We are very pleased to share another Cupola newsletter with our alumni in the U.S. and around the world. In this issue, you will find news that demonstrates that Bassett remains dedicated to excellence in medical education. The main article is about the new cardiovascular disease fellowship program, which commenced in July 2021, is three-year program certified for two positions per class accredited by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). The mission of the fellowship training program in cardiovascular disease is to provide a well-rounded academically and clinically rigorous experience and teach the trainees outstanding skills in general cardiology. The program is designed to provide basic and clinical knowledge, procedural skills, clinical judgment, research skills, systems-based practice, professionalism and interpersonal skills required as accomplished specialists in the discipline of cardiovascular diseases primarily in a rural-based healthcare network.

The fellowship program has attracted overwhelming interest from a broad range of diverse applicants. Our inaugural fellows, Dr. Bishesh Shrestha and Dr. Tarun Bathini completed their Internal Medicine training at Bassett. Their performance this academic year has been outstanding. Both physicians particularly excel in domains related to professionalism, interpersonal and communication skills. We are excited for our second class of fellows, chosen from 520 applicants, who will begin their fellowship in July. Dr. Ankur Panchal is currently a hospitalist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center-Jameson, and Dr. Shwetha Gopal who is completing her residency at Saint Barnabas Hospital in New Jersey. These Bassett cardiology fellows are the stars and the foundation for our future success.

The Bassett Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program will elevate patient care, house staff education and research activities to new heights. Fellows will receive outstanding clinical and research training in the rural setting of Bassett Healthcare Network, as well as experience additional training at New York-Presbyterian Hospital (Columbia Campus), one of the nation’s best urban academic medical centers. Since 1947, there has been a formal partnership of The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital and Columbia University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons. A program letter of agreement was signed to permit our fellows to spend up to two months per academic year at New York-Presbyterian Hospital (Columbia Campus) to complete rotations such as advanced heart failure and transplantation not offered at Bassett. The opportunity to complete cardiology fellowship at Bassett is unique in enabling fellows to care for socioeconomically diverse patients here at a rural hospital and interact with an ethnically/racially diverse patient population while training in New York City.

We will train our fellows to be first rate clinicians, educators and researchers. A detailed curriculum was created to provide expectations for both learners and faculty on all rotations. Rotations at Bassett include inpatient care, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, advanced imaging, cardiac catheterization, electrophysiology and research. Fellows have weekly continuity clinic supervised by Dr. Mun Hong and Dr. Jaswinder Virk. Daily fellowship lectures have been conducted to discuss topics in noninvasive cardiology, interventional cardiology, cardiac surgery, electrophysiology and interdisciplinary themes in an atmosphere of scholarship and collegiality.

Katz to page 2

Bassett Launches Subspecialty Fellowship Program

By Dr. Daniel Katz, Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship Program Director

We are very pleased to share another Cupola newsletter with our alumni in the U.S. and around the world. In this issue, you will find news that demonstrates that Bassett remains dedicated to excellence in medical education. The main article is about the new cardiovascular disease fellowship program. It is groundbreaking since this is the first ACGME accredited fellowship program established at Bassett. It reflects continuity and change, and those are traits that have kept Bassett going over its many decades.

In addition, you will see that we have a full roster of the incoming residents as well as the placements for the 2022 graduates of the Columbia-Bassett Medical School. I hope you will enjoy the notes from our alumni, too. We are saddened to share the obituaries of several alum and especially that of long-time member of the Bassett community Dr. Emery Herman. The contributions and influence he has dispensed to patients, students, colleagues, and Cooperstown cannot be overstated. I never overlapped with him at Bassett, but it was on his tennis courts that I learned that I had better focus on academics, because sports were not in my future.

Despite the distress around us these days, I hope that the onset of spring brings renewal and lifts our spirits.
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.

The Medical Alumni Association of Bassett Medical Center

Officers
President
James Murray, D.O.
Rochester, N.Y.
Executive Vice President
Anush Patel, M.D.
Cooperstown, N.Y.

