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CELEBRATED WVSOM’S 7TH PRESIDENT
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I can’t believe that it has been almost one full year since I officially began serving as the president of WVSOM. Time sure does fly when you’re having fun! I’m so excited about all that we have accomplished in this inaugural year, including last fall’s presidential installation ceremony. Celebrations like the installation fill my heart with joy, and I was truly touched by the support I received during that event.

The theme of this magazine focuses on the installation ceremony and the response we have received from the “Living Our Mission” campaign that we introduced in September. In case you’ve forgotten, the campaign encourages students, faculty, staff and alumni to involve themselves in community service projects and share the work they are doing throughout the local area and state. We have enjoyed hearing your stories and seeing photos of the great services you are providing. A few of the pages in the feature show photos we’ve taken and received so far. Keep them coming!

The feature story also includes a question-and-answer session where I evaluate my time as president to this point and share my plans and goals for the remainder of 2019. My hope is that our readers gain a sense of all the great work we have done and the anticipation of what is to come.

Other stories in this issue highlight the many events our school hosts for the community, fundraising efforts among students and national recognition. One story recaps our White Coat and Convocation event; another features our first-ever faculty and student Sim Wars; two stories highlight our national recognition as a “Great College to Work For” by The Chronicle of Higher Education and our primary care listing by U.S. News & World Report. There are news stories about the Grand Affair, an Emmy award for our TV show Abracadabra, the Heart of the Holidays and events that raised money for medical service trips. Then, of course, we feature alumni, research and a business that has been a consistent financial supporter of WVSOM.

For such a small school, there is always so much to celebrate. Pretty soon, we will celebrate our Class of 2019 graduates and a new group of physicians will be ready to provide patient care to the residents of West Virginia and beyond. Graduation is always such an exciting time.

July will mark one year I’ve spent as WVSOM’s president. I hope that you have witnessed growth since I have begun leading this incredible school. I also hope that you are just as enthusiastic as I am to embrace what’s to come. We don’t need an installation ceremony to be thankful for all we accomplish at WVSOM, but it sure is fun to celebrate when we can. Let’s continue to live our mission and be thankful we are part of an amazing community.

James W. Nemitz, Ph.D.
Installation ceremony celebrated James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., as WVSOM’s 7th President

A huge celebration took place on the WVSOM campus during the installation ceremony of James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., the school’s seventh president.
The installation, which took place Sept. 28, 2018, is an official recognition of the school's change in presidents and marks a new beginning for the institution. The formal ceremony included words of support from WVSOM Board of Governors Chairman Charles Davis, D.O., and Alumni Association President Robert Olexo, D.O. Music was provided by the Greenbrier Valley Chorale and the Greenbrier Academy for Girls.

“It’s been an honor for me to take part in this selection process and see its completion with Dr. Nemitz as the seventh president,” Davis said. “The office of president and the word ‘honor’ just feel right in the same sentence. It’s an honor to hold a position of power, leadership and responsibility. I have no doubt that Dr. Nemitz will keep the honor and integrity of this great institution.”

Nemitz said he is humbled and filled with gratitude to serve as WVSOM’s president. He thanked his parents for being such an integral part of shaping his values and ultimately his passion for the school.

“There’s something special about people who are good parents, who raise their kids and let them go and become what they’re supposed to be. My parents did that. They gave me my work ethic and gave me my values,” Nemitz said during the formal installation.

The ceremony focused on celebrating three main themes that included “honoring our heritage, living our mission and engaging our future.” WVSOM was founded on modest beginnings, but has risen to national prominence due to the dedicated hard work of many. The new president reiterated the importance of the past while also looking toward the future.

Nemitz explained the “Living Our Mission” initiative that encourages students, faculty, staff and alumni to immerse themselves in community service projects and share the work they are doing throughout the local area and state.

“We are a public institution and we are here to serve this great state and take care of the citizens of West Virginia. We have to live our mission every day. Many of our alumni are going back to their communities and serving others. We should be taking care of our neighbors, communities and recognizing the diversity and differences of opinion. We need to celebrate those differences and care for our communities,” he said.
“Living Our Mission” bandanas were given to all guests in order to highlight the sense of service among the WVSOM community.

“These are a symbol of what I’m going to challenge you with — to go out there and do something for somebody else,” Nemitz said.

“I want to inaugurate a year of community service. So go out there and do something for your community.”

The informal celebration that followed included music by the Ramp Supper Band and RiverJam Band, dancing and a West Virginia-focused dinner menu that paid homage to Mrs. Gwen Clingman, owner of the former Clingman’s restaurant in downtown Lewisburg. The early business of WVSOM was often conducted in her restaurant, and she is credited by many for providing nourishment of the body and soul to many students and their families over the years. WVSOM continues Mrs. Clingman’s legacy through the Gwen Clingman Scholarship award for a graduating student who has demonstrated a commitment to serve people and classmates unselfishly and humbly through community service.

Born and raised in New York City, Nemitz considers himself a West Virginian. He has strong family ties to the Greenbrier Valley, where he has resided for more than 30 years. He previously served for eight years as WVSOM’s vice president for administration and external relations, where he was integrally involved in accreditation, governmental relations, strategic planning and policymaking. Nemitz is a tenured professor of anatomy, having taught students from 29 classes. He served as the associate dean for preclinical education, overseeing the program from 2004 to 2010. Prior to that, he was the gross anatomy course coordinator, director of the Office of Rural Recruitment and Retention, faculty representative to the WVSOM Board of Advisors and Board of Governors, and chaired the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission’s Advisory Council of Faculty. Nemitz has received numerous awards throughout his career, including West Virginia Professor of the Year (1999), the American Osteopathic Foundation’s Educator of the Year (2002) and the George W. Northup, D.O. Distinguished Service Award for Excellence in Osteopathic Education (2005).
Ever since WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., introduced the “Living Our Mission” campaign to the WVSOM community during the presidential installation, he has continued to encourage students, faculty, staff and alumni to involve themselves in community service projects and share the work they are doing throughout the local area and state.

The initiative began with the distribution of green “Living Our Mission” bandanas that symbolize the school’s commitment to serving others. Individuals have used the bandanas in photographs that highlight a sense of service among the WVSOM community — whether at school events that benefit local organizations, alumni fundraisers throughout the state, or service work by students and faculty.

The campaign has been promoted on WVSOM’s social media platforms with the #WVSOMLivingOurMission hashtag and has been recognized at the national level. The WVSOM Marketing and Communications Department was recognized with a silver award for the social media campaign through the 34th annual Educational Advertising Awards, sponsored by the Higher Education Marketing Report.

Nemitz has made his way across the state to promote the campaign. He has visited alumni and students in the school’s Statewide Campus system to remind them not only to be involved but to share how they are impacting communities.

In February, the campaign was given a new twist when staff and other members of the school’s community celebrated “Loving Our Mission” Week. The week featured a “Labor of Love” event where employees filled goodie bags and signed notes of encouragement that were given to students; a session on yoga and relaxation at work; a blood drive; Apprentice Day for high school students; and a session about mindfulness and self-care. The week served as a time for students, faculty, staff and alumni to come together to care for themselves and for those in need.

These snapshots show how the WVSOM community has supported the campaign so far. Don’t forget to share photos of the work taking place in communities across the globe.

CULTURAL INTEGRATION COMMITTEE

Students in WVSOM’s Cultural Integration Committee took part in a GoGlobal-Interact event at Greenbrier East High School. The event helped raise awareness of diversity and encouraged high school students to ask about diversity in the medical field, medical service trips and how to apply for medical school. Gov. Jim Justice was in attendance and thanked the WVSOM students for participating.

CANNED FOOD DRIVE FOR LOCAL PANTRIES

WVSOM staff hosted a canned food and essentials drive with collected items distributed to area food pantries.

Green bandanas symbolize WVSOM’s service to communities.
WVSOM's SAAO club hosted a winter dance to benefit Grayson VanBuren, the nephew of a WVSOM employee. Grayson was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoblastic leukemia. The dance was attended by about 70 students, faculty and staff and raised $1,380.

WVSOM Atlas Club members collected pet supplies for the Greenbrier County Humane Society.

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., visited the Statewide Campus South West Region.

Trivia team “The Gallaghers” competed in Thursday night trivia at Hill and Holler Pizza and came in second. They won a $20 gift card and donated it to TeamGrayson, benefiting the nephew of a WVSOM employee who is battling childhood leukemia.

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The fundraiser benefited the Tanzania Health Integrated Multisectoral Services to aid female genital mutilation survivors and the Women’s Health Center of West Virginia.
HEART OF THE HOLIDAYS
WVSOM students and employees made children’s wishes come true with its 20th annual Heart of the Holidays. The event was organized by the school’s chapter of Sigma Sigma Phi and provided gifts from the wish lists of 38 children from the Children’s Home Society of West Virginia and Right From the Start.

RURAL HEALTH DAY
The WVSOM community took a moment to show support and appreciation for National Rural Health Day. The day is an opportunity to “celebrate the power of rural” by honoring the selfless, community-minded “can do” spirit that prevails in rural America.

FUNDS RAISED FOR FOOD PANTRY
Gloria and Bill Martin, Ph.D., a former faculty member, raised funds for the local food pantry.

CAMC FOUNDATION HOSPITALITY HOUSE
WVSOM’s Alumni Association donated snack packs to the CAMC (Charleston Area Medical Center) Foundation Hospitality House.

HIGHER EDUCATION DAY
James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., Edward Bridges, Ph.D., and a fourth-year medical student promoted WVSOM at the West Virginia State Capitol for Higher Education Day.
LEWISBURG FOOD PANTRY DONATION

First-year medical students, WVSOM employees and retirees volunteered at the Lewisburg Food Pantry.

W.VA. GOVERNOR AND WVSOM PRESIDENT

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., presented West Virginia’s governor with the symbolic “Living Our Mission” bandana stating the school’s commitment to community service.

STUDENTS FOR CHOICE CLOTHING DRIVE

Medical Students for Choice hosted a clothing drive that brought in more than 10 boxes of coats, boots and other winter items for the Family Refuge Center.

OMED CONFERENCE

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., took the school’s “Living Our Mission” campaign to San Diego to share with alumni attending the OMED conference.

SUMMERS COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING LUNCHES

WVSOM employees had extra food at their luncheons during the West Virginia Rural Health Association conference. They delivered lunches to Summers County Council on Aging.
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION DONATES SNACK BAGS

WVSOM’s Alumni Association provided snacks for Mid-Winter Osteopathic Seminar participants to package for the CAMC (Charleston Area Medical Center) Foundation Hospitality House.

MINI-MED SCHOOL

Community members became learners and medical students turned into teachers during WVSOM’s Mini-Med School. Organized and taught by WVSOM students, the goal of the event is to provide health education to area residents.

WELLNESS WEEK SNACKS

WVSOM’s Student Government Association hosted a ’90s-themed snack party in the school’s Student Center recreation room. The event was part of the SGA’s Wellness Week, which also included a yoga class, a fitness class and other activities.

RURAL HEALTH INITIATIVE AUTO EXTRICATION

WVSOM’s Rural Health Initiative presented an auto extrication demonstration. A mock accident scene was constructed to give students a close-up view of first responders in action and allow them to see extrication equipment, learn patient immobilization techniques and practice intubation.

FALL FESTIVAL

Jill Cochran, Ph.D., volunteered at a fall festival that her church sponsored at the state fairgrounds.
Nemitz reflected on his inaugural year as president and spoke to his immediate focus and goals for the remainder of 2019.

In just a few months, James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., will reach the one-year mark as WVSOM’s seventh president. And while the school’s leader has worked at the medical school for more than 30 years, one year at the helm of WVSOM seems to have gone by in an instant.
WVSOM Magazine: What are your thoughts about your time as president so far?

James Nemitz: So far, it’s going really well. I’ve been overwhelmed by the support I’ve received since becoming president. The support has been through the roof and has come from all sectors: faculty and staff, students, the Lewisburg community and those I meet throughout the state. And particularly alumni.

It still comes as a surprise that people are still congratulating me. All of this is about relationships. Many of the people I’m talking about are former students who I took care of when I was a faculty member. That is the thing I do: take care of people. As a faculty member, I took care of people in anatomy and in the lab and people remember that about me. Now, as president, I’m taking care of the institution. For me, it’s all about the people.

The fact is that support isn’t just coming from within the institution, support is coming from beyond the institution in the community and around the state. People feel like they have a connection to the school through me, and I think that’s good for the school.

You’ve been actively involved in a lot of events on campus and throughout the state. Why is it important for a president to be a participant in school events rather than deal solely with behind-the-scenes issues?

I feel that as president, part of the role is that you are the face of the institution. I think it’s important to put yourself out there. People want to see the school connected to the community; they don’t want the school to be isolated. By my going out and being more involved in the community, or things like Rotary Club meetings, the Chamber of Commerce, Greenbrier Valley Theatre or an event at Carnegie Hall, what the community sees is that the president of WVSOM supports what they are doing, and that’s important in terms of the community at large.

In terms of our students, I’ve tried to go to as many events as I could throughout my career because students appreciate it. Even though I don’t know students as well as I did when I was a faculty member, I know students appreciate it when I make the effort to go and be present. Because what that says is that I care. It’s important to share in the life of students beyond the classroom. I firmly believe that it sends a supporting message to them.

I would say the same thing with alumni events. I will participate in as many as I can because I like renewing the friendships and relationships. We are all busy, but I recognize that you also have to go out and meet people where they are. I want to go where the alumni are. I already started doing this with the Alumni After Hours events. I want to host more of those events — whether it’s a national meeting or a regional concentration of alumni — I want to continue to reach out to our alumni.

