Class of 2022 Takes its Place in the Field of Medicine

One hundred forty medical students who constitute the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai’s Class of 2022 were welcomed into the medical profession on Thursday, September 13, at the school’s symbolic White Coat Ceremony in Stern Auditorium. Surrounded by family members, alumni, and Mount Sinai Health System leaders, the students proudly received their white coats and recited an oath they had written to accept the privilege and responsibility being bestowed upon them as society’s future physicians.

Peter W. May, Chairman, Boards of Trustees, Mount Sinai Health System, told the audience that the medical school was unique in that it was founded 50 years ago by a hospital, rather than a large university. “What we care about is creating research that gets applied to the clinic as quickly as possible to help our patients,” he said. “You are receiving your white coats today because your clinical training starts right at the beginning of your medical education. At Mount Sinai, you will have the opportunity to learn and work with brilliant professors in math, computer science, engineering, and the physical sciences. This interdisciplinary collaboration extends the boundaries of what modern medicine can achieve.”

Kenneth L. Davis, MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Mount Sinai Health System, encouraged the students to take the time to explore the many research and clinical opportunities the school has to offer in order to find an area of medicine they love. He said Mount Sinai’s commitment to helping students find their passion is the same as it was nearly 50 years ago, when he entered the school’s second class.

“You have earned the right to be here. You have the capacity to be great,” Dr. Davis told the students. “Let today be remembered as the day you committed to achieve that greatness by searching for that part of

Grant Awarded for Multifaceted Study of Peanut Allergy

When patients are diagnosed with peanut allergy, they often ask two questions: “How much peanut can I eat before I get sick, and how severe will the reaction be?” says Scott Sicherer, MD, Director, Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Food Allergy Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. And physicians have another question, he says: “If I recommend a therapy, is it going to work for this patient?” These questions are at the center of research funded by a five-year, $7.6 million grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases that was recently awarded to a multidisciplinary team at the Icahn School of Medicine.

The research is divided into three projects, which reflect Mount Sinai’s unique strengths in clinical allergy treatment, basic science, and data-driven medicine. Cecilia Berin, PhD, Deputy Director of the Jaffe Food Allergy Institute, and Professor of Pediatrics, and Dr. Sicherer are principal investigators of the National Institutes of Health grant. The central project is a clinical trial that will focus on a seldom-studied group—people with “high-threshold” peanut allergy, meaning they react only to larger amounts of peanut. This
Top orthopedic surgeons, sports medicine physicians, and musculoskeletal radiologists were courtside to help diagnose and provide rapid professional care to athletes in need of medical attention at the 2018 US Open Tennis Championships. It was the sixth consecutive year that Mount Sinai has served as the official medical services provider of the event, which was held over a two-week span in August and September in Flushing Meadows, Queens.

Alexis Colvin, MD, Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery in the Leni and Peter W. May Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, led player care as the Chief Medical Officer of the 2018 US Open. “We treated not only the pros, but the juniors and wheelchair athletes, as well,” says Dr. Colvin, who is also the U.S. Fed Cup team physician.

This year marked many tournament firsts for Mount Sinai, which hosted the first-ever “Mount Sinai Get Fit and Play” event for the 23rd annual Arthur Ashe Kids’ Day, featuring fun, physical activities for youth. On hand to support the event were members of the sports medicine team and Leesa M. Galatz, MD, Mount Sinai Professor in Orthopedics and Chair of the Leni and Peter W. May Department of Orthopedic Surgery.

“Promoting the sport of youth tennis as a means to stay fit and healthy is a critical component of our partnership with the United States Tennis Association (USTA),” says James Gladstone, MD, Chief of the Mount Sinai Health System’s Sports Medicine Service, Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, US Open Player Physician, and U.S. Davis Cup team physician.

Also for the first time, Joseph Herrera, DO, Chair, Department of Rehabilitation Medicine and Human Performance, and the Lucy G. Moses Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine, along with a team of rehabilitation medicine specialists, participated in Community Day, hosting 32 Mount Sinai patients at the US Open Wheelchair Competition. There, they had a special courtside opportunity to experience the excitement of wheelchair tennis and meet players.

