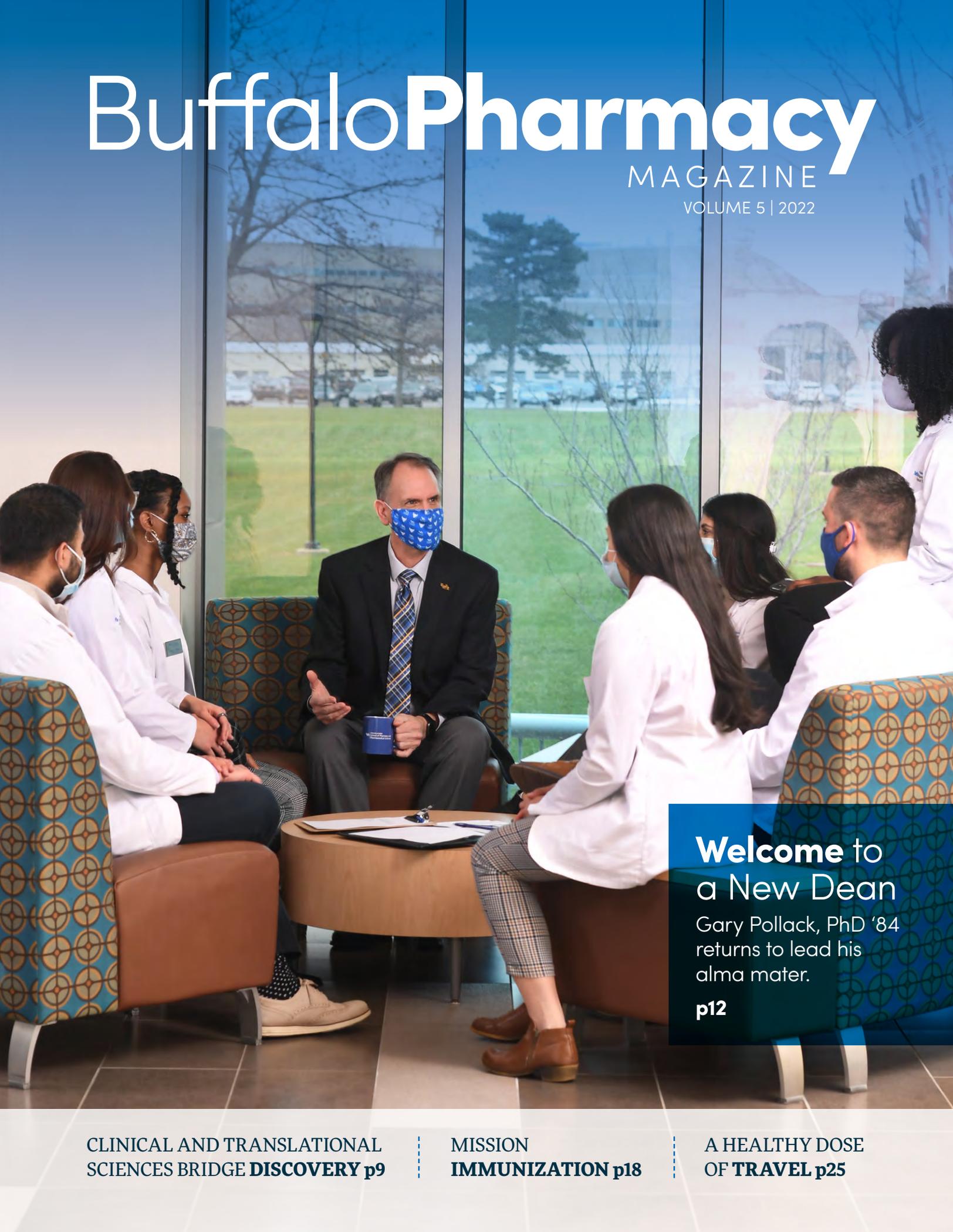


Buffalo Pharmacy

MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 | 2022



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Gary Pollack, PhD '84
returns to lead his
alma mater.

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Message From The Dean

As I begin my term as dean it is a pleasure for me to share with you the impressive accomplishments, meaningful stories and inspiring creativity of our faculty, staff, students and alumni found in this edition of the 2022 Buffalo Pharmacy Magazine.

The following pages showcase our leadership and expertise in high-impact patient care initiatives, innovative educational programs and pioneering research. I am very proud of all that was accomplished over the past year and look forward to our collective work as we begin 2022.

Warm Regards,



Gary M. Pollack, PhD
Professor and Dean



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Faculty help improve patient care through scholarship and clinical outcomes



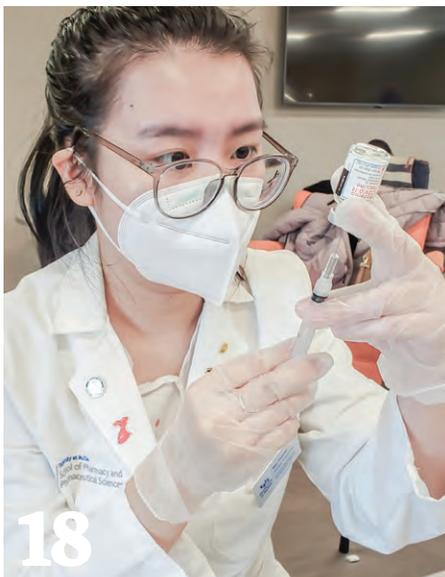
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2021 Commencement

The University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences held its 2021 Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, May 15. The outdoor, limited capacity event took place on the North Campus.

Dean Emeritus James M. O'Donnell, PhD, was recognized for his almost eight years of leadership by UB President Satish K. Tripathi.

C.K. "David" Chu, PhD '75, received a 2021 State University of New York Honorary Doctorate of Science for his seminal work in antiviral and anticancer drug discovery and, with his wife Jane Chu, for his generous support of pharmacy research and education.

"I couldn't imagine going through the past four years with anyone else. Now it's time to tackle life as a pharmacist and work toward creating a better world for everyone."

- Brenna Gelen, President, PharmD Class of 2021

The University at Buffalo also recognized the Class of 2020 with a belated in-person Commencement Ceremony on Friday, Oct. 1. The event was held in conjunction with UB's 2021 Homecoming Weekend.

Below, Dean Emeritus James O'Donnell, PhD, welcomes the graduating classes.



L-R: University at Buffalo President Satish K. Tripathi; C.K. "David" Chu, PhD '75; and Eunice A. Lewin, SUNY Board of Trustees



Brenna Gelen, PharmD Class of 2021 president



BS graduating students



PharmD graduating students

DEGREES CONFERRED

118 Doctor of Pharmacy degrees conferred

12 Bachelor of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences degrees conferred

16 Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Sciences degrees conferred

10 Doctor of Philosophy in Pharmaceutical Sciences degrees conferred



2021 Awards Ceremony: A Celebration of Excellence



BY KARA SWEET

Our 2021 Awards Ceremony was a virtual opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of many of our alumni, preceptors, faculty, staff and students.

WILLIS G. GREGORY MEMORIAL AWARD **Gayle Brazeau, PhD '89**



Gayle Brazeau's career has spanned more than 35 years in pharmacy education at the University of New England, University of Houston, the University of Florida, the University at Buffalo, and most recently as dean of the Marshall University School of Pharmacy in West Virginia.

She is the recipient of numerous academic and professional awards, including the 2020 American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Robert K. Chalmers Distinguished Pharmacy Educator Award.

She has been the editor of the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education since 2014, and serves on the editorial boards of Pharmaceutical Development and Technology, PharmSciTech, American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists Journal, National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science, and the Journal of Healthcare Leadership-Honorary Editorial Board.

ORVILLE C. BAXTER MEMORIAL PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AWARD **Martin Burruano, BS '86**



Martin Burruano has been employed at Independent Health Association in Buffalo for 20 years and currently serves as vice president of pharmacy services. He is a frequent guest lecturer for the UB Department of Pharmacy Practice on topics related to pharmacy management and managed care. He has also been a dedicated Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) preceptor for the school for nearly 20 years.

Burruano has been honored by the Pharmacists Association of Western New York (PAWNY) with the 2011 Pharmacist of the Year Award and the 2015 Service to Pharmacy Award. His professional affiliations include serving on the Board of Directors for PAWNY, the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy and the University at Buffalo Blue and White Club. He is also a longtime member of the UB Alumni Association.

JULIE KOPFER MEMORIAL STAFF MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD **Jaime Maerten-Rivera**



Jaime Maerten-Rivera, PhD, director of assessment and outcomes, received extensive praise from SPPS faculty and staff for her dedication and hard work:

"Jaime is always pleasant to work with and brings her best effort to everything she does, and always follows through, putting in whatever effort is necessary to get the best results for the school."

"Jaime has been pivotal in key curriculum and assessment areas."

"Where would we be without Jaime?"

DANIEL H. MURRAY MEMORIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD **Kira Voyer, PharmD '21**



Kira Voyer was recognized for her academic ambition, service activities and leadership.

A 2020 Walmart Scholar recipient, she completed the Clinical Research Program under the mentorship of Raymond Cha, PharmD '99, clinical associate professor, pharmacy practice. "Kira represents one of those rare grads with exceptional professional competencies and a passion for excellence," Cha says. "She is a leader by example and an admirable professional with a balance of humility and confidence."

John Pieper, PharmD '79, 2020 Willis G. Gregory Memorial Award recipient; and Andrew DiLuca, BS '81 2020 Orville C. Baxter Memorial Professional Practice Award recipient, were also recognized at our 2021 Virtual Awards Ceremony.

