

CLASS NOTES

'40s

Eugene Cutuly, MD '47, the son of an Italian emigrant shoemaker, continues to practice at the age of 91. Cutuly was accepted to the School of Medicine in 1930, but, lacking money for tuition, chose instead to pursue a master's in experimental morphology because of the accompanying assistantship in Pitt's Department of Zoology. He would finally attend Pitt's medical school years later, in 1946, after earning a PhD in anatomy and completing his first three years of medical school at what was then called Wayne University in Detroit, Michigan. After graduation he started a general practice in Clairton, Pennsylvania, where he still makes house calls today.

'50s

Robert Berk, MD '55, is a professor emeritus and gastrointestinal radiologist at the University of California, San Diego. His research improved X rays of gall bladders prior to ultrasound. Berk also helped start one of the first magnetic resonance imaging facilities in California, which is named in his honor. He was the 1986 recipient of Pitt's Hench Distinguished Alumnus Award.

'60s

Barry Berkey, MD '61, has retired from psychiatry and is an environmental health consultant in Fairfax, Virginia. He teaches a writing workshop at George Mason University's Learning in Retirement Institute. Most recently Berkey published an article in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* about his brother Floyd Berkey's six-year-long coma and subsequent death. Floyd Berkey graduated with a BA from Pitt in 1949.

James Kushner, MD '62, is a professor at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and director of the university's General Clinical Research Center. Kushner recently published in *Nature* "Physiology: Mining the Genome for Iron."



The Owl, 1963

Anne Little Wedemeyer, MD '62, a pediatric cardiologist, learned the Tibetan language in 1996 for the express purpose of giving the dedication for the grand opening of Katsel clinic in Tibet, which she secured the funds to build. She retired a year later to start the Kathmandu Children's Heart Project at the Kanti Children's Hospital, the only children's hospital in Nepal. She estimates some 500,000 Nepalese children have rheumatic or congenital heart disease and that the rheumatic cases could have been prevented through access to basic health care. Wedemeyer spends a few months each year in Nepal training physicians and treating thousands of children.

Robert Hardesty, MD '66, realized medicine was meshing with the business world. So he took night classes at the Katz Graduate School of Business at Pitt, completing his MBA in 2000. Now the heart surgeon and Pitt professor is hitting the books again—to earn a master's in information systems. "Up until a few years ago, I used the monitor on my computer for stickies," he says. He is convinced technology improves patient care.

Philip Raskin, MD '66, is director of the University Diabetes Treatment Center and Diabetes Outpatient Clinic at Parkland Memorial Hospital. He is a professor of internal medicine at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. Raskin and his staff helped develop many new diabetes treatments including the insulin pump.

'70s

Barbara Weiser, MD '75, codirector of the HIV Research Laboratory at the Wadsworth Center in Albany, New York, discovered that combination antiretroviral treatments change not only the quantity but also the quality of HIV, contributing to the success of therapy. The center also is developing a test to measure the characteristics of the virus in a person's system. Says Weiser: "This is good news because it opens up a new area of monitoring . . . . We can watch the progress of the virus and the effects of the treatment."

REWARDING VISITS | MILLER IN MYANMAR

BY MEGHAN HOLOHAN

The chief of cardiology at Yagon General Hospital approached Michael Miller, MD '85, with a problem: A patient needed angioplasty. Her health was deteriorating. She was on a ventilator. Miller told the doctor they should perform the procedure together. The doctor protested, fearing culpability. If the patient, the mother-in-law of an important government official, died, the government could shut down the first cardiac catheterization lab in Myanmar (formerly Burma). Miller reluctantly performed the operation alone.

The next evening, as Miller dined with colleagues, a convoy of government cars raced toward the restaurant. Miller, realizing they had arrived on his account, anxiously waited as several military officers headed toward his table. Perhaps the patient had died; perhaps his own health was now in danger. Instead the officers presented Miller with a jewel-encrusted painting, a reward for helping the official's mother-in-law survive.

Miller, an associate professor of medicine at East Carolina University, in Greenville, North Carolina, spent January in Myanmar as a visiting cardiologist with the World Health Organization. "The only reason I would consider something like this is because of my experience in Nigeria in medical school at Pitt," Miller says. He points out how that trip's success made it easier for him to put his life in the States on hold again this year.

'80s

Paul F. Worley, MD '80, professor of neuroscience and neurology at Johns Hopkins University, in Baltimore, Maryland, is working to identify the molecular mechanisms of neuronal plasticity in relation to protein synthesis. His last paper in *Nature* suggests that a protein known as Homer may have a role in long-term memory.

