It’s a long and winding career path that leads from the stage at Pittsburgh Public Theater to Pitt’s School of Medicine. For Clyde Jones, the first big bend in that path came in the early days of the AIDS crisis, when he was a professional actor based in New York City. Working in the theater, he saw close friends and colleagues stricken with the frightening new disease and was moved to help. So Jones began garnering donations to ease the plight of those with AIDS.

He has been raising money for worthy causes ever since. And now, Jones will direct fund-raising efforts for Pitt’s academic medical center—including the schools of the health sciences—through a new organization, the University of Pittsburgh and UPMC Medical and Health Sciences Foundation. The result of the new foundation, he says, will be an approach to fund-raising that is not fragmented, one that will meld together the clinical, research, and education aspects of medicine in the same way Pitt and UPMC do. It’s not just a more efficient way to raise money, says Jones, it can also result in a more meaningful experience for donors. If you were interested in giving to neurology, for example, because you or a loved one had a neurological problem, your gift could be structured to simultaneously benefit top research, clinical care, and training.

Jones was most recently director of a similar development program for the Weill Medical College of Cornell University and New York-Presbyterian Hospital. But he has a special fondness for Western Pennsylvania—the place he left 20 years ago for college and career opportunities. He says he is thrilled to see that others are taking note of exciting developments in Pittsburgh, too:

“The School of Medicine in particular is seen around the country as a leader in medical education and research. And as its reputation grows there will be more people—not just in the region but around the country—who look to Pittsburgh, and look to Pitt, as a place to direct their philanthropy.”

BOOSTER SHOTS

Oscar Marroquin, assistant professor of medicine, remembers the late Pitt cardiologist Galal Ziady as a superb clinician and teacher—extraordinarily humane, honest, and firm. When his widow, Laila Ziady, and others established the Galal M. Ziady Award for a fellow in cardiology, Marroquin was the first awardee. Asked how he resembles his mentor, Marroquin is characteristically humble: “I just try to be honest to myself and [my patients].” Sounds familiar.

For someone who wasn’t a clinician, A. Julio Martinez saw an awful lot of patients. Neurosurgeons would call the Pitt pathologist into their operating rooms to diagnose tumors and other brain ailments so they could quickly decide how to proceed. Others sent him tissue samples from around the world. He had an unusually keen eye for distinguishing between very similar cells, and he was a leading authority on amoeba-borne brain infections. The Department of Pathology is creating a lectureship in memory of Martinez, a professor emeritus of neuropathology who died last December. The lectureship will allow distinguished experts in neuropathology to visit the school annually. —CS & JM

ASHORS GIVE STUDENTS A LIFT

THEY’VE PLANNED AHEAD

By JENNIFER MATSON

Gilbert Ashor (MD ’54) needed a lift to get to the School of Medicine every day. Fifty years later, he feels it’s only right that he should get into the driver’s seat and help someone else in need.

After classes, Ashor would hitch a ride from campus home to New Kensington. On a good day, he rode with a friend. On a bad day, he was dropped on Route 28 and had to foot the bridge over the Allegheny River. To pay for medical school, Ashor worked. For a while he delivered limestone and manganese to open-hearth feeders at the mill. At another point, he clocked in at the Alcoa plant, where he manipulated 1,800-degree Fahrenheit aluminum ingots with tongs. At other jobs, he was on the graveyard shift.

Ashor's schedule prepared him for the world of medicine (he took naps in the library whenever he had time). But now, he’s making it easier for future med students to pay their bills. With his wife, Carol Ashor, he has made a planned gift of $750,000, endowing a full scholarship for students of high merit and limited financial means. A planned gift, often designated in a will, can be a great choice, Pitt’s development officials note. They point out that donors can enjoy the gift in the present—whether it’s real estate, artwork, or cash—while taking care of the University in the years to come. Planned gifts account for 15 to 18 percent of the University’s funds, and as foundations cut back on giving due to poor stock portfolios, individual endowments are becoming more important.

At 73 years old, Ashor assists in heart surgeries every week at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital in California, and he recently returned from Miraj, India, where he takes surgical teams to teach and operate. He shows no signs of slowing down, though he recently did so just long enough to see that the needs of his alma mater were met.