

CLASS NOTES

'60s

These days, **Constance Keefer** (MD '69) is "to a great extent retired—but I can't seem to give up the work!" This semi-retirement includes working as assistant professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and as a child development specialist at Boston Children's Hospital. As an expert in newborn behavior and infant mental health, she's also teaching for the medical staff at the Brigham and Women's Hospital nursery. Before semi-retiring, Keefer traveled the world as a developmental teaching pediatrician; that work included yearly trips to Iran.



Keefer

'70s

Vicki Rubin Kelley (PhD '77), professor of medicine at Harvard University, researches destructive inflammation—"the common denominator of almost every disease," she notes. Her recent work focuses on potential therapeutic targets for lupus nephritis, an inflammation of the kidneys that is common in patients with lupus. Kelley advises her students to follow their gut, saying she wouldn't have achieved success if she hadn't strayed from convention. She credits her unconventional efforts to seek out grants in person as a Pitt Med PhD candidate with ultimately landing her a position in Harvard's renal division.



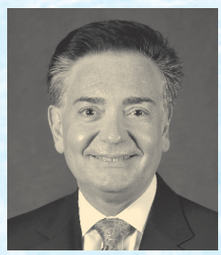
Kelley

'80s

Paul McDermott (PhD '84) is on the faculty of the Medical University of South Carolina's cardiology division in its department of medicine. McDermott is associate dean for faculty affairs and faculty development as well as professor of medicine. He oversees the preclinical medical curriculum and is also the director of the university's Academy of Medical Educators. McDermott's daughter Anne McDermott is in her second year at Pitt Med.



McDermott



Troianos

Christopher Troianos (MD '85) is chair of the Cleveland Clinic's Anesthesiology Institute. He oversees anesthesia-related care at the clinic's 10 hospitals and seven surgery centers in Ohio and provides administrative support to their hospitals in Florida, Abu Dhabi and London. Troianos also serves as professor of anesthesiology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine of Case Western Reserve University and practices as a cardiac anesthesiologist at Cleveland Clinic. He says the value of anesthesiologists has certainly come to light with COVID-19. "We're on the front lines in caring for these patients, from intubating their airways to managing their ventilation to caring for them in the ICUs."

'90s

Timothy Klatt (MD '92) serves as professor and head of the Medical College of Wisconsin's Division of General Obstetrics and Gynecology and as the medical director of patient safety at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee. "I am truly a generalist," he says of his clinical ob/gyn practice. In June, Klatt was honored with Froedtert's Thomas L. Smallwood Award for Clinical Excellence, the highest honor bestowed by the hospital. The best part of the recognition, according to Klatt? His colleagues: "the people who nominated me—the fantastic people with whom I work every day."



Klatt

Elisa Konieczko (PhD '92) is professor of biology at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, where she primarily teaches anatomy, cell biology and other courses. She recently completed a 20-year collaboration with researchers and physicians at UPMC Hamot investigating the hormones relaxin and estrogen in joint injuries and diseases. Responding to the sixfold increase of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries in women compared to men, the team confirmed the hormones' partial roles in the disparity. She is especially proud of the 40 undergraduate biology and pre-professional students from Gannon who participated in the collaboration.



Konieczko

While pursuing her doctorate at Pitt Med, **Kathleen Yee** (PhD '93) delved into neuronal pathfinding of visual sensory systems. During her career, she has broadened her attention to include auditory systems. Yee, assistant professor of neurobiology and anatomical sciences at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, began investigating the Zika virus's impact on the inner ear after reports surfaced of patients experiencing hearing impairment. She published a study in September's Hearing Research that is "the first to show the molecular and morphological damage to the inner ear" caused by Zika infections and "suggests multiple mechanisms" that contribute to that hearing loss.



Yee



Hackney

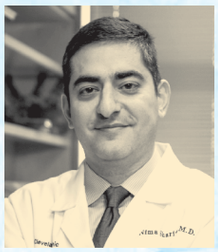
'00s

David Hackney (MD '00, Maternal Fetal Medicine Fellow '08) is associate professor of reproductive biology at Case Western Reserve University and division director of maternal fetal medicine at University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center. As vice chair for the Ohio section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Hackney meets with legislators to advocate for women's health. Hackney and his wife, **Lisa Hackney** (MD '02, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Fellow '08), a pediatric oncologist, both trained with Pitt doctors—and their Pitt connection spans a generation. "Our first son, Abe," says Hackney, "was born at Magee while we were fellows."