Edward Giovannucci, MD '84, is associate professor of medicine, nutrition, and epidemiology at Harvard University. Giovannucci's research at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, focuses on how nutritional, hormonal, and genetic factors relate to malignancies such as prostate and colorectal cancer. Giovannucci's recent work shows that carcinogens from tobacco that reach the colorectal mucosa through either the digestive tract or the circulatory system increase colorectal cancer risk.

Robert D. Dowling, MD '85, (General Surgery Resident '88, Cardiothoracic Surgery Fellow '89, General Surgery Chief Resident '91, Cardiothoracic Surgery Resident '93, Cardiothoracic Surgery Chief Resident '94) performed the first self-contained artificial heart implant at Jewish Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky. He credits Hank Bahnson, Bartley Griffith, and Thomas Starzl with reinforcing his budding interests in surgery as a career: "There was so much depth to what they were doing." Dowling recalled for the *New York Times* the first time he participated in a heart transplant. Pitt doctors cut out the heart, revealing an empty chest: "It was the most unbelievable, neatest, coolest, mind-boggling thing I had ever seen."





Miller went abroad this year teaching cardiologists to perform angioplasties.

Theresa Guise, MD '85, is an associate professor of endocrinology and an attending physician at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where she is researching the effects of cancer on the skeletal system. She recently received the Fuller Albright Award, which recognizes outstanding bone researchers under the age of 41.

'90s

Margalit Rosenkranz, MD '98, has started a three-year fellowship at the Cornell University—Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City where she is researching pediatric rheumatology and immunology. *—SD and MH*



THE WAY WE ARE

BY EDWARD HUMES

THE CLASS OF '51 accepted World War II; they'll tell you they saw it as their responsibility. So their college-age years were spent fighting some of the world's worst battles.

Everything else was put on hold, including, of course, medical school. "We were practically all veterans of World War II," says Edward Farrell, MD '51, a quartermaster on a Navy ship carrying troops and equipment to the beaches of the South Pacific during three invasions.

On the other side of the world, John Bucur, MD '51, operated intelligence equipment during almost every major battle in Europe, often from behind German lines. His unit pinpointed enemy guns by calculating the distance by their sounds, then relayed the coordinates to awaiting American artillery. "We just devastated them," Bucur says.

Stanley Hendry, MD '51, treated the wounded. A combat medic, he went into battle armed with saddlebags stuffed with bandages and morphine syringes. When the fighting subsided, he would help carry the wounded out on stretchers, treating them in makeshift infirmaries. During some nights, a dizzying stream of soldiers staggered into the battalion hospital.

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M-200K Scaife Hall
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15261
tel (412) 648-9090; fax (412) 648-9500
medalum@medschool.pitt.edu



Class of '51 reunion attendees. Back row: William Pitts, John Bucur, Herbert Pontzer, Alonzo Weigel. Front row: Lester Bolanovich, Joseph Mazza, Stanley Hendry, Melvin Kasten.

But Hendry didn't mind staying busy. "It was when the lulls came around that you got the jitters," he said.

Like nearly 70,000 other American veterans who eventually became physicians, some 75 percent of the Class of '51 attended Pitt through the GI Bill. While in medical school many started families—Farrell's first daughter was born while he was a junior.

Hendry practiced internal medicine in Pittsburgh, and Bucur was the chief of neurosurgery at three northern Virginia hospitals; both retired in 1994. Farrell sold his family practice seven years ago, but he still sees patients in Pittsburgh area nursing homes. Bucur and Hendry both attended their 50th class reunion last May. Farrell missed the event, celebrating instead the 25th wedding anniversary of his first daughter—who, like her father, became an MD.



Alumni and their families gathered in Cleveland, Ohio, for the Blossom Festival in August. (Shown here: Carl Groppe, MD '60, Mary Jo Groppe, Martha Dixon Nelson, MD '56, and Roger Nelson.)

ROBERT BRAGDON: ON TRACK WITH THE MAA

BY EDWARD HUMES



Bragdon

Robert Bragdon, MD '73, began college in the 1960s amid the flash of antiwar demonstrations. Yet the studious Bragdon never felt the lure of social upheaval while attending Mt. Union College in Alliance, Ohio. After recently being elected president of the University of Pittsburgh's Medical Alumni Association (MAA), he shared memories of those school days.

