



# THE MILLER COULSON ACADEMY *of* CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

*at Johns Hopkins*

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Celebrating 10 Years of Exceptional Patient Care





# Dear FRIENDS,

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Johns Hopkins Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence, we're pleased to share with you this magazine that highlights the Academy's impact—with stories of the people whose commitment to great doctoring is truly changing the practice of medicine.

In the pages that follow, you'll read about the genesis of the Academy (p. 3), and the momentous vision shown in making it a reality (p. 6). You'll see how Academy members are producing academic papers related to clinical excellence that are being widely published in respected medical journals (p. 18), and influencing institutional culture at Johns Hopkins and beyond (p. 20). You'll read the heartwarming story of a little girl, her pet cow—and Academy doctors at Johns Hopkins who refused to give up on her (p. 14). You'll find out how the launch of the Academy's new website, CLOSLER.org, is bringing the latest insights about clinical excellence to doctors all over the country and around the world (p. 22).

Of course, at the heart of all of this are the physician members of the Academy who are pictured on our cover. Now numbering 81, these men and women—in specialties ranging from oncology to gerontology to ophthalmology—truly are standout clinicians, providing compassionate care to every patient and family, hour after hour, day after day. As individuals, they are truly a force for good; by coming together to collaborate within the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence, their impact is nothing short of breathtaking.

None of this important work would be possible without the generosity and support of the Miller and Coulson families—for which we are immensely grateful for their contribution to the Center for Innovative Medicine. Ten years ago, they had the foresight and the courage to set in motion an Academy that celebrates and advances physicians who are the “best of the best” in providing exceptional care to patients. We're proud of how far we've come over this past decade, and we look forward with excitement and anticipation to what the future will hold.



DAVID HELLMANN, DIRECTOR  
JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER FOR  
INNOVATIVE MEDICINE



SCOTT WRIGHT, DIRECTOR  
MILLER COULSON ACADEMY  
OF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE



Left to right: Duvuru Geetha (Academy member), recreational therapist Alexandra Dull, Leah Wolfe (Academy member), William Greenough (Academy member), and patient Michael Underwood.

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Clockwise from top left: Jamie Wright (Academy member) with patient Joseph Artabane; Luca Vricella (Academy Member, center); Susan Lehmann (Academy Member); Hugh Calkins (Academy Member).

# A Premium on GREAT DOCTORING

It all began with a provocative question posed by grateful patient Anne Miller: “Why aren’t we creating more Dr. Tumultys?” She was referring to Philip Tumulty, the Johns Hopkins internist known for his superlative patient care, who had treated her until his death in 1989.



“In the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s, Dr. Tumulty was like William Osler incarnate around here. He was beloved by patients and revered by students and residents,” says David Hellmann, director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Innovative Medicine. “I found myself thinking more and more about what a great question that was, and how we could be working harder in this institution to nurture and develop great clinicians.”

A few years after this conversation, Mrs. Miller’s daughter and son-in-law, Mrs. Sarah Miller Coulson and Mr. Frank Coulson, made a generous gift that supported the naming of four respected clinicians as Miller Coulson Scholars: Colleen Christmas, Samuel “Chris” Durso, Steve Kravet and Scott Wright. The quartet’s mission: to precisely define what “clinical excellence” means in an academic setting, to develop a systematic means of measuring it, and to find a way to recognize doctors who provide the best of the best in patient care at Johns Hopkins.

After more than two years of hard work, their efforts paid off. The Miller Coulson Scholars published a seminal paper defining clinical excellence in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (see p. 18). Their work also laid the groundwork for the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence at Johns Hopkins Bayview, which was launched in 2008 with Scott Wright as director.

“At Johns Hopkins, as at many other academic medical institutions, we are very good at recognizing and promoting researchers. We struggle in our attempts to value and recognize those who spend a majority of their time taking care of patients—doctors who are passionate about providing the very best care,” says Wright. “The Miller Coulson Academy has enabled us to do that.”

In the decade since the Miller Coulson Academy began, its impact has grown year by year—from Johns Hopkins Bayview

to Johns Hopkins Hospital and beyond. Because the Miller Coulson Academy is a “working academy,” these exemplary doctors come together to collaborate on programs and initiatives. And they have become role models to medical students and trainees across the institution, who are able to watch and learn from them every day. The Academy members, now more than 70 strong, serve as inspiring role models for all trainees, but particularly for those doing electives in the Academy. There is also a coaching program for physicians and Miller Coulson Academy-branded Grand Rounds. Academy members have also conducted research and published papers in biomedical journals about clinical excellence.

“Before the Miller Coulson Academy, many of the institution’s best clinician-physicians did not know each other,” Wright says. “The Academy brings these amazing clinicians together and is encouraging them to share best practices across departments and to innovate.”



**RIGHT** Johns Hopkins' "Founding Four" doctors set the course in patient-centered care. Left to right: William Welch, William Halsted, William Osler and Howard Kelly. Portrait by John Singer Sargent.

**FAR RIGHT** Members of the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence deliberate over clinical portfolios of applicant physicians.



## A RIGOROUS PROCESS

Each year, only a small percentage of the most respected physicians who are invited to apply to the Academy (after having been nominated by many peers) are ultimately offered membership. One key element to the process is external evaluation: Master clinicians from top academic institutions around the country review and score the clinical portfolios that are submitted.

When building their portfolio, applicants must provide the names of 10 patients, 10 physician peers, 10 learners, and 10 non-physician clinical providers (e.g. nurses and medical assistants) who provide confidential assessments—scoring the candidates across eight domains of clinical excellence and writing comments. A rating of “5” on the 5-point scale means that the evaluator considers the applicant as “the very best doctor I’ve ever come across” for that domain.

“People often say to me, ‘Oh, Scott, it’s easy to find 10 patients or 10 students who love you,’” Wright says. “There’s some truth in that, and that’s why we chose to set the scale as we did. Are these people really going to say that the applicant is the very best doctor they’ve ever seen, bar none?”

“Having the finalized portfolios assessed by respected clinicians not at Hopkins is critical,” Wright notes. “Getting input

from beyond this institution, from people who don’t know the candidates personally, is extremely valuable.” After the external reviewers score the portfolio, the internal selection committee (made up of Academy members) thoughtfully consider the candidates and ultimately come to consensus on membership decisions.

