



THE CUPOLA

The Bulletin of The Medical Alumni Association of Bassett Medical Center
Cooperstown, New York

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Former Chief Resident's Wedding Showcases the "Bassett Vibe"



Gayatri Bondi and Sridhar
Nayakwadi, February 7, 2025

On February 7, 2025, at the Sri Guruvayoorappan Temple in Old Bridge, New Jersey, Dr. Gayatri Bondi (Internal Medicine resident 2020-2023 and chief resident 2023-2024) and Sridhar Nayakwadi, a senior software developer at Volkswagen of America, were joined in marriage. It was a celebration that captured

not only the love of two people, but it also showcased the deep connections forged during residency among individuals who come to Cooperstown from all over the globe.

"The Bassett vibe was on full display," said Dr. Anush Patel (Internal Medicine resident 2003-2006, chief Medicine resident 2006-07, attending physician 2011-present). Patel, who is Chief of Oncology and Hematology, travelled with his wife to New Jersey for the celebration. "Everyone who knew Gayatri from her time at Bassett came—they came from Rhode Island, Indiana, West Virginia, Virginia, Cooperstown, and elsewhere. We felt compelled to be there to support the couple, and I'm just so happy to see today's residents developing that same bond I felt decades ago during my residency."

Gayatri completed her residency and a year as chief resident at Bassett over a year ago, but the group that came together again on this day said the friendships they formed are lifelong.

"Bassett is such a special place, we never felt like we were away from home, and the 12 residents and the attendings became family," said Gayatri as she recalled her residency experience. "At other places people ask casually, 'how are

you doing?' At Bassett, they really want to know how you are feeling, from the janitor to the attending. Our relationship never felt like that of a colleague, but always like family. That is why it meant so much to have them all at our wedding."



Jim and Deb Dalton in traditional
Hindu attire

Gayatri was particularly honored when Dr. James Dalton (Internal Medicine resident 1979-1982, chief resident 1982-1983, faculty 1988-2021) and his wife, Deborah, agreed to serve as proxies for her parents during the marriage ceremony. Gayatri's mother and younger sisters were unable to get visas arranged to make the trip, and her father passed away in 2021.

"It was particularly important to me to have Dr. Dalton participate in the way that he and his wife did at our wedding," shared Gayatri. "I lost

my father in my first year of residency and Dr. Dalton, who was my program director, became like a father figure to me. I introduced him during the wedding ceremony as my father program director. He and his wife literally did my parents role in the wedding, including "Kanyadhan," a very important part of a Hindu traditional wedding during which the father releases his daughter to the groom."

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Message from the President of the Medical Alumni Board of Directors

Greetings alumni. I hope that your summer includes some rest and relaxation. As I write this, my current institution is welcoming new Interns, and I can tell you that they appear to have the same nervous energy that I remember experiencing 25 years ago. Of the many ways the Bassett alumni are connected, I suspect that you can summon a similar memory from the first day you showed up to work/train at Bassett.

Our lead article today builds on the shared experience of training at Bassett, notably how these people you spend so much time with become almost like your family. In this article,



Dr. James A. Murray

Dr. Gayatri Bondi got married earlier this year, in a celebration that was like a mini-Bassett reunion. Congratulations to Dr. Bondi! To the new Interns at Bassett, I offer a warm welcome to Cooperstown and a welcome to the alumni family.

Also in these pages, you will discover the plans of departing residents and fellows. While the transition to new phases of training or new jobs may evoke bittersweet emotions, I enjoy watching our alumni membership grow and encourage everyone to stay in touch and send us updates on your careers and families for the Bassett Family Album. Have a wonderful and safe summer. ■

The Cupola is the newsletter of the Medical Alumni Association of Bassett Medical Center. The Association was founded to provide support and recommendations to Bassett's Medical Education Department; to assist in recruiting medical students, house staff and attending staff; and to provide financial support to develop and enhance medical education at Bassett.

