CLASS NOTES

'50s Melvin L. Cohen, MD '53, is the director of medical education at Phoenix Children's Hospital, a position he's held since the hospital was founded in 1983. For the majority of the hospital's history, Cohen was the only pediatric nephrologist, which means, among other things, that he knows what it's like to cut short a fishing vacation to tend to a patient in critical condition. It's rewarding for him to do little things for the kids in the hospital; for one child, he obtained a basketball autographed by the Phoenix Suns. The hospital's new conference center recently was named in his honor.

'60s Richar Trackler, MD '61, recently published the novel The Roll Call Vote (Pentland Press, Inc.). The book follows a US president's struggle to confirm a controversial Supreme Court candidate. Trackler, who was a radiologist and founding member of the San Diego Diagnostic Radiology Medical Group, retired recently after 22 years of private practice, which he began after working at several universities.

Harvey Golomb, MD '68, has been chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago since 1998. He enjoys nurturing residents and younger faculty members, and he's proud of establishing four new clinical centers: an asthma center, a memory center, an emergency resuscitation center, and a cancer genetics center. Golomb says he moved the department's books to the black, adding that he developed his business skills selling toys for the Squirrel Hill Newsstand, which his parents once owned.

L. Gregory Pawlson, MD '69, is executive vice president of the National Committee on Quality Assurance, a Washington, DC-based organization. The group investigates everything from the quality of hospitals to HMOs to primary care physicians to specialists. He is the only medical officer in the organization.

'60s RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS

Gilbert A. Friday Jr. (Pediatrics Resident '62–'63, Allergy and Immunology Fellow '62–'67), recently retired from the University, where he'd been a professor of pediatrics since 1968. Now in private practice, Friday is conducting research indicating that intravenous gamma globulin can interfere with autoimmune antibodies in patients with polyendocrinopathy. Polyendocrinopathy is a rare autoimmune disease that produces symptoms such as hypothyroidism, the erosion of enamel from teeth, and a loss of pigment in skin. Gamma globulin has been used as therapy for some genetic diseases, such as multiple sclerosis.

Robert Goldwyn, (Plastic Surgery Resident '61–'63) recently retired after 34 years as a plastic surgeon at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center; he still teaches at Harvard University. He recently completed editing the third edition of the textbook The Unfavorable Result in Plastic Surgery: Avoidance and Treatment. He says that some patients who opt for such surgery have unrealistic expectations. Surgeries that are "technical" successes may not meet the patient's standards. The intent of his book is to help doctors deal with the gap between expectations and reality.

'70s Ira M. Weissman, MD '71, has been in private pediatric practice in Malone, New York, since 1988. His former classmates might recognize him from a recent segment of 60 Minutes. One of his patients suffered recurrent, life-threatening seizures affecting regions of her brain controlling pulmonary and cardiac function. He believed the mother was smothering the child, especially since the girl's older sibling had similar episodes. Another set of doctors disagreed and gave the girl a pacemaker. The child died anyway, and investigators discovered that she, indeed, was smothered. Her mother was convicted of murder: A jury found she was trying to obtain Social Security money.

Weissman was featured on the CBS show in January.

Kathy Helzlsouer, MD '79, is a professor in the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University. Until recently, she directed the Breast and Ovarian Surveillance Center at Hopkins. For several years
Helzlsouer has run a large community-based study in Washington County, Maryland. One group gave blood in ‘74, the other in ‘89, and she uses their samples to determine if certain environmental and genetic factors contribute to cancer. Helzlsouer just finished another project investigating the effect of carotenoids, micronutrients including antioxidants like carotene, on reducing breast cancer. While preliminary results indicate they don’t have an effect, Helzlsouer continues to search for preventive measures.