Mount Sinai radiologists, led by Carlos Benitez, MD, Director of Musculoskeletal Imaging at Mount Sinai West and Mount Sinai St. Luke’s, and Associate Professor of Radiology at the Icahn School of Medicine, were also onsite working closely with the team of Mount Sinai’s orthopedic sports medicine specialists. They provided players with immediate access to on-the-spot evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of injuries. A portable, laptop-size ultrasound device made by GE Healthcare was used to diagnose musculoskeletal injuries. Also adding to their capabilities for the first time this year was a portable X-ray machine, the GE Optima 200, outfitted with a Konica Minolta Digital Detector providing high-definition digital images of the chest, pelvis, spine, or extremities that could be interpreted by radiologists onsite.

The Mount Sinai Health System also achieved another milestone during the tournament when it launched its first marketing campaign in support of its partnership with the US Open and the USTA Eastern Section. It included highly visible billboards in Lower Manhattan, ads in The New York Times Magazine, digital and social media displays, and ads on the Long Island Railroad, Metro-North, and subway.

While the ads had a distinct tennis theme and reinforced Mount Sinai’s relationship with the US Open, they also conveyed the broad message that “Mount Sinai is a full-service health system that can not only treat your injury, but also treat the rest of your body.” In mid-October, Mount Sinai will launch a larger six-month ad campaign that will showcase its world-renowned excellence in many other disciplines.
Postdoctoral Award Supports Innovative Research

Two early-career scientists in the fields of Neuroscience, and Genetics and Genomic Sciences, recently received the 2018 Robin Chemers Neustein Postdoctoral Fellowship Award. The recipients—Lorna Farrelly, PhD, and Sabrina Tamburini, PhD—will each receive an award of $25,000 to further their research.

Dr. Farrelly works in the laboratory of Ian Sutherland Maze, PhD, in the Fishberg Department of Neuroscience. She is investigating susceptibility to psychiatric illness via novel neuroepigenetic brain mechanisms potentially responsible for neural plasticity. “Dr. Farrelly is a truly passionate, talented, and inspiring young scientist who has great potential to one day become a leader in the collective fields of neuroepigenetics and molecular psychiatry,” says Dr. Maze, Assistant Professor of Pharmacological Sciences, and Neuroscience, at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. “Additionally, she is an exceptional mentor to members of my lab and is never afraid to tackle the most difficult of scientific dilemmas.”

Working in the laboratory of Jose Clemente, PhD, Assistant Professor of Genetics and Genomic Sciences, Dr. Tamburini conducts research focused on understanding what constitutes a “healthy” microbiome and how the microbiome is related to overall health and disease. Explains Dr. Clemente: “Dr. Tamburini has developed assays that can distinguish viable bacteria in the human gut, which is crucial because only those bacteria can produce chemical compounds that induce host responses. We are now using this technique to better understand how microbial transplantation can be used therapeutically in Clostridium difficile and inflammatory bowel disease patients.”

Intended to encourage and support female research scientists at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Fellowship was established in 2010 through a generous gift from Robin Chemers Neustein, JD, MBA, a former member of Mount Sinai’s Boards of Trustees.

Class of 2022 Takes its Place in the Field of Medicine (continued from page 1)

Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and President for Academic Affairs, Mount Sinai Health System, said the high academic achievements, skills, and interests among the Class of 2022 were evidence of their potential to become the “next generation of brilliant physicians, transformative scientists, and leaders who will shape the future of education, biomedical research, and delivery of high quality care to all Americans.”

Dr. Charney said the ability to change the field of medicine would belong to only a talented few, including the Class of 2022. This, he said, brought to mind the famous 1940 speech by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who said of the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain, “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

The white coat, said Dr. Charney, comes with “serious responsibilities. Patients will ask you for answers, and sometimes the answers are not forthcoming. Class of 2022, there are only 140 of you, yet there are so many patients in our local community, our city, our country, our world who are going to need you.”

On the occasion of its 50th anniversary this year, the Icahn School of Medicine inaugurated the first Hans Popper, MD, PhD, Keynote Speaker at the White Coat Ceremony, and extended this honor to 2009 Mount Sinai alumnus Pooja Mehta, MD, MSHP, Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology at Louisiana State University School of Medicine. Dr. Mehta also serves as Director of Women’s Health Policy and interim Chief Medical Officer of Medicaid for the state of Louisiana.