The academy’s now 70-plus members host electives for medical students, coach young physicians and present at special Miller Coulson Academy-branded Grand Rounds, among other activities.

## BEYOND BAYVIEW

For its first five years, the Academy was a Hopkins Bayview-only operation. In 2014, Paul Rothman, dean of the medical faculty and CEO of Johns Hopkins Medicine, asked Hellmann and Wright to expand the Academy into an institution-wide endeavor. The class inducted that year included faculty from The Johns Hopkins Hospital. Today the application process is open to faculty physicians at both hospitals, and Johns Hopkins Community Physicians has launched its own similar program.

This year, as the Miller Coulson Academy celebrates its 10th anniversary, Academy leaders are exporting best practices in clinical excellence to physicians all over the country and around the world with the launch of a new website called CLOSLER.org (a portmanteau of “Closer” and “Osler”). The mission of CLOSLER.org is to create a learning community focused on sharing thoughtful clinical stories and perspectives to stimulate reflection about providing exceptional care to every patient (see p. 22).

One member of the website’s development team is Johns Hopkins psychiatrist Margaret Chisolm, who was selected to the Miller Coulson Academy in 2010. She’s excited about sharing the latest ideas about clinical excellence beyond Baltimore, affording physicians around the world some of the same benefits she’s derived from the Miller Coulson Academy.

“The Academy changed the course of my career,” Chisolm says. “It made me a part of this wonderful new community. It reinforced for me the sense that I wasn’t alone, that there really was the possibility of building a rewarding and successful career as a clinician-educator.” ■



A team meets to discuss improving systems to enhance patient care. Left to right: Flora Kisuule, Eric Howell (Academy member), Catherine Washburn, David Klimpl and Venkat Gundareddy.

## DEFINING CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

“The clinically excellent academic physician has achieved a level of mastery in communication and interpersonal skills, professionalism and humanism, and negotiation of the health care system. Such physicians are exemplary with respect to diagnostic acumen, knowledge and their scholarly approach to clinical practice. They exhibit a passion for patient care, and they explicitly model all of the above to medical trainees, earning them a reputation for being exceptional.”

—from “Clinical Excellence in Academia: Perspectives from Masterful Clinicians,” which was written by Miller Coulson Scholars and published in the September 2008 issue of Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

## BEYOND COMPETENCE

In 2014, the Miller Coulson Academy for Clinical Excellence launched a coaching program. The G. Thomas Miller Coaching Program is aimed at helping young doctors on their path toward becoming master clinicians. Participants shadow the expert clinicians of the Miller Coulson Academy, who also provide one-on-one coaching and feedback. “This is a natural program to emerge from the Academy because our core mission is to promote clinical excellence, and to move all of us at Hopkins along the path toward clinical excellence,” says Scott Wright.



# Then and Now WOMEN WITH VISION

Some 125 years ago, a band of powerful and fearless women led by Mary Elizabeth Garrett had the vision and determination to chart a new course in medical education—one that would include women. Their gift of \$500,000 made it possible for the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to open in 1893.



MARY ELIZABETH GARRETT

More than a century later, it seems only fitting that a contemporary trio of visionary women have been the driving force for creating and supporting the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence. By recognizing and celebrating physicians who offer the very finest in patient-centered care, the Academy continues to break new ground in preparing physicians—at Johns Hopkins and beyond—to be great doctors.

## “ON THE SAME TERMS AS MEN”

The story begins in 1890. The Johns Hopkins Hospital had opened a year earlier, with funds from the will of Johns Hopkins, who had also included money for a school of medicine. But when the B&O railroad stock that had formed the bulk of Mr. Hopkins’ estate lost value, the well suddenly ran dry. The trustees were desperate to find the money they needed to open the school.

Up stepped five women led by Mary Elizabeth Garrett, daughter and close business adviser of B&O Railroad president and founding Johns Hopkins trustee John Work Garrett. Early feminists, these members of the Women’s Fund Committee—Garrett, Martha Carey Thomas, Mary Gwinn, Elizabeth King and Julia Rogers—were rich, independent and highly educated.

They agreed to raise the needed funds, but there were strings attached. Namely, women must be accepted into the medical school “on the same terms as men” and be on equal footing regarding “all prizes, dignities, or honors.” In addition, they insisted that the school be a graduate institution, requiring that students enter with a bachelor’s degree from a reputable college and pursue a four-year course of study followed by exams to obtain a medical degree.

These were path-breaking ideas for the day—and they found fertile ground. By the turn of the century, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine’s Class of 1900 had 13 female graduates, including Florence Sabin, who would become the school’s first female professor and eventually be the first woman elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1925.

## THE LEGACY LIVES ON

In much the same way that these early women showed uncommon wisdom and determination to change the status quo, the women of the Miller family—matriarch Anne Gaines Miller and daughters Sarah Miller Coulson and Leslie Miller—have made an indelible mark on the worlds of medicine, law, the arts, telecommunications and conservation.

The women of the Miller family have made an indelible mark on the worlds of medicine, law, the arts, telecommunication, and conservation. Left to right: Leslie Miller, Anne Gaines Miller, Sarah Miller Coulson.



Anne Gaines Miller attended the all-female Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, and then went on to pursue a graduate fellowship in physiology at Vassar College. She married G. Thomas “Tom” Miller, who served in the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean conflict, and the couple settled outside Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to raise their family: daughters Sarah and Leslie, and son Thomas. While her husband pursued a career in law (including an interim judgeship and partnerships in two different firms), Anne devoted herself to full-time motherhood and community work. Though Tom died in 2013, Anne Miller continues to live on their Pennsylvania farm, where she is an avid gardener within her extensive arboretum. Today she remains a tireless conservationist with a strong voice for land preservation, open space and clean water.

Sarah Miller Coulson, who like her sister is an alumna of Mount Holyoke College, worked for a brief time on Wall Street before earning an MBA from Columbia University in 1982. Sarah spent the next 18 years in New York City in various financial roles with Time Warner Inc., most notably at Comedy Central, where she was a member of the original start-up team of the successful cable channel as its chief financial officer and executive vice president. She left New York City in 1998 to become an entrepreneur in the nascent telecommunications field, where she and two partners

helped to start and to build a successful wireless cell tower company called Clear-Shot Communications, LLC.