Additionally, our program is a four-year program with the first two years on the Lewisburg campus. The third and fourth years are in our Statewide Campus (SWC), which is an integral part of our institution. That program is essential in the delivery of our curriculum. The SWC is always invited to participate in campus activities, but I feel I have a responsibility to go out and be connected to the Statewide Campus. As president, I want to send a message that I care about our SWC and I think one of the ways you do that is by making the effort to be physically present. In 2018, my goal was to visit every SWC site and to have

*This interview has been edited for brevity and clarity.*
lunch with the administrative team in each of the seven regions, that also included CEOs of hospitals and preceptors. When you do things like this, you not only create goodwill and show that you care, but you learn things about what is going on and it’s helpful for me in understanding what is working and what isn’t working, what challenges we have and so forth. I am happy to say that I met that goal.

- *A president has to deal with many pressing issues, but what are some of the more immediate issues or goals you have for WVSOM for the remainder of 2019?*

- *Certainly, my top priority is to work with the dean and associate deans to ensure that we have quality clinical rotations, and we do, but the point is that the clinical environment and the medical education environment is constantly shifting in the third and fourth year. We have to be proactive in continuing to develop relationships with hospitals and clinics that we are working with and growing new ones. A lot of work has been done by the SWC staff, but I still believe as president that I have a role in sending the message that this is important, and where appropriate, meet with higher-level people like CEOs of hospitals to make sure we are developing and maintaining those relationships. It’s one of my top priorities.*

My second priority is growing and maintaining residency positions. That’s tied to the first priority. There’s a connection between clinical rotations and developing residencies. One of the things our students want is to rotate in places that have residencies, so we continue to grow residency opportunities for our students. This is a challenging environment because we are past the tipping point where more people are applying for residencies than there are residency positions. So it’s incumbent on me and WVSOM to look for opportunities to grow additional residencies and then also ensure good relations so students get the residencies they want and deserve. It’s a challenging area that we need to direct our effort toward.

- *What are some other priorities or goals for WVSOM?*

An objective in 2019 is to look at institutional strategic planning. We have already accomplished most of the goals we set in the last strategic plan that was approved in 2015. We need to evaluate where we want WVSOM to be in five years, so we are brainstorming that and putting together a vision, a roadmap for the institution. It’s always an ongoing process, but it’s important to set those goals. That will be a big accomplishment in 2019 — to create the next strategic plan, the next roadmap for the institution, and to get it approved by the Board of Governors.

Another thing that we’re looking at is what makes sense in regard to complementary programs. At the January 2019 Board of Governors meeting, the board agreed to allow the school to move forward in exploring a masters of medical education program, and I’m excited about that. It’s opened up the conversation with faculty and staff about what other programs we might want to do that are complementary to our mission.

There are many areas to talk about, but I’d be remiss if I didn’t talk about two other areas that continue to grow and have an impact, and one is the commitment to research. We’ve built the infrastructure with the Office of Research and Grant Management and we’re seeing more research and grant activity. This is the most research activity we’ve had in the school’s history.
This is good. This is healthy. I see research continuing, and it’s an area of growth for our institution. Research is an important component of our school’s mission. Another part of our mission is serving, first and foremost, West Virginia and addressing the health care needs of the citizens in this state. So all the outreach we do is another area we are continuing to grow and have a huge impact. We have all kinds of projects going on where we impact kids as young as kindergarten through our seniors, and I think that’s really important. The Center for Rural and Community Health, which is bringing in a lot of programmatic grant money to address the health care needs of the state is, again, an area of continued growth for us, particularly dealing with the opioid crisis. We are at the table and we are one of the players at the state level in terms of addressing the crisis and doing things in the areas of education, prevention and even starting to look at the possibility of what we can do in terms of treatment and workforce development.

Shifting gears, let’s talk about the “Living Our Mission” campaign. You introduced it at the installation ceremony and it seems people have embraced the initiative. What are your thoughts regarding the response people have had to the campaign?

I’m pleased with the response. As we thought about the installation, I thought about what I wanted it to turn into and that was an opportunity to send a message to people. I think coming up with the bandana, which is a physical symbol, was a wonderful idea. Here’s the thing: we are living our mission. We do that each day, day after day, and we have been doing it a long time. But the other part is when I say we are living our mission, that’s more than just fulfilling our mission statement, which we do. I’m sending the message that part of living our mission is taking care of ourselves and taking care of others. That’s really the message I want to send to people. I want people to live the philosophy of A.T. Still and take care of their mind, body and spirit so they can better take care of others. It’s all about taking care of others and doing good for others. For me, that’s ultimately what WVSOM is about.

“I WANT PEOPLE TO LIVE THE PHILOSOPHY OF A.T. STILL AND TAKE CARE OF THEIR MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT SO THEY CAN BETTER TAKE CARE OF OTHERS.”
Beckett is often touted as an alumnus who has made significant positive impacts in his local community, which is why he was chosen as the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award, recognizing his tireless dedication in working to make his hometown a healthier community.

“Being an osteopathic physician and learning about holistic medicine — in my practice and community — we practice holistic community development, so it’s an extension of understanding mind, body and spirit and looking at all those facets of the community and how they are all interconnected so we can create change and opportunities for people,” Beckett said of how he tries to incorporate osteopathic principles in his patients’ lives.
After graduating from WVSOM in 2000, Beckett completed his residency at Charleston Area Medical Center, after which he returned to Williamson, a small coal-mining town in Mingo County with a population of less than 3,000. He opened a family practice there and began offering a free clinic once a month to cater to patients who had little or no insurance. This led to the transition of his practice to a nonprofit federally qualified health center called the Williamson Health and Wellness Center, which is now the parent organization of the Mingo County Diabetes Coalition and the Williamson Farmer’s Market. Patients are prescribed vegetables, encouraged to eat healthy and have follow-up care with diabetes educators and community health workers in the same location to help improve health outcomes.

**“IT MAKES YOU A BETTER PHYSICIAN IF YOU’RE ABLE TO CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY,” THE FAMILY MEDICINE PHYSICIAN SAID OF THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE.**

“Growing up in a town is one thing, and you should be involved with any community you live in, but it’s another thing to be a physician and have the perspective that you are a doctor in a rural community and then understand the needs of that community and how you can fashion your practice to help benefit the community in a broader sense.”

A colleague described Beckett with the sentiment, “Throughout life, we see many leaders, but rarely do we see true leaders that actually work tirelessly for the good of so many, improving so profoundly the quality of life through health care, education, community and economic development.”

Beckett said he was honored to be recognized by his WVSOM peers with such a prestigious award. He has been the recipient of many awards and accolades including the National Rural Health Association’s Rural Health Practitioner of the Year in 2017. During that time, he commented on the importance of having a sense of community and practicing in underserved areas.

“There are ways we can help to keep our sense of community together and ways for us to draw closer to one another. It’s just like in hard times, when you know your family is always there. This is a big extended family, and that’s what we are trying to do. We are doing what we can to help keep that part of Appalachian culture and that sense of community going. It’s not an easy task, but it’s something that we’ve got to reach for. Nobody is going to come in here and do it for us, and we can’t expect that to happen,” he said.

The Alumni Association established the Distinguished Alumni of the Year Award to annually recognize graduates who have demonstrated outstanding personal and professional achievements.
Alumna recounted graduating in first WVSOM class during White Coat Ceremony speech
N

aomi Wriston, D.O., M.S., FAOCOPM, was one of 33 people in WVSOM’s first graduating class in 1978. On Aug. 25, 2018, she delivered a keynote speech to 206 first-year medical students during the school’s annual Convocation and White Coat Ceremony.

She recounted stories about the school in its early years — how most “nontraditional” students searched for places to live in Lewisburg, how Gwen Clingman cooked large pots of food to feed students for $1.05, and how custodians would place black plastic over the windows to darken a histology classroom in order for students to be able to see slides through their microscopes.

“WVSOM in 1974 may not have been considered the ideal learning environment,” Wriston shared with the audience. “However, the real question then as it is now for you — will WVSOM give me the education I need to become a good physician?”

She explained how her education at WVSOM prepared her to see patients and often set her apart during rotations in hospitals and clinics, even though in the late 1970s being a woman in medicine was not the norm.

“During my fourth year, a pulmonologist in Florida said he would never call a woman ‘doctor’ and when we would go to the bedside he would call all the male residents, interns and students doctor but he called me Miss Naomi. He was probably teasing me, and he eventually called me doctor when I answered a question the others could not, but it still stung when you’re a fourth-year medical student,” she said. “We still have a ways to go, but discrimination is less obvious. Remember, females were about 15 percent of the class then, and in most medical schools now they are 50 percent.”

The Convocation and White Coat Ceremony marked the Class of 2022’s commitment to a life of health care service. It is the first step in one’s medical school journey, as the coat symbolizes each student’s osteopathic pledge to serving communities and patients.
WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., told the class that the ceremony welcomes students not only to WVSOM but into the community of osteopathic physicians.

“You, the members of the Class of 2022, now enter into this rich tradition and will become a part of WVSOM’s legacy — a legacy that includes being one of the best medical schools in the nation and the leader in graduating physicians who practice in rural America,” he said. “Putting on the white coat will not transform you into an osteopathic physician. There’s a lot of hard work that will be required of you to earn that white coat. It will require you to grow both intellectually and emotionally, and in time you’ll make that white coat your own. Have a vision for yourself. Imagine what you are becoming. See the end point and go after it.”

More than three decades ago, Wriston had a vision for herself even when the odds may not have been in her favor, but she said she thinks there is no more exciting profession than medicine.
“One of your classmates said, ‘I know I have an extremely long journey but I think I chose the right school to get me there.’ Do long years, long evenings of study, the missed movies, the hospital food swallowed quickly make a difference? Is it worth it?” Wriston asked of the new students. “I can tell you for me, my family and my patients it has made a great difference. And it has been well worth it.”

The ceremony also included greetings from Board of Governors Chair Charles Davis, D.O., Alumni Association President Robert Olexo, D.O., and West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association President Arthur Rubin, D.O.

Wriston is certified in family medicine and occupational medicine and is a fellow of the American Osteopathic College of Occupational and Preventive Medicine. She serves as the assistant medical director with OhioHealth Employer Services in Columbus, Ohio, and her clinical practice includes executive physical exams for international companies.

The White Coat Ceremony coincided with WVSOM’s Alumni Weekend, hosted by the Alumni Association. Graduates returned to campus for continuing medical education and other events including a barbecue and reunion dinner. Some alumni assisted in the convocation by presenting white coats to students.
WVSOM has been recognized for the seventh time as one of the best colleges in the nation to work for, according to a survey by The Chronicle of Higher Education’s annual report on academic workplaces. The school has also been included on the Honor Roll, which is a distinction awarded to institutions that are cited most often across all recognition categories.

**WVSOM was recognized in 10 out of 12 categories including:**

1. Collaborative governance
2. Compensation and benefits
3. Confidence in leadership
4. Facilities, workspaces and security
5. Job satisfaction
6. Professional/career-development programs
7. Respect and appreciation
8. Teaching environment
9. Tenure clarity and process
10. Work-life balance
Leslie Bicksler, WVSOM’s vice president of human resources, said the recognition reinforces WVSOM’s reputation as a vital organization in the community, throughout the state of West Virginia and in the communities in which graduates practice.

“WVSOM has received this recognition over several years and it is always a topic of conversation with our applicants at WVSOM,” she said. “Applicants, whether prospective students or job applicants, consistently state how warm and inviting the campus is. Our people are the building blocks of this campus, and receiving recognition shows the world that WVSOM is truly a great place to work.”

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., said he is excited to lead such a reputable institution.

“What makes WVSOM a great school to work for are the people who work here. We are blessed to have an amazing team of employees who help provide our students with the best possible education,” Nemitz said. “Everyone at WVSOM is important and valued for their contributions. It truly is an honor that our faculty and staff recognize WVSOM as a ‘Great College to Work For’ in so many different categories.”

WVSOM has built a culture based on family values and employee unity, which is a culmination of more than 40 years of teamwork, according to Tiffany Burns, WVSOM’s director of human resources.

“Based on the school’s history, and looking to the school’s future, WVSOM’s employees know the far-reaching and lasting impact they have on WVSOM and the students we serve,” she said. “WVSOM appreciates and celebrates accomplishments of the school and of each other, and employees step in when we need each other the most.”

The primary factor in deciding recognition was employee feedback through The Chronicle’s survey. WVSOM was one of 253 institutions participating in the survey.
Two faculty teams at WVSOM competed in a “Simulation (Sim) War” to show students the importance of communication in a clinical setting.

The event was part of the school’s second annual recognition of the national Healthcare Simulation Week, sponsored by the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, and took place in September. Simulation is the creation of realistic circumstances in order to teach skills and enhance competencies among health care professionals.

The two teams, which consisted of clinicians, Ph.D.s and graduate teaching assistants, used human-patient simulators to address critical skills, decision-making and communication during the exercise. Each team had 10 minutes to try to complete the medical scenario.

“While the time went by extremely fast, our team was doing an excellent job with communicating what they were seeing and worked well together,” said Jacob Neumann, Ph.D., an assistant professor in WVSOM’s biomedical sciences department. “This experience really helps to put in perspective how instrumental the team leader is to the outcome of the patient. Having a great leader allowed me to focus on the task I was given and know what to do when that assignment was complete.”

