Honoring Accomplishments at Commencement 2016

A former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, an influential immunologist, a renowned rheumatologist, and a distinguished social epidemiologist were honored at the 47th annual Commencement of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, held Friday, May 13, at David Geffen Hall, Lincoln Center.

The Icahn School of Medicine granted a total of 120 MDs, 37 PhDs, and 22 dual degrees. Two days earlier, the School of Medicine conferred 148 master’s degrees (see the story below). Kathleen Sebelius, MPA, Chief Executive Officer of Sebelius Resources LLC, delivered the commencement address to more than 3,000 faculty, staff, graduates, and their families and friends who filled the hall.

Ms. Sebelius also received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree for her instrumental role in implementing the Affordable Care Act, which provides millions of Americans with access to quality and affordable health care. In her remarks, she described the difficult decisions and risks she took that eventually led to her appointment as the 21st Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

“The opportunity to succeed won’t ever be harnessed unless you take a leap,” said Ms. Sebelius. “You have to give yourself

Inaugural Commencement for Master’s Degrees

The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences—in recognition of the enormous growth and importance of its master’s programs—hosted its Inaugural Master’s Commencement ceremony Wednesday, May 11, at David Geffen Hall in Lincoln Center. It was the first time that the conferring of MS degrees was not combined with the MD, PhD, and MD/PhD Commencement.

The presentation of degree candidates was led by Marta Filizola, PhD, newly appointed Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. Dr. Filizola, an expert in computational biophysics, is also Professor of Structural and Chemical Biology.

Addressing a jubilant crowd of graduates, their families and friends, and Mount Sinai faculty and staff, Dr. Filizola said: “The world-class faculty and staff who have put so much time and effort into teaching and mentoring you to make you stronger and more competitive professionals are also exceedingly proud of what you have achieved. We are all here today to celebrate and to reward your hard work and dedication. It is a great honor

continued on page 2

continued on page 3
permission to try and find stretch goals, to find mentors, and to follow a path. You are joining a handful of the best-educated people in the world. So you have a big responsibility to go forth, to do good work, to make a positive difference each and every day—and to give yourself permission to take some risks along the way. Even if you don’t know what’s behind the door, kick it open, because you are capable and you have the opportunity.”

Honorary degrees also were awarded to:

• **James P. Allison, PhD**, Professor and Chair, Department of Immunology, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and the recipient of the 2015 Lasker-DeBakey Clinical Medical Research Award, who received an honorary Doctor of Science degree for his pioneering research on T-cell regulation, which led to the development of the first drug to improve survival rates for patients with metastatic melanoma.

• **Sir Marc Feldmann, MBBS, PhD, AC, FRS**, Emeritus Professor, Kennedy Institute of Rheumatology, University of Oxford, and the recipient of the 2003 Albert Lasker Clinical Medical Research Award, who received an honorary Doctor of Science degree for discovering a groundbreaking new treatment for rheumatoid arthritis that has improved the quality of life for millions of patients around the world.

• **Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, PhD, MPH**, President, American Public Health Association, and Senior Fellow, Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Cardiovascular Research Institute, Morehouse School of Medicine, who received an honorary Doctor of Science degree for tirelessly examining the roles of racism and other systems of social inequity on health outcomes and advocating for systemic changes to assure the conditions for optimal health for all people.

Addressing the class on its many accomplishments, 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, said, “The graduates of the Class of 2016 have the creativity and intelligence to discover cures for our most serious diseases, and I am sure they have the motivation to develop and participate in new models of health care designed to reduce inequities of the underserved.” He added: “I ask you to join your alma mater in making a commitment to embrace diversity as it relates to medical education, scientific research, and the delivery of clinical care. There is growing evidence that this is the key to breakthrough science. When science is inclusive, everybody wins. Long underserved communities are finally heard and helped. I want you to lead the charge as advocates and activists to eliminate bias and health inequities in your local communities and around the world.”

Kenneth L. Davis, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mount Sinai Health System, likened today’s advances in biological science to the revolution in physics some 100 years ago that dramatically changed our understanding of the world and led to great scientific achievements. “You’re entering the medical profession during a time of revolution in biology, which is giving us unprecedented insight into many diseases,” he said. “This insight will change the world in ways that none of us can yet imagine. This is an exciting time to enter into the practice of medicine. You will be part of a golden era of biological science that’s going to have enormous benefits. In your lifetimes, our ability to treat the most devastating diseases will be utterly transformed.”

Peter W. May, Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, told graduates: “You are stepping into roles as leaders at the forefront of health care, and you could not be doing so at a more profoundly exciting moment. The promise of genomics and bioinformatics will bear fruit over the next decade. And while there may be growing pains as our health care system grapples with the transition to a population health paradigm, in the long run our patients and communities will be healthier and better cared for. I encourage you to seize these opportunities. You need only harness the creativity and compassion that you have honed during your training here at Mount Sinai.”
for me to grant my very first master's degrees to such an exceptional class as yours.”

A total of 148 master’s degrees were awarded in Biomedical Sciences, Biostatistics, Clinical Research, Genetic Counseling, Health Care Delivery Leadership, and Public Health. Two programs—the Master of Science in Biostatistics and the Master of Science in Health Care Delivery Leadership—graduated their first cohorts of students.

“By choosing a health-related profession, you have the training and ability to do something valuable, something that truly matters to society,” Eric J. Nestler, MD, PhD, Dean for Academic and Scientific Affairs, told the graduates. “We may all work in different parts of the biomedical world and use our skills and talents to attack problems from very different perspectives, but one thing that we have in common is that we are all integral parts of the health care system,” Dr. Nestler also serves as Nash Family Professor and Chair, Fishberg Department of Neuroscience, and Director of The Friedman Brain Institute.

