and a few years later ground would break on the Albert Sherman Center, reflecting a strategic investment in cutting-edge biomedical research. At the same time, the Medical School stayed true to its core mission of training physicians on behalf of the commonwealth.



“It is scholarships like this that enable me to focus on learning and bettering myself as a future physician with less financial worry.”

Current recipient
Natasha Bitar

Anne and Gary credit UMass Chan with providing Stefan an outstanding medical education that included exposure to many aspects of clinical medicine, hands-on rotations at several hospitals and the support of dedicated faculty

who seemed to take a genuine, personal interest in training and mentoring medical students. Impressed by the tremendous value offered by UMass Chan, Anne and Gary felt strongly compelled to give back to the Medical School, where Stefan also completed his dermatology residency.

Their generous, sustained giving for the past 15 years includes the naming of two conference rooms at the Albert Sherman Center and the establishment of an endowed scholarship fund for medical students.

Current recipient Natasha Bitar, a third-year student in the T.H. Chan School of Medicine, is grateful for the support.

"It is scholarships like this that enable me to focus on learning and bettering myself as a future physician with less financial worry," she said.

Anne and Gary also give generously in unrestricted support, recognizing how valuable this flexible funding is to the Medical School.

Stefan currently practices dermatology in California, where he lives with his wife and three children. Back east, Anne and Gary enjoy outdoor activities such as golf and cross-country skiing, and the couple is also dedicated to a range of philanthropic interests alongside the Medical School. Gary summed up his and Anne's experience as UMass Chan parents and now donors:

"We've been enthusiastic boosters of UMass Chan since our son Stefan was a student. Both the faculty and student body impressed us—the faculty were a group of dedicated medical professionals on a mission to transfer knowledge, and the student body was bright, caring and energetic. We feel the school provided superior value to its students and to Massachusetts in general, given the extent to which students took up practice in the state. We are happy to support the school." ●



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CANCER
WALK
25TH YEAR**

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of your commitment to cancer research.

Registration is now open!

Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023 | Polar Park, Worcester

To register, visit p2p.onecause.com/umasscancerwalk

For more information about the UMass Cancer Walk, visit umasscancerwalk.org

If you are creating a team, your exclusive promo code for free registration is TEAMCAP (redeem at checkout screen). Offer good until July 14.

Register today with an early bird rate of only \$5!



The Cellucci family hosted a dinner for the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund Boston Marathon team at Filippo Ristorante in Boston's North End. Standing before the mural, which features the likeness of Gov. Cellucci, are, from left, marathon runners Paul McNeil, Ashley Craig, and Lacey Foley, along with Gov. Cellucci's daughters Anne Adams and Kate Cellucci and their families.

ALS research at UMass Chan gets a big boost thanks to Boston Marathon runners

Everyone who runs the Boston Marathon has a story. Entering, training for and completing the famously challenging race is undoubtedly a journey filled with twists, turns, painful lows and exhilarating highs. For the event's thousands of charity runners, personal stories are also deeply tied to positive change. These marathoners actively solicit donations on behalf of institutions and nonprofit organizations, bringing critical resources to work that represents our highest ideals as a society, such as youth development, education, and biomedical research.

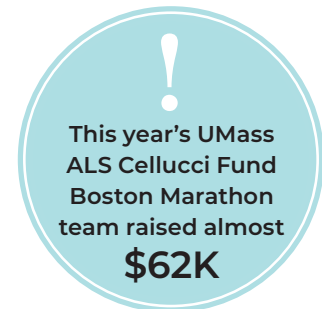
Following recent tradition, multiple runners hit the 26.2 mile racecourse on April 17 to support ALS research at UMass Chan Medical School, specifically the pioneering lab of Robert H. Brown Jr., DPhil, MD, the *Donna M. and Robert J. Manning Chair in Neurosciences* and professor of neurology. Breakthrough advancements at UMass Chan are bringing hope to people and families affected by this devastating, fatal disease with no known cure.

Sisters **Ashley Craig** and **Lacey Foley** of East Bridgewater ran this year for the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund in memory of their grandmother, Linda Harrington, who died from ALS.

