

# Ohio State Medicine Alumni

## Leaders in Medicine

Raising the bar **P. 12**

Training champions **P. 18**

Connection at the core **P. 22**



Amy Moore, MD, professor and the Robert L. Ruberg MD Alumni Chair in the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery

# MEDICAL ALUMNI REUNION WEEKEND



## Save the Date

### Fall 2026

**Join us at Hamilton Hall, home of  
The Ohio State University College of Medicine!**

Medical Alumni Reunion Weekend will include tours of the new Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Center, educational sessions, social activities and plenty of time to reminisce with friends, old and new alike.

[go.osu.edu/medreunion](https://go.osu.edu/medreunion)

More  
information  
will be available  
in the coming  
months.



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**Contributing writers**

Jennifer Shaffer, Kelli Trinoskey,  
Joshua Wright

**Contributing photographer**

Wendy Pramik

**Design and Operations,  
Office of Marketing**

**Designer**

Betsy Becker

**Operations**

Richelle Antczak McCuen '00

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# A Message from Dr. Bradford

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— MARGARET MEAD

**NOW THAT MY TERM** as dean of The Ohio State University College of Medicine has concluded — and I have stepped down in order to return to the faculty and my work as a physician-scientist — Margaret Mead’s words resonate with me more deeply than ever. Leading this extraordinary community of learners, educators, researchers, clinicians and alumni was a true honor and a privilege. You embody what it means to be thoughtful and committed citizens, advancing medicine with compassion, curiosity and purpose.

This fall, it was wonderful to reconnect with so many of you — our changemaking graduates. We welcomed hundreds of former students back to campus for Alumni Reunion Weekend, including the Class of 1975 as they marked their 50th reunion. I am grateful to all who joined us in celebrating the lifelong bonds that unite us as Buckeyes and as physicians. The friendships renewed and stories shared were moving reminders of how these connections influence lives and careers long after graduation.

Another highlight of the season was recognition for one of our most cherished spaces. Hamilton Hall, the century-old heart of our college, received a 2025 Building Columbus Award for Best Historic Preservation from *Columbus Business First*. Its careful renovation and integration with our new Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Center beautifully showcases the power of vision, collaboration and philanthropy. My sincere thanks to all who made this possible!

Our people have always been our greatest strength. In this issue, you will read about several remarkable leaders: **Dr. Amy Moore**, who is transforming surgical education and reconstructive nerve surgery; **Cindy Chang '84 BS, '89 MD, '93 Fellow**, a trailblazer in women’s sports medicine; and **Andy Thomas '95 MD, '98 Res, '00 MBA**, whose longtime leadership has helped guide our institution and the creation of the new University Hospital. Their stories



Dr. Bradford hosts College of Medicine alumni at the Class of 1975’s 50th reunion.

remind us that leadership shines brightest when it lights the way for others.

As I continue my journey here at Ohio State, I am filled with gratitude for your support, inspiration and partnership over the past five years. I know that this community of healers, innovators and leaders will continue to shape the future of medicine for generations to come.

With heartfelt appreciation and best wishes,

**Carol R. Bradford, MD, MS, FACS**

Professor of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery  
The Ohio State University College of Medicine

*Dr. Carol R. Bradford’s term as dean of The Ohio State University College of Medicine concluded on Dec. 31, 2025. She continues to serve Ohio State as a Professor of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery.*



# Heart, Skill and Unwavering Dedication

At The Ohio State University College of Medicine, we shape compassionate leaders who will heal, uplift and transform lives. Every day, our learners rise to meet the challenges of tomorrow's health care landscape.

Your gift today helps us with this vital mission of nurturing the next generation of healers who will care for our communities with excellence and empathy.



[give.osu.edu/comcaregivers](https://give.osu.edu/comcaregivers)

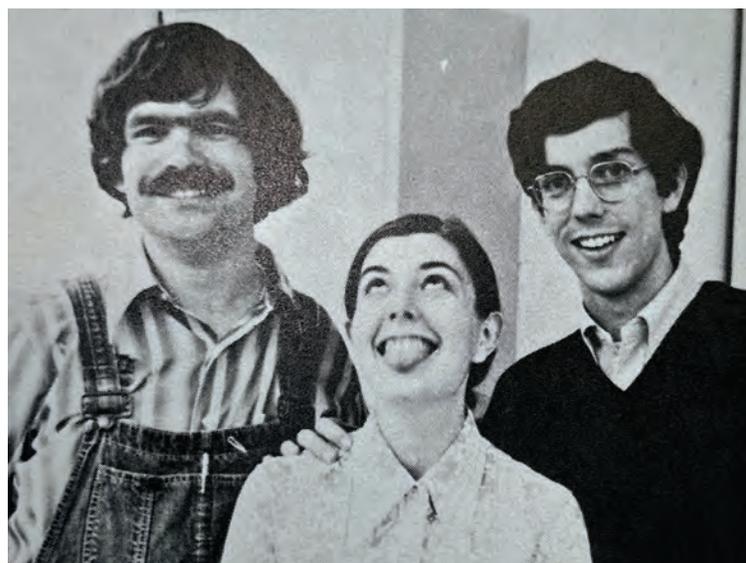
HONOR A  
**CAREGIVER**  
at The Ohio State University

# Then & Now

The Class of 1975 celebrated reconnecting  
at the 50th Reunion Weekend  
Oct. 3-4, 2025



1975





# COLLEGE NOTES

NEWS | NUMBERS | RESEARCH



## AI in action

**Ohio State harnesses AI:** Xia Ning, PhD, and Raghu Machiraju, PhD, professors of Biomedical Informatics in the Ohio State College of Medicine and of Computer Science and Engineering, will co-lead the AI for Health component of AI(X) Hub, a recently launched Ohio State University initiative designed to become a national hub for AI research, industry and entrepreneurship. AI(X) Hub brings together 15 colleges to build a transformative research and education ecosystem for AI in health care and in biomedicine.

**Radiology department's best practices recognized:** The Ohio State Department of Radiology was named an American College of Radiology (ACR®) Recognized Center for Healthcare-AI (ARCH-AI). The designation recognizes the department's commitment to AI best practices in patient safety and excellence in imaging interpretation. ARCH-AI establishes guidelines for safe and effective AI use in radiology facilities.

## Researchers use novel gene technology to explore brown fat's role in heart health

Ohio State College of Medicine professors of Surgery **Kristin Stanford, PhD**, and **Daniel Gallego Perez '11 PhD**, are using a novel, non-viral gene therapy technology called tissue nontransfection (TNT) to explore new ways to treat age-related heart disease. They found that increasing “good” energy-burning brown fat — or raising the level of a lipokine it releases — can help preserve heart health even without exercise.

“One of the biggest things we see with aging is cardiovascular disease, which increases dramatically in patients over 65,” says Stanford, who is also associate director of the Dorothy M. Davis Heart and Lung Research

Institute. “Now we’re showing directly that when we increase this lipokine, that we can essentially rescue cardiac function.”

“The results were quite striking, with improvements to ejection fraction and the heart’s pumping cycles,” says Gallego Perez, who is also the Edgar C. Hendrickson Chair in Biomedical Engineering and director of Advanced Nanotherapeutics at the Gene Therapy Institute. Gallego-Perez is lead inventor of TNT, a patented technology developed at Ohio State.

## Panel emphasizes power of narrative medicine

In October 2025, a panel of professors, physicians and staff from Ohio State, and a local writer explored how the field of medical humanities is shaping

modern medical education and health care practice. They examined how storytelling can improve communication and self-expression for patients, providers and caregivers. The panel discussed the use of narrative elements, characters, interpretation and attentive listening to better understand an individual’s health and healing journey.

Panelists included **James Phelan, PhD**, Distinguished University Professor and director of the Medical Humanities program and Project Narrative at Ohio State; **Avraham (Avi) Cooper, MD, '19 Fellow**, associate clinical professor of Internal Medicine at the Ohio State College of Medicine, and a pulmonary/critical care physician and co-host of a medical podcast for physicians exploring the

personal and professional elements of human connection; **Erin McConnell, MD**, associate clinical professor of Internal Medicine; **Kelli Trinoskey**, associate director of Marketing and Communication in the College of Medicine; and **Pat Wynn Brown**, author of *Royal Roots: Reimagining a Life Through Humor, a Castle, and the US Navy*.

### College earns 2025 Building Columbus Award for Best Historic Preservation

The Ohio State College of Medicine's Hamilton Hall and Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Center (IHSC) received a 2025 Building Columbus Award in the Best Historic Preservation category from *Columbus Business First*. The award recognized the thoughtful renovation of Hamilton Hall, a 100-year-old landmark, and its seamless integration into the new IHSC. Completed in 2024, the IHSC is a state-of-the-art, 225,000-square-foot facility that honors the building's legacy while providing modern spaces for education, collaboration and wellness.

The award also highlighted the IHSC's advanced simulation labs, testing center, and vibrant community spaces, including a café, student lounge and wellness center. Its architecture preserves the historic design of Hamilton Hall, while prioritizing the integration of learning, health and team science.



Recently renovated, Hamilton Hall opened in 1925 and received an award in 2025 for Best Historic Preservation from *Columbus Business First*.

### Besner elected to National Academy of Medicine

**Gail Besner, MD**, professor of Surgery and Pediatrics, director of the Division of Pediatric Surgery, and the H. William Clatworthy Jr. Professor of Pediatric Surgery at Ohio State, has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). Election to NAM is one of the highest honors in medicine, recognizing individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service. As chief of pediatric surgery at Nationwide Children's Hospital, Besner is a world-renowned expert whose seminal research has led

to breakthroughs in the treatment of serious intestinal diseases in premature infants.

### Ohio State physicians lead central Ohio on Castle Connolly Top Doctors list

A total of 622 faculty physicians from the Ohio State College of Medicine and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center have been named to the 2025 Castle Connolly Top Doctors List — more than any other medical institution in central Ohio.

