Alumni Association Announces Campaign to Boost Endowment

The Bassett Medical Alumni Association is undertaking a campaign to raise additional funds for the Medical Education Endowment. This endowment was established in 1997 through the generous contributions of members to provide enhancements to Bassett’s Medical Education Program.

The endowment currently stands at $3.5 million. Its proceeds have underwritten such improvements as the design and construction of the Simulation Lab, an active learning center. It has funded the purchase and installation of audience response mechanisms in the auditoriums and meeting spaces to enhance two-way communications in lectures and grand rounds. In recent years, funds have provided faculty development opportunities.

To underwrite significant and impactful programs relating to Medical Education requires an endowment considerably greater than $3.5 million. According to Douglas M. DeLong, M.D., Executive Vice-President of the Bassett Medical Alumni Association, “There is real and present danger threatening the caliber of Medical Education and we have insufficient funds to meet the challenges for the immediate present and the future.”

It is a changing environment for health care and medical education. External pressures are creating new demands on teaching hospitals, and reliable funding streams of the past are no longer available. At the same time that Medical Education Programs are threatened by loses of federal and state funding — through such actions as reimbursement reductions, there are new requirements of the faculty.

To improve their effectiveness as teachers, clinicians are expected to develop new skill sets beyond those of the disciplines of medicine, specifically evaluation skills and teaching methods. The American College of General Medicine (ACGM), the Institute of Medicine, Congress and the public are demanding that medical educators demonstrate the competencies of their students and graduates.

A well-funded program can give Bassett an advantage in attracting high-caliber students and residents as well as clinicians and medical administrators who serve as faculty. An enlarged program endowment will foster greater consistency in funding and support aspects of the program not readily subsidized in other ways.

As I mentioned in the previous edition of The Cupola, the Bassett Medical Alumni Association will be hosting our 25th anniversary reunion on October 11th and 12th. I imagine that there are at least a few of you — or maybe more — who haven’t been back to Bassett or seen your former colleagues and mentors for many years, and perhaps feel a bit apprehensive about coming to the reunion. I understand.

A few months ago I received an invitation to my 30th college reunion. I hadn’t been back to campus for 29 years and hadn’t been in touch with college friends for a long time. Along with the invitation was a newsletter with updates from several class members. One wrote that she and her husband were restoring a 200 year-old farmstead, while raising three biological and five adopted special needs children, running their own businesses, leading bible-study group, coaching basketball, singing in the church choir, and growing their own vegetables. Pictures were included; both she and her husband looked happy and fit, with no sign of wrinkles, gray hair or fatigue. Other similar updates from successful classmates appeared in the newsletter.

I was very ambivalent about registering for the reunion. I had visions of being among wealthy, Botox’ed, aerobicized classmates who traveled the world, bought companies, and were training for triathlons. Worse, they might not remember me.

Despite my apprehension, I did attend the reunion and had a wonderful time. Everyone looked and acted like the regular people they were. Everyone there was happy to see others with whom they had shared a specific time and experience.
Residents Leave Bassett to Pursue New Endeavors

Promporn Sukarsaranjit, M.D. (Internal Medicine), Advanced Cardiac Imaging Fellowship, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah

Sanjay Thomas, M.D. (General Surgery), Private Practice, Vassar Brothers Medical Center, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Golden Awards Announced

Bassett residents and students recently honored two of their own with the Golden Stethoscope awards. The Surgery students chose Sanjay Thomas, M.D., as the resident they felt was their best teacher. The Internal Medicine residents selected Promporn “Pat” Sukarsaranjit, M.D.

The 2013 Golden Apple awards, given by the residents to the faculty members they felt were their most outstanding teachers were presented to Patrick H. McNulty, MD (Medicine) and Craig A. Henson, M.D., and Nicholas J. Hellenthal, M.D. (Surgery).
Plans for our Family Reunion to be held on October 11 and 12 are shaping up nicely. I hope that many of you will join us in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Mary Imogene Bassett Medical Alumni Association and spend a glorious fall weekend in Cooperstown.

The gathering will feature some of Bassett’s accomplished alumni presenting on a range of topics and will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their medical training experience here and look forward to what the future may hold for training and study at Bassett.

The weekend kicks off with the Dr. John Davis Lecture on Friday morning. This year’s speaker, Nicholas Wolter, M.D., is CEO of the Billings Clinic, and a two-term Commissioner on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC). Dr. Wolter received his medical degree at the University of Michigan Medical Center. He completed his internship and residency in Internal Medicine at The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital in 1980.

The John Davis Lecture is presented annually for the Bassett Medical Staff, residents and students and features outstanding faculty from around the country nominated by the staff. Following the lecture, the Board of the Bassett Medical Alumni Association will hold a meeting to which members are invited.

