A golden anniversary
Celebrating 50 years of intensive care

IN THE FIRST HALF of the 20th century, MGH patients with respiratory failure could receive mechanical ventilation and other specialized treatments, but they were scattered throughout the hospital, straining available resources. In October 1961, Henning Pontoppidan, MD, then medical director of Oxygen Therapy – with the support of Henry K. Beecher, MD, former anesthetist-in-chief – requested and received approval to create the hospital’s first designated intensive care unit, the Respiratory Intensive Care Unit (RICU). On Oct. 28, members of the Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine and the Critical Care Center gathered in the Ether Dome to celebrate the golden anniversary of intensive care at the MGH.

J. Perren Cobb, MD, director of the Critical Care Center, welcomed attendees, including Pontoppidan and his three daughters. Providing recollections of the early days of the RICU were Edward Lowenstein, MD, provost of the Department of Anesthesia, Critical Care and Pain Medicine and one of the unit’s first residents, and Sally Millar, RN, director of Patient Care Services Informatics, who worked on the unit in the late 1970s and was its first head nurse.

“To watch the progression of advances in the RICU from bench to bedside and from practice at the MGH to practice throughout the community was amazing,” recalled Millar.

Warren Zapol, MD, PhD, director of the Anesthesia Center for Critical Care Research and former anesthetist-in-chief, offered insight into the many research advances (Continued on page 3)

Crowley named to Podolsky Professorship

WILLIAM CROWLEY JR., MD, chief of the Reproductive Endocrine Unit and director of Clinical Research, was honored Oct. 17 with the first Daniel K. Podolsky Professorship in Medicine, a new endowed chair at Harvard Medical School (HMS). The professorship was established by an anonymous donor in honor of Podolsky, who served as chief of MGH Gastroenterology and the Mallinckrodt Professor of Medicine at HMS until 2008, when he became president of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Podolsky spoke at the event, along with Jeffrey Flier, MD, dean of HMS, Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president, and Dennis Ausiello, MD, chief of the MGH Department of Medicine. (Continued on page 2)
Influencing change


The fourth annual event featured a panel discussion about the rapidly-changing world of health care as well as personal success stories from four featured speakers, who shared how they balance high-level careers at Boston hospitals with the demands of family and other personal obligations.

“I was very pleased to be part of this wonderful event,” says speaker Valerie Stone, MD, MPH, associate chief of the General Medicine Unit at the MGH. “I’ve learned a lot on my long journey from first-year medical student in 1979 to full professor and associate chief of an MGH academic division in 2011. So I was delighted to have the opportunity to share some of these lessons with fellow colleagues, in hopes that it would be helpful to them along their journey and in their efforts to break through the glass ceiling.”

Other panelists who spoke during the two-hour program were Naomi Fried, PhD, chief innovation officer at Children’s Hospital; Beth Gies, director of Policy and Research at Partners HealthCare; and Kate Walsh, president and CEO of Boston Medical Center. The event was moderated by Pamela Reeve, chair of The Commonwealth Institute, and also featured remarks from Ann L. Prestipino, MPH, senior vice president of MGH Diversity Program for Patient Care Services. and Deborah Washington, RN, director of the MGH Surgical and Anesthesia Services and Clinical Business Development, and Deborah Washington, RN, director of the MGH Diversity Program for Patient Care Services.

“It was truly an inspirational event – not only for the attendees, but for the speakers as well,” Prestipino says. “It was great to see so many incredible women in various stages of their careers coming together to influence change.”

LEADING THE WAY: From left, Fried, Washington, Reeve, Walsh, Prestipino. Seated, Alexa Kimball, MD, vice president of the MGPO and vice chair of the Department of Dermatology, left, and Gies

Understanding domestic violence

ACCORDING TO THE National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, one in every four women will be abused at home in her lifetime. Throughout October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the MGH Domestic Violence Working Group – a part of the MGH HAVEN (Hospitals Helping Abuse and Violence End Now) program – hosted a series of events to call attention to this complex problem.

“Although domestic violence primarily affects women, they are not the only victims,” says Liz Speakman, LICSW, director of HAVEN. “Men also can be abused, and the children who often witness such violence are negatively affected too.”

Activities included information tables, panel discussions and grand rounds. Unsung Hero Awards were presented by Speakman Oct. 27 to MGHers who have gone above and beyond to help survivors of domestic violence. Recipients are staff of the MGH Revere Adolescent Health Center/School Based Health Center, for incorporating teen dating violence education and screening into the treatment of all their patients; Jeff Cooper, PhD, executive director of the Center for Medical Simulation, for his exemplary work as a member of MGH Men Against Abuse; and Arlene Meara, RN, a staff nurse in the Operating Room, for founding the Shannon Lee Meara Foundation in memory of her daughter – tragically killed by her boyfriend in 2008 – in order to provide teen dating violence awareness and education to high school students.