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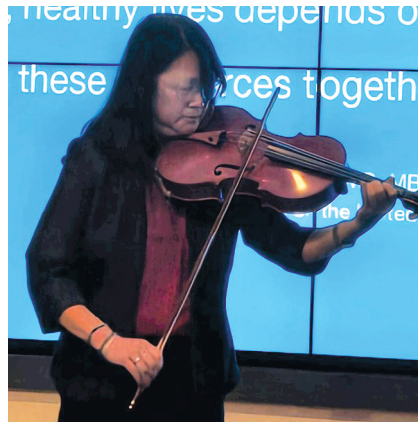
The power of music to heal and caring for the whole body by applying science and humanism to patient care took center stage at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown recently. The occasion was the second annual David S. Svahn Humanities in Medicine Memorial Lecture. This year's guest lecturer, Dr. Lisa Wong, delivered an address titled "Embracing the Art of Medicine in Uncertain Times." Wong, an

accomplished musician, also played her viola for an audience that included medical students and residents, seasoned clinicians, department heads and others.

Wong is associate co-director and co-founder of the Arts and Humanities Initiative at Harvard Medical School. She is also a practicing pediatrician at Milton Pediatric Associates, and past president and a current member of the Longwood Symphony Orchestra, an orchestra composed of members of Boston's medical community.

During her lecture, Wong spoke about her personal journey in medicine, music and community service, from childhood to the present. Music and the arts in general, she said, can bring people together and bolster an individual's development.

"A major challenge that we're having in our communities, starting before the COVID-19 pandemic and then accelerated and amplified



Dr. Lisa Wong plays her viola during her lecture.

during the pandemic, is an increase in loneliness, anxiety, and isolation, not only of the individual patient but also of the medical student, resident, our neighbors, and our friends. With that comes a decrease in resilience, a decrease in the use of our manual dexterity, and a decrease in curiosity and creativity. I argue that with the arts we can help address those changes," said Wong. "Music can heal the patient, heal the community, and heal the healer," she continued.

Wong also spoke about neuroscience and the impact music has on the brain. She reflected on recent initiatives she's been involved with, including the Ukraine Invisible Wounds of War Project and the Boston Hope Music Project, one of the wellness programs offered to patients at Boston Hope Medical Center, a field hospital in Boston established to care for patients recovering from COVID-19.

You can watch Wong's lecture on Bassett Healthcare Network's YouTube channel.

The Svahn lecture series is presented as a tribute to Dr. David S. Svahn, who dedicated his life to instilling a profound sense of compassion and human connection in generations of physicians. He devoted the entirety of his 30-year career in medicine to Bassett Medical Center. The lecture series is made possible through an endowment from Dr. Jennifer Svahn, a practicing surgeon and Svahn's daughter, and her husband Dr. Jeffrey Nicastro. ■

Columbia-Bassett Students Launch Musical Initiative in Cancer Center



Columbia-Bassett medical students Annah Chollet (left) and Frances Morris (right)

Columbia-Bassett medical students Annah Chollet and Frances Morris brought their musical talents to the waiting room at Bassett Cancer Institute in Cooperstown on June 11.

The performance was part of a Music in Medicine initiative the students launched, aimed at harnessing the healing and calming properties of music to benefit patients and practitioners. Patients passing by and waiting for their appointments listened to the music and some joined in the singing.

Columbia University's Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and Bassett Healthcare Network have a distinguished and collaborative medical school program to deepen students' training and practice experiences through longitudinal observation and research. Accepted students complete 18 months of study at Columbia University's campus in New York City and then spend the major clinical year at Bassett Medical Center, before returning to NYC to complete their final year of medical school. ■

Residents Announce Future Plans



Transitional Year Residents L-R: Front Row—Drs. Morvarid Zehtab, Priya Rao, Amanda Liberman, and Jennifer Cha. Back Row—Drs. Tyler Petersen, Mohammad Ahmady, Taylor Zabel, Aaron Ringle, and Jesse Randolph



Internal Medicine Residents L-R: Front Row—Drs. Kunjal Luhadia, Rakel Emma-Okah, Roudabeh Kiani, Navar Almama, and Rida Fatima. Back Row—Drs. Prejin Upadhyay, Sagar Ghimire, Muhammad Bilal, Bishnu Singh, Mohamed Abugrin, Thanmay Sathi, and Timur Otajonov



Cardiovascular Disease Fellows L-R: Drs. Shwetha Gopal and Ankur Panchal



Surgery graduating residents L-R: Drs. Kristen Laaman, Eunice Yang, and Matthew Ward

Members of the house staff have completed their training at Bassett and are moving on to new endeavors. The following list provides the names of departing residents and fellows, their programs at Bassett, and their plans:

Mohamed Abugrin, M.B., B.Ch. (Internal Medicine) – Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, N.Y.