‘70s RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS
Sandra Schneider, MD ‘75 (Internal Medicine Resident ‘75–’78), director of medical emergency services at Montefiore Hospital from 1981 to 1992, is chair of emergency medicine at the University of Rochester, New York. She put her work on poisonous mushrooms aside for administrative responsibilities, but now investigates ways to improve efficiency in the emergency department at Rochester’s Strong Memorial Hospital. Before Schneider’s arrival, ED doctors were spending a lot of time trying to notify primary care physicians about their patients in the ED. Since the ED added a “communication” nurse, these doctors now spend more time with patients.

David Mallott, MD ‘78 (Internal Medicine Intern ‘78–’79), is the associate dean of medical education and an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, in Baltimore. He directs the school’s problem-based learning program, which gives students a practical scenario to work out. (One group needed to treat a woman on welfare, so in addition to learning about her medical conditions they applied for welfare.)

‘80s Peter G. Gerbino II, MD ‘86, an instructor of orthopaedic surgery at Harvard Medical School, is examining whether football causes an increase in degenerative back problems. Although improper and excessive weightlifting causes some long-term effects, Gerbino says explosive spine hyperextension—which can occur when football players line up for the snap, shoot from crouching to standing positions, and crash into each other—causes many stress fractures, often leading to crippling back pain in older years.

‘90s RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS
Laurence M. Katz, MD ‘87 (Emergency Medicine Resident ‘90–’93), is an associate professor of emergency medicine at the University of North Carolina, where he is conducting research on restoring neurologic function in patients who nearly drown or suffer heart attacks. He suggests that inducing a “hibernating state” in such patients can reduce long-term brain damage. Katz’s animal studies show that an investigational synthetic drug can induce a hibernating state and decrease brain damage after asphyxial cardiac arrest. His interest stems from his residency under Pitt’s Peter Safar.

THE WAY WE ARE:
CLASS OF ’62
BY MEGHAN HOLOHAN

When John Hibbs (MD ’62) was in med school, he thought he’d be an internist. After an internship in Oregon, Hibbs was drafted into the army. He was stationed in Panama where he heard the National Institutes of Health (NIH) was in Bolivia investigating a fever epidemic later shown to be caused by the Machupo virus. Patients were developing rashes, severe headaches, muscle aches, low platelets, and going into shock. Sixty percent of those infected were dying in Bolivia. They needed more Spanish-speaking doctors, so Hibbs volunteered to help. Those adventures convinced him of the importance of basic science that his professors at Pitt had emphasized. Hibbs has spent his career investigating macrophage chemistry, helping to understand its role in controlling inflammation and immune responses. He published the important discovery that macrophages release nitric oxide from L-arginine, indicating that nitric oxide production could be related to inflammation and cell-mediated immunity.

Barry Brenner (MD ’62) left Pitt with a research career in mind. His work in nephrology led to his formulation of the well-known glomerular hypertension theory, or “Brenner’s Theory.” He recently retired as director of the renal division at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and director of the Harvard University Center for the Study of Kidney Disease. Time for some new blood to run things, he noted, with high hopes for novel ideas the next generation might spawn.

Hibbs and Brenner’s classmate Fred Heidenreich (MD ’62) left the School of Medicine with a sense of purpose. In the late ‘60s, he landed at Allegheny Valley Hospital, outside Pittsburgh, where he was instrumental in the development of the hospital’s cardiology department. He recalled the excitement then of purchasing the latest technological advancements, like the echocardiograph. Medicine runs deep in Heidenreich’s family. Three of his four children are doctors; two attended Pitt—Fred Heidenreich Jr. (MD ’93) is a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, and Michael Heidenreich (MD ’96) is a vascular surgery fellow at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Brenner (the 1995 Hench Award winner) was unable to attend the June reunion, organized in part by David Jacobs, president of the Class of ’62, a urologist in private practice in Pittsburgh, but Hibbs and Heidenreich did. When we spoke with Hibbs, he was looking forward to hiking some western Pennsylvania hills. Heidenreich planned to check in with his friend Bob Israel; the two met in 1958 in an undergrad Greek and Latin medical terminology class. How do you say “Hail to Pitt” in Greek?
ON THE ROAD: CALI

