



THE CUPOLA

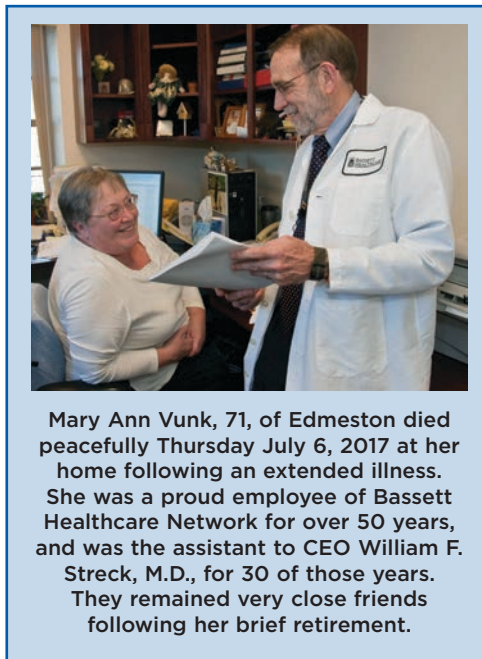
The Bulletin of The Medical Alumni Association of Bassett Medical Center
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Mary Ann Vunk: 50 Years at Bassett, Making a Quiet Difference

By William F. Streck, M.D.

No person in the history of the Bassett Healthcare Network cumulatively influenced the lives and careers of the physicians of Bassett as much as Mary Ann Vunk. As the Executive Assistant to Charles A. Ashley, M.D., for 17 years and for me for 30 years, Mary Ann was the port of entry to the Bassett organization for new physicians. In that span she oversaw new beginnings and entire careers. When new physicians first came to her to learn of compensation, retirement options, organizational rules of engagement and answers to most questions, they learned what existing staff members had long recognized. In Mary Ann they had a remarkable friend and ally, an individual who was extraordinarily bright and insightful, kind and thoughtful, knowledgeable about all things Bassett. Over the years for junior and senior physicians, Mary Ann would serve as a welcome place to visit, to express concerns, to reflect, to laugh, to get questions answered, to feel secure in the facts and appreciated as an individual. It was always easy because



Mary Ann Vunk, 71, of Edmeston died peacefully Thursday July 6, 2017 at her home following an extended illness. She was a proud employee of Bassett Healthcare Network for over 50 years, and was the assistant to CEO William F. Streck, M.D., for 30 of those years. They remained very close friends following her brief retirement.

she was never too busy, always interested in any physician's ideas or needs and quite willing to get an answer or pursue a solution.

In fact, she was always very busy. She managed all the schedules and documents for the CEO and board, kept minutes of all key meetings, ran the payroll and retirement plans by herself for every member of the physician staff, even as it ballooned from 60 to 250 plus over the years. She was also a remarkable proofreader with all important documents going through her desk, including every Annual Report from 1968 to 2014. But if you walked into her office with a question you would never know all this was going on. She took care of all and then worked at her home and on weekends to meet her own high standards of professionalism.

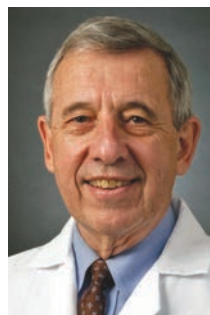
Mary Ann's work ethic was defining, both for herself and her view of others. She was kind to all but most appreciative of those who worked hard. Mary Ann brought a loyalty to

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Message from the Editor

By Alan J. Kozak, M.D.

As pointed out by William Streck, M.D., in the above article, during her long career devoted to the Bassett Healthcare Network, Mary Ann Vunk served as a supportive shepherd to many. I was no exception. I first became acquainted with her in November 1968, when visiting Bassett for the first time as a Medicine intern applicant. At that time, then Hospital Director, Charles A. Ashley, M.D., interviewed all prospective house officers. Mary Ann, fairly new in the position, sat outside his office as his private secretary. Even at that younger age, I clearly recall her calm, friendly, and professional style, which I came to later recognize as her hallmark. Through subsequent years, as a departing and then returning house officer and later in 1977, when I finally returned as an Attending, she remained a stable figure, unchanged, despite changes that continued about her. She shouldered increasing responsibility through her long tenure, yet she was always



Alan J. Kozak, M.D.

there, never abrupt or rushed, with door wide open, to answer questions, provide advice, share a laugh, or simply chat about Bassett life, current and past.

When my time for retirement approached, her shepherding role continued as she provided me with the help and advice needed as I concluded my own clinical career. We often laughed and joked about her own plans for retirement. True to her institutional loyalty, she indicated that she wanted to delay retirement until she had helped Dr. Streck through his own retirement process and then assist his successor, Vance Brown, M.D., become situated in his new role.

Unfortunately, life after retirement was too short for Mary Ann. In a town, well known for its National Baseball Hall of Fame, perhaps the Bassett should develop its own Hall of Fame, with extraordinary, loyal, and dedicated past contributors, such as Mary Ann, its inductees. ■

The Cupola is the newsletter of the Medical Alumni Association of Bassett Medical Center. The Association was founded to provide support and recommendations to Bassett's Medical Education Department; to assist in recruiting medical students, house staff and attending staff; and to provide financial support to develop and enhance medical education at Bassett.

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The Cupola is published three times a year. Please send comments and news, including change of address information to: Editor, *The Cupola*, Office of Medical Education, Bassett Medical Center, One Atwell Road, Cooperstown, NY 13326 or e-mail cupola@bassett.org.

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Front Row (L-R): Drs. John Davis, Ken Wilkins, Merideth Davis, Doug DeLong, Steven Ching, and David Newman. Middle Row (L-R): Drs. Tim Whitaker and Erin McKay. Back Row (L-R): Drs. Bruce McClennan, Alan Kozak, Than Doro, John Dier, Anush Patel, and Vance Brown, President and CEO, Bassett Healthcare Network.