“Having more than 600 of our doctors recognized on this list highlights the world-class care our



### Gold named associate vice dean for Education

We welcome **Jennifer Gold, '91 BS, MD, FAAP**, who joined the Ohio State College of Medicine on Dec 1, 2025, as vice dean for Education and chair of the Department of Biomedical Education and Anatomy. She joined us from the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, where she was the senior dean of the School of Medicine and School of Health Professions.

Over the past decade, Gold led strategic planning efforts, curriculum renewal and accreditation processes. She also launched innovative programs, including a new regional four-year medical school campus, the Humanities Education/Arts Lab, the Office of Medical Education Research and Scholarship, and the Office of Accreditation and Educational Effectiveness.

A proud Buckeye, Gold earned her Bachelor of Science in Biology with distinction at Ohio State, followed by her medical degree at the University of Toledo College of Medicine. She completed a pediatric internship and residency at the University of Michigan Medical Center.

## COLLEGE NOTES

physicians and care teams provide every day,” says **John J. Warner, MD**, chief executive officer of the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center and executive vice president at Ohio State.

Castle Connolly Top Doctors are peer-nominated and vetted by a physician-led research team.

### **Krawczeski named among *Modern Healthcare*'s 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives**

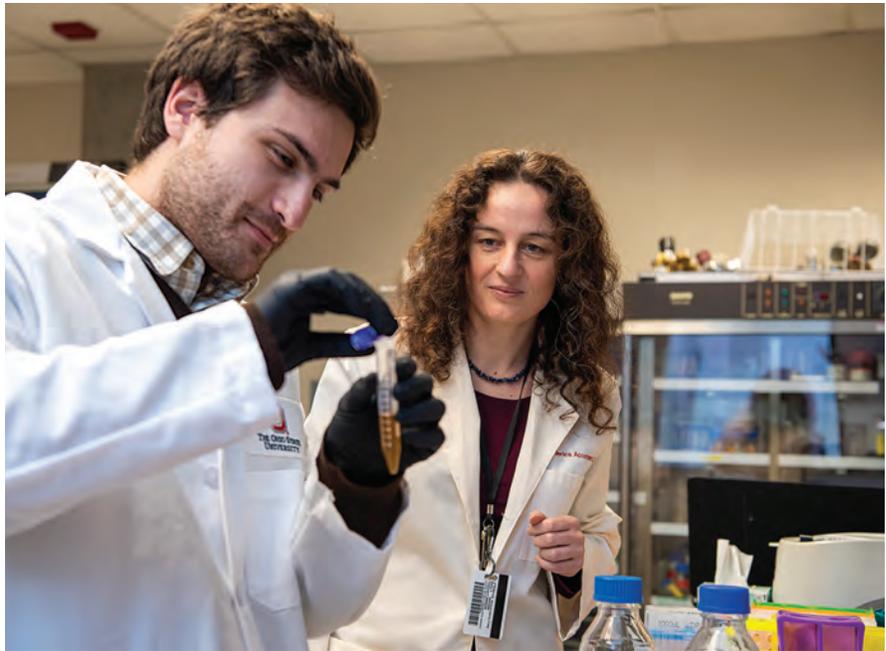
**Catherine Krawczeski, MD**, professor and the chair of Pediatrics at the Ohio State College of Medicine, was named by *Modern Healthcare* as one of its “50 of the Most Influential Clinical Executives” of 2025. Leaders at *Modern Healthcare*, a health care business and policy news source, noted Krawczeski’s medical expertise, innovation and exemplary leadership. Krawczeski also serves as chief medical officer and physician-in-chief at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, where she also holds the Ann I. Wolfe Endowed Chair in Pediatric Leadership.

She is recognized for her record of driving transformation across the health care industry and her role as a preeminent clinician.

### **Program offers support for combined research, clinical training**

A new year-long initiative at the Ohio State College of Medicine, the Physician-Scientist Connectome Program, strengthens opportunities for research-focused students, resident physicians and fellows to integrate research into their clinical training.

Hosted by the college’s Medical Scientist Training Program and Physician Scientist Education and Training Program, Connectome features quarterly informal events that connect medical students, residents and fellows with peer mentors and provides structured support to help participants develop the competencies needed to excel on the physician-scientist pathway.



The Physician-Scientist Connectome program strengthens opportunities for research-focused students, residents and fellows.

**Ginny Bumgardner, MD, PhD**, professor of Transplant Surgery and associate dean for the college’s Office of Physician Scientist Education and Training, says programs like this are essential because they “steward innovative individuals who are working to improve medical care through dedicated time to [conduct] research.”

### **Ohio State researchers receive 2025 Nikon Small World photography award**

**Divya Sridharan, PhD**, a research scientist in the laboratory of **Mahmood Khan, PhD, M. Pharm**, professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine-Cardiac Research Lab at the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, and two undergraduate interns **Syed Ashraf** and **Salvia Zafar**, received an Image of Distinction Award at the 2025 Nikon Small World Photomicrography Competition for their piece, “Human iPSC-derived cardiac organoid.” Khan’s lab focuses on cardiovascular regeneration through the use of stem cell therapy.

Nikon Small World is the leading forum for showcasing photomicrographers’ work in photographing the beauty and complexity of life as seen through the light microscope.

The Ohio State team used confocal, deconvolution and image stacking techniques to magnify the beauty and complexity of a human induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC)-derived cardiac organ grown from stem cells.

Sridharan said that in order to understand the mechanisms underlying the pathological remodeling that takes place after a heart attack, the team had to delineate the interactions among different cardiac cell types in a healthy heart versus a diseased heart.

“I optimized a protocol to culture and differentiate the human iPSCs to functional cardiomyocytes in a 3D microenvironment,” Sridharan says. “Syed and Salvia participated in culturing and differentiating the cells to 3D cardiac organoids and staining the organoids with cardiomyocyte-specific markers to understand the structural and cellular organization of the cells.”

BY THE NUMBERS

# A new chapter in health care

WHEN IT OPENS IN EARLY 2026, The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center's new hospital will be poised to serve our growing region, providing more Ohioans with access to world-class care.

## SUPPORTING PATIENTS

### Excellence in care

**820**

large, private rooms



**234**

ICU beds



**51**

neonatal ICU  
bassinets



**24**

operating  
rooms



**10**

interventional  
radiology  
suites



**6**

endoscopy  
rooms and 4  
bronchoscopy  
rooms

### Supporting safety and comfort



**50**

elevators



**9-foot**

windows



**1**

helipad



**75-inch**

digital screens

## DID YOU KNOW...?

### The new University Hospital —

- Is **410 feet high**, and **> 10x taller** than the Ohio Stadium scoreboard video screen
- Has **50 elevators**, only 7 fewer than the Burj Khalifa skyscraper in Dubai, the tallest building in the world
- Has **15,000 tons** of total steel superstructure, **2x more** than that in the Eiffel Tower
- Has **31,000 light fixtures**, only 1,000 fewer than the Times Square New Year ball



# Faculty research

## Researchers receive \$16.6 M award to study mental, emotional recovery in trauma patients

Carmen Quatman, MD, PhD, '16 Res, associate professor of Emergency Medicine at the Ohio State College of Medicine and orthopedic surgeon at the Wexner Medical Center, is leading a \$16.6 million study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute to improve holistic healing for trauma survivors. The Healing and Empowerment Actions for Recovery from Trauma (HEART) multi-center trial compares two care models for adults recovering from orthopedic trauma: a patient-centered approach addressing physical and mental health, versus traditional physical recovery.

The HEART trial will follow patients 18 and older who suffer a physical trauma that requires orthopedic surgical treatment for moderate to severe injuries. Over 12 months, researchers will compare the effectiveness of a comprehensive trauma recovery program to standard care on patient anxiety, mental health, acute healthcare utilization, pain, and substance use.

## Innovative wound healing research earns Accelerator Award

Two researchers from the Ohio State College of Medicine who developed a novel peptide that promotes skin wound healing in mice — and was later successfully applied to horses at Ohio State's Galbreath Equine Center — have received an Ohio State Accelerator Award to advance commercialization of the technology.

**Thomas Cherpes, DVM, MD**, associate professor, and **Rodolfo Vicetti Miguel, MD**, assistant professor of research, both in the College of Medicine's Department

of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, worked in collaboration with **Hilary Rice, DVM**, and **Caitlin Moreno, DVM**, assistant professors in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Services in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

“Our collaboration allowed us to bridge the gap between lab discovery and real-world effectiveness,” Cherpes says. “Many horses are negatively impacted by skin wounds, and because horses and humans use a similar mechanism for wound repair, our technology may also have applications for humans.”

## Mushrooms' components offer bioelectronic capabilities

Ohio State researchers have discovered that mushrooms could serve as a promising alternative to tiny metal devices used for processing and storing digital data. They may also be used to create other low-cost, environmentally friendly, brain-inspired computing components.

In a recent study, researchers dehydrated samples of mature shiitake and button mushrooms, connected them to special electronic circuits, and then electrocuted them at various voltages and frequencies. The team



## Ohio State researchers to lead \$12M national effort to improve emergency respiratory care

Dangerously low oxygen levels in the blood claim more than 100,000 lives in the United States each year. A \$12 million award from National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute will support researchers at the Ohio State College of Medicine in identifying the most effective non-invasive respiratory treatment for patients experiencing acute respiratory failure in emergency departments.

The WINDSURFER (WIN ratio analysis to Determine a strategy of non-invasive Support for Respiratory Failure in the ER) trial will compare two common approaches: bilevel positive airway pressure (BiPAP), which delivers high-pressure oxygen through a tight-fitting face mask, and high-flow nasal oxygen (HFNO), the delivery of high-flow oxygen through a specially designed nasal tube.