Biomedical faculty like Neumann never have clinical interactions in real-life scenarios, but during this simulation exercise the focus was communication among all health care professionals.

“As a biomedical faculty member, I am focused on my area of expertise and have limited experience in the clinical realm. Being part of the simulation competition allowed me to step outside my expertise and perform some tasks that our students will be potentially experiencing during their medical careers,” he said of the opportunity.

During the Sim War, Neumann was mostly responsible for packing a leg wound and stopping the human-patient simulator from bleeding.

Adam Goodcoff, a third-year student and graduate teaching assistant, said he thought the experience was rewarding, especially since he is interested in an emergency medicine residency. The fast-paced, trauma scenario could be similar to ones he will encounter as a future physician.

Goodcoff said he thinks that demonstrating closed-loop
communication to students in attendance will be helpful when it comes time for them to practice what they have learned on human-patient simulators. Closed-loop communication is a technique used to avoid misunderstanding and often includes repeating information and confirming the actions a person is taking.

“With the right training and a strong team around you, you can help a patient in these types of scenarios,” he said. “With our situation, everybody was there to help each other. They’re not doing things by themselves.”

One piece of educational advice the judges gave to Goodcoff’s team was to provide reassurance to the patient, even if the health team is busy or the patient may not seem to hear.

“It’s such a sensory overload, but it’s definitely good practice to constantly speak to the patient. It was a good piece of feedback,” he said.

A few months later, in January, first- and second-year medical students competed in their own Sim War. WVSOM’s first Student Sim War provided two student teams the opportunity to respond to a simulated scenario set in a surgical waiting room in a hospital.

Once again, teams had to effectively communicate and efficiently work together to assess the scenario and determine the best course of action. The “Doc Side” team was made up of first-year students, while a team called “C-3DO” included second-year students. Only one team could reign supreme in the friendly competition, and it was the Doc Side.

Joseph Bolger, a first-year student who acted as team leader for the Doc Side, said he felt comfortable leading the team due to his experience navigating different resources on an emergency scene from his work as an EMS crew chief.

“It was great that our team was able to come together to accomplish a task and perform in an excellent manner,” Bolger said after the simulation exercise. “Having multiple people with different roles in this scenario certainly helps, especially when there are multiple things to be attended to on the patient simultaneously. Between vitals, maintaining the cervical spine, airway and trying to manage that overall requires everyone working together. Everybody knew their roles and knew how to do them well.”

WVSOM’s CEC earned re-accreditation

WVSOM’s Clinical Evaluation Center (CEC) was re-accredited by the Society for Simulation in Healthcare (SSH).

Though the accreditation isn’t required, CEC staff once again applied for accreditation to be recognized as a center that meets the standards for providing effective and safe medical simulation opportunities for its learners.

The SSH represents a growing group of educators, research scientists and advocates who utilize simulation for education, testing and research. The society is united by its desire to improve performance and reduce errors in patient care using multi-modal simulation methodologies including task trainers, human-patient simulators, virtual reality, screen-based simulators and standardized patients.

WVSOM’s CEC was recognized at the International Society for Simulation in Healthcare meeting in January in San Antonio after an accreditation team visit, review and approval. The accreditation status for the areas of education and assessment lasts for five years.
About two dozen community members became learners and medical students turned into teachers when the WVSOM hosted its 10th annual Mini-Med School on Feb. 11-12.

Organized and taught by WVSOM students, the aim of Mini-Med School is to provide health education to community members. This year, representatives from seven different student organizations introduced participants to a variety of medical concepts through brief lectures, PowerPoint presentations and hands-on demonstrations.
Ruth Surgeon, of Alderson, has attended the event for at least four years. She said she appreciates that the students emphasize different aspects of health each year.

“You learn so much about so many different topics, about things that actually affect our lives. I feel like I pick up something new every time I come,” Surgeon said.

WVSOM anatomy club President Ryan Jensen, a second-year student participating in Mini-Med School for the first time, said the event can help attendees learn skills that may decrease the chances of developing certain medical problems.

“There’s a lot of preventive medicine that the public needs to know about,” Jensen said. “Our presentation dealt with lower back pain, so we wanted to show people why good posture is important and why it’s critical to lift heavy objects with your legs rather than your back.”

On the first day of the event, WVSOM’s internal medicine club discussed cancer prevention and used a model of a human colon to show attendees how an endoscope works. In their session on lower back pain, the anatomy club invited community members to view preserved portions of an actual human skeleton. The obstetrics and gynecology club taught a session on osteoporosis, asking each participant to bend an acid-soaked chicken bone to mimic the breakability of calcium-deprived human bones. The pediatrics club demonstrated how osteopathic manipulative treatment can aid in caring for children suffering from the common cold.

On the event’s second day, the surgery club used a light box to show attendees how X-ray films are examined and described how physicians might handle a patient presenting with chest trauma. The emergency medicine club led a discussion on heart attacks and had guests practice chest compressions on task trainers, devices that simulate portions of the human body for educational purposes. The sports medicine club spoke about concussions and displayed models of the brain to show areas that can be affected by the injury.

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., thanked community members for participating. “The more you know about your bodies and what could potentially go wrong, the better you can help yourself and your families,” he said. “The more we can educate each other, the better off we all are, because health is a precious commodity.”

WVSOM faculty member Hilary Hamric, D.O., and second-year student Kristy Farmer oversaw this year’s Mini-Med School. Hamric said the event is as educational for students as it is for members of the public.

“As a physician, you’re a lifelong teacher,” she explained. “Many of our students already know how to communicate with each other on a professional level, but it’s also useful for them to learn to speak in a way that makes sense to the greater community. They learn skills that they’ll use for the rest of their careers.”
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WVSOM was listed third in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for producing the most primary care residents.

The 2020 edition of the publication’s “America’s Best Graduate Schools” recognized WVSOM for the 21st consecutive year.

The report shows that 70.2 percent of WVSOM graduates from 2016 to 2018 entered primary care residencies upon their completion of medical school. This is a slight increase from last year’s 69.2 percent.

This distinction solidifies WVSOM’s reputation among allopathic and osteopathic medical schools nationwide. Eight of the top 10 spots in the listing were osteopathic medical schools.

“This placement demonstrates that WVSOM is meeting our mission to provide support for graduate medical education that will allow our graduates to secure residency spots, specifically emphasizing primary care in rural areas. The fact that we continue to be recognized for producing primary care residents is great evidence that we are fulfilling our mission each year with a new set of graduates,” said President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D.

Upon successful completion of medical school, graduates enter a residency program to further expand their knowledge in specific fields of study. While primary care, which encompasses family medicine, general internal medicine, OB-GYN, pediatrics and psychiatry, is the leading field at WVSOM, graduates also enter into a variety of non-primary care specialties such as surgery, urology, pulmonology and dermatology.

“We are extremely proud of our graduates and the work they accomplish,” said Craig Boisvert, D.O., WVSOM’s vice president for academic affairs and dean. “Our focus educates students to be well-rounded physicians. While WVSOM does place an emphasis on educating students who want to enter primary care residencies, they are not limited to those alone. Our students are prepared for any specialty when they complete medical school.”
WVSOM news and events

A total of 2,874 people benefited from having their blood pressure checked during the West Virginia State Fair that took place in August in Lewisburg.

Second-year medical students administered 1,412 readings to visitors. WVSOM physicians and Clinical Evaluation Center staff members were also available to perform screenings.

A Teddy Bear Clinic was also part of WVSOM’s blood pressure booth under the grandstand. The clinic provided 535 children the opportunity to “play doctor” as well as educate them about basic hospital visits. They learned about heartbeats, took temperatures, bandaged the bears and examined the stuffed animals’ eyes, ears and nose.
Groups presented tobacco and alcohol demonstration for Red Ribbon Week

WVSOM’s Pathology Club and Community Relations Committee partnered to show students at Ronceverte Elementary School the effects smoking and drinking alcohol can have on the body. The Nov. 2 presentation was part of Red Ribbon Week, a national alcohol, tobacco and drug-prevention awareness campaign.

For third-graders, the organizations displayed normal pig lungs and black pig lungs to show students what their own lungs would look like if they smoked for an extended period of time. For fourth-graders, the groups portrayed the effects of alcohol using goggles that simulate impairment. Students performed simple coordination tasks, such as stacking cups, with and without the goggles to compare the difference in visual coordination.

“Our goal was to make a long-lasting impact on the students in the hope that they can bring the message home to all their loved ones,” said Raymond Lam, Pathology Club president. “One student told me that he’ll now tell his parents to stop smoking. It was moments like these that showed how much of an impact we made.”

CMDA hosted fundraising dinner and auction

In late November, the WVSOM Christian Medical and Dental Association hosted a dinner and auction to raise funds for the organization’s next mission trip. The event raised $2,855 toward the group’s travel and housing expenses in North Carolina, where volunteers helped Habitat for Humanity work on homes in which a local church will house orphans from across the East Coast.

Murder Mystery Dinner raised $1,500 for substance abuse program

WVSOM’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation club members hosted the annual Murder Mystery Dinner on Nov. 10. The event, which sold out, raised more than $1,500 for Recovery Point West Virginia, an organization dedicated to serving men and women struggling with substance use disorders throughout the state.
Vehicle extrication taught students emergency techniques

Students at WVSOM had the opportunity to learn firsthand about what happens before an accident victim reaches doctors.

On Nov. 2, WVSOM’s Rural Health Initiative, Emergency Medicine Club and Wilderness Medicine Club presented a vehicle extrication demonstration in which a mock accident scene was constructed to give students a close-up view of first responders in action.

Representatives from the City of Lewisburg Fire Department, White Sulphur Springs Emergency Medical Services, Greenbrier Valley Medical Center, Greenbrier County Emergency Ambulance Authority and Anthony’s Truck Repair & Towing participated in the third annual event.

Melinda Kizziah, president of WVSOM’s Emergency Medicine Club, emphasized that such demonstrations are vital for medical students.

“It’s important for those interested in emergency medicine because it shows how things progress before the patient makes it to the emergency department,” she said.

“It establishes the importance of continuity of care and of making sure the patient is safe every step of the way.”

Prior to the demonstration, students received hands-on instruction in key areas of the extrication process. Fire department personnel introduced some of the equipment used to stabilize a vehicle and to cut through a vehicle’s body and windows, such as the Jaws of Life. Emergency workers showed students how to employ backboards and Kendrick Extrication Devices to safely immobilize patients for transport. Gregory Spears, M.D., and resident physician John Ford, D.O., both of Greenbrier Valley Medical Center, helped students practice intubation.

For the extrication itself, students entered a wrecked vehicle and took on the roles of accident victims. Firefighters used a variety of tools — an axe, a picklike instrument called a Halligan bar, even the car’s own antenna — to shatter windshields before removing the vehicle’s top with the Jaws of Life. Emergency workers assessed the patients and placed them on hydraulic stretchers in order to transport them, making sure to accurately communicate their condition to medical professionals.

“It was a great experience,” said first-year student Kaitlyn Belanger. “It gave us an appreciation for the other teams we’ll be working with. Unless you’ve worked in this field before, you don’t really know what happens before the doctor sees the patient.”

Lewisburg Fire Chief Joseph Thomas said his department was pleased to participate.

“It gives students an understanding of what we go through and how long it takes us to get a patient out. It’s a good program, and we enjoy doing it,” he said.
Gov. Justice announced funding for WVSOM’s Healthy Children’s Initiative

Gov. Jim Justice announced that the WVSOM Healthy Children’s Initiative, a program that raises awareness about childhood obesity and works to promote healthy life choices, will receive $50,000 in funding.

“When you’re able to give away money, that’s great stuff,” Justice said during a press conference Wednesday morning that was hosted on WVSOM’s campus in Lewisburg. “West Virginia used to be 50th in everything. The likelihood of crawling out of 50th with Jim Justice as your governor was not very high. But the reality is we have and we are on our way. I don’t think we want to go backwards. West Virginia today is a different place than it was 22 months ago.”

WVSOM’s Healthy Children’s Initiative is working toward creating a healthier West Virginia for the state’s youth. The initiative was created in 2011 along with the Abracadabra television series. It has served as a springboard for greater visibility around the issue of childhood obesity and engagement with other health issues of importance to West Virginians. Combining magic, ventriloquism and original music with important lessons about health, nutrition, exercise, safety and science, the show has captured the hearts of young viewers.

Justice commented on the importance of programs that educate children.

“Any and every effort that we make to help children and to educate kids in a better way should always be taken note and we should always hold that close to our heart,” he said after the press conference.

Delegate George “Boogie” Ambler played a role in helping to secure funding for the initiative. He said he was pleased to receive the announcement of the governor’s funding.

“Abracadabra and other parts of the Healthy Children’s Initiative are fantastic,” he said. “Those programs are what we need to keep moving West Virginia forward.”

This year, Abracadabra received a regional Emmy Award for a STEM episode. The show airs on West Virginia Public Broadcasting and PBS stations in three other states. In total, the stations reach portions of 10 states and parts of Canada, with the opportunity to showcase West Virginia to a viewing audience of more than 5 million people.

Episodes have centered on topics such as bullying, cyber predators, STEM, bicycle safety, visiting the doctor, growing a garden, fire safety and social development including sharing, courtesy and curiosity.

“A special episode of Abracadabra currently in post-production focuses on opioids and the drug epidemic,” said Michael Adelman, D.O., J.D., WVSOM’s president emeritus and the TV show’s creator. “This particular episode is directed toward elementary-aged children and their parents. We are excited about this special, as it is one of a few drug prevention and educational initiatives that focuses on this age group.”

