

50 YEARS OF ADVANCEMENT

1971  
2021

**UCONN**  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

## *Past deans*

Lyman Maynard Stowe, M.D.

**1963 - 1965**

John W. Patterson, M.D., Ph.D.

**1965 - 1971**

Robert U. Massey, M.D.

**1971 - 1984**

Eugene M. Sigman, M.D.

**1985 - 1992**

Ward E. Bullock, M.D.

**1994 - 1995**

Peter J. Deckers, M.D.

**1995 - 2008**

Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D.

**2008 - 2011**

Frank M. Torti, M.D., MPH

**2012 - 2014**

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



## WELCOME TO UCONN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

of our unwavering commitment to the advancement of medicine, medical education, and research. We are proudly commemorating the generational community impact from producing five decades of new physicians, scientists, and community leaders while increasing diversity and health equity in academic medicine.

I hope you enjoy reading this celebratory report about our School's history, and cutting-edge contributions to health care, science, and education — and about the even brighter future that lays ahead for our innovative medical school.

I was interim dean in 2011-2012, and have had the incredible privilege of serving as dean since 2015, and as a physician/scientist faculty member since 2002. It is an exciting honor to lay witness to this 50-year milestone celebrating our rich history of producing physicians to serve the great state of Connecticut, its citizens and others around the nation; their advancement of scientific breakthroughs from inside the lab to the patient's bedside; and changing medicine, peoples' lives and the world for the greater good, leaving it a better place indeed.

At the School of Medicine and UConn Health, Connecticut's only public academic medical center, our people represent our greatest strength. Enjoy this glimpse into just some of our exciting medical school's world of innovation, discovery, education, service and excellent patient care in our diverse, exemplary environment.

Here's to our next 50 years, unlocking the hope and promise of collaborative medicine and team science. I'd like to extend a sincere thanks for the ongoing support of the State of Connecticut, the University, our leadership, department chairs, division chiefs, center directors, staff, alumni, and our generous donors.

**Bruce T. Liang, M.D.**  
Dean, UConn School of Medicine

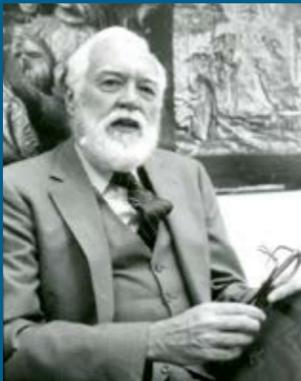
Director, Pat and Jim Calhoun  
Cardiology Center

Ray Neag Distinguished Professor of  
Cardiovascular Biology and Medicine

## WALKING THE HALLS OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE,

I'm reminded of its amazing history and the highly skilled faculty that fuel UConn Health's clinical, research and academic medical center's enterprise. We could not be a \$2.2 billion economic driver annually for Connecticut, its largest producer of new physicians, and offer the latest cutting-edge care without their dedication and talents.

Our people follow in the great footsteps of Founder John Patterson, M.D., Ph.D., our first VP for health affairs. Like him, they have an unfaltering commitment to scholarly excellence. As today's EVP for Health Affairs, I am honored and grateful for our leaders who, like him, have paved the way decade after decade for such a successful and diverse medical school and health center.



John Patterson

Congratulations to our medical school and its people on making the power of possible a reality with the robust medical and scientific breakthroughs patients need, while building the health-care workforce of tomorrow for Connecticut and the world.

**Andy Agwunobi, M.D., M.B.A.**  
Interim President,  
University of Connecticut

CEO & EVP for Health Affairs,  
UConn Health



50-YEAR HISTORY BY THE NUMBERS

SINCE 1972 UCONN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE HAS PRODUCED THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHYSICIANS AND SCIENTISTS. THIS IS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT'S OVERALL PROUD 130-YEAR HISTORY. UCONN IS RANKED BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT AMONG THE TOP 25 PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE NATION, AND ITS MEDICAL SCHOOL RANKS AMONG ALL PUBLIC MEDICAL SCHOOLS NATIONALLY AS NO. 30 IN PRIMARY CARE AND NO. 31 IN RESEARCH.

**10,000**  
HOSPITAL INPATIENTS

**800,000** OUTPATIENT CLIENTS CARED FOR BY FACULTY  
**169** Connecticut cities and towns have patients cared for by UConn faculty

**2,000**  
SURGERIES PERFORMED

**23%**  
of our medical students are from underrepresented groups in medicine.

**40%**  
OF OUR MEDICAL STUDENT GRADUATES PRACTICE IN CONNECTICUT

**36,000**  
EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

**#1**  
producer of medical professionals in the state

**\$100+ Million**

**457**  
FULL-TIME FACULTY

**44%** female faculty

**9.6%** underrepresented minority faculty

**98%**

MATCH OF GRADUATING MEDICAL STUDENTS TO A RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM

**50**  
medical school classes graduated since 1972

**100+**  
UConn Graduate School Master's, Ph.D. and dual doctoral degrees conferred annually

**340**  
graduate students (approximately), annually

**450**

APPROXIMATE ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL STUDENT BODY

**33%** of graduating medical students remain in Connecticut for training

**725+**  
residents, interns, and fellows in 68 graduate medical education training programs annually

**#30**  
ranked in primary care and

**#31**  
ranked in research nationally by U.S. News & World Report.

**60%**

approximately of Connecticut pediatricians have graduated from the medical school or its training programs, making UConn the largest educator of the state's pediatric medicine workforce.

**1 OF THE 10**  
most diverse medical schools in the nation named by U.S. News & World Report, with the new Diversity Index ranking of

**#13**  
among public medical schools and

**#26**  
among all medical schools.

**#6**  
ranked for least student indebtedness by U.S. News & World Report among all public medical schools, and

**#32**  
among all medical schools nationally.

IN ANNUAL MEDICAL SCHOOL RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACT FUNDING.



**WHILE ALL THE FOUNDING FACULTY HELPED SHAPE THE HISTORY OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL, 10 WERE CHOSEN SPECIFICALLY BY THE CLASS OF 1972 TO BE PORTRAYED IN THE MURAL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THEIR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE TEACHERS INCLUDING:**



**Robert L. Volle, Ph.D.** first to lead the Pharmacology Department, and later became associate medical school dean, and first Charles N. Loeser, M.D. award recipient for teaching excellence.



**Martha Lepow, M.D.** As associate professor started the Department of Pediatrics and taught from 1967 to 1978. A pioneer in children's health care, she is nationally recognized as one of the leading infectious disease specialists in the country for cystic fibrosis, pediatric and adolescent HIV care.



**Irwin H. Lepow, M.D. Ph.D.**, husband of Dr. Martha Lepow, first head of Pathology and became chair of the Department of Medicine. Since 1986 the annual Lepow award is given to the outstanding fourth-year student in the Biomedical Science Ph.D. Program.



**William Fleeson, M.D.**, was a professor of psychiatry who later served as associate dean of medical student affairs.



**Robert U. Massey, M.D.** was associate dean for Graduate Medical Education and later dean of UConn School of Medicine.



**James E. C. Walker, M.D.** served as professor of medicine and head of Clinical Medicine and Healthcare, which later became the Department of Community Medicine and Health Care.



**Charles N. Loeser, M.D.** a professor in the Anatomy Department, was one of the most popular and respected first faculty. The Loeser Award annually honors a faculty member who evokes in students an enthusiasm for learning, a desire to emulate their own attributes of scholarly curiosity, and who gives wholeheartedly to advance the welfare and education of their students.



**Eugene M. Sigman, M.D.**, a professor of medicine and associate dean of medical education, also served as dean of the medical school.



**Carl "Fritz" Hinz, M.D.** served as professor of medicine and associate dean of Medical Education.



**John W. Patterson, M.D. Ph.D.** served as professor of physiology, dean of the School of Medicine, and the first executive director and vice president for health affairs of the newly named UConn Health Center.

FIRST FACULTY



Sherwin Cooperstein / Milton Markowitz / Richard Worrell / Audrey Worrell / Naomi Rothfield / Mary Jane Osborn / Martha Lepow / Philip Levine / Lawrence Rothfield / John Foulds / Charles Loeser / Irwin Lepow / John Ives / Dudley Watkins / John Patterson / William Sunderman / Douglas Almond / Robert Volle / James Yaeger / William Fleeson / Robert Massey / Peter Ward / Edward Henderson / Carl Hinz / Sheldon Taubman / Robert Kramer / J. Richard Gaintner / Patricia Hulbrink / Douglas McGregor / James E. C. Walker / Norman Alisberg / Mary Carol Conroy / Donna Fournier / Susan W. Gilman / John Hancock / James A. Jackson / Jorge Jaramillo / Frank C. Jones / John Kneisel / Dorothy Schenck / D. William Schlott / Robert G. Votaw / Additional founding faculty members were Joseph E. Grasso / Maurice Feinstein / Achilles Pappano

FIRST AND 50<sup>TH</sup> CLASSES



John Bartkovitch / Kevin Beck / Roy Beebe / James Boyle / Jane Chapis / Lynn K. Davis / Robert S. Derkash / Richard Goldstein / Susan Goldstein / Thomas Gorin / Dennis Gottfried / James Greenberg / Stephen Hamburger / Robert Hendel / Terence S. Herman / Paul Iannini / James McCormick / Thomas Murphy / Neil Olson / Edward Osborn / William Pastuszak / Stephen Phillips / Joseph Pierz / Stephen Pillsbury / Ronald Reed / Sanford Rosenberg / Steven Sacks / William Vaughan / Allen Walker

FIRST WOMEN FACULTY

**Martha Lepow, M.D.**, also depicted in the mural, started to grow the initial roots of UConn's Department of Pediatrics, which she founded after beginning to care for pediatric outpatients at the still active Burgdorf Clinic in Hartford. Her meningococcal meningitis research helped contribute to vaccine development to fight this deadly disease.



