

*Devoted to noteworthy happenings
at the medical school*

RANKS SWELL IN TOP SOCIETIES

Thirteen Pitt med physician-scientists are among the newest members of two prestigious medical societies. This year, the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI) and the Association of American Physicians (AAP) chose eight and five of their new members, respectively, from Pitt.

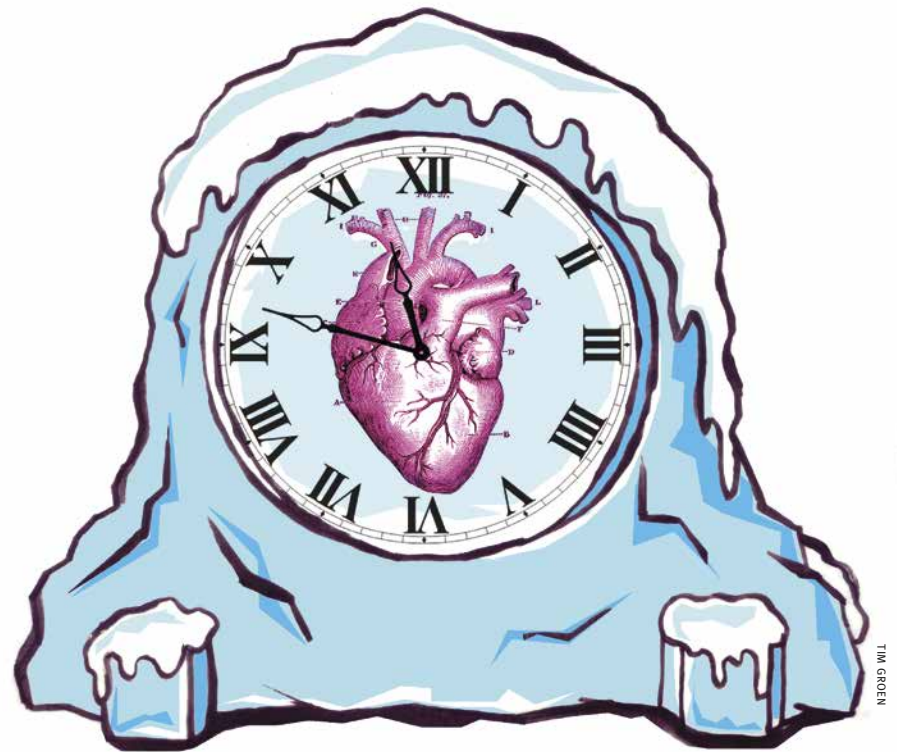
The ASCI chooses physician-scientists younger than 50 whose biomedical research it deems “outstanding.” The society elects up to 80 new members annually; this year, it chose 76 total. Pitt med profs honored included Cristian Apetrei, an MD/PhD; Carlton Bates, an MD; Hülya Bayir, an MD; Peter Lucas, an MD/PhD; Linda McAllister-Lucas, an MD/PhD; Mary Phillips, an MD/MD (Cantab); Aleksandar Rajkovic, an MD/PhD; and Yutong Zhao, an MD/PhD.

With 58 ASCI members to date, Pitt outnumbers Yale, Vanderbilt, and UCLA.

The AAP, cofounded in 1885 by William Osler, recognizes excellence in basic and clinical science. Of 62 inductees this year, Pitt’s were Yuan Chang, an MD; Patrick Moore, an MD/MPH; David Hackam, an MD/PhD; David Lewis, an MD; and Sally Wenzel, an MD. —*Jenny Blair*

FOOTNOTE

Pitt med’s Peter Shaw lent his knowledge and, ever so briefly, his visage to the movie *The Fault in Our Stars*. As head of Children’s Hospital’s adolescent oncology program, Shaw was uniquely qualified to advise on the film, which focuses on a romance between two teenage patients. With his guidance (and the dean’s help securing Children’s as a filming location), the producers managed to create an oncology ward accurate “down to a box of alcohol swabs on a cart.”