James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., WVSOM’s president, said the osteopathic medical school is appreciative of the support from Gov. Justice and funding for what WVSOM leaders think is an important program for the state.

“The impact we are having on youth in West Virginia is already profound and we know from school visits that the initiative is effective. It’s amazing to see these children respond so well to our message,” he said.

In addition to the television series, the initiative includes an outreach coordinator who works with school counselors and teachers at various elementary schools throughout West Virginia to present health, nutrition and STEM educational concepts that are reinforced by the Abracadabra series.
WVSOM’s Healthy Children’s Initiative won Emmy for *Abracadabra*

It was a magical evening for *Abracadabra* during the 54th annual Ohio Valley Regional Emmy Awards ceremony in Lawrenceburg, Ind., in August. Cast and crew members waited for the Children/Youth/Teens category to be announced.

*The wait was worth it. The episode “Joey’s Time Machine” was pronounced an Emmy winner.*
“We are truly grateful to be awarded this Emmy.”
- MICHAEL ADELMAN, D.O., J.D., CREATOR OF THE SHOW AND PRESIDENT EMERITUS FOR WVSOM

Abracadabra is a component of the Healthy Children’s Initiative at WVSOM. The goal is to present educational lessons on health, nutrition, exercise, safety and science through magic and ventriloquism to help improve the health of viewers.

West Virginia Public Broadcasting (WVPB) partners with WVSOM on the show.

“We appreciate the support and all the work that WVPB contributes to make this show successful,” Adelman said. “They are a professional team and a pleasure to work with.

“Our cast is an amazingly talented group of adults and youth. We have been very fortunate to keep so many of the same cast members over the years. We have seen them grow personally and professionally and it is a true joy that they believe in the purpose of Abracadabra,” he continued.

Marilea Butcher, the show’s producer, expressed thanks and appreciation to all those involved in the project. “All of this certainly would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors — Charleston Area Medical Center, BrickStreet Foundation and Highmark Foundation. Their support during the years has been phenomenal,” she said. “We are grateful to Jeff Kerscher, who writes many of the original songs for Abracadabra.”

“Abracadabra has been a great learning and growing experience for WVPB,” said Chuck Roberts, interim executive director for WVPB. “Since arriving on our air, the video production department efforts led by Larry Dowling have been impressive, to say the least. These efforts are greatly deserving of the recognition that the Emmy brings to the entire cast and crew. To Dr. Adelman and everyone involved, a heartfelt congratulations.”

The show has received positive feedback and appreciation from parents and teachers for educating young viewers and encouraging them to make healthy choices.

The story line of “Joey’s Time Machine” takes the cast and viewers back in time to visit famous scientists who were successful in making an impact. This year, Abracadabra was one of 312 Emmy nominees out of 907 entries. The basis for earning an Emmy award is excellence. Judges base their scores on effective visual techniques, strong content and overall impact.

Season 6 recording of Abracadabra took place in summer 2018 at Concord University, with college students serving as the production crew members. Rob Hoffman, assistant professor of communication arts, served as technical director and provided guidance to the students.

Abracadabra airs in 10 states and is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/user/abratv1.
PaLMS helps osteopathic students become tomorrow’s leaders

Some of the most valuable knowledge students gain while at WVSOM isn’t about treating medical conditions, but about treating people with respect.

As participants in the Professionalism and Leadership in the Medical Setting (PaLMS) program know, communication skills play a role in ensuring that patients receive the best possible medical care. Future osteopathic physicians must interact skillfully with administrators, staff members, other doctors and patients, and must be able to resolve conflicts diplomatically and efficiently.

"PaLMS aims to help first- and second-year students learn how to avoid professional issues before they go on rotations," said Earl Bundy, D.O., regional assistant dean for the South East Region of WVSOM’s Statewide Campus, who leads the program. "If you know how to talk to people, you’ll do well during a rotation. But if you enter a new situation and you’re not listening, come in with preconceived ideas, mistreat staff, are late for work or don’t read assigned work, those things will hurt you."

Based on the 2013 book Principle-Based Leadership by Jim Anderson, a graduate of the Greenbrier Military School, PaLMS helps medical students explore leadership styles and develop behaviors that will propel them in their careers. The program consists of online modules that participating students must complete, as well as in-person group sessions — five per year — in which guest speakers discuss topics related to the information in the modules.

Recent speakers have included community leaders, business owners, educators and even the host of the DIY Network television program Barnwood Builders. Besides communication, topics encompass leadership, management, conflict resolution and other interpersonal skills that are useful in the medical profession.

Bundy said it’s especially important that WVSOM graduates serve as PaLMS speakers. “Our alumni can help us make sure the next generation of physicians give us all a good name,” he said. “When we have competent D.O.s, the entire osteopathic profession benefits.”

WVSOM first implemented PaLMS in 2013 when former Clinical Evaluation Center Medical Director Steven Halm developed the program in conjunction with Anderson and two student leaders. Bundy began leading PaLMS in 2015. Faculty members Dr. Elizabeth Ziner and Dr. Robert Pepper also lend their time to the program, and for the 2018-19 school year they were assisted by four second-year students who completed PaLMS previously: Devine Thomas, Heather Farr, Autumn Spears and Ian Etheart.

The program has grown quickly in recent years. For the 2018-19 school year, 115 first- and second-year WVSOM students enrolled, up from a past average of about 70. Bundy said students are drawn to the program because it helps them stand out in their professional careers. “It’s very helpful, because today’s residency directors look favorably on graduates who have had a leadership course,” he said.

Bundy believes there’s another way participation in PaLMS benefits students: It’s a confidence booster.

“Medical school is tough, so sometimes students will walk in here feeling tired and a bit beat down,” he said. “We try to give them inspiration to empower and uplift them. We want them to walk out of our sessions feeling refreshed and self-assured.”
International Festival brought global flavor to WVSOM

“It brings people together around a commonality that we all share – being human.” - CHANCE ROHRBAUGH, CLASS OF 2021

$4,600 RAISED

More than 200 people attended this year’s International Festival, the largest fundraiser for WVSOM’s student chapter of DOCARE, a medical outreach organization dedicated to sustainable health care and education in underserved communities around the world.

The festival took place Jan. 11 in the Conference Center in the Student Center and raised more than $4,600 through live and silent auctions, ticket sales and donations.

The funds were used to purchase medications and medical supplies for DOCARE’s service trip to an area of Peru known as the Sacred Valley, near the city of Cuzco, where club members spent their spring break delivering health care. The expedition helped students learn to provide care in settings that offer minimal resources.

The festival included a dinner featuring samples of more than 30 international cuisines prepared by students and faculty members. During the meal, attendees browsed and placed bids on silent auction items as the musical duo of students Nick Bennett and Amanda Buzzetta, both Class of 2021, performed songs in English and Spanish.

WVSOM Associate Professor Peter Ward, Ph.D., led a martial arts demonstration, and students Sharon Cherian and Prashant Yadav, both Class of 2022, entertained the audience with Bollywood-style dancing. A live auction, with Associate Professor Brian Griffith, Ph.D., as auctioneer, allowed guests to purchase a variety of gift baskets, homemade novelties and other items. Chance Rohrbaugh, Class of 2021, is WVSOM’s DOCARE president. He said the International Festival promotes diversity in multiple ways.

“It allows students and faculty to celebrate their heritages and cultures,” he said. “And the service trip it helps fund is important not just because it serves communities that lack medical care, but because it connects cultures across a global spectrum. It brings people together around a commonality that we all share – being human.”
Medical students brightened children’s lives during holiday event

Students at WVSOM made children’s wishes come true with its 20th annual Heart of the Holidays event on Dec. 8.

The event, which served 38 children in need, was organized by the school’s chapter of Sigma Sigma Phi (SSP), a national osteopathic service fraternity.

WVSOM SSP president Noah Jordan, Class of 2021, said the organization was pleased to make a positive impact on local children during the holiday season. “As students, this community has welcomed us with open arms, and we’re happy that we have the means to give back. Heart of the Holidays offers us a great opportunity to do that.”

Throughout the Roland P. Sharp Alumni Conference Center, medical students painted holiday-themed designs on kids’ faces, helped them decorate cookies and let them express their creativity with coloring books. Santa’s helpers kept the youngsters entertained, and Santa Claus himself dropped in to give each child a gift from his or her wish list, along with more to open at home.

This year, Heart of the Holidays benefited the Children’s Home Society of West Virginia, which helps place children in foster families, and Right From the Start, a program that aids low-income West Virginia mothers and their babies in leading healthier lives.

Amanda Thomas, a social worker from the Children’s Home Society, said the event lends a sense of normalcy to children facing difficult circumstances. “Kids are displaced from their families while in foster care, so a lot of them ask, ‘Is Santa going to know where I am?’ An event like this gives them hope during the holiday season and allows them to be around other kids who are going through the same thing,” she said.

In addition to the children’s gifts, each family received a turkey, a ham, a roasting pan, enough groceries to prepare at least two full meals and a $25 Kroger gift card. Children also received stockings containing gloves, hats, cookies, candy, toothbrushes, toothpaste and a copy of How the Grinch Stole Christmas. Infants received blankets in their stockings.

In previous years, SSP members purchased gifts using donations from local businesses. This year, students instead conducted a letter-writing campaign to their own families, raising $4,679 in contributions. A T-shirt sale brought in an additional $125, and a grant from Kroger provided $250 to help purchase food items.

Belinda Evans, WVSOM’s director of student life, said a number of medical students were surprised by the hardships some children experience.
WVSOM observed the season in various ways throughout the month of December, from efforts to aid the community to celebrations for the people who make up the WVSOM community. Medical Students for Choice hosted a clothing drive that brought in more than 10 boxes of coats, boots and other winter items for the Family Refuge Center. The Atlas Club collected pet supplies for the Greenbrier County Humane Society. Staff members participated in the Christmas 4A Knight program, providing more than $700 worth of food, clothing, heating and gifts to students at Eastern Greenbrier Middle School and their families. Staff also conducted a fundraiser through the sale of wooden tree ornaments featuring the WVSOM logo.

The WVSOM community gathered at the president’s holiday party on Dec. 7 and the holiday luncheon on Dec. 14. Both events offered students, faculty and staff a chance to enjoy the food, festivities and fellowship that are traditionally part of the holiday season.

In the door-decorating contest, Lisa Morgan, a program assistant in media services, won first place. Clinical sciences senior administrative secretary Christina Frazer came in second, and Donna Polk, WVSOM admissions counselor, took third place. In the miniature tree-decorating contest, Rural Health Initiative program assistant Amanda Hoke was awarded first place, Lisa Morgan came in second and Suzanne Adkins, senior accountant in the business affairs office, won third place.

“Our students come from many different backgrounds, and many find that in rural West Virginia there’s a greater need than they’ve seen before,” Evans said. “During our preparations, when I was explaining that these kids might not be used to receiving love and attention, I saw some of our young men and women crying. They became so enthusiastic about making a child’s life better, and it got them thinking about how they can leave a legacy for next year’s leadership to do even bigger and better things.”

Other WVSOM student groups that participated in Heart of the Holidays included the pediatrics club, which conducted a diaper drive and hosted the face-painting and coloring book tables, and the family medicine club, which hosted the cookie-decorating table.

Holidays brought an array of winter activities to campus
Grand Affair raised $15,600 for scholarships
The room glowed with blue light, crystal chains sparkled like falling rain, and miniature trees held strings of white lights shaped into fanciful creatures. With its “Enchanted Forest” theme, the 2018 Grand Affair was designed to evoke the mystery and magic of a fairytale woodland.

The purpose of the formal gala, which was sponsored by the WVSOM Student Government Association (SGA) and took place in November at The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, is to provide funds for SGA scholarships awarded to students who show a commitment to academic leadership, community involvement and the osteopathic medical profession. This year’s event raised $15,600.

Lisa Smith, Class of 2019, has financially benefited from the SGA Leadership Scholarship. “I’d like to thank all the sponsors and participants of the

WVSOM Grand Affair for making the annual Student Government Scholarships a reality,” she said. “I’m deeply humbled to be recognized by my fellow classmates. The SGA scholarships not only help financially, but, even more so, are a wonderful way to recognize student contributions and promote a positive and supportive culture at WVSOM.”

In addition to its role in fundraising, the Grand Affair is an event that’s exciting, glamorous and, above all, fun. It provides students, faculty, staff and members of the greater Lewisburg community a chance to enjoy dancing, a strolling dinner, a silent auction and more in an elegant setting.

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., said he enjoyed seeing guests dressed up and having a good time in an iconic location.

“The delicious food, the fantastic silent auction and the fabulous music all made for a memorable evening,” he said. “I greatly appreciate everyone who worked so hard to make this event a success, those who attended the gala and especially all our sponsors and silent auction donors. I can’t think of a more enjoyable way to raise scholarship funds to support our students to be the best osteopathic physicians they can be.”

SGA President Benjamin Kastenbauer said he was heartened by the impressive turnout, which showed the community’s commitment to financially supporting medical students.

“The profits go directly back into student scholarships, giving a well-earned financial reward to students who show excellence in leadership and character as great future physicians,” he said.
As always, a wide variety of businesses and individuals helped make this year’s Grand Affair a success. Sponsors included:

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WVU Medicine’s Reynolds Memorial Hospital
Davis Medical Center
COM Week events focused on residencies, spirituality, fasting

During WVSOM’s Celebrate Osteopathic Medicine (COM) Week, the school hosted events dealing with a variety of aspects of osteopathic medicine.