"Watching someone you love suffer in any capacity motivates you to want to do whatever you can to bring awareness, raise money, whatever that may be," said Foley. "I said jokingly that we should run the marathon, because to non-runners, the pain you would go through would kind of mirror the pain that she had to go through. That's when we really decided to do it."

Craig and Foley organized a gala in March as a centerpiece of their fundraising efforts, with a DJ and raffle prizes, including a hockey stick signed by Bruins player Patrice Bergeron, which the late Gov. Paul Cellucci's daughter donated.

The Cellucci Fund was launched under the leadership of the late Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci, who died from ALS in 2013. More than 50 individuals have been part of the Cellucci Fund marathon team through the John Hancock Marathon Non-Profit Program,



which provides bibs to select nonprofit organizations. These runners have raised more than \$720,000, including this year's total of almost \$62,000.

Meanwhile, brothers **Dean Kennedy** and **Zack Kennedy**, PhD'19, raised funds to honor their father, a veteran of 37 Boston Marathons who died from ALS in 2020, on #TeamJake/The Jake Kennedy ALS Fund Marathon Team, bringing in more than \$76,000.

Dr. Kennedy, one of Jake Kennedy and his wife, Sparky's, four children, was mentored at UMass Chan by Dr. Brown. Zack worked until recently in the lab overseen by Anastasia Khvorova, PhD, the *Remondi Family Chair in Biomedical Research* and professor of RNA therapeutics. He now is a scientist at biopharmaceutical company CANbridge.

Zack was a lab technician for Dr. Brown when Brown found the gene mutation that causes most cases of familial ALS, a mutation that has affected several members of the Kennedy family.

"When I started in 2011, there was not a lot of progress in terms of creating medicines. It has been really within the past five years, as gene editing and gene manipulating therapies have started to mature, that we are beginning to have treatments and they are very, very promising," said Zack. "We're trying to create the best way to target some of these gene mutations and create a better drug for clinical trials, so in the not-too-far future we can have meaningful treatments."

Before Jake Kennedy died, he vowed to raise \$1 million for ALS research, Zack said. He and his brother Dean, a football coach at the College of the Holy Cross, are committed to continuing their father's marathon streak and ultimately reaching his fundraising goal.

Other members of the 2023 UMass ALS Cellucci Fund Boston Marathon Team include:

Kirstyn Grant
Wallingford, Connecticut

Grant is a U.S. patient services lead at Amylyx Pharmaceuticals, which is dedicated to finding new treatments for neurodegenerative diseases such as ALS.

Michael McCorkle
Tequesta, Florida

McCorkle is the senior vice president of workplace strategy at Fiserv, a global leader in fintech and payments, which provided a corporate sponsorship of \$25,000. A seasoned marathoner, he made his Boston Marathon debut this year.

Paul McNeil, Worcester

McNeil is a friend of the extended Cellucci family. This was his seventh time running the Boston Marathon, which he also ran last year for the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund, raising almost \$13,000. ●

New regional campus at Lahey Hospital and Medical Center will help to transform medical education

UMass Chan Medical School is expanding its reach eastward thanks to a new partnership with Burlington's Lahey Hospital & Medical Center (Lahey), part of Beth Israel Lahey Health. With recent approval from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, UMass Chan-Lahey will welcome the first cohort of medical students in August 2024. The new partnership will advance health care research and medical education priorities critical to the long-term health needs of the commonwealth, which includes addressing the shortage of primary care and specialty care physicians.

"The Medical School's partnership with Lahey will offer future physicians the opportunity to explore their professional passions and train in a hospital system with talented, dedicated faculty," said Terence R. Flotte, MD, provost of UMass Chan and dean of the T.H. Chan School of Medicine.

Dean Flotte has appointed Anne Mosenthal, MD, Lahey Hospital & Medical Center's chief academic officer, to be the inaugural regional executive dean of UMass Chan-Lahey.

"I am honored to serve as the first dean of UMass Chan-Lahey, where our students will benefit from learning in the unique Lahey environment of collaborative, relationship-centered care," said Dr. Mosenthal.

