

SAINT JOHN'S

THE MAGAZINE OF SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION

Fall 2021

PROVIDENCE SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER
**MAKING STRIDES AGAINST
BREAST CANCER**

SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH CENTER FOUNDATION
**A HEARTFELT GIFT AIMS
TO IMPROVE HOSPITAL
COMMUNICATIONS**

PACIFIC NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTE
**NEUROSURGEONS FROM
AROUND THE WORLD
SHARPEN THEIR SKILLS**

All Clear Ahead

A woman wins her battle against melanoma by turning to Saint John's storied cancer immunotherapy program.

SAINT JOHN'S CANCER INSTITUTE





THANK YOU DALLAS PRICE & BOB VAN-BREDA

for your generous support of the
Power of Partnership campaign.

We will never forget the impactful gift of Dallas Price-Van Breda and her husband Bob in support of a new nurse call system to honor their physician, Dr. Ernie Prudente. When you give a gift to Saint John's Health Center Foundation, you can help ease the way of patients suffering from serious diseases and support the meaningful, life-saving work of our nurses, caregivers and physicians. Your essential support enables us to continue to serve you, your family and the local community we all love.



Please give now at [SaintJohnsFoundation.org](https://www.SaintJohnsFoundation.org)
or call 310-829-8424, Monday through Friday,
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

the
Power of Partnership
Saint John's
Health Center Foundation

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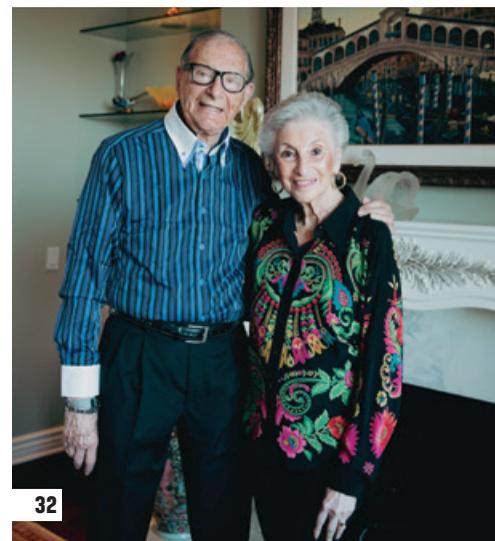
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» For all of us who are familiar with Providence Saint John's Health Center, we know what an amazing hospital it really is and why it's the pride of the Westside. With that being said, it's still nice to see our excellence recognized again by *U.S. News & World Report* (see page 9 for all awards). I attribute our continued trajectory of excellence and "Best Hospital" status to our amazing caregivers, nurses and physicians who make Saint John's the special place we know it to be—which is why attracting the best and brightest to our hospital will always be a priority.

As you'll learn on the following pages, we welcome three new astounding researchers and clinicians to our campus. At Margie Petersen Breast Center, we introduce Parvin Peddi, MD, as director of medical oncology. She will focus some of her work on new clinical trials and research studies to improve patient outcomes. At Saint John's Cancer Institute, Maria Ascierio, PhD, has joined our faculty as associate professor and director of translational immunology. She arrives with an impressive background and will soon be a rising star at Saint John's.

Last but not least, Kim Margolin, MD, joins the cancer institute as the new medical director of the melanoma program. Dr. Margolin is one of the leading melanoma experts in the country and has conducted impressive research in immunotherapy and other novel treatments in the fight against this type of cancer. We're proud to welcome these stellar professionals to our Saint John's family and will support them in all they do to make Saint John's an even better place to practice medicine and care for the sick and vulnerable. Although their work and specialties differ, all three of these doctors chose to come to Saint John's because they were familiar with our unparalleled care for patients and our reputation for clinical excellence.

We continually strive to keep Saint John's a nationally recognized facility that our community can be proud of. When you need health care, you should have peace of mind that any nurse, doctor, caregiver, technician or therapist you come in contact with meets our high professional standards and practices our core values of kindness and compassion.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ricks".

MICHAEL RICKS

Chief Executive
Providence Saint John's Health Center
Saint John's Cancer Institute



Robert O. Klein

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Saint John's Health Center Foundation

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» When you consider making a philanthropic donation to a place such as Providence Saint John's Health Center, it's with the intent to make a positive impact in the lives of patients and to ensure excellent health care right here in your community. In this issue of *Saint John's*, we share with you inspiring stories of the impact you're making not just here but around the world.

Through the Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and Surgical Skills Lab at Pacific Neuroscience Institute and Saint John's Cancer Institute, your donations are helping visiting doctors from all over the globe acquire new skills that advance their surgical techniques so that when they return home, the patients in their hospitals benefit (page 28). It's a unique type of partnership that connects us to the world at large and multiplies the impact of your generosity exponentially through the sharing of knowledge.

In another example of unique partnerships, you'll read about grateful patients who wanted to honor their family physician with a gift to the health center in their doctor's name (page 20). It's a touching story of friendship, heart and generosity that will pave the way for a state-of-the-art technology upgrade that will ease the way for Saint John's patients for years to come.

Speaking of partnership, as our three-year Power of Partnership campaign comes to a close, we could not be more grateful for the generous and selfless support you've given us. While we will include a more detailed report in the next issue of *Saint John's* this December, our little-campaign-that-could has been a remarkable success. The more than \$211 million raised so far will ensure university-level care and research in a community hospital known for a personalized and exceptional patient experience. That's the power of partnership. That's the power of compassionate, leading-edge care.

>> FIGHTING PROSTATE CANCER
September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the U.S., after skin cancer.

THIS YEAR:

More than **174,600** men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

More than **31,600** will die from the disease.

RISK:

Age: The older a man is, the greater his risk.

Family history: A man with a father, brother or son who has had prostate cancer is two to three times more likely to develop the disease.

Race: Prostate cancer is more common in Black men. It tends to start at younger ages and grow faster than in other racial or ethnic groups.

Source: Prostate Cancer Foundation



>> WHAT ABOUT DIET?

According to the American Cancer Society, there are things you can do that might lower your risk including:

- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese
- Avoid a diet high in dairy products and calcium
- Stay physically active
- Eat a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables and whole grains; avoid or limit red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages and highly processed foods



Timothy G. Wilson, MD, professor and chair of urology and urologic oncology, director of urology and urologic oncology research program



Mehran Movassaghi, MD, assistant professor of urologic oncology, director of men's health at Providence Saint John's Health Center

>> WE CAN HELP

The Saint John's Cancer Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center offers world-class expertise in prostate health, prostate cancer screening and prostate cancer diagnosis and treatment.

To make an appointment: 310-315-6125

» DON'T FORGET YOUR FLU SHOT

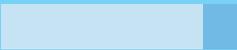
With much of our attention still on the threat of COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccination, it's easy to forget that other routine infectious diseases, such as influenza, still lurk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends annual flu vaccination for anyone age 6 months and older, with only rare exceptions.

A flu shot can reduce the risk of:

Flu-associated hospitalizations:

40% 

Admission to an intensive care unit:

82% 

Having to see the doctor:

40% 

to 60%



Full COVID-19 vaccination can reduce the risk of hospitalization:

94%

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

» RX: HAVE FUN

The COVID-19 pandemic sent many Americans into an emotional tailspin—especially older adults who were advised to “lock down” early in the pandemic and who suffered greater consequences from infection. With vaccines available and the pandemic easing, however, we may have forgotten how to have fun, says Scott A. Kaiser, MD, director of geriatric cognitive health at the Brain Health Center at Pacific Neuroscience Institute.

“Getting back into the swing of things can be surprisingly challenging,” says Dr. Kaiser, a board-certified family physician and geriatrician. “It has been a long, difficult and stressful time period. All people, but especially older adults, should prioritize having fun. When it comes to the secrets of aging well, attitude is everything. Having a positive, youthful, fun attitude can go a long way in helping someone age well and live well.”

Dr. Kaiser's Tips:

- Use this opportunity to reprioritize your time and reset.
- Focus on the things you value most and are most rewarding to you and bring you lasting and durable joy.
- Cut out some of the unnecessary activities.
- Nurture strong relationships and social connections.
- Have some kind of creative outlet.





