Overcoming the odds

EVEN UNDER the most challenging odds, patients can make remarkable, unexpected recoveries. Barbara Collard is one such patient. In July 2008, she suffered a serious brain-stem stroke, a deadly condition affecting the blood supply to areas of the brain vital to basic life support functions. Despite a poor prognosis, Collard has made a complete recovery thanks to her perseverance, the support of family and the care she received.

Collard was rushed to the MGH after collapsing at work. An acute neurologic examination showed she was unresponsive to a variety of stimuli, and a CT angiogram revealed both a blockage of the left vertebral artery in her neck and a clot that had moved into the basilar artery, which supplies the brain stem.

“Embolic strokes in the posterior circulation are a life-threatening situation,” says James Rabinov, MD, an interventional neuroradiologist in the MGH Vascular (Continued on page 2)

REMARKABLE RECOVERY: From left, Richard and Barbara Collard, Rost and Rabinov

Women in Medicine

No mountain too high to climb

MORE THAN 100 COLLEAGUES, friends and family members turned out to honor three generations of Women in Medicine at the MGH at a May 14 event held in the Richard B. Simches Research Center. Hosted by the MGH Office for Women's Careers, the MGH Planning Committee and the Archives for Women in Medicine at Harvard Medical School (HMS), the event began with an oral history video of Janet Ward McArthur, MD, the first woman at the MGH to be accorded a full HMS professorship in 1972.

During her 41 years as a clinician-researcher in reproductive endocrinology at what is now the MGH Vincent Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, McArthur, who died in 2006 at age 92, mentored many young medical professionals. One of these was Patricia K. Donahoe, MD, director of MGH Pediatric Surgical Research Laboratories and chief emerita of MGH Pediatric Surgical Services. Donahoe was recognized at the event for her outstanding research on Müllerian inhibiting substance and her role as a leader, teacher and mentor in the MGH Pediatric Surgical Service. W. Gerald Austen, MD – surgeon-in-chief emeritus and chairman of the MGH Chiefs' Council, who introduced Donahoe – shared with the audience that for Donahoe, “no mountain seems too high to climb” and that, throughout her career, others “have greatly profited from her interest, support and guidance.”

Antonia Stephen, MD, of Surgical Oncology, and AnneKathryn Goodman, MD, associate director of the MGH Vincent Division of Gynecologic Oncology, are just two of the many women who have been inspired by Donahoe. They shared their experiences as her former trainees.

“Someone believed in us,” Goodman fondly said. Stephen added, “She’s all about making it happen.”

Donahoe presented the event’s keynote address, sharing her thoughts on the importance of women in medicine and the impact of mentoring relationships. In her own experience, she said, she has found that mentors for women have moved from being reluctant advisors to personal champions. She also credited her success to her family. “My family, which reigns above all else, has made all possible,” she acknowledged, and noted that her husband Jack and her mentors – particularly Austen, M. Judah Folkman, MD, and W. Hardy Hendren III, MD – have meant the world to her throughout her career.

The event was one in a series of events co-sponsored by Countway Library’s Archives for Women in Medicine and HMS’s affiliated hospitals to celebrate pioneering and contemporary women leaders in medicine and science. To learn more about these and other outstanding women and to watch their full interviews, visit www.countway.harvard.edu/menuNavigation/chom/awm.html.
— Stroke
(Continued from page 1)

Center. “We talked with Barbara’s husband and children about the range of possible outcomes. We were not sure if she would have much quality of life, but her situation was not hopeless so they chose to give her every chance possible.”

Rabinov performed an endovascular procedure targeting the blood clot. He navigated a catheter through her blood vessels to the site of the clot and used a variety of techniques to restore blood flow. Natalia Rost, MD, a neurologist with the MGH Stroke Service, helped make treatment decisions, monitored indicators of Collard’s future neurological health and kept the family updated about the team’s progress.

After the procedure, Collard spent seven days in the Neurological Intensive Care Unit and 16 total days at the MGH. She was then transferred to a rehabilitation hospital where she continued her remarkable recovery.

