

Katherine Lane (MD '20) won
the Matthew Eric Piraino Award.



Personal. Powerful.

The last two years before Beth Piraino's son, Matthew Piraino, died from complications of an immunodeficiency, he was in and out of the hospital with brutal, snowballing infections. In 2009, he died at age 28.

"It was a hard thing to accept," Beth Piraino says.

So that her son's memory would endure, she established the Matthew Eric Piraino Award for Excellence in Infectious Diseases. Its recipients, students who have shown excellence in this area, are selected by members of Pitt's Division of Infectious Diseases—many of whom provided care to Matthew. Katherine Lane (MD '20), now a UPMC internal medicine resident, is a recent awardee. Her studies have already contributed to understanding barriers to screening teens for STDs.

Piraino (Res '80, Fel '82) is a Pitt professor of medicine and associate dean of admissions and financial aid. Again and again through the years, Pitt Med has benefited from her generous spirit. She established another endowment within her own specialty, nephrology; that fund is named for her beloved Pitt mentor Jules B. Puschett. She and Vice Dean Ann Thompson also recently mobilized several faculty to join them in contributing to an emergency fund for students during the pandemic.

And this summer, the passions of the students so inspired her that she reached out to Michelle Kenney. Kenney is the mother of Antwon Rose II, an African American Pittsburgh teen who was fatally shot by a police officer in 2018. The two moms related over their profound losses.

"She's such a lovely person, dealing so gracefully with her grief," Piraino says. Kenney agreed to Piraino's proposal: that a new award recognizing student commitment to social justice would be named for Antwon.

"The students mean a lot to me. I've been here at this medical school for my whole career," Piraino says. Helping our next generation of doctors, she adds, "that's something everyone should be interested in."



Beth Piraino

To make a gift, contact Jen Gabler: 412-802-8317, jag188@pitt.edu, Giveto.pitt.edu