2021 PRECEPTOR AWARDS

IPPE Outstanding Contribution Award

Raymond Cha, BS '97, PharmD '00

Professional Practice Elective Preceptor of the Year

Frank Pietrantoni, PharmD '03

J. Fred Bennes Outpatient Care Preceptor of the Year

Ken Sternfeld

Inpatient Care Preceptor of the Year

Deanna Argentieri

Pharmacy Practice Faculty Preceptor of the Year

Ashley Woodruff, PharmD '09

2021 White Coat Ceremony



Thursday, August 26, 2021 | Slee Hall, UB North Campus

Our annual White Coat Ceremony is a symbolic entrance into the profession of pharmacy, starting students on the path to providing compassionate patient care. Our 2021 event, in person after a brief hiatus, welcomed 88 first-year PharmD students to the UB family.



2021 Orientation



PharmD Class of 2025 and pharmaceutical sciences BS students also attended a variety of orientation programs to learn about school policies, spend time with representatives of student organizations, and meet with faculty and staff to help support their journey.

“There is no better time to be entering the profession of pharmacy, or the sciences that compose pharmacy, than right now.”

– Gary M. Pollack, PhD '84, Dean



Pharmaceutical Sciences students' annual orientation photo





Family and friends of PharmD students at the 2021 White Coat Ceremony



PharmD students' annual orientation photo

James O'Donnell

A Legacy of Leadership

BY KARA SWEET

In August 2021, James M. O'Donnell, PhD, stepped down as dean of the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, capping eight years of leadership. His impact and legacy have left a lasting mark on our school.



Health science deans at Dean O'Donnell's farewell reception.

During his tenure as dean, he has overseen many significant initiatives:

Rankings: U.S. News & World Report national ranking increased from 22 to 14, and first-place ranking status in New York State maintained

New Programs:

- Launch of a master's degree in pharmacometrics and personalized pharmacotherapy, and a one-of-its-kind master's degree in clinical and translational therapeutics
- Creation of numerous micro-credential programs

Endowed Chairs: Establishment of two endowed chairs

Award Winning IPE: Development and support of a nationally recognized interprofessional education program

Faculty Leadership: Appointment of two SUNY Distinguished Professors and one UB Distinguished Professor

Partnerships: Collaborations formed with SUNY community colleges and other universities

Strategic Initiatives: Attracted world-class faculty, with the support from strategic initiatives such as the SUNY Empire Innovation Program and UB Disciplinary Excellence initiative

O'Donnell will remain a member of the SPPS family as a faculty member and professor of pharmaceutical sciences, and pharmacology and toxicology.



Annual Pharmacy Summer Institute draws record number of students

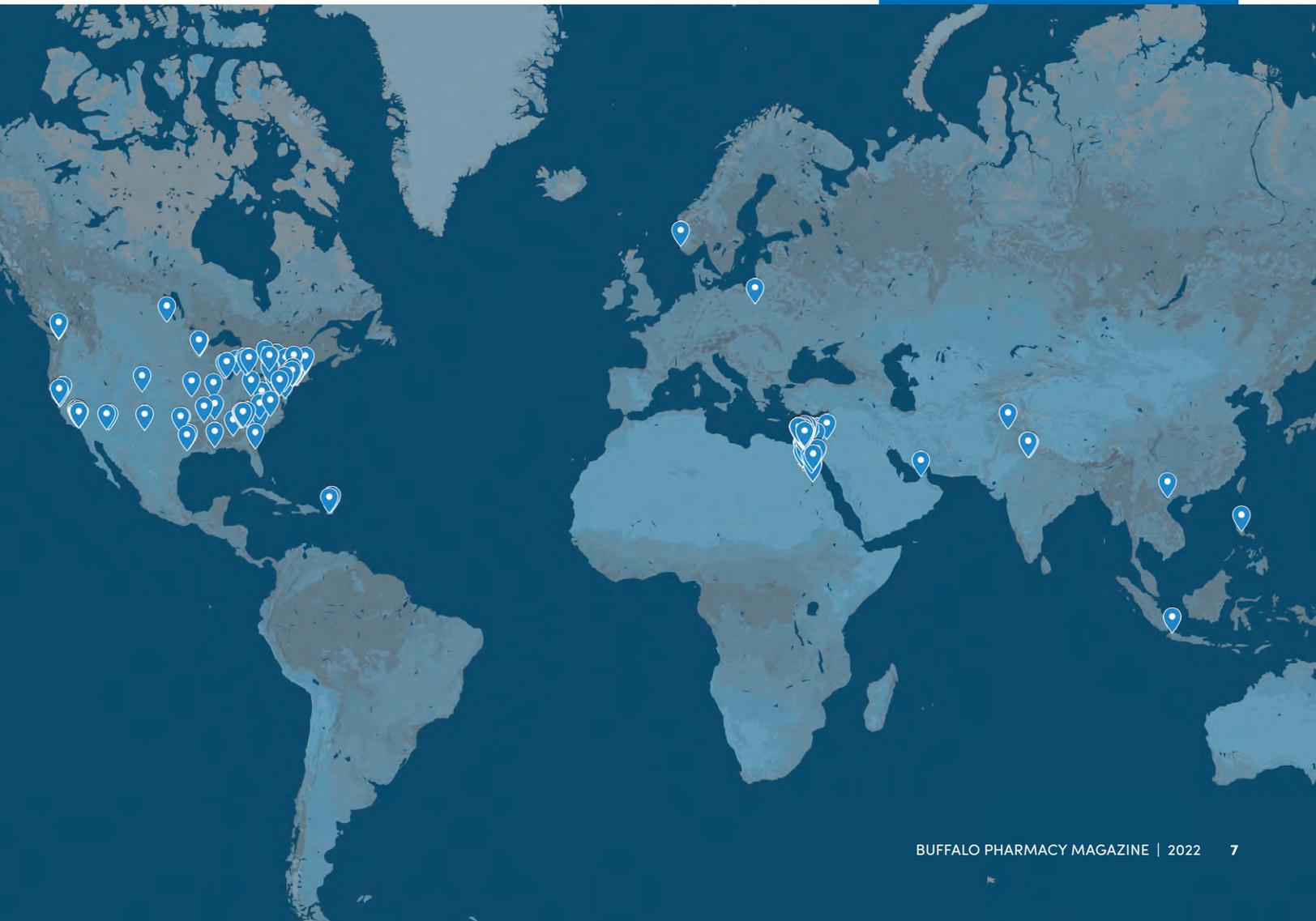
BY KARA SWEET

More than 600 high school and college students from around the world had a unique opportunity to explore and better understand what it means to be a pharmacist. The occasion was the sixth annual UB Pharmacy Summer Institute for High School and College Students.

The multiday, virtual program provided students with a broad scope of learning experiences, including interactive polls and patient care scenarios, a career panel, and lectures by UB pharmacy faculty and Buffalo-area alumni. Topics ranged from vaccinations to medical marijuana and covered the many diverse and dynamic career opportunities a pharmacy degree can provide.

“We were thrilled to bring so many talented high school and college students with an interest in health care to our virtual event to explore the many exciting opportunities available to future pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists,” says Jennifer Rosenberg, PhD, associate dean of admissions and advisement.

CANADA
EGYPT
INDIA
INDONESIA
JORDAN
KUWAIT
NORWAY
PAKISTAN
PHILIPPINES
POLAND
PUERTO RICO
QATAR
UNITED STATES
URUGUAY
VIETNAM



Welcome Back: 2021 Alumni Reunion

The classes of 1960, 1970, 1971, 1980, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1995, 2005, 2006 and 2011 were warmly welcomed back to campus to celebrate their reunion with highly anticipated in-person events. The weekend kicked off with guided tours of the Pharmacy Building and UB's South Campus, followed by UB's Homecoming football game. The festivities concluded with a cocktail reception. Thank you to all who attended and to our class representatives for making the weekend a success!



CLASS OF 1971



CLASS OF 1981



MEMBERS OF THE CLASSES OF 1990 AND 1991



CLASS OF 1980



CLASS OF 1995



CLASS OF 1970 (NOT PICTURED: DANIEL GOUPIL)