Sarah, whose husband, Frank Coulson, died in 2011, today lives in Bryn Mawr, where she is very active in the community, especially with the Philadelphia Orchestra, where she serves on the board, the Philadelphia Horticultural Society and Main Line Animal Rescue. She is a member of the Johns Hopkins Medicine Board of Trustees, and in 2016 she assumed leadership of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, a private, not-for-profit association that owns and operates the Virginia home and surrounding 500 acres of the first president.

Leslie Miller, no doubt inspired by her father’s example, has achieved great success as a leader in the legal profession—in private practice and public service. During

the gubernatorial administration of Pennsylvania’s Edward Rendell, Leslie served as General Counsel, leading a staff of more than 450 attorneys. She was also the first female president of the 27,000-member Pennsylvania Bar Association, chairing its first Commission on Women in the Profession and its House of Delegates and Young Lawyers Division.

A longtime collector and advocate for the arts, Leslie was elected chair of the Board of Trustees for the Philadelphia Museum of Art in October 2016—an organization she describes as a “center for creativity today, an educational resource for children and our schools, a powerful economic driver.” Her husband, investment advisor Richard B. Worley, is chairman of the board of the Philadelphia Orchestra, which means that the city’s two most visible cultural institutions are steered by husband and wife. ■

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

In 2011, Sarah Miller Coulson and Frank L. Coulson Jr. established a professorship in honor of Dr. David Hellmann “as a way to say thank-you to Johns Hopkins ... and most especially to Dr. Hellmann for his extraordinary care and friendship.” The inaugural recipient of the Sarah Miller Coulson and Frank L. Coulson Professorship in Medicine is vice dean for education Roy Ziegelstein. In May 2017, Academy director Scott Wright was officially installed as the inaugural recipient of the Anne Gaines and G. Thomas Miller Professor in the Center for Innovative Medicine.





Ronald R. Peterson, now president emeritus of the Johns Hopkins Health System and special advisor to the Dean/CEO of Johns Hopkins Medicine, leads a round of applause during a Miller Coulson Academy induction ceremony.

# Recognizing the BEST OF THE BEST

Each spring since 2009, members of the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence have gathered to welcome a class of new members and to hear their inspirational stories about providing the very best in patient care.



## CLASS OF 2009

### WILLIAM GREENOUGH, M.D.

*Clinical Chief, Ventilator Rehabilitation Unit, Bayview Medical Center;  
Professor of Medicine*

Dr. Greenough, now in his sixth decade on the faculty at Johns Hopkins, is the most senior member of the Miller Coulson Academy and is widely revered for his wisdom, kindness and deep experience. In the 1960s he served on an international team credited with the discovery and implementation of oral rehydration therapy, a simple and inexpensive treatment that has since saved the lives of millions of people in developing countries who would have died from diarrheal disease. An octogenarian, Dr. Greenough continues to care for patients and teach medical students and trainees, who praise him as a role model for providing compassionate clinical care.

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “To emphasize the value of treating each patient and family member as an individual deserving of understanding and respect for their ideas and emotions.”



## CLASS OF 2010

### MARGARET S. CHISOLM, M.D.

*Vice Chair for Education in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*

Dr. Chisolm, who serves as a clinical psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, is the author of numerous papers, including one on clinical excellence in psychiatry, which appeared in *The Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders*. She also co-authored a book for clinicians on a holistic approach to psychiatric diagnosis (*Systematic Psychiatric Evaluation: A Step-by-Step Guide to Applying the Perspectives of Psychiatry*, published by JHU Press). Together with psychiatrist Susan Lehmann, she is developing a smartphone app that allows clinical teachers to deliver brief, focused arts-based humanistic medical education to trainees. A proponent of using social media to improve clinical care (she co-authored a paper on this subject that appeared in *The Clinical Teacher*), Dr. Chisolm has also launched @whole\_patients on Twitter, which is aimed “at harnessing digital technology to make medical practice more personal.”

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “We live in a time when managed care bureaucracy and technologic innovation have the potential to overshadow the personal dimension of medicine. It is essential to convey to patients, caregivers and the larger society the crucial role that psychiatry and psychotherapy have to play in health care.”

## ACADEMY MEMBERS BY YEAR

### 2009

Nisha  
Chandra-  
Strobos

Mike  
Fingerhood

**William  
Greenough**

Jonathan  
Sevransky

Leah Wolfe

Roy  
Ziegelstein

### 2010

**Meg  
Chisolm**

Mark Duncan

Duvuru  
Geetha

Frank Herlong

Eric Howell

Carl Johnson

Edward Kraus

Raf Llinas

Steve  
Schwartz



ACADEMY  
MEMBERS  
BY YEAR

2011

Ilene Browner

**Michael  
Crocetti**

Judy Huang

2012

**Michele  
Bellantoni**

Giorgio Galetto

Stephen Milner

Jamie Wright



CLASS OF 2011

**MICHAEL CROCETTI, M.D.**

*Chief of Pediatrics, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians (JHCP);  
Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins Children's Center*

Pediatrician Michael Crocetti is beloved by the young patients and families he serves, who praise his responsiveness, dedication and willingness to listen. Co-author of "Clinical Excellence in Pediatrics," (*Clinical Pediatrics*, May 2014), he has been actively engaged in the G. Thomas Miller Coaching Program of the Miller Coulson Academy. He recently guided the launch of the Johns Hopkins Community Physicians Academy of Clinical Excellence, which inducted its second class in January 2018.

**Excerpt from Clinical Mission:** "Practicing pediatric medicine in an urban hospital-based clinic allows me to care for an ethnically and economically diverse population. I pride myself on being continually accessible to my patients through office visits, phone, and electronic messaging. This philosophy allows me to develop patient relationships that are family centered and that fulfill the concepts of a medical home."