Bebe Miller (MD ’55) and his wife, Gwen Miller, packed a few treasures for Pitt Med on the Road to California in May. Goodies from the “Bebe Bag” included Scope and Scalpel programs from yesteryear, to the delight of Mary Ann and Sam Aronson (MD ’55), who were among the 40 alumni and friends attending the reception at the home of David Mendelson (MD ’64) in San Francisco. Aronson recalled brainstorming for a school play, “something to bring the class together after their clinical years” with Frank Dixon; that conversation begot the first Scope and Scalpel. As guests thumbed through Bebe treasures, Harry and Winifred, Mendelson’s 1-foot tall corgis, provided interventions if food happened to drop to the floor. Harry and Winifred had the advantage, since everyone was agape at the host’s art collection.

Parag Nene, MD ’01, who landed an internal medicine residency at the University of California, Davis, noted that he has been yearning to delve more into his artistic side. His new band, tentatively named Seventh Heaven, combines Western and Indian sounds: “We’re going for a George Harrison kind of thing,” Nene said.

Miller spoke about his experience as a senior mentor, a new Pitt program that reaps the talents of retired faculty by having them work with students during problem-based learning sessions. Miller, an ob/gyn, is not sure how he was picked for anatomy: “Regarding anything above the belly button and below the pubis, I keep quiet.”

The ob/gyn ranks made a strong showing at the gathering. Per Sandberg, Res ’96, remembered Miller as an attending—“always entertaining.” Sandberg is now at the University of California at San Francisco (UCSF), where he specializes in critical care in pregnancy. His colleague, Sharon Knight, Res ’98, came too; she works with women dealing with pelvic organ prolapse and incontinence. Rebecca Yee, MD ’95, also in the UCSF group, was on call—but happily, not pulled away.

“That would have never happened at Magee,” noted Miller. — EL

Big thanks to the California reception hosts: David Mendelson, MD ’64, San Francisco; Robert Berk, MD ’55, and George Leopold, MD ’62, of La Jolla; and in Los Angeles, Elaine and Jeff Kamil (both MD ’73)

ABOVE: Joseph Manzini, MD ’83, and John Bednar, MD ’66, in La Jolla. LEFT: Joanne and Lawrence Green, MD ’68, at the LA fete.

ROBERT J. CORRY
DECEMBER 3, 1934–FEBRUARY 11, 2002

His knowledge of the pancreas was legendary. While the organ frustrated some, for it contains powerful enzymes that can damage surrounding tissue during surgery, Robert J. Corry was undaunted. He developed techniques around the problem, tried to expand the national organ donor pool, and investigated ways that transplant patients’ immune systems might better accept their new organs. In all, the University of Pittsburgh professor of surgery and director of the pancreas transplant program at the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute performed more than 350 pancreas, 180 kidney, and 50 liver transplants. The former president of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons also played an important role in the development of islet cell transplantation—which has been performed experimentally to cure diabetes. — DRE

GALAL M. ZIADY
AUGUST 21, 1939–MARCH 17, 2002

Galal M. Ziady came to the University of Pittsburgh from Egypt 15 years ago because his son needed a kidney transplant. By then, his wife, Laila Ziady, already knew she’d married a wonderful man. It wasn’t that a father was giving his son a chance to live; he was like most dads, who would offer both kidneys if they could. It was something more—how Ziady, who eventually became director of clinical cardiology at the School of Medicine’s Cardiovascular Institute, treated everyone like family. (On a professional level, he was also able to do something for his friend Thomas Starzl, by watching over his cardiac care.)

His were simple but beautiful gestures. Like the time he gave money to a single mother who couldn’t afford shoes. Or the way he would take a young resident under his wing. Or how he would talk with those he’d just met, as if they were old friends, listening, really listening, because he wanted to understand. “He was uncritical,” says his wife, and for that people loved him.