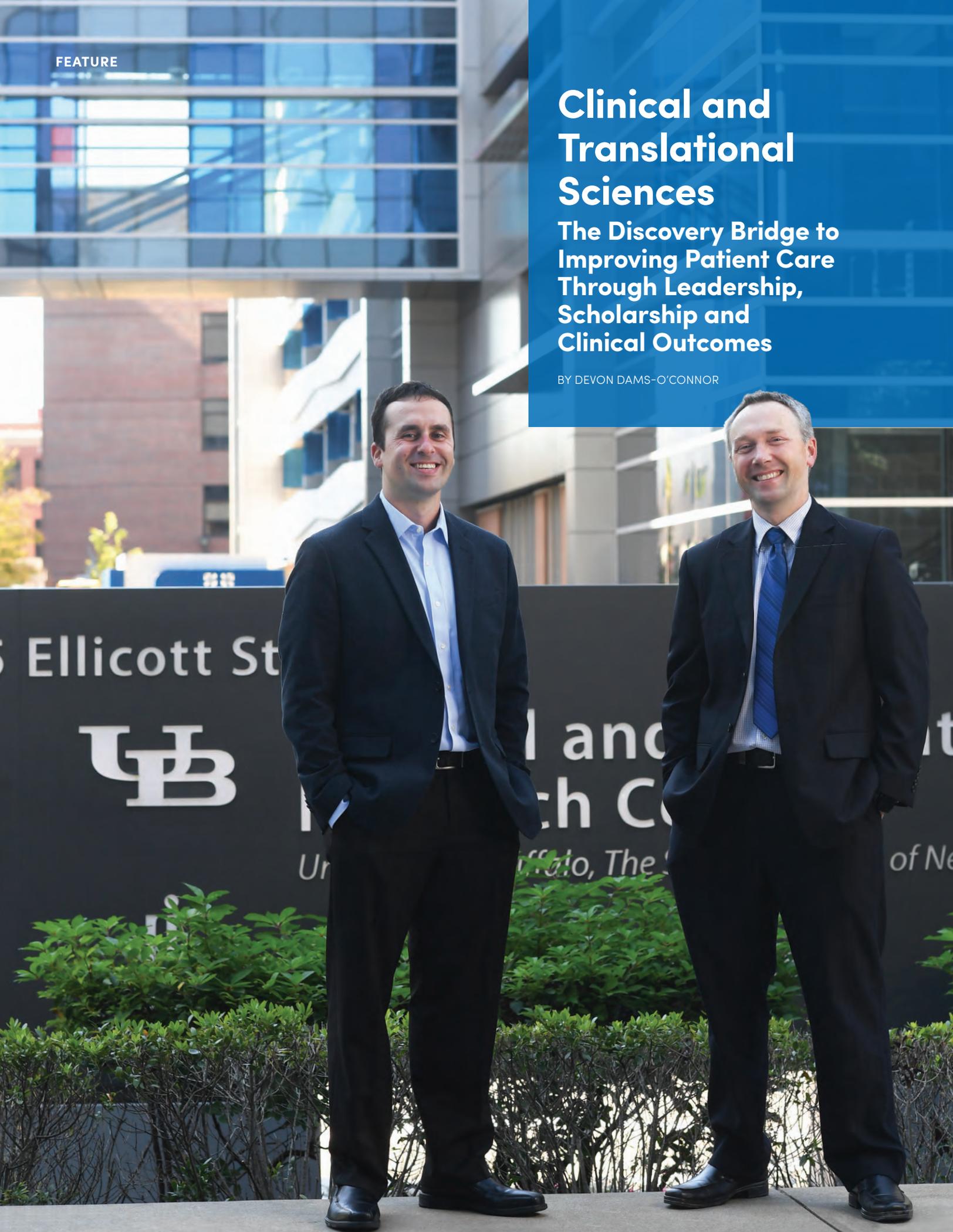
MEMBERS OF THE CLASSES OF 2005, 2006 AND 2011

FEATURE

Clinical and Translational Sciences

The Discovery Bridge to Improving Patient Care Through Leadership, Scholarship and Clinical Outcomes

BY DEVON DAMS-O'CONNOR



The journey from research finding to real-world use in health care settings is a long one, with many stops, decisions and discoveries along the way.



The University at Buffalo Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI) serves as a roadmap guiding researchers toward their destination: to see their work positively affect the lives of physicians and the patients they treat.

The CTSI moves basic scientific discoveries from the laboratory to clinical trials, and from clinical trials into general practice. Its vision is not only for CTSI to improve health care delivery through advanced treatments and improved protocols, but to do so in a way that reduces health disparities in the community. UB's CTSI provides comprehensive resources and support for research projects that make medical progress possible, including informatics, imaging, laboratory facilities, BERD (Biostatistics, Epidemiology and Research Design), community engagement and drug development.

Pharmacy Leadership

This is where the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (SPPS) comes in. The Drug Development Core at the CTSI provides a centralized resource for preclinical pharmacology, pharmacokinetic-pharmacodynamics and early phase clinical trial design, conduct and management.

"The fields of pharmacy and the pharmaceutical sciences are by their very nature some of the most interdisciplinary fields in the life sciences," says Gary Pollack, PhD '84, dean of the pharmacy school. "This impact is continually evidenced by the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences faculty who contribute to the significant research and clinical accomplishments of the CTSI through

a wide array of partnerships, oversight and engagement."

CTSI's Drug Development Core is led by Gene D. Morse, PharmD, FCCP, BCPS, SUNY Distinguished Professor. Morse also serves on the CTSI Steering Committee, where his responsibilities include reviewing progress of cores toward short-term and long-term goals, improving collaboration among cores, reviewing and responding to Evaluation Team reports, and advising CTSI leadership on the needs of Buffalo Translational Consortium investigators.

Morse and his colleagues bring together the expertise of the University at Buffalo and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center to provide resources, including training, in preclinical and early clinical development for novel compounds for investigators. These resources help develop discoveries—in molecules, tissues and cells—into vaccines, drugs and devices that can be studied first in clinical trial delivery, and then be disseminated more widely in population studies.

Scholarship Supporting Clinical Outcomes

A major component of CTSI is to provide funding for a variety of research projects. These dollars allow investigators to pursue focused courses of study within CTSI's support network. Since 2010, SPPS faculty have been awarded 12 CTSI Translational Pilot

Study awards. Along with support from the National Institutes of Health, the university and the health sciences schools, these awards provide seed money to advance new technologies and therapeutics from conceptual stage to clinical trials. Joseph Balthasar, PhD, professor of pharmaceutical sciences and executive director of University Research Initiatives, is a member of the CTSI Translational Pilot Studies Team, which helps foster cross-disciplinary collaborations and mentoring relationships among pilot study award recipients.

Recent CTSI Translational Pilot Study projects include looking at repurposing tamoxifen for triple negative breast cancer (a collaboration between SPPS and Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers), and a study examining the feasibility of a community health worker program embedded in Western New York community pharmacies to address social determinants of health (a collaboration between SPPS and the UB School of Public Health and Health Professions).

UB Pharmacy K Scholars

A second series of career development awards—the CTSI K Scholar Program—provides research mentoring, funding, and career and professional development to outstanding junior faculty and senior fellows who are transitioning to independent faculty positions. Scholars' research centers on new treatments for diseases and innovative methods to mitigate and eliminate health disparities.

Jason Sprowl, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, is a 2020 K Scholar. His work involves studying the

role of transporter proteins in regulating drug or nutrient uptake and accumulation in cancer treatment, making sure drugs attack cancer cells without causing long-term toxicity and damaging other healthy tissues. Sprowl's interest in this topic was sparked by his time as a postdoc at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, where he saw firsthand how cancer drugs could cause hearing loss in his tiniest patients.

"What we're doing with these transporters



"With cancer survivor rates going up, I'd like to participate in improving the long-term quality of life for patients."

– Jason Sprowl, PhD

is looking for ones that are expressed in the tissues being affected; in this case, cochlear tissue," Sprowl explains. "We're determining what their roles are in moving the drug into cochlear cells with the goal of blocking uptake to prevent hearing loss, while preserving uptake into cancer cells to maintain efficacy. With cancer survivor rates going up, I'd like to participate in improving the long-term quality of life for patients."

While Sprowl's current area of focus is reducing lasting side effects from chemotherapy drugs, the findings from this research program have the potential to be applied more widely to reduce similar tissue damage from other drugs, like antibiotics, in the future. So far, Sprowl's current study is showing promise, which will allow him to generate high-impact data to qualify his

team for future funding.

David Jacobs, PharmD, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Pharmacy Practice, was a 2018 K Scholar whose work under that program established the groundwork for future research and funding.

In 2021, Jacobs received a \$962,000 award from the NIH's National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) to develop a real-time, readmission risk-prediction algorithm to lower hospital readmission rates for patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The five-year NHLBI Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award will contribute to Jacobs' efforts toward helping clinicians provide individualized treatment for COPD patients during the transition from hospital to home.

"In the K Scholar program, I was able to work with strong collaborators in : Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences

and the School of Public Health and Health Professions," Jacobs says. "But it's not just the research that put me in a strong position to obtain additional funding, but it was also the mentorship, guidance, support and the time to do this work. That's what's pivotal."

In his new study, Jacobs will build upon his K Scholar work and will lean on skills he honed within the CTSI. He'll start by conducting interviews to learn more about COPD patients' everyday lives to help his team build a risk-prediction model. The interviews will assess issues such as the availability of transportation to get to a pharmacy or primary care physician's office, along with other economic and social priorities such as food access and caregiver roles that might be downgrading health care to a secondary or tertiary concern for patients. Medical variables will come in the form of data from larger medical institutions in the area, which Jacobs will integrate with

social findings to formulate a comprehensive predictive model.

"We'll take that information and develop a pilot study to target patients at high risk of hospital readmission and change aspects of their care to prevent it," he says.

"...it's not just the research that put me in a strong position to obtain additional funding, but it was also the mentorship, guidance, support and the time to do this work. That's what's pivotal."

– David Jacobs, PharmD, PhD

While this study focuses on COPD, a chronic condition that requires multiple medications and specialists to treat it, Jacob's hope is to ultimately expand the risk-prediction algorithm and intervention to help patients with other complex medical needs prevent repeat visits to the hospital.

"Our goal of research is to improve patient care and reduce costs," says Jacobs. "In the implementation science part of my work, we look at how a solution translates between practitioners and between facilities."



This predictive modeling helps streamline variables so health services interventions can target the patients with higher risk. We're looking at what a pharmacist can do within the processes involved, and then integrating that big data arm as well."



WELCOME

TO A NEW DEAN

Gary Pollack, PhD '84, returns to lead his alma mater

BY DEVON DAMS O'CONNOR

In August, the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences welcomed Gary Pollack, PhD '84, to his appointment as the 12th dean. Humble, personable and collaborative, Pollack brings the familiarity of an alumnus and the acumen of a proven leader to help advance the school's academic mission and national standing.

