Pittsburgh’s Hill District, and he opened a private practice there in 1950. At the time, Miller’s practice was one of about 10 in the Hill; now his is the only private practice in that neighborhood. Miller never considered leaving Pittsburgh, especially the Hill. “This is my home. It’s been my home since I was 3 years old,” he says. He plans to phase out his practice and retire in Pittsburgh.

Fred J. Payne (MD ’49) was tracking down viral diseases in Mauritius, an island east of Madagascar, in 1960. At the time, he was with the World Health Organization (WHO), serving as the leader of a diarrheal diseases advisory team. Payne and the rest of the team were trying to prove that infection, not malnutrition, was the source of diarrhea in many developing countries. On the island, Payne and his team identified a connection between the environment and health and determined an unknown virus was at fault. WHO set up a series of surveys for the next five years, which confirmed the team’s research. Years later, in 1978, Payne began working for the Fairfax County Health Department in Virginia, just before the emergence of HIV in the United States. Although Payne and the other health department physicians did not know what was causing HIV, they suspected it was a virus. Payne now is with the Children’s AIDS Fund in Washington, D.C., which supports the treatment of children with AIDS in Africa.

Lois Pounds Oliver (MD ’65) retired from teaching and medicine after her husband, Tim Oliver (former chair of pediatrics), became ill and died. Yet the one-time Pitt med dean of student affairs can’t seem to leave academia. She volunteers at Duke University’s gardens and chapel and takes classes, too. She has enrolled in a series of writing classes there—her assignments have turned into a memoir. Her classmates in an ethics class included other senior citizens from Duke’s Institute for Learning in Retirement but also undergrads. She especially had fun comparing views on sex and dating with her classmates.

If you’ve had a hard time tracking her down, that may be because she lasted

NO STUFFY SCIENCE | JOHN LAROSA

On a whim, John LaRosa (MD ’65), president of SUNY Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, began studying cholesterol and metabolism with a mentor at the National Institutes of Health in the ’60s because that investigator was unlike the other stuffy and preoccupied scientists he had met on interviews. Luckily, he found cholesterol and metabolism to be just as fascinating as his initial interest, infectious diseases.

Forty-some years later, LaRosa, winner of the Medical Alumni Association’s 2005 Hench Award, is internationally recognized for his work on statins. Even with his formidable administrative duties, he’s still an active researcher. He led a five-year study of the impact of administering intensive doses of the lipid-lowering drug atorvastatin; the study followed 10,000 people from the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and South Africa. Study results, published in April in The New England Journal of Medicine, suggest that lowering cholesterol below currently recommended guidelines offers significant additional benefit in preventing both heart attacks and strokes.

Looking back on a lifetime of effort to help people maintain or lower their cholesterol levels, LaRosa realizes that half the problem is getting people to adhere to a regimen. “Fifty percent of people on prescription stop taking their medicine because they feel okay,” he says.

During his six-year tenure at SUNY Downstate, he has established major biotechnology initiatives and doubled extramural research funding. Before joining SUNY Downstate, LaRosa was chancellor of Tulane University Medical Center in New Orleans. If LaRosa could have an alternate profession, he says it would be music. He plays jazz piano and has performed in New York and New Orleans. He even formed a band called Generation Gap with his kids.

“It unstiffens you, makes you look human. But I don’t really care about all that. I’m just glad that I’ve had the chance to play with some really great musicians,” he says. — Nita Chawla
A patient suffering from a mild stroke came to Lawrence Wechsler (Res ’80) and a colleague in 1988. Wechsler was a young neurologist recently returned to Pittsburgh after several years of additional training at Massachusetts General Hospital. Instead of giving the man a blood thinner, aspirin, or another oral drug that needed hours to take effect, the doctors inserted a microcatheter into an artery in the man’s leg, then threaded it to the clot threatening the brain where they administered a new clot-busting drug, urokinase. Wechsler and his colleague would be among the first doctors anywhere to report on using urokinase to dissolve clots this way. (There’s still interest in this interarterial therapy today.) The patient went home a day later. Encouraged by the patient’s recovery, Wechsler has applied himself to improving stroke treatments ever since.

Now a Pitt professor of neurology and neurological surgery, Wechsler is the winner of the 2005 McEllroy Award for an outstanding physician who completed a residency at Pitt. He is the founder and director of the University of Pittsburgh Stroke Institute. With his institute colleagues, Wechsler develops and tests such treatments for stroke as cell transplantation. The transplantation process begins with immortalized cells, which originate from tumor cells but have been treated to become the precursors of human neurons. Not long ago, it was thought impossible to restore brain function that had been lost. But Wechsler’s team has shown that if doctors are to treat both the donor and recipient with antioxidants, for example, the organ would be healthier and perform better in the recipient. Pretto also earned a Master of Public Health, studying under Lewis Kuller, while at Pitt.