Welcome to Dr. Maria Ascierito



Meet the Class of 2022–2024

Saint John's Cancer Institute is proud to announce the new class of physicians selected for the Donald L. Morton, MD, Complex General Surgical Oncology Fellowship. The four surgeons will complete the two-year fellowship in 2024, immersed in a multicampus program that covers technical operative skills, multidisciplinary care in clinical surgical oncology, translational research, skills to become an academic clinical scientist and laboratory basic science. The four surgeons join the four members of the class of 2021–2023.

The program was recently renamed for the late Donald L. Morton, MD, the institute's cofounder and a legendary surgical oncologist who was at the forefront of advances in the field. The long-standing program counts among its graduates many department chairs and divisional chiefs of surgical oncology around the country. The program is approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education.

CLASS OF 2022–2024

Katherine Jackson, MD
University of Rochester
Medical Center

Janelle-Cheri Millen, MD
University of Central Florida

Laura Fluke, MD
Naval Medical Center
Portsmouth

Udai Sibia, MD
Anne Arundel Medical Center

CLASS OF 2021–2023

Julia Greene, MD
San Antonio
Uniformed Services

Daniel Milgrom, MD
Indiana University

Jessica Weiss, MD
Madigan Army
Medical Center

Stephanie Young, MD
Kaiser LA Medical Center

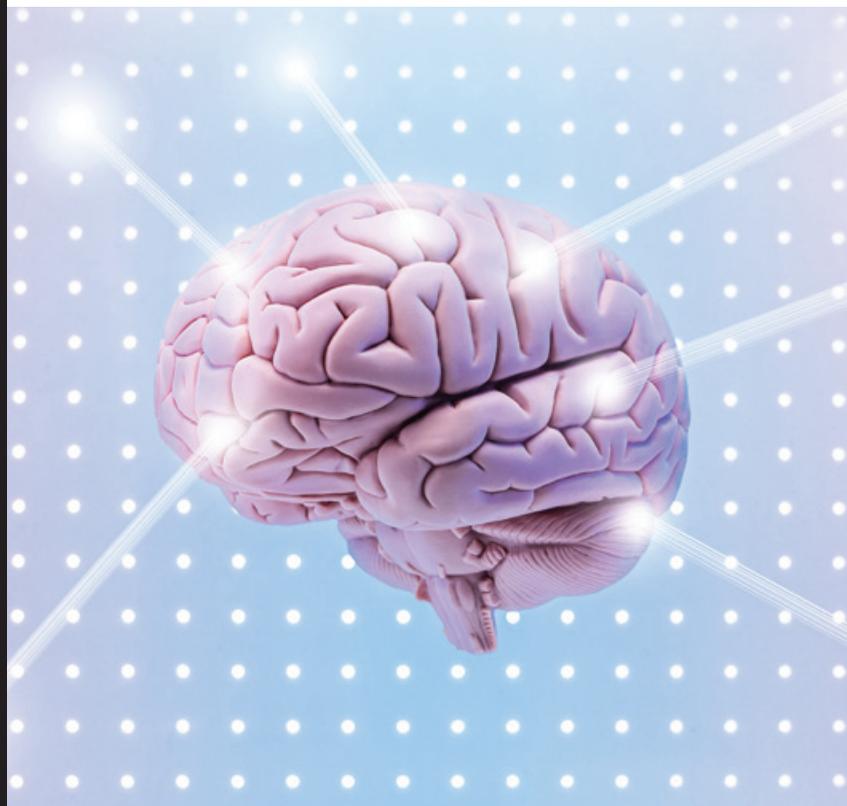
Maria Ascierito, PhD, has joined the faculty of Saint John's Cancer Institute as associate professor and director of translational immunology. Dr. Ascierito earned doctoral degrees in clinical and experimental immunology from the University of Genoa and microbiology/virology from the University of Naples Federico II. She completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University and has worked for AstraZeneca and at the National Institutes of Health. Her research focuses on immuno-oncology.

Saint John's Garners "Best Hospitals" Honors

Providence Saint John's Health Center has been recognized as one of the top 10 hospitals in Los Angeles and one of the top 20 hospitals in California in this year's "Best Hospitals" rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*. The annual evaluation measures excellence in patient care across a variety of common procedures and conditions as well as in high-acuity care.

The recognition reflects a period of sustained growth and improvement in our ministry against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. Pacific Neuroscience Institute was named one of best neurology and neurosurgery programs in the country, earning a national ranking of No. 48. This accolade is bestowed on the top 1% of programs based on a variety of data categories such as patient experience, nurse staffing and advanced clinical technologies. The award marked the first time one of our programs has been nationally ranked by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Several of our adult specialties also earned "high performance" ratings this year, meaning they were ranked within the top 10% nationwide. These included: gastroenterology and GI surgery, orthopedics, pulmonology and urology.



PNI Garners Honors in Skull Base Surgery

For the second year in a row, Pacific Neuroscience Institute (PNI) has been selected as a North American Skull Base Society Multidisciplinary Team of Distinction for 2021. Only 22 institutions in North America have received the prestigious designation, and PNI was among only three such teams on the West Coast. The award underscores the importance of having dedicated skull base surgery teams—with physicians and surgeons from various specialties who emphasize a team-oriented focus—when it comes to patient care.

PNI's multidisciplinary approach to skull base surgery involves coordination of a team of leading neurosurgeons, otolaryngologists, neuro-oncologists, neuro-ophthalmologists and many others in providing top-notch, comprehensive patient care. Conditions that benefit from skull base surgery include brain tumors, orbital tumors and pituitary tumors. Research continues to show better outcomes in team-based skull base surgery.

Q & A Making an Impact

Dr. Parvin Peddi aims to expand research and clinical trials in breast cancer.

BY ROBIN HEFFLER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANE O'DONNELL

In April, Parvin F. Peddi, MD, joined the staff of the Margie Petersen Breast Center at Providence Saint John's Health Center as director of medical oncology. Born in Iran, she moved to the United States after high school and attended Vanderbilt University. She attended medical school at Duke University and spent a year conducting research at the National Institutes of Health while at Duke. She completed her internal medicine training at Washington University, where she was a chief resident, and completed her oncology training at UCLA. She brings nearly a decade of experience leading medical oncology at the Revlon UCLA Breast Cancer Clinic at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, where she was involved in the design and implementation of all breast cancer research trials. Dr. Peddi has received numerous awards and honors for her research and patient care.

How did you become interested in medicine in general and breast cancer in particular?

It was an interest in the combination of science and helping others and having a human connection to patients. As I did hospital rotations, I found care of the cancer patients to be the most rewarding. I liked the focus not just on one organ but the whole body, because cancer can go to any

organ. Also, cancer is a life-changing experience—one of the most difficult parts of people's lives. So the long-term relationships doctors form with cancer patients are without parallel in medicine. I was drawn to breast cancer specifically because it is an area where you see patients at all stages of the disease—from the very early and curable stages to the most advanced forms.

How has the outlook improved for breast cancer patients over the past decade?

Mortality rates have come down significantly despite more diagnoses of breast cancer because we're screening more women. Treatments have improved vastly. Most significant are targeted drug treatments and so-called smart chemotherapy drugs, which target only cancer cells—not the "good" cells. They have fewer side effects and are more effective. Every year we have new drugs approved, so things are moving fast.

Why did you decide to take this position at Saint John's, and what do you see as the health center's strengths in breast cancer care?

I was very familiar with Saint John's through colleagues and from living in Santa Monica. I also delivered my second child here. I was looking for a center that understood the importance of breast cancer and was willing to devote resources to it. The breast center is already strong in providing very individualized patient care and having multiple specialties that work together. I look forward to helping it further and developing the clinical trial program so patients have access to the latest treatment options.

What are your goals for the program?

One focus is having research studies available to our patients that could improve on the current standard. Multiple clinical trials are in the works for all different types of breast cancer. We're also working on expanding the availability to patients of up-and-coming procedures and medications. For example, a few weeks ago, Saint John's introduced a new kind of PET scan for breast cancer, which is not available locally in our community otherwise.

Why is the support of the Saint John's Health Center Foundation important for the Margie Petersen Breast Center to offer the highest level of care?