Pollack holds a PhD in pharmaceutics from the University at Buffalo and a bachelor's degree in chemistry/psychology from Knox College. He returns to UB from the University of Toledo, where he served as dean and professor in the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. Before that, he served as dean of the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at Washington State University (WSU) for nearly

a decade. Prior to WSU, Pollack was executive associate dean of the School of Pharmacy and chair and professor in the pharmaceutical sciences division at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, Pollack has focused his research on how drugs and toxicants affect the central

nervous system. He also has made significant contributions to the understanding of opioid tolerance. A prolific author, he has published more than 150 refereed journal articles. Pollack serves on the Editorial Advisory Board of the Journal of Experimental Pharmacology and was formerly associate editor of the Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

The quest for a new dean was a collaborative one from the start, with a specially assembled search committee seeking input from faculty, alumni and partners to outline the desired qualities sought in the person taking this leadership position. The resulting list of requirements outlined what key constituents felt were the necessary

“The leadership positions I’ve been fortunate to hold are really service positions. We serve so many different communities—students, staff, faculty, the university, external partners, alumni, the surrounding community. I believe it’s important for deans to remember that service part.”

qualifications to head the school.

“One thing that rose to the top was his understanding of education, research and pharmacy practice,” says William Prescott, Jr., chair and clinical professor, pharmacy practice, and a member of the search committee. “It has been some time since we have had a dean enter with this level of experience in pharmacy academia and understanding of the profession. Another thing that stood out was his strong leadership skills. It’s one thing to be a strong researcher, clinician or teacher, and it’s another thing to be able to lead people. In conversations with his references, he was described as a futurist—someone who recognizes challenges, opportunities, goals and how to get there; he’s not afraid to mix things up to better the school. He trusts and provides autonomy to school leadership and believes in the value of team.”

Setting His Sights on a Top 10 Spot

Pollack sees two big opportunities for his team to begin working on immediately—one that involves the institution itself, and the other, the professionals it produces. The first, near-term goal is to reengage the national academic pharmacy community in the concept that UB is not only a great school of pharmacy, but one of a few of truly

historical importance. Over the past 100 years,

UB has had a profound influence at the interface of the pharmaceutical sciences and pharmacy practice, optimizing clinical patient care through innovative drug development and evaluation.

“The other challenge is continuing to modernize the approach we take to educating health care practitioners,” says Pollack “There’s room for our schools to stake out leadership in how we engage students in the classroom and laboratories, how we evaluate how they’re doing, and how we prepare a health care workforce to tackle the disparity in access and outcomes of the care that’s provided.”

Longer term, he’s aiming to elevate the school’s national standings. Currently, UB’s School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences is ranked 14th in the country, which Pollack feels undervalues the true significance of the school. He has his sights set on a top 10 spot—and preferably top five—within the next decade.

All these goals are achievable under Pollack’s leadership, says Marilyn Morris, PhD, SUNY Distinguished Professor and chair, pharmaceutical sciences. She was a member of the search committee and is also Pollack’s former classmate.

“He understands the culture in the school, what we’re looking for as a research-intensive school and is someone who will support those activities,” says Morris. “He also understands where pharmacy is at this time, and the need to enhance enrollment, increase interactions with alumni, and really foster a diverse and inclusive community within the school.”

While Pollack’s goals are bold and proudly stated, his approach is humble. It’s centered on the notion that leadership can only be effective if it keeps the best interests of the community at heart and holds steadfast to a shared belief in the mission everyone is trying to accomplish together.

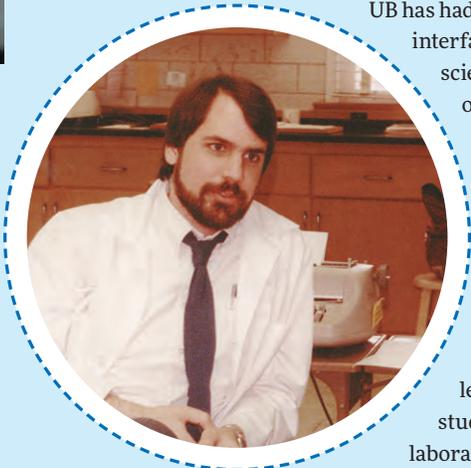
“The leadership positions I’ve been fortunate to hold are really service positions,” explains Pollack. “We serve so many different communities—students, staff, faculty, the university, external partners, alumni, the surrounding community. I believe it’s important for deans to remember that service part.”

Pollack’s appointment is a homecoming. As a UB alumnus and the husband of a Western New York native, a return to Buffalo was both a professional and a personal goal.

“Ever since I left here when I finished my graduate degree, I’ve had in the back of my mind that I’d like to circle back,” Pollack says. “As I advanced through my career, the sense that coming back here would be the good and right thing to do got increasingly strong. When this position came open, I felt like I was at an ideal time to come back.”

Pollack’s return to lead the school where his notable career began isn’t just a personal benefit; his perspective will be a boon to beckon new talent to Buffalo, too.

“When you have someone in a leadership role who is invested in the community and the university and really loves the area, it creates a different level of commitment,” says Prescott. “It will really help us when it comes to promoting the area and the university to the new leaders and faculty we’re trying to recruit.”



Pollack as a PhD student



Improving Pediatric Drug Dosing

Open-source mathematical equation simulates dosing impact by age, weight, gender

BY MARCENE ROBINSON

When prescribing medicine to children, doctors often rely on guidelines that simply scale down the dosage that adults receive. This imprecise and common practice fails to capture the nuances of childhood, which include rapid growth spurts.

To improve upon this method, researchers from the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (SPPS) developed, a single, open-source mathematical equation that compares the physiological relationships between age with organ weight and organ blood flow rate, both critical factors for drug absorption and clearance that change as organs quickly mature during childhood. The equation, recently published in the Journal of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, will allow researchers and clinicians

to better simulate the impact of drug dosage on children by age, weight and sex, as well as develop updated pediatric pharmacokinetic models.

“Children are not little adults. This widely used statement captures the complexity of changes in human physiology during development, which needs to be accounted for while determining drug doses for pediatric patients,” says lead investigator Dhaval Shah, PhD, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

“Adult-to-pediatric dose scaling through body weight, surface area or size is popular; however, all these scaling strategies often fail to achieve optimal concentrations of drugs across the entire pediatric age range,” he says. “Also, the safety and effectiveness of many drugs on the market are understudied

in children due to restrictions on their inclusion in clinical trials. Consequently, off-label drug usage is the unfortunate norm in pediatrics.”

Additional SPPS investigators include Hsuan Ping Chang, first author and doctoral candidate; Se Jin Kim, doctoral candidate; and Di Wu, PhD, research fellow, along with Kushal Shah, PhD, scientist at Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

“Adult-to-pediatric dose scaling... often fail[s] to achieve optimal concentrations of drugs across the entire pediatric age range.”

Attempts to develop pediatric pharmacokinetic models have been made in the past, but the models either reference outdated information; are not freely available to the public; or require the use of a different equation for each variable, making its application cumbersome, according to Shah.

The researchers examined the most recent data available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization and more than 50 research studies that measured organ weight and organ blood flow rate throughout childhood.

Using the data, they developed a single equation that could be modified to calculate the relationship between organ weight and age for male or female infants from birth to 2 years old, and male or female youths between 2-20 years old. The equation could also be adjusted to estimate the relationship between organ blood flow rate and age for male or female children from birth to 20 years old.

Children younger than 2 years old were separated in the equation due to the first two years of life being a period of rapid development, where body fat and brain size increase quickly, and kidney weight falls by 25%. The formula was also divided by sex to account for higher organ weights in males and higher body fat in females. The analysis found that organ blood flow rates did not change rapidly during childhood.

UB Launches MS in Clinical and Translational Therapeutics

First pharmacy school-based program of its kind in U.S.

BY KARA SWEET

The only pharmacy school-based program of its kind in the country, the MS in Clinical and Translational Therapeutics offers PharmD, undergraduate and health care professional students a unique opportunity to be involved in research and training to combat disease.

The study of clinical and translational therapeutics bridges scientific discoveries with the treatment of disease. It is a field of research in which the National Institutes of Health has noted a recent critical decline of adequately trained scientists.

The new MS in Clinical and Translational Therapeutics degree program aims to develop a pipeline of health care research leaders highly trained in therapeutic individualization and patient care optimization.

The completion of this MS, combined with the PharmD or other health professional degree, will give graduates a remarkable advantage when applying for residencies, fellowships or employment in clinical pharmacy or industry.

The program offers five therapeutic areas of concentration for students to choose from:

- clinical trials,
- pharmacotherapy,
- translational pharmacology,
- experimental therapeutics and
- pharmaceutical outcomes.

These tracks combine rotations with a pragmatic focus on research to create a highly individualized experience.

“UB has world-leading graduate training programs in pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics in the pharmaceutical sciences, and an extremely innovative PharmD curriculum,” Tsuji says. “Our MS in Clinical and Translational Therapeutics truly stands on the shoulders of giants.”



“There are currently no pharmacy school-based programs in the U.S. in the clinical and translational sciences that are specifically focused on treatment,” says Brian Tsuji, PharmD program director and associate dean for clinical and translational sciences. “This makes our program highly innovative in its blending of the clinical sciences with research rigor and therapeutic application.”

A Journey to Discovering Pharmacy: Beauty Kolade, PharmD Class of 2024

Her roots in Nigeria branch off to U.S. and Buffalo

BY REBECCA BRIERLEY

In her homeland of Nigeria, Beauty Kolade, PharmD '24, and her family experienced firsthand the impact of limited access to health care and pharmacy services. "My siblings and I experienced childhood diseases that in the United States are no longer a threat," Kolade recalls.

"My grandmother became ill and was misdiagnosed which resulted in her receiving inappropriate medications. She later passed away due to this misdiagnosis. I saw firsthand how lack of access to appropriate health care and medication therapy impacts you and those you care about." These tragic events set Kolade on her path to pharmacy to better understand how drugs really worked in the body.