Laurie Ann Garrett, Senior Fellow for Global Health, Council on Foreign Relations, an expert in emerging and re-emerging diseases, bioterrorism, and public health and their effects on foreign policy and national security, and who, as a distinguished journalist, has reported from the front lines on several dozen health epidemics around the globe, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. In conferring the degree, 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, recognized Ms. Garrett’s “clear and thoughtful examination of the greatest health challenges of our time, and her indelible influence on the craft of science journalism.”

Ms. Garrett, who also delivered the commencement address, cited encouraging global statistics for malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV-AIDS, and noted an overall significant drop in the death rate of children under 5 years of age. “So, let’s keep going,” she told graduates who plan to serve the global community. “Get out there and join the worldwide army of public health advocates. Go forth and save lives.”
Around the Health System

Several hundred Mount Sinai Health System employees laced up their sneakers and participated in a number of 30-minute, lunchtime walks in their hospital campus communities on Thursday, April 7, National Walking Day, to raise awareness of the benefits of walking for cardiovascular health. Sponsored by the American Heart Association,

David C. Thomas, MD, Professor of Medicine (Internal Medicine), Medical Education, and Rehabilitation Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, recently received a 2016 OTTY (Our Town Thanks You) Award from Our Town, a local newspaper serving the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The OTTY Awards honor individuals who perform outstanding community service.

Dr. Thomas is Co-founder and Medical Director of the East Harlem Health Outreach Partnership, a free clinic for uninsured patients run by Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai students. He recently was elected Chair of the Mount Sinai Community Advisory Board, which was formed in 1979 as a Boards of Trustees committee.

Leadership and Staff Celebrate National Walking Day

National Walking Day calls on all individuals, communities, and workplaces to help in the fight against heart disease by increasing and encouraging physical activity. “Walking at lunchtime is an easy way to fit daily exercise into your busy life,” says Beth Oliver, DNP, RN, Senior Vice President of Cardiac Services for the Mount Sinai Health System.

Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Screenings

Nearly 300 visitors and staff received free mouth and throat screenings at Mount Sinai Beth Israel and The Mount Sinai Hospital during Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month in April. Free educational material about oropharyngeal cancer and its association with the human papillomavirus (HPV)—which accounts for nearly 85 percent of new cases—also was available at both campuses. “Patients who have oropharyngeal cancer caused by HPV and receive timely treatment have better survival rates than those who don’t act quickly,” says Brett Miles, MD, DDS, Associate Professor of Otolaryngology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Head and Neck Surgeon at the Head and Neck Institute. Other risk factors for oral cancer include alcohol and tobacco use.
More than 1,300 leaders, staff, supporters, and friends of the Mount Sinai Health System celebrated a year of growth and significant milestones at the 31st annual Crystal Party on Thursday, May 5. Under a festively adorned tent in the Central Park Conservatory Garden, the guests enjoyed cocktails, dinner, dancing, and socializing.

This year’s celebration, chaired by Mount Sinai Trustee Glenn August and his wife, Debbie, raised $4.2 million. Other members of the event’s leadership included Doctor Chairs: Tania and Ahron L. Friedberg, MD; Cindie and Donald Kastenbaum, MD; Mamta and Ash Tewari, MD; Alice M. and George J. Todd, MD; as well as Friends of Mount Sinai Chair, Jonathan R. Dixon.

Peter W. May, Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, welcomed guests, noting the Health System's broad reach and impact on the people of New York City. “This gathering is symbolic in that it represents and celebrates both the past and the future of our Health System—ever-evolving, embracing change, working together to advance our mission to improve human health,” he said. “The Mount Sinai Health System serves a vast, highly diverse patient population and delivers care in almost every neighborhood in our city through 500 clinical locations. I hope our celebration has energized our faculty, staff, trustees, community members, and patients about our path forward.”

Kenneth L. Davis, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer, Mount Sinai Health System, spotlighted outstanding achievements and thanked the trustees for their dedication and support. “We continue to thrive and make major advances in numerous areas, including the hard work of moving our health care delivery from fee-for-service medicine to value and population health,” Dr. Davis said. “We have made extraordinary advances in patient care, research, and strategic partnerships, and we will continue to make these advances in the months and years to come. Much of the credit for our success goes to our exceptional group of visionary trustees, who almost ten years ago formulated a strategic plan for the growth of our science, and then generously supported that plan.”
Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad, a nurse at The Roosevelt Hospital from 1887-1904—now Mount Sinai West—is scheduled to be canonized as a Catholic saint by Pope Francis at a Mass on Sunday, June 5. Originally from Sweden, Ms. Hesselblad came to the United States at the age of 17 to care for the sick at the former Roosevelt Hospital. She later converted to Catholicism and revived the Order of St. Bridget of Sweden, whose mission was to unify all Christians. She died in Rome in 1957.

**Seventh Annual Resident and Fellow Research Day**

Residents and clinical fellows from the Mount Sinai Health System and affiliate hospitals will be presenting more than 200 research projects. All faculty, staff, and students are invited. For more information, email julia.fiore@mssm.edu.

Friday, June 3
9:30 – 11:15 am (Oral Presentations)
The Mount Sinai Hospital Campus
Hatch Auditorium

11:30 am – 2:30 pm (Poster Presentations)
Guggenheim Atrium