Because federal research funding has gone down, we're relying more and more on pharmaceutical companies or philanthropy to drive cancer research and improvements in care. It's extremely important for clinicians to develop the philanthropic side and partner with people who want to make a difference in their community and make an investment in cancer research and care that will help transform the lives of women with breast cancer. 



To learn more about supporting the Margie Petersen Breast Center at Providence Saint John's Health Center, contact Pam Solomon, director of development at 310-829-8644 or pamela.solomon@stjohns.org.



Parvin PeMD
Hematology

THE POWER
OF PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGN
Soars to New Heights

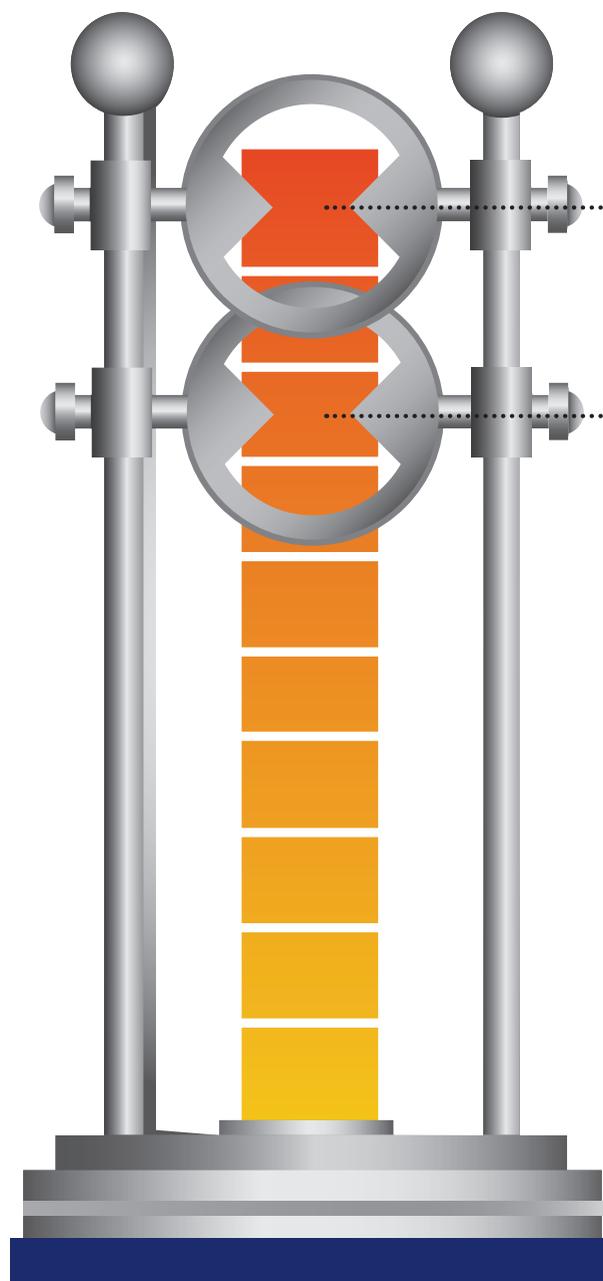


Saint John's Health Center Foundation wishes to thank everyone who has helped us in our multiyear Power of Partnership: The Campaign for Providence Saint John's Health Center. We are proud to announce that we have surpassed our original goal of \$150 million and have raised \$211 million as of late August.

The Power of Partnership Campaign is a comprehensive plan to ensure personalized care for our patients and to transform how we collaborate to discover new breakthroughs, train our professionals, become a model of nimbleness and speed, and make more powerful use of data analytics. We aim to advance and revolutionize the health center's excellence, potency, agility, dynamic collaboration, technology, research, patient care and attractiveness to professional medical partners.

The campaign was founded on the principle of partnership—partnering with our physicians and researchers; our sponsor, Providence; and with our visionary donors. The result of this campaign is to ensure university-level care and research in a community hospital setting known for a personalized and exceptional experience. Through the Power of Partnership, we have reestablished Saint John's Health Center as the premier and preferred health care provider in the Westside community. 

POWER OF PARTNERSHIP milestones



Raised:
**\$211
million!**

Initial Goal:
**\$150
million**



CANCER INSTITUTE
AT PROVIDENCE SAINT JOHN'S HEALTH
RESEARCH CENTER
2200

golin, MD
Oncology



Riding a Wave of Progress

DR. KIM MARGOLIN JOINS SAINT JOHN'S CANCER INSTITUTE AND CONTINUES A LEGACY IN IMMUNOLOGY RESEARCH.

BY NANCY SOKOLER STEINER / PHOTOGRAPHED BY MATTHEW SMITH

Kim Margolin, MD, became interested in science and medicine early in life. As an avid young reader, she gravitated to stories about women physicians and scientists. By the time she entered college, she knew she wanted to engage in this kind of work. As an undergraduate student she encountered a field that captivated her interest, and from that time on, she pictured herself conducting research in immunology.

Dr. Margolin attended Stanford Medical School and completed her internal medicine residency at Yale New Haven Hospital. After one year of a hematology-oncology fellowship at UC San Diego, she moved to City of Hope for her second year to work in bone marrow transplantation. Today, Dr. Margolin is advancing the field of cancer immunotherapy (harnessing the immune system to fight the disease) after years of leading research in melanoma. A medical oncologist, she is the new medical director of the melanoma program at Saint John's Cancer Institute.

Dr. Margolin is the right person to fill the shoes of Steven J. O'Day, MD, the former director of the Saint John's melanoma program, says Michael Ricks, chief executive of Providence Saint John's Health Center and the Saint John's Cancer Institute.

"The melanoma program is what we're especially known for. From the beginning, we've been a destination site for melanoma treatment," he says. "Dr. O'Day was a leader in this field, and we know there were only a handful of people in the country of his caliber. Dr. Margolin is one of those experts. We are beyond honored to have her lead our melanoma program. We're confident she'll take our melanoma program to a whole other level."

Dr. Margolin has witnessed the rapid evolution of cancer immunotherapy. "The field of cancer immunology is relatively new, with approved agents available only in the last decade or so," she says. "But it's taken off like wildfire. Just about every malignant disease now has at least one approved immunotherapy agent, if not many more."

Dr. Margolin specializes in investigating and treating melanoma and other skin cancers. With an interest in melanoma that has metastasized

to the brain, she has led and participated in numerous clinical trials in this specific area as well as exploring novel treatments for other melanoma patients and those with Merkel cell cancer or advanced cases of squamous and basal cell skin cancer, which are usually less aggressive and rarely spread. Most of these investigational treatments involve the study of various single or combination immunotherapy agents, sometimes including intra-tumoral injections of therapeutic viruses or other immunomodulatory substances.

Her trials on melanoma that has metastasized to the brain demonstrated that immune checkpoint-blocking drugs work just as well as they do against metastases elsewhere in the body.

At the institute, she has found a team equally committed to melanoma research. Dr. Margolin is eager to collaborate with the current institute staff, including Maria L. Ascierto, PhD, director of translational immunology; Richard Essner, MD, surgical director of melanoma; and genitourinary cancer specialists Timothy Wilson, MD, and Przemyslaw Twardowski, MD.

"I look forward to continuing outgoing institute director Steven O'Day's work with industry trials as well as writing our own trials and contributing original research," she says. "I'd like to see us engage in collaborative group trials."

With more than 40 years of experience in the medical field, Dr. Margolin worked most recently at City of Hope, where she conducted clinical trials in melanoma and renal cancers. In addition to her 30 years at City of Hope, she served as a professor at the University of Washington in charge of the melanoma and kidney cancer group and as a professor in the department of medical oncology at Stanford.

Much has changed in immunotherapy since that time. "In certain areas of the field, the progress will be incremental and we'll fine-tune our current understanding and available agents. In other areas, I hope and expect that more transformational advances will be made," she says. "These will allow us to plunge into a deeper and more meaningful understanding that will lead to therapeutic benefits, advancing in leaps and bounds."