In 2017, due to heightened military upheaval, Kolade and her family fled Nigeria for the United States, giving Kolade the opportunity to safely and securely continue her educational journey at the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Lehman College 3+4

Her U.S. studies began at CUNY Lehman College in the Bronx shortly after her arrival. Lehman College has a unique 3+4 transfer affiliation agreement with the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science that allows students to complete three years of undergraduate study at another institution, then transfer to the UB PharmD program. Kolade knew of UB's international reputation and signed up for the 3+4 program immediately. "I liked the dual degree options that UB Pharmacy offered, plus UB has one of the best pharmacy programs in New York State."

As a freshman at Lehman, she enrolled in chemistry, which provided her with the foundational knowledge to pursue her long-standing interest in biochemistry and how drugs work inside the body. Kolade also discovered a robust internship program in which she began to apply her intellectual curiosity to real world research and

scholarship. Her Lehman internships included:

University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio: Assisted with identifying molecularly targeted therapies for triple-negative breast cancer.

Los Alamos, New Mexico: Improved methodologies to identify biological compounds that can be used as biological threat agents.

Lehman College: Performed computational studies to identify cost-efficient alloys for use as fuel cell catalysts.

UB Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

In August 2020, Kolade began her last year as a Lehman College student and her first year as UB PharmD student in an almost fully remote environment. Completing her BS degree and beginning pharmacy school remotely was not quite what she expected, but Kolade took it all in stride. "The most challenging part about completing college was accepting that my Lehman graduation, and then my first year of pharmacy school, would be conducted online," she says. "My parents and I were really hoping to have the white coat ceremony (an important life milestone) in person, but unfortunately, that was also a remote event. It was tough ending Lehman and beginning UB in this environment, but these experiences taught me a lot about resiliency, self-discipline and how to succeed—all important qualities to use in my future pharmacy career."

Now that classes are once again in person for the 2021-22 academic year, Kolade is glad to finally be on campus and have the opportunity to meet her fellow students and professors. Her goal this year is to join a few student organizations and



keep focusing on her research interest in computational modeling, and its impact on drug development and new therapeutic approaches. "This year, I hope to establish more professional relationships with professors, and I am happy to finally be at the UB School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences in person, taking classes and being with my classmates."

"My grandmother became ill and was misdiagnosed which resulted in her receiving inappropriate medications. She later passed away due to this misdiagnosis. I saw firsthand how lack of access to appropriate health care and medication therapy impacts you and those you care about."

PharmD Students Impact Policy and the Profession

BY KARA SWEET

Two students from the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences were elected as 2021-22 regional officers for the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) Region 1, representing seven northeastern states from Maine to New York.



Caroline Irwin, PharmD '23, currently serves as APhA-ASP regional delegate for Region 1, where she promotes policy and advocacy, and represents student pharmacists in the APhA House of Delegates.

“I hope to empower student pharmacists to make meaningful changes to the field of pharmacy and aid in the progression of the profession into the future,” Irwin says.



Victoria Lyle, PharmD '24, is APhA-ASP regional member-at-large. Her duties include increasing student involvement on a regional and national level, and maintaining communication between chapters for membership, patient care and APhA-ASP/International Pharmaceutical Students Federation activities. She has also facilitated several virtual networking sessions at the Summer Leadership Institute and Annual Meeting.

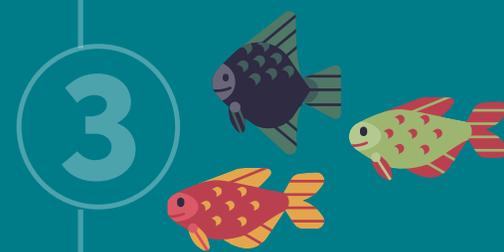
Meeting.

“Being a member of APhA-ASP has allowed me to connect and make friends with student pharmacists across the country,” Lyle says. “I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.”

TOP 5 Pharmacy Pets

A look at the furry family members of our faculty, staff and students.

1. Dog
2. Cat
3. Fish
4. Rodent
5. Reptile



Mission: Immunization

BY KARA SWEET

Operation Immunization was created in 1997 as a nationwide collaboration between the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) and the Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA).

Its objective was to increase the public's knowledge of immunizations, while increasing the number of adults receiving immunizations. Since its launch, nearly 1.5 million adults across the country have received an immunization because of the initiative, and the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences has played a key role.



100+

COVID-19 VACCINATION
CLINICS COMPLETED

3,800+

COVID-19 VACCINES
ADMINISTERED BY
UB SPPS STUDENTS

Vaccinating the UB Community and Beyond

In late 2018, New York State authorized pharmacy interns to administer immunizations. Shortly thereafter, the UB chapter of APhA-ASP, along with support from SNPhA and Lambda Kappa Sigma, began setting up influenza vaccination clinics in the community. They also partnered with UB Student Health Services to conduct flu shot clinics on all three of UB's campuses.

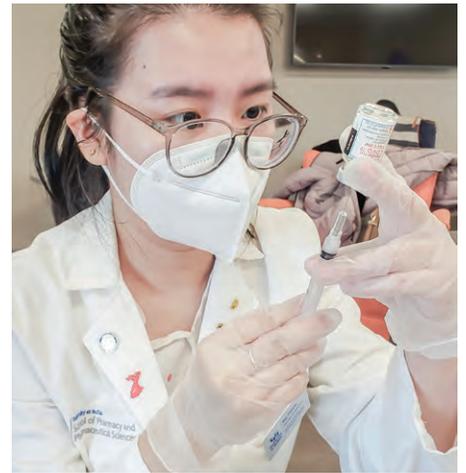
The students work under the supervision of community pharmacists and UB pharmacy school faculty, gaining valuable clinical experience. In addition to administering vaccines, students assist with patient registration, education and counseling, and clinic coordination, all skills necessary for compassionate and comprehensive patient care.

A New Challenge

Getting COVID-19 vaccines into the arms of Western New Yorkers presented UB pharmacy students and faculty with a whole new set of challenges.

"COVID-19 vaccination clinics were unique in their urgency and their scope," says Christopher Daly, PharmD/MBA '12, clinical assistant professor. "Our past flu vaccine clinics had, on average, 30 or 40 patients each. Our spring 2021 COVID-19 vaccine clinics saw hundreds of patients."

May Thandar is a third-year PharmD/MPH student and co-chair of Operation Immunization at SPPS. She worked closely with Daly to recruit student, faculty and alumni volunteers to set up community clinics. Her efforts resulted in UB student pharmacists administering nearly 4,000 COVID-19



May Thandar, PharmD '23, prepares COVID-19 vaccines at the Kenmore Community Center in March 2021. (Photo Credit: Don Daly, BS '79)

vaccines at senior and community centers, local pharmacies and across UB's three campuses.

Thandar finds the hands-on work to be vital to her training as a pharmacist and in supporting the school's mission of improving global health.

"The clinics are great opportunities to gain professional experience and demonstrate our efforts fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. As future health care professionals, it is important we play an active role in helping our community," she says.

With more than 100 COVID-19 vaccination clinics completed, UB student pharmacists are just getting started. "Our mission is to assist in ending the pandemic," Thandar says. "Participation in and coordination of these clinics will ensure this mission is accomplished."



“As future health care professionals, it is important we play an active role in helping our community.”

PharmD students and faculty providing COVID-19 vaccines at community clinics across Western New York.



Pharmacy and Public Health: Working Together to Optimize Patient Care

BY KARA SWEET

Health equity and social determinants play critical roles in individual well-being.

Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice David Jacobs, PharmD '11, PhD '18, is leading the school's public health efforts to optimize patient care in collaboration with PharmD and MPH students, faculty, community pharmacies, and local and national organizations. Their aim is to develop innovative care delivery models that address a patient's underlying social needs and improve whole person care. It's a unique combination of pharmacy practice and public health.

"We're integrating pharmacy practice research with many of the major public health challenges that we face today," Jacobs says. "It's a focus on practice transformation, collaborative research and engaging key stakeholders from the community to work on significant public health problems."

Jacobs is working closely with Christopher Daly, PharmD/MBA '12, clinical assistant professor, pharmacy practice, to explore screening and referral programs within community pharmacies, and with particular regard to complex patients who have multiple health and behavioral conditions. "These pharmacies are ideally placed to address social determinants of health, given their strong relationships with their patients and the communities they serve," Jacobs says.

Pharmacists as Patient Advocates

Unnecessary hospital readmissions are a major problem, accounting for more than 425,000 readmissions and over \$6 billion in hospital costs per year in the U.S. Jacobs, in collaboration with a local medical group and Erin Slazak, PharmD '04, clinical assistant professor, pharmacy practice, recently completed a clinical trial within primary care practices aimed at reducing hospitalizations and emergency department visits among older adults.

"We believe a pharmacist-led intervention cannot only solve the medication-related problems at discharge, but also assist with the communication gaps between patients and health care settings," Jacobs says. His recent K23 Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award from the NIH/ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute will help him develop a real-time, risk prediction algorithm that combines social information with patient-centric interventions tested in clinical practices.

Pharmacists as Public Health Experts

Jacobs recognizes that public health and pharmacy go hand-in-hand. "Pharmacy is on the front line in both hospital and community settings working to provide immunizations, optimizing medication use, and managing chronic illness and diseases," he says. "This has become even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. I believe pharmacy's role in public health will only continue to grow given the profession's accessibility, training and clinical expertise."

All pharmacists have a responsibility to participate in global, national, state, regional, and institutional efforts to promote public health and to integrate the goals of those initiatives into their practices.

— American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacists Statement on the Pharmacist's Role in Public Health, October 2021





Straubinger Receives Fulbright Award

BY KARA SWEET

Robert Straubinger, PhD, a University at Buffalo Distinguished Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, has received a highly prestigious Fulbright Scholar Award.

Straubinger will spend six months in Ireland at the Patrick G. Johnston Centre for Cancer Research at Queen's University Belfast (QUB) collaborating with scientists there to develop new leads for clinical trials for pancreatic adenocarcinoma (PDAC), the second leading cause of cancer death.