Dr. Mehta relayed the story of a very ill woman she once treated who taught her how important it is to understand the patient. She said, this woman—whose tragic health outcome was largely preventable—ultimately led her to Louisiana where she cares for underserved women, as well as transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, “who seek self-determination in health care.”

“You will have all the tools you need when you leave here to question, to think critically, to evaluate evidence, to work in a hospital, and to work outside the four walls of a hospital,” said Dr. Mehta. “Use every drop of privilege this white coat gives you. But don’t wait too long to divest from your privilege to meet the people where they are, and—as stated in the Oath of Maimonides that I took in this room 14 years ago—to be a fellow creature in pain.”

This worthy profession that lights an unquenchable fire in you. That takes time.”
**Epic Team Wins Honor Roll Distinction**

The Mount Sinai Health System was recognized recently for its achievements with Epic, the electronic health record system, receiving an Honor Roll distinction, at the Cum Laude level, through the Epic Honor Roll Good Maintenance Grant Program. This is a voluntary recognition program based on application of strategies, lessons learned, and best practices distilled from Epic’s experience serving top-line health care organizations.

“This is a huge achievement that not many other organizations of our size and complexity have achieved,” says Ken Koppenhaver, Senior Director of Epic Applications. “Just like the large-scale implementations that have occurred this year, this accomplishment belongs to all of us in Information Technology, as it took many teams countless hours to meet the requirements of this program.”

The requirements include computer hardware and business continuity, benchmarks in patient experience and population health, and ease of use, requiring collaboration across all of the Information Technology areas. Those who are eligible for the program include Epic customers across the United States who have been live with EpicCare Ambulatory or EpicCare Inpatient for one year or more. In early 2017, the Epic team began the process of achieving the Honor Roll recognition, with the final submission completed more than a year later in June.

Adds Mr. Koppenhaver: “Completing all components of the program helps ensure that Mount Sinai draws the most value from the Epic software and helps us improve the health and wellness of the communities we serve.”

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### Grant Awarded for Multifaceted Study of Peanut Allergy (continued from page 1)

A trial of a dietary allergy immunotherapy will be led by Dr. Sicherer, the Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe Professor of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology, and Chief of Pediatric Allergy; and Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn, MD, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics. “Most studies right now are looking at people who are exquisitely allergic—people who react to a fraction as small as a 50th of a peanut,” Dr. Sicherer says. “But a majority of people with peanut allergy do not react to these tiny amounts, and the treatments so far have not really been directed to them. This study is trying to identify those people and then see if an immunotherapy would help them, possibly to a cure.”

Researchers will conduct “food challenges” of about 200 children ages 4 to 14, giving them small doses of peanut. They plan to identify 98 high-threshold children, who will be divided into two groups. One group will simply avoid peanut, and the other will eat small amounts of peanut butter—carefully measured by parents—starting with about 1/8 teaspoon and progressing to larger servings. The aim is to reduce, or even eliminate, their sensitivity to peanut.

The third project will take a genomic and data-science approach, using Mount Sinai’s high-performance computing resources. It is led by Supinda Bunyavanich, MD, MPH, Associate Director of the Jaffe Food Allergy Institute, and Associate Professor of Genetics and Genomic Sciences, and Pediatrics. “We will sequence blood samples from the children participating in this trial and use data science to identify novel biomarkers for peanut-allergy management,” Dr. Bunyavanich says. “Our goal is to find biomarkers that predict reaction threshold and desensitization potential in peanut-allergic individuals. The project will also further our mechanistic understanding of peanut allergy severity.”