After the award presentations, guest speaker Maxine Weinreb, EdD, assistant director of the Child Witness to Violence Program at Boston Medical Center, gave a lecture, “Identifying and Responding to Children Exposed to Violence.” Weinreb emphasized key lessons learned by staff in the program, including that there is no age at which a child is immune to the effects of domestic violence.

For more information about domestic violence, access www.havenatmgh.org.

– Crowley

(Continued from page 1)

“It is fitting that Dr. Crowley be the first individual to hold the Podolsky Professorship," said Slavin. “Bill is a true leader as evidenced by the many national and international awards he has received. This is a particularly moving celebration for me, since I had the good fortune of learning from both Dan and Bill when I was an MGH medical resident. They both taught me a great deal about providing outstanding clinical care and simultaneously thinking deeply about the scientific basis of human illness.”

Crowley has been an integral part of the MGH community since 1969, during which time he pioneered a number of significant scientific advancements, including the use of GnRH analogues – which block the release of sex hormones – to treat children with precocious puberty. This therapy is also widely used to treat prostate cancer, endometriosis and uterine fibroids. Most recently, Crowley and his colleagues have been leaders in using genetic and molecular approaches in clinical research to identify several new genes that control human puberty and sexual maturation.

“I am greatly honored by this chair and all that it means in celebrating Dan Podolsky’s illustrious career at the MGH. I also appreciate Dr. Ausiello’s commitment to the area of translational research that will become such an important activity of the MGH going forward,” Crowley said.
Announcing the festival of lights

BRIGHTLY COLORED patterned lanterns hung from the ceiling, and flickering candles lined the window sills of the East Garden Room for its transformation into a traditional Indian celebration. “Happy Diwali!” attendees warmly greeted one another as they arrived at the Oct. 27 event, hosted by MGH Human Resources. A blessing was given by Michael McElhinney, MDiv, director of the MGH Chaplaincy, and Jeff Davis, senior vice president of Human Resources, provided additional remarks.

“It’s beautiful,” said Dinesh Patel, MD, chief of Arthroscopic Surgery, who approached the MGH about organizing the celebration earlier this year. “They have done a wonderful job. The fact that the leadership of the hospital is willing to respect other religions and the inclusion of diversity is great.”

Diwali is most commonly known as the festival of lights and traditionally celebrated by Hindus, Jains and Sikhs. According to tradition, Diwali celebrates the joyous homecoming of Lord Rama, hero of the epic poem “Ramayana,” after 14 years of exile. When Rama and his wife returned to rule their country, their people lit the way with small oil lamps.

Partners Research Ventures and Licensing employees Seema Basu, associate director, and Uma Sundaram and Rekha Paleyanda, both senior business strategy and licensing managers, said that, despite the inclement weather, they traveled from their office at the Prudential Center to join the festivities. “I came because Mass General is taking the time and effort to celebrate one of the largest Indian celebrations. It’s fun,” Sundaram said.

“This is wonderful,” Basu agreed. “It’s very well done. It’s a celebration that transcends all ages, and it’s for the whole family.”

FESTIVE FUN: Patel, second from left, with attendees at the Diwali event.

– Intensive care

(Continued from page 1)

that began in the RICU, including the unit’s leadership in providing respiratory support with extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and the use of inhaled nitric oxide. Daniel Chipman, RRT, assistant director of Respiratory Care Services, gave an overview of the parallel progress of respiratory care and intensive care.

Also offering remarks and congratulations were Jeanine Wiener-Kronish, MD, anesthetist-in-chief; Brit Nicholson, MD, chief medical officer; David Cullen, MD, a former MGH anesthesiologist; and Myanna Pontoppidan, who shared an anecdote about her father being likened to the “Mount Olympus” of his field. As a tribute to his contributions, the Henning Pontoppidan Visiting Professorship was established earlier this year.

In closing, Cobb described how intensive care has grown since its humble beginnings as a five-bed unit in the Phillips House. “The Critical Care Center now includes all nine ICUs hospitalwide and more than 130 total beds, and we continue to set the benchmark for our specialty,” said Cobb. “The credit goes to the entire team – the success we celebrate today is truly a group effort.”

John “Jack” Burke, MD

JOHN “JACK” BURKE, MD, who established the MGH Burn Research Center, died of pancreatic cancer Nov. 2 at the age of 89. During his 60-year career at the MGH, Burke helped advance techniques in burn care, including pioneering the development of artificial skin to treat burn patients, a therapy that ultimately became standard practice for treating major burn injuries.

“Dr. Jack Burke was one of the true giants in the clinical care, scientific discovery and teaching of modern burn therapy. His contributions have saved and improved the lives of patients around the world and will affect burn care for many, many years to come,” says Jay Austen, MD, chief of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.