CLASS OF 2012

**MICHELE BELLANTONI, M.D.**

*Clinical Director of the Division of Geriatric Medicine; Medical Director of the Johns Hopkins Bayview Specialty Hospital Program; Associate Professor of Medicine*

Uniformly admired for her compassionate care of older patients ("She is better than the very best," says one), Dr. Bellantoni is revered for her unparalleled ability to truly listen, and she serves as an outstanding role model for trainees. In that regard, "the health-care system would be most fortunate to have 100 Dr. Bellantoni's," notes one colleague. She's credited with greatly improving the system for long term care for elderly patients at Bayview and she is actively involved in quality improvement programs. Dr. Bellantoni's research focuses on transitions of care from hospitals to skilled nursing facilities, and she is particularly interested in using a holistic approach to osteoporosis management.

**Excerpt from Clinical Mission:** "I value the personal relationships I have with my patients, their family members, surrogate decision makers, and loved ones. The intensity and longevity of the relationships they share with me extend beyond their physical conditions to include their most personal information, values, ways of life, and yes, in geriatrics, often their ways of addressing their own mortality."



CLASS OF 2013

**SATISH SHANBHAG, M.B.B.S.,  
M.P.H.**

*Clinical Director of Hematology, Johns Hopkins Bayview; Assistant Professor of Medicine*

As a hemato-oncologist, Dr. Shanbhag is widely sought after by patients suffering from blood cancers. Some travel from as far away as Kuwait and South America, drawn by his tireless pursuit of a correct diagnosis and subsequent advocacy to make sure they get the treatment they need. In the face of a heavy inpatient and outpatient load, Dr. Shanbhag works with great energy, never losing his trademark joy and good humor. His zeal is infectious: Trainees describe him as a "hero." He earned the Lisa J. Heiser Award for Education Excellence from the Johns Hopkins Institute for Excellence in Education in 2014 and the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award from the Department of Medicine house staff in 2012-13.

**Excerpt from Clinical Mission:** "As a hemato-oncologist, I am in a field where giving bad news happens almost on a daily basis, but it's important that this does not become an 'everyday affair.' I am often asked by patients, 'What would you do if I were your mother?' My answer invariably is, 'I treat every patient like I would my mother.'"



CLASS OF 2014

**KIMBERLY PEAIRS, M.D.**

*Clinical Director, General Internal Medicine at Green Spring Station; Associate Vice Chair for Ambulatory in the Department of Medicine; Assistant Professor of Medicine*

As a primary care physician with the Tumulty Clinical Group, Dr. Peairs primarily sees patients in outpatient settings and she is particularly known for providing care to breast cancer survivors. Patients praise her competence and compassion: "She is the gold standard!" notes one. A respected leader in the Department of Medicine, she oversees and works tirelessly to improve ambulatory practice. Trainees describe her as an outstanding role model: She serves as a firm faculty member for the Osler Medical Residency and is a co-director of the Topics in Clinical Medicine Course. In addition, she has been actively engaged in coaching physicians in the Academy's G. Thomas Miller Coaching Program.

**Excerpt from Clinical Mission:** "Do what is right for the patient.' In the medical era of time constraints, billing pressures, cost containment and paperwork, my primary responsibility is to the individuals with whom I engage in a physician-patient relationship."

ACADEMY  
MEMBERS  
BY YEAR

2013

Alfredo  
Quinones-  
Hinojosa

Vani Rao

**Satish  
Shanbhag**

2014

Daniel  
Brotman

Hugh Calkins

Mimi Canto

Ross  
Donehower

David Efron

Jonathan Efron

Paul Manson

Justin  
McArthur

**Kimberly  
Peairs**

Rosalyn  
Stewart

Christopher  
Wolfgang



ACADEMY  
MEMBERS  
BY YEAR

2015

John Clarke  
John Fetting  
Derek Fine  
Elliot Fishman  
Mitchell Goldstein  
Carol Ann Huff  
Daniel Laheru  
Julie Lange  
**Linda Lee**  
Susan Lehmann  
Kristen Nelson  
Richard Redett  
Daniel Sciubba  
Deborah Sellmeyer

2016

Ivor Berkowitz  
Patrick Byrne  
Michael Carducci  
Steve Frank  
Nancy Hutton  
**Michele Manahan**  
Scott Newsome  
Timothy Pawlik  
C. Matthew Stewart  
Luca Vricella



CLASS OF 2015

LINDA LEE, M.D.

*Clinical Director, Division of Gastroenterology; Director, Johns Hopkins Integrative Medicine and Digestive Center; Associate Professor of Medicine; Chief Medical Officer, Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare*

Dr. Lee is a gastroenterologist with “a real love for the physiology of the digestive tract” who focuses on the brain/gut connection and on taking an integrative approach to digestive issues such as irritable bowel syndrome and Crohn’s Disease. Colleagues admire her “amazing ability to talk with patients and encourage them to follow through on their treatment plan,” and patients describe her as “one in a million.” In September 2017, Dr. Lee left her practice at Green Spring Station to become chief medical officer at Johns Hopkins Aramco Healthcare in Saudi Arabia. There, some 5,000 miles away from Baltimore, she continues to model and teach the important tenets of clinical excellence.

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “Most patients do not want their chronic illness to define who they are. I want to help them figure out how to achieve what is important to them despite having a chronic condition. The practice of integrative medicine has been a natural fit for me, because one of its key principles is to learn from each person what their specific cultural beliefs and individual values are and how these affect their understanding of illness and wellness.”



CLASS OF 2016

MICHELE MANAHAN, M.D.

*Department Director of Patient Safety, Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery; Associate Professor of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*

Dr. Manahan is a gifted surgeon who conducts elective, urgent, and emergency evaluation and treatment for patients with traumatic, reconstructive and aesthetic needs. Her “special love” is breast reconstruction. While her surgical skills are unparalleled (“I would trust her with my life,” says one colleague), it is her compassionate bedside manner and empathy that draw raves from patients and colleagues. “She is exceptional at communicating with her patients,” notes one colleague. Dr. Manahan serves in national leadership positions, including with the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “From minor ills onward, I hope to non-judgmentally provide a receptive ear, a comforting touch, an incisive mind, and healing action.”



CLASS OF 2017

SHARON SOLOMON, M.D.