THE IMMUNOTHERAPY REVOLUTION

**ADVANCES IN
IMMUNOLOGY
HAVE MADE IT
POSSIBLE TO
CURE DEADLY
MELANOMA SKIN
CANCER.**

*BY NANCY BRANDS WARD /
PHOTOGRAPHED BY
SHANE O'DONNELL*





Tracy Stoll has lived her life with one overriding fear: melanoma. While Southern Californians pay close attention to protecting their skin from sun damage, not everyone lives in constant fear of a dangerous skin cancer that is expected to kill more than 7,000 Americans in 2021. Because Stoll has many freckles and moles, she has been scrutinizing her skin and visiting a dermatologist every six months since age 5.

“I was 8 when I had the first mole removed on my foot,” says the 45-year-old Montecito mother of two sons and one daughter. “I’ve had basal cell cancers removed from my hand and hairline. I always thought melanoma was one of those things I could control if I just stayed on top of it.”

In 2015, however, she received the diagnosis she’d dreaded. What she didn’t know then was that recent advances in a type of cancer treatment called immunotherapy would save her life.

The Saint John’s Cancer Institute has a long history of pioneering work on cancer immunotherapies, beginning decades ago when the organization

was founded as the John Wayne Cancer Institute. Throughout the years, dedicated philanthropic support helped researchers push the envelope with leading-edge experiments, and Saint John’s was proud to count itself as immunotherapy pioneers as breakthrough drugs finally emerged in recent years.

IT STARTED WITH A SKIN-COLORED BUMP

Stoll was fortunate in a sense because melanoma was one of the first areas to benefit from progress in cancer immunotherapy. A little over five years ago Stoll noticed a skin-colored bump on her shin. She thought it looked a lot more like a wart than skin cancer, so she was careful not to scratch it or shave over it.

Six months later while on a trip to Hawaii, Stoll noticed another wart-like bump beside the first one. It started bleeding the next day. “I knew I hadn’t bumped it,” she says. “I know that warts don’t just spontaneously bleed.”

She immediately saw her dermatologist upon return from Hawaii, who was inclined to freeze it off because

Tracy Stoll survived melanoma with a revolutionary immunotherapy drug combination.

it looked like a wart, but Stoll insisted she take a sample. During the visit she also biopsied something on Stoll's back. Five days later she learned the bump on her shin was melanoma. However, the cancer was designated as stage 1B—an early stage in which most patients don't experience a recurrence after treatment.

She met with specialists at Saint John's Cancer Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center, including Leland Foshag, MD, a professor of surgery and director of the Complex General Surgical Oncology Fellowship program at the institute. A surgical oncologist with expertise in melanoma, sarcoma and other cancers, Dr. Foshag made a four-inch incision in Stoll's shin to excise cancerous cells and removed one of the lymph nodes in her groin. There was no sign of cancer in her lymph nodes.

However, about a year later a few tiny bumps on the shin sent her back to Dr. Foshag. The bumps didn't look like melanoma, but the surgery revealed melanoma tumors. A third surgery removed more cancer from the shin. This time when they examined the lymph nodes in Stoll's groin, they found traces of melanoma in one. The cancer had spread. Dr. Foshag removed four lymph nodes.

"Now we were at a complicated point in deciding what to do," Stoll says, who handles the business aspects of the upscale Irene Neuwirth jewelry company. "They'd removed all the cancer, but it was obvious that there were still cancer cells in my body."

Since early in this ordeal, Stoll relied on her husband, Robert, to guide her decisions about treatment. A lawyer with decades of experience reading medical records, he also has the savvy to understand articles in medical journals. They sought second opinions from the other top melanoma specialists in Los Angeles. But she found their approaches cold and frightening.

"They said because the cancer was in my lymph node, the chances that one cell was left behind is extremely high and that the cancer will spread to my brain and to my liver if I did nothing," she says. "I've never been so scared in my life. It was like a self-fulfilling prophecy—melanoma is something I've feared all my life. I felt totally hopeless. That made me recognize that the team I had at Saint John's was the team I needed to take me through this journey. We told the Saint John's team we wanted to start aggressive treatment."

DRUG COMBINATION UNLEASHES IMMUNE RESPONSE

Three months after her second and third surgeries in January 2017, Stoll began immunotherapy treatment at

"These drugs completely revolutionized treatment of melanoma. Before immunotherapy, the prognosis was dismal ... now we are curing more than half of melanomas that have invaded various organs."

Saint John's under the care of former institute director Steven O'Day, MD. Dr. O'Day is a highly regarded melanoma specialist with experience in both immunotherapy research and treatment. He prescribed a two-drug combination of ipilimumab and nivolumab, which has been used over the past five years to successfully treat melanoma.

The immune system doesn't recognize cancerous cells as foreign, so it doesn't attack them, says Kim Margolin, MD, medical director of the melanoma program at Saint John's Cancer Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center. And even if it does recognize them, it shuts off the immune response.

These two drugs exploit that process by allowing the body to recognize cancerous cells and spurring the immune system into action, Dr. Margolin says. Pioneering basic research on cancer immunotherapies began more than 25 years ago at Saint John's, under the leadership of the late Donald L. Morton, MD, the institute's cofounder. The institute was one of the few medical centers in the country pursuing the complexity of cancer immunotherapy research.

"These drugs completely revolutionized treatment of melanoma," explains Przemyslaw W. Twardowski, MD, professor of medical oncology and urologic oncology and director of clinical research, urology and urologic oncology at Saint John's Cancer Institute. "Before immunotherapy, the prognosis was dismal in the vast majority of melanoma patients when the cancer had spread—with survival less than a year. Now we are curing more than half of melanomas that have invaded various organs. She was lucky she got it when she did."

Sometimes these powerful drugs kick the immune system into such high gear that it overreacts and attacks other organs. This happened to Stoll; her skin and pituitary gland came under attack, and she had to stop treatment after just two of the four scheduled sessions and take a heavy dose of steroids for two months.

Nevertheless, it was enough. "What is interesting about this particular regimen is that sometimes even one or two doses can have a profound, very durable effect on the cancer," Dr. Twardowski says.

It did for Stoll. A few weeks after her second



Tracy Stoll, husband Robert and their children enjoy time together at the Santa Barbara Yacht Club.

immunotherapy treatment, she watched over two weeks as her tumor tripled in size, became red hot and sensitive to the touch, then dissolved. “That’s the immune system performing its function,” says Dr. Twardowski.

A CARE TEAM LIKE FAMILY

The Saint John’s health care providers and staff made her feel supported and secure throughout her cancer journey, recovery and survivorship, Stoll says, adding that Dr. O’Day and Dr. Foshag gave her hope and encouragement. “They’re like family. They were both very supportive of all the things I did—the hot yoga, meditation, vegetarian diets and acupuncture twice a week. Dr. O’Day would ask, ‘Don’t you want to rest?’ And I’d reply, ‘I’m in fight mode, and when I’m at war, I’m at war!’”

Every day now, Stoll wakes up grateful for the treatment she received from the multidisciplinary team at Saint John’s. “I’ve developed an incredible appreciation for my body and the strength it had to kill my cancer,” she says. “I tell my body how grateful I am and that I will never take it for granted.”

A heightened connection with her body is one thing that has resulted from Stoll’s cancer experience. She meditates and listens to what her body is telling her, whether it’s to slow down, get more sleep or ask a doctor to check out any pain she experiences.

“People who have survived cancer learn a powerful

lesson about how they’re living life and what changes they need to make to survive,” Stoll says, “And if you don’t take the opportunity to look at it, it would be a great misfortune.”

She’s now focused on doing all the things she loves outside of work—traveling, cooking, yoga, hiking, skiing, boating—and most of all creating memories for her children.

She isn’t completely free of fear: “I always have that fear in the back of my mind.” But she remains cancer-free and now simply returns for scans every two years. Stoll and her husband continue to support the work at the Saint John’s Cancer Institute through financial donations.

“I’m a huge fan of Saint John’s and their doctors,” Stoll says. “Everyone was so kind and genuinely interested in me and my husband and what we were going through and most importantly, I trusted them with my life.” 

For more information on supporting cancer immunotherapy research and treatment, contact Jeanne Goldsmith, director of development, at 310-582-7344 or jeanne.goldsmith@stjohns.org.

The Summit of Generosity

Dallas Price and Bob Van Breda's \$1 million donation in honor of Dr. Ernie Prudente will help support a new, state-of-the-art nurse call system at Providence Saint John's Health Center.