MARTHA LEPOW

**Naomi F. Rothfield, M.D.**, professor of medicine who retired in 2016, is an internationally renowned rheumatologist who led UConn's Division of Rheumatic Diseases, training dozens of the world's leading rheumatologists. She specialized in lupus, scleroderma, and Raynaud disease.



NAOMI ROTHFIELD

**Mary Jane Osborn, Ph.D.**, professor and former leader of microbiology in the Department of Molecular, Microbial and Structural Biology, is nationally recognized for her biochemistry research, including mechanisms of bacterial cell division.



MARY OSBORN

**Audrey M. Worrell, M.D.**, practicing psychiatrist for 40 years and professor of psychiatry until 1987 at UConn. Her husband Richard V. Worrell, M.D., was the first chair of the Department of Orthopedics.

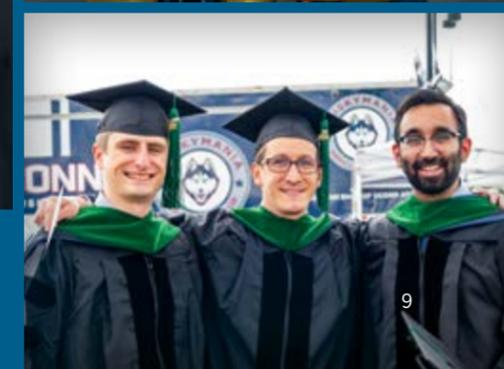


AUDREY WORRELL

50<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATING CLASS

The 107 graduating medical students in the Class of 2021 were part of UConn School of Medicine's largest class ever to graduate. Its historic 50th Commencement celebration was held May 8 outdoors at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, Conn.

2021



HISTORY TIMELINE

1964

Ground is broken for the future UConn Health Center, the only public academic medical center in Connecticut, and the only one in the nation to have a medical school founded concurrently with a dental school.

1965

Dr. John Patterson named medical dean and executive director of the UConn Health Center following the unexpected passing of Dr. Stowe.

1968

The first medical school class arrives, learning in temporary buildings while campus construction is underway for one of Connecticut's largest buildings at 1.2 million sq. ft.

1972

Commencement is held for UConn School of Medicine's first graduating medical school student class. Medical degrees were earned by 29 new physicians.

1975

UConn Health Center's John Dempsey Hospital opens and admits its first inpatient. The hospital is named after the governor who signed the initial 1961 legislation.

1978

Phased construction of UConn Health Center is completed and officially dedicated by Governor Ella Grasso.

1996

Connecticut Children's hospital is born after state legislation and local pediatric hospital providers volunteer to end pediatric services. Legislation required the same person as UConn's Department of Pediatrics chair and Connecticut Children's physician-in-chief.

2011

UConn Health is at the heart of the major state initiative called Bioscience Connecticut. The \$864 million investment establishes the state as a bioscience research leader, bolstering the state's economy, creating new jobs and improving access to world-class medicine.

2012

Bioscience Connecticut groundbreaking with Governor Dannel P. Malloy, marks the start of major construction transforming the UConn Health campus.

2014

The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine (JAX-GM) and UConn Health create a unique research partnership to accelerate personalized medicine and the state's bioscience industry. JAX-GM opens a new building on campus.

2016

19,000-square-foot Academic Entrance and Academic Rotunda opens with state-of-the-art, team-based learning facilities, and the medical school launches its new M-Delta curriculum.

2019

The Class of 2023, with 110 members the largest medical school class in the School's history, arrive in Farmington, an increase of 30% over the previous class, making good on Bioscience CT's promise to grow the state's health care workforce.

2020

Highest record research funding awarded, totaling more than \$100 million.

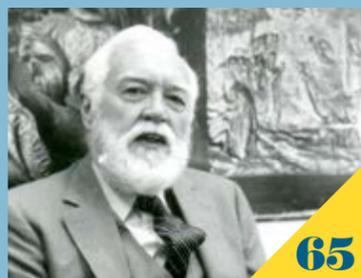
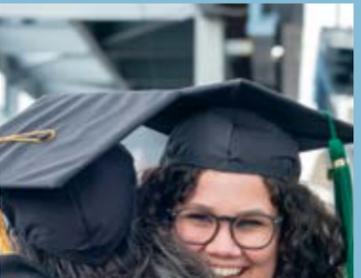
The pandemic strikes, and the first COVID-19 patient arrives at UConn's academic medical center for care on March 14, 2020.

2021

Commencement celebrated for the 50th graduating medical school class.

2022

UConn School of Medicine marks 50th year of producing new physicians for the great state of Connecticut and the nation.



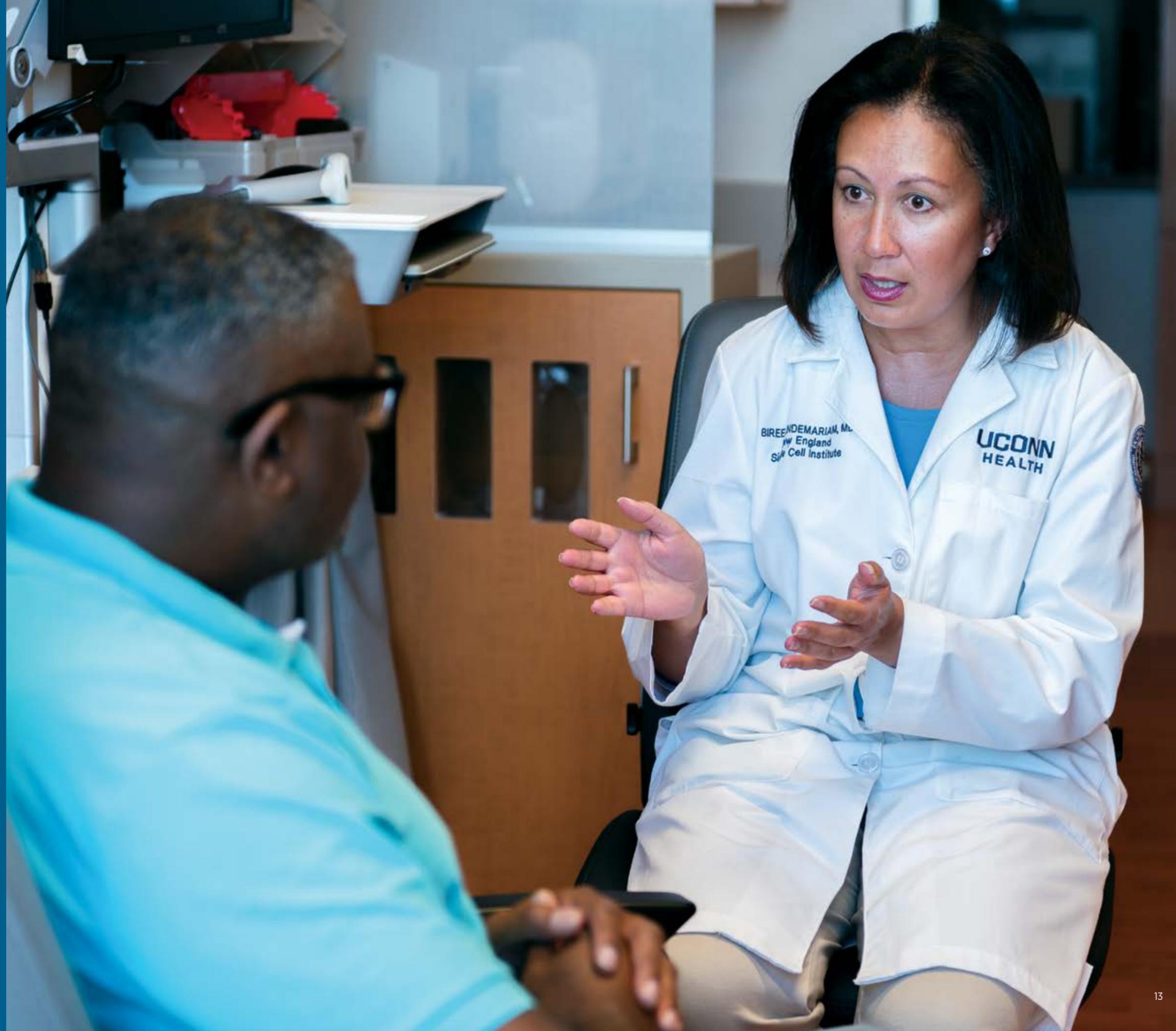
# 50

*years of  
advancement*

MEET SOME OF OUR FACULTY INNOVATIVELY ADVANCING PATIENT CARE, WHO REPRESENT A SMALL CROSS-SECTION OF THE POWER OF POSSIBILITIES OUR FACULTY COLLECTIVELY REPRESENT.

## CHANGING SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Dr. Biree Andemariam, professor of medicine, is transforming the lives of sickle cell patients. Her state-of-the-art New England Sickle Cell Institute is the first and only dedicated outpatient regional center of its kind for managing the painful inherited red blood cell condition. The once small program she founded in 2009 now serves hundreds of patients, and as a national referral base. Life expectancy for someone born with sickle cell is age 40 or less, but Andemariam's efforts are helping many beat the odds. Her global collaborations have published evidence-based, best practice guidelines, and her research team is conducting clinical trial testing for promising experimental drugs aimed at reducing the disease's trademark cell sickling, blood vessel blockages, organ damage, frequent hospitalizations, and premature deaths.



SURGEONS CHOOSE TO WORK AT OUR ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE PATIENTS WITH THE LATEST STATE-OF-THE-ART TREATMENTS AND TECHNOLOGY AND TO EDUCATE NEW PHYSICIANS TO ENSURE THIS HIGH STANDARD OF CARE CONTINUES FOR YEARS TO COME.