Board of Directors
Madhia Alvi, M.B., B.S.
Jacqueline A. Bello, M.D.
Wendy Bergman, M.D.
John L. Chamberlain, M.D.
Steven S.T. Ching, M.D.
James T. Dalton, M.D.
John S. Davis, M.D.
Merideth S. Davis, M.D.
Douglas M. Dellos, M.D.
John Dier, M.D.
Nathaniel Doro, D.O.
Michael Foltzer, M.D.
Erin Gillaspie, M.D.
Peter R. Gray, M.D.
Elizabeth Jacob, M.D.
Samir Jha, M.B., B.S.
Alan J. Kozak, M.D.
Jing Luan, M.D.
Erin McKay, D.O.
Bruce L. McClenann, M.D.
David E. Newman, M.D.
Stephanie S. Oceguera, M.D.
Beth Olearczyk, M.D.
Sarah M. Ricketts, M.D.
Eric Rubin, M.D.
G. Theodore Ruckert IV, M.D.
Timothy Whitaker, M.D.
Kenneth W. Wilkins, Jr., M.D.
Rachel Zehr, M.D.

Ex Officio
Tommy Ibrahim, M.D., M.H.A.
Chief Executive Officer

The Cupola is published three times a year. Please send comments and news, including change of address information to: Editor, The Cupola, Office of Medical Education, Bassett Medical Center, One Atwell Road, Cooperstown, NY 13326 or e-mail cupola@bassett.org.

Alan J. Kozak, M.D.
Editor
Marianne Bez
Assistant Editor
FLAT Graphics
Design and Production

Katz from page 1
Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery colleagues as well as the fellows have delivered an excellent series of lectures. Hong, associate program director, leads the interventional cardiology lecture series. Weekly fellowship meetings with the Bassett Research Institute, including clinical research nurse supervisor Jennifer Victory and statistician Melissa Scribani, are organized to develop investigator initiated research projects. The fellows participate in joint virtual educational sessions with fellows from Columbia Presbyterian as well as the University of Rochester.

There are few rural hospitals that offer diverse pathology, cardiac surgery, cutting edge 3 Tesla cardiac MRI, advanced ablation, TAVR and a Watchman Program. We have the support of the Bassett Research Institute led by Dr. Anne Gadomski to promote fellow-driven projects.

The inspiration for building a cardiology fellowship was rooted in the academic efforts of our dedicated Bassett internal medicine residents, Dr. Randolph Hutter and me to work with residents to develop cardiology research with outstanding support from the Bassett Research Institute. Our residents received four E. Donnell Thomas awards from the Bassett Research Institute to complete our research. Our translational research, to evaluate novel biomarkers, has been nationally recognized and presented by Bassett residents at the scientific sessions of the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, The Society of Cardiovascular MRI and the European Society of Cardiology.

We are indebted to Jill Stoecklin, administrative director of Medical Education, and Teri Musser, program coordinator for their support of the fellowship program. Musser has assisted the program in numerous ways including managing the ACGME application process, preparing documents for the ACGME site review, coordinating interview sessions, and developing policies to maintain compliance with regulations. She is an integral member of the fellowship Clinical Competency, Program Evaluation and Graduate Medical Education Committees.

Establishing the Bassett Cardiovascular Disease Fellowship has helped to attract outstanding candidates for faculty positions. Our goal is to develop a national reputation in clinical care, education and research by recruitment, as well as in retention of faculty and in developing our own nationally recognized physician clinicians, educators and researchers. The fellowship program offers trainees the potential of a permanent attending position to build on the success of their cardiology fellowship. Our fellowship will develop physician leaders who will establish a high standard for collegiality, teamwork, patient care, teaching and research.

Welcome to New Fellows
Shwetha Gopal, M.D. is a graduate of Davao Medical School Foundation College of Medicine in The Philippines. She will complete her internal medicine residency at Robert Wood Johnson/Barnabas Health in West Orange, N.J. Ankur Panchal, M.B., B.S., is a graduate of S.B.K.S., Medical Institute and Research Center in Gujarat, India. He completed his internal medicine residency at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (Elmhurst Hospital Center) in Elmhurst, N.Y. ■

Correction: The article in the fall issue of The Cupola welcoming new members to the board of the Bassett Medical Alumni Association misidentified the institutions at which Dr. Beth Olearczyk studied and trained. She completed her medical degree at Columbia University and was a preliminary Internal Medicine resident at Bassett Healthcare in 2005-06, before completing an Internal Medicine residency at the University of Rochester.
2022 Residency Match Results Announced

All of Bassett’s residency programs had success in the 2022 Match through the National Resident Matching Program. The following is the roster of the first post-graduate year appointments for the 2022-23 academic year.