TIM GROEN

A Matter of Time

A patient with severe trauma and massive blood loss who is also in the throes of cardiac arrest needs special care. But what to focus on? The quickly bleeding wound? The arrest? Emergency medicine physicians and trauma surgeons could use a few extra minutes.

Cue EPR, emergency preservation and resuscitation. Pitt’s late Peter Safar (MD Distinguished Professor of Resuscitation Medicine) with colleagues, including Samuel Tisherman (MD ’85, Res ’93, and longtime Pitt professor of critical care medicine and of surgery), developed the procedure in preclinical studies. EPR involves flushing out the patient’s blood and pumping cool saline into the aorta. With no blood, brainwaves, or breathing, this paused state will allow surgeons to repair damage, Tisherman predicts. He’ll know more as clinical trials unfold at UPMC Presbyterian and at several other academic medical centers, including the University of Maryland, to which Tisherman has recently moved.

The Department of Defense–funded trial of EPR officially began in April at UPMC Presbyterian. So when the right patient comes into the emergency department, the EPR team is primed to “race against the clock,” says Tisherman. —*Robyn K. Coggins*



Overheard Sticker Shock

Here in the United States, we pay \$2.7 trillion each year for health care, and that number is increasing. Though the Affordable Care Act has made health insurance possible for millions of Americans, whether it will help control costs is in doubt. We talked about the issue with this year's School of Medicine commencement speaker, **Elisabeth Rosenthal**, an MD. In her *New York Times* series "Paying Till It Hurts," she examines how incentives built into our health care system drive up the price of drugs, tests, and procedures.

Why are health care cost discussions taboo in this country?

We have this weird notion that if you talk about value or cost-effectiveness in health care, you're on that slippery slope to talking about death panels and [saying], "It's not worth saving someone." It's a big misconception that talking about costs means your life is not worth it. It means, "Let's think about how to spend our health care dollars wisely."

Also, a lot of people are making a lot of money in our health care system right now, and they don't really want to talk about high prices. Their first concern is to figure out how they can keep their piece of that \$2.7 trillion health care pie.

How can patients keep their own health care expenses under control?

We're in a really difficult moment for individuals. All our plans are asking people to pay far more of their medical expenses. That does make people more cost conscious, but we're not giving them the tools or the information they need. One thing I would push for in the near future is to have more price transparency.

So would health care price transparency be an effective national reform?

I would put that pretty high up. There are a lot of things we can do. A lot of people say we should just have price regulation or single-payer, which would also work. It's not like it's a great mystery what we could do—the mystery is what we're willing to do.

The question in the end is going to be, "Will all of that private market stuff be sufficient?" Or are we going to need to do what almost every other country does, which is to have some form of national price setting or price regulations? —*Interview by Jenny Blair*

Faculty Snapshots

Famed faculty members **Bernard Fisher**, **Thomas Starzl**, and **Julius Youngner** each received a Chancellor's Medal this spring from outgoing Chancellor **Mark A. Nordenberg**. Fisher (MD Distinguished Service Professor of Surgery) dramatically altered our understanding of cancer biology and fought for scientifically sound treatments for breast cancer, including lumpectomy and tamoxifen. Youngner (ScD Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Molecular Genetics and Biochemistry) was instrumental in creating the killed-virus polio vaccine and is known for other microbiology advances (including trypsinization, the basis for modern cell culturing, and fundamental studies of interferon). For more on Starzl (MD/PhD Distinguished Service Professor of Surgery), the man who made liver transplantation a reality, see p. 6.



FROM LEFT: Fisher, Youngner, and Starzl.

The Chancellor's Medal celebrates those who leave "an indelible mark" on the University—Nordenberg called the trio "health care heroes" in his remarks.

Carolyn Coyne and **Yoel Sadovsky's** July 2013 paper in *PNAS* won the **Cozzarelli Prize**; the National Academy of Sciences celebrates just one biomedical sciences paper with the award each year. Their study showed how the placenta may protect a pregnancy against viral infections. Coyne is a PhD associate professor of microbiology and molecular genetics. Sadovsky is an MD, **Elsie Hilliard Hillman Professor of Women's and Infants' Health Research**, and professor of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences, as well as of microbiology and molecular genetics. **Elizabeth Delorme-Axford** (PhD '13) is the first author on the paper.