*Associate Professor of Ophthalmology*

The first ophthalmologist to be inducted into the Miller Coulson Academy, Dr. Solomon is a retina specialist who sees patients at Green Spring Station and the Wilmer Eye Institute clinic in East Baltimore. Patients and colleagues credit her with having the “wow factor”—she makes a point to listen and engage with each patient and family in conversation, use imaging tests as teaching aids to explain complex information and fully explain each patient’s treatment plan. “Dr. Solomon is the most compassionate and intelligent healthcare provider I’ve encountered in my 73 years,” says one patient. On the editorial board of *Ophthalmology Retina*, she is actively involved in numerous clinical trials aimed at improving treatment for diabetic retinopathy and age-related macular degeneration, and trainees eagerly seek her out, describing her as “a fantastic mentor.”

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “By focusing on one patient at a time, 35 to 40 times a day, this has become my mission: to listen, to educate, to intervene with treatment when I can, and to provide reassurance and a bridge to the potential for care when nothing else can be done.”



CLASS OF 2018

WILLIAM RAVEKES, M.D.

*Associate Professor of Pediatrics; Medical Director, Pediatric Heart Transplant*

Dr. Ravekes is a pediatric cardiologist with particular expertise in pediatric heart transplantation patients and children needing a ventricular assist device. He also is active in the Pediatric Echocardiography Lab. In his leadership role overseeing Johns Hopkins’ pediatric cardiology fellowship, he has been a mentor to many. Described as the “quintessential physician,” who “always goes above and beyond,” he is praised by parents, patients and colleagues for being extremely compassionate and a great communicator. “He deals with high-stress clinical situations constantly (children who have extreme heart failure) and he always maintains a positive attitude,” notes a colleague. Parents come from across the United States and around the world to seek Dr. Ravekes’ care for their young children with serious heart problems.

Excerpt from Clinical Mission: “Compassion is a key part of my philosophy and I strive to meet the needs of my patients and their entire families. I will often tell parents that your child doesn’t have congenital heart disease, your whole family does.” ■

ACADEMY  
MEMBERS  
BY YEAR

2017

James Black  
Andrea Corse  
Dorianne Feldman  
David Feller-Kopman  
Julie Hoover Fong  
Sophie Lanzkron  
Manisha Loss  
Sally Mitchell  
William Sharfman  
**Sharon Solomon**  
Matthew Weiss

2018

Lee Akst  
Michael Choi  
Tom Crawford  
Angela Guarda  
Susan Harvey  
Michael Marohn  
**William Ravekes**  
John Sperati  
Linda Szymanski  
Antonio Wolff





**LEFT** Dr. Kristen Nelson remained a daily lifeline to Reese Burdette during the little girl's nearly two-year stay at Johns Hopkins Hospital. *Photo courtesy of Herald-Mail Media.*

**RIGHT** Reese's beloved pet cow, Pantene, paid a visit to Johns Hopkins Hospital on the day she took her first steps.



Each day, in operating rooms and corridors across Johns Hopkins, physician members of the Miller Coulson Academy collaborate in the care of patients with complex medical presentations, tapping into the expertise of their colleagues from diverse disciplines to provide the finest in patient-centered care. While we could tell thousands of different stories about patients our Academy members have touched over these past 10 years, we've chosen this one—about a little girl, her pet cow ... and the medical team who refused to give up on her.

# Case Study: CLINICAL EXCELLENCE in Action

It's been two years since Reese Burdette left the Johns Hopkins Children's Center and returned home with her family to their dairy farm in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania.

But for Kristen Nelson, director of Johns Hopkins' pediatric cardiac critical care, the bond she has with her young patient remains stronger than ever. "Let's put it this way: I have Reese's picture on my phone's screensaver," says Nelson, adding, "You cannot care for a patient every day for more than 600 days and not grow attached. And with Reese ..." she pauses and tears up, "well, she's absolutely amazing."

Reese's medical odyssey started on Memorial Day weekend in 2014. During an overnight visit to her grandparents' farm in Virginia, a fire broke out. Though younger sister Brinkley escaped without harm, seven-year-old Reese sustained burns over 35 percent of her body and suffered extreme smoke inhalation. She was airlifted to the Johns Hopkins Children's Center—beginning a journey that would take her to the brink of death more than once. It would also push the limits of modern medical science, thanks to Nelson and a Johns Hopkins team committed to seeing Reese beat the odds and find healing.



A respiratory therapist remarked to the little girl, “Dr. Kristen is such a good friend to you, isn’t she?” A teary Reese responded indignantly: ‘She’s not my friend. She’s my family!’”

“During the first weeks, plastic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Rick Redett (Academy member) and burn surgeon Dr. Dylan Stewart were very involved in treating her burns and repairing her skin, which was a process complicated by the fact that Reese had to be on blood thinners. They did a wonderful job and her skin has since healed very nicely,” says Nelson.

Because Reese’s heart and lungs were so devastated by her injuries, within a week after her initial injury, she was placed on a heart and lung bypass system—a complex system known as extra corporeal membrane oxygenation, or ECMO. Prior to Reese’s experience, the longest period of time a patient at Johns Hopkins had been treated with ECMO was 45 days. Reese was on this traditional ECMO system for 60 days.

But due to heart failure in her right ventricle and need for longer term support of her severe lung injury, Hopkins pediatric cardiac surgery specialist Luca Vricella (Academy member) and Nelson knew they needed to support her with a ventricular assist device (VAD) for her right heart with an inline oxygenator—a makeshift lung of sorts because Reese still needed oxygen to be delivered and carbon dioxide to be removed—for another 491 days. In total, Reese was managed by the ECMO/VAD team for 551 days. “That length of support for the right ventricle and lungs has never been done before, especially with recovery. Her case has really pushed the medical community to consider the regenerative

ability of lungs,” says Nelson, who directs the pediatric VAD program.

From Reese’s earliest days in the hospital, Nelson was closely involved in her care and she quickly developed a very close rapport with Reese’s parents, Claire and Justin Burdette.

The couple was intent on giving their daughter the most normal life possible—even as she remained hooked up to machines, underwent myriad heart and skin surgeries and lost her burned leg to amputation. As Reese’s hospital stay lengthened, she began schoolwork again, logging into her Pennsylvania classroom via her iPad and participating remotely with her teacher and classmates.

