Celebrating Achievements at Convocation 2014

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai’s 29th annual Convocation Ceremony, held Monday, September 29, honored 10 physician-scientists whose groundbreaking achievements have made them leaders in the fields of cancer, HIV/AIDS, immunology, microbiology, ophthalmology, psychiatry, rheumatology, surgery, and urology.

Peter W. May, Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, welcomed the honorees, their families and friends, physicians and staff, and donors to the ceremony in Goldwurm Auditorium.

“Today, we commend not only those whose endeavors transform the practice of medicine, but also the many philanthropists whose vision and generosity have championed their vital work,” said Mr. May. “Our patients rely on the clinical and scientific breakthroughs generated by our extraordinary faculty. Likewise, our faculty relies on the partnership and vision of our most devoted supporters, whose unwavering commitment to Mount Sinai has sustained and expanded our research enterprise for generations.”

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National Recognition for Advancing Spinal Cord Injury Treatment

A physician-scientist and a clinical investigator at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx were presented with the 2014 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal in Science and the Environment for their groundbreaking contributions to improving the health care and quality of life of paralyzed veterans. The ceremony took place on Monday, September 22, in Washington, D.C.

The Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit nonpartisan organization that celebrates excellence in the federal civil service, awards medals annually in seven areas of accomplishment. They are highly competitive and known as the “Oscars” of public service. The winners and finalists also attended a ceremony at the White House, hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama.

William A. Bauman, MD, and Ann M. Spungen, EdD, the Director and Associate Director, respectively, of the National Center of Excellence for the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord...
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Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and President for Academic Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System, presided over the Convocation Ceremony and delivered the annual State-of-the-School Address. (For a copy of the State-of-the-School Address, please visit: http://icahn.mssm.edu/StateoftheSchool2014.)

“This has been the most transformative time in the history of Mount Sinai, starting with our 2013 combination with the former Continuum Health system,” Dr. Charney said. “We support a culture of innovation for our students and scientists to do their best work, and we have branded Mount Sinai as the place to go for the best clinical care.”

At a time marked by overall cuts in National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding, Dr. Charney said Mount Sinai’s NIH funding increased by 15 percent between 2013 and 2014, to reach $247 million. Icahn School of Medicine ranks as No. 4 among U.S. medical schools in research dollars per principal investigator.

More than 900 new faculty members from across the Mount Sinai Health System’s seven hospital campuses have joined Icahn School of Medicine this year, Dr. Charney said, and Mount Sinai now has the largest graduate medical education program in the United States.

Dr. Charney also pointed to Mount Sinai’s partnership with National Jewish Health, based in Denver, to advance research and patient care in respiratory and related diseases; and the establishment of institutes that focus on primary care, critical care, global health, diabetes, and neuroscience.

Additional examples of Mount Sinai’s leadership, he said, include a series of Mount Sinai Expert Guides being produced in conjunction with Wiley in the areas of gastroenterology, hepatology, cardiology, allergy and immunology, psychiatry, and neurology.

He noted the expansion of Mount Sinai’s technology transfer organization, Mount Sinai Innovation Partners; Mount Sinai’s commitment to advancing diversity among students and faculty; the launch of a promising biotech company, Dual Therapeutics, from a Mount Sinai laboratory; and Icahn School of Medicine’s standing as No. 5 among Fast Company’s list of most innovative companies in 2014.

Supporting a culture of innovation means tolerating failure, Dr. Charney said. “Playing it safe means you probably won’t break new ground.”

An Evening of Music and Healing

A jazz concert with performances from the cast of the 2014 Tony Award-winning Broadway production of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical set the stage in September for the ninth annual “What a Wonderful World” Awards event held by the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine at Mount Sinai Beth Israel. Each year, the Center honors extraordinary health care advocates, musicians, and patients.

Dancer-choreographer Mercedes Ellington, the granddaughter of Duke Ellington, and actor Kevin Bernard presided as co-emcees at the event, which continued on page 4

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Joanne Loewy, DA, MT-BC, LCAT, Director of Mount Sinai Beth Israel’s Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine, center, joined the award winners, from left: musician and patient Gweneviere Mann; musician Jon Batiste; Ann-Marie Dassler, NP, RN, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit; and Aimee Telsey, MD, Associate Director, Newborn Medicine.
National Recognition for Advancing Spinal Cord Injury Treatment

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Injury at the Mount Sinai-affiliated VA Medical Center, were recognized for advancing the understanding and treatment of the many complex medical conditions that result after spinal cord injury, and for developing novel therapeutic interventions. Dr. Bauman is Professor of Medicine and Associate Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Dr. Spungen is Associate Professor of Medicine with a secondary appointment in Rehabilitation Medicine.

In testimonials, their work was described as revolutionary, creative, and having a profound impact on how physicians now care for these patients. One nomination letter said: “Dr. Bauman has been the single most important scientist and physician leading the way to improved medical management of persons with spinal cord injury.”

Dr. Bauman has worked at the Bronx VA hospital for 55 years, starting in the laboratory of the late Rosalyn Sussman Yalow, PhD, a physicist and Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine in 1977, and a former Mount Sinai faculty member. Dr. Spungen began working with Dr. Bauman in 1990.

“They lead a team of talented doctors to address many of the largely neglected, but highly relevant, issues faced by patients with spinal cord injury,” says Erik Langhoff, MD, PhD, Director of the James J. Peters VA Medical Center. “Their efforts further reinforce why maintaining a strong system of federal funding for research is key to medical progress. Their successes would not have happened without continued research support from Veterans Affairs and a strong affiliation with Mount Sinai.”