Mohammad Kazem Ahmady, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Nuclear Medicine Residency, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, N.Y.

Navar Almama, M.D. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Muhammad Bilal, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Gastroenterology Fellowship, East Carolina University Medical Center, Greenville, N.C.

Jennifer Cha, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Radiation Oncology Residency, University of Texas-Southwestern, Dallas, Texas

Rakel Emma-Okah, M.D. (Internal Medicine) – Endocrinology Fellowship, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va.

Rida Fatima, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Primary Care Medicine, Greenville, N.C.

Sagar Ghimire, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Shwetha Gopal, M.D. (Cardiovascular Disease) – Practice of Cardiology, Bayhealth Hospital, Dover, Del.

Laura Holton, D.O. (General Surgery) – General Surgery Residency, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, Pa.

Jacqueline Inglis, M.D. (General Surgery) – Plans not finalized at press time

Kristen Laaman, M.D. (General Surgery) – Practice of General Surgery, Atrium Health, Albemarle, N.C.

Amanda Liberman, M.D., M.H.S. (Transitional Year) – General Preventive Medicine Residency, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, Md.

Kunjal Luhadia, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Endocrinology Fellowship, Westchester Medical Center, Valhalla, N.Y.

Vivian Matubia, M.D. (Internal Medicine) – Infectious Disease Fellowship, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, N.H.

Timur Otajonov, M.D. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Ankur Panchal, M.B., B.S. (Cardiovascular Disease) – Practice of Cardiology, Banner Health, Mesa/Scottsdale, Ariz.

Tyler Petersen, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency, Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wis.

Jesse Randolph, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Radiology Residency, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, N.Y.

Priya Rao, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Diagnostic Radiology Residency, Morristown Medical Center (Atlantic Health), Morristown, N.J.

Aaron Ringle, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Anesthesiology Residency, University of Central Florida at HCA Healthcare, Ocala, Fla.

Thanmay Sathi, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Eastern Maine Medical Center, Bangor, Maine

Bishnu Singh, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Bassett Medical Center, Cooperstown, N.Y.

Prejin Upadhyay, M.B., B.S. (Internal Medicine) – Practice of Hospital Medicine, Yale New Haven Hospital-Bridgeport Hospital, Bridgeport, Conn.

Matthew Ward, M.D. (General Surgery) – Practice of General Surgery, Bingham Memorial Hospital, Blackfoot, Idaho

Eunice Yang, M.D., J.D. (General Surgery) – Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, St. Luke's Hospital, Bethlehem, Pa.

Taylor Zabel, M.D. (Transitional Year) – Diagnostic Radiology Residency, Brigham & Women's Hospital/Harvard University, Boston, Mass.

Morvarid Zehtab, M.B., B.Ch. (Transitional Year) – Dermatology Residency (July 2026), Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Wis. ■

Columbia-Bassett Medical School Graduation Celebration

On May 18, preceding the formal graduation in New York City, a ceremony was held at Origins Café in Cooperstown to honor the Columbia-Bassett Medical School Class of 2025. The event was attended by several faculty members, and friends and family of the graduates.



The keynote address was given by Dr. Alan Kozak, (Internal Medicine intern 1969-70, Internal Medicine resident 1972-73), who returned to Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown 48 years ago to become part of the Infectious Disease Division. He continues to teach medical students and was chosen by this year's Columbia-Bassett graduates as their recipient of the Cupola Award, which he has been honored with two other times. Each year the graduating class recognizes a faculty member who exemplifies the traits that students hope to embody in the future,

such as dedication to teaching, patient care, scholarship, and probity.