Throughout the long weeks and months, Nelson remained a daily lifeline. She made a point to be there whenever Reese’s VAD tubing had to be changed—an anxiety-provoking process for Reese since it required the little girl to briefly be taken off the bypass system. At one point, Nelson was away at a medical conference in California during a tubing change. So she checked in via FaceTime. “I ran to a nearby beach, and ‘together’ Reese and I picked up shells to help get her mind off things.” Later, a respiratory therapist remarked to the little girl, “Dr. Kristen is such a good friend to you, isn’t she?” A teary Reese responded indignantly: ‘She’s not my friend. She’s my family!’”

Says Nelson: “I will never forget that.”

For Reese, the rehab involved with her new leg was particularly grueling. So her parents and the team devised a unique spirit-lifter: They promised Reese a hospital visit from her pet cow, Pantene, on the day she took her first steps. Pantene’s visit, which caused quite a stir at Johns Hopkins, had the hoped-for impact: Pictures of the day show a beaming Reese standing upright in her walker, next to her beloved bovine.

Ultimately, Reese Burdette spent 662 days at Johns Hopkins Hospital. She went home on March 18, 2016—two days shy of her ninth birthday. That wasn’t the end of the story for Nelson, however. She traveled home with the family to their dairy farm and helped them get set up and comfortable managing Reese’s many medical needs. “At that point, she was still on a ventilator and oxygen and many medications. She was also receiving kidney dialysis,” says Nelson.

Today, two years later, Reese has resumed the normal life of an 11-year-old. She’s earning top grades in school, is active in showing her cows at competition and will soon have her tracheotomy tube removed, allowing her to resume swimming, a favorite activity.

Nelson remains very close to the Burdette family and active in Reese’s medical care. “There’s not enough words to describe what Reese means to me,” she says. ■



**ABOVE RIGHT** Reese’s mom, Claire, and her care team were intent on keeping life as normal as possible during her long hospital stay. Photo courtesy of Herald-Mail Media.

**RIGHT** Reese shares a goofy moment with many of her favorite caregivers.



Reese shares a hug with her kidney donor, Alyssa Hussey—and a big smile with three doctors key to her care at Johns Hopkins: Academy members Luca Vricella, Kristen Nelson and Rick Redett. Photo of Reese and Alyssa courtesy of Bre Bogert Photography.



# Setting a New Course IN SCHOLARSHIP

With the 2008 publication of “Defining Clinical Excellence in Academic Medicine” in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, the Miller Coulson Scholars (Colleen Christmas, Chris Durso, Steve Kravet and Scott Wright) set a new course for published scholarship related to excellence in patient care.

Until that point in time, definitions of clinical excellence varied greatly, as did the metrics used to measure it. In the years since that seminal work was published, members of the Miller Coulson Academy have built upon that foundation to author more than 20 papers related to clinical excellence across a wide variety of medical specialties. Here are a few highlights:

**Clinical Medicine & Research, 2009. “Implications of academic medicine’s failure to recognize clinical excellence”**  
Authors: Durso, Christmas, Kravet, Wright



In studying the perspectives of clinically excellent faculty within prominent American Departments of Medicine, the authors learned of several concerns related to academic medicine’s failure to recognize clinical excellence: (i) low morale and prestige among clinicians (ii) loss of talented clinicians (iii) a lack of commitment to improving patient care systems, and (iv) fewer excellent clinician role models to inspire trainees. These results emphasize the imperative to ensure that clinicians feel valued and are treated well by their institution.

**Journal of Graduate Medical Education, 2010. “Advantages and challenges of working as a clinician in an academic department of medicine: academic clinicians’ perspectives”**  
Authors: Christmas, Durso, Kravet, Wright



This paper delineates the special opportunities and significant threats to the delivery of excellent patient care at academic institutions. As compared to clinicians practicing in the private sector, the faculty are often also focused on succeeding as educators and researchers, which may pull attention and time away from patient care.

**Academic Medicine, 2010. “Creating an academy of clinical excellence at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center: A 3-year experience”**  
Authors: Wright, Kravet, Christmas, Burkhardt, Durso



Describes the history, creation and ongoing activities of the Miller Coulson Academy at Johns Hopkins Bayview and notes that while membership in the academy is honorific, the members of this working academy are committed to influencing institutional culture as they collaborate on advocacy, scholarship and educational initiatives. This article inspired other academic medical centers (including Ohio State University, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania and others) to use the Academy’s methods for measuring clinical excellence, to develop programs that recognize outstanding clinicians, or to establish their own academy.

**Miller Coulson Academy members have authored more than 20 papers related to clinical excellence across a wide variety of medical specialties.**

**American Journal of Cardiology, 2011. “Clinical excellence in cardiology”**  
Author: Roy Ziegelstein, Sarah Miller Coulson and Frank L. Coulson, Jr. Professor of Medicine



Discusses clinical excellence in cardiology using the definition and framework of the seven previously defined domains. The Academy established a template for this series of papers that would apply our definition of clinical excellence in general to any medical specialty. These papers were filled with examples identified from the published literature, predominantly case reports, of physicians and other healthcare professionals delivering exceptional care across each of the definition’s domains. The following papers by Academy members have similarly been published in biomedical journals (and several others are under development):

- Clinical Excellence in Psychiatry
- Clinical Excellence in Nephrology
- Clinical Excellence in Pediatrics
- Clinical Excellence in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
- The Role of Social Media in Clinical Excellence
- Clinical Excellence in Hospital Medicine
- Clinical Excellence in Infectious Diseases
- Clinical Excellence in Primary Care
- Clinical Excellence in Palliative Care

**American Journal of Medicine, 2012. “Clinicians’ perceptions about how they are valued by the academic medical center”**  
Authors: Gozu, Burkhardt, Bhogal, Hirsch, Wright



Because promotion decisions and academic rank are heavily influenced by research success and not clinical accomplishments, distinction in the clinical care of patients is perceived to be “under-rewarded and taken for granted” by clinicians. While some academic health centers have established multiple tracks for promotion in an effort to balance the appreciation for all three parts of the tripartite mission, even at those academic health centers, clinicians or clinician-educators who are part of these alternate tracks may feel as though they are members of a “second class.”