## INNOVATIVE MINIMALLY INVASIVE SPINAL SURGERY

Dr. Isaac Moss, chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery, co-directs the Comprehensive Spine Center, a major part of the newly launched Brain and Spine Institute. He is an innovative, fellowship-trained spine surgeon specializing in minimally invasive solutions for complex spinal disorders. These techniques are designed to achieve the same goals of traditional surgery while employing smaller incisions and less damage to surrounding tissue. This reduces the risk of many complications, and shortens hospital stays. Many patients

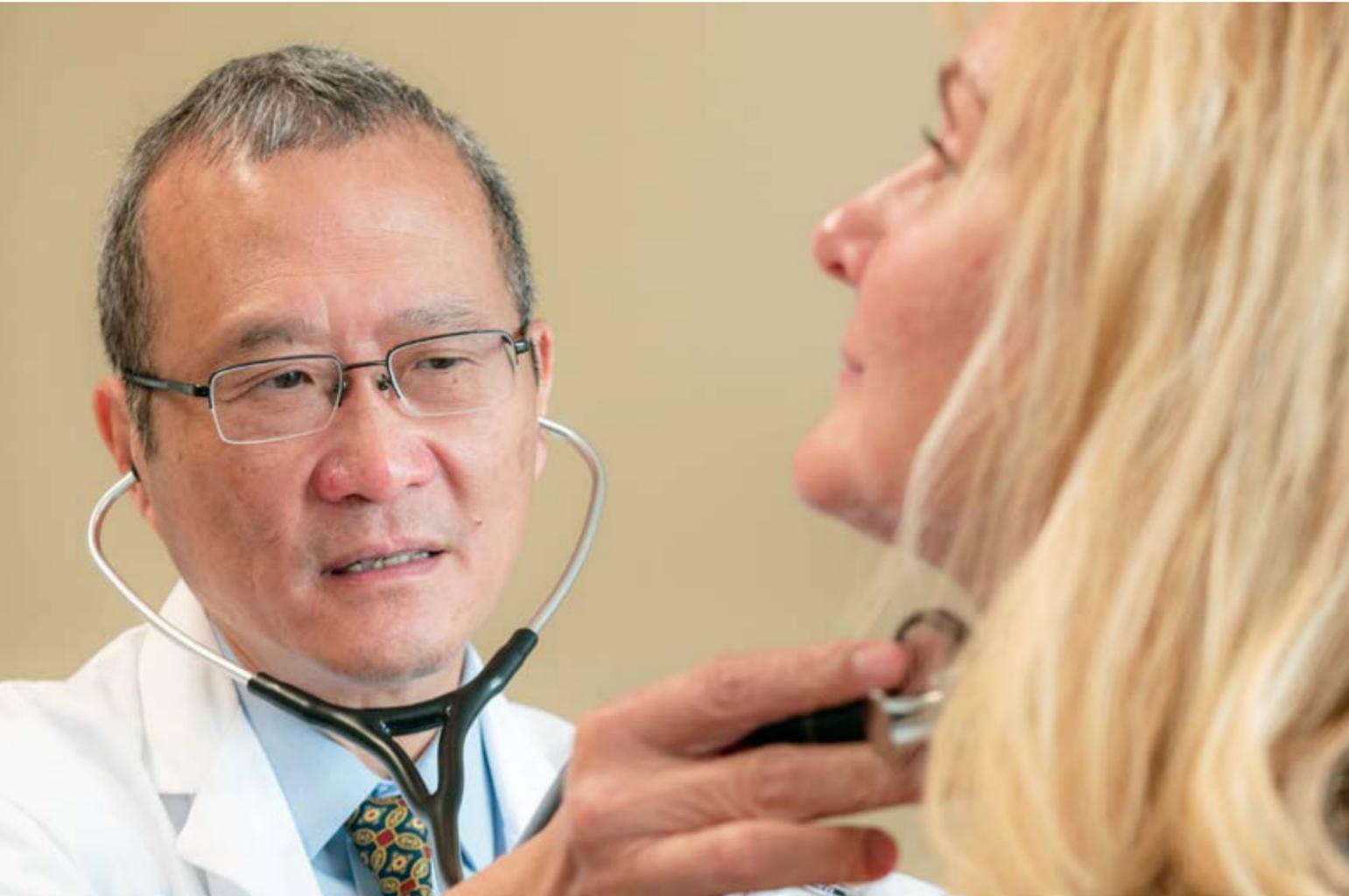
go home within a few hours of surgery, and experience accelerated recovery with less postoperative pain and earlier return to function. Moss leverages a wide array of technologies to facilitate these procedures, including being the first surgeon in New England to offer patients robotic-assisted spine surgery for the greatest accuracy and safety when implanting spinal instrumentation. In the laboratory he is studying the use of novel biomaterials and growth factors to advance the care of intervertebral disc degeneration. He has recently developed and directs a spinal surgery fellowship to pass on his knowledge and expertise to the next generation of surgeons.

## ADVANCING PROSTATE CANCER CARE

Dr. Peter C. Albertsen, professor of surgery and chief of the Division of Urology, is globally recognized for describing the natural history of prostate cancer. In the 1990s he used the Connecticut Tumor Registry to track 20-year clinical outcomes and recognized that most cancers identified by PSA testing rarely progress. This led to work with the National Cancer Institute and participation in a randomized trial conducted in the U.K. and reported in the New England Journal of Medicine comparing surgery, radiation and active surveillance. In 2010 he developed a robust prostate MRI program with our radiology department and now follows over 100 men with low-grade prostate cancer on “active surveillance.” In 2020 he was the first in Connecticut to adopt the transperineal approach to prostate biopsy that facilitates accurate biopsy of lesions found by MRI, and reduces the risk of sepsis.



# Reversing heart failure



Dr. Bruce T. Liang, director of the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center, dean of the School of Medicine, and Ray Neag Distinguished Professor of Cardiovascular Biology and Medicine, is a well-known cardiovascular physician-scientist. His research aims to clinically reverse heart failure, which has limited treatment options and is expected to triple in prevalence by 2030. In their work, Liang and co-researchers are testing their discovered medication's cardioprotective effects and reversal of heart dysfunction to turn back the

clock to improve the heart muscle's pumping. Liang's UConn-based start-up company, Provascor Pharmaceuticals (formerly Cornovus), is developing the new promising small molecule drug candidates. Liang's widely published translational heart failure, cardiac myocyte and intact heart biology research has been continuously funded since 1986 by the NIH, American Heart Association and Department of Defense. His promising clinical therapy, with NIH scientists, has received patents from the U.S. and European Union.



## PATIENT-FOCUSED PSORIASIS CENTER

As chair of the Department of Dermatology, Dr. Philip E. Kerr oversees a multidisciplinary team of highly experienced skin-care experts. He also directs and cares for skin cancer patients at the Melanoma Clinic with his team, using the latest evidence-based medicine and innovative tools from imaging to Mohs surgery. Most recently, he was instrumental in the Department's opening of a state-of-the-art, multidisciplinary Psoriasis Center dedicated to comprehensive patient care and clinical research for this common autoimmune condition causing scaly, itchy and painful skin plaques. Nearly 30 percent of UConn's dermatology patients have the condition. The Center's unique holistic psoriasis care approach offers high-tech treatments from phototherapy ultraviolet light, lasers and injectable medications, while patients have access to the Center's cutting-edge clinical trial research pursuits, as the researchers work onsite.



## ADVANCING WOMEN'S HEALTH AND CANCER CARE

Dr. Molly Brewer, professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, established a comprehensive Women's Center with a full range of services from general OB/GYN to minimally invasive gynecologic surgery and imaging. As a nationally recognized GYN oncology expert she shares: "I love my patients. They endure so many incredibly hard treatments. When we get them into remission, they're healthier, they feel better, and they're able to go back to their life. And that makes it all worth it." She cares for women from beginning to end, performing surgery and treating their disease with anti-cancer drugs, and meets their needs throughout remission. Brewer's latest research, part of a large team grant by the National Cancer Institute, is finding novel ways to improve ovarian cancer patient outcomes through innovative treatments and boosting current drug effectiveness. She is also studying chemo resistance and the role of cancer stem cells in recurrence.



# World-class neurosurgical care

Dr. Ketan Bulsara, chief of the Division of Neurosurgery, is an internationally renowned neurosurgeon with unparalleled expertise in both minimally invasive and standard treatment of neurological disorders affecting the brain and spine. These range from aneurysms, hemorrhages, and strokes, to complex tumors and cerebrovascular disorders. His arrival in 2017 heralded the formation of a mechanical thrombectomy program which allows the removal of devastating clots in stroke patients in the novel hybrid operating room. Also, UConn Health was the first U.S. institution to use a high-tech surgical microscope with augmented reality digital imaging during brain and spine surgeries.

Bulsara's multidisciplinary team approach tailors care for each patient and has established a personalized genomics initiative with The Jackson Laboratory to guide optimal clinical treatment. He has established a clinical collaboration with Duke's Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center to facilitate Connecticut patients' access to that premier center's treatments. UConn is now one of only a handful of centers in the country that is home to the high-profile LUMINOS-10 brain tumor clinical trial, testing promising immunotherapies. It also joins less than 2% of U.S. hospitals to be granted a seven-year neurological surgery residency.

DR. HENDERSON TRULY EMBODIES THE SPIRIT AND VERY BEST OF WHAT OUR MEDICAL SCHOOL AND ITS TALENTED PEOPLE HAVE OFFERED CONNECTICUT AND ACADEMIC MEDICINE OVERALL THROUGHOUT OUR SCHOOL'S 50-YEAR HISTORY.