In his address, Dr. Kozak spoke to the graduates about the importance of failure in shaping who we are and who we can become. He shared personal accounts of challenging experiences in

medical school, during residency, and over the course of his career. "I learned about the powerful incentive that failure can provide," said Dr. Kozak to the Class of 2025. "If you don't succumb to it, it can serve to promote an incredible growth spurt and surely make you better."

A few days after the Cooperstown celebration, the graduates attended a formal commencement ceremony in New York City and now move on to postgraduate training following their residency match success (See details in "The Cupola" Spring 2025 issue for a complete list of placements). ■

THE BASSETT FAMILY ALBUM — ALUMNI NEWS

Please keep your notes and photos coming!

1980s

Paul Deringer, M.D.

(attending physician 1987-present), his wife Christy, and **Margaret Young, M.D.** (attending pediatrician 1987-2006) report that they had a glorious time connecting with old classmates at their 50th VP&S reunion in May. Lots of classmates spoke warmly of time spent in Cooperstown at some point in their careers. Being with the remaining classmates reminded them of how blessed they were to start together as frightened, overwhelmed medical students, and how thankful they all are for their enduring friendships and memories. Dr. Deringer also very much enjoyed telling the current Columbia-Bassett students about their 50th reunion and their time at P&S!

1990s

Alan James, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 1994-97) has retired from practice but says, "I will try my hand at

allergy locums and my wife continues at the local hospice. I would like to come visit someday and see the changes from my time there as a resident." Meanwhile, James' children will complete college in 2026. His daughter will likely go to Case Western for an Ethics program, and his son will continue on for a Psychology Ph.D.

2000s

Rory Sears, D.O. (Internal Medicine resident 2004-07, Chief Resident 2007-08) Hello Bassett! I am currently president of the medical staff at Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown, N.Y. I am loving taking care of patients and serving others as my calling. What a great service my God has given me. I am honored to have recently received two awards. Thank you for the roots of medicine that I developed at Bassett. ■



A group of Bassett alumni gathered to celebrate the 95th birthday of John Davis on June 17. Davis, who came to Cooperstown in 1964 and practiced as a gastroenterologist, is a former director of Medical Education and Bassett historian. He authored "Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown, New York: 200 Years of Health Care in Rural America." (Seated) Drs. David Newman, John Davis, Sally Ricketts, and Jamie Walker. (Standing) Drs. Doug DeLong and Anush Patel.



A reminder: Who are the members of the Bassett Medical Alumni Association?

You are past and current interns, residents and fellows. You are former and current members of the senior doctoral staff. And you are students of the Columbia-Bassett Medical School program or students who spent your final two years of medical school at Bassett.

Dr. Anush Patel Honored with Walter Franck Award for Physician Excellence



Dr. Anush Patel

Bassett Cancer Institute's Chief of Medical Oncology and Hematology, Dr. Anush Patel, has been honored with the 2025 Walter A. Franck Physician Excellence Award. The award recognizes a physician, nominated by peers, who exemplifies excellence in the areas of clinical care, scholarship, and citizenship. It is among the most prestigious recognitions awarded by Bassett Healthcare Network to its caregivers.

Dr. Patel has called Bassett home for nearly 25 years—even before he began his residency in Cooperstown

as a doctor fresh out of medical school.

"It was a cold day in late fall when I first visited Bassett Medical Center in 2002," recalls Patel. "I knew then that Bassett was the place I wanted to spend my career."

"The attending physician that day was Dr. Douglas DeLong. I observed as he interacted with the team of residents on the floor, and I could tell he was brilliant. Most importantly, he was kind. He treated residents and interns with deep respect and taught with candor and compassion," says Patel. "I wanted to be just like him. And as I came to know more clinical mentors and life mentors at Bassett—like Dr. James Dalton—they shaped me as a doctor and as a person."

A Legacy of Excellence

The Walter A. Franck Award is named in honor of Bassett rheumatologist Dr. Walt Franck, who retired from Bassett after more than four decades of distinguished service. The award recognizes a physician who emulates the lifelong career traits he embodied, service to patients, students, colleagues, and the community.