Building on the success of UMass Chan's first regional campus in Springfield, UMass Chan-Lahey



will emphasize leadership, health systems science and interprofessional education, preparing students to lead and create solutions to future challenges in health care. Students will follow the core curriculum of the T.H. Chan School of Medicine and complete their third-year clerkship rotations and most of their fourth-year rotations under the supervision of Lahey faculty and specialty-specific clerkship site directors.

UMass Chan-Lahey will increase the Medical School's capacity to offer an affordable, high-quality medical education, while applying evidence-based care and proven academic research to reduce health disparities and improve health care delivery in Massachusetts and beyond.

"I think this program is going to be transformational not only for medical education, but for health care in the future. We have so many challenges and we need to do something different," said Dr. Mosenthal. ●

A dual Match Day-Giving Day marks a momentous step for medical students while bolstering UMass Chan donor support

Key milestones mark the long path to becoming a physician. Among the most anticipated, Match Day is when graduating medical students nationwide discover where they will continue their training as residents. As tradition dictates, residency placements are kept top secret each year until noon ET on the third Thursday in March. This year, 149 fourth-year students at the T.H. Chan School of Medicine gathered in the Medical School lobby on March 17 with friends, family and faculty to experience the occasion together.

At the stroke of noon, students tore open blue envelopes to discover which medical institution will play a defining role in their careers—and mostly expressed signs of relief and joy.

Graduating medical student Megan Hansen matched in internal medicine at Duke University Medical Center. Hansen chose to attend UMass Chan to become a physician who not only cares for her patients, but also advocates for systems that promote health and well-being for everyone.

“Growing up in Kansas, I frequently saw my grandparents, who lived in a rural part of the state, drive several hours for medical care. I learned that something as arbitrary as a county line between the richest and poorest counties in the state could predict health outcomes better than any other metric,” Hansen said.

The National Resident Matching Program uses a complex algorithm to pair graduating medical students with residency programs. Reflecting UMass Chan’s mission to train primary care physicians, 66 students matched in internal medicine, family medicine and pediatrics, representing 44 percent of the Class of 2023. Fourteen students are going into obstetrics and gynecology and 10 into



UMass Chan Medical School students celebrate Match Day.



emergency medicine. Sixty-one class members will complete some or all of their residency training in Massachusetts, including 26 staying at UMass Chan campuses.

This year, Match Day coincided with T. H. Chan School of Medicine Giving Day, a one-day fundraising campaign, raising more than \$165,000 through direct mail, email, phone, text and social media appeals. Gift matches funded by generous alumni and parents helped to propel the day’s momentum.

Giving Day donors joined in the Match Day excitement by leaving words of wisdom and encouragement for the fourth-years. Lien Do, MD’00, wrote to students, “You should all be so proud of the

brilliant work and dedication you have put in. Now starts an even more exciting phase. There will be challenging moments when you question your decision, but trust yourself. You can do it!”

On supporting UMass Chan, Dr. Do said, “UMass Chan not only gave me so much as a medical student, but also lifelong connections as friends and colleagues. I’m happy to give back by supporting future generations of aspiring physicians.” ●

On track to open in 2024, new education and research building will drive collaboration and scientific discovery

Bringing together some of the greatest minds in biomedical research under one roof, the new education and research building at UMass Chan Medical School will be an incubator of scientific collaboration. The convening of scientists in a shared physical space, day-to-day, presents unique opportunities that simply can’t be replicated elsewhere. A spontaneous, casual exchange at a lab presentation, breakout space or even the elevator can kickstart a chain of discovery that leads to a life-changing scientific breakthrough.

Located at the heart of our Worcester campus, this new facility will permit the co-location of programs in which UMass Chan is a global leader, including molecular medicine, neurology, neurobiology and gene therapy, as well as a new program in human genetics and evolutionary biology. New synergies made possible by this shared space will advance treatments for ALS, Alzheimer’s and other devastating neurodegenerative diseases.

Construction continues at a steady pace on this state-of-the-art, nine-story structure, which is expected to open in spring 2024 and achieve LEED Gold certification and net-zero energy use. Featuring open lab areas, research meeting spaces, casual breakout areas and an outdoor terrace, the new building mirrors UMass Chan’s institutional culture of collaboration, which is lauded by students, faculty and alumni as truly unique amid the competitive world of biomedicine. ●



You can leave your mark on this impressive addition to our Worcester campus through a lead gift. Naming opportunities start at \$50,000 and include lab, conference, community and transitional spaces.