Friday evening we invite local alumni and our guests from out of town to join us for an opening reception at Brewery Ommegang at 6:00 p.m. Located only four miles from Bassett, Ommegang offers an experience that is akin to a trip to Belgium. We will enjoy camaraderie, beer tastings, and light repast at this unique farmstead-style brewery. Some of you might want to join us at Ommegang after attending the Appreciation Celebration honoring Drs. James Bordley and Patrick Dietz. (See the article on page 4.)

Saturday’s agenda features former and current Medical Education administrators including John S. Davis, M.D., who will provide an historical perspective. Walter A. Franck, M.D., will offer an update on Undergraduate Medical Education and James T. Dalton, M.D. will share an overview of the status of Graduate Medical Education at Bassett.

Mimicking a trend in the world of idea-sharing, we will introduce a new format for some of our presentations. We will offer a half-dozen “Imy Talks,” succinct creative sessions on a range of topics chosen by the speakers. Among the alumni who agreed to share their thoughts in this format are: David Pratt, Andrew Coates, Jocelyn Wittstein and others.

The highlight of the day will be the Lipsky Memorial Lecture offered immediately following lunch. Dr. Nicholas Wolter will address current trends in health care delivery and payment reform. This presentation will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Drs. Pratt, Coates and Wolter, moderated by myself. The panel will be asked to prognosticate 25 years into the future on what medical education, health care, and the payment system might look like.

There’s some free time in the afternoon to explore Cooperstown and its museums, visit with friends, enjoy the outdoors or relax. Alumni and their family are invited to attend a barbecue which begins at 6:00 p.m. at the Sugar Shack.

The cost for attending this weekend is $100 (per family unit) which will help off-set expenses. This includes: the Friday night reception at Brewery Ommegang, Saturday’s educational program with a luncheon, and the family barbecue.

If you have any questions or if you wish to help with this event, please contact me at douglas.delong@bassett.org. I look forward to welcoming many friends and colleagues back to Cooperstown.

First Annual Bassett Cupola 5K Run/Walk

Alumni and their family members are welcome to take part in the first annual Bassett Cupola 5K Run/Walk, to be held on Sunday, October 13, beginning at 10:00 a.m. This event is organized by the Bassett Network’s Celebration and Wellness committees and it is open to all of the Bassett community as well as friends and families. It is intended to gather participants ranging from serious to beginner runners.

First-time runners are highly encouraged to join and run their first 5K. There is plenty of time to start training and planning. Details on registration, costs, and the course will be available at the reunion registration desk.
Surgeons Celebrate Bordley and Dietz on Their Years of Service

After a combined service of more than 70 years at Bassett Healthcare, two senior surgeons are being honored. James Bordley, IV, M.D., the son of James Bordley III, M.D., Bassett’s Director from 1947-1966, came to Bassett directly from his medical schooling at Columbia University, completing his surgical internship and residency at The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital from 1970 to 1975. He returned to work at Bassett in 1977. During his time at Bassett, he was Division Chief of General Surgery and specialized in gastrointestinal surgery.

As Program Director of the Surgery Residency Program from 1984 to 2008, Patrick A. Dietz, M.D., is well-known to many alumni. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, he came to Bassett in 1979 and served as Division Chief of Vascular Surgery.

An Appreciation Celebration in honor of Drs. Bordley and Dietz will be held on Friday, October 11, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at the Louis C. Jones Center at The Farmers’ Museum on Rt. 80, Cooperstown. Past surgical alumni are invited to attend. For more information, contact Kelly Stone at kelly.stone@bassett.org; 607-547-3202.
IN MEMORIAM: BASSETT REMEMBERS

Alumni: Please send copies of obituaries of former Bassett trainees, faculty or other members of the “Bassett Family” to cupola@bassett.org

William E. Bowers, Ph.D.

William (“Bill”) E. Bowers, Ph.D., a former Bassett staff member and a driving force behind the establishment of the Bassett Research Institute, passed away May 9, 2013, in Columbia, S.C. Dr. Bowers, who was a graduate of Princeton University and obtained a Ph.D. at the Rockefeller Institute, joined Bassett in 1980 as a research immunologist. Dr. Bowers’ particular area of interest, accomplishment and inspiration for faculty, residents and students, came from his work studying the ways immune cells communicate with each other, particularly dendritic cells and T-lymphocytes. In 1984, the Bassett Research Institute was created and Dr. Bowers was named acting scientific director, a position he held four years.

In 1990, Dr. Bowers left Bassett to join the staff of the University of South Carolina (USC) Medical School. He was designated Distinguished Professor Emeritus by the University, having served as Chair of Pathology and Microbiology at USC Medical School.

He is survived by his wife Barbara, son Kevin (Ingrid), daughter Kendra (Mica), and six grandchildren: Ivan, Hagen, Acadia, Isabella, Natalie, and Joseph. He is also survived by his brother Henry (Katya), sister Sally (Ron), sisters-in-law Georgette and Joan, and numerous nephews, nieces, grandnephews, and grandnieces.

James A. Brockway, O.D.

James A. Brockway, O.D., 73, passed away May 26, 2013, at his residence.