"Dr. Franck is one of the reasons so many of us came back to Bassett after our residencies," says Patel. "He is a force of nature. He is the epitome of class, kindness, and what a doctor should be. To receive such an honor—named for him and what he represents—feels like the highlight of my career."

Patel grew up in Ahmedabad, India. "My father was a businessman, and my mother was a homemaker. They always taught me and my brother and sister that education was of utmost importance. Back then, it was not common for girls to attend school. Most schools in my hometown were for boys. My father shaped a new school for girls using the family trust to give to the community. He always had a forward-thinking yearning to use his energy to help people and enrich their lives in whatever ways he could. He instilled that energy in me."

Patel began his medical studies after high school at B.J. Medical College in Ahmedabad. Soon after, Patel's uncle introduced him to his wife, Bijal. "The rest is history," he laughed. Bijal lived in New Jersey, but within a few months they got married in India.

Realizing a Passion for Oncology

Patel returned to America with Bijal and moved to his uncle's home in Utica to study for entrance exams. "I was eager to apply for residencies while still having a family connection nearby," he says. Although he had pre-matched with a couple of hospitals in New York City, his top choice became a reality on Valentine's Day, 2003, when he matched with Bassett Medical Center and began his medicine residency.

"I had no plans to pursue oncology," says Patel. "In fact,

I remember clearly the first day as a resident that I rounded on a cancer patient in the hospital. He was a young man with advanced colon cancer and was very sick. I felt so sad and helpless. I turned to Dr. Barbara Healey, the on-call oncologist that day, and said, 'Dr. Healey, how can you do this work every day? How can you stand it?'

"I'll never forget her response. She told me oncology is a field of medicine that requires a high aptitude and even higher levels of compassion, and a desire to forge friendships every day. 'You'd be perfect for it, Anush,' she said. I thought about it, and I continued to come and see the young patient in the hospital. Within a month, I realized that oncology was my path. It was always my destiny because I love people. It really is that simple." It was Dr. Eric Bravin, an oncologist, who called Roswell Park's fellowship director and highly recommended Patel for Bassett's program.



Dr. Anush Patel speaking with members of the cancer center's patient care and treatment team

A Team with Heart

Today, in addition to leading Oncology and Hematology at Bassett, Patel provides treatment for patients with cancer and non-cancerous disorders. He says team collaboration and multidisciplinary approaches to care are at the center of his work each day. "Every member of our team plays an important role in patient treatment and care," he says. "From the clinic and infusion nurses to nurse navigators, nutritionists, financial counselors, social workers, and administrative staff."

Patel has a desk drawer that is overflowing with hundreds of letters and thank you cards from patients and their families. "I read through them from time to time," he says. "My favorite part of being an oncologist is my patients. Each day, I try to spread light and love. I meet patients when they are in some of the most trying times of their lives. It is a privilege that they entrust me with their care and open their hearts to our staff."

Patel and his wife live in Cooperstown with their daughters, Arya and Avni. They enjoy traveling, lake living, gardening, hiking, and spending time together as a family.

"What an amazing journey it's been. And how lucky I am to call this place home. Receiving this great honor brings tears to my eyes. Thank you to my family, my friends, and my colleagues who enrich my life and lift me up every day." ■



See our latest news
and updates at
Bassett Medical Alumni Association

Congratulations to Bassett Cardiovascular Fellows Team!



L-R: Hardikkumar Patel, M.B., B.S., Shwetha Gopal, M.D., and Dhan Shrestha, M.B., B.S.

A team of three cardiovascular fellows from Bassett Medical Center—Shwetha Gopal, M.D., Hardikkumar Patel, M.B., B.S., and Dhan Shrestha, M.B., B.S.—demonstrated outstanding knowledge and teamwork recently by becoming the 2025 champions of the New York Chapter of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) Fellows-in-Training Jeopardy Competition.