## FAMILY MEDICINE CARE

Dr. David Henderson, chair of the Department of Family Medicine, is a hometown, UConn-trained family medicine practitioner, and a long-serving faculty member with clinical, teaching, and administrative leadership contributions. "Dr. Henderson truly embodies the spirit and very best of what our medical school and its talented people have offered Connecticut and academic medicine overall throughout our school's 50-year history," says Dr. Bruce T. Liang, dean. As chair, Henderson oversees all administrative, academic and clinical activities at UConn Health and in the community, including at Hartford's Family Medicine Center at Asylum Hill, which is Family Medicine's outpatient residency training program. Completing his UConn family medicine residency in 1984, he later joined the faculty in 2003 after serving for 19 years in clinical practice, with extensive global health experience, including in Africa. He is also trained in medical acupuncture and is an inventor, having been awarded patents in both the U.S. and the European Union for his novel intravenous catheter design.



## EMERGENCY MEDICINE HOME & AWAY



As chair and professor of the Department of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Robert Fuller and his team care for 36,000 annual patient visits to UConn John Dempsey Hospital, ranging from common injuries to rapid, cutting-edge heart and stroke care. He is also a first responder to the world's most devastating disasters with the International Medical Corps. As part of the humanitarian organization, he's deployed to disaster-ravaged areas to provide health-care relief while reestablishing medical infrastructure and supply chains. Often without electricity, running water, or even a roof over his head, nothing stops Fuller from treating his patients whether during the aftermath of 9/11, or Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas. While training the next generation of doctors at UConn, Fuller has begun a "How to Respond to an International Emergency as a Medical Doctor" fellowship to inspire global volunteers. Interestingly, Fuller grew up the son of a builder. "I know how to fix almost everything," says Fuller. This grand skill is the gift that keeps serving his patients, whether at home or around the world.



## REDUCING OLDER ADULT DEPRESSION WITH VIDEO GAMES

Kevin Manning, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry, is a neuropsychologist caring for older adults at the multidisciplinary UConn Center on Aging. He's using the power of computerized video gaming to improve mood and cognition in older adults still experiencing depression symptoms despite taking anti-depressant medications. Success for this National Institute of Mental Health-funded research is being tracked by Manning and his psychiatry colleagues Drs. David Steffens and Lihong Wang through cognitive evaluations, survey responses, and functional MRI neuroimaging, which helps physicians understand the brain regions involved in the etiology of depression and cognitive impairment.

## UCONN FACULTY AWARDED CLAUDE D. PEPPER OLDER AMERICANS INDEPENDENCE CENTER GRANT

UConn faculty have been awarded a \$7 million NIH grant to establish a Claude D. Pepper Older Americans Independence Center (OAIC) at the University of Connecticut, joining a network of only 14 other such centers of excellence across the country that promote research designed to maintain or restore independence in older adults. This highly competitive award, which comes from the National Institute on Aging at NIH, begins mid-August 2021 and continues through 2026.

The Pepper Center's aging research efforts will seek to engage investigators across both UConn and The Jackson Laboratory. This multidisciplinary effort is led by George A Kuchel, MD (director, UConn Center on Aging, professor, Travelers Chair in Geriatrics and Gerontology) and Richard H Fortinsky, PhD (professor, Health Net, Inc. Endowed Chair in Geriatrics and Gerontology). The OAIC will advance the new field of "precision gerontology," which seeks to enhance independence in older adults through approaches designed to better understand the uniqueness of each older individual in a manner that will lead to interventions that are more targeted and precise.

"Aging is multifaceted and not 'one-size-fits-all,'" said Kuchel. "With more holistic, yet individualized care and geroscience-guided interventions that seek to delay or slow the progression of multiple chronic diseases by targeting biological aging, we can transform the care of older adults."



BRIGHTER PRESENT AND FUTURE

Thanks to Bioscience Connecticut, UConn Health's campus has been transformed, and patient care, research, and medical education are bustling. UConn was the recipient of significant investment from the state's major initiative launched in 2011, which dedicated \$864 million across Connecticut to increase residents' access to world-class medicine, and establish the state and UConn as leaders on the forefront of cutting-edge bioscience research and industry, innovative health care, and medical education.

**384,000** SQ. FT.

NEW UCONN JOHN DEMPSEY HOSPITAL TOWER IN 2016 WITH

**169** **11**

PATIENT ROOMS FLOORS

AND EXPANSIVE NEW EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AND OPERATING ROOMS

**2016**

28,000 sq. ft. of new incubator lab space for biotech startup companies to fuel scientific discoveries opened at the Cell and Genome Sciences Building.



**2017**

200,000+ sq. ft. of renovated research laboratories to make them more open and collaborative for advancing research.

**2019**

Renovated patient care clinics completed.

**2016**

19,000 sq. ft. Academic Entrance and Academic Rotunda team-based learning center.

**2014**

189,000 sq. ft. Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine building opened on campus.

**2015**

300,000 sq. ft. Outpatient Pavilion

**200+**

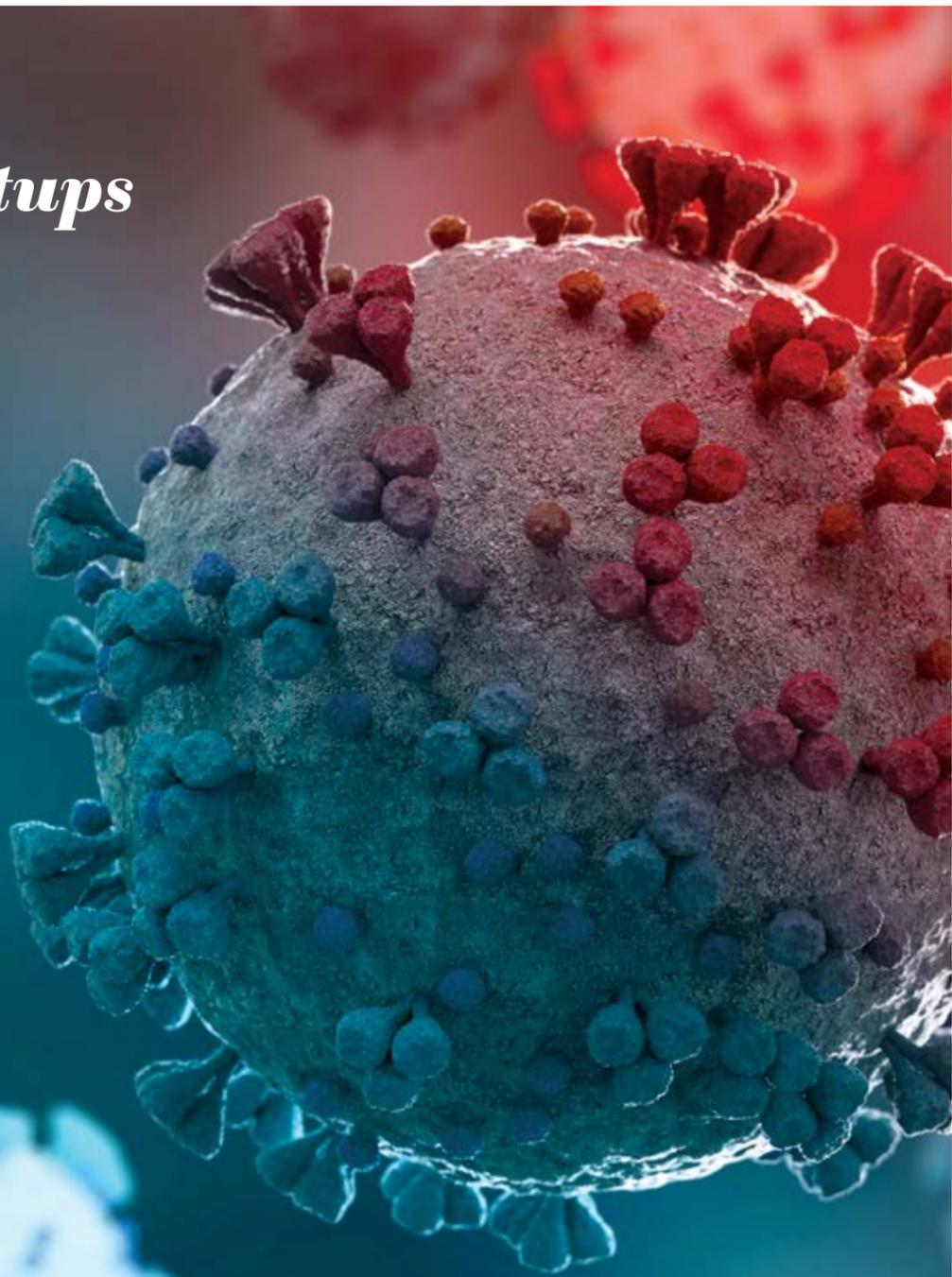
NEW FACULTY HIRED SINCE 2013 ACROSS PRIMARY CARE SPECIALTY AND INNOVATIVE SCIENCE AREAS.

The Technology Incubation Program (TIP), part of Technology Commercialization Services (TCS) within UConn's Office of the Vice President for Research, is dedicated to developing promising biotechnology breakthroughs into commercialized technologies and businesses. It is accelerating technology-based startups through UConn research partnerships, access to top experts and high-tech facilities, plus state of the art wet labs, offices, and no-cost business-development services. Combined, UConn's more than 100 University-wide TIP companies have secured 700 patents and annually raise nearly \$500 million in funding. Thanks to incubator lab space expansion under Bioscience CT, the more than 30 UConn Health-based TIP companies now receive more than \$280 million annually in external funding and boast nearly 200 employees.

## Faculty biotech startups

### QUERCUS MOLECULAR DESIGN (QMD)

was cofounded by Sandra Weller, Ph.D., former chair of the Department of Molecular Biology and Biophysics, with Dennis Wright, Ph.D., from the School of Pharmacy. QMD specializes in the design of small molecules that inhibit multiple protein targets to enhance drug potency and slow drug resistance. QMD applies this novel multi-targeting strategy for anti-viral indications including those for inhibiting herpes and COVID-19. "As academic scientists running a business, we were fortunate to have support from the University to help us advance our technologies," Weller says.



