A brush with history

WHEN AN ARTIST PAINTS A PORTRAIT, a story is created. Every item surrounding the subject becomes a part of that story – all with the stroke of a brush.

“The story of John Stoeckle is academic medicine,” said John Goodson, MD, of MGH Internal Medicine Associates and Stoeckle Center advisory board chair. “John was a 24/7 guy, a clinical scholar working at night on ideas he articulated and influenced powerfully in his work.”

Goodson, along with colleagues and friends, crowded into the John D. Stoeckle, MD, Conference Room on Sept. 11 to celebrate the unveiling of Stoeckle’s portrait and the conference room named in his honor.

“When I began working at the MGH in 1983, someone suggested I should sit in with John Stoeckle,” said Michael Barry, MD, of the MGH Department of Medicine. “Never before or since, have I met anyone so focused on the patient agenda.”

The real story of John Stoeckle, MD, of MGH’s John D. Stoeckle Center for Primary Care Innovation, began in a small town in Michigan where he was inspired by his older brother to pursue medicine. Although the road to become a doctor was paved with good intentions, the world was at war and Stoeckle’s journey was not a smooth, straight line. He attended Oberlin and Antioch colleges in Ohio, joined the Naval Reserve, and in a cooperative program, spent time at the University of Chicago, where he took courses to complete the necessary requirements to apply to medical school. In 1944, he was accepted into Harvard Medical School, which was at the time a three-year, year-round program.

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MAO awards highlight advancement

IN 1991 ARTURO SAAVEDRA, MD, PHD, first arrived at the MGH – young and full of wonder – as one of the first participants in the Multicultural Affairs Office (MAO) summer research trainee program. He made his way to his assigned lab thinking he might be interested in medicine but had no idea what lay ahead.

Twenty-three years later after completing two degrees, Saavedra is medical director of the MGH Medical Dermatology Unit and one of four faculty members honored with the 2014 MAO Faculty Development Award.

“This award allows me to continue what I’m doing and reinforces that the hospital is committed to career development,” said Saavedra, who received a Clinician-Teacher Award that will fund his project, “Evaluating the Effect of Isotretinoin in T-regulatory Cell Function in Adverse Cutaneous Drug Eruptions.”

The MAO Award program supports research, education and clinical

(Continued on page 2)
Kenneth D. Bloch, MD

NEARLY EVERY MORNING before the rising light, Kenneth D. Bloch, MD, was the first one to arrive at his lab at the MGH. It was home. It was where he could be found each day – including Saturday and Sunday – often whistling unknown tunes while he worked. Friends called him the pied piper of scientists, always with a flock of young students and physician/scientists to whom he devoted hours, patiently guiding and counseling each day.

“He spent untold hours correcting their papers, and I can tell you it was not just theirs,” says close friend and colleague Warren Zapol, MD, director of the Anesthesia Center for Critical Care Research and former anesthetist-in-chief. “I would send Ken what I considered to be a just about perfect draft, and shortly after I would get it back with 100 to 200 red editorial balloon comments.”

Bloch, a cardiologist in the Department of Medicine – described by colleagues as a brilliant, unflappable researcher, physician and mentor, who possessed equanimity in the face of any stress – died on September 13 at the age of 58.

“He brightened our lives with his wisdom, his amazing grasp of science, his carefully articulated insights and opinions, his dry wit and his remarkable way of helping us express ourselves,” says Zapol.

“Ken’s first priorities were the science, and the development of those around him,” says Marc Semigran, MD, director of the MGH Heart Failure/Cardiac Transplant Program in the Institute for Heart, Vascular and Stroke Care. “He was always available to plan experiments, review grants and manuscripts, and discuss the best way to present your work.”

MGH cardiologist Rajeev Malhotra, MD, was an intern when he met Bloch and later worked in his lab. Malhotra quickly came to appreciate the respect and trust Bloch received not only from his patients but also his peers.

“I learned an immense amount of clinical knowledge from Ken but also witnessed his passion for studying molecular biology and pursuing investigation of cardiovascular disease mechanisms,” says Malhotra. “Even on the wards, Ken always had a way of weaving the conversation back towards bench science.”

Bloch was born in New York City on May 17, 1956, and raised in Brookline, Mass. After receiving his undergraduate and medical degrees from Brown University in 1978 and 1981, he began his career as a medical resident at the MGH, followed by a cardiology fellowship and then a position on the division staff in 1990. Two years later, he became an investigator in the Cardiovascular Research Center. His longstanding collaboration with Zapol led to a joint appointment with the Department of Anesthesia and receipt of the Harvard Medical School (HMS) William T. G. Morton Professorship in 2007.