Treatment resistance of PDAC stems largely from the fact that it mutates to adapt and survive with a very limited blood supply, in a low-oxygen, low-nutrient environment. PDAC tumors also produce abundant connective tissue. This combination of low blood supply and a dense tissue barrier enables the cancer cells to survive chemotherapy and spread. Furthermore, the anatomical location of PDAC often makes surgery impossible and radiation too toxic to organs to be effective.

Straubinger's research focuses on both delivery mechanisms to optimize treatment of

difficult-to-access solid cancer tumors, and nanoparticle carriers to exploit temporary breaches in the tumor drug delivery barrier. He has been developing sequenced drug treatment strategies that weaken the PDAC drug delivery barrier and then deliver a cancer-killing treatment during the period of susceptibility.

His work draws heavily on predictive mathematical modeling of cancer therapeutics to understand mechanisms involved in tumor progression and responses to therapy, and how to employ novel nanoparticulate drugs and antibody-targeted therapies.

"This visit to QUB will provide an opportunity for sustained interaction with colleagues and potential collaborators, during which we will build an expanded sphere of research into novel pancreatic adenocarcinoma treatments," Straubinger says.

Straubinger recently obtained five years of support from the National Institutes of Health and funding agencies in the UK and Ireland to lead a three-nation, collaborative research project, "Tumor priming sequences combined with novel nanoparticle drug carriers for enhanced therapeutic efficacy in pancreatic cancer," with overall funding of \$4.8 million.



The Fulbright program, coordinated by the U.S. Department of State, is one of the most widely recognized scholarships in the world. It is devoted to improving intercultural relations, diplomacy and knowledge between the people of the U.S. and other nations through educational exchange.

Recognizing Greatness

These faculty and staff members are also recognized for awards and distinctions in 2021:



Sathy Balu-Iyer, PhD, professor, pharmaceutical sciences, appointed editor, *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*.



Nicholas Fusco, PharmD '10, clinical associate professor, pharmacy practice, received a 2021 University at Buffalo Exceptional Scholar Award for Teaching Innovation.



Kris Jordan, advanced pharmacy practice experience coordinator, received a 2021 State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service.



Dhaval Shah, PhD '10, associate professor, pharmaceutical sciences, named a top 2021 reviewer for the *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*.



Qing Ma, PharmD, PhD, associate professor, pharmacy practice, selected as a member of the National Institutes of Health HIV Comorbidities and Clinical Studies Study Section, Center for Scientific Review.



Donald Mager, BS '91, PharmD '00 and PhD '02, professor and vice chair, pharmaceutical sciences, appointed a fellow of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP).



Erin Slazak, PharmD '04, clinical assistant professor, pharmacy practice, elected chair-elect of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) Self-Care/Nonprescription Medicine Special Interest Group (SIG).



Kathleen Tornatore, PharmD, '81, professor, pharmacy practice, received a 2021 University at Buffalo Exceptional Scholar Sustained Achievement Award.

Blazing a New Path for Underserved Populations

Nicholas Smith's NIH Award will enhance individualized therapeutic care



BY REBECCA BRIERLEY

Nicholas Smith, BS '15, PharmD '18, MS '18 and PhD '21, assistant professor of pharmacy practice, is the recipient of a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clinical Loan Repayment Program (LRP) Award from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Purpose of the award is to decrease health disparities and improve patient outcomes through enhanced therapeutic care in underserved populations. This competitive funding is given to counteract the financial pressure of student loans for clinical investigators by repaying a percentage of the researcher's qualified educational debt in return for a commitment to engage in NIH-mission oriented research.

"As a group of clinician-scientists, our objectives are to design, test, then implement patient-specific treatments to optimize patient outcomes."

Smith's project, "Establishing Next Generation Therapeutic Drug Monitoring by Incorporating Special Patient Populations and Mechanism-based Pharmacodynamics," is focused on developing freely available dosing software tools to individualize therapy in the hospital setting. "The goal is to better provide dosing recommendations for special or underserved patient populations in Western New York where there may be insufficient information," Smith says. "In an era of increased medical costs, this type of patient-centered treatment will be integral to decreasing disparities in health outcomes."

The collaborative project involved faculty from across the university, as well as from the VA Western New York Health Care System and the University of Southern California. It will build upon Smith's research using population studies in tandem with bench research to optimize and understand new therapies, and their impact on patient care and outcomes.



A Life of Service: Nancy Finch Thompson, BS '60

First female pharmacist, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service

BY REBECCA BRIERLEY

Nancy Finch Thompson's life was one of service: to her family, to her community and to the profession of pharmacy.

After graduating from the UB School of Pharmacy in 1960, Thompson began her community and public service journey. She applied to the Commissioned Corps of the United States Public Health Service (PHS), becoming the first female pharmacist in the Corps, where she served from 1960-1968.



Her service to the Corps covered a variety of positions and opportunities: a two-year assignment to the PHS Hospital in Boston, followed by transfer to the New Orleans PHS hospital and the PHS-supported leprosarium in Carville, La. After an assignment in England, she returned to Washington, D.C.,

where she served as acting chief pharmacist, PHS Outpatient Clinic.

In Washington, she met her husband, Gene, and they were married in 1967. As there wasn't an opportunity during this time for part-time work, she left the Corps after the birth of her first child, and remained in the D.C. area until her passing on Nov. 21, 2020.

"Things were so different in the 1960s,"

her husband Gene Thompson recalls.

"During the birth of our first child at Walter Reed Medical Center, she was admitted to the ward for wives of enlisted service members, as they did not have hospital rooms for female officers. Nor as a dependent male spouse was I eligible for medical care. It was a different time; Nancy wished there was opportunity to work part time after becoming a mother. But sadly, that was not an option; she cried when she resigned her PHS post."

After leaving the USPHS, she no longer actively practiced pharmacy and turned her attentions to other forms of service. She became an active member of the National Presbyterian Church, serving as deacon and leading mission trips to Moldova. She and her husband also owned and operated the Adams Inn for many years, and were active D.C. community members.

Thompson's legacy of pioneering female leadership in public health and pharmacy is not to be forgotten. She paved the way

for female pharmacists to pursue a life of public health service. They now lead and direct medication therapy to underserved populations, monitor new drugs, conduct groundbreaking research and lead pharmacy care efforts during public health emergencies.

"We are forever grateful and indebted to



Nancy Finch Thompson for her leadership and role in advancing the profession as well as breaking

down barriers for women," says RADM Pamela Schweitzer, PharmD, former assistant surgeon general, 10th chief pharmacist officer, USPHS Commissioned Corp. "There are now 1,300 USPHS Commissioned Corps pharmacy officers—50% of them are women. There was not a path for Nancy, but she left a trail for us to follow."

Her pharmacy impact also includes a strong University at Buffalo legacy: Grandfather Ralph Stowell '15, father George Finch '28, uncle Richard Stowell '39, brother-in-law Peter Goliber '63 and cousins, James Buckley '53 and John Rodgers '83, were all graduates of the UB School of Pharmacy. Her place as

"During the birth of our first child at Walter Reed Medical Center, she was admitted to the ward for wives of enlisted service members, as they did not have hospital rooms for female officers."

a trailblazing female graduate is one not forgotten.

"The University at Buffalo pharmacy program has a strong legacy of women in leadership," says James O'Donnell, PhD, dean emeritus. "To have Mrs. Thompson carry on that legacy into the ranks of the Commissioned Corps of the United State Public Health Service is a great achievement and one of which we are immensely proud."



A Healthy Dose of Travel

BY KARA SWEET

A white coat over a shimmering sarong. An article on elder care for Forbes written oceanside. Patient medication safety videos on TikTok.

It's just another day in the life of 2019 PharmD grad Nabila Ismail, whose motto is to "maximize life beyond the 9 to 5."

Ismail began traveling the world her freshman year of college, taking every opportunity she could to explore.

"I learned so much about myself," she says. "Then when I went to Africa for one of my APPE rotations, I stayed there afterward to backpack around the continent. It changed the way I lived."

Ismail documented her journeys on a blog and her Instagram profile, "Dose of Travel," a charming combination of pharmacist insight and tourist tips. The more she traveled, the more popular she became, eventually boasting upwards of 12,000 followers.

After graduating in 2019, Ismail moved to Los Angeles, where she worked as a retail pharmacist. She continued to travel every chance she could and expanded her portfolio to include TikTok (where she now has over 14,000 followers) and her "Dose of Travel" podcast.

Ismail soon realized her passion for creating and communicating was a path she needed to pursue. "I was looking for a nontraditional career to utilize my skills and knowledge from pharmacy school," she says. The company GoodRX caught her eye—she now works as an engagement marketing manager on their Healthcare Professionals Marketing team and hosts the GoodPharmacists Podcast. She is also a contributing writer for Forbes and has been featured in Trip Advisor and Parade, where she offers both health and travel information.

Ismail was recently named by Trip Advisor as one of eight Asian American influencers to follow, and says she is humbled by the honor.

Notwithstanding her whirlwind success, her goals have remained unchanged. "I want to make a positive impact in the world and live a happy, fulfilled life," she says.



"[W]hen when I went to Africa for one of my APPE rotations, I stayed there afterward to backpack around the continent. It changed the way I lived."



Above, left: Volcan de Fuego, Guatemala
Above: Mexico City

The Golden Age of Western New York Pharmacy

BY KARA SWEET

The 1950s are considered by many to be the golden age of pharmacy. Science and research flourished, leading to the development of new drugs, better antibiotics and critical vaccines.

In Western New York, pharmacy school graduates were opening pharmacies and creating a newfound sense of community. Through their leadership, the local landscape of pharmacy practice changed for all who came afterward.