GENERAL SURGERY
Rahima Khatun, M.D., Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine
Ashleigh Martinez, M.D., University of Connecticut School of Medicine
Prince Morke, M.D., Morehouse School of Medicine
Sean Morton, M.D., Washington State University

“There were always students here, always interns, always residents. That made it possible to attract a higher quality of senior staff persons because of the opportunity to teach and to do research.”

Dr. Charles Ashley
Director of Bassett Hospital, 1967-1984

Program Director Named
Dr. Russell Moore

After a nationwide search conducted by an outside firm, Dr. Russell Moore has been appointed as the director of the Internal Medicine Residency Program. Moore brings to the role clinical experience and excellence as a Bassett hospitalist, a passion for teaching, palpable energy, and a record of being an effective team builder, leader, and organizer.

In announcing the appointment, Dr. Kai Mebust, chief of the Department of Medicine stated, “I am confident that he is going to be a strong advocate for the residents and a successful Program Director.”

In addition, Mebust recognized the tremendous contributions of Dr. Edward Bischof who served as the interim program director since the fall of 2021, [we are] “thankful that someone with his experience, excellence, and passion for our residents was available and willing to shepherd the program through this crucial time period.”

Moore officially assumed his new role on March 1. He will continue to work clinically as a hospitalist. Bischof will resume his former role as associate program director. His wealth of experience and expertise will be of invaluable assistance to Moore.

Mebust added “Congratulations Russ, and thank you Ed. You are both a credit to our institution.”

Bassett Residents Match in Fellowships

Three doctors completing their residency training received the following fellowship appointments:

Karl Damroth, M.D., (General Surgery) Surgical Critical Care Fellowship, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.
Panadeekarn Panjawatanan, M.D., (Internal Medicine), Endocrinology Fellowship, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, Lebanon, N. H.

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.
1950s
Charles Greenblatt M.D. (Rotating intern 1956-57) provides the following update on his previous message to The Cupola regarding the old TB vaccine BCG in the prevention of Alzheimer’s. “Since then, our work has been confirmed by Harvard and Montefiore and at this time the anti-flu, anti-pneumonia, DPT (diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus), are all showing a significant reduction in the risk of Alzheimer’s. Our little lab is trying to find the common mechanism. So, I have become a fanatic on adult vaccination’s off-target effects. We take childhood vaccination for granted, but adult vaccines, other than their specific effects are far less known. Any of you who want to join us in these studies, please let me know at charlesg@ekmd.huji.ac.il.”

1960s
Alan Ames M.D. (Rotating intern 1960-61) After leaving Cooperstown, he joined the Army Medical Corps and was sent to Germany, landing on the day the Berlin Wall went up. He spent three years in Augsburg before returning stateside to settle in Portland, Ore. into an internal medicine residency and then a cardiology fellowship. He reports, “From 1968-2000 I practiced interventional cardiology, which I really enjoyed. Since then, I like retirement but miss seeing patients. Here in Portland my favorite occupation is walking and running in the neighborhood with our malamute.”

David Svahn, M.D. (Rotating/Internal Medicine resident 1965-67, Attending 1972-99) Shared these thoughts, “On balance I consider myself fortunate to have spent the bulk of my career as part of Columbia and Bassett and have raised my children in Cooperster (two of whom are Columbia physicians, one at a Bassett-like program, both with academic appointments.) I am proud that Bassett has forged a medical school program, one that is unique as far as I know. It’s all about education and mentorship. I hope that Bassett can continue leadership in this critical aspect of medicine.”

Roger MacMillan, M.D. (Surgical resident 1966-70, Attending surgeon 1977-2004) Many area residents, including MacMillan are appearing in an independent film due out later this year. The movie is based on the life of Eva Coo, a woman who ran a roadhouse that offered “ladies of the night” and illicit booze during the depression. After she murdered a local handy man for his life insurance funds, Coo was tried in Cooperstown’s courthouse and convicted of murder in the first degree. MacMillan plays the role of the jury foreman who rendered the guilty verdict, and his Model A Ford was used by Coo to transport the victim’s body in one scene.