‘90s When a cult doused an Oregon salad bar with salmonella in 1984, local doctors didn’t realize what had happened until 750 people were sickened. As chief of the Division of Emergency Medicine at Northwestern University, James G. Adams (Emergency Medicine Resident ’88–’91) is trying to prevent situations like this from happening again by automating area emergency medical departments. Adams hopes that tools like data storage and geo-mapping (storing patient information by zip code) will track unusual events. If such a system had been in place during the 1984 outbreak, doctors would have quickly noticed that the illnesses were clustered in one area, and they might have zeroed in on the restaurant sooner.

When she was 16 years old, Sylvia Blumstein (MD ’85) arrived in Hinesville, Ga. —Nita Chawla, Jen Dionisio, Seth Borquaye —Nita Chawla, Jen Dionisio, Seth Borquaye

Stay in touch, view alumni photos, or post a Class Note at www.medschool.pitt.edu/alumni
The Class of ’55 originated the annual musical revue now known as Scope and Scalpel, and the members of the class have since evolved into the backbone of the Medical Alumni Association. They were out in full force for their 50th reunion in May. Roy Titchworth seemed to be enjoying the fact that he has become a little more retired each year. Formerly chief of radiology at three Pittsburgh-area hospitals, he also has held a political appointment as chair of the Allegheny County Board of Health since 1969. That came to an end last year, but the service he and other board members provided to the community are among his proudest accomplishments. They successfully pushed for greater pollution controls on the steelworks in Clairton and helped form a nonprofit—Tobacco Free Allegheny, which administers grants to local groups helping people to quit using tobacco and live healthier lives.

Amid all the reminiscing about med school, Vincent Albo took a few moments to mull over four decades in hematology. After a pediatrics residency at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, he went to Los Angeles for a hematology fellowship. Many kids the hospital staff cared for had leukemia, which was a death sentence then. He joined Pitt’s faculty as a junior investigator on a National Cancer Institute grant in 1961. Two years later, he was the principal investigator and continued the work until 1992. All those years, he did the slow, steady work of science—testing new drugs, testing old drugs in new ways, and devising new treatment protocols, which gradually helped turn the numbers on childhood leukemia around. Today, most children survive. (And many of their parents find shelter and support at Ronald McDonald House; in 1975, Albo orchestrated the opening of the house here in Pittsburgh.)

Robert Berk attended the musical put on by his graduating class—he thinks he may have been an usher—but he was probably too busy studying to take part. These were the habits that won him a few awards in med school, including Most Likely to Succeed. He recalls Davenport Hooker’s attempts to intimidate first-year students, too: Look at your classmates on either side of you. One of them won’t be here next year. Berk had a long career in radiology, researching better ways of imaging the gall bladder. He was chair of radiology at the University of California, San Diego, and left to become the full-time editor in chief of the American Journal of Roentgenology. He’s now the journal’s editor emeritus. —CS

**IN MEMORIAM**

**‘30s**
Edward M. Schultz  
MD ’32  
March 20, 2005

Robert L. Loeb  
MD ’34  
June 6, 2005

Philip L. Becker  
MD ’37  
April 21, 2004

**‘40s**
Amor Francis Pierce  
MD ’41  
October 3, 2004

Randolph W. Linhart  
MD ’43a  
April 10, 2005

**‘50s**
Jean Kaiser Migliorato  
MD ’50  
June 3, 2005

Seymour M. Weisman  
MD ’50  
April 11, 2005

Charles A. Provhan  
MD ’54  
April 13, 2005

**‘60s**
Dalton L. Hoffman  
MD ’62  
September 18, 2004

Clarence D. Leiphart  
Res ’62  
February 6, 2005

**‘70s**
David M. Lobur  
MD ’78  
May 12, 2005

**FELIX “BEBE” MILLER**

**OCTOBER 5, 1928—APRIL 25, 2005**

It must have been two o’clock in the morning when one of the final frantic Scope and Scalpel rehearsals wrapped up, but the time didn’t matter to Felix “Bebe” Miller (MD ’55, Res ’62). He insisted that Susan Dumminre (MD ’85, Res ’88), as the new faculty adviser, needed to take the students to Ritter’s diner. In fact, he couldn’t understand why she’d want to go home. In 15 years as faculty adviser for this annual production (1964–78), Miller had found that sitting together at Ritter’s brought the class closer and made everyone feel a part of the team. The way people around him were treated was important to Miller. (At the same time, he wasn’t afraid to speak his mind.)