The three bested 11 other teams in the New York State tournament with a particularly intense semifinal round against Mount Sinai Morningside and Upstate Medical Center. This victory secured the team's spot at the national competition during the ACC Annual Conference from March 28 to 31 in Chicago, Ill. At the national competition at the Scientific Sessions of the American College of Cardiology in Chicago, the fellows won the initial round beating teams from the University of North Carolina, the University of Nebraska, and Michigan to advance to the semifinal round. In Final Jeopardy, the fellows correctly identified the right atrium as the chamber most likely to have malignant primary cardiac neoplasms.

The Bassett fellows exceeded expectations in representing Bassett and New York State in the National Fellows-in-Training Jeopardy Competition. ■

Physician Employment Opportunities in the Bassett Healthcare Network

Thinking of a career move? Do you know another physician seeking a position in an award-winning network of six hospitals and 30 regional sites? Consider these openings in Central New York and Cooperstown.

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Neurology	Urology

For more information visit:
<https://www.bassett.org/careers/physicians-and-advanced-practice-clinicians> or call
Medical Staff Recruitment at 607-547-6982.

Awards Cap 2025 Year-End Celebrations



Douglas DeLong, M.D., and Kunjal Luhadia, M.B., B.S. at the presentation of the Outpatient Medicine Teaching Award

The 2025 Golden Awards were presented at the year-end celebrations of the Departments of Medicine, Cardiology, and Surgery on Friday, June 13. As this year's recipients of the Golden Apple Awards, the Internal Medicine residents selected Dr. Russell Moore and the Surgery residents chose Dr. Luis Ocegüera and Dr. Amjad Qabbani. The Outpatient Medicine Teaching Award went to Dr. Douglas DeLong.

The Cardiovascular Disease fellows selected Dr. Dhananjai Menzies for the Golden Heart Award. The fellows selected Dr. Daniel Katz as the Research Mentor of the Year and Dr. James Storey as the Clinical Mentor of the Year.

Medicine and Transitional Year residents selected Dr. Timur Otajonov for the Golden Stethoscope Award for excellence in teaching. The Surgery and Transitional Year residents selected Dr. Kristen Laaman for the Best Resident Educator Award. Fellow Educator of the Year Award, selected by medicine and transitional year residents, went to Dr. Ankur Panchal.

Intern of the Year Awards were also bestowed. The Medicine Intern of the Year, selected by the Medicine residents, was Dr. Katrina Corpuz. The Medicine residents selected Dr. Tyler Petersen and the Surgery residents selected Dr. Taylor Zabel to receive the Transitional Year Intern of the Year Awards.

The cardiovascular disease faculty selected Dr. Ankur Panchal as the Fellow Clinician of the Year and Dr. Shwetha Gopal as the Fellow Researcher of the Year.

The Columbia-Bassett students selected Dr. Kristen Laaman (Surgery) and Dr. Panisara Fangsaard (Medicine) to receive this year's Cupola awards. ■



Dr. Kai Mebust, Physician-in-Chief, speaking. Retirees honored this year, L-R: Michael Miller, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 1992-93, attending physician 1999-2025), Joseph Hughes, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 1978-81, attending physician 1987-2025), Lee Edmonds, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 1985-88, chief medicine resident 1988-89, attending physician 1992-2025), and Raquel Rosen, M.D. (attending physician 1998-2025)

New Chief of Neurology Brings Local Roots, Fresh Perspective



Dr. Ramesh Cherukuri

Since taking on the role of Division Chief of Neurology at Bassett Healthcare Network earlier this year, Dr. Ramesh Cherukuri has been working to build up Bassett's neurology team through the recruitment of new practitioners. "One of my long-term goals is to develop a neurology residency program at Bassett Medical Center," said Dr. Cherukuri, who practices at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown and Oneonta Specialty Services.

Cherukuri is also prioritizing access to advanced diagnostic and treatment methods for patients with neurological disorders. The division will soon begin scheduling its first patients for ambulatory electroencephalography (EEG), a more sensitive means of testing for epilepsy.

"We treat epilepsy fairly frequently across all age ranges," he said. "It can affect anybody at any time in their lives, and while it cannot be cured, it can be controlled with proper treatment."

Routine EEGs are conducted at the hospital and typically last about 30 minutes, which provides only a small sample recording of brain activity. In an extended ambulatory EEG, the

patient is fitted with an EEG at the hospital and sent home, where brain activity is recorded over the course of several days. This provides neurologists with a significantly larger amount of information, allowing them to make more accurate diagnoses.