“My whole right side was gone,” Collard says. “I couldn’t walk, talk or eat, but the next week I was on my feet moving around. I worked hard because I wanted to talk again. I have too many grandchildren to enjoy, and I’m too young to be stuck in a wheelchair.”

Collard was at the rehabilitation hospital for two weeks before returning home to New Bedford. Within a year, she was walking without a cane and had no trouble with her speech.

“I didn’t recognize her the first time she came to my clinic for a follow-up appointment,” says Rost. “I was in the waiting room expecting someone in a wheelchair, and she was just standing there smiling at me. Moreover, she has continued to improve every time I have seen her since.”

To help raise awareness of stroke, Collard was one of 75 survivors to gather at the Massachusetts State House May 11 to mark American Stroke Month. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health reports that stroke is the third leading cause of death in the state.

“I’m amazed at how I came through it all, just amazed,” says Collard. “I hope I can offer some hope that it is possible to survive a brain-stem stroke. It can be done.”

Collard’s case will be published in the Journal of Neurointerventional Surgery.

Champions of success

EVERYONE AT THE MGH is a part of the effort toward hand hygiene excellence, but some MGHers go above and beyond to promote hand hygiene hospitalwide. A May 12 celebration recognized these individuals, known as hand hygiene champions, for their role in achieving 90 percent hand hygiene compliance both before and after contact with a patient or patient environment throughout 2009 at the MGH. The event, hosted by the Stop the Transmission of Pathogens (STOP) Task Force and the Infection Control Unit, featured an overview of the MGH’s hand hygiene program and a presentation of awards to the champions of nearly 60 surveyed units, work areas and role groups who contributed to the success. Hospital leaders and “behind-the-scenes” guests also were recognized for their support of the program, which has achieved national and international attention.

“The event was a lot fun,” said Megan Knecht, RN, a hand hygiene champion for Bigelow 11. “I am very impressed by how well we’ve done over time!”

CLEAN COLLABORATION: Hand hygiene champions and STOP Task Force members at the May 12 event

PEOPLE ARE TWEETING ... ABOUT MGH

@galtime: @massgeneralnews @mghfc great, important health news
@HappyChickens: @MGH/C Mass General for Children ROCKS! I am lucky they are right down the street.
@CarissO: Dr. Peter Masiakos from @MassGeneral is incredible. Since he operated on my girl at 6 days old, he’s there for every call or email I make.
@Christinew: @MassGeneralNews-wonderful staff today @Wang loop helping patients to get in/out of cars & into wheelchairs-are gentle & do not rush the pt
@BobWoodruff: @BobWoodruff presented $100,000 ck to @MassGeneralNews & Red Sox Foundation Home Base Prgm to help our service members last nite!

Follow @massgeneralnews and @mghfc on Twitter by accessing http://twitter.com/massgeneralnews and http://twitter.com/mghfc.
MAO celebrates URM graduates and their accomplishments

With its largest ever graduating class, the MGH Multicultural Affairs Office (MAO) marked the graduation of 44 underrepresented minority (URM) residents and fellows May 13 at an evening reception held at the Cambridge Multicultural Art Center. The graduating class reflects the most diverse group of residents and fellows in MGH history.

Offering warm congratulations to the class of 2010 was MAO Executive Director Elena Olson, who described several key accomplishments during the past year. These include the recruitment of 26 new URM residents in 15 programs in 2010, the creation of a MAO Facebook page for alumni to keep in touch and the launch of planning for an inaugural MAO alumni reunion to be held Feb. 11, 2011, in recognition of the MGH bicentennial.