McNeil

Brian Keith McNeil (MD '01) recently added associate dean for clinical affairs at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University to his titles, an extensive list that includes vice chair of Downstate's urology department. In our 2018 write-up on McNeil, we noted his longstanding efforts to address health care inequities. Now as associate dean, McNeil is overseeing the medical school's senior class curriculum, and he's revamping student rotations with Brooklyn-area hospitals as part of a broader effort to better prepare students to care for underserved populations. Last year, as part of the Downstate Coronavirus Preparedness Task Force, McNeil worked closely with his colleagues to organize redeployment of residents and faculty to meet critical patient needs.



Sharifi

Nima Sharifi (MD '01) studies sex steroids that control the progression of prostate cancer. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, he's following a new thread: whether these steroids play a role in the disproportionate number of men who've become seriously ill or died from COVID-19 compared to women. There may be clues from his study published last year in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; he discovered a genetic anomaly related to prostate cancer that's common in patients with poor outcomes from asthma treatment. Sharifi is the Kendrick Family Endowed Chair for Prostate Cancer Research at the Cleveland Clinic.

—Nithya Kasibhatla and Rachel Mennies

SPOTLIGHT

JENNIFER COPE: WASH AND GO

COURTESY COPE





Cope has been deployed by the CDC.

In February 2020, while most Americans were still living normally in the growing shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, CDC medical officer Jennifer Cope (MD '04) was deployed to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) to screen travelers arriving from China for SARS-CoV-2. Two passengers who had been stuck in Wuhan for months were ordered to quarantine at a U.S. naval base. "They were both so gracious," Cope recalls. "I don't know how many people would have been. [Imagine] flying halfway across the world, you're tired, you haven't seen your family in maybe months."

During her LAX deployment, Cope also experienced the stress of quarantining after being exposed to a confirmed-positive individual. In addition to being concerned about getting sick, she had to work from her hotel room (in February, before remote work was the norm) and delay going home. Cope says it was "the longest that I'd been away from my kids since they were born. It was tough."

Yet she was driven to contribute more. She was home in Atlanta for only a few weeks before deploying to North Dakota to expand testing capacity there—most memorably by testing workers at a manufacturing plant during an April snowfall. (Her head-to-toe PPE kept her warm.) In the summer, Cope returned to Atlanta to pitch in at the CDC's emergency response center.

Cope is the CDC's subject-matter expert for free-living amoeba infections, which spread to humans through water. She's still busy confirming amoeba-infection cases, but as the team leader of the Domestic Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Epidemiology Team at the CDC, she's now using her expertise in waterborne disease surveillance to help implement a new system for monitoring the spread of SARS-CoV-2.

The WASH team is working with the wastewater sector and local public health officials nationwide to build a national wastewater surveillance system for SARS-CoV-2, which is shed in stool. Testing the sludge at a wastewater treatment plant can offer an early warning of a COVID-19 outbreak.

"This tells you, 'This is probably a place where we need to ramp up clinical testing,'" she notes. *—Rachel Mennies*

BERTRAM LUBIN

JULY 21, 1939–JUNE 27, 2020



Lubin

As a teenager in Pittsburgh, Bertram Lubin (MD '64)—then a budding jazz drummer—experienced a once-in-a-lifetime breakthrough: The drummer for jazz legend Thelonious Monk had fallen ill before the show that Lubin had snuck out of the house to attend. Lubin, excited, offered to pinch-hit on the drums—and performed with Monk onstage.

Lubin, a hematologist and pediatrician and the former president and CEO of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, died in June. He's remembered by friends and family for his twinned lifetime dedications to music and medicine—both shaped by the city of Pittsburgh.

"My father loved science, medicine and jazz," reflects his son Alex Lubin. "These were passions he developed in Pittsburgh and at Pitt Med. He dedicated his life to helping others, to creating meaningful change in health outcomes and access, and to seeing the best in everyone he encountered."

Commitment to underserved communities characterized Lubin's medical career, including breakthroughs in sickle-cell research that led to the founding of the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute (CHORI). His standard-setting push to screen newborns for sickle-cell disease became law in California; that policy was adopted in all 50 states. At CHORI, Lubin also created an umbilical cord blood storage program for the siblings of children in need of a stem cell transplant; it was the first program of its kind in the world.

Pittsburgh was always in his heart, Alex notes. He says his father always kept a copy of Pitt Med magazine on his coffee table. In 2007, Pitt Med awarded Lubin its Hench Distinguished Alumni Award.

—Rachel Mennies

MARTHA D. NELSON

OCT 15, 1931–AUG 6, 2020



Nelson

As a Pitt Med student, Martha D. Nelson (MD '56) frequented Jonas Salk's lab. "We would spend lunchtimes watching the monkeys—the ones that [Salk] used to come up with the polio vaccine," recalls classmate Herbert Croft (MD '56).