Family medicine physician David Oram, M.D., of Toledo, Ohio; family medicine and sports medicine physician Jacklyn Kiefer, D.O., of Indianapolis; and WVSOM Class of 2016 alumnus Marshall Ochi, D.O., gave a presentation on Feb. 25 titled “Preserving Osteopathic Uniqueness as Residencies Merge.” The speakers answered medical students’ questions regarding changes brought about by the agreement between the American Osteopathic Association and the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education that allows D.O.s and M.D.s to compete for the same residencies.

Kiefer detailed what osteopathic recognition requires of a residency program and said it’s important for D.O.s to integrate osteopathic training into their day-to-day practices from the start.

“Research shows that most people want their spirituality addressed in medicine, but they’re afraid to bring it up because they don’t know whether doctors are open to it,” Foster said. “We want students to become physicians who can help people with that side of their nature.”

The school’s Medical Muslim Student Association (MMSA) hosted a Fast-a-Thon on March 1. Community members were asked to commit to a day of fasting and invited to a “break the fast” meal and presentation featuring visiting speaker Mohammed Pervaiz, of Virginia Tech, on fasting in the Islamic faith tradition, as well as reflections from Foster and WVSOM faculty member Dr. Imaan Benmerzouga and a question-and-answer session with a student panel.

The event raised $773 for West Virginia’s Right From the Start program through donations collected at the door and pledges by those who participated in fasting.

Samira Ibrahim, president of the school’s MMSA chapter, said that going without food is a way to connect with forces outside of bodily desires, and that the practice can be useful for future medical professionals.

“Fasting helps us establish a metaphysical paradigm that gives life to our work as medical students,” Ibrahim said. “When we fast, we make sacrifices in order to serve and love our creator, the same way we will come to know our future patients.”

Lewisburg Mayor John Manchester signed a proclamation declaring Feb. 24-March 2, 2019, to be Celebrate Osteopathic Medicine Week in the city.
WVSOM hosted its second Apprentice Day on Feb. 13 as part of the school’s “Loving Our Mission” week of events. The program brought 40 high school students from 12 West Virginia counties to Lewisburg to explore careers associated with medical school. Students participated in hands-on demonstrations led by various WVSOM departments.

National Apprentice Day connects young people to their dream jobs regardless of income, race, gender, educational performance, impairment or disability. Christina Entenmann, executive director of the nonprofit organization’s West Virginia chapter, said the program aims to help close America’s skills gap by giving young people an early look at potential careers.

“It gets them out of the classroom and into a workforce setting,” Entenmann said. “We’re trying to get them thinking about this when they’re young so that they can go to a trade school or figure out what they want to study in college.”

As the day began, WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., spoke to participants, providing a brief history of osteopathic medicine. He explained that those who wish to pursue a medical career should begin preparing in high school. “It’s a long process, but it’s one of the greatest professions, because physicians make a difference in the lives of patients every day,” he said.

WVSOM’s Office of Research and Sponsored Programs allowed students to gain experience in several areas of research. Led by Jandy Hanna, Ph.D., participants employed tools such as calipers and microscopes to investigate differences in anatomy related to function, blood-testing kits to learn about antigens, and an EKG machine to show how physiological monitoring illustrates differences in heart rate before and after exercise.

The school’s Clinical Evaluation Center staff demonstrated human-patient simulators, explaining that the interactive learning tools can be adjusted to mimic a variety of conditions and can be programmed to cry, perspire and produce different heart and vocal sounds. The simulators also can replicate sophisticated human actions such as reacting to medication, giving birth or experiencing a heart attack.

Staff from WVSOM’s Rural Health Initiative and Center for Rural and Community Health taught participants how to recognize an emergency, alert an emergency response team and perform hands-only CPR until responders arrive. Students also learned basic first aid skills such as cleaning wounds, administering first aid for basic burns, stabilizing possible

“I came to this with the idea that seeing what I would have to do while I’m at school would help me decide, and so far it’s working. It’s given me more incentive to go to medical school.”

- JARRON CHAPMAN
fractures, recognizing symptoms of shock and managing hyperthermia.

Students had the opportunity to listen to the sounds of the heart through infrared stethoscopes and to learn about osteopathic manipulative treatment. Dr. Bob Foster, WVSOM’s associate dean for osteopathic medical education, and Dr. Robert Pepper, associate dean for predoctoral clinical education, led this session.

Employees in the school’s marketing and communications department divided students into teams focusing on photography, design and content. Together, the teams composed a postcard advertising Apprentice Day, with participants choosing photographs and textual content and writing an accompanying headline.

Jarron Chapman, a student at Charleston’s George Washington High School, said the event confirmed his interest in someday attending medical school. He particularly enjoyed learning about WVSOM’s human-patient simulators and said he plans to work harder in high school after experiencing Apprentice Day.

“I’ve always wanted to be a doctor, but at the same time I’ve had some doubts,” he said. “I came to this with the idea that seeing what I would have to do while I’m at school would help me decide, and so far it’s working. It’s given me more incentive to go to medical school.”
Faculty, students and alumni from the WVSOM contributed their findings to a national research journal.

The six publications were featured in the March 2019 issue of The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA). Although members of the WVSOM community have published research in the JAOA previously, the special issue is the result of the school’s participation in the journal’s “Engage Initiative,” in which osteopathic medical schools are encouraged to contribute multiple research items to highlight their commitment to scholarly activity.

Jandy Hanna, Ph.D., WVSOM’s associate dean for research and sponsored programs, said the contributions are based on the theme of building on the school’s mission through the integration of education and scholarly activity.

“Students are encouraged to be involved in research and scholarly activity projects, preparing them to think critically, work with and educate future patients, and practice self-directed learning,” she said.

Though WVSOM is not recognized as a research institution, the interest in research opportunities has grown among students in recent years.

“As an educational institution, our students are educated on how to conduct research and we are trying to focus on the importance of their involvement in research and give students opportunities to do so,” Hanna said.

Two of the clinical research studies illustrated lifelong learning through clinical inquiry. One article examined alternative osteoporosis screening options for health care providers and patients through noninvasive assessment of bone density of the calcaneus (heel bone). The other article revealed that self-reported ratings of genital pain were higher in patients with provoked localized vulvodynia, which is a chronic pain in the area around the opening of the vagina.

Three of the published research articles highlighted educational initiatives at WVSOM, including the importance of engaging students in the education process, a pharmacology enrichment program for high school students taught by medical students and a study on how WVSOM’s students are engaged in the learning process and interested in persistent improvement in educational activities.

WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., said he supports the continued growth of research at WVSOM. The school has designated a new facility on campus that is used for clinical and translational research called the Clinical and Translational Science Center.

“This is the most research activity we’ve had in the school’s history,” Nemitz said. “This is good. This is healthy. I see research continuing and it’s an area of growth for our institution. Research is an important component of our school and part of our mission.”
The publications in the journal’s March issue are:

1. “Building on WVSOM’s Mission of Education and Scholarly Activity”  
   Jandy B. Hanna, Ph.D., MSB • Craig S. Boisvert, D.O.

2. “Advancing Methods of Assessing Bone Quality to Expand Screening for Osteoporosis”  
   Carolyn Komar, Ph.D. • Mohammed Ahmed, D.O. • Agape Chen, OMS III • Hannah Richwine, OMS IV • Nida Zia, D.O. • Andrea Nazar, D.O. • Laurie Bauer, D.O.

   Maureen E. Basha, Ph.D. • Susan Kellogg-Spadt, Ph.D. • Lara J. Burrows, M.D., M.Sc. • Monique S. Ruberu, M.D. • Andrea S. Wallach, B.S. • Andrea Nazar, D.O. • Kristene E. Whitmore, M.D.

4. “Nelson-Denny Reading Test Scores as a Predictor of Student Success in Osteopathic Medical Education”  
   Machelle Linsenmeyer, Ed.D. • Lance Ridpath, M.S.

5. “Just Say Know to Drugs! A High School Pharmacology Enrichment Program for a Rural Population”  
   Lucas A. Hamrick, D.O. • Stephanie R. Harter, D.O. • Carrie L. Fox, OMS IV • Meghan Dhir, OMS IV • Raeann L. Carrier, Ph.D.

6. “Point-of-Care Ultrasonography Integration in Undergraduate Medical Education: A Student-Driven Approach.”  
   Adam Goodeoff, OMS III • Delaney Keane, OMS IV • Angelica Bialeczak, OMS III • Elizabeth Ziner, D.O. • Jandy B. Hanna, Ph.D., MSB

“Students are encouraged to be involved in research and scholarly activity projects, preparing them to think critically, work with and educate future patients, and practice self-directed learning.”

- JANDY HANNA, PH.D., WVSOM’S ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS
New hires

Janet Hinton, MHS

Hinton became the director of rural outreach on Oct. 27. In this role, she manages projects, programs and grants involving rural outreach activities. Hinton has a Master of Health Science in health education and wellness with a concentration in online course development, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in health education and wellness from Mountain State University. Prior to joining WVSOM, Hinton served as an assistant professor and clinical coordinator for the medical assisting and phlebotomy certificate programs at Mountain State University.

Imaan Benmerzouga, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of physiology

Benmerzouga began working in the Department of Biomedical Sciences on June 23. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in biology and honors chemistry, then her Ph.D. from Cleveland State University in Ohio, specializing in cellular and molecular biology. She went to Indiana University School of Medicine for a postdoctoral fellowship, specializing in pharmacology and molecular biology. She has taught pathophysiology, pharmacology and pharmacogenomics at the University of Hail in Saudi Arabia and Marshall University School of Pharmacy.

Shinichi Asano, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of physiology

Asano began working in the Department of Biomedical Sciences on Aug. 4. He served as assistant professor at Fairmont State University in the exercise physiology department. He received his Ph.D. in exercise physiology from the West Virginia University School of Medicine, followed by postdoctoral fellowships at the WVU School of Medicine, Marshall University School of Pharmacy and Department of Integrative Physiology at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Marc Benson, Ph.D.
Assistant professor of microbiology

Benson began working in the Department of Biomedical Sciences on Aug. 28. He earned his Ph.D. from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, after which he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia, Mo. He served as an assistant professor of microbiology at Idaho State University and an assistant director of research development at the University of California, Irvine. He came to WVSOM from Saint Kitts and Nevis in the West Indies, where he was an assistant professor of microbiology and immunology at the Medical University of the Americas.
Amick worked with SIM specialists

Angie Amick, Clinical Evaluation Center simulation coordinator, was chosen to work with simulation operation specialists from around the country to write exam questions for the SSH Certified Healthcare Operation Specialist (CHSOS) exam in September, in Tampa, Fla.

Operations specialists must be knowledgeable in a wide range of skills in various technologies and health care simulation methods to ensure that simulations run well. Amick obtained her CHSOS certification in February 2015. This marks the third year she has been requested to collaborate on written questions for the exam, which is given to applicants worldwide who wish to receive formal recognition of their specialized knowledge, skills, abilities and accomplishments in simulation operations.

Morgan appointed to committee

Bobbi Morgan was appointed to the Anatomical Services Committee of the American Association of Clinical Anatomists and was selected to serve as technical co-chair.

The Anatomical Services Committee supports the activities of members who administer institutional willed body donor programs, serve on state anatomical boards and committees and prepare cadaveric materials for education and research.
Contact Leslie Bicksler, Vice President of Human Resources
304.647.6279
lbicksler@osteo.wvsom.edu
WVSOM.edu/employment

Explore your career opportunities:

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- Pharmacology Faculty

Administrative Positions
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- Assistant Dean of Assessment and Quality Improvement

WVSOM is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to enhancing diversity among its faculty and staff.
It has been one year since I took on the role of Alumni Association president at WVSO.M, and in that short time I have had the pleasure of meeting alumni from all over the country. I have listened to the stories of our alumni who serve patients in large communities in South Florida and small communities in Alaska. It is through these stories and interactions with our alumni that I have realized how we all are truly living the WVSO.M mission.

I have learned several things in the past year. First, we are a well-respected group. We are being noticed for the unselfish care we give our patients, for our service to communities and for our dedication to the osteopathic profession. We are leading the state in health care — especially rural health care — and in the past decade we’ve earned national recognition as a leader.

I have also learned that although we have a beautiful campus, institutions of higher learning are judged not by their bricks and mortar but by their graduates. I have heard stories from alumni working in solo rural clinics and those working in large urban practices. We are presidents, directors, CEOs, owners and leaders of research with results that impact cutting-edge medicine. We are leaders in the medical field.

We are all WVSO.M graduates, but we have something else in common, too: We all work nonstop for our patients. We have alumni who take care of people from all walks of life, alumni who are responsible for thousands of military service men and women, and alumni who are the sole physicians in small towns everywhere. Some of us work night and day, at times seven days a week, doing whatever it takes to improve people’s lives. We do this not for recognition or awards, but for the oath of service we all made to the practice of medicine.

We truly do touch lives, improve the communities in which we practice and become part of the families we meet through medicine. We are one of America’s elite groups. We are changing the face of medicine, both as osteopathic physicians and as WVSO.M alumni. After 40 years of WVSO.M graduates, I applaud the alumni who continue to live WVSO.M’s mission and encourage those who are just getting started.

Rob Olexo, D.O.
Class of 2001
WVSO.M Alumni Association President

Dr. Olexo is board-certified in family medicine. He works as a family physician at a rural Federally Qualified Health Center through Rainelle Medical Center in White Sulphur Springs, W.Va.
Alumna experienced compassion from ‘WVSOM family’ while in school

Marla Haller, D.O.,
Class of 1993

“Feeling as though your classmates are also your extended family was vitally important.”
One of the most important aspects of WVSOM’s culture is its emphasis on the “WVSOM family.” Members of the WVSOM family — which encompasses students, faculty and staff — support each other when needed, as one’s personal family would.