**Journal of Hospital Medicine, 2014. “Development and validation of the Tool to Assess Inpatient Satisfaction with care from hospitalists”**  
Authors: Torok, Ghazarian, Kotwal, Landis, Wright, Howell



As part of the effort to advance clinical coaching, an instrument to collect detailed feedback from patients about the clinicians caring for them was developed and validated (TAISCH). TAISCH had good reliability (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=.88$ ). The relationships between TAISCH with a validated empathy scale and a global provider satisfaction question revealed significant positive associations ( $\beta=12.2$ , and  $\beta=11.2$  respectively, both  $P<0.001$ ). Clinicians were also more confident that the attribution was accurate as compared to mailed surveys (e.g. Press Ganey or HCAHPS).

**Academic Medicine, 2015. “Beginning with the end in mind: Imagining personal retirement speeches to promote professionalism”**  
Authors: Yu and Wright



As part of a course for interns named Introduction to Clinical Excellence, newly graduated MDs are asked to write their retirement speeches. This builds on Steven Covey’s second of *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, which is “beginning with the end in mind.” In having the interns think about all of the accomplishments that are forthcoming in their careers, it encourages them to plan ahead and to dream big. This paper describes the themes common among their commentaries.

**Southern Medical Journal, 2016. “Fostering clinical excellence across an academic health system”**  
Authors: Tackett, Eisele, McGuire, Rotello, Wright



Input was solicited from more than 1,700 healthcare providers across a large academic health system about their perspectives on how best to formally recognize clinicians who are excelling in patient care. There was agreement about several metrics believed to be valid and sensible for assessing clinical excellence. Stakeholders asserted that the most desirable rewards for excellence was institutional reinvestment in resources that would facilitate first-rate patient care. ■



# A GROWING IMPACT

In the decade since the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence started at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, its reach and impact has continued to expand.



## ABOVE AND BEYOND

“Over the last decade, the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence not only has shined the spotlight on many amazing doctors here at Johns Hopkins, but it has kept us all focused on clinical excellence as a paramount objective. The Academy is a concrete embodiment of our values, reinforcing to our community that clinical excellence is a critical piece of our mission while offering a tangible way to recognize the clinicians who go above and beyond to help their patients. Moreover, in the spirit of academia, the Academy, which we have expanded from Bayview to the Johns Hopkins Hospital, supports outstanding scholarship through which we can spread these principles and practices across our institutions and beyond to the broader community of healthcare providers.”

**Paul B. Rothman, M.D.**  
*Dean of the Medical Faculty  
CEO, Johns Hopkins Medicine*



## THE HIGHEST FORM OF FLATTERY

“When we at Columbia learned about what is now named the Miller Coulson Academy at Johns Hopkins, we were extremely impressed with the concept of honoring a medical school’s outstanding clinicians. After meeting with Dr. Wright in both Baltimore and New York, we have launched the Academy of Clinical Excellence at the Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons, with the inaugural class inducted this past year. Mimicry is the highest form of flattery, and we look forward to the success of both of our Academies as well as the creation of analogous academies at other medical schools.”

**Lee Goldman, M.D., M.P.H.**  
*Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculties  
of Health Sciences and Medicine  
Chief Executive of Columbia University Medical Center*



## WORTH PROMOTING

“When I was a vice dean for education at the Ohio State University, we carefully reviewed the comprehensive clinical portfolios that were developed by the Miller Coulson Academy. We were extremely impressed by the thoughtful design of the portfolio and the rigor with which the portfolios were evaluated. In developing our own process for assessing clinicians who were going up for promotion, we looked to the Miller Coulson Academy framework as a model to guide us.”

**Catherine Lucey, M.D.**  
*Executive Vice Dean, UCSF School of Medicine  
Formerly Vice Dean for Education, Ohio State University College of Medicine*



## ENHANCING JOY IN PRACTICE

“Having had the privilege of being involved in the creation of the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence and having seen the impact it had on institutional culture, I felt establishing a similar structure within Johns Hopkins Community Physicians would provide our strongest clinicians a platform to also become active ambassadors of change. Through mentorship and advocacy, we hope to bring focus on clinical excellence to enhance joy in practice and to assure the highest quality care to patients and families across our 40 practices and nearly 1 million yearly patient visits.”

**Steven J. Kravet, M.D., M.B.A.**  
*President, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians*





# Moving Us CLOSER TO OSLER

Making healthcare more welcoming for LGBTQ patients. Tried and true tips for avoiding physician burnout. Lessons clinicians can learn from therapy dogs. Why mindfulness is at the foundation of clinical reasoning and accuracy in diagnosis.

Such articles, authored by Johns Hopkins healthcare professionals and by physicians from other institutions, are among the compelling pieces featured on CLOSLER.org, a new website launched in March by leaders of the Miller Coulson Academy. Its mission: to share the latest insights and perspectives about clinical excellence with doctors all over the country and around the world.

“We all can learn so much from wise clinicians who are brilliant diagnosticians and

skillful at connecting meaningfully with all of their patients. With the creation of CLOSLER.org, exceptional role models for clinical excellence (Academy members and others) become accessible to anyone wanting to improve in patient care,” says Scott Wright, director of the Miller Coulson Academy and the Anne Gaines and G. Thomas Miller Endowed Professor of Medicine. “The CLOSLER.org site is beautiful and thoughtful providers have been thrilled to share their perspectives—so the content is amazing.”

Adds psychiatrist Margaret Chisolm, a Miller Coulson Academy scholar and regular contributor to CLOSLER.org: “Studies suggest that people learn best when they are part of a learning community where they can share and exchange information. Exposure to role models you would otherwise never meet is a true gift.”

The new website, a portmanteau of “Closer” and “Osler,” is named for William Osler, the “father of modern medicine” and one of

The launch of CLOSLER.org was the result of many months of diligent work on the part of the website’s development team (left to right): Leigh Fisher, Michael Fingerhood (Academy member), Scott Wright (Academy Director), Kim Williams (Academy Manager), Margaret Chisolm (Academy member), Kirsten Gercke, Gretchen Miller (CLOSLER Managing Editor).

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the “Big Four” founding professors at Johns Hopkins Hospital. He is most famous for articulating an early patient-centric pursuit of medicine: “The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.”

“With CLOSLER.org, our goal is to help physicians move ‘closer’ to ‘Osler’ in their delivery of exceptional patient care,” explains Gretchen Miller, who is the new website’s managing editor.