To learn more, contact John Hayes at 508-856-3507 or John.Hayes@umassmed.edu, or Prescott Stewart at 617-939-5771 or Prescott.Stewart@umassmed.edu.

Make a big impact with a future gift to UMass Chan

When you include UMass Chan Medical School in your estate plans, your generosity changes lives. But the process may seem daunting. Giving options are many: charitable gift annuities, wills and living trusts, giving through your IRA, donor advised funds, and so on.

Where do you begin? plannedgiving.umassmed.edu

Our new planned giving website is the perfect place to start. This interactive, user-friendly resource will help you discover the giving option that works best for you based on your age, planned gift amount and/or assets (e.g., cash, real estate, life insurance, retirement plans).

You’ll discover tax-savvy ways to leave your legacy. For example, did you know that when you donate appreciated securities or mutual funds, you can reduce or even eliminate federal capital gains taxes on the transfer? You may also be entitled to a federal income tax charitable deduction based on the fair market value of the securities at the time of the transfer.

Visit the website: plannedgiving.umassmed.edu

Questions? Call our planned giving team at 508-723-4243.

Have you already included UMass Chan in your estate plans?

Thank you for your generosity. Please let us know by contacting Kim Canty at 508-723-4243. We would like to welcome you into our Heritage Society, which

recognizes valued donors like you. And by letting us know, we can ensure that we fulfill your gift exactly as you intended.

UMass Chan welcomes alumni back to an evolving campus for Reunion 2023

Over 200 alumni of UMass Chan Medical School gathered on May 6 in Worcester to reconnect at Reunion 2023, including members of the T.H. Chan School of Medicine Classes of 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2018 and graduates of the Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing. Festivities kicked off with an outdoor lunchtime event and tours of the Worcester campus, followed by a cocktail reception, dinner and dancing.

This year's Alumni Distinguished Service Award, an honor of, by and for T.H. Chan School of Medicine alumni that recognizes a fellow graduate who has made a significant impact in their field, was awarded to Gerry Cox, MD'83, MHA, assistant under secretary for health for quality and patient safety in the Veterans Health Administration. Dr. Cox is respected for his extraordinary contributions to medicine through an uncommon career path. Throughout 40 years of distinguished government and military service, he has had a substantial impact on the health of thousands of service men and women, veterans and their families.

The Tan Chingfen Graduate School of Nursing Alumni Award, which recognizes excellence in education, outstanding service, commitment to school and profession, and leadership in health care advocacy, was presented to Dawn Carpenter DNP'10, ACNP-BC, PMC'03. Carpenter was selected for her accomplishments in both patient care and nursing education. An expert clinician in critical care and dedicated mentor, she has helped shape UMass Chan's nursing programs, including the Adult-Gerontology Acute Care Nurse Practitioner track, which she formerly coordinated.

Reunion also celebrates alumni giving that is critical to the vitality of UMass Chan. Reunion classes and individuals have established more than 65 endowed student scholarships over the past decade, ensuring a legacy of financial support for talented UMass Chan medical students. At the time of publication, this year's reunion classes had raised more than \$500,000 in gifts and pledges. This includes generous matching gifts from alumni attending reunion.

"What a wonderful evening reconnecting with



classmates. We had a lovely dinner and great conversations that lasted long into the night," said Jenny Schwab, MD'98, Class of 1998 reunion committee member.

"It's extraordinary to see how the Medical School has evolved since I was a student," said Dr. Cox. "The growth and innovation on campus is palpable. I'm particularly excited about the new VA outpatient clinic, which is critical to improving health care for veterans in the region and beyond." ●

Your annual gift to UMass Chan is now tax deductible

As of this year, every Massachusetts taxpayer can deduct charitable donations from state income tax returns, a policy reinstated after a 20-year hiatus.

Your investment in UMass Chan changes lives.

Make your gift at umassmed.edu/give or by scanning this QR code.