Many friends have called Laila Ziady recently to tell her, “He was like my father.” She thinks of one boy in particular who’s now 14. He used to play chess with the cardiologist while his mother visited with Laila Ziady. On their way over, he’d say, “I hope that beeper doesn’t go off.” — DRE

IN MEMORIAM

’20s
RICHARD C. SNYDER (MD ’29)
MARCH 26, 2002

’30s
JAMES C. DOBLER (MD ’31)
APRIL 23, 2002

ROBERT J. DEAN (MD ’42)
JULY 15, 2001

LEONARD B. VOLKIN (MD ’35)
APRIL 12, 2002

THOMAS S. VATES (MD ’55)
MAY 19, 2002

’50s
JACK M. ULRICH (MD ’52)
APRIL 12, 2002

FACULTY
ROBERT J. CORRY
FEBRUARY 11, 2002

GALAL M. ZIADY
MARCH 17, 2002

NOTE: A PRIMARY SOURCE FOR DEATH NOTICES OF OUR ALUMNI, THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, NO LONGER PRINTS AN OBITUARY LIST. WE ENCOURAGE YOU, MORE THAN EVER NOW, TO LET US KNOW ABOUT ALUMNI WHO DIED RECENTLY. (ON THE INSIDE FRONT COVER YOU’LL FIND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE MAGAZINE.)
Zane Gates, M D ’95, examines his first patient of the afternoon, a man who has lost 30 pounds in the two months he has had diarrhea. As Gates takes the patient’s history, he hears a familiar litany: Full-time laborer. Several work-related injuries over the years. Last doctor visit—can’t remember. “No health insurance,” adds Gates. Ninety percent of his patients at Altoona’s Partnering for Health Services free clinic (which isn’t the first such clinic Gates has founded) are working people who cannot afford health insurance. “Yet, if a person makes 20 cents an hour over minimum wage,” says Gates, leaning into his pet peeve, “they’re not eligible for Medical Assistance.”

The 34-year-old Gates grew up not far from here, in a housing project, where “we believed you had to have some kind of magical power to be a doctor,” he says with a laugh. His sense of humor wanes when his next patient complains of recurrent chest pain and shortness of breath. The retired woman has a stent. Her blood pressure is up—she thinks it’s the stress of caring for her husband, who has cancer. He’s covered by the VA. She’s not. “As if she’s not part of him,” says Gates.

“Sweetheart, let’s get you a test over at my private practice’s kitchen,” Gates notes that the clinic is the only area respite for an economic stratum of patients who otherwise might end up desperately ill in the emergency room, “where the hospital would pay for it anyway.” He checks the EKG results, then gently approaches his patient: “Honey, how do you feel about going to the hospital?”

En route to the next exam back at the free clinic, Gates greets a woman checking out at the front desk. The 40-year-old mother of five has had diarrhea. As Gates takes the patient’s history, he hears a familiar litany: Full-time laborer. Several work-related injuries over the years. Last doctor visit—can’t remember. “No health insurance.”

“I wrote my state representative—” She holds up a referral from Gates for an ophthalmologist and lab and prescription vouchers. “I was so afraid I’d be denied here today.”

“This,” Gates says, referring to his clinic patients, “is not how they thought it would be after all these years.” He remembers his own difficult times, like in medical school—when burnout hit like a brick wall. “I was gonna quit,” he says with a laugh. But then he volunteered for Operation Safety Net to care for the homeless. Gates devoted one night a week to the program. The experience was defining: “This is the neat thing about being a doctor. I’m one man, but I can help these people during some of the darkest times of their lives—with just my time and my knowledge.”

Gates has published a novel, The Cure, a mystery about a boy whose blood cures cancer. Half of the proceeds go to the Gloria Gates Memorial Foundation for Children, which Gates founded in honor of his mother who died while he was in medical school. The foundation provides after-school programs for Altoona’s Evergreen Manor Housing Projects. The Cure is available from amazon.com.