Coyne

David Lewis received the **2014 American Psychiatric Association Award for Research in Psychiatry**. Lewis is the MD chair of psychiatry and UPMC Professor of Translational Neuroscience at Pitt. In addition, his department won a \$10 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to support the **Silvio O. Conte Center for Translational Mental Health Research** toward efforts in detailing the disease process of schizophrenia.



Sadovsky

Pitt's chair of orthopaedic surgery, **Freddie Fu** (MD '77), was awarded the **Kappa Delta Elizabeth Winston Lanier Award** (a.k.a. the "Nobel Prize of Orthopaedic Research") at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' 2014 annual meeting. Fu, the **David Silver Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery**, investigates "double bundle" ACL reconstruction, which more closely mimics the knee's natural anatomy than traditional reconstruction methods. —*RKC*



Lewis



Fu

JIM DUKES

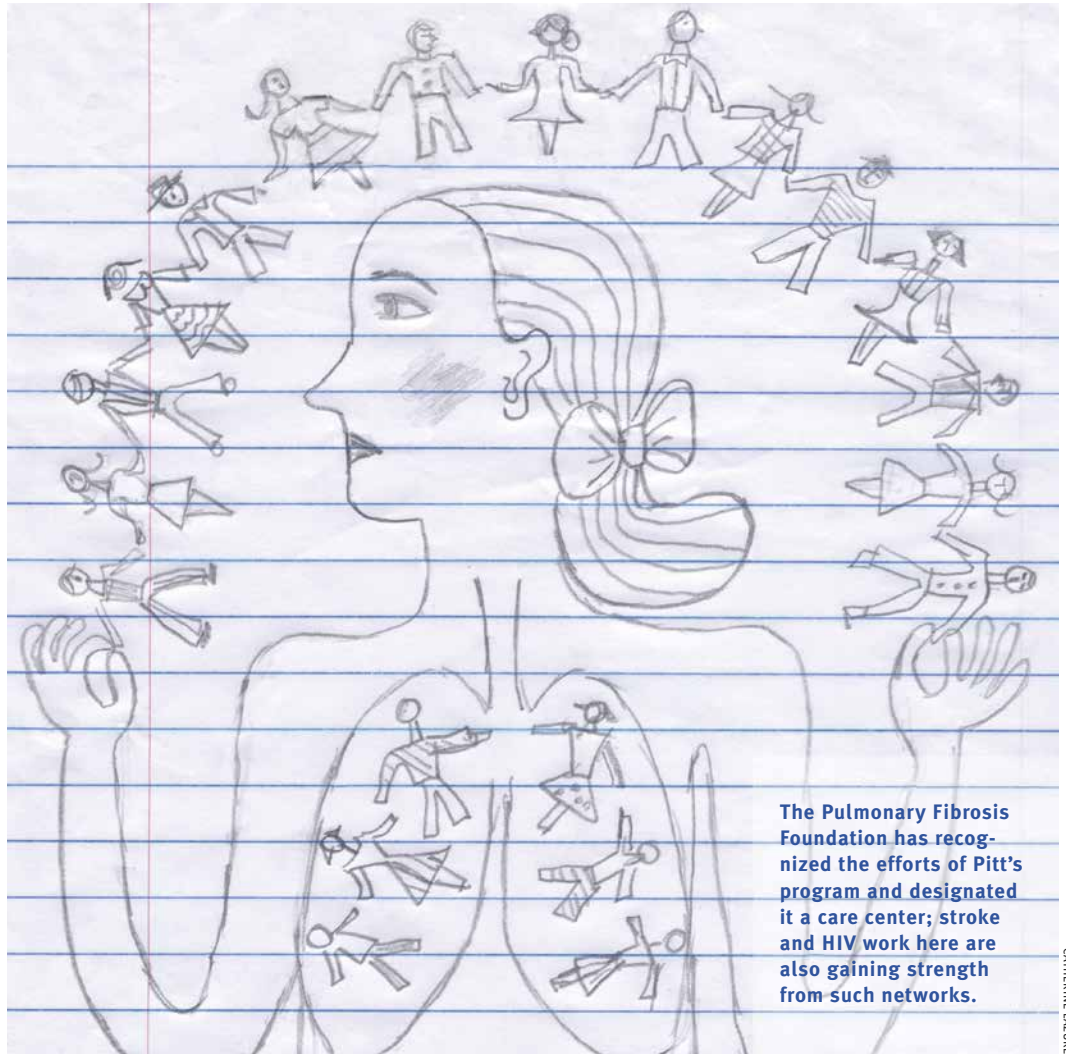
Centered

It's all about networking. At least it seems that way of late at the School of Medicine.

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation has named Pitt's Center for Interstitial Lung Disease one of nine designated centers in its new Care Center Network and PFF Patient Registry Program. The centers will track treatment and outcomes to establish best practices and standardize care for the currently incurable and multifarious disease.

The National Institutes of Health has named Pitt one of 25 new regional stroke centers in an effort to jump-start clinical trials to prevent and treat strokes—currently America's fourth-leading cause of death and number-one cause of serious, long-term disability. Affiliates of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke Trials Network will share results of their multi-disciplinary studies across member sites. The "StrokeNet" will create a long-range approach to research, decreasing setup costs of starting new trials.

Pitt's Microbicide Trials Network has been awarded \$70 million to help prevent the spread of HIV. A group led by coprincipal investigators Sharon Hillier (PhD professor and vice chair for faculty affairs in obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences) and Ian McGowan (MD and PhD professor of medicine in gastroenterology, hepatology, and nutrition) will develop vaginal and rectal gels, rings, and films that can kill or block transmission of the virus. —RKC



The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation has recognized the efforts of Pitt's program and designated it a care center; stroke and HIV work here are also gaining strength from such networks.

CATHERINE LAZURE



GREG KAVALEC

The dean, with a few structural models of items he's focused his lab on over the years. FROM LEFT (and most recent): KillerRed, a fluorescent protein (the novel use of which has allowed the further detailing of the cell's response to DNA damage); UV-DDB (a protein which binds to damaged DNA and initiates its repair); and SV40 (an oncogenic virus). Also shown is this magazine.

INAUGURAL DEANSHIP

He's not just senior vice chancellor for the health sciences and dean of the med school anymore. Arthur S. Levine, MD, is now the John and Gertrude Petersen Dean; he holds the first endowed deanship in the history of this medical school. Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg conferred the honor at a ceremony this May with a proud handshake, a little ribbing, and a medal worthy of an Olympian.