For Bloch, medicine was more than just a way to make a living. His idea of a sabbatical was to spend six months, seven days per week in his own lab. It was there he spent his happiest hours studying three cell signaling molecules important to regulating the cardiovascular system: atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP), nitric oxide (NO), and the bone morphogenetic proteins (BMPs).

At the beginning of his research career, Bloch discovered the mechanisms of action and regulation of ANP, a hormone essential for optimizing cardiac function and maintaining blood pressure in humans. Later, he went on to identify one of the genes responsible for NO synthesis and characterized in patients at MGH the important functions of NO in regulating blood vessel constriction and cardiac function. Bloch was central to many of the human trials of inhaled NO in babies and adults with heart and lung disease at MGH.

More recently, he developed novel small molecule inhibitors of the BMPs, a critical family of proteins involved in human diseases, including pulmonary hypertension, atherosclerosis and anemia.

“Having had the extraordinary opportunity to work with Ken for 12 years, I am pretty sure that the best way we can honor his memory as scientists is to keep doing great science and to look out for each other,” says Emmanuel Buys, PhD, of the Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine.

Despite receiving many awards and accolades throughout his remarkable career, Bloch tended to downplay his impact on research and teaching.

“Ken was a private person,” says Fumito Ichinose, MD, of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine. “He never talked about himself – all he ever talked about was science. He could talk research like others talk about a last-second touchdown pass by Tom Brady.”

A funeral service has been held for Bloch, who in addition to his father Kurt and brother Donald, both longtime MGH physicians, leaves his mother Margot, niece Emily and nephew Sam.

— Awards

(Continued from page 1)

innovation, along with community and global health projects of faculty underrepresented in medicine. Funded by the Executive Committee on Research, the Mass General Physicians Organization and the President’s Office, each award consists of $120,000 over the course of four years.

The Sept. 10 event, at the Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation, also welcomed new medical students, trainees and faculty. During the celebration, Elena Olson, MAO executive director, honored award recipients.

“Award winners, visit www.massgeneral.org/mao.

“I am grateful for this award,” said Ahonkhai. “Thanks to the guidance of the MGH community, I am truly able to stand on the shoulders of giants.”

Other recipients included child psychiatrist Tanisha Choice, MD, who received a Clinician-Teacher Award, recognized for her project, “A New Curriculum for Enhancing Pediatric Mental Health Treatment in Primary Care Settings;” and Azure Tariro Makadzange, MD, PhD, in the Division of Infectious Disease and Ragon Institute, who received a Physician/Scientist Award for “Immunopathogenesis of Cryptococcal Reactivation in HIV Infection.”

For more information about current and past award winners, visit www.massgeneral.org/mao.
Wilhelm named chief of Psychology

THE MGH DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY recently named Sabine Wilhelm, PhD, chief of Psychology. In this role, Wilhelm will oversee Psychology operations, liaison with the MGH and Psychiatry leadership and further the ongoing reputation of the department through national and global channels.

“Sabine is an extraordinary quadruple threat,” says Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD, chief of the MGH Department of Psychiatry. “She has built and administers a large and successful clinical and research program, is acknowledged as a master teacher and mentor, is very well funded in challenging times, and is a clinical expert, but most of all she is a talented and committed team player.”

Wilhelm joined the Psychiatry Department as an intern in clinical psychology in July 1995, becoming director of the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Program in 2005 and of the OCD and Related Disorders Program in 2007. After her recent promotion, she stepped down from her leadership role within CBT but continues to run the multidisciplinary OCD program, which has 36 members including psychiatrists, psychologists, statisticians, fellows and research assistants.

She has also supervised the research and clinical work of 37 psychologists both inside and outside of the MGH. Wilhelm’s research focuses on the development, testing and dissemination of treatments for obsessive-compulsive spectrum disorders. She has been the principal investigator or site principal investigator of seven NIMH-funded research grants and several foundation grants. Additionally, her research has appeared in more than 170 publications and six books focusing on the cognitive functioning, prevalence and treatment outcome of these disorders.

“Psychology at the MGH has many strengths, and I look forward to forging – and surpassing – new objectives and goals for this very talented group,” says Wilhelm. “I am truly humbled by the trust that leadership has placed in me.”

Wilhelm succeeds Dennis Norman, EdD, who stepped down after 25 years of service to focus his efforts on the Harvard University Native American Program where he has served as faculty chair since 2005.

Color MGH happy

A NEW HUE decorated the MGH this week as employees donned blue and orange in celebration of the 2014 My Giving Helps: The MGH Fund + United Way employee campaign.

Blue and Orange Week, an annual spirit week that takes place during the month-long campaign, is an opportunity for employees to show off their campaign pride and creativity. Employees wearing campaign colors who are spotted by a My Giving Helps champion are eligible to win prizes such as restaurant gift cards and tickets to local events and entertainment.