### POTENTIOMETRIC PROBES

was launched by Leslie Loew, Ph.D., professor of cell biology, with Co-Founders Corey Acker, Ph.D. and Ping Yan, Ph.D., both assistant professors in Loew's Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling. Their patented and innovative voltage-sensitive fluorescent staining dyes, with vibrant tones of yellow, orange and red, help light up and measure electrical impulses within cells, tissues, or whole organs. This allows for the microscopic study of tissue, injury, or disease from the brain to the heart. The commercialized voltage-sensitive dyes are used across basic research, drug discovery, and for safety screening of developmental drugs.



## GENERAL BIOMICS

was founded by George Weinstock, Ph.D., professor of genetics and genome sciences at UConn and director of Microbial Genomics at The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, with co-founder Dr. Yanjiao Zhou, assistant professor of medicine. The company is identifying the roles disease-causing pathogens and microbes play in our health. Their new single-platform, high-tech Metagenomic Shotgun Sequencing (MSS) protocol may more accurately and comprehensively sequence all pathogens in a clinical sample. This technology will help fuel future microbiome-based diagnostics and therapeutics for microbiome-impacted diseases such as asthma.

UConn Health and The Jackson Laboratory's on-campus partnership is accelerating scientific collaborations and advances in genomics and translational research for greater personalized medicine. Plus, it has attracted top research talent, including world-class physician-scientists, as joint UConn Health/JAX faculty.

## ADVANCING PEDIATRIC BRAIN TUMOR CARE

Since 2016, Ching C. Lau, M.D., Ph.D., has served as JAX Professor, Division Head in UConn's Department of Pediatrics' Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, and Martin J. Gavin Endowed Chair of Hematology-Oncology at Connecticut Children's. He's accelerating the pace and success rate of clinical trials in pediatric cancer patients using new genomic technologies to better understand pediatric brain and bone cancers and rapidly develop new therapeutic treatments for patients via translational research, especially difficult-to-treat brain tumors.

By combining virtual drug screening and mouse model findings with genomic medicine to choose the best therapy for each patient, Lau hopes to improve the speed and outcome of clinical trials and reduce cancer care side effects for children. His latest research is gaining insight on the underlying genomics of common and difficult-to-treat brain tumors to target them genetically with novel therapeutics. Plus, he's working to test and reposition current heart drugs to help expand the fight against complicated brain tumors. He also is leading an international team of investigators in industry and academia to develop a cloud-based platform to facilitate data sharing and integration through global collaboration.



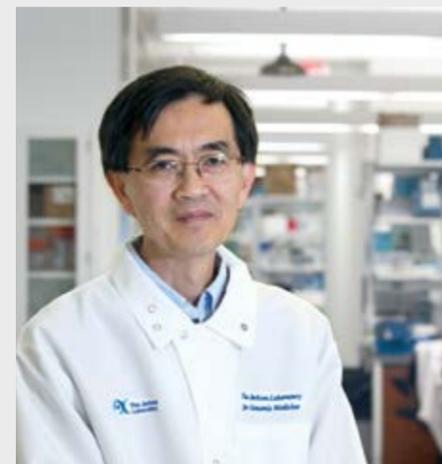
## BEATING HEART IN A DISH

J. Travis Hinson M.D., a cardiac physician-scientist recruited in 2016, advances cutting-edge translational human heart research. He has pioneered the engineering of heart-like structures with cells containing specific genetic mutations to study heart muscle diseases, known as cardiomyopathies, that can lead to heart failure. He studies the genetics and mutations of these tiny, 3-D heart structures to assess what medications may work best for personalized care of the heart condition. Hinson moves seamlessly between his JAX research and applying what he learns to his patient care practice at UConn's Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center, while teaching the next generation of cardiologists. Currently, he's investigating cardiovascular genome editing as a future promising therapeutic strategy to molecularly repair a disease-causing gene into a healthy gene.



## MICE IN SPACE

Se-Jin Lee, M.D., Ph.D., professor and Presidential Distinguished Professor of Genetics and Genome Sciences, joined UConn/JAX in 2017. He discovered myostatin, a signaling protein that acts as a master regulator of muscle mass. He leverages mouse genetics to investigate how dysregulation of myostatin and related proteins contributes to debilitating muscle disease progression. In 2019 his UConn, JAX, and Connecticut Children's team led research when NASA sent genetically engineered "Mighty Mice" to the International Space Station to study microgravity's effect on muscle and bone loss and show the potential myostatin inhibitors' hold for treating muscle and bone loss. The research findings will benefit astronauts and people suffering from muscle and bone degeneration-related conditions such as aging, AIDS, osteoporosis, and cancer. Lee holds more than 50 U.S. patents.



## CATCHING 'JUMPING GENES' BEFORE DISEASE STRIKES

Christine R. Beck, assistant professor of genetics and genome sciences at UConn Health/JAX, is a human genomics researcher recruited in 2017. She studies gene sequences that can change location within your genome. They may make up around 50% of the human genome, and are known as transposable elements (TEs). Beck believes they may be an important piece to the puzzle of understanding human variation and disease. She is working on discovering how TEs and other repeats can lead to genomic rearrangements seen in both healthy individuals and in diseases like cancer. While TEs are a key feature in our DNA, we still do not have a complete understanding of their impact on our genome and our health. The Beck Lab is studying how TEs impact genomic stability and gene expression in both human populations and mammalian models.

Connecticut Children's, the state's only health system dedicated exclusively to children, opened its doors to patients and families on April 2, 1996, after several hospitals like UConn John Dempsey Hospital voluntarily closed and integrated their pediatric services.

Twenty-five years later, Connecticut Children's remains the clinical home of the UConn Department of Pediatrics faculty's clinical care work. As one of the state's largest care providers with 300 faculty members, UConn's Department of Pediatrics has 31 medical and 13 surgical specialties. Connecticut Children's is also the teaching hospital for training medical students, pediatric residents, and fellows. In addition to the strong executive leadership of Jim Shmerling, DHA, FACHE, President & CEO, Connecticut Children's has always been co-led by a dually appointed physician-in-chief and UConn chair of pediatrics. Since 2013, Juan C. Salazar, M.D., M.P.H. has served in this leadership role.

Interestingly, the initial roots of the more than 50-year legacy of the pediatrics department grew from its founder, Martha Lepow, M.D., and others caring for pediatric outpatients at the Burgdorf Clinic, which is still active today in Hartford.



## MEET DR. EMILY GERMAIN-LEE

UConn and Connecticut Children's have recruited pioneering physician-scientists like Emily Germain-Lee, M.D., professor of pediatrics and chief of pediatric endocrinology and diabetes, to advance treatments and cures for pediatric diseases. Seamlessly, Germain-Lee provides clinical services at Connecticut Children's while conducting robust laboratory research at UConn. Her first-of-its-kind Albright Center cares for more patients suffering from a specific spectrum of rare inherited bone and endocrine disorders than any doctor or other center in the world.



RESEARCH INNOVATION

A FEW OF OUR MANY CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH PROGRAMS, AND THE WORLD-RENOWNED TEAMS BEHIND THE POWERFUL DISCOVERIES PROPELLING NEW INNOVATIONS.

Since the medical school's inception, part of its institutional fabric has been its commitment to advancing scientific and medical discovery by growing high-quality research programs. Today, its research enterprise has reached new heights with year-after-year landmark funding exceeding \$100 million. With the goal of improving the health and well-being of the people of Connecticut and the globe, its research expertise knows no boundaries. It spans across disciplines, campuses, state and international lines, from basic science to clinical research and trials, to translational research at the patient's bedside, to population, public, behavioral and social health arenas.



FOR NEARLY 45 YEARS ALCOHOL RESEARCH CENTER TACKLES ADDICTION

Victor Hesselbrock, Ph.D. leads the Alcohol Research Center (ARC). Established in 1978, it is the longest funded center of its kind both at UConn and in the nation. The NIH's National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) recently renewed ARC's funding for the eighth time with a \$7.5 million award. While ARC's central focus is causes and treatment of alcoholism, its programs span across drug addiction, pathological gambling, and even HIV/AIDS, integrating research, clinical care, and education.

"Receiving NIH support for over 40 years is a testament to the ARC's leadership and its investigators' cutting-edge research in alcohol-use disorders. The team's success is truly remarkable," said Dr. David Steffens, chair of psychiatry. ARC has earned an elite reputation in the worldwide addiction science community and has broken ground to advance the care of patients nationally in the areas of neuroscience, medication therapies, behavioral interventions, the genetics of addiction, as well as gender, ethnic, and environmental influences on the development of addictive disorders. The Center has also continued its training of post-doctoral fellows with ongoing NIH funding since 1980.



HUNTING FOR AN ALZHEIMER'S CURE

Riqiang Yan, Ph.D., chair and professor of the Department of Neuroscience, is one of the world's preeminent experts in Alzheimer's disease, which has no known cure. Yan founded UConn's first Alzheimer's program in 2018 to discover more effective future treatments and a cure. His leadership has ushered in research collaborations across the University, medical school, and with The Jackson Laboratory. Yan's been building upon his groundbreaking co-discovery made in 1999 of BACE1, an enzyme with a crucial role in AD's onset and the buildup of amyloids, the brain plaque leading to cognitive decline. Yan's latest findings show for the first time the overexpression of the C-terminal part of CX3CL1 protein reduces Alzheimer's pathology and neuron loss in mouse models. His current NIH-funded studies are testing the power and safety of several promising molecules to stop further amyloid growth, reduce other AD-causing brain culprits, and to enhance neurogenesis and replenish brain cell loss. "We hope within the next few years, with collaborative medical research, we will indeed have an effective drug to improve their cognitive functions and to finally treat Alzheimer's disease," says Yan. "Our discoveries will make this hope a reality for those struggling with Alzheimer's."