1970s
Gary Hoffman, M.D. (Attending rheumatologist 1974-84) retired in 2015, at age 73, from the Cleveland Clinic. He writes, “I enjoyed my role as Chairman of the Department of Rheumatic and Immunologic Diseases and having been the founder and PI of our Center for Vasculitis Care and Research. While our Center investigators are proud to have established the first multicenter collaborative network in the U.S. to perform randomized controlled studies for the vasculitises, I am much more pleased to have trained more talented physicians than I, who are now leading research initiatives and improving the care that all can provide for these difficult patients with rare diseases.” He and his wife Diane remain in Cleveland and would welcome visits from Bassett family.

1980s
Lewis Zulick, M.D. (Surgery resident 1984-89) is still doing general surgery in the Finger Lakes near Rochester, but a few years ago he started working every other week in Carthage, NY, so he can spend more time at their cottage in Thousand Islands Park on Wellesley Island. Cheryl is doing well working as a realtor in the Thousand Islands and the Rochester area. He recalls that he has worked with several Bassett folks over the years including Kitima Boonvisudhi, M.D. (Surgery resident 1994-2000) and Charlie Stackhouse, M.D. (Surgery resident 1979-84).

1990s
Manuel Chaknis, M.D. (Transitional Year resident 1992-93) sends greetings from Atlanta! He’s looking forward to seeing everyone from the 1992-93 Bassett residency classes (and attendings/staff from then, too) at the next Bassett Reunion in 2023. He writes, “I contacted a good number of us during the Summer of 2020, but everything’s been on hold due to Covid. I will try to remind everyone again in about 6-9 months so that we have a big turnout then! In the meantime, please feel free to contact me and spread the word! Until then, I’ll continue my LASIK and eye laser practice coupled with general ophthalmology here in the “great Southern megalopolis”.

Theodor Kaufman, M.D. (Surgery resident 1993-99, Surgery Residency Program Director 2015-20) reports that he left Bassett in 2020, to take a position as Chief of Regional Surgery for University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC).

Family to page 5
Family from page 4

He shares, “I work with eight surgeons across four rural hospitals and love the job and the Finger Lakes region, which is where I live. I have always enjoyed rural living and the organization is fully supportive of empowering our regional practitioners.”

Bora Gumustop, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 1994-97) has been named 2021 Physician of the Year by the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Upstate Northeastern New York. He was celebrated at the foundation’s annual gala, “An Evening to Remember” in November. Gumustop’s principal area of interest is clinical/research outcomes and endoscopic technology development. He currently serves on the board of St. Peter’s Surgery and Endoscopy Center, is chief of Gastroenterology at St. Peter’s Hospital and a member of the board of Innovative Health Alliance of New York.


2000s

Dave Prakash, M.D. (Transitional Year resident 2003-04) left the U.S. Air Force in 2017 to attend Stanford Graduate School of Business. He joined a newly formed team at Anthem in Palo Alto that is using artificial intelligence to improve healthcare. He was involved in product development, and clinical validation for Digital Health solutions. He also worked on the ethical and regulatory issues related to AI in healthcare. He reports, he and his family recently, “moved to the VA/DC area to be close to family and continue WFH full time. I still stay connected to aerospace by working for Northrop Grumman part-time.”

2010s

Wisit Cheungpasitport, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 2010-2013) has been recognized by the Mayo Clinic Department of Medicine and Internal Medicine Residency Program as one of the highest rated educators (among 635) in resident education.

Natanong “Ten” Thamcharoen, M.D. (Internal Medicine resident 2014-17) finished all her specialty trainings (Nephrology and Palliative Care) and she is back home in Bangkok, Thailand, working at King Chulalongkorn Hospital where she graduated. She states, “I am where I want to be. Bassett is the place where it all started, and I cannot thank you enough.”

2020s

Mark Travor, M.D. (Columbia-Bassett graduate 2020, Transitional Year resident 2020-21) “We’re doing well! My wife Jessie and I are all settled in Lebanon, N.H., where I’m doing my ophthalmology residency and where she is working in the Mohs surgery division of Dermatology. Being up here feels a lot like being in Cooperstown, though we miss the lake and the people. In other exciting news, we added a goldendoodle puppy to our family.”