Dr. Brockway was born December 21, 1939, in Constable, Mass., the son of the late Howard R. and Esther (Langdon) Brockway. He was married to Aida A. Brockway for 24 years.

He graduated from the New England College of Optometry in 1964 and practiced optometry at Bassett Healthcare Network for 41 years. He was a consulting optometrist at Albany Medical College, and a member of the American Academy of Optometry.

He served in the U.S. Army 815th Station Hospital, Army Reserves. He was an active community volunteer serving on the local emergency squad, the School Board of Education and also in the New York State Optometric Association.

He loved music, played the organ, substituting at the Presbyterian and United Methodist churches. He was also a member of the Mohawk Organ Theatre, Schenectady and the American Theatre Organ Society (ATOS), where he played organ at noontime concerts.

Survivors include his wife, Aida A. Brockway; daughter, Janet Brockway Fuhrman (Craig); and grandchild, Hannah E. Fuhrman. He was predeceased by his daughter, Kris Brockway and grandchild, Robert James.

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A larger endowment will generate more annual income and enable Bassett to bring in specialists to help design the needed curriculum for our faculty and to help create objective measurements to demonstrate competencies. Ongoing faculty development will ensure that Bassett’s Medical Education programs will continue improving. It will enable the faculty to successfully measure competencies beyond the traditional areas of medical knowledge and patient care, proficiencies such as professionalism, practice-based learning and improvement, communications and health care systems.

Members of the Bassett Medical Alumni are being asked to protect the experience that alumni valued here. A contribution to this endowment campaign is an investment in the future of excellence in Medical Education at Bassett. Dr. DeLong states, “I believe that it is the obligation of every alumnus to preserve medical education at Bassett by supporting the program for those presently here and others to come.”

The Medical Alumni Association has a goal to substantially increase this endowment through major gifts and planned giving opportunities. Alumni are asked to consider evaluating their financial and estate plans to establish a legacy gift to benefit the Medical Education Endowment. Major contributions may be given in cash, securities, property and other tangibles with cash value.

In the coming months, alumni will receive a mailing packet with more information about this campaign. A team of medical students will be enlisted to help call past donors to identify those interested in exploring the potential of a contribution to the endowment.

Alumni who wish to support the campaign either directly or through a legacy gift are encouraged to contact Joshua Truman (joshua.truman@bassett.org), Director of Development, or Michael Stein (michael.stein@bassett.org), Vice President of Development and Executive Director at The Friends of Bassett at 607-547-3928.

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 28 regional sites? Consider these openings in Central New York and Cooperstown. For more information visit: http://recruitment.bassett.org/physician-jobs/

Or call the Medical Staff Affairs office at 607-547-6982

Cardiologist (Non-Invasive)
Dermatologist
Emergency Medicine
Endocrinology
Primary Care
Gastroenterologist
General Surgery
Hospitalist
Neurosurgeon
OB-GYN - Physician
Optometrist
Otolaryngology
Pulmonologist
Vascular Surgeon
Research Award Recipient Named

Nischala Ammannagari, M.D., a medical resident in her second year of training at Bassett Medical Center, was presented with the E. Donnall Thomas Outstanding Research Presentation Award for 2013. Her research project and poster were among 12 recently presented as part of the E. Donnall Thomas Research Day.

Ammannagari’s research study project was titled “Impact of obesity on the efficacy of colon cancer treatment.” “As diet-induced obesity is a major health problem worldwide, I chose to conduct a study to see if there was a relationship between obesity and the response to chemotherapy in colon cancer,” said Ammannagari. “Interestingly, it was found that obesity does affect the treatment response, as it seems to block the intended action of chemotherapy. I plan to study the cell signaling pathways that get activated in the setting of obesity, with an intention to look for new focused therapeutic agents in cancer patients with obesity and metabolic syndrome.”

Ammannagari worked on the study project with Erin Gillaspie, M.D., Michael Greene, Ph.D., Christine Burrington and Melissa Horsman from the research lab at Bassett Medical Center; and Anush Patel, M.D., attending physician in the Division of Hematology/Oncology, who provided guidance and support. Ammannagari earned her medical degree from SVS Medical College, India, and plans to pursue a career in medical oncology.

“Dr. Ammannagari’s scholarly work represents her well,” says Patel. “Her recent poster at American College of Physicians and the E. Donnall Thomas Outstanding Research Award supports her ongoing efforts in becoming a researcher and a caring physician. Her dedication, enthusiasm and insight are inspiring.”

The E. Donnall Thomas Award is given annually to a Bassett trainee who has conducted exceptional research while at Bassett Medical Center during residency. The award is named in honor of E. Donnall Thomas, who served as Bassett’s physician-in-chief from 1955 to 1963. He was awarded the 1990 Nobel Prize in Medicine for his pioneering work in bone marrow transplantation, which he began at Bassett. Dr. Thomas performed the world’s first human bone marrow transplant at Bassett in 1956.