

11.22.19

MGH HOTLINE

A PUBLICATION FOR EMPLOYEES AND STAFF OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

HONORING SACRIFICE: Former New England Patriot Max Lane with the MGH Honor Guard



'For flag, country and democracy'

"RELIGION, RACE, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity – none of that matters when you go to war," said retired Col. Dan Arkins, director of Development at Home Base, a partnership of the Red Sox Foundation and MGH. "Every branch of the military is colorblind. At the end of the day, I know everyone out there with me would have my back and I would have theirs. All that matters is getting the job done."

Arkins – who spent 33 years in the Army, 30 of them as a military intelligence officer – was the keynote speaker at the MGH's annual Veterans Day Breakfast Nov. 12 at the Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation. Arkins was deployed for 14 months

of active duty in Iraq in 2003 and to Afghanistan in 2011 for nine months.

"I found the military community was a place I could thrive," said Arkins, who initially joined the Army as a way to pay off his "seemingly insurmountable amount of student debt" after graduating from Boston College. "My somewhat selfish beginning turned into something I am truly passionate about. I found a group of similarly mission-driven people who care about the flag, country and democracy – and doing what's right to protect all these things."

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Scrapbooks, scalpels and surprises: Inside the MGH Archives

THE MGH ARCHIVES houses the official records of the hospital dating back to its beginnings. Archivist Lucy Ross, who oversees collections of documents and photographs spanning more than a quarter mile of shelf space, discusses this valuable resource – and its constant surprises.

THE MGH IS ALL ABOUT LOOKING FORWARD, SO WHY LOOK BACK AT ITS HISTORY?

The history of medicine is not all leeches and alchemy, but is about major ongoing themes, such as the evolution of the doctor-patient relationship, the progression of the scientific method and working toward evidence-based practices. The history of medicine touches everyone. At the MGH, records can show us why certain things are the way they are. Out of the apothecary, for example, grew not only the pharmacy, but also imaging. We can also gain perspective on how far medicine has come in a relatively short time.

WHO USES THE ARCHIVES, AND WHY?

Most requests come from MGH staff looking for photos relating to their department or verifying that a certain person was in their department during a certain year, though I should note that we do not have personnel records or modern patient records. We also host researchers from the world over who are writing papers or books on topics such as the history of the social service and anesthesia.

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TREASURES ABOUND: Ross with a 1741 indenture, or legal contract, part of a bequest by Boston merchant Thomas Oliver to MGH.

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Learn. Earn. Return: The three phases of a career journey

THE MGH/MGPO Women in Leadership Committee hosted its annual meeting Nov. 5, featuring Jovita Thomas-Williams, senior vice president of Human Resources. During her talk, “Defining Success: Is it all about getting to the C-Suite?” Thomas-Williams provided a detailed overview of what she views as the three phases of one’s career: Learn. Earn. Return.

“Take time to learn as much as you can about who you are and what matters most – because that is what will guide you in your career and toward success in the years to come,” she said. “Success isn’t universally defined, it’s personal. Your neighbor’s idea of success is not yours, so don’t waste your precious time and energy trying to keep pace. And always remember, success is not achieved in isolation, it really does take a village, so take the time to establish a network of trusted advisors along your career journey.”

Attendees at this year’s event were encouraged to invite a “rising leader” from their departments to attend the presentation, which was followed by a networking event at the Paul S. Russell, MD Museum of Medical History and Innovation.

“Whenever possible, return the coaching and mentoring you received by sharing your wisdom with those following in your footsteps,” Thomas-Williams said, encouraging those in attendance to mentor others. “You didn’t get to where you are alone, and neither will they. They need us – and they are going to become us.” ■



IT TAKES A VILLAGE: Thomas-Williams, sixth from right, with members of the Women in Leadership Committee



World Diabetes Day

HEALTHY HABITS: The MGH Diabetes Self-Management Education Program hosted its annual World Diabetes Day awareness event on Nov. 14. This year’s event included a table at the MGH Revere HealthCare Center where patients, visitors and staff were invited to stop to learn more about diabetes.

Pictured above, from left, Linnea Borden, Antonio Nascimento, Kawtar Wahman and Danielle Daly, Population Health coordinators; Chucks Eze, Revere practice manager; and Asmaa Sahrour, senior Population Health coordinator.

– MGH Archives

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WHERE DOES THE ARCHIVES GET ITS MATERIALS?

The archives collects whatever materials it can – such as Broadcast MGH emails about hospital policies or changes of heads of departments, or new issues of hospital newsletters to add to existing collections – but largely relies on donations from MGHers. Though donors are most commonly physicians, anyone can contribute. We aim to preserve the history of all the people who have made MGH what it is.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ITEM IN THE ARCHIVES?