See our latest news and updates at Bassett Medical Alumni Association
IN MEMORIAM: BASSETT REMEMBERS

Dr. Emery C. Herman, Jr., 92, died in his Cooperstown home on February 26, 2022, following a stroke in December 2019, nearly 63 years after he began his career at Bassett Hospital in 1959.

Born July 24, 1929, in La Grange, Georgia, Herman was a graduate of Emory University and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine (M.D. 1953). His education was followed by an internship at Hopkins, two years of assistant residency at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, two years in the National Heart Institute and another year in hematology at Hopkins.

In 1955 he married Margaret (Peggy) Whitaker, and in 1959 after a stint at the National Institutes of Health, he and his young family came to Cooperstown. He was a research physician with Drs. E. Donnall Thomas and Joseph Ferrebee, working in the field of bone marrow transplantation. He soon transferred to clinical medicine and spent his entire Bassett career as a practicing internist, retiring in 1994. He was beloved by his patients as a caring physician who understood and dealt with their general lives, in addition to providing his outstanding medical expertise. Board-certified in Internal Medicine, he was an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University.

Herman and his wife Peggy raised five children together in Cooperstown until her untimely death in 1975. In 1978, he married Nancy Frazier Freehafer and they shared a 44-year marriage.

In addition to his professional commitment, Herman was involved in multiple community focused activities, including serving on the Village Board of Trustees and as mayor of Cooperstown in 1970-72. He was actively involved in the greater Cooperstown community, believing strongly in a life of service, volunteerism, and charitable giving. The host of volunteer activities that engaged him included serving as treasurer of the Catskill Symphony Orchestra and long-standing work with Habitat for Humanity.

Many community members also recall that Herman had a lifelong passion for tennis, and he played ping pong into his 90s. In the mid-1970s, he built two tennis courts on his property, and enjoyed playing on them and seeing them used by family, friends, and the local community. Not a regular practitioner of any organized religion, he gave the name “Sunday Services” to the group who would join him for doubles matches most Sunday mornings. He was known as much for his lively banter and questionable calls as he was for his superior racquet skills! Since his death, multiple accolades from Bassett physicians have included: “He was one of those people who made the world a better place simply by being there.” and “He was a true giant, a true representation of what Bassett stands for and who we are today.” He is survived by his wife Nancy, 5 children and 3 stepchildren, 14 grandchildren, 2 sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews.

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.

- Cardiology
- Critical Care
- Non-Invasive and EP
- Anesthesiology
- Radiology Dx and IR
- Pulm/CC
- Chief of Psychiatry
- Urology
- Neurology
- General Surgery – Breast
- Family Medicine – Pediatrics – Herkimer
- Dolgeville
- Rheumatology
- Pediatrics

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

IN MEMORIAM: BASSETT REMEMBERS

Emery C. Herman, Jr., M.D. (1929-2022)

In further celebration of Dr. Emery Herman’s life, we go back to a photo taken at his 40th birthday party in the Fieldstone Building in 1969.

BASSETT LOOKS BACK

In further celebration of Dr. Emery Herman’s life, we go back to a photo taken at his 40th birthday party in the Fieldstone Building in 1969.
Dr. Thomas A. Brasitus died in Cooperstown on January 2, 2022, at age 76. After a nationally distinguished career, he joined Bassett as the Chief of Digestive Diseases in 2001, retiring in 2015. He received his M.D. at Jefferson Medical College and served his internship at Duke University Medical Center and his residency in medicine at The New York Hospital (Cornell). He was a Research Fellow at Harvard Medical School and completed his Gastroenterology Fellowship at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. Tom spent two years in the U.S. Air Force, attaining the rank of Major. 

For 15 years, Brasitus was the Director of the Gastroenterology Section of the University of Chicago Hospitals as the Walter L. Palmer Distinguished Service Professor of Medicine. In 2000, he became the president of the American Gastroenterological Association. Under Brasitus’ leadership, Bassett’s Division of Digestive Diseases continued to develop and maintain a strong impact throughout Bassett’s expanding eight-county presence, combined with active GI research and teaching. He is survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Christine Brasitus, and daughter, Christine Whittaker and grandchildren, Nicholas, Oliver and Sophie.