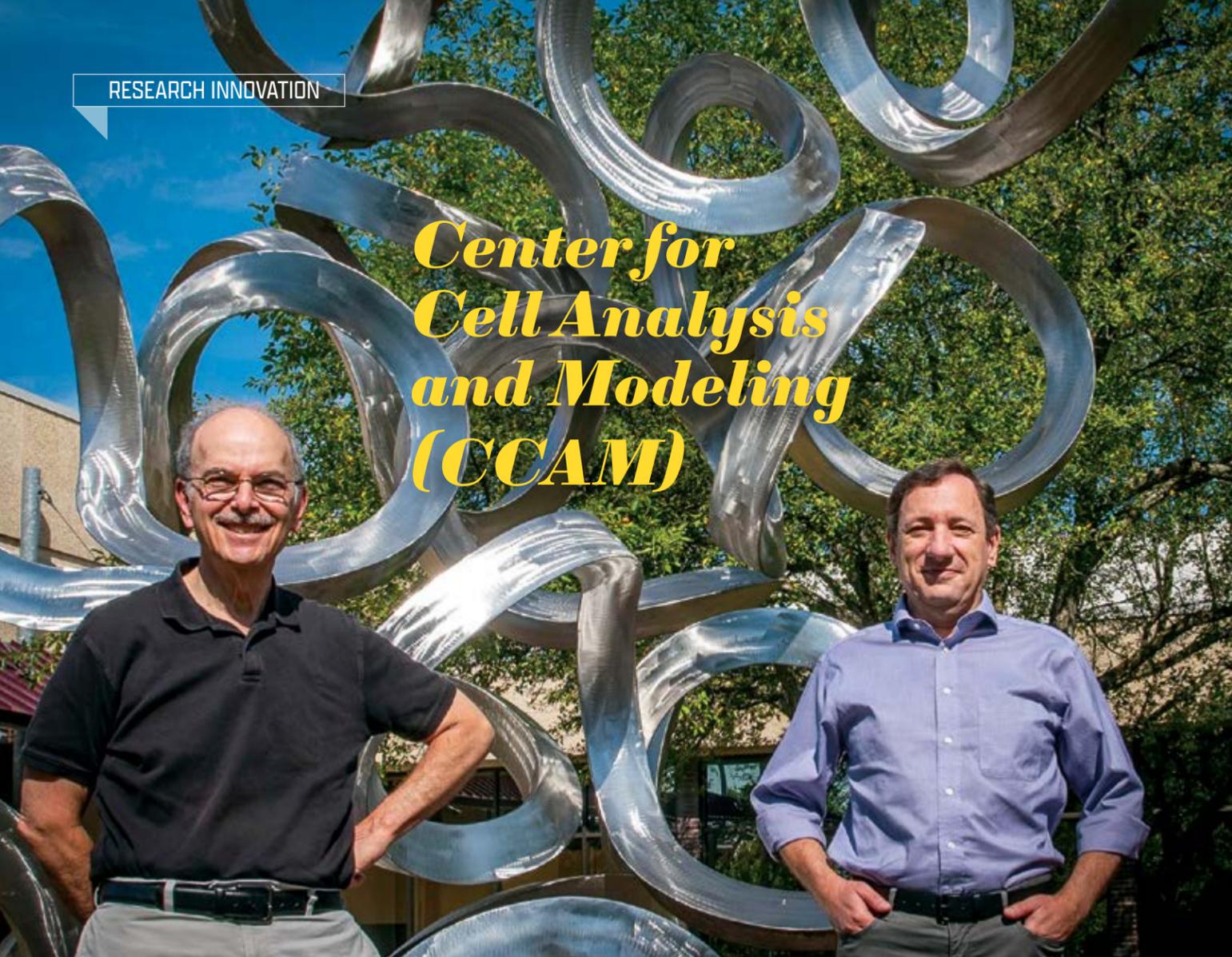
GROWING A HUMAN LIMB BY 2030

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin's brainchild is The Hartford Engineering A Limb (HEAL) project, aiming to regenerate/grow an entire human limb by 2030. As a surgeon-scientist and pioneer in the field of regenerative engineering, his laboratory research successes

already include the growth of bone and knee ligaments. HEAL hopes to help wounded warriors as well as others who have lost limbs or experienced nerve damage, such as those with amputations or even children born with missing or impaired limbs. Laurencin's international grand research challenge of his Connecticut Convergence Institute for Translation in Regenerative Engineering at UConn Health is a collaboration with top regenerative engineers at UConn, The University of California Irvine, professors at Harvard University, Columbia University, and Sastra University in India. The HEAL project is further supported by the work of dedicated multidisciplinary teams of research fellows, scientists, and clinicians. The project is supported by Laurencin's large grants from the NIH's Pioneer Award and the National Science Foundation for Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation. "The HEAL Project is a transformative moment for science and medicine," says Laurencin about the first international effort ever for knee and limb engineering.



# Center for Cell Analysis and Modeling (CCAM)



Leslie Loew, Ph.D., is the longtime director of CCAM. While he has passed the leadership torch to Pedro Mendes, Ph.D., professor of cell biology, Loew's legacy and research continues. In 1993, he first convinced several faculty members to merge their expertise and equipment for live cell imaging methods, later leading to CCAM's establishment. The Center developed the Virtual Cell software for computational modeling in cell biology, ushering in a new era. Thousands of scientists use the Virtual Cell worldwide. Loew recognized the value in bringing together different disciplines toward a shared goal of understanding cellular mechanisms. He has recruited exceptional faculty in cell biology,

chemistry, optical engineering, math, physics, and computer engineering, creating a unique environment for multidisciplinary research within a medical school. Over the decades, CCAM has been funded by NIH, U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Naval Research, National Science Foundation, and Connecticut Innovations, Inc. For 22 years the NIH funded CCAM as a National Biotechnology Resource. Loew's own research is still thriving, with new fluorescence probes for electrical activity in membranes and creating new understanding of cellular mechanisms. Loew is a newly appointed UConn Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor.

## CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH AIMS TO STOP STROKE DAMAGE

Rajkumar Verma, Ph.D., assistant professor of neuroscience at the Calhoun Cardiology Center, is hoping his research team's promising, experimental medication therapy could help to heal the brain after being damaged by a stroke. Already proven effective in animal models, the innovative stroke therapy nearing human clinical trials aims to inhibit an important receptor, P2X4, implicated in ischemic stroke damage. This novel P2X4 receptor inhibitor may reduce the expansion of brain lesion damaged by stroke and can combat the long-term effects of stroke such as paralysis of one side of the body, memory loss, speech, language and vision problems. "If proven successful in human clinical trials, this neuroprotective drug intervention would have a groundbreaking impact on stroke patient care," says Verma. In collaboration with UConn's Dr. Bruce Liang, M.D. and NIH's Dr. Kenneth Jacobson, Ph.D., Verma is currently working to synthesize and test more effective and brain-permeable P2X4 receptor inhibitors. This research innovation is supported by a small-business NIH grant, led by Liang and Verma, to the UConn Technology Incubation Program start-up company Provascor Pharmaceuticals (formerly Cornovus).



## NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE MEMBERS

The University of Connecticut now has three top scientists elected to the most prestigious U.S. National Academy of Sciences, for distinguished original research achievements.



Laurinda A. Jaffe, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Cell Biology for scientific advances in understanding of fertility.



Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D., University Professor and the Albert and Wilda Van Dusen Distinguished Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, for advancing his field of regenerative engineering.



Se-Jin Lee, M.D., Ph.D., the Presidential Distinguished Professor in Genetics and Genome Sciences and professor at The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, for research contributions to medical physiology and metabolism.

## MEDICAL EDUCATION

UConn School of Medicine has been making history and transforming medical education ever since its inception. In fact, UConn School of Medicine was the first medical school in the nation to be founded concurrently with a dental school, and students still learn side-by-side across all stages of their curriculum training to be future physicians and dentists.

The medical school is a select member of the American Medical Association's (AMA) prestigious Accelerating Change in Medical Education Consortium, working to reshape the medical education of the future by sharing their innovations with other schools around the country, helping to bridge the gaps that exist between how medical students are trained and how health care is delivered.

## NEW-AGE MEDICAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

UConn School of Medicine's new team-based learning, four year curriculum is meeting the challenges of the rapidly evolving health-care field, making students the best possible future doctors and health-care leaders. Unveiled in 2016, MDelta: Making a Difference in Education,

Learning, and Teaching Across the Curriculum, prepares physicians to embrace scientific advances, provide exceptional clinical care for patients and communities, become outstanding teachers, contribute to new knowledge about health and disease, work collaboratively with other health professionals, and pursue scholarly activities throughout their lives.

MDelta's cornerstones of success include the elimination of lectures, more active learning through teamwork, problem solving, and the application of learned knowledge in clinical case-based exercises. It should be noted that UConn was the first medical school in the nation to eliminate lectures. Learning is always patient-centered, with real hands-on patient care training with faculty preceptors. Patient care experiences start the first few weeks of medical school, and are sustained throughout students' four years, along with foundational basic science education. Students also train with advanced medical simulation and imaging technology in the high-tech clinical skills and virtual anatomy laboratories, and the traditional anatomy lab.



## EARLY CLINICAL & COMMUNITY CARE EXPERIENCES

Early patient exposure is one of the many reasons students choose UConn for medical school. Students clinically train alongside faculty, while volunteering thousands of hours of free health care community screenings, especially for the underserved. Some of their experiences include:

### 27 YEARS OF THE CLIC PROGRAM

The curriculum's Clinical Longitudinal Immersion in the Community (CLIC) Program matches first year medical students to work for three to four years alongside faculty and other community based primary care physician preceptors in internal medicine, family medicine, and pediatrics, and with some clinical subspecialists.

Introduced in 1995, the program was one of the first of its kind, serving as a national model. Three hundred and fifty medical students are enrolled in the CLIC Program, with 300 physician faculty across 60 Connecticut towns serving as preceptors. CLIC students build their patient-care skills, patient physician relationships, and see first hand the realities of medicine.