Marla Haller, D.O., admits that the WVSOM family seemed like an idyllic concept that admissions counselors shared with prospective students to make the medical school seem more appealing. However, in Haller’s second year of medical school, she realized that the WVSOM family was as supportive as it claimed to be.

The support came after Haller was pregnant with her son, Nathaniel, who had complications at birth. He was transported from LewisGale Hospital Alleghany in Low Moor, Va., to Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and was later flown to the former Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He was placed on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation in the neonatal intensive care unit.

The special care her child required subsequently forced Haller to make a decision about her medical education.

“I notified the school that I had my son but we didn’t know whether he was going to live,” she said. “I had to decide whether I was going to have to take a leave of absence from school or if the school was going to support me staying on with my class. I didn’t want to sit out a year or take a significant leave of absence. I didn’t want to quit medical school. There was no way I was going to do that.”

She said that she asked WVSOM’s president at the time, Olen E. Jones Jr., Ph.D., and dean, James Stookey, D.O., to allow her to continue with the curriculum and stay on schedule.

“I told them, ‘I promise I will study hard and do my best. I want to graduate with my class. Just please allow me to do that.’ After pleading my case, I will never forget Dr. Stookey said, ‘Marla, I swear you could sell a rusted old rattle trap off a used car lot for full price.’ And they allowed me to stay and continue with my class,” the family practice physician said.

Being able to graduate with her classmates was important to Haller. After spending significant time studying with each other, Haller said, students develop bonds with one another and become a part of each other’s lives.

“Feeling as though your classmates are also your extended family was vitally important,” she said. “That was a key factor in staying on track along with wanting to get through medical school. I wanted to get to that next step, that next level. I wanted to graduate and be a physician who utilized the knowledge and education that I was gifted and be able to share that with patients and make a difference in peoples’ lives.”

Medical school is difficult, and having a child’s health issue to deal with can make it more challenging. Haller said that her education temporarily involved a type of distance learning: picking up cassette tapes of recorded class lectures to listen to at the hospital in Washington, D.C., by her son’s side. She’d return to campus to take exams based on her notes from the taped lectures and the notes of classmates. She also received “bedside learning” from the team at Children’s National Medical Center, who knew she was a medical student.

Haller appreciated the caring WVSOM professors and an empathetic group of leaders. The touted “WVSOM family” that she questioned at the time of her medical school admission left no doubt in her mind about its existence.

“The school and my professors saw my dedication, and I knew how dedicated they were to the success of each student, no matter what the situation was. Because they wanted each student to be successful, they would help in any way that they could to allow us to finish our schooling and become alumni of WVSOM,” Haller said.

Haller received a surprise the week of her graduation when she was awarded the Dr. William R. Holmes Scholarship for overcoming adversity while in school. She attributes her fortitude to her religious beliefs.

“Those who know me know my Christian faith. It is that faith that I rely on in every aspect of my life to get me through tough times. Man people will go through tough times and may feel like quitting, but don’t. No matter what the circumstance is, you can be an overcomer,” she said. Haller, who graduated with her class in 1993, is WVSOM’s Statewide Campus Central West regional assistant dean.

Haller, who graduated with her class in 1993, is WVSOM’s Statewide Campus Central West regional assistant dean.
Colin Zhu, D.O., combines a dash of spice and a dose of medical advice to provide patients with an ideal plan to lead a healthy life.

The 2011 WVSOM graduate built upon his osteopathic medicine degree by adding a nutritional education component that he had an interest in even before he began practicing medicine. Being a graduate teaching assistant at WVSOM afforded Zhu more flexibility to explore career interests. “Because I graduated off cycle, it allowed me to pursue more personal endeavors before matriculating to a family practice residency,” he said.

“I traveled, read a lot of books and started to realize that I wanted to go to culinary school.”

Through this self-teaching period, Zhu learned that most people deal with health issues that are related to lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, stroke and hypertension. He became more interested in learning about how factors such as food and nutrition affected health outcomes. As a result, he enrolled in a health-supported and plant-based culinary school called the Natural Gourmet Institute in New York City and after six months received his diploma. Additionally, he became
Zhu has written a book titled *Thrive Medicine: How to Cultivate Your Desires and Elevate Your Life*. The book, which took a year and a half from concept to publication, is written from the perspective of a traveling physician and a world traveler.

“It’s part self-empowerment, part memoir type of book. The purpose of writing the book was that in my travels and day-to-day professional life I encountered people who felt stuck in their lives. They felt they couldn’t move forward, either in a relationship or in their career, and they faced different challenges, so I connected with them.”

Through different topics, Zhu’s book addresses mental health, emotional well-being and self-transformation. He said it also helps readers learn to cultivate what they want from life.


“Food is medicine, and it’s all about getting back to the basics. Lifestyle medicine is evidenced-based lifestyle approaches to treating diseases. ‘Thrive medicine’ is a concept I came up with, which is taking your life to the next level. Everybody has the mental and emotional capacity and spiritual fortitude to get themselves to the next level. I just offer them the compass,” he said.
certified in health coaching at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. A majority of his nutritional education was based on Asian culinary influences. It was his mother’s Eastern medical techniques, however, that led him to pursue an osteopathic medicine degree from the beginning.

“My mother is a Chinese medical doctor, and she was the main influence in my decision to go into medicine. When I learned about osteopathic medicine and its principles and philosophies, it resonated with me. My mother’s influence with holistic care and prevention, and looking at the body as a whole, spoke to me. For me it just made sense,” he said. “In the beginning, I wanted to marry Eastern and Western approaches.”

Now, Zhu marries medicine and nutrition to provide patients with information about “culinary medicine,” a concept he defines as using evidence-based nutrition and culinary techniques to address and treat diseases. Culinary medicine ignites his desire to educate others about how food can greatly impact one’s health.

“I didn’t go to culinary school to become a Michelin-starred chef or to go on the Food Network. The point was to learn about food in the context of where it comes from, how to grocery shop and what to look for, and use that education to teach patients to empower their own health,” he said.

Zhu works at an outpatient clinic called Providence Health & Services in Los Angeles. He is board-certified in family practice and osteopathic manipulative treatment and also received board certification in lifestyle medicine, a certification created in 2017 by the American Board of Lifestyle Medicine, the first board certification of its kind in the world. The physician said that 80-90 percent of his patient visits intertwine medical care with diet and lifestyle counseling.

“To me, diet, nutrition and lifestyle counseling is the primary treatment. It’s the foundation,” Zhu said. “If you don’t have that or aren’t knowledgeable about that, then it’s almost moot to continue to talk about medication. If you keep getting medicated it’s because you aren’t fixing the root cause of what you are going through.”

During office visits, Zhu tries to explain diet and lifestyle advice in a concise but impactful way, so patients can absorb information that will lead to actionable steps. He offers suggestions on eating habits, provides tips on how patients can get moving and suggests free, easily accessible resources for more information.

In addition to clinical consultations, Zhu speaks about culinary medicine at events geared toward health care providers and provides cooking demonstrations and interactive workshops.

“Teaching about food is a very hands-on type of approach, so creating these culinary workshops is practical,” he said. “Events like these help me to reach broader audiences so that providers can then go back and share with their own communities. You teach someone and then they teach someone else. It’s a ripple effect.”

And though he’s teaching others now, Zhu said, WVSOM taught him the foundation on which his entire career is based — the whole-person approach to looking at patients.

“I was grateful, humbled and blessed to have learned from osteopathic doctors and leadership who are passionate about their work. The school has been around since 1972, so it has history. It includes a lot of people who care about the school. People are invigorated about what they do. I find that to be humbling, because there are many osteopathic schools popping up but you don’t know who or what comes with them. I was fortunate to attend WVSOM with its history and its dedicated staff and administration,” he said.

“Events like these help me to reach broader audiences so that providers can then go back and share with their own communities. You teach someone and then they teach someone else.

It’s a ripple effect.”
Lectures, labs and clinical experience are central to any medical school’s curriculum. They are where aspiring physicians acquire the knowledge and skills they’ll use for the length of their careers – how to examine patients, recognize diseases and recommend courses of action.

But where can students find the nonmedical guidance that’s also essential to a successful career as a physician – for example, how to choose a specialty, network with other doctors, or balance work and life?

That’s where mentoring comes in. To help students prepare for life as osteopathic medical professionals, WVSOM offers several programs that pair those enrolled in school with alumni, physicians and even other students who are further along in their education.

In January 2018, the Office of Alumni Relations implemented the WVSOM Student Mentor Program, whose goal is to foster long-lasting professional relationships between medical students and alumni that will help students become compassionate, caring physicians and strong community leaders. Since the program began, 182 WVSOM students have been assigned mentors.

“One of the strengths of osteopathic medicine is its focus on relationships, and for that reason, mentoring is consistent with the tenets of the osteopathic profession,” said Emily Hall, D.O., a 2011 WVSOM graduate who has served as a mentor since the program began. Hall, who completed a residency in Tanzania and now works as a pediatrician on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana, said it’s exciting to watch students decide which specialty to pursue.

Hall currently mentors second-year WVSOM student Lalan Shah and sees her role as providing support when and if her mentee needs it. “I make myself available as needed, but I try not to put expectations on the student, because I know how busy medical school is,” she said. “I tell him to do what makes him feel alive, what’s exciting to him.”

Shah, who hopes to practice in his home state of West Virginia, speaks with Hall at least monthly, and sometimes more. He said Hall’s experience in low-resource medical settings has opened his eyes to potential career paths. “She’s the only pediatrician in a 140-mile stretch, and she does everything from inpatient pediatrics to emergency medicine to air medical services,” Shah said. “I didn’t even know options like that were available. It’s nice to talk with someone who can give you a new perspective, and to have someone who can give you reassurance during stressful times.”

Christine Moore, D.O., a 2016 WVSOM graduate and mentor who is an internal medicine resident at East Tennessee State University, emphasized that mentors can play a critical role in preparing students for the challenging transition from medical school to residency. Sometimes that takes the form of advice; at other times it might mean helping a mentee find a match location.

“Students don’t know what it’s like to be a resident,” she said. “So we’ll talk about what it’s like, not just the difficulty involved but the joy of being a physician, which sometimes gets lost when you’re studying or concerned about your performance on your last exam. I tell my mentee that board scores matter, but that as you get further along in your career, what really makes a difference is the people you know. Most residents have connections in places where we can say, ‘I have a medical student who’s interested. Do you know of anything available?’”

Mentoring doesn’t solely benefit those seeking guidance: The mentors often gain personal fulfillment through nurturing medical students. Class of 2017 alumnus Olabode Agaja, D.O., a resident at Children’s Hospital of Michigan, said the program offers a way for those who have previously received guidance to “pay it forward.”

“Someone was there for me once, and I want to do the same for others,” Agaja said. “Any profession benefits from having a mentor-mentee service. It helps people learn from the mistakes others have made so they can avoid making the same mistakes themselves. It’s also just good to know that someone else has been in the same place you’re in.”
Guiding future rural health providers

WVSOM’s Rural Health Initiative (RHI) Mentoring program, designed to enhance the school’s primary care curriculum in order to produce graduates qualified to practice medicine in rural or underserved communities, established a mentoring program in 2013. Those who are mentored through the program are asked to later serve as mentors to others. Today, the program encompasses alumni who are practicing physicians and mentor third- and fourth-year RHI students; alumni who are medical residents and mentor second-year students; and third- and fourth-year RHI students who mentor undergraduates at their own alma maters.

Third-year RHI student Joshua Ennis is mentored by Class of 2016 alumnus Mark Yost, D.O. Ennis said Yost’s guidance helped him successfully prepare for the COMLEX Level 1 exam last summer. As Ennis prepares for life after medical school, he has called on Yost for advice about audition rotations and residency interviews.

“We talk about once a month to see how things are going,” Ennis said. “It’s beneficial to have someone who’s been through this so recently, to have that person you can sit down and discuss something you need extra help with.”

Fourth-year RHI student Janet Kowalsky said her mentor, Ryan Runyon, D.O., has impressed upon her some of the challenges inherent in practicing medicine in rural and underserved areas.

“In rural health, many of your patients may not have good insurance coverage, or they may have a hard time just getting to their appointment,” Kowalsky said. “He has shown me that you have to be understanding of that. He’s also taught me that as a medical student, it’s important to take time for yourself, because you can’t be successful in other parts of your life if you’re not taking care of yourself.”

Helping students succeed

Mentoring is also vital to the success of students who receive financial assistance through the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students grant offered by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). WVSOM implemented the grant beginning with the 2016-17 academic year, and it’s available to up to six students per year who demonstrate financial need and whose backgrounds meet certain eligibility requirements.

Biomedical faculty member Karen Wines has mentored students with HRSA scholarships since the scholarship’s inception at WVSOM. Her time with the program has enabled her to watch future physicians grow as they make their way through medical school. She believes mentors should be open-minded, compassionate, selfless and good listeners, and should think of themselves as coaches who inspire, not advisors who place judgment.

“I first worked with second-year students who are now in their fourth year, so it’s been nice to be able to follow their progress,” Wines said. “Every first-year student goes through a moment when they realize that they’ve never done anything this difficult before. You can see it: Some of them don’t sleep, some lose or gain weight. So it’s not a bad idea to check in periodically and see how they’re doing.”