When philanthropist Dallas Price-Van Breda and her husband, artist Bob Van Breda, donated \$1 million to Providence Saint John's Health Center in honor of Ernie Prudente, MD, they decided to announce their gift with a small reveal event for Dallas' longtime physician and friend.

"I was tricked into coming to the hospital," says Dr. Prudente, a Saint John's internist who serves on both the Saint John's Health Center Foundation's board of trustees and the health center's board of directors. "I was told I needed to meet a potential new donor. But when I walked around the corner and saw Dallas, her husband, Bob, my wife and two kids—then I immediately suspected something was afoot."

Dr. Prudente had known nothing about the Price-Van Breda gift until he was presented with a mock-up plaque recognizing their donation in his honor. A few months later, wall lettering reflecting the gift was mounted in the first-floor patient care area.

"I was choked up," says Dr. Prudente. "It was an emotional experience. The fact that Dallas and Bob wanted to help the hospital and include me in their generosity was humbling. It was also very special having my family there to share this experience with me so they could see that what I do all day is this meaningful to people."

The Price-Van Breda gift specified that Dr. Prudente choose how the gift is spent. "We wanted him to have the privilege of making this decision," she says.

Because the nurse call system at Saint John's is 20 years old, Dr. Prudente is earmarking the funds as seed money for a new, \$6 million state-of-the-art integrated system that utilizes the latest technology to improve communication among doctors, nurses, patients and patients' families.

"This is a great opportunity for the hospital to improve the patient experience," says Dr. Prudente, "and will allow our nurses to do an even better job. And Dallas is very supportive of the idea."

PHILANTHROPY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a longtime Santa Monica resident, Price-Van Breda feels grateful for the support she, Bob and

her family have received through the years from Saint John's, where one of her five children and several of her 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren were born.

"They've taken care of my family in moments of medical need. It's important that people support institutions that serve our community," she says.

And as a member of the foundation's board of trustees, Price-Van Breda has given back immeasurably in time and support. "I think it's important that board members contribute to the hospital," she says. "A few years back we contributed \$1 million to the radiation therapy department in honor of a treasured friend who had cancer and passed away."

The full scope of Price-Van Breda's philanthropy and accomplishments are beyond impressive and have impacted the worlds of art, sports, business, education and adventure. She is a star of the Southern California arts community for both her extensive art collection and generous donations and is perhaps best known as founder and president emeritus of the board of trustees of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

She has also served as a vice president and major shareholder of the American Golf Corporation—one of the world's biggest golf properties—and is an instrument-rated pilot and former co-owner of the aeronautical services provider Supermarine at the Santa Monica Airport. During the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, she served as co-commissioner of basketball. Her commitment to quality education inspired her to cofound Oaks Christian School, a private Christian school serving grades 5–12 in Westlake Village. The list goes on.

An experienced climber, she conquered the Seven Summits—the highest mountains on each of the seven continents, and her mettle helped her survive some treacherous conditions. After descending Vinson Massif, the highest peak in Antarctica, she and her guide Pete Whittaker were stranded in a storm for eight days until there was a break in the weather and a plane was able to rescue them.

“We were afraid we’d run out of fuel to melt the ice. And without water, we couldn’t survive. We had to play mind games to keep our brain functioning,” she says. “We had a paperback book that I already had read. I would read 10 pages, rip them out and give them to Pete who would read them.”

Yet, despite the dangers, Price-Van Breda found her climbs a spiritual experience. “When you’re at that altitude you see the glory of God and his universe,” she says.

A SPECIAL CONNECTION

Price-Van Breda first met Dr. Prudente 17 years ago when she became his patient. Since that time, he has become somewhat of a family doctor—treating Bob and other family members.

“Ernie’s an angel with his patients, and I’m very blessed that he’s my doctor,” says Price-Van Breda. “So often gifts are dedicated not to people but to places or things, and I felt it was important for one of Saint John’s doctors to be recognized for the wonderful, caring individual he is.”

“Over the years, Dallas and I have gotten to know and like each other and formed a friendship beyond the typical doctor-patient relationship,” says Dr. Prudente. “Dallas is an amazing human being who is perky, high energy and engaged. ‘Dynamic’ is the word that comes to mind when I think of Dallas.”

Besides his current board positions, in his 20-year relationship with Saint John’s, Dr. Prudente has functioned in a multitude of roles. He has served as the chairman of medicine, was on the foundation’s executive committee and continues to actively serve on various committees.

“I’m not only involved in trying to raise funds and resources to help programs at Saint John’s, which is what Dallas is doing too, but I’m also helping determine how that money is used to benefit the hospital.”

Dr. Prudente’s wife, Kate, also contributes her talent to Saint John’s, having served as president of the Irene Dunne Guild and through her involvement with the foundation. “We’re kind of a Saint John’s couple,” Dr. Prudente says.

UPGRADING THE NURSE CALL SYSTEM

Nurse call systems have been standard equipment in hospitals for decades, enabling patients to press a bedside button when they need assistance. Technology, however, is rapidly changing. Saint John’s chief nursing officer, Giancarlo Lyle-Edrosolo, DNP, RN, explains that the latest nurse call systems are far more sophisticated and can greatly enhance communication, caregiver workflow and patient care.

“We’ll be able to respond faster to and personalize patient calls based on the button the patient presses,” he says. “For example, if it’s a toileting need, then it goes directly to the appropriate caregiver.”

Furthermore, these integrated systems include a digital patient care board, similar to a flat-screen TV, installed in each patient’s room throughout Saint John’s, that would replace the familiar, erasable whiteboards. All the patient’s information would be regularly updated digitally. The board also has a camera and is





To learn more about supporting the nurse call system fundraising campaign, contact Maquina Munoz-Freedman, director of development, at 310-829-8348 or Maquina.Munoz-Freedman@stjohns.org.



interactive, enabling conference calls with the patient's family and educating patients about their health care progress and care plan.

The system would be integrated with the health center's existing electronic medical records system, EPIC, so patient information could be easily accessed by physicians and appropriate caregivers.

"The new call system will help improve the experience of our patients by decreasing their wait time when they need help because the call is sent to the right person," says Dr. Lyle-Edrosolo. "The system will also dramatically help our caregivers by streamlining their workflow. Updating the call light system is a request that nurses have asked me about ever since I got here 2½ years ago, and it's exciting to see it start to come to fruition. We're extremely grateful for the generosity that Dallas has provided us."

CALLING FOR HELP

According to Dr. Prudente, insurance companies and Medicare do not provide funds to upgrade call systems, and funds must come directly from the generosity of private donors. Therefore additional philanthropic partners are needed for Saint John's to reach its \$6 million goal to install the system.

"Our nurses are very caring and patient-centric," says Dr. Prudente. "And at the end of the day, taking care of a patient, talking to them, touching them—it's that direct experience that makes a difference. This system would allow our nurses to do an even better job because it improves communication with their patients. And I would tell potential donors that you could play an important role in making a great institution even better."

Price-Van Breda shares his sentiments. "I would hope that there would be others who share my enthusiasm for giving," she says. "If the whole world was filled with people who love to give from their hearts, how much different our environment would be." 🍷





WITH OPEN ARMS

**A VENICE-BASED NONPROFIT SEEKS TO RIGHT
INEQUITY BY HELPING HOMELESS YOUTHS.**

BY VICTORIA CLAYTON

THE GIFT OF HEALTH

The Community Impact Fund (CIF) was established by Saint John's Health Center Foundation to support our local health care partners in improving the health of our community. Each year the CIF committee reviews applications and makes grants to entities striving to improve the health of local residents. In this issue of *Saint John's*, we update readers on the ongoing problem of homelessness among young people, which has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To many people, the issue of homelessness among young people seems overwhelmingly complex. Not to Alison Hurst, executive director of Safe Place for Youth—a nonprofit that offers solutions for homeless and housing-insecure youths ages 12 to 25 and one of the recipients of the Saint John's Health Center Foundation's Community Impact Fund grant.

"It's really simple," says Hurst, who started the nonprofit with a group of volunteers more than a decade ago. "Homeless youths are just young people who are falling through society's cracks." And, she says, during the COVID-19 pandemic some of those cracks grew wider.

