Hamiton's grandfather was a general practitioner in Punxsutawney, Pa. His father, S. Sutton Hamilton Jr., interned at Presbyterian and Magee hospitals in the 1930s, and his son, S. Sutton Hamilton IV (MD '97) received his medical degree from Pitt.

Shirts' recently completed PhD research examined the interaction between genes and environment in relation to the development of schizophrenia. If a firm link is found, he contends, it may be possible to manipulate genetic pathways and modulate exposure to pathogens as a way to reduce risk.

As Shirts enters into his surgical rotation, the scholarship positions him well for the future by freeing resources for further training, he notes.

Students in the M STP program are eligible for the scholarship if they have completed the PhD and are two years away from the MD degree. The award covers the last two years of tuition and includes a $2,000 stipend for the duration of the scholarship.

Years ago, when Hamilton joined the faculty at Penn, he was impressed by how his Pitt medical education stood up to those of his colleagues, and he grew to appreciate great teaching.

"As a youngster," he says, "I thought that if I ever had a little bit of money, I would like to make the very best teachers available to students."

Vauughn Stagg was the clinical director of the Matilda H. Theiss Child Development Center in Pittsburgh's Hill District from 1988 until he died in June 2004. Affiliated with Pitt's Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, the center is a place where children and low-income families receive the sort of help that changes lives, including parenting programs, dental care, a preschool, and nursery programs for at-risk children. Stagg was a PhD and assistant professor of psychiatry in the School of Medicine. His memory will live on at the Theiss center, which has dedicated a children's library and a memorial garden in his name.

When Henry Posner Jr., a prominent Pittsburgh businessman, ran into difficulty with his spine, he found himself in the right place—under the care of James Kang (Res '91), a Pitt associate professor of both orthopaedic and neurological surgery. The quality of care motivated Posner and his wife, Helen Posner, to create a new faculty chair in orthopaedic surgery. Their $1 million gift, matched by UPMC, will support research on degenerative disc disease in Pitt's Ferguson Laboratory for Orthopaedic Research. The lab is directed by Kang, who is expected to be the first holder of the Posner family chair.

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