As in past years, there was no lack of creativity during Blue and Orange Week. Colorful scrubs, sneakers and jewelry were a common sight around campus, and some especially creative employees also donned bright shades of makeup, hair accessories and nail polish.

“Blue and Orange Week is a fun opportunity to change up my wardrobe for a good cause,” says Karima Ricketts, office supervisor at the Center for Integrated Diagnostics.

The annual My Giving Helps employee campaign raises support for Mass General and United Way. Donations to the MGH Fund benefit a wide range of areas at the hospital, including research, clinical innovations and employee programs. Gifts to United Way support the organization’s 170 different partner organizations providing services to thousands of local residents.

This fall, My Giving Helps introduced Tap to Give, an easy way for employees to make a campaign contribution by scanning their badge at special card readers stationed at Eat Street Café registers. Each tap represents a one-time, $1 payroll contribution. Tap to Give will continue through the end of this year’s campaign. Participating employees will be entered into a special prize drawing. During the week of September 15, donors will be eligible to win lift tickets to Wachusett Mountain, and during the week of September 22 can win an overnight stay and breakfast at the Westin Boston Waterfront.

My Giving Helps co-chairs have set a goal of 5,000 employee donors in 2014. Employees can make a one-time gift or enroll in a payroll deduction pledge by visiting www.mygivinghelps.org.

MGH HOTLINE

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PUT A STICKER ON IT: Ina Drouin, MGH Fund director of leadership giving, left, helps an employee apply a donor recognition sticker to her badge.
— Brush with history
(Continued from page 1)

When released by the Naval Reserve in 1945, Stoeckle worked at the Massachusetts Mental Hospital in exchange for free room and board – a full-time student by day and a watch-keeper by night. In 1946, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis, spent a year at Trudeau Sanatorium in upstate New York, and in 1948 began residency training at the MGH. When the Korean War began, the navy would not accept Stoeckle because of his bout with tuberculosis, but the army would. Yet as fate would have it, Stoeckle never went to war; he was asked to serve on a Pentagon panel regarding the medical effects of atomic bomb exposure.

In the early 1950s, he returned to the MGH and became head of the medical outpatient clinic, where he introduced a new model for outpatient care, based on the experiences of physicians who had gone to war.

“The wartime medical doctors had observed psychiatrists dealing with the wounded and rehabilitating them in ways they never did in their own practice,” said Stoeckle. “We took their advice and taught students how to listen. And along with a psychiatric staff, we instructed them on non directive interviewing to elicit the emotional distress of medical patients.”

In the 1960s and 70s, the medical clinic under Stoeckle was converted into a teaching group practice holding a residency training program in primary care management. This was a major change in the organization of practice at the MGH.

Stoeckle’s story is reflected in his portrait where he is surrounded by relics from the past – a spiral notebook, a rolodex and piles of books – revealing a man who colleagues say never signed out.

“I am inspired by how people get through illness and the stress of their lives,” said Stoeckle. “It’s moving what patients go through. You can’t help but end up with a sense of admiration and inspiration.”

Flu shots on the fly

PEAK FLU SEASON is months away but it’s never too late to get a jump-start on prevention. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends an annual flu shot for everyone over the age of 6 months. To protect staff and patients, the MGH is offering a number of free flu clinics.

“The expectation is that all employees, except those that have medical conditions that rule it out, will receive the flu vaccine this season,” says Andrew Gottlieb, NP, FNP-BC, director of MGH Occupational Health Services. “Flu vaccine remains the most effective way to prevent the flu in those receiving the vaccine and those around them.”

The first clinic will be held Sept. 22 through Sept. 26 under the Bulfinch Tent from noon to 5 pm. Staff should remember to bring their ID badges and wear clothing that easily rolls up to the top of the arm. New stickers for IDs indicating who has been vaccinated will be distributed to replace last year’s green stickers.

Employee vaccination clinics at satellite locations are listed below.

Somerville
Oct. 7, 9 to 11 am

Medford Registration & Referral Center
Oct. 9, 1 to 3:30 pm

101 Merrimac Street, 4th Floor conference room
Oct. 9, 11 am to 1 pm

Charlestown Navy Yard (CNY), Building 149
Oct. 8, 7 am to 3:30 pm
Oct. 21, 8 am to 12:30 pm

Schartfts, 5th Floor Assembly rooms A,B,C
Oct. 16, 8 am to 1 pm

Danvers
Oct. 22, 10 am to 2 pm

Employees may also visit MGH Occupational Health Services located at 165 Charles River Plaza, suite 404, or call 617-726-2217 to schedule an appointment.