“This national study represents a major step forward in how we care for patients with respiratory failure in the emergency setting,” says **Henry Wang, MD, MPH**, lead researcher and professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine.

found that when used as RAM — the computer memory that stores data — the mushroom memristor could switch between electrical states at up to 5,850 signals per second with about 90% accuracy.

“Being able to develop microchips that mimic actual neural activity means you don’t need a lot of power for standby or when the machine isn’t being used,” says **John LaRocco, PhD**, lead author of the study and a research scientist in Psychiatry at the Wexner Medical Center.

### **Ohio State researchers receive NIH award to study suicide risk prevention**

To enhance suicide risk prediction nationwide, researchers at the Ohio State College of Medicine and the Wexner Medical Center are launching the ARTEMIS study, funded by a \$19.5 million award from the National Institutes of Health.

ARTEMIS (Analyses to Reveal Trajectories and Early Markers of Imminent Shifts in Suicidal States) aims to better understand which individuals are likely to experience suicide risk within six weeks after seeing a doctor. The study will recruit about 13,500 participants ages 18 to 55, including roughly 4,000 people from Ohio, Michigan and Indiana who have recently visited a health care provider.

Researchers will apply dynamical systems modeling and AI to analyze the data and improve risk prediction, says study principal investigator **Jessica Turner, PhD**, a cognitive neuroscientist in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health.

### **Study explores brain cell communication called ‘crosstalk’**

A multidisciplinary team led by Ohio State College of Medicine and Wexner Medical Center researchers has found that advanced imaging and computational modeling can analyze the “crosstalk” between neurons and their supporting glial cells in the human brain, revealing new insights

into the progression of Alzheimer’s disease.

“By mapping these cell interactions at the molecular level, we identified key pathways that could be pivotal in both the onset and progression of neurodegeneration,” says study co-author **Oscar Harari, PhD**, director of the Division of Neurogenetics and director of the Center for Neurobiology of Aging and Resiliency at the Ohio State Neuroscience Research Institute.

Harari, who also holds the Helen C. Kurtz Associate Professor of Neurology at Ohio State, says “these findings are critical for developing effective treatments, as ‘cellular crosstalk’ may serve as an attractive molecular target for drug development.” Study findings were published in *Science Translational Medicine*.

### **AI tools predict seizure outcomes in mouse models**

Researchers with the Ohio State College of Medicine, the Wexner Medical Center and the College of Veterinary Medicine used AI tools to predict seizure outcomes in mouse models. Seizures can cause temporary

disruptions in motor control, which typically follow certain behavioral patterns that help identify seizure types, onset zones and potential outcomes. The team used two AI-aided tools to decode underexplored behavior and action domains in 32 inbred mice with induced seizures.

“By analyzing movement patterns in a data-driven manner, we can accurately classify seizure types and predict outcomes,” says **Bin Gu, PhD**, assistant professor in the Department of Neuroscience and senior author of the study. He notes that future applications are exciting and could include analyzing videos captured on smartphones and home surveillance devices.

“This could transform how seizures are recognized outside of the clinic, giving families and caregivers a simple way to contribute valuable diagnostic information,” Gu says. “This is especially critical in the telemedicine settings, where access to neurologists and epileptologists is often limited, particularly for patients in underserved and rural communities.”

The study was published in *Annals of Neurology*.



AI tools are helping Ohio State researchers decode unexplained seizure behavior.



# Raising the bar

A world-renowned specialist in complex nerve reconstruction, **Amy Moore, MD**, is a leader in providing advanced, hands-on training to prepare the next generation of plastic surgeons to give patients like Byron Heersink a path back to full function.

By Joshua Wright





Amy Moore, MD, visits a now healed Byron Heersink and his mother, Emily, at their home in Dothan, Alabama.

**It's** been nearly five years since the Heersink family experienced the most harrowing night of their lives.

Byron Heersink was playing in his family's foyer in Dothan, Alabama, on a Thursday evening in January of 2021. The 6-year-old tripped on a rolled-up rug, crashing through a single-pane glass window near the front door. It caused a deep cut in his right arm near the armpit.

His life was in jeopardy. Terrifying hours followed, including conversations about amputation. A helicopter took him to life-saving surgery in Birmingham, some 200 miles away. Doctors there were able to stabilize him, but none believed he'd regain use of his right arm.

His parents weren't so sure.

As Byron recovered in the weeks that followed, his parents, Sebastian and Emily, began surveying trusted physicians: "If this was your son, who would you turn to for help with an injury like this?" They asked each to recommend three candidates. The responses varied, but one name appeared on every list: Amy Moore. The Heersinks reached out to her for an appointment.

### **At the forefront of her field**

**Amy Moore, MD, FACS**, is a world-renowned specialist in complex nerve reconstruction. Since 2019, she has been a professor and the Robert L. Ruberg MD Alumni Chair in the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

People like the Heersinks — those needing someone who can perform the most complex nerve-reconstruction surgeries to restore function — seek out her expertise. As a result, residents and fellows at Ohio State get to work with her on cases that they wouldn't see elsewhere.

Every plastic surgery resident at Ohio State rotates with Moore during their time here — no other program in the country has a rotation specific to nerve injuries. Instituting that program was important to Moore after her arrival here.

"I couldn't have residents graduating our program not understanding what I do or what we can do, when nerves affect every aspect of

**“She’s one of the very few people in the world who can do these [brachial plexus] cases. It’s great to learn from her.”**

**MINH NGUYEN, MD, '24 RES**

care we provide as plastic surgeons,” she says.

Minh Nguyen, MD, '24 Res, was one of those residents when Byron came to Columbus a few months after his accident.

“She’s one of the very few people in the world who can do these cases,” says Nguyen, who assisted with Byron’s surgery. It was a challenge for Nguyen both professionally and personally — he was a new father at the time.

“My son was 1 or 2 years old at the time. You know these are the things that are going to happen, and it can happen to anyone. If it happened to my son, I’d bring him to Dr. Moore.”

Byron’s case involved injury to the brachial plexus — the bundle of nerves in the neck and torso that connect to the nerves in the arm. Reconstruction surgeries in that part of the body are among the most complicated surgeries that nerve specialists perform.

“With the brachial plexus, you have to dedicate your life to it,” Nguyen says. “It’s great to learn from her, but you kind of humble yourself. You learn that these cases are tough.”

### **Building a world-class teaching environment**

Moore’s presence at Ohio State made it easy for Kaitlin Kavanagh, MD, to decide where to pursue her residency. The 2020 graduate of the University of Virginia School of Medicine was a candidate in the first class of potential residents that Moore interviewed after her arrival.

“She just had so much enthusiasm and so many big ideas about how to innovate and change our program here at Ohio State,” says Kavanagh, now a chief resident in her sixth year of the Integrated Residency Program at the Ohio State Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.



Byron Heersink (center) with his parents Emily and Sebastian (left), who chose Moore for her expertise in treating complex nerve injuries.

“I think we have one of the most well-rounded plastic surgery programs in the country, and a lot of that has to do with the changes that Dr. Moore has made over the past six years.”

Key among those changes is the addition of a fellowship specifically for nerve and functional reconstruction. The program, now in its third year, is rare: Only about a dozen nerve fellowships exist nationally.

Clinical trials are another mark of distinction for the program under Moore. The U.S. Department of Defense has funded one that has led to the creation of a handheld device that provides electrical stimulation to help patients.

But many residents say the truly invaluable experience at Ohio State is the opportunity to work on the types of cases that Moore specializes in.

“As a junior resident, it’s really intimidating to see the operations that she does,” says **Mark Mishu, MD**, a fifth-year plastic surgery resident. “But she tries to break it down for you piece by piece and walks you through it. I’m obviously nowhere close to that level, and I don’t know if I ever will be, but I’ve definitely grown a lot being in the operating room with her.”

### **A focus on improving patients’ lives**

Seeing Byron today, one would notice that only a few scars indicate anything ever happened to him. Moore performed a lengthy surgery and continued to follow up with him remotely as he regained use of his right arm during his rehabilitation process. He’s a lanky, athletic sixth-grader who loves shooting hoops with his dad in the driveway in Dothan.