Olson also gave special recognition to the Organization of Minority Residents and Fellows (OMRF), a subcommittee of the MAO. The 2009-2010 OMRF board, which is chaired by Karen Winkfield, MD, includes Fola May, MD, Andrea Jackson, MD, Audley Osbourne, MD, and Josue Vazquez, MD. The group has participated in recruitment and career development of URM trainees as well as outreach to the Boston community. This past year, the OMRF also organized the Haiti Relief Gala, raising more than $35,000 to benefit individuals affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti. For their contributions, each OMRF leader was presented an Award for Service. Olson then announced the incoming OMRF board members: Taison Bell, MD, Oluseyi Ojeifo, MD, and Ken Shelton, MD. Osbourne will remain a board member as the 2010-2011 OMRF chair.

As a highlight of the event, Winfred Williams, MD, MAO Advisory Board co-chair, associate faculty member of the MGH Center for Human Genetic Research and senior transplant nephrologist, provided remarks. Williams, who is the founding director of the MAO, explained how he had been in the graduates’ shoes more than 20 years ago and had been both “scared and excited” by the prospects of the future. He offered encouragement to the graduates: “So, as I reflect upon my career and those who I have seen develop around me, I have a simple message: ‘In order to succeed in the world of academic medicine, you must be creative, tenacious and find good people to work with and leaders to support your work and ideas. This – in addition to good luck and timing – is the key to success no matter what health care career you choose.’”

For more information about the MAO, access www2.massgeneral.org/mao.

10th annual Community Health Day

For 10 years, the MGH Revere HealthCare Center’s Community Health Day has provided the opportunity to celebrate community health efforts and educate center staff, patients and community members. This year’s event featured Michael Jellinek, MD, chief of the MGH Child Psychiatry Service and president of Newton-Wellesley Hospital, who presented “Adolescent Self-Esteem – The Complex Path to Teen Success.”

“Self-esteem is at the root of many issues child psychiatrists see,” said Jellinek, who discussed the role of self-esteem in an individual’s healthy psychological development. He detailed ways for adults to encourage self-esteem in children and teenagers, including setting reasonable expectations for success and providing opportunities for children and teens to succeed autonomously.

At the close of the event, Debra Jacobson, administrative director of the health center, presented the Revere Community Health Award to Jay Picariello, Revere Fire Department captain, for his leadership and support of anti-drug abuse efforts in the community. Picariello successfully advocated for Revere firefighters to carry intranasal Naloxone, a resource which has enabled them to save several lives by preventing opioid overdoses.

Community Counts: From left, Roger Pasinski, MD, MGH Revere medical director; Jacobson; Bernice MacIntyre, MGH Revere Marketing/Operations liaison; and Jellinek
WHAT'S HAPPENING
Seminar on multicenter clinical trials
The MGH Clinical Research Program and Neurology Clinical Trials Unit are hosting “Sponsoring and Managing Multicenter Clinical Trials: An Introduction for Principal Investigators and Study Staff” on June 7 from 9 am to noon for investigators and 12:30 to 4 pm for study staff in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.120. The morning session will focus on the difference between being a site investigator participating in a multicenter clinical trial and being the “sponsor” of a multicenter clinical trial. The afternoon session will focus on the differences between being a site coordinator and managing a multicenter clinical trial. To register, contact Hillary Dearborn at 617-726-3310.

Julie Fund 5K Walk to benefit MGH Cancer Center
MGHers are invited to join the MGH Gynecology/Oncology Team for The Julie Fund Walk June 26 from 9 am to noon in Artesani Park in Brighton. The Julie Fund honors the memory of Julie McAvinn, an MGH patient who died from ovarian cancer in 2004. Her friends and family established the fund in partnership with the MGH to support women with cancer. All proceeds from the walk benefit the MGH to fund research and provide nonmedical financial support to women in need. For more information or to join the MGH team, visit www.juliefund.org or contact Devon Ficker at 617-726-6308 or dficker@partners.org.