Second-year student and HRSA grant recipient Natan Harel is a nontraditional student and a parent to a 2-year-old daughter. He said having a mentor who is also balancing professional and family obligations has been helpful.

“My mentor, Kristina Harvell, D.O., is also a parent,” he said. “One of my biggest challenges is not having as much time for my family as I’d like. She’s taught me that medicine can eat up as much time as you give it, so having someone to talk to about maintaining a family and a happy relationship is important.”

First-year student Andrew Baker, another HRSA grant recipient, said the benefits of mentorships also extend directly to the educational process, especially...
when the mentor is also a faculty member. Baker is mentored by WVSOM biomedical professor Tuoen Liu, M.D.

“You’re already going to their office every month, so it makes it easy to ask for help during their office hours when you have something you need clarified from class,” Baker said. “It helps you build better relationships with professors. And for students who are more reserved and don’t want to ask questions during lectures, this gives them an opportunity to ask for more information.”

Ultimately, though, most students say the value of mentoring comes down to realizing that they’re not alone, that others who came before them were able to endure the rigors of medical school and find successful careers as physicians.

“It’s amazing to see what other WVSOM students have become because it shows you what you can accomplish,” Shah said. “I got pretty lucky in being placed with my mentor, because she’s given me great advice. When I need help, she’s there.”

We look forward to your visit during admissions’

Fall Open House
November 2019

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

www.WVSOM.edu/OpenHouse
No. 1 in rural primary care
The WVSOM Alumni Association’s annual Mid-Winter Osteopathic Seminar took place in the renovated Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. The new space provided a fresh change for alumni, speakers, residents and students who attended the event Jan. 25-27.
A total of 337 people attended the seminar, which included 14 continuing medical education sessions with topics regarding addiction, pain management and opioids on the last day of the seminar. The presentations were co-sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and WVSOM’s Southeastern Area Health Education Center and satisfied drug training the West Virginia Board of Osteopathic Medicine requires of physicians.

Other lectures addressed medical topics such as emergency pediatric burn care; clinical oral pathology and oral medicine; guidelines to the well-woman’s exam and female cancers; resuscitation; stroke care; functional medicine in primary care; opioid use disorder; cardiovascular fitness and nutrition; new drugs; boundary considerations in clinical settings; and an osteopathic approach to hip pain.

The seminar’s Alumni Luncheon/Annual Meeting included a message by WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D., regarding the “Living Our Mission” campaign. Nemitz explained that the initiative encourages students, faculty, staff and alumni to immerse themselves in community service projects and share the work they are doing throughout the state. WVSOM’s Alumni Association provided snacks for Mid-Winter Osteopathic Seminar participants to package for donation to the CAMC (Charleston Area Medical Center) Foundation Hospitality House and YWCA Sojourner’s Shelter.

Seminar presenters:
Debbie Harrell, RN
Richard Marshall, DDS
Joni Canby, D.O.
Scott Taylor, D.O.
Cynthia Keely, B.A.
Barbara McKee, RN
James Harman, D.O.
Aunna Herbst, D.O.
Elizabeth Nelson, M.D.
Robert Pepper, D.O.
Megan Elavsky, Pharm.D.
Chris Terpening, Ph.D., Pharm.D.
Machelle Linsenmeyer, Ed.D.
Leslie Buchanan, D.O.
Tom Gibbs, D.O.
Andy Thymius, D.O.
Kelly Dunavant, D.O.
Alumni Tower class challenge ended, winners announced

The WVSOM Alumni Association ended its ongoing Alumni Tower class challenge in 2018. The campaign began as an all-class challenge seeking financial support from alumni to reach a goal of $250,000 in order to offset the purchase of the tower on the WVSOM Student Center. Alumni were encouraged to support the campaign in order to free funds that could instead be used to increase the Alumni Association’s ability to provide scholarships and programs to WVSOM students and enhance students’ medical training.

During the luncheon, the Alumni Tower class challenge winners were announced. The class whose donations totaled the highest and the class with the highest percentage of donors receive a bench to be placed on the WVSOM campus. The Class of 1979 won both categories, with 100 percent participation and a total of $14,022. The first runner-up was the Class of 1997, which raised $12,458. The second runner-up was the Class of 1982, which raised $9,950.

MSOPTI research posters recognized during seminar

Medical residents and WVSOM students presented 60 posters at the Mountain State Osteopathic Postdoctoral Training Institutions Research Day Poster Competition during the Mid-Winter Osteopathic Seminar.

Lance Ridpath, coordinator of institutional research, announced poster winners during the alumni luncheon on Jan. 26. Individuals were recognized in research and case study categories, with a “people’s choice” award also named.

The winners were...
### Resident Research Category:

1st
- **Rachal Crum, D.O., OGME II**
- **Brandy Sweeney, OMS III**
- **Emily Thomas, D.O.**
  
  “Improving the Rate of Compliance With ACCF/AHA Guidelines Regarding Angiotensin Receptor-Neprilysin Inhibitor (ANRI) Use in Patients With Heart Failure and Reduced EF (HFrEF)”

2nd
- **Kristin Black, D.O., PGY III**
- **S. Whitney Courtney, D.O.**
- **Eric Radcliffe, M.D.**
- **Lauren Cronise, OMS III**
  
  “Improving Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment Curriculum Through Procedure Based Learning Within a Family Medicine Continuity Clinic: A Quality Improvement Project”

3rd
- **Jeffrey Lin, D.O.**
- **Kasey Radacic, D.O.**
- **Lyndie Wilkins, OMS III**
  
  “Reducing Delirium in the Intensive Care Unit via Education”

### Student Research Category:

1st
- **Brandy Sweeney, OMS III**
- **Rachal Crum, D.O., OGME II**
  
  “Improving the Rate of Compliance With ACCF/AHA/HFSA Guidelines Regarding Angiotensin Receptor-Neprilysin Inhibitor (ANRI) Use in Patients With Heart Failure and Reduced EF (HFrEF)”

2nd
- **Laura McCourt, OMS IV**
- **Kaitlin Mcdade, OMS IV**
- **David Moore, OMS IV**
  
  “Evaluation of Laparoscopic Ventral Hernia Repair Complications in Patients with Elevated Body Mass Index”

3rd
- **Kevin Hennenhoefer, D.O., PGY III**
- **Monika Marcinkevicius, OMS III**
- **Crissandra Digges, OMS III**
  
  “Effect of Lymphatic Pump Technique on the Pathogenesis and Management of Experimentally-Induced Psoriasis in Rodents”

### Resident Case Study Category:

1st
- **Ryan Newell, D.O.**
- **Adrienne Fratczak, D.O., PGY I**
- **Matthew Fratczak, D.O., PGY I**
  
  “A Plant-Based Medical Approach to Chronic Disease”

2nd
- **Jeffrey Lin, D.O.**
- **Simona Ioha, M.D.**
  
  “Primary Adrenal Insufficiency as a Presentation of Stage IV Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma”

3rd
- **Kacey Radacic, D.O.**
- **Joe Ciszewski, D.O.**
- **Daniel Sunders, D.O.**
  
  “Facial and Intestinal Angioedema With ACE Inhibitor”

### Student Case Study Category:

1st
- **Kaitlin Mcdade, OMS IV**
  
  “Atypical Presentation of Primary Osteosarcoma in an Adult Patient in the Absence of Risk Factors”

2nd
- **Robert D. Mullin, OMS III**
- **Madeleine G. Parson, OMS III**
- **Jeremy J. Adams, D.O.**
- **Michael J. Tranovich, D.O.**
  
  “Cotton Fever: A Sepsis Mimicker in Intravenous Drug Users”

3rd
- **Madeлин G. Parson, OMS III**
- **Adam C. Heinemann, D.O.**
- **Robert D. Mullin, OMS III**
- **Michael J. Tranovich, D.O.**
  
  “Follow-Up of a Complicated Case of Cocaine-Associated Levamisole Vasculitis”

### Resident “People’s Choice” Category:

**Research**
- **Chelsea Feger, D.O., OGME II**
- **Rachal Crum, D.O., OGME II**
- **Seth Larson, D.O., OMS III**
  
  “Thriveasaurus: A Program on Life Coping Skills”

**Case Study**
- **Cody K. Grace, D.O., PGY I**
- **Zachary K. Hamilton, D.O., PGY III**
  
  “What? Shocked?”

### Student “People’s Choice” Category:

- **Dahnish Valiani, OMS III**
- **Ameer Quadri, OMS III**
  
  “Neuroblastoma: Advances in Understanding and Therapies”
Holstein
named 2019 WVSOM Distinguished Alumni of the Year

For four decades, Robert B. Holstein, D.O., has supported the school that provided his medical education and helped launch his career in the osteopathic profession.

The Class of 1979 WVSOM graduate has exemplified continuous dedication to the WVSOM Alumni Association and school and as a result was named the 2019 Distinguished Alumni of the Year during the association’s annual Mid-Winter Osteopathic Seminar in Charleston, W.Va.

Holstein practices in Florida, but spends a lot of time at WVSOM, where he is living the mission by serving others. Holstein has given his time by serving on various boards, donated to major fundraising campaigns, and encouraged other alumni to pay it forward to help lessen the financial burden current students must carry to become physicians.

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“While I humbly appreciate receiving the Distinguished Alumni of the Year award for 2019 as recognition for service to WVSOM, my greatest satisfaction has come from the service itself,” Holstein said after the announcement.

“When you love what you do and you love those you do it for, therein lies the joy and satisfaction of serving.”

Classmate Art Rubin, D.O., who presented the award to a humbled and emotional Holstein, commented humorously on the benefits of receiving the award. “As a past winner of this award, I can tell you there are some hidden benefits … you receive a dedicated parking spot on the campus, even though I still haven’t found it yet. You also receive a photographic portrait that hangs in the lobby of the alumni center. Visitors have said, ‘Who are all of these old people?’ They never say ‘distinguished people.’”

Rubin went on to say that one current Alumni Association board member stated that Holstein could easily be named “alumni of the decade” for all he has done for WVSOM.

After Holstein’s name was called and he accepted an engraved Blenko glass vase, he quipped, “I’d like to thank the academy, the producers and my mom and dad, without whom I wouldn’t be here.”

He reflected on his trepidation after entering medical school even with the support of his wife, Jean. “As newlyweds to a new school, we weren’t sure we were going to make it. I wasn’t sure if I graduated if I would kill people or help people.”

On a more serious note, Holstein said he believes that God continues to use WVSOM and its diverse alumni to fulfill his will in bringing love and healing to others. Though he was honored to be recognized with such a prestigious award, he praised other graduates as the real heroes of WVSOM.

“I am fully aware that there are countless unsung heroes of WVSOM whose service exceeds anything that I have done. The alumni of WVSOM are truly my heroes, and this award will always remind me of their sacrifice and exemplary service as osteopathic physicians,” he said.

Holstein was elected to the Alumni Association board as a member at large in 2006, was elected president in 2010 and was re-elected in 2012, serving until 2016. Under his leadership, the association committed to the capital campaign for the Alumni Tower at $250,000.

In 2016, he was appointed to the WVSOM Board of Governors, where he still serves as vice chairman.

After graduation, Holstein completed an internship at Doctor’s Hospital in Georgia. He is board-certified in family medicine and practices at CareHere, Bob Pryor Health Center in Port Charlotte, Fla. His interests include medical mission trips, hunting, camping, riding motorcycles and WVSOM. He and his wife have been married for 44 years and have two children, Stacy Pardal and Scott Holstein.

The WVSOM Alumni Association established the Distinguished Alumni of the Year award to annually recognize graduates who have demonstrated outstanding personal and professional achievements.
Class notes

1978
Ed Eskew, D.O., serves as medical director for the Addiction Healing Center at Saint Francis Hospital in Charleston, W.Va., and as associate medical director for the West Virginia Medical Professionals Health Program.

1979
R. Daniel Goff, D.O., retired from the VA Medical Center in Las Vegas in August 2018 and has worked since then as a locum doctor in emergency rooms in Arizona and Nevada. He plans to retire from practicing medicine in December and looks forward to traveling the U.S. and world with his wife, Judy.

1984
Joni Canby, D.O., was named 2018 Distinguished Physician by the Mahoning Valley Medical Society. Canby, who is board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology as well as family medicine, owns and operates Progressive Women's Care in Boardman, Ohio, and Youngstown, Ohio.

1986
Teresa M. Kilgore, D.O., FACOI, was named 2018 Clinical Decision-Making Case Writer of the Year by the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners. Kilgore is discipline chair for internal medicine and associate professor for clinical medicine at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine-Carolinas.

1988
Andy Naymick, D.O., completed training in the da Vinci Surgical System and performed his first robotic-assisted total laparoscopic hysterectomy in May 2018 in Hanover, Pa., where he practices obstetrics and gynecology.

1999
Andy Tanner, D.O., was appointed to the West Virginia Board of Osteopathic Medicine.

2000
Shannon Sorah, D.O., was elected chair of the anesthesiology department and teaches osteopathic medical students at Lincoln Memorial University’s DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harrogate, Tenn.

2001
J.B. Hill, D.O., established a clinic at the VA Medical Center in Clarksburg, W.Va., where he offers auricular therapy.

2002
W. Britz Zimmerman, D.O., will join the staff of the Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine in June, serving as director of trauma and reconstructive urology.

2003
Craig C. Benson, D.O., relocated to Maine and joined the staff of Bucksport Regional Health Center in Bucksport. Benson is a member of the American Osteopathic Association, the American Medical Association and the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Melanie Crites-Bachert, D.O., was named one of Portland's Top Doctors of 2018 by Portland Monthly magazine, in Oregon.