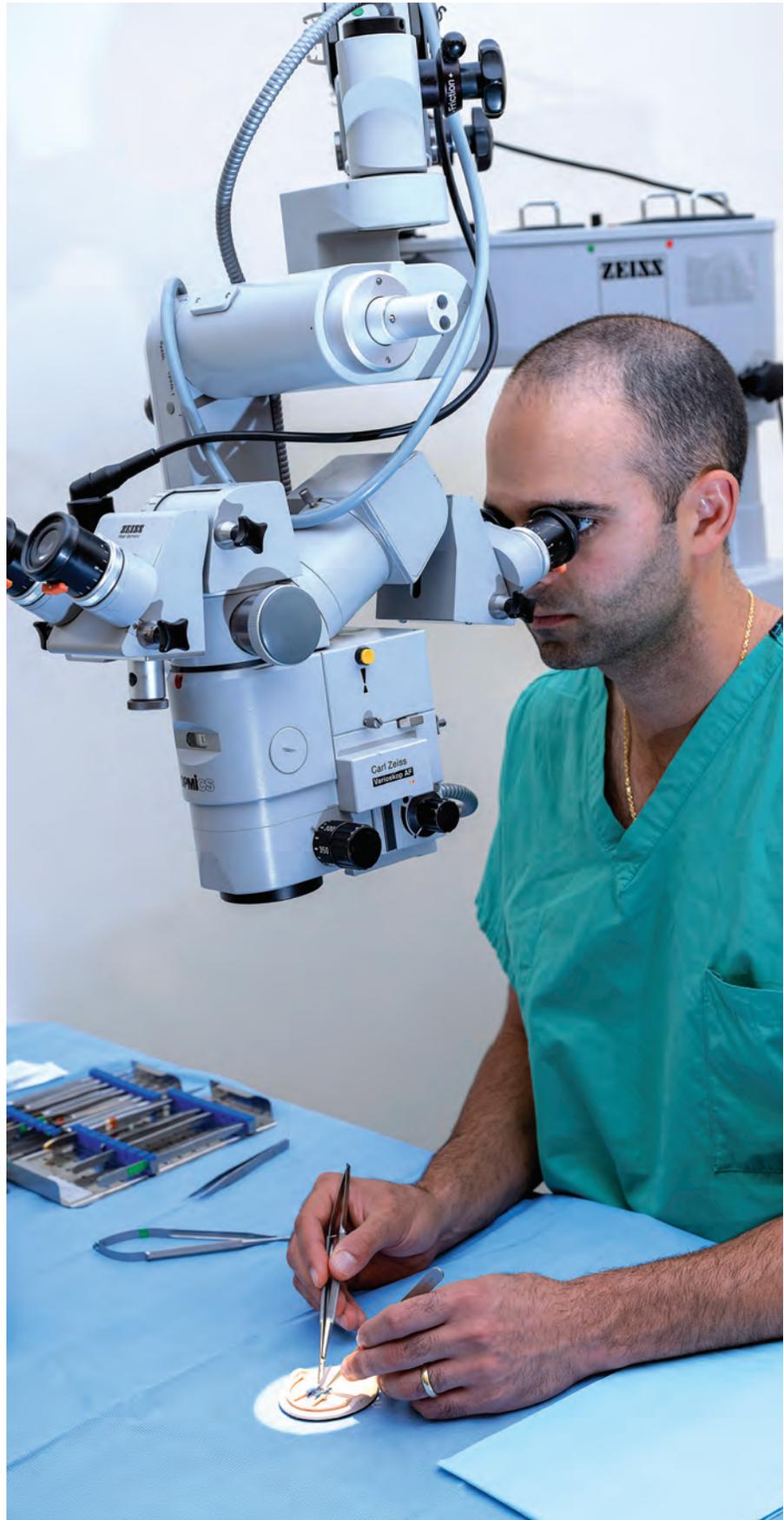
Moore’s priority is making sure there are more nerve surgeons with her level of expertise, so that there can be more Byrons getting full use of their bodies back.

“Early conversations with Byron’s parents were ‘Why are there not more surgeons who do what you do?’ And I just said that the training doesn’t exist yet,” Moore says. “But we’ve been at the forefront of that.”

“We have so many patients coming to Ohio State. It’s a gift, and it’s also our responsibility and accountability to them to do the best for them.”

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**Joshua Wright** is a senior writer with The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center.





Opposite and top right: plastic and reconstructive surgery residents Mark Mishu, MD, and Kaitlin Kavanagh, MD, say they value the specialized skills they gain and the innovation that Moore brings to the residency program. Bottom right: Byron Heersink, his right arm healed, plays piano at his home in Dothan, Alabama.

# Training Champions

From clinic rooms to Olympic arenas, **Cindy Chang '84 BS, '89 MD, '93 Fellow**, continues to advance the field of primary care sports medicine, having built fellowships and mentoring emerging physician leaders.

By Lisa Lopez Snyder

**C**indy Chang '84 BS, '89 MD, '93 Fellow, knows what it's like to be at the top of her game.

After all, there are so many “firsts” in her career: She was one of the first fellows in The Ohio State University College of Medicine’s Primary Care Sports Medicine program; the first woman head team physician for an NCAA Division I athletic program, including football (University of California-Berkeley); the first woman chief medical officer for Team USA at a Paralympic and then Olympic Games (2008 and 2012); and the first chief medical officer for the National Women’s Soccer League (2022).

And that’s not all. She mentors women physicians pursuing careers in primary care sports medicine and is a champion for leadership focused on collaborative learning and training.

Raised in Columbus, Ohio, and a graduate of the Ohio State College of Medicine, Chang went on to complete her residency in family medicine at UCLA Medical Center. Afterward, she returned to Ohio State to complete a fellowship in the college’s Primary Care Sports Medicine (PCSM) program.

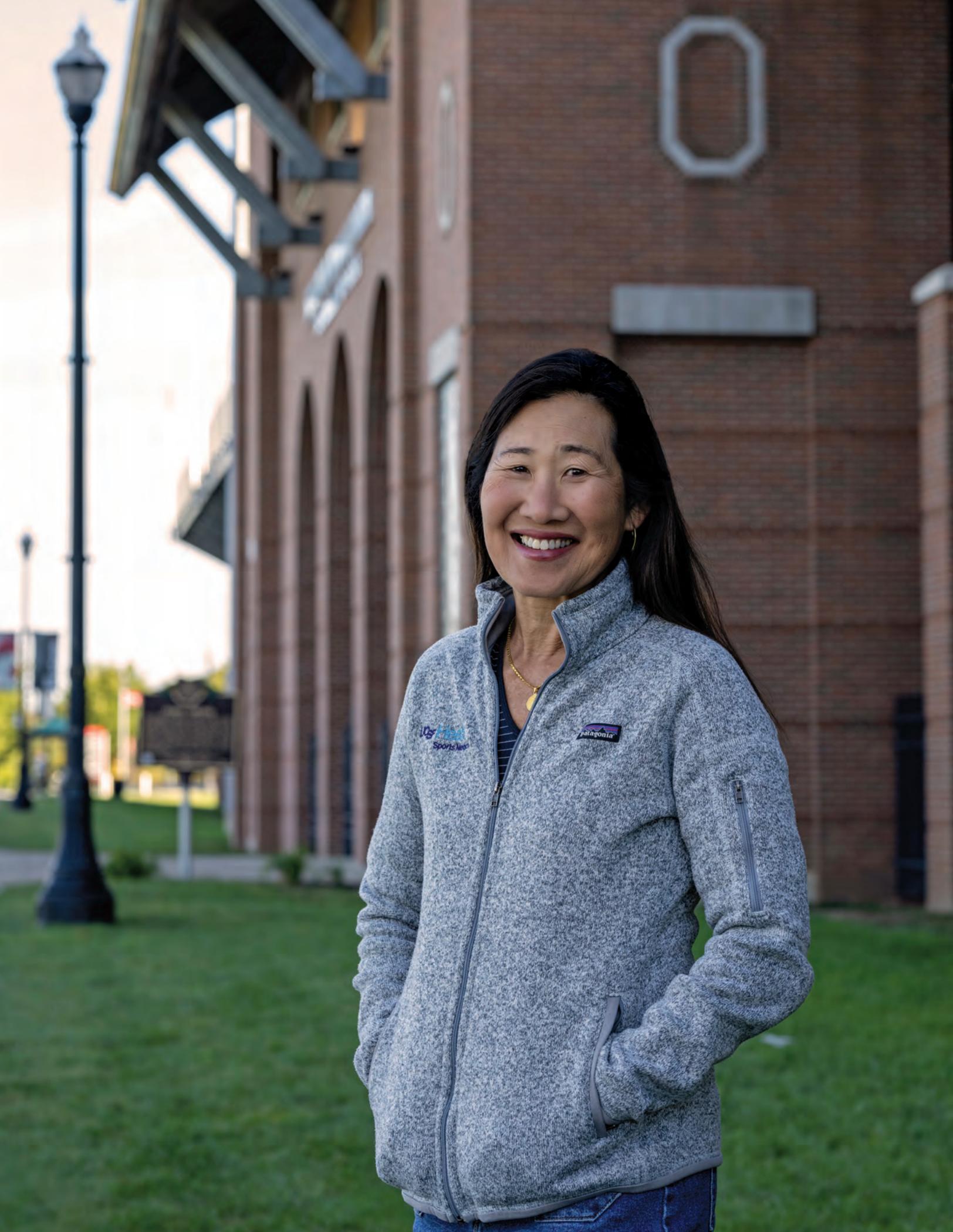
Today, Chang is a UC-San Francisco (UCSF) professor emerita with a joint appointment in the UCSF Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and the Department of Family and Community Medicine.

## **Sports, hospital job an inspiration**

Chang says sports have always been a part of her life. “I played sports in junior high and all through high school,” she says. As an Ohio State undergraduate, she played on the club volleyball team and worked weekend shifts as a ward clerk at University Hospital. “That experience working in the hospital really opened up a window to medicine,” she says.

Still a volleyball player to this day, Chang says, “It was a love for almost every rotation during med school that made me choose family medicine. Ohio State College of Medicine faculty were really instrumental to my experiences — they showed me the scope of what family medicine could be.”

She went on to do her residency at UCLA, where she discovered that about 25% of the patients she treated in her family medicine clinics had musculoskeletal-related concerns.





Chang celebrates with her parents at her Ohio State College of Medicine graduation in 1989.

“I had patients coming in and saying, for example, ‘I hurt my back cleaning up the garage,’ or ‘I hurt my elbow pruning in the garden,’ or ‘I slipped on the ice and sprained my knee,’” she says. “These injuries weren’t always sports-related, and as a family physician, I wanted to become better at diagnosing and managing all of my patients’ needs.”

Seeking to advance her knowledge in this area, Chang began exploring PCSM fellowships, and learned about a new one at Ohio State that was soon to launch. She began the fellowship in 1992, its first year. Established by **John Lombardo ’77 MD**, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, the fellowship was an opportunity Chang says she couldn’t pass up. Lombardo, formerly a Cleveland Clinic physician who had also been a team physician for the Cleveland Browns and Cavaliers before coming to Ohio State, was her fellowship director and mentor.

“Having someone with his reputation and being back at my alma mater was, to me, one of the best things about coming back to Ohio State,” she says.

“And, of course, I could be closer to home. It was perfect.”