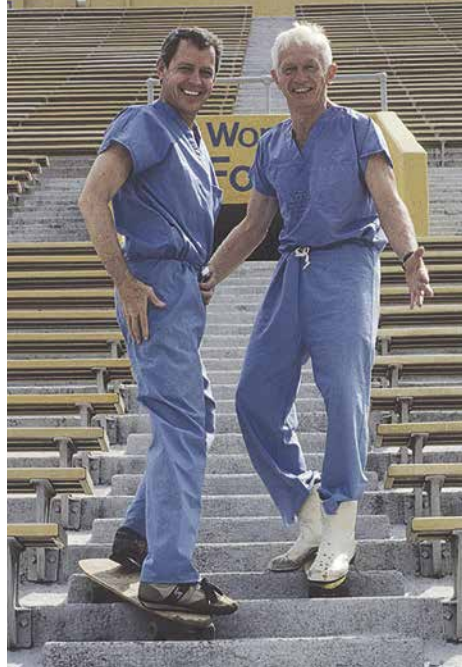
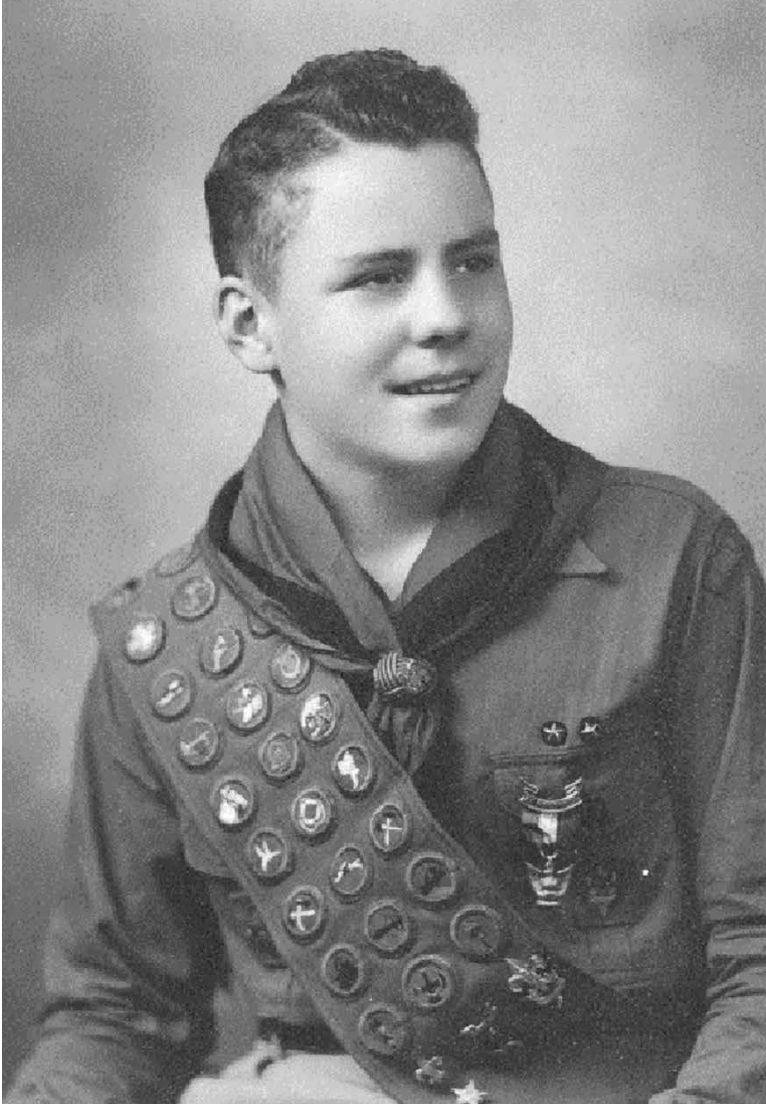
Levine, dean since 1998 (after three successive search committees had failed to find the right person, by the way), has led the med school into the ranks of the top five institutions receiving NIH funding. He has appointed 30 of 31 department chairs, created 10 new departments, and lured five National Academy of Sciences members to join the faculty.

"The institution transcends departments," Levine said of the present-day school, increasingly known for its interdisciplinary collaborations.

At the event, Levine gave a lecture recounting both his and the School of Medicine's histories, referring back to his great grandfather and the first diploma granted by the school in 1887.

Levine attributed his and the school's strength, in part, to stellar faculty, donors like the Petersens, and first-rate staff like his assistant, Gina Deible. He said he's "a catalyst dependent upon substrate."

His portrait (left), painted by Greg Kavalec, was unveiled after the lecture and will hang in the Scaife Hall auditorium. —RKC



EPIC TALE OF AN EAGLE SCOUT

Thomas E. Starzl—MD/PhD Distinguished Service Professor of Surgery and famed transplantation surgeon—was recently inducted into the National Academy of Sciences. He joins the ranks of Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Margaret Mead, and other scientific juggernauts (including six other Pitt faculty members).