2006
Jessica Castonguay, D.O., MPH, completed a one-year teaching fellowship and a one-year leadership fellowship at Northeast Ohio Medical University. She was awarded Most Innovative Project for the teaching track. Castonguay was also named medical director of the eating disorder program at Akron Children's Hospital.

2007
John Favero, D.O., of Martinsville, Va., joined the board of directors of The Harvest Foundation, dedicated to enhancing opportunities and quality of life for citizens of Martinsville and Henry County. Favero owns Martinsville Family Medicine and is president of the Medical Society of Virginia. He volunteers as an athletic team physician at Magna Vista High School and enjoys fishing, skiing, snowboarding and sports.

2010
Jennifer Bailey, D.O., received the South Carolina HPV Vaccine Is Cancer Prevention Award in January.

2011
David Silber, D.O., completed a fellowship in advanced heart failure and transplantation cardiology from Columbia University Medical Center in 2018 and became an assistant professor of medicine at Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine at Seton Hall University, in Hackensack, N.J. He serves as an advanced heart failure and pulmonary hypertension specialist at Hackensack University Medical Center.

Jim Walter, D.O., completed an orthopedic surgery residency at the Cleveland Clinic in 2016 and a hand surgery fellowship at Grandview Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio, in 2017. He works at University Hospitals in Cleveland.

2014
Lt. Andrew Naymick, D.O., will complete a three-year assignment as a flight surgeon for the U.S. Navy in June, serving at the Marine Air Corps Station in Cherry Point, N.C. Before

1991
Harry W. Young Jr., D.O., earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Baptist Bible Seminary at Clarks Summit University, graduating summa cum laude with a grade point average of 4.0. This is Young’s 15th academic degree, and it follows a master’s degree in theology and pastoral services he earned from Appalachian Bible College. A lifelong learner, Young also has advanced degrees in engineering, business administration, and aerospace and preventative medicine.
that assignment, he was deployed to Incirlik Air Base, in Turkey, where he completed more than 80 hours of combat flights. He will begin a family medicine residency at the Jacksonville Naval Hospital in July.

**Micaela Weaver, D.O.,** will complete a general surgery residency in June and start a breast surgical oncology fellowship at Women & Infants Hospital at Brown University in Providence, R.I., in August.

**2016**

Dominique Elmore, D.O., matched at Norton Children's Hospital at the University of Louisville (Kentucky) for a three-year pediatric emergency medicine fellowship. Elmore will complete a pediatrics residency at Marshall University’s Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine in June.

Christine Moore, D.O., will complete an internal medicine residency at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn., and start a hematology and medical oncology fellowship at University of Texas Health Sciences Center San Antonio in July.

Melanie Ezra Patel, D.O., matched into the Geisinger Cardiology Disease Fellowship at Geisinger Health System in Danville, Pa.

Sunny Patel, D.O., matched into the Geisinger Gastroenterology Fellowship at Geisinger Health System in Danville, Pa.

Carl Shultz, D.O., will complete an internal medicine residency at Geisinger Health System in Danville, Pa., and start a hematology and medical oncology fellowship at West Virginia University in Morgantown, W.Va., in July.

**2017**

Shiry Guirgis, D.O., and Jordan Hunter, D.O., were married July 29, 2018, in Waynesboro, Va. They are both residents at WVU Medicine-Camden Clark Medical Center in Parkersburg, W.Va.

**2018**

Matthew Hillman, D.O., and Nicole Decker, D.O., were married on June 22, 2018.

Eric Weidert, D.O., and Kristin Gibbs, D.O., were married on Dec. 8, 2018.

**2019**

**1986**

David Proctor, D.O., and his wife, June, welcomed a grandchild, Nora Rose Hanlin, on Oct. 11, 2017. Nora is the daughter of Jeff and April Hanlin of Mogadore, Ohio.

**2005**

Jen Wildpret, D.O., welcomed a daughter, Giulia Robyn Wildpret, on May 10, 2018.

**2008**

Dennis Mays, D.O., and Flora Mays welcomed a daughter, Kaia Elizabeth Mays, on June 19, 2018.

**2010**


**2011**

Grace Falbo, D.O., and her husband, Anthony Falbo, welcomed a daughter, Eva Catherine, on July 30, 2018, joining her big brother, Max.

Jim Walter, D.O., and his wife, Lauren, welcomed twin daughters, Madison and Mackenzie Walter, on Nov. 11, 2018.

**2012**

Brant Hinchman, D.O., and his wife, Adria, welcomed their third son, Weston David Hinchman, on Sept. 14, 2018.

Stephanie Rose, D.O., and Chris Rose welcomed a daughter, Eliza Lynn Rose, on Jan. 21. Stephanie is an attending emergency medicine physician in Concord, N.C.

Chad Ward, D.O., and his wife, Katie, welcomed a daughter, Margo Ward, on Sept. 12, 2018.

**2014**


**2015**

Jacob Smith, D.O., and Andrea Smith welcomed a daughter, McKayleigh Grace Smith, on Oct. 21, 2018.

**2018**

Brittany Streets, D.O., and her husband, Aaron, welcomed their first child, Easton, on Jan. 5.

**IN MEMORY OF**

Benjamin Malkiel, D.O., passed away Oct. 2, 2018. He was a former director of the inpatient team at Baltimore Washington Medical Center, where he served as a hospitalist. Malkiel is survived by his wife, Carol, and three children, Daniel, Nechama and Eric, as well as two stepchildren, Sherri Trader and Michael McCraw.

Lee Jonathan Bechtold, D.O., passed away Sept. 21, 2018, at his home. He is survived by a son, Jonathan, and a daughter, Kristin. He was founder and co-owner of EZ Care and was an avid Pittsburgh Penguins fan.

Luke Charles McElwain, D.O., passed away Sept. 21, 2018. He was a physician at Webster County Memorial Hospital in Webster Springs, W.Va., and served as medical director of emergency services. McElwain was an avid outdoorsman and is survived by his children, Luke, Andrew, Emily, Jennifer, Benjamin and Sarah.

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Have you ever thought to yourself, “If I won the lottery, I would GIVE a lot of money to the causes I care about and make a big difference”? The reality is that, on a global scale, all of us who live in this great country are already winners in life’s biggest lottery and have greater resources and opportunities than much of the rest of the world.

From those to whom much is given, much will be expected. How do we best use what we have to make a difference?

Each spring is filled with promise and hope. As the earth becomes green with the budding of new life, we also see joy and anticipation in students who are preparing to graduate and grow into their life as practicing physicians, excited about the knowledge and skills they have to give to the world. Family, friends and WVSOM alumni have supported them on the journey to this destination. No one travels this road successfully alone. Who helped you on your journey?

One of the best ways we can encourage students who commit their lives to the greater purpose of providing care for others is to assist them financially through scholarships and enhanced educational opportunities. Every year, hundreds of alumni and friends, as well as business and corporate partners, contribute to the WVSOM Foundation to support our students — but their gifts only scratch the surface of the great and growing need. Will you invest in the future of health care and help us make a difference at WVSOM?

You can make that difference now, and you can do it without winning the lottery! You don’t need a windfall to contribute something meaningful. Even giving as little as $10 a month makes an impact. Monthly sustaining gifts through electronic funds transfers are one of the best and most popular ways to give. There are many opportunities to provide support, in any amount, to the areas you are most passionate about. Whether you can make a $25,000 contribution to endow a scholarship or provide a small monthly contribution to the Annual Fund, it all adds up to create a better experience for WVSOM’s students.

If you would like to leave a lasting legacy but don’t believe you have the funds to do so now, you can arrange a gift as a part of your estate plan, to begin during your lifetime or after. Whether you can give a little or a lot, now or in the future, we can help you find a way to give that is meaningful to you and makes a lasting impact.

And if you DO win the lottery, please remember the WVSOM Foundation. Best of luck! Hope to hear from you soon.

Heather Antolini, Director of Institutional Development

Thank you to our Annual Fund Partners
Manchin Clinic has supported WVSOM for 40 years

John Manchin II, D.O., was a member of WVSOM’s first graduating class, and for four decades he and the Manchin Clinic have provided financial support to the medical school that forged his career, through contributions to the WVSOM Foundation.

“I’m thankful that I had the opportunity to go to medical school,” Manchin said. “My father was adamant about me going into the family business, so I was destined to sell carpet, lay carpet or clean carpet and that’s something I had absolutely no interest in. I did that all my early life and I knew that wasn’t what I wanted for myself.”

In addition to Manchin’s personal financial contributions, the Manchin Clinic, which has three sites in West Virginia, also contributes monetarily to the school, in part because the two organizations share similar missions.

“We believe in primary care; that’s one of our main emphases,” Manchin said. “Everybody is supposed to now have the PCP, the primary care physician, and we play an important role in that because we are the ones patients are coming to see. I’m 68 years old and I’m still seeing patients every day, five days a week. I’m also active with some of our assisted living programs in helping with elderly care. Our physicians are living the osteopathic philosophy and taking care of patients from the time of their births to the time of their deaths.”

Manchin said he understands the importance of independent clinics in underserved areas, and it’s one reason he supports WVSOM in its goal of educating physicians who serve in those parts of West Virginia.

“When I see signs that WVSOM is No. 1 in rural primary care, I get a big smile on my face because I graduated from WVSOM and went back to serve in my hometown,” he said.
“Farmington [where the Manchin Clinic began] is a town of about 300 people. It’s a coal mining community, and I was the first doctor to go back to my town and practice since 1956. Now that means something. That’s what WVSOM’s D.O.s are doing in these small communities — they’re going back to areas that don’t have physicians.”

The school’s fulfillment of its mission of educating students to serve in primary care specialties should encourage alumni to help future physicians, Manchin said.

“I think if people realize that we are so fortunate to have this school and what it has accomplished, nationally and in the state, then we can hold our heads up high.”

“To think that we can be a small part of helping that continue and keeping our school’s legacy — that’s why we should give. We need to encourage our graduates to give, because if they don’t show an interest then it’s hard to get others to contribute.”

Heather Antolini, director of institutional development at WVSOM, said Manchin is an outstanding alumnus who understands the importance of giving back to WVSOM and “paying it forward” to those entering the osteopathic profession.

“His consistent giving of his time and talent has kept him connected to our school as a beloved member of the WVSOM family. His generous financial contributions have made a powerful impact on the WVSOM Foundation’s ability to support students. His gifts have enabled the creation of facilities, the enhancement of student enrichment opportunities and the establishment of the Student Emergency Fund. We value and appreciate Dr. Manchin’s ongoing commitment and engagement with our school through the WVSOM Foundation,” she said.

While the Manchin Clinic has been a consistent business supporter of WVSOM, Manchin also gives something that some would consider just as valuable as money: his time. He has served on a number of boards representing the osteopathic profession. He was one of the first WVSOM graduates to become president of the West Virginia Society of Osteopathic Medicine, he served on the West Virginia Medical Institute board and he was a member of the WVSOM Board of Governors for more than eight years.

Manchin and his clinics have each given to the Annual Fund partnership; the Capital Campaign project with a donation for the Clinical Evaluation Center Grand Hall; the 5-for-5 Campaign; the Fredric W. Smith Memorial Scholarship; and the construction of the school’s Roland P. Sharp Alumni Conference Center.
Thank you for helping WVSOM raise more than $15,600 for student scholarships.

The support of student scholarship funding is a key focus of WVSOM, and we rely heavily on the generous donations of Grand Affair sponsors. The following pages are dedicated to the individuals and partners who graciously provided financial support to create an elegant event in 2018.

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WVSOM FOUNDATION

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ASSOCIATION

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Dr. and Mrs. Charles H. Davis

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Carvalho/Yates at Morgan Stanley Private Wealth Management

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ARE YOU READY?

Enroll in the WVSOM PE PREP COURSE or the PE PRACTICE EXAM.

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REGISTER
https://www.wvsom.edu/Programs/cec/pe-prep

INFORMATION
CEC Operations Manager
WVSOM Clinical Evaluation Center
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NEW DATES:
Sept. 26-29

Make plans to join your colleagues this September at The Greenbrier!
Earn 1-A CME (AOA and AMA) from top medical experts while having time to enjoy outdoor activities that the resort is known for: golf, tennis, fly fishing, hiking, shooting clays, horseback riding, off-roading or relaxing by the pool. Early fall is one of the most beautiful times to enjoy America’s resort!

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.wvoma.org

*Credits are recognized by the AOA Council on CME. The complete program schedule will be posted when it becomes available.
MARY ESSIG TIDBITS:

► Her first position at WVSOM was as the manager of library services.
► She has won the President’s Award of Excellence for Employee Achievement a few times.
► Most appealing aspect of working in a library: the area is a little hidden so it’s quiet. Most unappealing: sometimes it’s too quiet.
► She supervises four people.
WVSOM is No. 1 in providing primary care physicians for West Virginia.  
W.Va. HEPC Health Sciences Report Card

WVSOM is No. 1 in the nation graduating primary care physicians who practice in rural Appalachia.  
Academic Medicine

WVSOM is No. 1 in the nation among all medical schools graduating physicians who practice in rural areas.  
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21 CONSECUTIVE YEARS
WVSOM has been recognized as one of the nation's top medical schools for 21 consecutive years.  
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NO.1
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Academic Medicine

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Academic Medicine

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**SUMMER**

**FALL**

**June 12-15**
SUMMER SEMINAR

**August 22-24**
ALUMNI WEEKEND

**August 24**
CONVOCATION/WHITE COAT CEREMONY

**September 28**
GRAND AFFAIR