In 2021, we lost three of these renowned local leaders, but their legacy lives on through those they guided and mentored.

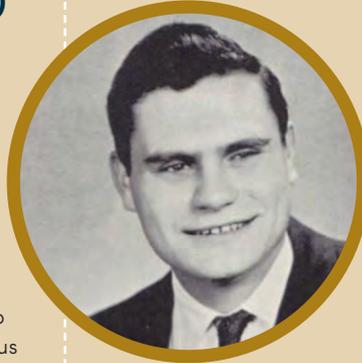
James Coppola BS '56 (1934-2021)

James Coppola was the quintessential businessman with a health care focus. After graduating from UB in 1956, he opened Getzville Pharmacy in 1965 and served as treasurer for the Getzville Businessmen's Association.

Coppola was a founding member of the Pharmacists' Association of Western New York (PAWNY), where he served two terms as president in the 1980s. He was also a founding member of the Amherst North Rotary as well as the Erie-Niagara Corporation, which eventually became part of Independent Health Association. Coppola was recognized for his civic leadership with PAWNY's 1987 Pharmacist of the Year Award and the prestigious National Bowl of Hygeia Award in 2004.

Although Coppola was esteemed in the community as an executive, he is remembered by local pharmacists as a treasured mentor.

"[Jim's] friendship and mentorship led me to get involved in leadership capacities with pharmacy professional organizations, which also proved valuable in the advancement of my career goals," says Martin Burruano, BS '86, vice president of pharmacy services at Independent Health Corporation. "His selfless dedication to our profession had a profound impact on me."



"His selfless dedication to our profession had a profound impact on me."

Milner Forster BS '52 (1926-2021)

Milner Forster's passion for pharmacy was just as strong as his love of conversation, family and community. He opened Forster's Pharmacy in Blasdell, N.Y., in 1959, and remained owner for more than 25 years.

"He taught me that pharmacy is for the people, with the people," says his grandson Christopher Daly, PharmD/MBA '12, clinical assistant professor, pharmacy practice.

He was an active and engaged member of the Pharmacists Association of Western New York and the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York, and president of the South Shore Rotary Club, which he was involved in for more than 40 years. He spent his time outside of pharmacy organizing Rotary Club fundraisers for charity, and in 1999, funded an open-heart surgery at Buffalo Children's Hospital for a young girl from Mexico.

His daughter, Lynn Daly (BS '79), followed in her father's footsteps as a pharmacist. After he retired, she took over Forster's Pharmacy with her husband, Don Daly (BS '79), and son Christopher. Customers there remember him fondly.

"He was very personable and a kind, generous person," says Lynn Daly. "He enjoyed making everybody laugh."

"He taught me that pharmacy is for the people, with the people."



Bruce Moden BS '57 (1936-2021)

Bruce Moden was a devoted family man, businessman and independent pharmacy advocate. He first opened Moden's Pharmacy in Lancaster, N.Y., in 1969. Later, as president and CEO of Moden-Giroux, Inc., he co-owned four other local pharmacies, as well as a surgical supply company.

He served as president of both the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York and the Erie County Pharmaceutical Association (later PAWNY); he held meetings for the latter in his living room.

"Bruce was a mentor for me," says Stephen Giroux, BS '81, Moden's longtime business partner and friend. "First as a pharmacist exemplifying leadership in associations, then as a business partner, taking a chance on a young kid just out of school. He was one of the hardest working pharmacists I've ever met."

His daughter, Linda Moden Andrews, BS '97, continued the family tradition, co-owning Larwood Pharmacy in East Aurora, N.Y.,

for more than 15 years. While many of her childhood memories include working in pharmacies with her family (and the distinct "medicine smell" her dad brought home with him), it's his knowledge and compassion that stands out the most.

"He was revered by the community," she says. "I've looked up to him all of my life ... which he would probably say was easy because he was 6'7'!"



"He was revered by the community,"

Defining a New Era of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Recent graduates carry on the UB legacy

BY KARA SWEET

The fundamentals of pharmaceutical sciences were pioneered at the University at Buffalo more than half a century ago. Our recent graduates proudly carry on this legacy, as they help shape emerging new frontiers of innovation and discovery.

Vanessa Gonzalez-Covarrubias, PhD '08: Improving drug efficacy with pharmacogenomics

Vanessa Gonzalez-Covarrubias leads a team of researchers at the National Institute of Genomic Medicine (INMEGEN) in Mexico in the field of pharmacogenomics. Most of her time is spent in the lab working with molecular and bioinformatic tools, but she also teaches and mentors graduate students through the National Autonomous University of Mexico.



Gonzalez-Covarrubias is currently investigating the role of the microbiome in the control of blood pressure in aging populations. The results have been fascinating. “We have identified some groups of bacteria more abundant in individuals with a healthy blood pressure, which suggests not only a role for diet and

interventions, but also an interplay between bacteria, their metabolites, antihypertensive pharmacokinetics and blood pressure,” she says.

She attributes her love of research to the “demanding and competitive” pharmaceutical sciences PhD program at UB and her mentor, Javier Blanco, PhD, Clin.Bio, professor, pharmaceutical sciences.

“Vanessa’s collaborative research endeavors have real translational value,” says Blanco. “They are likely to impact the utilization of pharmacogenetic testing in Mexico.”

Gonzalez-Covarrubias plans to continue her research of the genetic determinants of drug action and safety.

“I find meaning and passion in every experiment and in every question that may lead to a potential clue to unravel some drug mechanism, or offer an insight to understand drug efficacy better,” she says.

Erik Hefti, PharmD/MS '14, PhD '17: Reducing inequities in health care delivery through translational research

Erik Hefti is executive director and assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences at Harrisburg University. He is also part of a collaborative faculty group that is formulating a Pennsylvania State of Health Improvement Plan to reduce inequities in health care delivery and access.



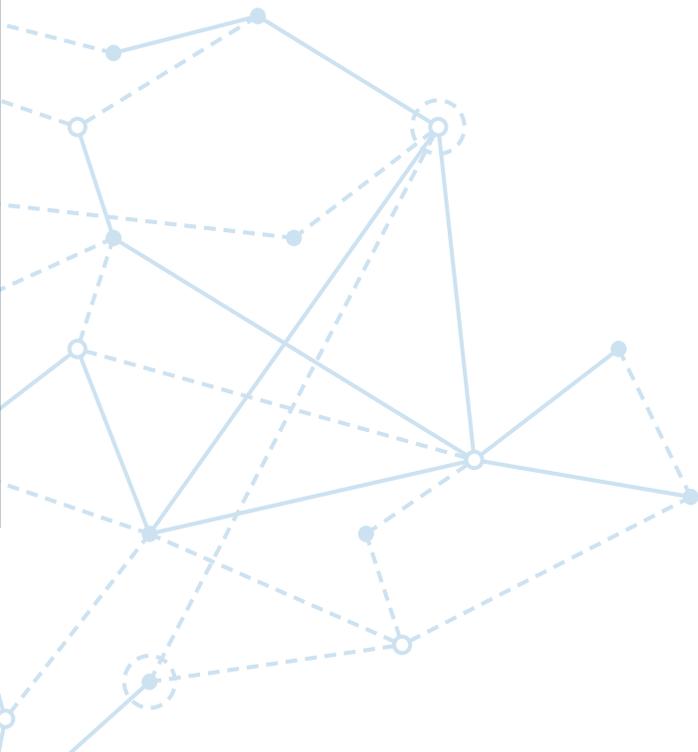
Beyond his academic obligations, he works as a clinical pharmacist at the telehealth startup RxLive, where he is studying the impact that medication therapy management—conducted on RxLive’s proprietary digital platform—has on hospitalization rates in a large outpatient population during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hefti was the first student at SPPS to complete a PharmD/MS/PhD. The academic rigor and guidance he received at the pharmacy school left a lasting impression. “Faculty support in the pharmaceutical sciences department was excellent,” he recalls. “[It] helped me realize my potential as an educator and researcher.”

While at UB, Hefti completed the first and most comprehensive mapping of mitochondrial genomes in myocardial samples from persons with and without Down syndrome. He finished his PhD with eight peer-reviewed publications and was first author on all of them.

“Erik opened new directions of research with genuine clinical impact,” says Javier Blanco, PhD, Clin.Bio, professor, pharmaceutical sciences.

“He epitomizes a translational scientist.”



Matthew Kosloski, BS '07, PhD '13: Biologic drug development to expand therapeutic access

Matthew Kosloski is assistant director of clinical pharmacology at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, where he supports biologic drug development for immunological and inflammatory diseases. He also is evaluating how therapies established in adults can translate to pediatric populations.



Last fall, Kosloski virtually returned to UB to present a lecture on the clinical pharmacology of protein therapeutics for Sathy Balu-Iyer, PhD, professor, pharmaceutical sciences. It was an invitation he was honored to accept from the school that helped him find his passion.

"Dr. Balu-Iyer introduced me to the possibilities of a research-based career," he says. "There was a lot to love about being a student at SPPS—even late nights alone in the lab collecting a hard-to-schedule time point for experiments could be oddly cathartic."

"Matt's performance in the demanding coursework of our department was outstanding," says Balu-Iyer. "He always went out of his way to help other students with their research."

Looking forward, Kosloski anticipates a long career in drug development—"getting a new drug product approved and into the hands of patients is immensely rewarding."