### KEEPING MIGRANT FARMERS HEALTHY, FOR 25 YEARS

Since 1997 the medical student-run UConn Migrant Farm Worker Mobile Clinic has provided critical free health care and screenings in 17 farming communities to some of the state's estimated 20,000 underserved migrant farmworkers. "Twenty-five years ago our medical students saw an unmet need in the underserved community. Now our migrant farm worker clinic has become part of the fabric of Connecticut," says program founder and associate dean for primary care Dr. Bruce Gould. "One night out at the camps caring for the migrant farm workers reminds us all why we went to medical school in the first place — to care for others." Part of a large inter agency effort, the Clinic is based in UConn Health's Connecticut Area Health Education Center (CT AHEC) Program.



## *Medical Students Powering Mass-Vaccination Effort*

Our future doctors have answered the call to assist with the Connecticut's COVID-19 mass vaccination efforts. They have volunteered with the City of Hartford Department of Health and Human Services to give vaccines at mass vaccination sites. They also powered the mobile vaccine distribution efforts of UConn Health, which was selected to run a traveling FEMA Mobile Vaccination Unit across underserved Eastern Connecticut towns to lower vaccine inequities. Medical students also vaccinated the underserved in Hartford-based Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) community clinics. "This is very important work. It is part of our legacy as we hope to put the once-in-a-lifetime, if not in a century, pandemic in our rearview mirror," says Dean Dr. Bruce T. Liang.

LAST YEAR NEARLY 18,000 STATE RESIDENTS, MANY OF WHOM ARE UNDERSERVED AND VULNERABLE, PARTICIPATED IN FREE HEALTH CARE, SCREENINGS AND HEALTH-PROMOTION EDUCATION, INCLUDING COVID-19 TESTING, VACCINATIONS, AND EDUCATION PROVIDED BY STUDENTS AND CT AHEC AFFILIATES.

### FUTURE DOCTORS MAKING A DIFFERENCE, ONE PHONE CALL AT A TIME

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, UConn medical students jumped into action and started working the phones to help in the battle against the virus. Students have made thousands of phone calls to check on COVID-19-positive patients in quarantine as well as high-risk, isolated older adults. The calls are part of the COVID-19 Self-Quarantine Surveillance Capacity Expansion Program, one of several student-led COVID-19 response initiatives rapidly developed by CT AHEC at UConn Health. The student-led, patient-focused surveillance project is a close collaboration with the UConn Health Population Health team's ongoing COVID-19 response.



UConn School of Medicine is a major provider for large-scale advanced teaching of doctors pursuing residency and other specialty fellowship training after medical school.

The School sponsors 68 residency and fellowship programs, supporting over 725 trainees each year. These trainees provide critical health care and staffing resources to UConn John Dempsey Hospital, along with six other Greater Hartford Area affiliated hospitals, along with other community facilities and programs in the state. Financially, these programs draw more than \$110 million in federal funding annually to support these new doctors' patient care and workforce contributions.



Dr. Kiki Nissen is the senior associate dean for Faculty Affairs and associate dean for GME. Nissen is a home-grown UConn success story. She has been a primary care provider at UConn since 1996, after completing her UConn medical degree and internal medicine residency training.

“IT IS A PRIVILEGE TO LEAD THE TRAINING OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE NATION. TO DO THIS AT MY VERY OWN MEDICAL SCHOOL AND WHERE I TRAINED IN RESIDENCY MAKES IT EVEN BETTER. OUR ROBUST RESIDENCY AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS ARE A TRUE TESTAMENT TO UCONN’S SUCCESS.”

Fifty years following its founding by one of the School's first faculty founders, Dr. James E. C. Walker, today's Department of Public Health Sciences remains a basic science department, formerly known as Community Medicine and Health Care. Its 25 full-time multidisciplinary faculty and other contributing faculty are led by Doug Brugge, Ph.D., M.S., the Health Net, Inc. Chair in Community Medicine and Public Health. Together they annually educate nearly 90 future public health leaders through their Program in Applied Public Health Sciences, offering M.P.H. and Ph.D. graduate degrees, along with other collaborative dual degrees and certificate trainings. They also

host the largest portfolio of population and public health research projects at the School of Medicine. Their wide-ranging research cuts across cancer epidemiology, substance use disorders, health services research, occupational and environmental health, health law and ethics, health behavior, public health dentistry, HIV/AIDS, and global health. Throughout this time, the department has had a significant impact on public policy through its collaborative work with State of Connecticut agencies and community-based health and service agencies.

### REDUCING HEALTH DISPARITIES THROUGH MEDICAL EDUCATION

UConn School of Medicine shines a bright light on inequitable health-care access and health disparities in America. We educate our students to address these disparities as part of the curriculum and from the ground up inside the community, giving them a more personal connection to those they serve.

The new curriculum's medical degree program uniquely offers a Public Health Certificate in Social Determinants of Health and Disparities. It was the first in the nation to require students to complete a certificate curriculum in social determinants of health, and the program is being emulated by other medical schools. MDelta and the Certificate in Social Determinants of Health and Disparities address both patient- and population-based health, allowing students to apply principles of epidemiology and biostatistics to questions related to clinical care and public health-focused problems. Additionally, students tackle issues of health equity, health policy, high-value care, cultural competence, and disease-control measures.



Starting with the Class of 2021, every medical student completes a fourth-year project that brings together their skills to identify an emerging issue in public health, assess available evidence, and determine whether to change their clinical practice or to advocate for change in policy or law.

The School is updating its curriculum to prepare trainees to tackle and respond to tough issues in health care such as mistreatment, harassment, bias, and career bullying. Students, faculty and clinical staff receive implicit-bias training to help identify any unconscious bias and prevent it from affecting their treatment decisions.

# ADAPTING TO A PANDEMIC

Even during pandemic times, with safety as the number-one priority, UConn School of Medicine faculty, in addition to their own heroic patient care response, quickly found creative ways to continue to rigorously train the next generation of doctors. They first switched to virtual learning at the end of 2020's academic year when the pandemic hit, and then safely welcomed the Class of 2024's 110 bright and diverse medical students in-person. Not even a pandemic would stop them from reaching their shared higher-education goals and becoming future health-care heroes.



To ensure safety, each new and returning student, like their faculty, are required to be entry-screened and wear masks on campus. In addition to stethoscopes, clinical students have face shields and eye protection to carry out their patient-care training experiences, and were offered COVID-19 vaccinations. The students' new age hybrid learning experiences include a combination of in-person, physically-distanced campus learning in limited-capacity classrooms along with virtual coursework.

PUBLIC HEALTH MISSION SINCE 1971



## DIVERSIFYING MEDICINE

As the School of Medicine's class size has grown, so has its diversity. UConn has been leading the way forward for nearly two decades with successful strides to increase underrepresented groups in medicine, especially Black Americans.

UConn School of Medicine was named by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top-10 medical schools in the nation for the diversity of its student body. Plus, in 2021 U.S. News Diversity Index ranked the UConn School of Medicine No. 26 for its diversity among all medical schools nationally. Among all public medical schools, UConn is ranked 13 out of 71 in the country for diversity.

"The Health Career Opportunity programs under the leadership of Dr. Marja Hurley have been a key initiative in diversifying the medical school student body, since more than 55% of the Black and Hispanic students who have matriculated to UConn School of Medicine came through this pipeline," said Dr. Bruce T. Liang, dean.

Black medical students represent 11.8% of the student body, well above the longstanding national average of 6% to 7%. Further, the School's population of underrepresented individuals in medicine has steadily grown to nearly 23%. For more than a decade, the school has maintained its overall percentage of Black students and has doubled the number of Black men enrolled.

"Diversity is incredibly important to us not only today, but also for the future as we advance medicine academically, clinically and and scientifically," said Liang. "The lack of African Americans and other underrepresented minorities choosing to enter the fields of medicine and research is a critical and longstanding national issue. Our ongoing commitment and efforts are showing progress and we look forward to further helping curb this national issue and building a stronger, more diverse pipeline of future health care professionals."

## CHANGEMAKER OF YOUNG PEOPLES' LIVES

Dr. Marja M. Hurley was the first woman of color to graduate from the School of Medicine, in 1976, and the first to become a tenured full professor. UConn named the pioneering physician-scientist one of its most outstanding women of its first 100 years.

While this trailblazer is renowned for her three decades of NIH-funded bone research, she is a mentor and inspiration for the next generation of doctors and scientists. For two decades, her 14 distinct Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative-sponsored programs have been critical in getting more young people, of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds interested in medicine and science, to enter medical, dental and health schools, and ultimately to pursue health professions.

The programs have served as a continuous pathway for youth of diverse backgrounds to realize their dream of becoming future doctors, dentists, and health professionals. Impressively, of the nearly 900 youth in the Health Career Opportunity Programs so far, more than 600 have successfully gone on to enter medical, dental school, or other health profession schools, and practice as providers in these fields.

"THIS PROGRAM AT UCONN HEALTH OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOME OF OUR BRIGHTEST STUDENTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS TO LEARN ABOUT THE INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS."

Hurley is founding director and associate dean for the Health Career Opportunity Programs, and professor of medicine and orthopedics. At UConn she completed her undergraduate and medical degrees, internal medicine residency and endocrinology fellowship trainings, and joined the faculty in 1986. Recently, Hurley was the first Black woman to be appointed a UConn Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor.



## HEALTH DISPARITIES INSTITUTE

Based in the downtown Hartford community, the UConn Health Disparities Institute (HDI) was launched in 2017 as part of Bioscience CT. It enhances research to improve the delivery of health care and outcomes for the underserved. Its strategic focus includes health systems change, utilization, and finance; behavioral health; chronic disease prevention and control; and neighborhoods, housing, and health.