Don't know much about Starzl? Then check out the Official Dr. Thomas E. Starzl Web Site (www.starzl.pitt.edu). The site was officially launched in April 2014; archivists and the great doc spent much of 2013 filling out the site with photos (including those shown here of him as an Eagle Scout and, decades later, skateboarding with eminent surgeon Hank Bahnsen) and archival materials. "After responding to many requests over the years for information about his background, accomplishments, and impact on the legacy of transplantation and transplant immunology," says archivist Ashley Taylor, Starzl "wanted the archive Web site to provide a singular, official destination for those wishing to learn more about him and his work." In addition, all 2,257 Starzl publications are available digitally through the University Library System (d-scholarship.pitt.edu). Yup, we said 2,257. —RKC

Appointments



Vignali

Dario Vignali, a PhD, has been recruited to Pitt from St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, where he was vice chair of the immunology department. At Pitt, he will be a professor in and vice chair of the Department of Immunology and colead the Cancer Immunology Program at UPCI. Vignali, along with **Robert Ferris**, an MD/PhD, will also run the new Tumor Microenvironment Center—an important hub for cancer and immunological studies.



Ferris

Luis De la Torre, an MD, comes to Pittsburgh by way of Hospital Angeles Puebla in Mexico, where he was the head of the hospital's Colorectal Center for Children. Now an associate professor at Pitt, De la Torre is the founding director of another such center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC that will provide diagnostics, consultations, a broad range of treatments, and emotional support to patients and their families. The center's radiologists, gastroenterologists, psychologists, surgeons, and specially trained nurses will work with patients with anorectal malformations, Hirschsprung disease, and those with functional problems after related procedures.



De la Torre

Hoby Hetherington, a PhD, joins Pitt as a professor in the Department of Radiology. Hetherington made a name for himself at Yale for his work on high-field magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Now Hetherington will lead Pitt's Magnetic Resonance Research Center, as he and colleagues investigate the behavior of neurotransmitters in epilepsy patients using imaging techniques he developed. He also investigates brain tumors and traumatic brain injury.



Hetherington

Roderick O'Sullivan, a PhD, has joined UPCI and the faculty at Pitt after leaving the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, where he was a postdoc. O'Sullivan, an assistant professor of pharmacology and chemical biology, was the first author of a recent study investigating the alternative lengthening of telomeres pathway, a contributor to cell division in 10–15 percent of cancers. O'Sullivan's lab at Pitt will continue this research as his team works to understand the relationship between telomere structure and function in this peculiar but significant pathway. —Zach Nichols



O'Sullivan



PHOTO COURTESY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH OF UPMC/TIM GROEN, PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

ROOM WITH A VIEW, OF THE LITTLEST ONES

When a newborn lands in the neonatal ICU, it's a rough road of separation for new parents like Erin and Ryan Hayes. But the NICUs at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC are easing some parental worries with NICVIEW—a camera system mounted above incubators that parents can securely access.

"It was nice," Erin Hayes says, "to be able to see my baby on there, see both of them." Twin boys Tristan (pictured) and Maddox, born last November at just 25 weeks, were in both hospitals during their respective six- and four-month stays. The Hayeses tuned in during lunch breaks at work and at bedtime to view their little ones between visits.

"[Parents] can feel comforted that, even though they can't be with the baby, the baby is okay," says Beverly Brozanski, MD medical director of Children's NICU and professor of pediatrics and of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences at Pitt.

Parents can check in during six designated times each day and share

login information with family; folks from 29 states and five countries have connected since December, Brozanski says. "When family—their parents, sisters, and brothers—can log in to see the baby, they understand a little bit more about what the parents are going through."

By the end of June, Magee had some 30,000 logins to its 62 cameras, and Children's reported more than 20,000 to its 31. (Children's plans to add more cameras this year.) Brozanski thinks of the service as part of the big transition from hospital to home.

"Family-centered care is very important to newborn medicine. We're discharging this baby—this very medically fragile child—to a family that hasn't had the baby home yet," she says. "Anything we can do to help ease that transition and allow the family to feel more connected is definitely worthwhile."

And don't worry: Maddox and Tristan are home and doing well.

—Robyn K. Coggins