VINTAGE APOTHECARY

THE HISTORY
BEHIND NOVEL
ITEMS IN OUR
SCHOOL'S
APOTHECARY

Munyon's Homeopathic Remedies

BY KARA SWEET



James Munyon, ca. 1900

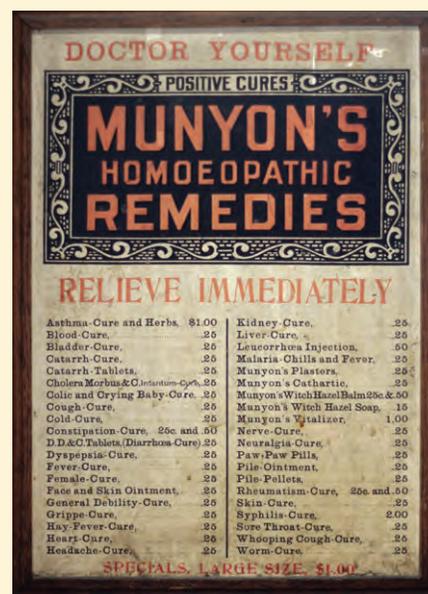
James Munyon was such a savvy entrepreneur that he was nicknamed "Money Munyon."

After stints as a lawyer, teacher, publisher and songwriter, Munyon changed course in the 1890s and became a salesman of homeopathic treatments that he developed with a staff of chemists and physicians. He was

wildly popular, and his runaway business success allowed him to purchase an island off the coast of Florida in 1901.

The construction and promotion of Hotel Hygeia (named for the Greek goddess of health) on Munyon Island became his new passion. It quickly became a wintertime retreat for wealthy Northerners, who couldn't get enough of his infamous "Paw Paw Elixir" (nothing more than fermented juice from papayas picked nearby). Munyon even composed an official song to promote the resort and elixir as part of an elaborate marketing campaign.

Munyon's self-professed "cures" were renamed "remedies" after passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. His success continued until 1917, when his hotel burned down—he died shortly thereafter. Munyon Island has remained largely uninhabited and is now part of the John D. MacArthur Beach State Park.



Munyon's Homeopathic Remedies sign in the UB SPPS Apothecary

The Drs. Piscitelli share their reward

BY: JUD MEAD

Steve Piscitelli, BS '88, Pharm D '90, has a story about the beginning of his research education that he's been telling all his life.

Steve Piscitelli, BS '88, Pharm D '90, has a story about the very beginning of his research education he's been telling all his life.

By the time he graduated with a bachelor of science in pharmacy, Steve had decided his future was in research. He was one of seven students in his first-year UB PharmD class. Gerhard Levy, a giant in the world Steve hoped to work in, assigned writing a research protocol. He gave Steve's effort a "D."

Steve went to Levy despondent. Maybe he wasn't cut out for a research career. Levy said, "Mr. Piscitelli, the first time you played golf were you good at it? No? Well, same thing here. Just keep working at it."

So he did. And he did very well.

Steve graduated from UB's PharmD program and moved on to a residency and a fellowship in infectious diseases at the University of Illinois–Chicago where he met his wife, Debbie, a PharmD graduate of UIC.

Then to the NIH for seven years where he was the coordinator of a clinical pharmacokinetics laboratory, with a side trip to the FDA. Then to industry, first as associate director of clinical pharmacology at Tibotec/Virco Labs, and then to GlaxoSmithKline where he was global head of clinical pharmacology–infectious diseases.

Today, Steve is vice president for clinical pharmacology, biometrics and medical writing at Dermavant, a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company. Debbie heads her own medical writing business.

And now that their two sons launched on their own careers, one in pharmacy and one in advertising, Steve and Debbie are realizing an ambition they've nurtured for several years: to give pharmacy student-researchers the advantage of their success.

Past Success Allows for Future Support

With a generous endowment gift, they established the Drs. Stephen and Deborah Piscitelli Scholarship at the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. They

also established an equivalent scholarship at Debbie's alma mater.

"The pharmaceutical industry has been very good to Debbie and me and we both think it's a great opportunity for pharmacists," Steve says. "If there are students out there who are thinking of pursuing a research career in industry, we want to help them along."

The Piscitelli Scholarship will go each year to a third- or fourth-year student who has demonstrated an interest in working in the pharmaceutical industry (for instance through an internship) or research, or both.

"There are so many options in pharmacy—you can go into government, academia, retail," Steve says. "We happen to feel strongly that the pharmaceutical industry is a good option for students and we want to support that if we can."

The Piscitellis are also particular about not restricting their scholarship to the highest achievers. They wanted no GPA or class rank criteria attached to the award, just interest in research and the pharmaceutical industry.

"One of my good friends in school worked a couple of jobs part time and he wasn't a straight-A student but he was a really good pharmacist—if I ever got sick I wanted him taking care of me," Steve says.

Just Keep Working At It

Steve grew up in Seneca Falls, NY. He had an aptitude for science and math and decided early in high school he wanted a career in pharmacy after learning about the field at a career fair. He chose UB as his best option for pharmacy study. It turned out to be a good choice.

"The school means a lot to me," he says. "I really enjoyed UB. I really enjoyed the pharmacy school."

He left with a handful of friends who he's still close to and the makings of a career he now describes at career fairs like the one that shaped his future. Steve also teaches a class in a drug development elective at the University of North Carolina's Eshelman School of Pharmacy.

Now he might paraphrase Gerhard Levy as he beckons students to join the industry he and Debbie both find so rewarding. "Come on in—and just keep working at it." Great career options await.

"Nothing would make us happier," Steve says today, "than if some years from now we meet someone who says 'I got your scholarship' and is having a successful career in research and we got to play a part in that."

Steve and Debbie Piscitelli





What the best minds can imagine

A new endowed chair in clinical pharmacy established

BY: JUD MEAD

“I’m just a kid who came from South Buffalo,” says Margie McGlynn, BS ’82, MBA ’83, Hon. Sc.D. “My mother always told me, ‘Remember, you’re just Margie.’”

Behind that plain introduction is an upbringing that produced an industry-leading career, a dedication to improving lives affected by rare diseases, and now, her endowment of the Margaret Hempling McGlynn Endowed Chair in Clinical Pharmacy.

Margie was one of eight children. Her father, Edward Hempling, BS ’50, owned Hempling’s Pharmacy on the corner of South Park and Crystal Avenues. Margie learned the business—and his values—at her father’s side. He cared more about doing good in his community than making profits.

Sadly, the Hempling family was shadowed by illness. Her brother Timothy died from measles when he was a toddler. When Margie was four, her sisters Judy (six) and Susie (two) were diagnosed with the rare genetic disorder homocystinuria, which interferes with the body’s ability to process certain amino acids.

The disorder had only been characterized a year earlier. There was no treatment. It brought a disastrous cascade of sequelae: developmental disability, abnormal blood clots, strokes, ophthalmic issues among many others. Judy was eventually wheelchair bound. They died within six months of each other when Susie was nine and Judy was 14. Margie was 11.



Path to Future Success

She expected to follow her father’s path in retail pharmacy but after a summer internship with Merck, she realized she could make a bigger impact in industry and accepted a position with Merck after finishing her MBA. She stayed for 26 years. By the time she left to pursue her own interests she was president of the company’s \$8 billion global vaccine and infectious disease division.

She was the global version of what her father had been in his South Buffalo neighborhood. Among other initiatives, she worked to establish a no-profit pricing policy for distributing medications for HIV/AIDS and other diseases to developing countries. Her division provided millions of free doses of Merck’s HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer

and rotavirus vaccine to prevent severe gastrointestinal disease in infants.

After Merck, McGlynn served for four years as president and CEO of the nonprofit International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, retiring from that role in 2015.

Understanding Patient’s Everyday Lives

In the meantime she established the Hempling Foundation for Homocystinuria Research and, in 2016, HCU Network America, a nonprofit patient advocacy and support organization dedicated to helping patients with homocystinuria and related disorders live with their diseases. Although still very difficult, the disorder is now better understood and more manageable.

The Hempling Foundation’s first research grant contributed to the development of a promising synthetic replacement for the defective enzyme that causes homocystinuria. It is now in phase 1/phase 2 human trials.

“It gives me the greatest satisfaction to know there may eventually be effective therapies to prevent serious issues and address the severe impact restrictive diet has on the quality of patients’ lives,” she says.

But it is the everyday lives of people

with homocystinuria and other metabolic disorders and their families that led to Margie McGlynn’s endowment at the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.

When her sisters were living with homocystinuria, there was no support system for them or the family, beyond medical care.

The disorder was barely understood. The sisters’ doctors at Children’s Hospital were wonderfully caring, but there was no team: no nutritionist because there was no dietary therapy, there were no geneticists, it didn’t occur to anyone that a clinical psychologist might get involved or a social worker.

Leadership in Clinical Pharmacy Research and Patient Care

The McGlynn Chair will focus research and training on how to deliver state-of-the-art clinical pharmacy care and will collaborate with other health care disciplines to improve integrated care delivery for patients with rare genetic metabolic disorders like

“[The endowed chair] establishes the concept that clinical pharmacists can play a lead role in a care-support team for rare genetic disorders.”

– Dean Gary Pollack

homocystinuria and phenylketonuria (PKU).

According to Dean Gary Pollack, the endowment will make a fundamental difference for the population Margie McGlynn cares most about.

“First, it establishes the concept that clinical pharmacists can play a lead role in a care-support team for rare genetic disorders. And second, it can put UB in a leadership position in developing that concept.”

Margie McGlynn is results-oriented. She expects her endowment to make a difference in the delivery of care for rare genetic diseases far beyond the pharmacy school.

“If we can do that better in Western New York, then let’s share that with the rest of the country and the rest of the world,” she says.

She wants the world to have what her sisters Judy and Susie missed. It was their fate to be born at a time when the world didn’t understand their disorder.

It’s Margie McGlynn’s mission to make what we better understand today work as effectively as the best minds in the field can imagine.

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The Hayes Society honors individuals who have made legacy gifts to the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences through a bequest or other method of deferred giving.

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