Safe Place for Youth aims to empower kids who are homeless—whether that means sleeping on the streets, on the beach, in a van or in a car, or couch-surfing—to create a healthy, sustainable future for themselves. Youths experiencing homelessness or home insecurity are welcomed with open arms and can receive a number of services

including housing referrals, return home travel, case management, food, clothing, internet access, counseling, health education and screenings, dental services, pregnancy and parenting support, transportation, art and music groups, mail and phone services, and access to a legal clinic.

Many people served by Safe Place for Youth are what Hurst describes as “system-involved.” That means they’ve been in foster care and/or the juvenile detention system.

“If you look a little deeper you see that so many are LGBTQ who have not been able to reside or remain supported by family members,” explains Hurst. In addition, many young people served by Safe Place for Youth are BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color). “I’d say that when you really look at it clearly, you find that historical and systematic racism and injustice are huge drivers of youth homelessness.”

Whatever way you look at it, though, this is no small problem—even before the COVID-19 pandemic. Nationwide, an estimated 1.6 to 1.7 million youths join the ranks of those without a home each year. Last year in Los Angeles County, an estimated 4,673 youths experienced homelessness on any given night—a 19% increase from the previous year. Stats from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness are consistent with what Hurst sees: 31% of homeless youths report current or previous involvement in the child welfare system, and 62% report previous or current involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice systems.

“It’s tragic. A shocking number of young people exit these systems without anyone helping them connect to safe and stable housing,” Hurst says.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only complicated the outlook for youths who are homeless. Just prior to the COVID-19 shutdown, Safe Place for Youth in conjunction with the Westside nonprofit PATH (People Assisting the Homeless) opened Los Angeles’ largest bridge housing shelter for youths with a 154-bed capacity and 54 beds specifically for young people.

Before the opening, Westside homeless teens and young adults were referred downtown to Skid Row. Bridge housing is just what the name suggests—it provides a tool to get kids off the streets prior to locating permanent housing. It consists of dormitory-style living, and staff try to resolve the needs of residents and help them progress to the next, more stable stage.

If you don’t have your physical or mental health needs met, however, that’s unlikely to happen. Health care counselors are critical pieces of the puzzle, providing on-site support and arranging for young people to receive a variety of necessary medical care and therapeutic services. The most recent CIF grant from the Saint John’s Health Center Foundation allowed Safe Place for Youth to hire an on-site health care counselor for the new bridge housing unit.

When the pandemic struck, the health care counseling position became integral to operations. Under typical conditions, many bridge housing residents would opt to come to Safe Place for Youth’s Access Center on Lincoln Boulevard in Venice to access services and activities during the day. With the pandemic in full swing, however, they had to stay on-site at the bridge housing unit, and the CIF grant-funded health care counselor became their lifeline.

Safe Place for Youth continued street outreach and other services, but the pandemic meant a temporary halt to the organization’s major fundraising events. The number of youths they were able to serve during the pandemic shutdown fell from 1,600 during the previous year to around 1,200.

“Even under the circumstances, though, we didn’t miss a beat,” says Hurst, who notes they are now back up to full-service capacity. “Our staff didn’t have the luxury of sheltering at home. They showed up every single day to provide what we could. That’s why I always say that this field is full of angels and heroes. People who work in our field and all our partners like Saint John’s are incredible people who are dedicated to putting an end



AN ESTIMATED
1.6 TO 2.1
MILLION
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AGES 12-24
ARE HOMELESS
OVER THE
COURSE OF A
YEAR.



ALMOST 30%
OF HOMELESS
YOUTHS IN THE
U.S. ARE LIVING
IN CALIFORNIA.

79% OF HOMELESS
YOUNG PEOPLE IN
CALIFORNIA ARE
UNSHELTERED,
MAKING THEM
MORE VULNERABLE
TO CONTRACTING
AND SPREADING
COVID-19.



to homelessness.”

Homelessness—even short-term—constitutes trauma with major consequences, Hurst explains. Youths who experience homelessness are disproportionately exposed to violence and abuse. They’re at increased risk for substance abuse, suicide and a host of different health problems.

Safe Place for Youth joins other recipients of the Saint John’s Community Impact Fund grants to tackle major issues like youth homelessness. Over the past six years, CIF has distributed more than \$7.5 million to Westside community health partners serving vulnerable and underserved populations. The goal is to make investments in better health and better lives for people in need by increasing access to health care and supportive services.

The Saint John’s grant specifically helps the nonprofit better address the vast mental and physical health needs of the young adults and teens they serve. “Saint John’s Health Center Foundation is an essential thread that enables us to continue surrounding our young people with love and care,” says Hurst.

She is convinced that if we followed the lead of organizations like Saint John’s—and if society prioritized the problem of homelessness—we’d find solutions. “I want everyone to be aware that they have some power in this. Choosing not to oppose residential programs in their neighborhood, volunteering to hand out food, sharing a skill at a shelter or being a property owner who accepts Section 8 housing vouchers [a federal rent assistance program] are all ways to help.”

But the biggest thing we can do, according to Hurst, is to simply reimagine the way we view youth homelessness. “We need to think about these young people as untapped resources. If we rally together to help them, they become a gift to our community.” 🌱

Top row: The Safe Place for Youth garden staff tends to the plants.
Middle row: The Access Center on Lincoln Boulevard provides services and activities during the day.
Bottom row: Services include art and music.

Homeless
individuals
with COVID-19
are **TWO TO
FOUR TIMES
MORE LIKELY
TO REQUIRE
CRITICAL
CARE** and **TWO
TO THREE
TIMES AS
LIKELY TO DIE.**

THE NUMBER OF
HOMELESS YOUTHS IN
CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS
PLUNGED LAST YEAR BY
28%,
SUGGESTING THEY
ARE NOT GETTING THE
SERVICES THEY NEED
DURING THE PANDEMIC.

Sources: [Endhomelessness.org](https://endhomelessness.org), jbforyouth.org,
[EdSource](https://EdSource.org), calyouth.org

MAKING NEW CONNECTIONS

THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY NEUROANATOMY AND SURGICAL SKILLS LABORATORY IS AN INTERNATIONAL HUB FOR SURGEONS STRIVING TO EXPAND THEIR SKILLS.

BY MELANIE ANDERSON

At any given time, it's not unusual to find surgical fellows from several countries, as well as other U.S. medical centers, observing and working alongside the highly skilled surgeons of Saint John's Cancer Institute and Pacific Neuroscience Institute (PNI). The Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and Surgical Skills Laboratory at Saint John's Cancer Institute has become a leading destination for neurosurgeons from around the world to conduct research and gain knowledge and hands-on experience.

"It's very rewarding to have such a multinational group of individuals that come through our lab and come to our clinic on a regular basis, and it really expands our knowledge base with regard to how things are done in other countries," says Garni Barkhoudarian, MD, associate professor of neuroscience and neurosurgery and director of the Microdissection Anatomy Laboratory. "It allows Saint John's Cancer Institute and PNI to expand



our reach. It puts us on a global playing field, and there's a lot of value there."

A major part of the lab's mission is providing neurosurgeons with a safe environment for practicing highly complex procedures—which they might not have mastered in their initial training—on cadaver specimens.

"The anatomy lab is the best opportunity to see what you're going to see in real life. These labs



Dr. Daniel F. Kelly (far left) and Dr. Garni Barkhoudarian (far right) oversee training in the skills lab.

allow for surgeons to perform these techniques with surgical instruments that would be very similar to how it would be in the operating room,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian. “The ability to help other surgeons in expanding their knowledge and being able to do these complicated operations in a safe and effective manner is not just benefiting our physicians, but it’s also benefiting patients locally, regionally and internationally.”

While labs for studying anatomy and developing neurosurgical skills aren’t uncommon, it’s the state-of-the-art technology,

“THE ANATOMY LAB IS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO SEE WHAT YOU’RE GOING TO SEE IN REAL LIFE.”

multidisciplinary emphasis and a robust fellowship program that set the lab at Saint John's apart.