Miller completed an ob/gyn residency at what is now Magee-Womens Hospital, and practiced in Pittsburgh for more than 30 years. The University has probably never had a booster quite like him. (Miller had a Pitt chemistry degree, and one of his two sons, Andrew, is an MD ’91.) As a popular longtime Pitt clinical professor, Miller was a draw at reunions. He started the tradition of the senior-class picnic for med students. (If Dean Levine ever flipped a burger for you, it was because Bebe handed him a spatula.) He also chaired the Chancellor’s Circle—a group of major University donors. No wonder one of his retirement gifts was an appointment book accompanied by a watch.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Hillman Cancer Center or to the Gwen and Bebe Miller Scope and Scalpel Award, care of the Medical Alumni Association. —CS

**REBECCA FRANCES DREW TAYLOR**

**APRIL 30, 1917–MARCH 22, 2005**

Everyone in Scuffle Hall knew Penna Drew. She didn’t have a shy bone in her body, and the fact that she smoked a pipe made her stand out, too. But many of her charges—more than 15 years’ worth of Pitt med students—remember her for how well she knew them. As the associate dean of student affairs from 1975 to 1984, Rebecca Frances Drew Taylor looked after and spoke up for her students.

Robert E. Lee (MD ’56), emeritus professor of pathology, recalls how she picked up on people’s needs, like if students felt they were in trouble or were ill. “You can call that a trifle, but if you’re a student, it’s not a trifle,” he says.

Drew Taylor, a clinical professor, received her medical degree in 1942 in Montreal, where a friend dubbed her “Penna” because of her home state. The name stuck, even after she returned to her native Pittsburgh, where she received master’s degrees in public health and creative writing at Pitt. She remained a clinical professor in the School of Medicine until 2000. —CS
The man in Mary Carrasco’s office was tall and burly, like an NFL lineman. He was also the father of her patient—a boy who was clearly the victim of periodic beatings. When Carrasco confronted him with the evidence, the man crumpled and began to sob. He never knew he was angry until he found his fist in the wall, he said. He wanted to be a better father. He just did not know how to control his temper or stop criticizing his son for being interested in art and music instead of athletics.

After seeing many parent-child relationships like this, Carrasco began to develop ways to protect children and help parents.

“I never thought I’d end up being interested in child abuse,” she says 20 years later in her office, peering from behind rimless, oval spectacles. It’s a busy day, with patients being walked to their exam rooms outside. Her stethoscope and a few other tools of the trade are set on the table during these few minutes between appointments.

“I came to it by realizing I couldn’t provide adequate care to the children I was seeing without some way to address broader issues of prevention and parenting,” she says.

Carrasco (Pediatrics Fellowship ’78) just returned from Boston, where she received the 2005 Ray E. Helfer, MD Award for her contributions to child-abuse prevention. She directs the international and community health program at Mercy Hospital and contributed to the core programs that led to Pittsburgh’s being noted on ABC World News Tonight as a national model for child welfare systems. These include family-support centers (she created the first in Allegheny County) and child-advocacy centers.

Her work with Pittsburgh families started with a positive parenting program that addressed a spectrum of issues: disciplining children, drug and alcohol treatment, assistance getting Medicare coverage, and even looking for jobs. Though it had a rocky start (the first parenting class was attended by only herself and other staff members) and some negative side effects for Carrasco (“finding funding is what made me go gray,” she laughs, twirling a lock of her short hair), the program has been so successful that it has been duplicated time and again.

Allegheny County now has 27. These programs teach parenting skills to those who may never have experienced positive parenting themselves.

Carrasco’s philosophy is that prevention is the most important goal, but she also has implemented changes in intervention and treatment on behalf of abused kids. The advocacy center she started at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh is one of the first to enlist victim advocates and child-welfare workers as well as forensic experts to gather testimony for prosecutors. A team offers counseling and medical treatment in one location. Carrasco opened a similar center at Mercy.

Her beeper goes off. The phone rings a second later, and she answers it, huffing out a concerned, “Okay, I’ll be there.” A kid is tearing up an exam room, she explains. She apologetically hurries out the door, then pivots. In her rush, she forgot her medical supplies. She laughs at herself, waves, and heads off to find out why a child acts up at the doctor’s office.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm

Mary Carrasco: Protects Kids and Coaches Parents
BY JEN DIONISIO

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Mary Carrasco came to believe that she couldn’t give adequate care to kids without helping parents, too.