Seminar series on professional clinical research organizations
The MGH Clinical Research Program is sponsoring “The Benefits of Joining a Professional Clinical Research Organization” June 9 from noon to 1 pm in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.110. Representatives from the Association of Clinical Research Professionals and the Society of Clinical Research Associates will highlight the benefits of membership in a professional clinical research organization and outline the process for obtaining clinical research certification. The course is geared toward research nurses and coordinators, but all are welcome to attend. This program meets the requirements of the Board of Registration in Nursing for 24 CMR 5.00, for one contact hour of nursing continuing education. To register, access http://hub.partners.org. For more information, contact Lauren Michaels at 617-726-5010.

Global health seminar series
The MGH Center for Global Health is hosting “Models of Global Health Education: Presentation and Panel Discussion” June 2 from 2 to 4 pm in the Ether Dome as part of the “Global Health Seminar Series.” The presentation will feature Neal Nathanson, MD, associate dean for Global Health Programs at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Panelists will be David Bangsberg, MD, director of the MGH Center for Global Health; David Henderson, MD, director of the Chester M. Pierce Division of Global Psychiatry at MGH; Patrick Lee, MD, of MGH General Medicine; and Albert Mulley, MD, chief of General Medicine.

MGH Senior HealthWISE
MGH Senior HealthWise will offer a free blood pressure screening for seniors ages 60 and older June 7 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm at Hill House, 127 Mt. Vernon St., with Diane Connor, MS, RN, CDE, a wellness nurse. For more information, call 617-724-6756.

Heart failure class
The MGH Heart Center is hosting a patient and family education class, “Understanding Heart Failure,” June 2 from 10:30 to 11:30 am in the Yawkey Center, Room 4-930. Instructors will be Kevin Heist, MD, and Anne Borden, RN, both of the MGH Heart Center. To register, call 617-643-1452.

DSC seminar series
The MGH Disparities Solutions Center (DSC) is hosting “Mental Health, Acculturation and Cancer Screening Among Hispanics” June 2 from noon to 1 pm in the Trustees Room as part of its “Racial and Ethnic Disparities: Keeping Current” seminar series. Lina Pabon-Nau, MD, MPH, current Aetna Foundation Health Care Disparities fellow with the DSC, will discuss her work looking at how anxiety and depression affect cancer screening in Hispanics of different levels of acculturation. This event is free and open to the public. A light lunch will be served. To register, e-mail disparitiessolutions@partners.org and indicate the event’s title. For more information, visit www2.massgeneral.org/disparitiessolutions/events.html.

Proteomics nanocourse
The MGH Clinical Research Program and the Harvard Catalyst are sponsoring “Proteomics Nanocourse” June 14 from 1 to 5 pm in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.110. This course is intended for clinicians, investigators, graduate and medical students, nurses and other clinical research staff with an interest in proteomics, metabolomics and disease biomarkers. Key principles necessary for basic, clinical and translational researchers to design proteomic or metabolomic studies and to perform and analyze proteomic and metabolic data will be discussed. To register, access http://catalyst.harvard.edu/home.html. For more information, contact Suzanne Guerette at 617-724-2900.

IN GENERAL
Valerie Stone, MD, MPH, FACP, of the Department of Medicine, has been elected to the Board of Regents of the American College of Physicians (ACP). The Board of Regents is the main policymaking body of the ACP, which is the largest medical specialty organization in the United States.

Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, of the Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine, was re-elected to a second term as vice speaker of the House of Delegates of the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) at the organization’s annual meeting May 14. The House of Delegates is the legislative and policy-making body of the MMS, which represents approximately 21,000 physicians, residents and medical students throughout Massachusetts.

Theofanie Mela, MD, Vanessa Preble, NP, and May Dambreville of the MGH Cardiac Arrhythmia Service have been honored with a Governor’s Citation signed by Gov. Deval Patrick and Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Murray acknowledging their outstanding service to the health care profession. The three were nominated for their expertise and commitment to providing outstanding care at the MGH Heart Center.

Jim Noga, chief information officer (CIO), is one of four finalists for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan CIO Symposium 2010 Award for Innovation Leadership. The award honors CIOs and chief medical information officers who encourage a culture of innovation while providing excellent information technology services to advance their organization’s mission.