Dr. John W. Severinghaus, 99, professor emeritus of anesthesiology at UCSF and resident of Marin County, Calif., died June 2, 2021. A graduate of Haverford College with a degree in physics, he obtained his M.D. from Columbia University in 1949, followed by six months as a medical missionary on a remote Navaho Indian reservation and then a two-year rotating internship at Basset which included working with Research Physician, Dr. Joe Ferrebee. He went on to a career in anesthesiology, achieving worldwide renown for his invention of the blood gas analyzer and other achievements in the study of blood gasses. He is survived by his children, Ed, Jean, Wendy (Milton), and Jeff (Lynne); grandchildren Sarah and Alex; and many nieces and nephews. For a fascinating writeup of his storied life and career, see https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/marinij/name/john-severinghaus-obituary?id=14412812. See also his Family Album entry in The Cupola, Volume XI, No. VI, Winter 2008-2009.

The 2022 class of the Columbia-Bassett program entered the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) Main Residency Match this year. Please join us in congratulating these graduates on their success. The residency results are: 

- Matthew Adan, M.D., Internal Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Mass.
- Jamie Aron, M.D., Emergency Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, Mass.
- Devin Beecher, M.D., Family Medicine, Keck Medicine of USC, Los Angeles, Calif.
- Alexander Bulteel, M.D., Internal Medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston, Mass.
- Samuel Burnnim, M.D., Pediatrics, Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles, Calif.
- Kelsey Clayman, M.D., Emergency Medicine, Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- Joseph Cornett, M.D., Internal Medicine-Pediatrics, University of North Carolina Hospitals, Chapel Hill, N.C.
- Kerry Flitz, M.D., General Surgery, Brown University/ Rhode Island Hospital, Providence, R.I.
- Liam Gallagher, M.D., Otolaryngology, University of Minnesota Medical School, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Liam Heneghan, M.D., Internal Medicine, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, Penn.
- Kenneth Hubbell, M.D., Internal Medicine, University of California-San Francisco, San Francisco, Calif.
- Julie Huff, M.D., Family Medicine, Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, Lawrence, Mass.
- Martha Renn, M.D., Family Medicine, New York-Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia University Medical Center, New York, N.Y.

Deferred: Adam Richter and Kathleen Yu
“A More Excellent Way” — a Part of Bassett’s Past and Its Future

By Dr. Subashini Daniel

Eight years ago, I was given the privilege of joining the Bassett Healthcare Network staff. As I reflect on that decision, and the approaching 100th anniversary of Bassett Medical Center, it is still that intangible aspect of Bassett, the strength and caring encompassed in the community-caretaker partnership, that drives me and remains the core of the organization.

Philanthropy is idealism in action. It’s that combination of idealism and hard work, coupled with a critical underpinning of faith in our potential, that brought this place to life 100 years ago and has allowed it to thrive since. The foundation?

A relationship built between a community benefactor, Edward Severin Clark, and a natural-born physician leader who embodied an unwavering commitment to “a more excellent way”, Dr. Mary Imogene Bassett. Following in those footsteps, Bassett teams have achieved clinical excellence while maintaining a deep understanding of what it means to truly care for a community, to care for one another.

The philosophy of a “more excellent way” holds within it not only pride for successes, but simultaneously engenders humility, and reinforces the acknowledgement that we cannot stand still, that there is always room for growth, for learning, for improvement in every facet of our work and interactions. It is with that in mind that we embrace the challenges inevitably facing us in the next 100 years—continuing to innovate, and to coin a phrase from a colleague, continuing to fight to “be pioneers, as that’s in our DNA”.

Our task as the collective Bassett community is to continue to hold sacrosanct our dedication to refining the art and science of medical care—to not be forced into a construct shaped by others, or by industry drivers that do not share our most fundamental values. Rather, our obligation is to use our strengths, history, intellect and innate dedication to service, to define our own future. As we further cultivate our relationships with the communities we serve, as well as with the leaders that serve them, we will find innovative solutions to the problems facing health care delivery in a competitive, strained, and under-resourced environment.

By embodying Dr. Bassett’s philosophy of boundary-less thinking I have no doubt that we will succeed, and I look forward to making that journey with all of you.

Dr. Daniel is serving as the Vice Chair of the Friends of Bassett Board of Directors. She is Medical Director of Systems Improvement and a Senior Attending in Cardiac Surgery at Bassett. If you are interested in making a gift to support Bassett, please contact the Friends of Bassett by emailing friends.office@bassett.org or call 607-547-3928. Thank you!