His father, Floyd Bragdon, MD '31, a prominent neurosurgeon and a clinical professor at Pitt's School of Medicine, had made it clear. The young man would have to prove himself as an undergraduate in order to get into the medical school. Bragdon heard him loud and clear.

After his freshman year, Bragdon traveled to Europe with his father, who was presenting a paper at a conference. During that trip, Floyd Bragdon suffered a fatal heart attack. Bragdon returned to Mt. Union the next fall, shaken but determined. He studied harder. He began to spend his summers assisting his father's colleagues at Mercy Hospital. He finished his undergraduate work a semester early.



Bragdon keeps this photo of Pitt's original plastic surgery faculty in his office.

Then Bragdon attended medical school at Pitt: "I think I was one of the few guys who owned a tie." His focus occasionally waned, his thoughts slipping to his father or the Vietnam War. Those who knew and admired his father encouraged him to stay focused. "That was very important, especially in a time when there were so many free spirits," says Bragdon, now a prominent Pittsburgh plastic surgeon. Such lessons no doubt will help him keep the MAA on track.

IN MEMORIAM

'40s

WILLIAM JOHN WINTER (MD '42)
JULY 9, 2001

HOWARD T. LEWIS JR. (MD '43)
AUGUST 1, 2001

FRANK R. McGEORGE (MD '44)
JUNE 21, 2001

DAVID STANLEY PUGH (MD '44)
MAY 31, 2001

CHARLES R. FREEBLE JR. (MD '45)
MAY 23, 2001

J. KENNETH HOOTMAN (MD '47)
JULY 17, 2001

LYNDON HOLT LANDON JR. (MD '47)
FEBRUARY 19, 2001

'50s

NORMAN E. SCOTT (MD '54)
JULY 25, 2001

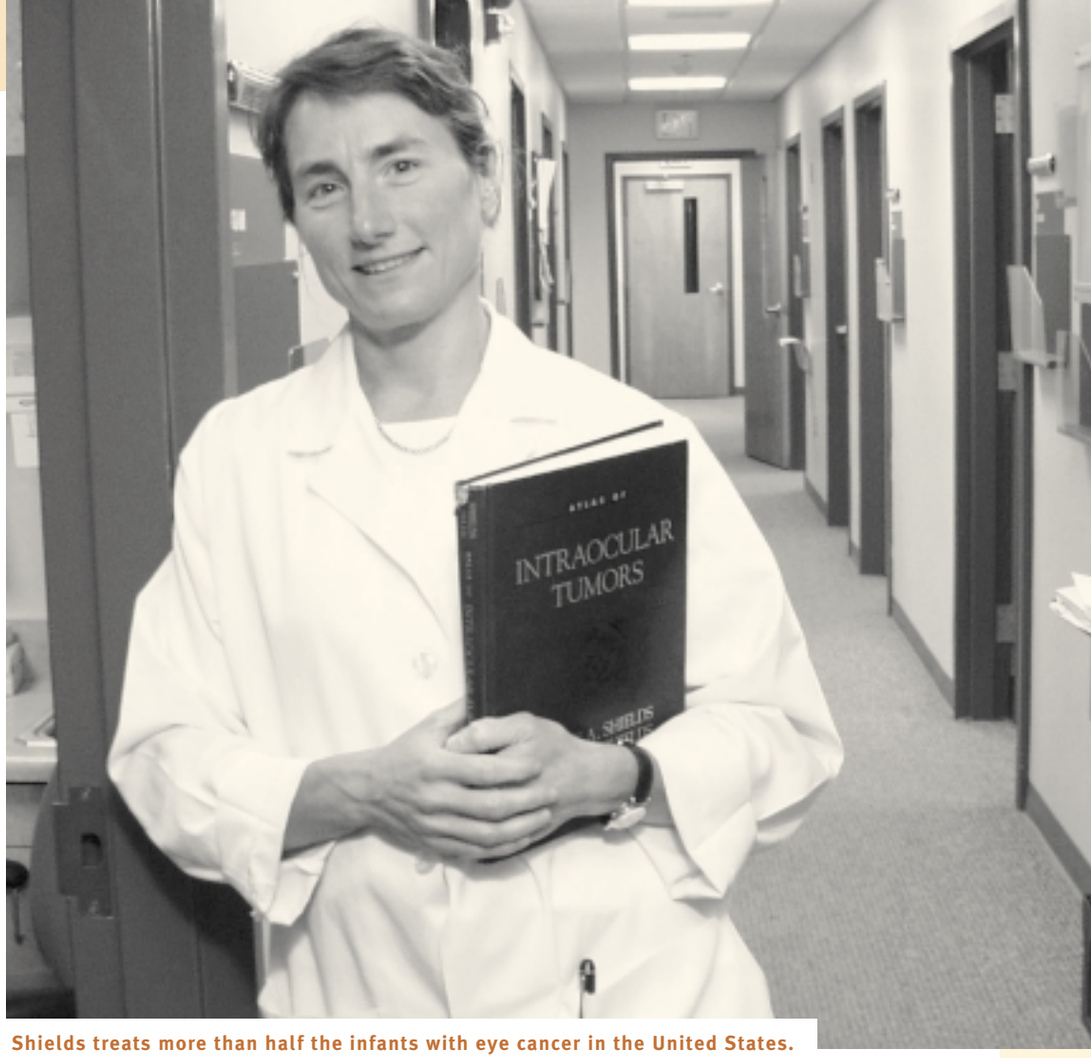
JOHN L. CAMPBELL (MD '59)
JUNE 26, 2000

'70s

RICHARD N. HARRIS (MD '74)
MAY 12, 2001

CAROL SHIELDS: EXPLORES BLACK SILENCES

BY JENNIFER ANDREWS



Shields treats more than half the infants with eye cancer in the United States.

One might assume that Carol Shields, MD '83, could afford to leave little to chance. She has seven children as well as a premier ocular oncology practice that has her attending to patients three times a week, performing surgery three other, and putting out reams of publications that are considered trusted references. Yet she has found it wise at times to have faith in serendipity. Even a simple piece of paper can be a turning point, she'll tell you. One such leaf, tacked to a dormitory wall at the University of Notre Dame, read: Women's Basketball Team Tryouts.

"That eight by eleven announcement made a whole difference in my life—on all levels," says Shields. "Being on the team gave me confidence, inspired me to trust myself so I could extend myself . . . know I could do anything."