PUSHING BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Pacific Neuroscience Institute offers two fellowship programs—one for surgeons based in the U.S. and one for surgeons from international institutions. “We have the clinical fellowship, which is for a United States-trained neurosurgeon who wants to spend one additional year perfecting their art and their craft in minimally invasive and endoscopic surgery,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian. “It’s a joy to see somebody pushing their boundaries and learning how to do something that they haven’t been able to do before. It’s very rewarding to have that type of fellowship, and those bonds last forever. It’s been fantastic working with our colleagues after they’ve graduated.”

The international fellows typically spend three to six months at Saint John's and PNI, observing complex neurosurgical procedures and working in the lab. “This is a really great opportunity because they can spend a concentrated amount of time practicing surgical approaches and techniques, and then they’re able to apply that when they go back to their home countries,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian.

Rosa Maria Gerardi, MD, a consultant neurosurgeon at the neurosurgical clinic of University Hospital Policlinico Paolo Giaccone in Palermo, Italy, spent three months at Saint John's in 2018. A typical day included morning rounds to check patients followed by an observational session in the operating room and lab dissections. Like other fellows, she also had the opportunity to contribute to research.

“The lab is fully equipped with the latest technological devices in order to reproduce faithfully a ‘real-life’ operating room environment,” says Dr. Gerardi. “This is truly helpful since, intuitively, the more the dissection conditions are adherent to reality, the more you can learn and grow as a surgeon.”

Dr. Gerardi's fellowship experience inspired her commitment to



Dr. Pablo Barceló (upper left), Dr. Rose Maria Gerardi (upper right), lab manager Josh Emerson and Dr. Felipe Sfeir



professional growth. “I have strongly reinforced my education as a resident, learning to always look for the highest level of surgical performance. It also reinforced the importance to create a strong bond of trust with patients and, last but not least, the central role of teamwork,” she says.

Artur Khachikyan, MD, PhD, who heads the Department of Neurosurgery at Erebouni Medical Center—Armenia's largest medical institution—appreciated being able to observe and then replicate operations in the lab. “After

you see any stage of the operation in a real operating room, it is possible to repeat it in the laboratory and there is an opportunity to ask the surgeons the questions that have arisen,” he says. “This is an invaluable experience.”

After visiting the lab in 2018 and again in 2019, Dr. Khachikyan changed his approach to skull base operations because minimally invasive surgery is often much better for patients, minimizing risks and shortening recovery time. “I began to use widely the neuroendoscope and the minimally

invasive keyhole technique,” he says. “Thus, you can gradually switch from surgery with a microscope to an endoscope. This favorably distinguishes my technique of work from colleagues and is a new step in my career as a surgeon.”

Dr. Khachikyan says he hopes all his residents can someday visit the Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and Surgical Skills Laboratory and work with Dr. Barkhoudarian; PNI director and cofounder Daniel F. Kelly, MD; and lab manager/medical illustrator Josh Emerson.

When Pablo Barceló, MD, visited the lab in 2019, he was struck by its welcoming environment. “Josh Emerson was there for any need, and the proximity with the OR and resources made it easy to fulfill the concept, ‘from the lab to the OR,’” says Dr. Barceló, director of skull base and pituitary disorders at Hospital Rawson in San Juan, Argentina. “Dr. Kelly and Dr. Barkhoudarian were committed to including me in all of the activities. Nurse practitioner Amy Eisenberg is a very warm person who is willing to help you in all of your needs. All the staff made me feel comfortable and included me as one more.”

He adds, “If you spend hours in an incredible lab, if you spend hours watching incredible surgeons performing minimally invasive procedures and everybody cares about you learning, it’s impossible not to improve as a surgeon.”

Fellows typically return home with not only advanced surgical skills but also an inspiring model for teamwork and patient care. “The lessons and the professional example of the faculty changed the way I see my vocation in several positive ways,” says Felipe Sfeir, MD, a neurosurgeon at Hospital Puerto Montt in Chile. “It is an intensely collaborative team in function for the patients, where each one of the parts dialogues fluidly with the others. Since my fellowship in 2017, I have been working to emulate the same spirit in my team.”

EXPANDING OUR REACH

Without the generosity of donors, the Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and

GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Surgeons from around the world have trained at the Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and Surgical Skills Laboratory at the Saint John’s Cancer Institute. Lab directors hope to fund a stipend to bring more international fellows to the lab.



Surgical Skills Laboratory and the outstanding educational and research opportunities it provides would not exist. “These labs are primarily for education, and as a result there’s a cost to it,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian. “The vast majority of the funds for the establishment of the lab, as well as the day-to-day functioning of the lab and the support of our fellows, comes from philanthropy. We owe a debt of gratitude to our Saint John’s Health Center Foundation donors.”

Dr. Barkhoudarian notes the lab has also received approximately \$1 million worth of equipment from industry partners since the lab’s mission includes testing and developing new surgical devices.

Another source of pride is the lab’s commitment to offering multidisciplinary courses that advance knowledge of anatomy and surgical approaches. As the lab continues to expand its course offerings, increased philanthropic support is needed to allow for hiring additional staff.

“Our goal is to make connections to avoid each discipline working in silos,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian. “The

lab is open to any Saint John’s Cancer Institute faculty if they want to utilize it for research or for courses. We’ve worked with the thoracic surgery team for a course and found that to be very helpful. We provide surgical anatomy education for the institution.”

Another goal is to establish an endowment to support a need-based stipend for international fellows. “I would love to have a fund that would support one or two fellows at a time such that we can continue this and really expand to physicians who don’t have the means to take time off from work and spend time with us,” says Dr. Barkhoudarian. “We have a lot of pride in this amazing, small but powerful hospital and network of physicians and caregivers, and we want to continue training and educating physicians who will in turn save more lives here and all over the world.”

To learn more about supporting the Multidisciplinary Neuroanatomy and Surgical Skills Laboratory, contact Pam Solomon, director of development, at 310-829-8644 or pamela.solomon@stjohns.org

Giving Brings Joy

Marty and Lisa Greenberg remember Saint John's in their estate plans.

BY SHARI ROAN / PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHILLIP GRAYBILL

To Marty Greenberg, giving is a way of life. He's known to drop off gifts, such as a bottle of perfume or flowers, to people who have gone out of their way for him.

That generosity extends to all areas of his life, including philanthropic giving. He and his wife, Lisa, are longtime friends and supporters of Providence Saint John's Health Center—dating back almost three decades ago when Lisa sought care at Saint John's. They have chosen to express their gratitude by remembering the health center in their estate plans.

"Saint John's is a special place. They are caring people," Greenberg says. "If there is a way I can help them and help other people, I'm good with that."

Estate planning makes sense and has left the Greenbergs assured that the people and causes they care about will be supported for years to come. "Sometimes people accumulate wealth over their life, and they don't know what to do with it," Greenberg says. "We will make sure people and the organizations we care about are secure by having the money they need many years from now."

Of course, financial matters have always been easy for Greenberg. He was born in Brooklyn and attended New York University, where he was known for having a head for numbers. During his service with the Army, he was assigned to manage the entire Army payrolls at the bases in Okinawa and Tokyo, Japan.

The Greenbergs eventually landed in Los Angeles where Marty founded a large and successful insurance company, that includes underwriting for the entertainment industry. Marty Greenberg handed the reigns of the company over to his daughter, Diana, several years ago, so the family business remains close to his heart. Through his career, Greenberg also served on numerous insurance advisory boards and devoted time to many charitable boards and foundations.

But one organization has been especially close to his heart. In the 1990s, Greenberg was asked to join a group of couples to provide philanthropic support to a local hospital. His involvement eventually led the Greenbergs and several other couples to found the Associates for Breast and Prostate Cancer Studies (ABCs) to support research at the John Wayne Cancer Institute (now known as the Saint John's

Cancer Institute). Greenberg was one of the group's early presidents. Currently chaired by Gloria Gebbia, the ABCs has raised more than \$15 million and is widely known for its spectacular Talk of the Town annual gala. Marty and Lisa Greenberg, who were honorees at the 2019 event, have raised considerable funds through the insurance industry.

"Look at everything that is happening in health care now—all of the new services and new technologies. These people save lives."

The Greenbergs also became friends with the institute's cofounder, Donald L. Morton, MD, who helped care for Lisa years ago during a skin cancer scare.