She relished her fellowship year at Ohio State where she also worked closely with athletic trainers and physical therapists from the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (HRS), then called the School of Allied Medical Professions, and other physician subspecialists from across the College of Medicine. “We were really collegial,” she says. “We worked well as a team to provide well-rounded comprehensive care for our athletes.”

Chang stayed on as an assistant professor and served as an associate residency director with the Department of Family Medicine. She was also an assistant team physician for the Athletics department, with her primary responsibilities including the men’s and women’s volleyball and gymnastics teams. She also coordinated sports medicine for high schools in the Columbus City School District.

### **Advancing primary care sports medicine**

In 1995, she moved back to California and became the head team physician for the California Golden Bears at UC Berkeley. She also served as site director for the UC Davis/UC Berkeley PCSM Fellowship, and later at UCSF she established its inaugural PCSM fellowship, becoming its first program director.

Building those fellowships was a daunting task, she says, because she didn’t have the same resources available as she had at Ohio State, since UC Berkeley and UCSF are separate campuses, and the medical school and its resources are part of UCSF. However, because of her experiences at Ohio State, she understood what was needed. “I knew what the necessary pieces were to develop a strong sports medicine training program,” she says.

Long before she transitioned to a faculty member at UCSF, she served as volunteer clinical faculty at UC Davis and UCSF, commuting to precept family medicine residents at their continuity clinics in San Francisco and Sacramento and accepting medical students and residents to rotate in her UC-Berkeley sports medicine clinics. She also hosted the sports medicine fellows at her Berkeley home on weekends.

“I did this so they could get a full Division I event coverage experience with us at Cal without needing to waste time commuting,” she says. “It was a labor of love that included my husband (Chris Hudson ’95 MCRP) and our two kids.”

The UCSF PCSM fellowship was officially approved with its initial submission to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical



Chang served as chief medical officer for Team USA at the 2012 Olympics (left); years later she trained her first UCSF Primary Care Sports Medicine fellow at the WNBA “Wubble” in 2020.

Education in 2019. Then, in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Chang took their first fellow with her into the WNBA “Wubble” in Bradenton, Florida, to care for elite women basketball players and staff.

In light of the uncertainty surrounding sports at all levels at the time, the Wubble presented some valuable opportunities for the PCSM’s first fellow, Chang says.

“It was an unbelievable experience for her. She was able to get one month of very intense sports medicine training, versus other fellows across the country who couldn’t get exposure as most sports were shut down during this time.”

Since it was established, the PCSM program at UC Berkeley has successfully graduated five fellows, most of whom have remained in academia and are training the next generation of physicians.

Chang credits much of her career accomplishments to the education and team sports medicine experiences she had with the College of Medicine and HRS. While she continues to work with elite athletes ranging from USA rowers to international parasurfing athletes, she has also served as president of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine and on the board of trustees for the American College of Sports Medicine. She employs the leadership skills she has developed to create opportunities for others, “paying it forward.”

In February 2025, Chang returned to Ohio State to speak at the first HRS Perspectives in Leadership

series on developing transformative leaders.

“Leadership means making the effort to develop a team culture that is collaborative and makes your organization a great place to work, learn, and attract and retain good people, by knowing that your opinions and input will be heard and respected,” Chang says.

It’s an effort that Chang herself tries to practice in every role she serves, including as a mentor to physicians entering primary care.

The key is to treat everyone as a vital part of the team, she says, whether it’s students, patients, athletes, staff or anyone aspiring to work in health care.

“It doesn’t matter how big or small of a role they think they are playing, from the facilities worker who is emptying the clinic’s trash to the medical assistant who is rooming the patients. I want them to know that what they do is important and contributes to the overall success of the team. And for those aspiring to become physicians, who are often seen as the leaders of a health care team, I want to ensure that they understand that it is critical that they demonstrate compassion and respect and give autonomy and opportunities for growth to those around them,” she says.

“If they can take that forward and be able to touch others with that positive, supportive and collaborative attitude, then I feel I’ve done my job.”

**Lisa Lopez Snyder** is project manager of *Ohio State Medicine Alumni* magazine.

# Connection at the Core

From Ohio State medical student advocate to chief clinical leader, **Andy Thomas '95 MD, '98 Res, '00 MBA**, has built a career on curiosity and engagement, guiding the health system through crises, construction and a vision for the future of care.

By Jenn Shaffer

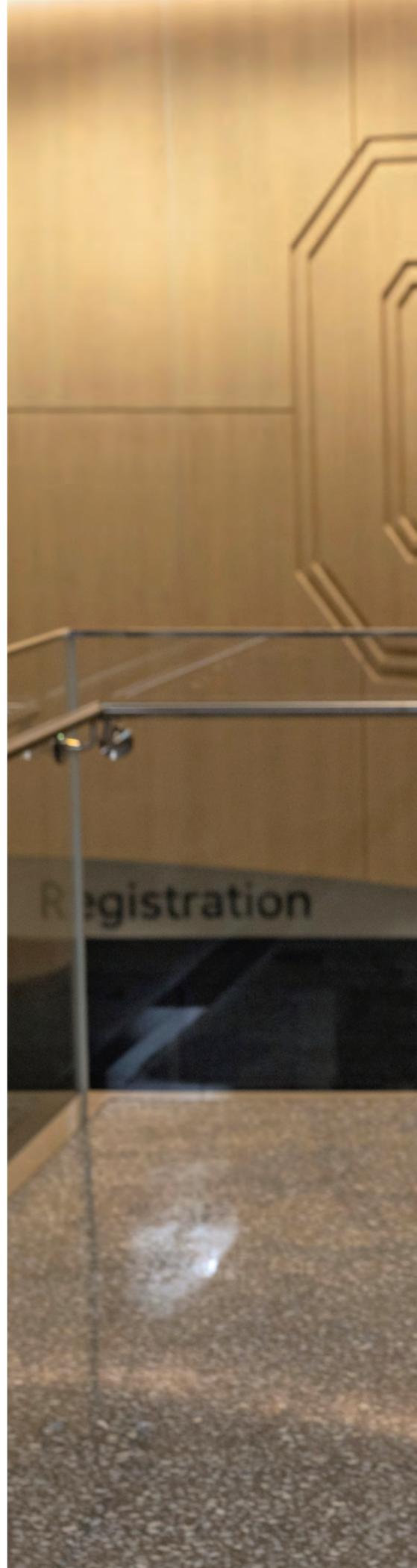
**T**alking with his family doctor a few weeks before entering The Ohio State University College of Medicine, **Andy Thomas '95 MD, '98 Res, '00 MBA**, recalls getting advice to get his feet on the ground during his first year, and focus simply on being a medical student.

That was an adjustment for Thomas, who'd been editor of his high school newspaper, vice president of the theater society, director of a community service program, and countless other roles during high school and undergrad. Between his parents and numerous teachers in high school, he credits their encouragement to pursue these leadership roles and the mentorship that came along with that advice as a sound foundation he has built on over the past 34 years at Ohio State.

But, like any good patient, Thomas took his doctor's advice — at first.

By his second year of medical school, Thomas was involved with the Ohio State Medical Association and the student chapter of the American Medical Association (AMA). By graduation, he was one of a small handful leading the AMA's student section of 35,000 members, among other activities.

"I still love taking care of patients, but I've always had one eye on other things, too, whether it was clinical practice guidelines, use of computers in medicine, graduate medical education, or health policy issues. Having a focus on these issues in the 1990s well before they became mainstream in health care was also helpful," Thomas says.





Clockwise from left: Thomas tours the new hospital tower under construction at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center alongside Board of Trustees member George Skestos (left) and John Stiles, director of Space Planning; Thomas volunteers with a Student Life service project packing meals the day before the Peach Bowl Game against University of Georgia in Atlanta in 2022. Also included are Thomas' sons Michael Doran and Jake Thomas and nephew Alexander Wilkins; Thomas talks with, from left, Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, Dr. Nicholas Kreatsoulas, former chief clinical officer of Mount Carmel Health System, and Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff, former chief medical officer of OhioHealth, at a care facility set up as a precaution at the Greater Columbus Convention Center in 2020 in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Back then, I don’t know that I ever set my sights on becoming a health system leader, but I’ve always had interests in addition to clinical medicine that have helped open up a lot of doors for me.”

Having leadership opportunities early taught Thomas many lessons about how to build and cultivate teams of people. Finding the unique value that each person can bring to a project, a team or the whole organization is a skill he has worked hard to develop since coming to Ohio State.

“I’m a primary care doctor in a sea of specialists and sub-specialists here at Ohio State. If a leader in my role is not comfortable surrounding themselves with people who have a deeper subject matter expertise on a variety of issues, then that person is not going to make it long in a senior leadership role. My job isn’t to have all of the ideas myself ... my job is to synthesize and prioritize the great solutions that the teams around me develop over time.”

Fast forward a few decades, and it was the blend of clinical and business experience, leadership ability, and a commitment to Ohio State and the central Ohio community that culminated in Thomas’ appointment as the Robert F. Wolfe and Edgar T. Wolfe Foundation Chief Clinical Officer at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. His deep foundation proved essential for navigating major challenges, from the global COVID-19 pandemic to the planning and completion of Ohio State’s largest-ever construction project, the new University Hospital tower.

“Andy exemplifies calm, principled leadership in every challenge he faces,” says Carol R. Bradford, MD, MS, FACS, former dean of the Ohio State College of Medicine and professor of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery. “His steady presence, unwavering dedication to patient care and commitment to advancing medical education have made him an indispensable pillar of our medical community.”



### Keeping grounded

Thomas grew up hearing his grandparents’ admiration for their physicians and witnessing their clinical care. That, coupled with his natural fascination with science (he still has his anatomy coloring book from childhood), and a sprinkling of medical television shows inspired him to become a doctor.

“The way my grandparents talked about their physicians was almost like they were a member of the family,” Thomas recalls. “Seeing how much they respected their doctors, I thought it must be a really interesting job.”