In the '70s Shields turned the "ball club" at Notre Dame into a varsity sport, then became its captain her senior year. She was the first woman at that university to receive the Byron Kanaley Award, which is given to a varsity athlete for excellence in academics. As an MD, she has been recognized as one of Philadelphia's "Top Docs" in *Philadelphia Magazine* for four years running, though her reputation is by no means confined to one metro area. Along with her husband, Jerry Shields, she runs the oncology department at Wills Eye Hospital and a practice that regularly gets referrals nationally for eye cancer treatments.

Cancers of the eye caught her imagination when she was a resident on call in the emergency department at Wills. Shields got her share of eye trauma that evening. One patient had a knife wound; another, a torn retina—from the blunt force of a fist. Still waiting was a woman who couldn't see from one eye. Had she lost a contact? By the time Shields examined her, the night had grown late. Shields breathed deeply, then dilated the eye:

"When I looked in the back of the right eye there was silence. Just black silence. Under her retina there was a large melanoma. She hadn't lost her contact; she had a tumor."

The next day, Shields was part of a team of doctors who, along with the woman, decided to remove the eye. A month later, while on pathology rotation, Shields was asked to examine a specimen—it was that very same eye.

"That experience gave me a real feel for cancer of the eye—what it can do, what I could do."

"I went through the whole process with this one woman, from initial diagnosis to treatment to pathology, and, finally, with her as a patient whose life I followed until she died," says Shields. "That experience gave me a real feel for cancer of the eye—what it can do, what I could do."

Because of a desire to help children and "focus on one thing and excel in it," Shields now treats more than half of the infants with eye cancer in the United States.

The eye care community has come to rely on the expertise of Carol and Jerry Shields to, in a sense, fill in those black silences—to advise them about tumors that most ophthalmologists come across only once or twice in their careers.

"Their combined clinical experience is unparalleled," Michael Gorin, chair of ophthalmology at Pitt notes. "They consistently have been major contributors to multicenter trials and are able to offer personal experience that allows them to really appreciate the nuances and variations within each case.

"Dr. Carol Shields, in particular, is beloved by the families and patients she guides through these very frightening times—times in which vision, appearance, and lives are at stake," continues Gorin. "The trust that she builds is no less therapeutic than the treatments that she administers in the operating room or through radiation or chemotherapy."

Each night Shields and her husband are home for dinner at six. Later, when it is quiet and still, she gathers her children in a circle, pulls out a book or talks about one of their soccer or basketball games. Here is a place to muse on the magic waiting to happen around the corner, about believing they can do anything. ■