"The ABCs has raised a lot of money," Greenberg says. "We've helped a lot of people with serious cancers. When people with cancer would ask me where to get care, I would steer them to Saint John's. Later I would ask them

to make a donation to Saint John's and become a member of ABCs too."

The Greenberg's estate gift will have an impact for years to come, says Andy Trilling, vice president of legacy and principal gifts at Saint John's Health Center Foundation.

"We are truly grateful to Marty and Lisa for their longstanding friendship and support and that they have chosen to share their future estate plans with us," Trilling says. "We appreciate knowing their intentions in advance, which enables Saint John's to plan strategically for the future and to recognize Marty and Lisa's generosity during their lifetime."

The couple continue to receive care from Saint John's physicians. "Saint John's is a family," Greenberg says. "It's the place to go. They watch over you and make sure you recover. They express concern for their patients."

Over the years, Greenberg says, he has watched as Saint John's has expanded and ventured into new areas of health care. The hospital is the pride of the





Marty and Lisa Greenberg are longtime friends of Saint John's and supporters of the ABCs.

Westside, he says, and should be the focus of continued philanthropic support to maintain its standing.

“Look at everything that is happening in health care now— all of the new services and new technologies,” he says. “These people save lives. We need to give them the money so they can continue to work on new treatments and cures. Our fervent hopes are that Saint John's remains a pioneer to help all who need care or are searching for a cure.” 

THE GRACE OF LEGACY GIVING

Legacy gifts, such as bequests, are made through charitable estate planning and can have significant tax advantages for you and your heirs. There are many additional reasons to consider a legacy gift:

- Charitable bequests are viewed as one of the most meaningful expressions of gratitude for the care received.
- It allows you to leave a legacy in an area that may be close to your heart.
- You may be able to make an impact greater than you thought possible.
- Legacy donors may be eligible for special recognition and amenities.

Our experienced staff can work confidentially with you and your financial advisors to help ensure your charitable wishes are fulfilled. Please contact Andy Trilling, vice president of principal gifts, at 310-449-5246 or Andrew.Trilling@stjohns.org.

In Memoriam

Saint John's Health Center Foundation grieves the losses earlier this year of three dear friends.



Leslie M. Holve, MD

Leslie Holve, MD, a longtime member of the Providence Saint John's Health Center medical staff and one of the founders of the Cleft Palate Center at Saint John's, passed away peacefully on May 5 at age 94 after a long and satisfying life.

Dr. Holve was born on September 26, 1926, and was raised on a citrus farm in Santa Ana. He attended Occidental College and then USC Medical School in Los Angeles. After graduating in 1952, he began a one-year rotating internship at Los Angeles County Hospital and then started his residency in pediatrics at the same institution. However, his training was interrupted by the Korean War, and he was called back to active duty by the Navy.

After two years in the service, he returned to the newly opened UCLA pediatric training program in 1954. Two years later he obtained his pediatric board certification and entered a general pediatric practice in Westwood.

In 1964, Dr. Holve joined a group of specialists at Saint John's Health Center to start the first comprehensive cleft palate team in the Los Angeles area. He was the first medical director of the cleft palate team and continued in that role while running a private practice for the next 26 years. In 1990, he retired from active general practice but continued in his role as director of the Cleft Palate Center until 1999.

Dr. Holve was dedicated to interdisciplinary long-term team care for children with clefts and was a natural leader, skilled in the ability to keep a group of busy professionals focused on the care of the "total child." A gifted visionary, Dr. Holve was instrumental in organizing a one-day interdisciplinary didactic teaching conference, and the resulting Saint John's Cleft Palate Symposium became an annual event. It continues to be the only instructional symposium of this nature in the western United States focusing on the care and management of individuals with clefts and craniofacial abnormalities.

He was a former member of the Native Sons of the Golden West and had an enduring relationship with the organization, which has raised more than \$2 million in support of the cleft palate clinic. Additionally, Dr. Holve was president of the Los Angeles Pediatric Society in 1964 and president of the American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association in 1984. He was an associate clinical professor of pediatrics at UCLA.

He was a compassionate and skilled physician, a great father and a loving husband. He is survived by his wife, Eleanore, three sons and daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren.

"He leaves a wonderful legacy of selfless devotion to team management and excellence in patient care," says Julia Hobbs, a speech therapist who worked with Dr. Holve. "He was one-of-a-kind and a true pioneer in the world of cleft team care."



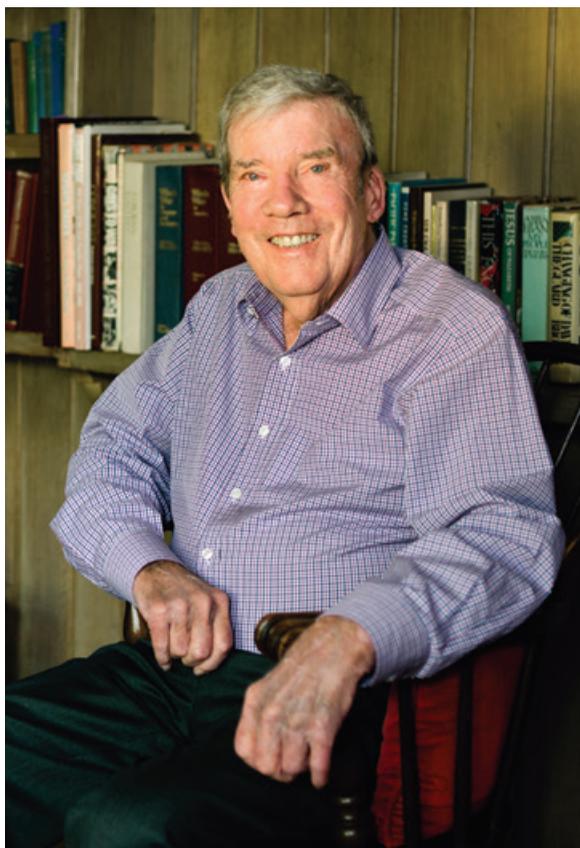


William K. Hummer, MD

William K. Hummer, MD, passed away on February 28 in Los Gatos, where he and his wife, Carla, moved after his retirement from medical practice in 2005. He was 84. Dr. Hummer was a foundation trustee since 1977 and life trustee since 2000.

Dr. Hummer was born in 1937 in Davenport, Iowa. After receiving his bachelor's degree and medical degree from the University of Iowa, he completed his internship at Los Angeles County Hospital. He completed his residency at Mayo Clinic and received his master's degree from the University of Minnesota, both in obstetrics and gynecology. Between his internship and residency, he served as a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

Hummer was on the medical staff at Saint John's, Santa Monica Hospital and UCLA Medical Center, where he was also a professor of obstetrics and gynecology. At Saint John's he was part of the top OB-GYN surgical leadership team for decades and became a formidable part of the administrative leadership of the hospital, medical staff and surgery. He was integral in bringing the John Wayne Cancer Institute to Saint John's in 1991. He served as president of the medical staff at Saint John's in 1988 and as chairman of the board of Saint John's Hospital and Health Center Foundation in 1991. He was a leader on many foundation committees.



William S. Mortensen

Longtime trustee Williams S. Mortensen of Pacific Palisades passed away at the age of 88 on Sunday, February 28, surrounded by his family. His loving wife of 57 years, Nancy, and their son, William Jr., predeceased him.

Mortensen, the son and grandson of prominent physicians, became a foundation trustee in 1987 and a life trustee in 2011. He carried on a family legacy of compassion and generosity in his work with Saint John's. He was active in many foundation committees.

His career began in 1955 as a teller at First Federal Bank, an institution cofounded by his grandfather. In 1969, he was appointed president and was elected chairman of the board and chief executive officer in 1983. Mortensen's bigheartedness and deep belief in "putting people first" were the cornerstone of his business philosophy. Under his leadership, the bank consistently gave back 3% to 4% of its profits to the community and was profiled in "The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America," largely due to his long history of providing equal employment opportunities to minorities and women.

Mortensen was actively involved in many organizations throughout his life, including St. Monica Catholic Church, YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles, Pepperdine University and United Way. 🍷

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—ALISON HURST

With Open Arms

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