Eventually, Bassett Neurology also hopes to expand its program to include neuroendovascular surgery, a procedure that utilizes minimally invasive techniques to treat complex brain and spinal cord issues.

Cherukuri completed his undergraduate studies at Siena College, located just outside of Albany, N.Y. He attended medical school at the American University of Antigua College of Medicine in Antigua. After graduation, he returned to New York, completing clinical rotations in Brooklyn and at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse. He remained at Upstate Medical for four years of residency training and a one-year clinical neurophysiology fellowship. Cherukuri then joined a private practice in New Hartford, N.Y., where he provided care for seven years.

"I knew of Cooperstown from my frequent visits to the area and my wife works as a physician assistant in Bassett's cardiothoracic surgery program," said Cherukuri. "She told me it was a great place to work. Central New York is my home, and I always imagined helping the people I grew up around." ■



The Bassett contingent, their families, and other friends and family at the wedding

Wedding from page 1

"It was such an honor for both Deb and me to take part in the way that we did," said Jim Dalton, formerly director of Medical Education and past program director of Internal Medicine. "It was all very beautiful, moving and emotionally powerful."

The ceremony was conducted in Gayatri's native Telugu language, with segments of the ceremony involving both families and the couple. Sridhar's parents and family were present, as was Gayatri's brother.

As testament to the affection Gayatri gained during her years at Bassett, there were more than a dozen current and previous residents from the Internal Medicine program at the wedding, along with current program director Russ Moore, and program coordinator Teri Musser, who Gayatri described as her mentor, a best friend, and "like a family member." The group agreed that the award for the most persevering traveler went

to Nancy Bethuel (Internal Medicine resident 2018-2021, current faculty pulmonologist in Indianapolis). Nancy obtained coverage for her on-call responsibilities the night before the wedding, flew the red-eye from Indianapolis to JFK on Long Island, rented a car and drove to Old Bridge, New Jersey, participated in the festivities, and reversed the process to take call again that night.

"I really felt strongly that I needed to be there," said Nancy. "I made, and a lot of others made, good friends during our residency because of our shared experience and mutual support of each other. It was such a nurturing environment with a very strong international community of practitioners. I haven't been around as many international physicians since I was in Cooperstown. Bassett is unique in that way," she said.

Gayatri Bondi is currently a Cardiology fellow at Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine in West Virginia. ■



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Extending Your Impact Through Generations

As a graduate of Bassett Medical Center, your influence extends far beyond the walls where you trained. Every patient you've treated, every colleague you've mentored, and every life you've touched reflects the values and skills rooted in your time at Bassett. Now, you have the opportunity to ensure that impact continues—well into the future.

Legacy giving is not only a personal act of generosity; it's a statement of confidence in the future of medicine. When you include Bassett in your estate plans, you help sustain a tradition of clinical excellence, innovation, and compassionate care. Your support makes it possible for future physicians to benefit from the same transformative experiences that helped launch your career.

Whether you choose to designate a gift in your will, establish a charitable trust, or name the Friends of Bassett Healthcare Network as a beneficiary of your retirement or investment account, your legacy gift provides critical funding for scholarships, advanced training, and emerging medical initiatives. And while these gifts support the next generation,

they can also provide meaningful tax and financial advantages for you and your family.

At its core, legacy giving is about continuity—linking your personal journey with the future of health care. It's about empowering tomorrow's doctors with the same opportunity, guidance, and inspiration that shaped you.

To explore how you can extend your impact through legacy giving, please contact Friends of Bassett Healthcare Network by email at: friends.office@bassett.org or by phone at: (607) 547-3928. You can also explore the tools we have to offer by visiting our website at: www.bassett.giftlegacy.com.



Scan this QR code to access Friends of Bassett's legacy giving guide on Basset.org.

Help Us Keep Your Information Up to Date

Did you know you can now update your information for the Alumni Association on Bassett's website? Just go to Alumni Affairs on Bassett.org and click on the alumni update form.