That importance of patient care and personal connection is a constant. Years into administrative leadership, Thomas, a general internist, continues to see patients at least once a week.



“It helps keep me grounded in why we do what we do here. It helps me do my job better, and make better decisions” he says.

Even when Thomas isn’t dealing directly with patients, his focus on people and building strong relationships is evident in everything he does, his colleagues say.

“He believes to his core that developing relationships with people is the key to getting stuff done, and he thinks about those relationships,” says **Naeem Ali '96 MD, '99 Res**, medical director of University Hospital. “I think a lot of people exhibit those values, but Andy’s got this really great ability to hold a relationship with someone even if they don’t personally see eye to eye.”

In his role, Thomas oversees inpatient, outpatient and emergency department services

across Ohio State’s six hospitals, outpatient clinics and specialized care facilities. On any given day, as problems land on his desk that can be brought forward by any one of thousands of providers or staff, his approach is simple.

“I take what I do really, really seriously, but I try not to take myself too seriously,” he says. “My number one job is to facilitate other people doing their job. The work we do here isn’t what happens around my conference room table, it’s what happens at the bedside or in one of our clinics, operating rooms or emergency departments.”

Guided by outstanding mentors — especially his predecessor, Hagop Mekhjian, MD, who had the role for 30 years — Thomas now pays it forward, championing and mentoring emerging professionals.



Thomas enjoys a break during a dress rehearsal in the new University Hospital with (from left) William “Skip” Hidlay, chief communications and marketing officer for the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, and Naeem Ali, ’96 MD, ’99 Res, ’00/’03 Fellow, medical director, University Hospital.

“He is one of the most humble people I know, and he really has a sense of his roots,” says Candise Ferguson, MD, a fifth-year radiology resident at Ohio State and mentee of Thomas, who got to know him through the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. “He’s taught me that having a well-rounded look at everything, including personal development and professional development, makes you a better leader.”

### **Managing crisis**

Thomas has been involved in dozens of major initiatives at Ohio State, including the implementation of electronic health records, root cause analysis for safety events, patient satisfaction, clinical efficiency, simulation training and more. But none of these were as formidable as managing the COVID-19 pandemic when it arrived in Ohio in early 2020.

“There are busy days, there are busy weeks, but a busy two years? It was just a completely different pace,” says Thomas.

During the pandemic, Thomas led the Wexner Medical Center’s COVID-19 response and was

tapped by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine to lead the statewide response in one of three hospital zones, which covered 36 counties and over 40 hospitals and health systems across central and southeastern Ohio.

Throughout those turbulent days, Thomas held fast to what he called his “30, 6 and 1” mentality: 30 minutes of exercise a day, at least six hours of sleep each night and taking it one day at a time.

“It was a way of reminding myself that this was an international, worldwide problem,” Thomas recalls. “Each day, we needed to do what we could do that day. There was nothing I was going to do to make this better or be done by tomorrow. I focused on, ‘What can I do today to solve the problem today?’”

### **Building the future of care**

While the towering new University Hospital only ascended into Ohio State’s campus skyline within the past few years, for Thomas and a small, dedicated group, it represents the culmination of a decade of vision and thoughtful effort.

“For a lot of people, it’s been six or eight months,” of seeing the tower come to completion and

preparing it for patients, Thomas says. “For a small group of us, it’s been a 10-year journey.”

The seeds of the \$1.9 billion project were first sown in 2015, long before the construction cranes arrived, with design work completed largely before the world changed in 2020. At the peak of planning, Thomas helped oversee 20 different interdisciplinary planning groups charged with thinking through every detail for the new hospital. The result is an 820-room, 26-story, state-of-the-art facility, with thoughtful considerations to elevate patient, family and staff experience including an emphasis on natural light and nature.

“Ultimately, new bricks and mortar are nice, but it’s the people who work here that bring the humanity, spirit and energy to the place. Part of the “secret sauce” in building a top-notch hospital was gathering feedback from hundreds of frontline staff to make sure things were done the right way,” Thomas says.

In early 2026, the new University Hospital will open its doors, and clinical departments, equipment and patients will move into the new facility.

“Moving forward, the quality and character of the building will now match the excellence of the care that we’ve been providing for decades in University Hospital.” It invigorates everyone, he says. A new facility brings a fresh mindset, and it’s especially exciting for residents, fellows and learners from across all disciplines.

“When you think about training the best and the brightest to go out and lead the future of health care, this building is going to allow people to just see their job and their role differently, and see a building that reflects the quality of the work they do,” he says.

The opening of the new University Hospital marks over 25 years in leadership at Ohio State for Thomas, who previously served as medical director of University Hospital, among other roles. Behind only his wife, Lisa, and their children, Michael, Julia and Jake, he counts this project as one of the things he’s most proud of and hopes that it will serve as part of his legacy at Ohio State.

In a fitting tribute to his “original mentors”, when a donor to the University Hospital project set aside funds for Thomas to be honored by a space in the building, he chose the Sanctuary on the second floor and quite aptly named it after his parents, Janet and Elden Thomas.

“Without the love and support of my parents and my family, none of this would have been possible.”

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**Jenn Shaffer** is a senior content specialist with The Ohio State University College of Medicine.



Top: Thomas participates in Cotton Bowl Community service at Goodwill Industries of Dallas in 2017 with wife, Lisa Wilkins Thomas, and daughter Julia Doran. Bottom: Pelotonia is an annual tradition for Thomas, pictured here with fellow Team Buckeye co-captains for Pelotonia 2025 David Cohn, MD, chief operating officer and chief medical officer of The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center – Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital and Richard J. Solove Research Institute, and Molly Ranz-Calhoun, president and CEO of the Ohio State Alumni Association.

# ALUMNI NOTES

NEWS | IN MEMORIAM | AWARDS



## Class of 1960s

**Larrie Greenberg '65 MD**, published his second book, *Misadventures in Patient Care and Medical Education: Lessons Learned for the Clinician Educator*. The book is aimed at clinical faculty in academic medicine. A retired clinical educator, Greenberg devoted his entire career to medical education, serving as a visiting professor focused on faculty development at medical schools across North America and as clinical professor of Pediatrics at George Washington University from 1986 to 2000.

## Class of 1970s

**William Feeman Jr. '70 MD**, presented a poster, “The (Virtual) Eradication of Atherothrombotic Disease,” at the 2025 symposium of the European Atherosclerosis Society in Glasgow in

May of last year. The poster abstract will be published in *Atherosclerosis*, with full publication forthcoming in the *International Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*.

## Class of 1980s



**Leon McDougle '89 MD**, received the Louis W. Sullivan, MD, Award at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Presidential

Award Ceremony. This AAMC award recognizes a leader’s commitment to promoting a health care workforce that includes people of all backgrounds and perspectives. In his

20 years as director of the Ohio State College of Medicine’s premedical program, the Medical Careers Pathway Post-Baccalaureate Program, McDougle has advised and mentored more than 200 medical students and has held numerous leadership positions within the college. In 2020, he was installed as the 121st president of the National Medical Association and guided the organization through the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Class of 1990s



**James Bruffey '94 MD**, was named chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Scripps Clinic in San Diego.

In addition to treating spinal fusion, bursitis, spinal stenosis, spondylosis and other conditions, Bruffey's practice includes minimally invasive techniques for spine surgery, such as neural decompression and spinal stabilization via fusion. His research focuses on fusion outcomes in anterior lumbar spinal surgery and neurological monitoring and protection for lateral transpoas-based procedures.

**John Queen '94 MD**, received the American College of Emergency Physicians' 2025 Bill Hall Award for Service. An emergency medicine physician with the Cleveland Clinic, Queen was recognized for his dedication to advancing emergency medicine and patient care. He also serves as associate residency program director of the Case Western Reserve University/MetroHealth System/ Cleveland Clinic Emergency Medicine Residency program.

**Class of 2000s**



**J. Nwando Olayiwola '01 MD**, is serving her first term on The Ohio State University Alumni Association's Board of Directors. She is president of

the Advocate Health National Center for Clinical and Community Impact and senior vice president of Advocate Health in New Albany, Ohio.



**Chris Longenecker '06 MD**, was awarded a \$20 million grant from the American Heart Association to lead a rural health equity research

network. An internationally recognized physician scientist studying the cardiovascular complications of HIV

# In Memoriam

**2025**

**October**

Sheldon T. Pinsky '51 MD  
Conner White '62 MD

**September**

Richard G. Saleeby, MD, '54 Res  
Ivan A. Gradiser '67 MD  
Robert E. Collier '73 MD

**August**

Nancy J. Welsh '63 MD  
Anne D. Littleton '87 MD, '90 Res

**July**

Harvey Lash '55 MD  
Lester E. Webb '66 MD  
John I. Hollenbeck '68 MD

**June**

Richard H. Turner '66 MD  
Thomas H. Hartranft '69 MD

**May**

Ann H. Benassi '58 MD  
David R. Rudy '60 MD, Res  
Alan E. Patterson '63 MD  
Beverly A. Ungerleider '65 MD, Res  
John E. Markis '66 MD  
Richard C. Traugott '67 MD  
Thomas R. Freytag '78 MD

**April**

Donald E. Weiss '58 MD, Res  
Charles A. Hanson '64 MD  
Paul L. Jones '66 MD  
Larry W. Thompson '74 MD  
Thomas R. White, MD, '72 Fellow  
Mary A. McRae '75 MD, Res  
Meridith Treen '85 MD, Res

**March**

Charles Zepp '58 MD  
David Krigbaum '59 MD, Res  
David A. Garrety '61 MD  
Brant W. Tedrow '64 MD  
Robert F. Donley '67 MD  
Daniel E. Wise '69 MD  
Sherry B. Zox '76 MD, Res  
Paul T. McCauley '77 MD

**February**

Normand T. Townley '59 MD  
Philip G. Cochran '60 MD  
James C. Kloefer '63 MD  
James A. Mechenbier '70 MD, Res  
Arthur L. Sagone Jr., MD, '70 Fellow  
David A. Baldrich '78 MD, Res  
Matthew W. Victor '10 MD, '14 Res

**January**

David L. Louis '64 MD, Res  
Larry L. Heller '65 MD  
Joseph C. Ward '72 MD  
Charles E. Aplin '73 MD  
Jeanne M. Vinsel '80 MD, Res  
Nassar H. Smiley '85 MD  
Michael C. Townsend '82 MD  
Paul C. Drago '90 MD  
C. D. Schloss, MD, Res  
Hoyt W. Crump, MD, Res

**Former Faculty**

**February**

Dwight A. Powell, MD  
Richard S. Munford, MD, Res  
Myra Zollinger, MD, Res



To view obituaries in full, please visit [go.osu.edu/notesandobits](http://go.osu.edu/notesandobits).