Studying at Pitt during that time inspired Nelson to become a champion of public health. She found her calling in Ohio's Summit County Health Department. She was hired in 1961 as director of medical services and soon became the youngest health commissioner in the state.

Croft witnessed Nelson's impact, having also moved to Summit County. During his first year of medical practice, he spent Sundays administering the Salk team's polio vaccine at schools under Nelson's department's purview.

Nelson served as health commissioner for 38 years. Besides organizing immunization campaigns, school health programs and access to quality health care, she was a founding member of Planned Parenthood of Akron and served on its medical advisory board.

When Nelson retired in 1996, the Akron Beacon Journal noted that she had garnered respect for her ability to accomplish any project. As her daughter, Jane Nelson, CEO and executive director of the Oklahoma Nurses Association, puts it: "My mother was out there doing it and not talking it." The Summit County Board of Health named the Martha D. Nelson Public Health Clinic in her honor.

Nelson's husband, Roger Nelson, says she loved her position because "she felt that she was impacting more lives through public health practices than she would have in private practice." Indeed, Jane Nelson says her mother "saw the community itself as her practice."

—Nithya Kasibhatla

LINTON TRAUB

FEB 6, 1962–OCT 19, 2020



Traub

Linton Traub was finishing his PhD at the Weizmann Institute when he and wife, Jill, bought their first original lithograph—a rooftop cityscape evocative of the view from their Israeli apartment. The acquisition launched a local arts patronage that spanned three decades as the pair moved first to St. Louis for Linton's postdoctoral fellowship at Washington University and then to Pittsburgh, where he spent 20 years on the faculty of Pitt's Department of Cell Biology. "We're running out of space on the walls," says daughter Simone.

And yet when Traub died, his family decided to hang one more original—a series of Coomassie blue–stained protein gels from the London-born scientist's lab notebooks. "His gels were perfect," says Texas Tech University's Peter Keyel (PhD '06), who trained with Traub. "He wanted data of a quality that was incontrovertible."

Traub investigated how the protein clathrin affects the passage of macromolecules from the eukaryotic cell surface to the inside of the cell. The process influences cellular uptake of iron and other critical substances. "His work was fundamental to our current understanding of how clathrin-coated structures are assembled, how cargo is recruited into these structures and the physiological role of this process," says Pitt cell biology department chair Alexander Sorkin.

Traub's final paper was a single-author report on molecular tools he'd developed, illustrated with his characteristically impeccable gels, to elucidate the earliest steps in clathrin coat formation. Says Sorkin: "Linton's hunger for research, resilience, rigorousness and boundless knowledge of scientific literature were second to none."

—Sharon Tregaskis

NELSON PHOTO: © AKRON BEACON JOURNAL. 1993. USA TODAY NETWORK

'50s

RAYMOND N. KILLEEN, MD '52
SEPT 11, 2020

GEORGE F. MACDONALD, MD '52
OCT 22, 2020

RUSSELL L. ANDERSON JR., MD '54, RES '57, FEL '58, RES '60
OCT 14, 2020

LOREN M. ROSENBACH, MD '54
NOV 9, 2020

JOHN FRANCIS ZEEDICK, MD '54
AUG 18, 2020

NORBERT L. DUGAN JR., MD '56
MAY 16, 2019

JOSEPH G. RITTER, MD '56
NOV 7, 2020

DAYNE F. WAHL, MD '58
SEPT 12, 2020

JOHN J. GEORGE, MD '59
OCT 29, 2020

AWARD-WINNING IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT: CARL FUHRMAN

BY ADAM REGER



NIKHIL B. AMESUR/PHOTO ILLUSTRATION: ELENA CERRI

Fuhrman won his department's teaching award so many times that they named it for him.

"Don't even think about using the word 'prominent.' Foreheads are prominent. If you're going to tell me about what you've seen, you need to tell me about the structure's size, its shape, its contour, its position. No 'prominent.'"

That's the sort of guidance radiologist Carl Fuhrman (MD '79) was famous for giving. A celebrated teacher, Fuhrman challenged students to be precise in their language and observations.

Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, Fuhrman attended Pitt for his undergraduate and medical studies. He became a full professor in the Department of Radiology in 1994 and served as chief of thoracic radiology for the next 27 years. He died unexpectedly in June, while reading X-rays.

Speaking at a memorial celebration in July, Christopher Faber characterized Fuhrman's teaching as "the Socratic method, but with a Carl Fuhrman twist." By asking binary questions such as "Which lung is larger?" Fuhrman guided students' observations. "At the end, you would believe you had come up with the correct diagnosis," Faber, associate professor of medicine, said.