"MY LIFE'S WORK IS TO PREVENT FAMILIES FROM LOSING THE MEN AND BOYS WHO THEY LOVE BEFORE IT'S THEIR TIME," SAYS POWELL, WHOSE HDI TEAM IS ALSO IMPROVING OTHER DISPARITIES SUCH AS COVID-19 HEALTH INEQUITIES, HEALTH INSURANCE LITERACY, AND MEDICAL DEBT — THE NUMBER-ONE REASON FOR PERSONAL BANKRUPTCY.

Under the leadership of Wizdom Powell, Ph.D., director and associate professor of psychiatry, HDI combines rigorous scientific research and translates it into policy to create structural changes addressing health inequities and disparities. Her ongoing research, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, is expanding the scientific knowledge on men's behavioral health, especially in high-risk, young-adult Black male populations. HDI has innovatively introduced an annual Report Card on Health Equity Among Men and Boys of Color in Connecticut, examining their health-care access and outcomes. Also, HDI has a series of overlapping research, policy translation, and programmatic initiatives focused on advancing health equity for boys and men of color in the state.

## OFFICE OF MULTICULTURAL AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Since 2017, the School's office of Multicultural and Community Affairs has celebrated, promoted and facilitated diversity and an inclusive environment for instruction, research, and health care delivery. Its programming and initiatives are grounded in amplifying diversity and inclusion, and cultivating leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenship. OMCA works to emphasize diversity in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of students, faculty and staff while serving as a resource.

OMCA is co-led by Dr. Bruce T. Liang, dean, Dr. David Henderson, OMCA's associate dean, and its director, Dr. Linda Barry.

“TOGETHER WE CELEBRATE DIVERSITY IN ALL ITS EXPRESSIONS, AND UPLIFT THE VOICES OF OUR COMMUNITY. EVERY MEMBER IS VALUED, ADDING TO THE RICH MOSAIC THAT HAS CREATED THIS INNOVATIVE ENVIRONMENT OF LEARNING, RESEARCH AND HEALTH CARE DELIVERY.”

Linda Barry, director of OMCA and associate professor of surgery and public health sciences



## ALUMNI ADVANCING MEDICINE

UConn School of Medicine's thousands of successful alumni practice medicine throughout Connecticut and around the world, with many conducting research or working as entrepreneurs in the private bioscience industry. And while UConn is often touted by alumni for providing a family-like atmosphere, some families continue to drive the advancement of medicine together.



“I LIKE THE PRACTICAL NATURE OF TRYING TO SOLVE PROBLEMS IN HUMAN BIOLOGY AND UNDERSTANDING SO YOU CAN MAKE PEOPLE’S LIVES BETTER.”

Tim Shannon

### SHANNON BROTHERS

Brothers Rick and Tim Shannon have become successful leaders in divergent fields, both driven by their desire to improve life for patients. Rick ('80), a cardiologist, oversees clinical and patient outcomes as chief quality officer for Duke Health. Tim ('85), also a physician, trained in pulmonary and critical care, and is a venture capitalist who launches biotechnology startups to develop new medicines to treat

patients. Tim, a general partner at Canaan Partners, wanted to find ways to help address pain and suffering. Rick also got into the medical field to make a difference, and discovered he had a talent for leadership during his medical internship.

They trace their career successes back to their working-class parents, who valued education and set high expectations, along with the outstanding education they received at the UConn School of Medicine. Both are generous supporters of the school.

### DR. LINDSAY SCHINE

Lindsay Schine ('89) M.D., recalls her time at the School of Medicine as being a lot of fun. She says there was a supportive, “we’re all in this together” atmosphere that she really appreciated.

Schine also appreciated that the tuition was much more affordable than other schools, which allowed her to choose to work in primary care, a field notoriously low paying in the profession. According to Schine, many physicians feel compelled to choose more lucrative specialties to afford their medical school debt.



Schine spent her career in primary care, including 27 years with the VA Connecticut Healthcare System. She retired in 2019. Now, Schine supports medical students who also wish to pursue careers in primary care through the Lindsay Schine and Michael Klingher Fellowship Fund, which she and Klingher, her husband, established in 2014.

Schine, who has served on the School of Medicine Alumni Board since 2016, joined the UConn Foundation's Board of Directors in 2020.

“I REALLY ENJOYED PRIMARY CARE, AND I LIKE BEING ABLE TO HELP OTHERS WHO WISH TO PURSUE THAT PATH. I HOPE THIS FUND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND BECOME SELF-SUSTAINING, AND THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THESE STUDENTS IN PERPETUITY.”

Lindsay Schine

## DR. WAYNE RAWLINS

Wayne Rawlins '76 (CLAS), '80 MD, is vice president and chief medical officer of WellSpark Health, a health insurance company started by ConnectiCare. From his remote home office on beautiful Bainbridge Island in Washington, he develops programs and strategies to promote prevention, health and wellbeing for employees and dependents of companies around the country.

Prior to joining ConnectiCare, Rawlins held several senior leadership positions at Aetna and was a lead clinician focused on identifying ways to address racial and ethnic disparities in health care. As a nationally recognized immunization expert, he has spoken to a number of groups during the pandemic about how to improve vaccine acceptance with respect to hesitancy among racial and ethnic populations.

Rawlins, who grew up in Manchester, Connecticut and majored in biology as an undergraduate, is a strong believer in giving back. He serves on the UConn Health Board of Directors and he and his wife established the Wayne S. Rawlins M.D., MBA and Janet E. Flagg Endowed Fellowship Fund, a scholarship for medical students.



funding supports life-saving patient care and innovative research. The Neag Outreach Educational Fund assists the Calhoun Cardiology Center with community outreach, and the Carole and Ray Neag Orthopaedic Research Scholar Program is helping to advance the field of orthopaedic academic medicine.

Ray also gave generously of his time, serving on the UConn Foundation Board of Directors, the Cancer Center Advisory Board, and the Calhoun Cardiology Center Leadership Advisory Council.

“HELPING OTHERS IS SOMETHING WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO, AND WE MUST. WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN OUR LIFETIME, AND WE GIVE BACK WHERE WE FEEL IT’S NEEDED.”

Carol Neag

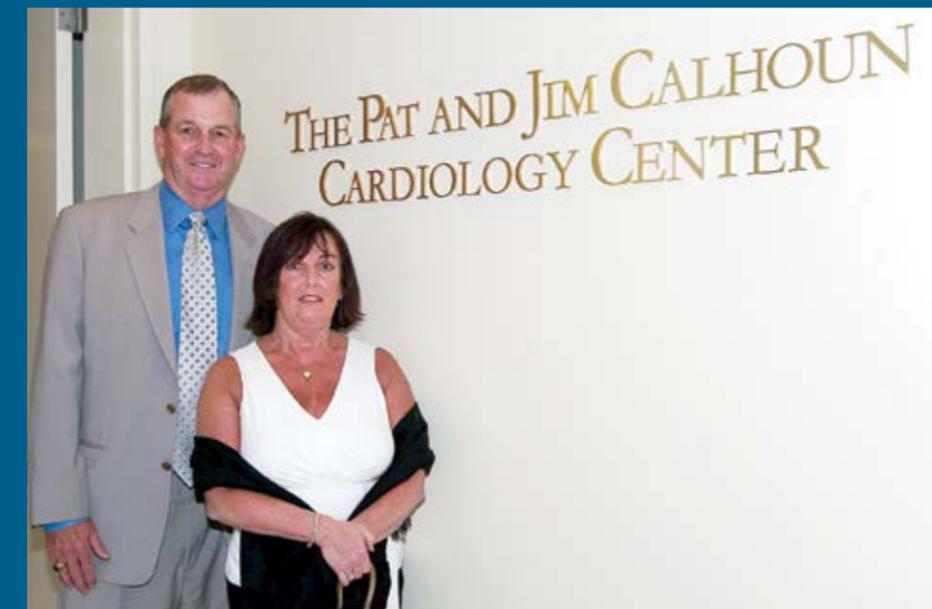
## PAT AND JIM CALHOUN

Renowned UConn Men’s Basketball Coach Jim Calhoun is well-known for winning three national championships, four Final Fours, and 17 Big East Championships. But he and his wife, Pat, are also champions in another UConn arena: supporting UConn Health.

The Calhouns, who both lost their parents to heart disease, are passionate about supporting UConn Health and have given generously to establish the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center at UConn Health, along with an affiliated cardiology research fund.

“WHEN I WAS 15 AND WAS WALKING OFF THE FIELD AFTER A BASEBALL GAME, SOMEONE SAID ‘HEY JIMMY CALHOUN, YOUR FATHER DIED.’ MY DAD HAD THE SAME SITUATION. HIS FATHER DIED WHEN HE WAS 16 AND HE WAS COMING HOME FROM SCHOOL. WE WANT TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO ELIMINATE ANOTHER KID GOING THROUGH THAT.”

Jim Calhoun



They first became acquainted with John Dempsey Hospital when Jim was treated there and were pleased with the excellent care they received from doctors, some of whom became lifelong friends.

Jim Calhoun also sponsored annual fundraisers, including the Jim Calhoun Celebrity Classic Golf Tournament, and the Big Y Jim Calhoun Cancer Challenge Ride, to benefit The Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center at UConn Health.

Calhoun retired from UConn in 2012 after 26 years, and subsequently became head coach of men’s basketball at the University of St. Joseph in 2018. Pat is a homemaker and also has been active in fundraisers for the American Heart Association.

## CAROLE AND RAY NEAG '56, '01H

Ray and Carole Neag’s support of UConn Health makes a difference in countless lives every day. Their generosity enables doctors and nurses to provide quality care, and scientists to conduct life-saving research—all to the benefit of patients in Connecticut and around the world.

Carole, a retired registered nurse, says that their careers in the health-care industry—Ray, who passed away in 2018, worked in the medical device industry—inspired their philanthropy in this area.

The Neags have transformed UConn Health’s cancer, cardiology, orthopaedics, and dermatology programs. At the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center, their





**UCONN**  
**HEALTH**