Overall, the objective is to develop more effective, personalized immunotherapies for peanut allergy and to determine which patients are the best candidates before any treatment starts. “Peanut allergy is a very common food allergy—it affects about 2 percent of kids,” Dr. Sicherer says, “and this research will have a big impact on how we treat these patients.”
“Celebration and Joy” on National Cancer Survivors Day

About 200 cancer survivors, their families and friends, and Mount Sinai faculty and staff recently attended the 21st annual luncheon celebrating National Cancer Survivors Day*. At the event, held in the atrium of Mount Sinai Union Square, Shawn S. Smith, who was treated for uterine cancer at Mount Sinai West, gave a talk on her journey as a patient. “I learned to laugh and to help others to laugh, even if only for a moment,” Ms. Smith said. “I learned that it was OK to be afraid, but not stay in fear—to push past it.” In addition, the Mount Sinai Chelsea Cancer Survivors Vocal Ensemble made its debut performance, led by Michael Inge, a singer-songwriter. “This well-anticipated annual event was filled with celebration and joy,” says Melissa Bellino, Vice President, Oncology and Therapeutic Infusion, Mount Sinai Health System. “It allows us to focus on the importance of the community that we have created and demonstrates our commitment to provide the highest quality of cancer care.”

Restoring Stained Glass at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s

The historic stained-glass windows of Muhlenberg Chapel at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s are being restored, thanks to a fund-raising effort led by Norma M.T. Braun, MD, Clinical Professor of Medicine, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. The chapel is named after the founder of St. Luke’s, Episcopal clergyman William Augustus Muhlenberg. Its windows, designed by the architect Henry Holiday in 1896, were recently selected as a point of interest in the New York Landmarks Conservancy’s annual Sacred Sites Open House. Restoration is to be completed later this year. Meanwhile, the chapel will continue multidenominational services, remaining “a beautiful and serene retreat for prayer and contemplation,” says the Rev. Meredith D.K. Lisagor, MDiv, BCC, Director of Spiritual Care and Education at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s and Mount Sinai West.

Watercolor Workshop Promotes Calm and Creativity

While many were rushing away from work on two recent afternoons, about two dozen Mount Sinai staff members took a peaceful detour—to after-work watercolor workshops at the Icahn Medical Institute. The classes were sponsored by Mount Sinai Calm, 1199-SEIU, and Chashama, a nonprofit group that provides work space to artists and offers community-centered arts programs. Participants were given painting tips by Charles Esperanza, an author and illustrator with Chashama. “Make a rough sketch first to make sure your figure will fit on the paper,” Mr. Esperanza said. “As you paint, look at the model more than at your paper.” And finally, there was advice that could be applied to many endeavors: “Don’t expect perfection, just jump in and have fun.” Mount Sinai Calm offers free self-care and stress-reduction programs. For a class schedule and to learn about future workshops, visit www.mountsinai.org/about/ms-fit/self-care or email 4calm@mountsinai.org.
7th Annual **SINA Innovations**

**Theme: Innovation in Science and Medicine**

As the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai celebrates its 50th Anniversary, this year’s **SINA Innovations** conference will focus on the school’s historical achievements, current strengths, and plans for continued leadership in biomedicine through interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation, and discovery.

Keynote speakers include:

- Charles Murry, MD, PhD, Director, Center for Cardiovascular Biology, University of Washington
- Katherine A. High, MD, President, Spark Therapeutics
- Raymond Schinazi, PhD, Director, Center for AIDS Research, Emory University School of Medicine
- Tom Maniatis, PhD, Scientific Director, New York Genome Center, Columbia University
- Eric Dishman, Director, All of Us Research Program, National Institutes of Health
- Sri Madabushi, PhD, Business Development Director, Google AI Healthcare
- David Blumenthal, MD, President, The Commonwealth Fund
- Kelly J. Kelleher, MD, Director, Center for Innovative Pediatric Practice, Nationwide Children’s Hospital

**Tuesday, October 23 – Wednesday, October 24**

**Annenberg, Stern Auditorium**

Email: Sinainnovations@mssm.edu
http://icahn.mssm.edu/about/sinainnovations

Registration is free, but required.

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**3rd Annual Mount Sinai Health Hackathon**

**Creating Novel Technology Solutions for Health Care**

**Theme: Rare Diseases**

A 48-hour fun and high-energy, team-based, multidisciplinary competition focused on creating novel technology solutions for problems in health care. Three finalists will each be awarded $2,500.

**Friday, October 19 – Sunday, October 21**

**Hess Center for Science and Medicine**

**Davis Conference Center**

Registration is $10.

For more information, email health-hackathon@mssm.edu.