Currently it is a scrapbook compiled by Jane Holbrook, a medical illustrator here in the 1940s, that includes not only department pictures, but also party pictures – snapshots of daily life inside and outside the hospital.

AREN’T A LOT OF THE DOCUMENTS YOU CONSULT – LIKE REPORTS – PRETTY DRY?

Even in things that appear to be dry, you’ll find signs of life – doodles in the corner or a pithy cover letter. Also, I must say I come across a delightful amount of verse – in a newsletter called the *World of MGH*, department newsletters, retirement party programs – in places you’d least expect it.

IS IT ARCHIVES OR ARCHIVE?

Archives generally refers to collections of records or the physical place where the records are kept. Archive usually refers to less formal collections, like a file cabinet full of old papers. Really, though, either term is fine.

For more information visit <https://www.russellmuseum.org/archives/archives-faq/>. ■



ARCHIVE ART: Drawn by medical resident Ernest Craig, MD, in June 1947, a caption on the back of the original art reads: “This is the original drawing of the industrious little man which heads the Archives column in THE NEWS.”

Talking turkey: Tips for a tranquil Thanksgiving

AS THE MOTHER OF ALL FAMILY DINNERS, Thanksgiving can come with a huge helping of expectation and a side of emotional baggage, says Anne K. Fishel, PhD, director of the MGH Family and Couples Therapy Program, and director and co-founder of The Family Dinner Project in the MGH Psychiatry Academy.

“From it being a poignant reminder of time passing as we remember beloved family members no longer at the table to worrying about the food, drink or controversial conversations that may arise, the holiday can easily turn from joyful to stressful,” she says. Here, Fishel shares tips to keep Thanksgiving calm, cozy and civil.

THINK OF THE FAMILY AS A STEW POT

Most of us live in a bubble with like-minded people, but our family can be a stew pot where we can be confronted with different perspectives. While these contrary points of view can be stress-inducing, try to make Thanksgiving the start of empathy, of being curious about a family member’s differing viewpoint. Saying “I’m really curious about...” or “Could you share with me...?” might start a conversation you’ll be glad you had. If that is too tall an order, make Thanksgiving an opportunity to suggest a conversation at a later date.

BROADEN THE PERSPECTIVE TO INCLUDE HISTORY

Discussing an often-polarizing topic, such as politics, through the lens of time travel can be less charged than talking about present day. When kids know their family stories they grow up to be more resilient, and knowing that family members have survived and learned from other turbulent times can be reassuring. Some guiding questions can include:

- Who remembers the first vote they cast? For whom did you vote?
- Does anyone recall Thanksgiving 1963, six days after President Kennedy’s assassination? What was that Thanksgiving like in your home?

USE YOUR HOST ROLE TO TAKE SOME PREEMPTIVE STEPS

You might want to send a group email ahead of time, setting an expectation that discourages conflict. You could ask family members to arrive at dinner ready to focus on what they feel thankful for or what they love about the family. Once the dinner gets rolling, consider announcing that everyone is going to switch seats after each course.

DO NOT FORGET THE FUN

Thanksgiving should be an opportunity to gather and enjoy one another’s company. A few years ago, when I worried about possible friction, I came up with The Hat Game. As guests arrive, ask them to write answers anonymously to various prompts on a Post-it and put them in a hat. Here are some prompts you might use:

- What character in a children’s book did you most admire?
- What animal would you most like to be?
- Who do you wish could join us for this holiday meal, dead or alive, famous or not?

At dinner, read the answers aloud and everyone tries to guess who gave each answer. This allows for a tablewide conversation that everyone can participate in, regardless of age or differing outlooks. You might

also suggest some classic games that are easier to play with a large group, such as Telephone, Celebrity or Charades, or make a family charades version where guests act out favorite family memories.

As I think about this holiday, I remember Abraham Lincoln, who issued a proclamation to make Thanksgiving a national celebration in the depths of the Civil War, arguably a more contentious time to be an American: I wish you and your family “the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and union.” ■



– Veterans Day

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Also at the breakfast was Max Lane, a former offensive lineman for the New England Patriots. Prior to his time with the Patriots, Lane was a three-year starter for offensive tackle at the U.S. Naval Academy. Attendees were given the opportunity to meet with Lane, who posed for pictures and signed autographs.



“Today’s breakfast is a very small expression of the hospital’s appreciation for the sacrifices you and your families have made to protect the freedom we enjoy here in the United States,” said Jovita Thomas-Williams, senior vice president of Human Resources. “We recognize that the freedoms we enjoy in our daily lives are a direct result of your love for and dedication to this country. On behalf of myself and the rest of the MGH community, please accept our thanks.” ■

MVP Scholarship

The MGH Military Veteran Partners group – formed five years ago – supports active-duty military members and their families year-round through volunteer programs at the MGH and throughout the community. One of these programs is the annual MVP Scholarship, given during the breakfast to a veteran employee seeking to further their education.