## ALUMNI NOTES

infection and endemic cardiovascular disease, Longenecker is a professor of Medicine, director of the Global Cardiovascular Health program and director of Research for the Division of Cardiology at the University of Washington.



**Jason Smith '02 MD, '08 Res,** was named chief executive officer of the University of Louisville (UofL) Health. He will lead an academic health system made up

of nine hospitals, four medical centers, the Brown Cancer Center and the Eye Institute. Smith most recently served as the system's chief medical officer. He joined the UofL faculty in 2008.



**Richard Wardrop III '02 MD, PhD,** was appointed chief medical officer and clinical physician at Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown,

Ohio. A nationally recognized leader in medical education and clinical practice, Wardrop has extensive experience in academic medicine, leadership and patient care. He is chair of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) and serves on the ABIM Council.

### Class of 2010s



**Lisa Hickman '13 MD,** an associate clinical professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Ohio State College of Medicine, received the 2025 Early

Career Award from the Cleveland

### Northrup Family Medical Legacy Scholarship



**Bruce Northrup '65 MD**  
1938–2019

Created by **Bruce Northrup '65 MD,** and his wife, Frances, the Northrup Family Medical Legacy Scholarship specifically honors a learner joining a family lineage of Ohio State College of Medicine graduates. Being

chosen as the 2025 recipient of the award was both surprising and humbling for **Mychael Dopirak '25 MD.**

Growing up, he never considered any career other than joining his grandfather and father as physicians.

"There was never any pressure to follow in their footsteps," Mychael says. "I think a big part of my drive was that they were very supportive of me."

After graduation, Mychael began his medical residency at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where his father serves as medical director of the Musculoskeletal

Service Line for Froedtert Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin's Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

"I'm grateful to receive the scholarship and grateful that I have had such great support from my family my whole life," Mychael says. "I wouldn't be here without them."

Through the innovative education they received at Ohio State, these three men have created a legacy — one built on family support that contributes to their ability to have an impact on each other and the field of medicine.

**Ryan Dopirak '00 MD,** says Ohio State's innovative learning environment exposed them to state-of-the-art technology and training and prepared them to apply their talents to be the best in their fields and "provide exceptional service to those in need."

The Northrup gift pays tribute to the Dopirak family's ability to build on and embrace what it means to be a Buckeye and part of a community that fosters connection, curiosity and service to others. Congratulations on this prestigious honor. Read more on page 35.

Clinic Alumni Association Board of Directors. Hickman, a reconstructive surgeon who leads the Childbirth Pelvic Floor Disorders Clinic at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, was recognized for her work in transforming care for women with postpartum pelvic floor disorders. While in residency at the Cleveland Clinic, she founded the Postpartum Care Clinic, addressing critical gaps in urogynecologic care.

### Class of 2020s

**Victor Chen '23 MD,** received the Resident Wellness Promotion Award from the University of Wisconsin's Department of Medicine. The award recognizes a resident who has shown consistent care and support for their fellow residents, extending joy and compassion through their actions, improving well-being, and fostering connection and warmth in the residency program and community.

### Resident alumni

**Francis Belardi, MD, '78 Res,** was named emeritus editor of *The Guthrie Clinic Journal of Medicine* by the University of Toronto Press. Belardi served on the journal's editorial board for many years and held numerous clinical and administrative roles throughout his career at Guthrie Clinic in Sayre, Pennsylvania, including program director of the Family Medicine residency. He also served in various leadership capacities for the Guthrie Healthcare System and the Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital and was president and CEO of the Guthrie Medical Group, from which he retired.

### Share Your Story

 The Ohio State Medical Alumni Society wants to hear from you! Share your news, including wedding announcements — 80 words or less. Tag us on social media or email us at [medalum@osumc.edu](mailto:medalum@osumc.edu) by April 3, 2026, for the Summer 2026 issue of *Ohio State Medicine Alumni* magazine.



# 2025 Alumni Awards

**IN SEPTEMBER 2025**, we recognized six distinguished Ohio State College of Medicine alumni for their excellence in teaching, service and the practice of medicine.

**Alumni Achievement Award**

**E. Christopher Ellison, MD, Res '83, FACS**

*“Any achievements or accomplishments attributed to me should really be attributed to the people I’ve worked with, the opportunities that I’ve had at this great institution. I’m humbled and feel great gratitude.”*

E. Christopher Ellison is the Robert

M. Zollinger Professor of Surgery Emeritus at the Ohio State College of Medicine. He previously served as chair of the Department of Surgery from 2000 to 2013 and interim dean of the College of Medicine from 2014 to 2016. He led the academic development of the Department of Surgery and played a key role in establishing the departments of Neurosurgery, Plastic Surgery and Urology. Recognized for his teaching, Ellison was named the College of Medicine Professor of the Year and Distinguished Professor. He received the Ohio State Distinguished Service Award in 2020 and the Distinguished

Service Award from the MCW/ Marquette Medical Alumni Association in 2021. His teams published more than 175 papers in peer-reviewed journals, and he served as editor of Zollinger’s *Atlas of Surgical Operations* and Fischer’s *Mastery of Surgery*.

A leader in American surgery, Ellison was at the forefront of laparoscopic surgery and has served in numerous leadership roles in the profession, including as president of the American College of Surgeons, the American Surgical Association and the Central Surgical Association, and as chair of the American Board of Surgery.

## ALUMNI NOTES



Richard D. Parker '81 MD



E. Christopher Ellison, MD,  
Res '83, FACS

### Alumni Achievement Award

#### Richard D. Parker '81 MD

Richard Parker is nationally and internationally known for his dedication to the field of orthopedics and arthroscopic knee surgery. He retired in February 2025 from the Cleveland Clinic Foundation (CCF) after 37 years of practice. Prior to joining the foundation, Parker trained and practiced at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Cleveland. He held many clinical and leadership positions at the foundation, including as president of CCF Hillcrest/Mentor Hospital and East Region Ohio Market. His other leadership positions include serving as chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, director of the Sports Medicine fellowship and professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Cleveland Clinic's Lerner College of Medicine.

He also served as the Cleveland Cavaliers' head team physician from 2002 to 2017 and as a consultant to the Cleveland Browns and the Cleveland Indians (now the Guardians). A member of both the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine, Parker has been recognized for his research, teaching

**“I attribute my successes over the course of my career to family and to being associated with many extraordinary people. This medical school hugely shaped who I was as a physician.”**

#### RICHARD D. PARKER '81 MD

and clinical work related to knee injuries. Parker has trained orthopedic residents and sports medicine fellows to be excellent physicians.

### Alumni Service Award

#### Charles L. Hamilton III, MD, Res '08, MBA, FASA, FASAM

Charles Hamilton is an anesthesiologist with more than

15 years of clinical expertise and experience in perioperative medicine, regional anesthesia and acute pain management. An associate clinical professor of Anesthesiology at Ohio State, Hamilton is the perioperative medical director at Ohio State East Hospital, where he spearheads initiatives that have dramatically improved operational efficiency, operating room utilization and patient safety. With dual board certifications in anesthesiology and addiction medicine, as well as an MBA, he blends his clinical acumen with strategic insight to drive impactful health care outcomes.

A notable lecturer, medical illustrator and author, with publications in books and peer-reviewed journals, Hamilton is a visionary leader for the multiple committees, institutional councils and multidisciplinary projects on which he serves. From designing operating room emergency preparedness simulations to optimizing billing for anesthesia services, Hamilton has received many recognitions, including the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center Exceptional Physician Peer Award.

A leader in medical education, Hamilton has developed curricula,

Sarah Sams '91 MD, FAAFP

Charles L. Hamilton III, MD,  
Res '08, MBA, FASA, FASAM



**“This award is a humbling reminder that the impact one has is not measured by the accolades but by the lives that they touch. I’m proud to be part of this legacy.”**

**CHARLES L. HAMILTON III, MD, RES '08, MBA, FASA, FASAM**

led cadaveric labs, served as a longstanding member of the Ohio State College of Medicine Admissions Committee and contributed to the training of residents, fellows and medical students.

**Community Practice Alumni Award**  
**Sarah Sams '91 MD, FAAFP**

*“I’m grateful to the Ohio State College of Medicine for giving me the foundation and to my colleagues, patients and family for reminding me every day why this work matters.”*

Sarah Sams is a board-certified family physician, educator and advocate for family medicine at OhioHealth Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio, where she serves as associate director of the Family Medicine Residency program. As a full-

time faculty member, she taught the OhioHealth health system’s management curriculum to her residents and developed a joint teaching program with Capital University Law School, pairing third-year family medicine residents with law students to participate in a mock deposition.

Sams has held multiple roles within organized medicine. In 2010, she was president of the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians. She has also served on the American Academy of Family Physicians’ (AAFP) commissions on Governmental Advocacy and on Finance and Insurance, chairing both. Sams also serves as a trustee of the AAFP Foundation.