The team’s many accomplishments include: studies revealing that patients have an increased risk for heart disease, and are susceptible to an asthma-like lung condition; novel drug therapies for low blood pressure and poor bowel function; investigating new ways to reduce bone loss that occurs after the immobilization of spinal cord injury; and advancing the understanding and treatment of chronic, nonhealing pressure ulcers. They were also among the first to test and reveal the benefits of using the ReWalk exoskeleton, an assisted-walking robotic device now being used by individuals with paraplegia.

Says Kristjan Ragnarsson, MD, Professor, and Chair, Rehabilitation Medicine, Mount Sinai Health System: “Drs. Bauman and Spungen have created an outstanding research center. Through presentations and publication of their research results, they have contributed in a large way to the reputation of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and the James J. Peters Veterans Affairs Medical Center.”

Exploring the Impact of Anesthesia on the Elderly

A pioneering study now underway at the Mount Sinai Health System’s Translational and Molecular Imaging Institute is exploring why older patients often wake up from surgery disoriented and some experience cognitive deficits several months later. The study is being led by Jeffrey Silverstein, MD, Professor and Vice Chair for Research in the Department of Anesthesiology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, with $3.1 million in funding from the National Institute on Aging.

Researchers from Mount Sinai and the Yale School of Medicine will use cognitive tests and Mount Sinai’s state-of-the-art imaging technology to examine the effects of two commonly used anesthesia drugs, propofol and sevoflurane, on 76 volunteers ages 40 to 80. The researchers will look at cognition and physiological changes that may be brought about by anesthesia. They will also determine whether inflammation from surgery—not the anesthesia drugs—causes cognitive impairment.

“We see it all the time, the patient looks normal after surgery, but 45 minutes later he doesn’t remember anything. Most recover very quickly, but some still have cognitive problems months after their surgery,” says Dr. Silverstein.

About 10 to 15 percent of elderly patients experience decreased cognitive function, including loss of memory and problem-solving, three months after surgery.

The researchers, comprised of anesthesiologists, psychologists, radiologists, and bioengineers, also will explore predictive signs to learn which individuals will experience cognitive impairment post-surgery, and for how long.

Families will benefit from the study, as well, by learning prior to surgery whether their family member would not be able to work for a period of time, and would need help at home during recovery.

Cheuk Y. Tang, PhD, Associate Professor of Radiology, and Psychiatry, at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and a lead investigator in the study, says the research will utilize the best-in-class technology housed at the Translational and Molecular Imaging Institute. “Mount Sinai is the best place to do this important project,” says Dr. Tang.

Such predictions may result in doctors keeping certain patients in the hospital for a longer period to recuperate.
Become a Blood Donor

The Mount Sinai Hospital is hosting a blood drive. To make an appointment, contact Nelson Arencibia at nelson.arencibia@mountsinai.org, or 212-241-4601, or Annette Aiken at annette.aiken@mountsinai.org, or 212-241-6445. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Monday, October 27
10 am - 6 pm
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Annenberg West Lobby

Grand Rounds
Cardiology
Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH, Dean, Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy, Tufts University, presents “Nutrition and Cardiovascular Disease.”

Wednesday, October 22
8 – 9 am
Mount Sinai St. Luke’s Muhlenberg Auditorium

Grand Rounds
Medical Education
David Muller, MD, Dean, Medical Education, presents “Diversity, Innovation, Progress: Why We Should Care Deeply about Pre-Medical Preparation.”

Wednesday, October 22
Noon – 1 pm
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Hess Center, 9-101

Grand Rounds
Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine
Jeremy Boal, MD, Chief Medical Officer, presents “If Not Now, When? The Opportunity for Geriatrics and Palliative Care in Our Evolving Health Care Landscape.”

Thursday, October 23
5 – 6 pm
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Hess Center, Davis Auditorium

Grand Rounds
Critical Care
Irene P. Osborn, MD, Director, Division of Neuroanesthesia, presents “Advanced Technologies and Training in Airway Management.”

Wednesday, October 15
3 pm
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Hess Center, Davis Auditorium

An Evening of Music and Healing

included cocktails, and a silent auction to benefit the Center’s clinical programs for adults and children.

The Louis and Lucille Armstrong Music Therapy Department at Mount Sinai Beth Israel, established nearly two decades ago as part of the jazz legend’s legacy, was the foundation for the expanded programs of the Louis Armstrong Center for Music and Medicine, created in 2005. The Center’s team treats patients using the most current music psychotherapy techniques in areas such as meditation, pain management, sedation, and breathing modalities.

This year’s award recipients were:

Jon Batiste, a gifted musician and entertainer whose music spans several genres including jazz, blues, pop, rock, soul, R&B, funk, hip-hop, and classical.

Ann-Marie Dassler, NP, RN, and Aimee Telsey, MD, who collaborated with the Armstrong Center’s Director, Joanne Loewy, DA, MT-BC, LCAT, on a study on music therapy in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), published in the April 2014 issue of Pediatrics. Ms. Dassler is a nurse practitioner who has worked in Mount Sinai Beth Israel’s NICU since 1994. Dr. Telsey is the Associate Director, Division of Newborn Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics at Mount Sinai Beth Israel, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Gweneviere Mann, a musician and patient who has participated in the Armstrong Center’s music therapy clinic since 2012.