This year’s scholarship went to Shona White, a senior radiation therapist at MGH and Newton-Wellesley Hospital since 2008. White and her husband, an Army veteran, both are active in their local veteran community as part of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association and are raising a 2-year-old son. She also is going back to school to earn a master’s degree in health care administration.

“It has always been a great opportunity to be able to help our community and to help our patients,” said White. “This scholarship will help me to continue to do just that.”

Tanaka on tackling ACL tears

AS THE NUMBER of female athletes increases, so do the number of anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tears in the knee, prompting reconstruction surgery rates to rise three times faster in women.



TANAKA

Miho J. Tanaka, MD, MGH's new director of Women's Sports Medicine, says these injuries often occur without collision and can happen when the knee gives out and buckles during a sporting maneuver. "It has been proven that you can reduce the rate of ACL tears in female athletes by performing certain neuromuscular training exercises."

Unfortunately, such information on injury prevention is not well known amongst athletes and coaches. Tanaka hopes to deter

statistics by spearheading a coordinated effort among physical therapists, surgeons, athletic trainers, coaches and doctors to provide a standardized, unified way of educating the community about preventative training. Here, she shares information about the program, and answers some common questions.

WHY IS AN ACL INJURY SO BAD?

The ACL is one of the ligaments in the knee that provides stability to the knee joint, particularly during cutting and pivoting motions. If you think of the knee as a hinge joint, the ACL prevents the knee from "coming off the hinge." An injury of the ACL is problematic because it can cause the knee to become unstable during these twisting and pivoting motions. Although people can walk without an intact ACL, the movements needed for sporting activities, such as sudden changes in direction, are difficult with an ACL tear.

Unfortunately, this is not an injury that heals on its own, leaving surgery and a long recovery as the primary options for treatment. Athletes who have ACL tears are generally out for a season and may not return to play for up to a year, and studies show that not everyone

is able to return to the same level of performance after recovering from this injury, despite having successful surgery. It also has been shown that ACL injuries can lead to increased risk of arthritis and knee disability later in life.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR GOAL TO IMPLEMENT THE ACL PREVENTATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM AND MAKE IT STANDARD OF CARE.

Female athletes are four to eight times more likely to tear their ACL than male athletes, and imbalances in the muscles that support the knee can contribute to their rate of ACL injuries. The data shows that preventative training programs to correct these muscle imbalances can reduce injury rates, but they only work when implemented and performed regularly. Even though this is common knowledge amongst surgeons and physical therapists, the purpose is not served if athletes and coaches don't have access to this information.

The concept of having surgeons or physicians working closely with physical therapists and athletic trainers to educate the community is key. The goal is to get the same important message to as many schools and sports clubs as possible. Part of this is making sure that female athletes and parents understand the importance of preventative training. The other part is helping to implement these programs, which involves building relationships with coaches and providing the information and support needed.

Through this program, we can provide workshops for coaches to learn how to teach and monitor these exercises for their players. We can provide information on the types of exercises that are helpful, how to perform them correctly and how to modify them as needed for players of different levels. This type of program can then be incorporated into a warmup routine in the team's practice.

WHY IS A PROGRAM LIKE THIS IMPORTANT?

Preventative training exercises cost very little, can reduce injury risk and can likely even improve performance by optimizing body mechanics. At a time when female athletes are competing at an increasingly high level, it is important that we support these women by providing the education they need to help them stay healthy so they can continue breaking barriers in sports. ■

December *Hotline* happenings

UPCOMING HOTLINE EDITIONS

There are three editions of *MGH Hotline* left in 2019. Dec. 6 will be the final standard edition of the year. Then be sure to pick up the Dec. 20 holiday edition to enjoy coverage of the fun and festive happenings at the MGH this holiday season. The final year-in-review edition will be distributed Dec. 27 and will include highlights from 2019 and a 2020 fold-out calendar with a list of MGH holidays. The first edition for 2020 will be available Jan. 10.

SUBMIT YOUR 2019 HIGHLIGHTS

For the 2019 year-in-review edition, *Hotline* wants to hear about the highlight of your year. Whether personal or professional, share your most memorable milestone from the past year to be featured in *Hotline* or on Apollo, the MGH intranet. To submit, email a brief description and photo, if applicable, to hotline@partners.org so the MGH community can celebrate with you and ring in 2020 with a look back at the many accomplishments throughout the hospital.