CLOSLER.org is organized around four central content areas that are critical to clinical excellence: connecting with patients; clinical reasoning; passion in the medical profession; and lifelong learning in clinical excellence.

Contributors from across Johns Hopkins and beyond—including nurses and therapists, as well as those on the physician continuum, from medical students, interns and residents to senior faculty members—are providing the site with concise reflections (most pieces can be read in two to three minutes) aimed at inspiring and informing. In addition to original content, CLOSLER.org also includes “curated content”—physician commentary on pertinent articles from the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and other publications that offer thought-provoking insights and perspectives on great doctoring.

As CLOSLER.org gains traction, contributions and involvement from outside expert clinicians will grow, say website team members, who note that William Osler made significant contributions to the medical education curriculum and learning communities at all of the institutions where he worked: McGill University, University of Pennsylvania, and Oxford University, in addition to Johns Hopkins.

“We’re partnering with physicians at these universities, and others around the world,” says Miller, “to galvanize an online learning community that will be focused on stimulating reflection about providing exceptional care to every patient.” ■

## OVERHEARD ON CLOSLER.ORG

### STORYTELLING IN MEDICINE

“Storytelling in medicine can sound like a nebulous affair... After all, once you open yourself to the hopes and fears of a patient, where will that inexhaustible exploration end? These theoretical qualms make it all the more striking that most clinicians I talk to find it vital to grasp a patient’s story and personality as well as the chronicity of symptoms. A hospitalist told me recently how she improved both the quality of her history taking and her efficiency when she when she stopped asking people, ‘Tell me about your cough,’ or the even-more-open-ended, ‘Tell me what brought you to the hospital,’ and started instead with a request: ‘Tell me about yourself.’”

—from “Individualized Medicine Calls Me Back to Patient Stories,” by Tom Laskow, M.D., medicine resident, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

### MAKING WELLNESS WORK

I’m a primary care physician (general internist) who’s been burned out before. When I was burned out, I realized I wasn’t as good of a doctor. I listened less, I got frustrated more easily, and I took less time with my patients. Being aware of burnout encourages us to work on our individual well-being and improving our system, which will help us to be more caring doctors, more thoughtful about the care we provide to patients.

—from “Six Ways to Make Wellness Work,” by Laura Hanyok, M.D., Assistant Dean for Graduate Medical Education, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine





Some recent recipients of the Frank L. Coulson Award for Clinical Excellence, which honors outstanding physicians in residency training programs at Johns Hopkins.

# Looking Ahead A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

In its first decade of existence, the Miller Coulson Academy of Clinical Excellence has made significant strides in creating a culture at Johns Hopkins—and beyond—that nurtures and celebrates great doctoring.

“We live in an era when technology has become central to the practice of medicine. For that reason, it’s incredibly gratifying to see the Miller Coulson Academy thrive in its important work of holding up doctors who are devoted to doing whatever they can to help their patients receive exceptional care that is in line with their patients’ values and goals,” says David Hellmann, director of the Center for Innovative Medicine.

The key to the Academy’s continued growth and widening impact, says director Scott Wright, is that it’s a “working academy.” Its members, an ever-growing cadre of Johns Hopkins’ top doctors, are regularly collaborating to boost the quality of patient-centered care, brainstorming new ways to advance the Academy’s mission, developing innovative programs and disseminating advances through the academic literature so that other institutions may consider following suit.

The launch of the G. Thomas Miller Coaching Program in 2013, which connects master clinicians with new faculty for clinical mentoring, is one example of

that collaboration. And the creation of the Frank L. Coulson Award for Clinical Excellence, which honors outstanding doctors-in-training in all 20-plus residency programs, is another (see pictures of some recent award winners shown on adjacent page). Most recently, in March of this year, the Academy began CLOSLER.org, a website that is enabling people all over the world to learn about excellence in patient care from great role models they would otherwise never encounter.

“Before the Miller Coulson Academy, these exceptional clinicians who are scattered across Johns Hopkins mostly didn’t know each other. They never came together in one place or had reason or opportunity to join forces to improve patient care,” says Wright. “Now they are writing papers *together*. They are teaching *together*. They are thinking about how to enhance the quality of patient care *together*. When you bring them all together, you’ve got magic!”

Looking ahead, Wright says the Academy will go even further to build a culture that nurtures lifelong learning in clinical excellence. “We will also consolidate initiatives for medical students, residents and junior faculty so they all can readily see that there is a clear career path in academia for those whose dream and passion it is to become a master clinician,” he says.

“The composition and production of our ‘working Academy’ over the last 10 years should make us all excited about the possibilities that are forthcoming.”

—Scott Wright

“Just as we have courses, mentors and funding mechanisms to support faculty who want to dedicate their careers to research, the Academy hopes to establish similar structures and resources for those who are committed to growth as master clinicians.

“The composition and production of our ‘working Academy’ over the last 10 years should make us all excited about the possibilities that are forthcoming,” says Wright.

David Hellmann agrees. “The Academy facilitates conversations between doctors who are the best of the best, and as such, the possibilities for improving patient care are limitless,” he says. “The Academy is destined to do great things, and the patients we serve at Johns Hopkins will benefit from these efforts.” ■



## THE MILLER COULSON ACADEMY of CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Celebrating 10 Years  
of Exceptional Patient Care

PROJECT MANAGER: Leigh Fisher

PROJECT TEAM: Kim Williams  
Kirsten Gercke  
Scott Wright

WRITER/EDITOR: Sue De Pasquale

PHOTOGRAPHY: Christopher Myers  
Keith Weller  
Bre Bogert  
Colleen Helf

DESIGN: idfive

To learn more or to contribute to the pursuit of clinical excellence:

BY MAIL  
Miller Coulson Academy  
Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center  
5200 Eastern Ave  
Mason F. Lord Building  
Center Tower, Suite 2300  
Baltimore, MD 21224

ONLINE  
<https://secure.jhu.edu/form/innovate>

EMAIL  
[CLOSLER@jhmi.edu](mailto:CLOSLER@jhmi.edu)

For more information on the Center for Innovative Medicine, go to [HopkinsCIM.org](http://HopkinsCIM.org)

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