She has been a mentor for medical students and residents through the AAFP Foundation Emerging Leaders Institute, a highlight of which was

when she traveled with her first mentee to Uganda to teach the Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics course to Ugandan midwives.

**Early Career Achievement Award**  
**Christopher Nau '13 MD**

*“I can trace back every single thing that’s happened and every single opportunity I’ve been able to take advantage of to someone who took the time to teach me and mentor me at Ohio State.”*

Christopher Nau is an assistant professor in the Department of Reproductive Biology at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and director of the Diabetes in Pregnancy Program at University Hospitals (UH) in Cleveland. His work in maternal-fetal medicine has transformed the teaching and practice of working with patients with high-risk pregnancies, exemplifying the ambition of the Ohio State College of Medicine to transform the health of all communities through innovative education, discovery and care.

Under Nau’s leadership, UH health system policies now include awareness and teaching about managing diabetic patients across the entire UH health network system. He

## ALUMNI NOTES

**“I’m grateful for my mentors at the College of Medicine who see the potential in me and consistently push me to grow. They truly model what it means to be outstanding leaders and role models.”**

**PHILICIA DUNCAN, MD**

is the site principal investigator for the newest maternal-fetal medicine trial at UH, an initiative that makes Case Western a participating clinical center in the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development’s Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units Network.

He has also advised on obstetric care guidelines throughout the UH health system, established a comprehensive diabetes pregnancy clinic within the resident clinic, and is constantly seeking ways to educate residents and medical students about the latest evidence-based medicine.

### **Faculty Teaching Award**

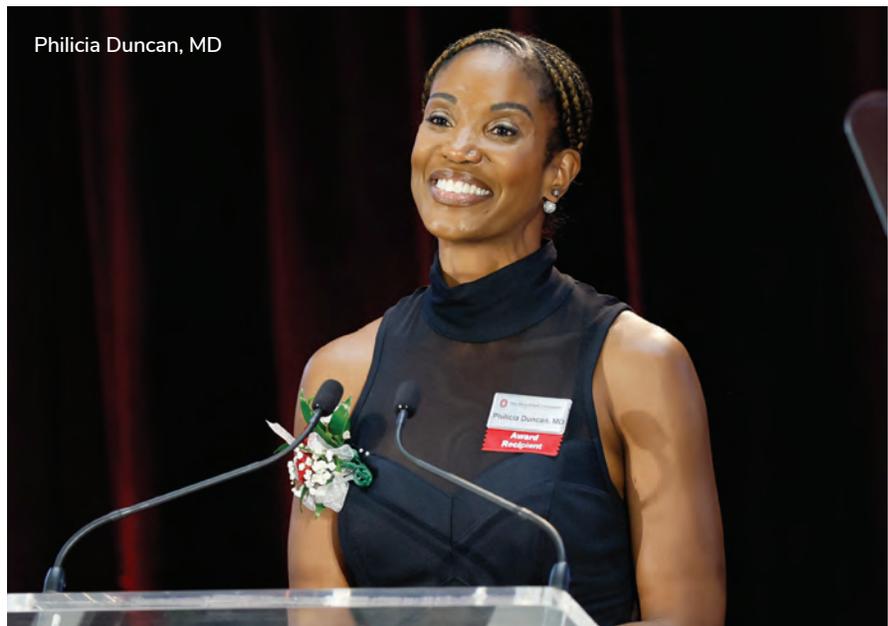
**Philicia Duncan, MD**

Philicia Duncan is an associate clinical professor of Internal Medicine at the Ohio State College of Medicine, where she is a dedicated hospitalist, educator and leader in quality improvement initiatives. Born in Jamaica, Duncan immigrated to the United States as a teenager with a dream of becoming a physician.

She is the medical school’s LSI Part One associate program director, an expert educator and a portfolio coach. In directing the Applied



Christopher Nau '13 MD



Philicia Duncan, MD

Health Systems Science course, her implementation of a curriculum in quality improvement and patient safety has led to numerous student-driven projects with measurable clinical impact. Duncan co-founded the *Lead. Advocate. Engage. Deliver.* program in the College of Medicine, which empowers trainees in advancing health care through advocacy and scholarship. She mentored 10 residents through a national leadership development

collaborative sponsored by the American Medical Association and the University of Cincinnati and has been recognized with multiple teaching awards. Additionally, she mentored medical students on research aimed at improving understanding of medical misinformation, which has led to lasting curricular changes.

Duncan returns to Jamaica annually to participate in a global health mission at the Falmouth Clinic, providing no-cost medical care.



The 2025 Ohio State College of Medicine graduation was special for Mychael Dopirak '25 MD, whose father, Ryan Dopirak '00 MD, and grandfather, Milan Dopirak MD, '76 Res, '78 Fellow, celebrated his joining their ranks as a physician — and carrying on a family legacy.

# Finding a path and purpose

By Kelli Trinoskey

**THE DAY THEY HAD BEEN WAITING** for arrived — The Ohio State University College of Medicine 2025 Doctoral Convocation, also known as the Hooding Ceremony.

Milan Dopirak MD, '76 Res, '78 Fellow, and Ryan Dopirak '00 MD, walked across the stage with their grandson and son, Mychael Dopirak '25 MD, to place the symbolic garment on his back, celebrating his journey from medical student to physician. The velvety trim on the hood symbolized his joining their ranks as physicians and Ohio State alumni, continuing a family tradition that spanned generations.

As they read the Hippocratic Oath together on stage, their voices held notes of gratitude for the world-renowned Buckeye community, which had provided the exceptional education

that shaped who they have become. And as they recited their loyalty to the medical profession, the words underscored the full meaning of how the university's innovative culture helped define their family legacy — a lineage built on supporting one another and applying the lessons they learned while becoming Buckeyes.

"There is no other place than Ohio State where I would have wanted to spend my four years as a medical student," Mychael says. "There was never any pressure to follow in my grandfather or father's footsteps, but this was always the path I saw and wanted to take."

Mychael's grandfather, Milan, became an alumnus of the College of Medicine after completing an internal medicine residency and a cardiovascular medicine fellowship

in the mid-70s. His father, Ryan, graduated from the college in 2000, and now serves as a sports medicine specialist and as medical director of the Musculoskeletal Service Line for Froedtert Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin's Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

"This is the place that made me who I am," Milan says. "The fact my grandson not only went to medical school, but came to the place that I love, makes it extra special."

All three Dopiraks received exceptional training at the college, immersed in a culture of engagement and service, which prepared them to find purpose in their work and contribute to solving medical challenges.

"I'm starting an orthopedic surgery residency at the Medical College of

## OUR TURN



Service and healing are a passion for the Dopiraks (from left, father, son and grandfather), who are all alumni of The Ohio State University College of Medicine.

Wisconsin. It's one of the specialties that I've been around my whole life and one I feel comfortable in," says Mychael, the recipient of a 2025 Northrup Family Medical Legacy Scholarship.

"Now, being able to collaborate with my father, as a resident on any service, is pretty unique and I know it will be a cool experience."

Ryan is thrilled that his son will soon be returning to Wisconsin for his residency and pursuing the fulfillment of his career dreams in a way he feels is the best fit.

"I never really pressed him to go into orthopedics or to return home," Ryan says. "But I think that makes it even more meaningful that he went through his own process and found his own path."

As the first person in his family to attend college, Milan says his career journey was guided by sage advice from his father — advice he's passed on to Ryan and Mychael.

"My dad said to me, 'If you're going to do something, do it right or don't do it at all,'" Milan says. "So that is my life lesson to them: try to be as good as you can possibly be with the talents that God gave you and don't come up short."

Having fathers who modeled

dedication and compassion gave both Ryan and Mychael the confidence to explore and envision themselves working in the field of medicine.

Ryan says what stands out to him about his childhood and watching his father practice cardiology was his passion.

"It's a passion for service and healing, and it's what inspired me to pursue this pathway as well," Ryan says. "I see passion in my son, too."

Passion and stamina are required to successfully practice 21st century medicine, they agree. As the sole practitioner in his practice, Milan was on call every night. He laughs when he recalls a now-infamous question posed to him by then five-year-old Ryan one Sunday on the way to church.

"He asked, 'Are you ever going to have a day off?'" Milan says. "I answered, 'This is my day off.'"

Ryan's retort called out the obvious: "But are you going to the hospital after church?"

Everyone in the car knew the answer was yes. Yet, Milan says that while he earnestly tried to be home as much as possible, his profession required continual sacrifices from him, his wife and his children.

"Cardiology is a demanding

specialty, and a lot of what happens, happens at night," Milan says. "When doctors refer a patient to you as an emergency, they don't care how smart you think you are or where you've trained. All they want to know at 3 a.m. is, 'Are you going to be here in 10 minutes?'"

### Like father, like son

At his dad's Match Day ceremony in 2000, Mychael was too young to remember the details of the event or his dad beginning his orthopedic surgery residency at Mount Carmel Hospital. But he has many fond memories of growing up in a small town in Wisconsin and witnessing his dad's dedication to both his family and patients, experiencing firsthand the depth of his father's care for the community.

"In the grocery store or while working out at the local YMCA, people would approach and share stories of how my dad's care impacted their lives and how it improved their quality of life," Mychael says.

To gain a better sense of various residency programs, Mychael completed away rotations before his final year of medical school. While at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where his father practices, Mychael felt and observed the supportive camaraderie between residents and physicians.

"It was like a family," Mychael says. "You could tell the attendings cared about the residents and wanted them to feel that they were all friends and colleagues, as well as teachers and students."

Like his father and his grandfather, he wants to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

"I want to follow in their steps of being phenomenal doctors," Mychael says. "But it's more important for me to be a phenomenal father, husband and just overall family member."

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**Kelli Trinoskey** is associate director of Marketing and Communications at The Ohio State University College of Medicine.



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