"Everybody was brighter when they were around Carl."

"His passion was teaching," said Melissa McNeil (MD '80), professor of medicine and a friend for more than 40 years. "He loved our students, and they loved him." At the memorial, McNeil read excerpts from Fuhrman's teaching evaluations, which she said contained more exclamation points than she had ever seen. "Dr. Fuhrman!!!" read one evaluation. "Everyone has got to listen to his lectures."

Fuhrman was a nine-time winner of the Golden Apple Award, given annually by medical students to the top-rated professor. His peers in the national Association of University Radiologists voted him top teacher in 2013. And Pitt awarded him the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. Fuhrman won his department's teaching award 15 times—so often that in 2016 it was renamed in his honor.

For those who worked with and learned from Fuhrman, his skill as a teacher was inseparable from his excellence as a clinician. "You can't be a gifted teacher unless you know your field backwards and forwards," says Jules Sumkin, chair of radiology. "Carl just had all the pieces."

Marion Hughes (MD '00), who trained with Fuhrman and later became his colleague as associate professor of radiology, says: "To be excellent as a radiologist there's a lot of inferring, and he was very good at that. He was extremely accurate and very fast, a rare combination."

Fuhrman also possessed a legendary memory. At Fuhrman's memorial, Jacob Sechrist, assistant professor of radiology, said, "Not only did he remember their medical history but he could tell you when they got divorced and how much their spouse got in the settlement."

As a researcher, Fuhrman distinguished himself with more than 100 publications, contributing to the understanding of lung cancer, interstitial lung disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Fuhrman created a tutorial to aid radiologists across the UPMC system and beyond in correctly identifying the virus on a chest X-ray.

He was often reading chest X-rays by 5 or 6 a.m., Hughes says, so he could be finished in time to hear student presentations. Each Friday, from 7 to 8 a.m., he held a conference that was wildly popular.

"I learned something from Carl in every interaction," said Faber. "Regrettably my education lasted only 33 years. In that time I learned perhaps 1% of what he knew. I was hoping to get to 2%."

"It's an incomparable loss," says Hughes. "When you [are] not only great yourself but train hundreds of other people to be great, that's your legacy." ■

IN MEMORIAM

'60s

ROBERT N. LIGO, MD '61
SEPT 13, 2020

CHARLES GOODSTEIN, RES '62
APRIL 30, 2020

JOHN A. HERMAN, RES '63
JAN 14, 2019

JOHN S. NAJARIAN, FEL '63
AUG 31, 2020

WILLIAM H. MARCHL, MD '64
NOV 15, 2020

EDWARD J. MCCLAIN JR., RES '64
OCT 20, 2020

ROBERT EMMETT KEEFE, MD '65
AUG 10, 2020

JOHN F. LANCASTER, RES '65
SEPT 21, 2019

CLOVIS M. SNYDER, RES '65, FEL '65
OCT 1, 2020

HANS R. WILHELMSEN, RES '65
OCT 9, 2020

VICTOR S. ANDERSON, RES '66
JAN 20, 2020

CHARLES A. STRINGFELLOW, RES '66
MAR 5, 2019

JUAN T. MUNOZ, RES '67
NOV 11, 2019

CHARLES HALL ASHFORD, RES '68
MAY 15, 2020

RAYMOND SESTI BONIFACE, RES '68
MAR 1, 2020

EDGAR O. HORGER III, FEL '68
DEC 25, 2019

MICHAEL DAVIDSON, MD '69
NOV 8, 2020

'70s

SWAMIKKAN A. NALLATHAMBI, RES '70, FEL '72
DEC 29, 2019

NARAYAN T. NAYAK, RES '72, '77
AUG 11, 2019

WILLIAM H. THIES, PHD '72
AUG 16, 2020

RONALD J. NORTH, RES '76
NOV 7, 2020

'80s

BENEDICT J. SEMMES, FEL '83
JUNE 18, 2020

'90s

RAYMOND H. THORNTON, MD '98
OCT 1, 2020

KATHY A. EDWARDS, RES '99
DEC 7, 2019

'00s

JAMES W. HUNDERUP, RES '02
DEC 18, 2019

FACULTY

ROBERT E. LEE, MD '56
OCT 29, 2020

MARITA D. KENNA, RES '64
NOV 13, 2019

PAUL C. FIEHLER, MD '76
OCT 6, 2020

LYDIA BUKOWY DANIELS, PHD '83
SEPT 14, 2020