Burke was born July 22, 1922, in Chicago. After serving in the Army during World War II, he attended Harvard Medical School (HMS) and received his medical degree in 1951. Burke was named chief of the MGH Trauma Services in 1974. He also served as chief of surgery at the Shriners Burns Institute from 1968 to 1980 and chief of staff there from 1969 to 1980. In 1976, he was named the Helen Andrus Benedict Professor of Surgery at HMS. During his career, Burke developed techniques for excising burned skin and immediately grafting new skin on the burned sites, as well as developing and refining artificial skin for grafting.

Paul Russell, MD, former chief of the Department of Surgery, remembers Burke as a “capable and well-regarded surgeon having been broadly trained in general and thoracic surgery. Jack was very well-liked and respected by all of his colleagues and was known throughout the world for his contributions. He had a wonderful wry sense of humor and an unquenchable cheerfulness that made him especially popular.”

Burke is survived by his wife, Agnes, and their children, John, Peter and Anne, as well as eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. His son Andrew preceded him in death.
MGH chiefs elected to IOM

THE PRESTIGIOUS Institute of Medicine (IOM) recently hosted its 41st annual meeting announcing 65 new members and five foreign associates. Among the new members are two MGH physicians, Jay S. Loeffler, MD, chief of Radiation Oncology, and James H. Thrall, MD, radiologist-in-chief.

IOM membership, gained through election, is considered one of the highest honors in the fields of health and medicine and recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement and commitment to service. The IOM, founded in 1970, is recognized as a resource for independent, scientifically informed analysis and recommendations on health issues.

“The IOM provides a lot of leadership direction for the health care system in the United States, including quality and safety, education and research, and I am looking forward to taking part in that process,” says Thrall.

Adds Loeffler: “I am honored and very flattered to be elected. I am particularly thrilled to be in the class of 2011 with friend and fellow chief Dr. James Thrall. I look forward to serving the IOM in whatever capacity I may be of assistance.”

One more week to make a difference

IT’S HALFWAY through the 2011 MGH United Way Campaign, and 1,537 MGH employees have already donated and raised a total of $368,056. The campaign aims to inspire 2,011 MGHers to make a donation by Nov. 18.

There are many reasons to give. Gifts can easily be made online in any amount and directed to an area or agency of choice. Those who donate also are automatically entered to win great prizes – the next drawings will be held Nov. 14 and 18. Donors seen wearing their 2011 United Way pin are eligible for special spot prizes as well.

In addition to making a donation, employees can support the United Way by purchasing apricot bars, available now at Nutrition and Food Services eateries. For more information or to donate, visit www.massgeneral.org/unitedway.

What’s Happening

MGH Senior HealthWISE
The MGH Senior HealthWISE Book Club will discuss The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks, by Rebecca Skloot, Nov. 17 from 11:30 am in the Simches Center, Room 3.110. Paula Moran, privacy and security manager at the MGH, and Elizabeth Hohmann, MD, physician director, Partners IRB, will present. Registration is required at hub.partners.org/catalog. For more information, contact Lauren Michaels at lmichaels@partners.org.

Subject privacy and information security
The MGH Clinical Research Program is sponsoring, “Maintaining Research Subject Privacy and Information Security: What Clinical Researchers Must Know,” Nov. 21 from 10 to 11:30 am in the Simches Center, Room 3.110. Paula Moran, privacy and security manager at the MGH, and Elizabeth Hohmann, MD, physician director, Partners IRB, will present. Registration is required at http://hub.partners.org/catalog. For more information, contact Lauren Michaels at lmichaels@partners.org.

R. William Gange lecture
The 20th annual R. William Gange Lecture, “Exploiting cellular molecular responses for enhanced photodynamic treatments,” will be held Dec. 1. A reception runs from 5 to 5:30 pm, followed by the lecture from 5:30 to 6:30 pm in the Simches Center, Room 3.110. The speaker will be Tayaba Hasan, PhD, of the Department of Dermatology. For more information, contact Nicole DeVoie at ndevoie@partners.org.

EAP seminar
The Partners Employee Assistance Program (EAP) will host “Working and Breastfeeding” Nov. 16 from noon to 1 pm in Bulfinch 222. Studies show breastfeeding reduces health care costs and the amount of time new parents miss work. Germaine Lamberg, RN, IBCLC, MGH lactation consultant, will provide expectant parents and nursing mothers with the basics on using breast pumps, keeping up one’s milk supply while working, reverse feeding and identifying and resolving potential problems. Participants also will tour the Wang Center’s Mothers’ Corner. For more information, call 617-726-6976 or visit www.eap.partners.org.

Cancer Center Fall Benefit
The Friends of the MGH Cancer Center are hosting the 19th annual Fall Benefit Nov. 17 at 6 pm at the John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse. The evening will include a silent auction and live auction hosted by WCVB’s Kelley Tuthill, as well as book signings by local authors. Proceeds will benefit supportive care programs, including the Maxwell V. Blum Cancer Resource Room, HOPES Program, and the financial assistance fund for patients and families. For more information, visit www.massgeneral.org/cancer/about/friends.aspx.

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