I am pleased to report that the fall meeting of the Alumni Association Board, held on October 13, 2017, was well attended and very productive. Once again, I was reminded that we are most fortunate to have a dedicated group of alumni who volunteer their time to give back to medical education at Bassett.

A major order of business included the announcement that Kenneth W. Wilkins, Jr., M.D., (Medicine Resident 1980-84) has agreed to serve as the President of the Association Board of Directors. He is a long-time supporter and this role will be a "return engagement" since he was President of the Board from 2004 to 2010. I am also pleased that James Murray, D.O., (Medicine Resident 2000-04) agreed to step into the position of President-Elect. My thanks to both of you for your leadership and I look forward to working together.

Members of the board engaged in an excellent brainstorming session about how to enlarge our numbers and increase the diversity of the board especially regarding women and international medical graduates. We came up with an impressive prospect list that will be further researched and explored.

Two new board members have been added at this time. We welcomed John Dier, M.D., (Internal Medicine Resident 1976-79, Attending Physician 2002-17) and Bruce L. McClennan, M.D, (Intern 1967-68) who immediately made an impact at the meeting with their fresh insights.

Having dispensed with leadership issues, we also had a demonstration of the newly created alumni webpage. Although it is a "work in progress" at this point, it is our goal to make the page a vibrant and engaging place that alumni will frequent. In time, we will share the

link and our steering committee will appreciate your feedback on its functionality and most useful aspects.

30th Anniversary
Family Reunion
SAVE THE DATE
Friday and Saturday
October 5-7, 2018

reunion" and in 2018, we are planning to repeat some of the most successful bits of the 25th reunion such as the spousal networking, coordinating with surgery department gathering, IMY talks, and great weather. There are plans for a plenary speaker of regional/national significance. This gathering is a big lift with everything from scientific programming to public relations/promotion. We hope to have at least as good a turnout as in 2013.

Most significantly, we celebrated the end of an era with the departure of Charlotte Hoag from Medical Education after a career spanning 30 years. She's put her heart and soul into the job and is largely responsible for the successful implementation of progressive improvements in medical education at Bassett in a challenging and ever-changing era. We wish her all the best in her new position.

There's a lot to look forward in the next year so keep reading *The Cupola*, like us on Facebook, and keep in touch. ■

Charlotte Hoag, known to many alumni in her various roles within the department of Medical Education over the past 30 years, will be missed. Best wishes for success and our gratitude go out to Charlotte as she begins anew in the position of Manager of Medical Staff Affairs.

The Editor



See our latest news and updates at Bassett Medical Alumni Association



Columbia-Bassett Medical School Class of 2021. Bottom Row (L-R): Patrick Ho, Ellen Myers, Matthew Adan, Allison Saunders, Samuel Burnim Top Row (L-R): Martha Renn, Liam Gallagher, Laurel Whitney, Mikko Sayre, Mary Shimkus



Mary Ann Vunk with William F. Streck, M.D.

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Bassett, to friends, to colleagues that just made you proud. She bristled at perceptions of unfair or unkind interactions, underappreciation of others' work and arrogance in any form. There was virtually no circumstance where she would not extend herself to get a task completed. Her wit could casually, effectively and privately skewer those whose efforts lagged her standards.

For all of us, it seemed there was nothing about Bassett, its history and its staff, past and present that remained unknown to Mary Ann. She was a

recognized by everyone in the organization as the source of truth about all things Bassett. Not only recognized, she was loved and respected by all, a fact made clear by the progressively thunderous ovations at the annual Employee Recognition Dinners as she approached her unmatched accomplishment of 50 years of service at Bassett, attained in 2016.

It was my great privilege to work with Mary Ann, first as a new physician to Bassett where she guided me as she had so many others, then as her colleague in the executive suite. To have a colleague whom you can trust entirely and enjoy immensely is a wonderful thing. To work with such an individual on a daily basis for 30 years is a rare gift. Mary Ann believed in Bassett, in its aspirations and ideals, in the people who did the work. And speaking of those people, Mary Ann, more than anyone ever will again, knew them all. Kind, considerate, thoughtful, self-effacing, diligent, funny, opinionated, loyal—she was always there for anyone. Mary Ann Vunk was not just the entry point to the careers of so many physicians and others, she was a portal to the soul of Bassett. ■

A reminder: Who are the members of the Bassett Medical Alumni Association?

You are past and current interns, residents and fellows. You are former and current members of the senior doctoral staff. And you are students of the Columbia-Bassett Medical School program or students who spent your final two years of medical school at Bassett.

Jose Raul Monzon, M.D., Honored with 2017 Walter A. Franck Physician Excellence Award



José Raul Monzon, M.D.

Attending Surgeon Jose Raul Monzon, M.D., is the 2017 recipient of Bassett Healthcare Network's most prestigious recognition for a physician, the Walter A. Franck Physician Excellence Award.

The award was established to honor rheumatologist Walter A. Franck, M.D., who retired from Bassett in 2014 after more than four decades of service. The award recognizes a physician who emulates the lifelong career traits of Franck—service to patients, students, colleagues and the community. Physicians are nominated by their peers and the award recipient is determined by a vote of Bassett physicians.

In the nomination Monzon was described as a physician who “personifies the traditions that Walter Franck, M.D., formed here at Bassett.” The application went on to state that what distinguishes Monzon most is his love of Bassett and his tireless effort to bring people together.

Monzon completed his general surgery residency at Bassett in 2003. He returned as an attending surgeon in 2009, and serves as associate program director for the surgical residency program.

In addition to his responsibilities as a general surgeon with particular expertise in gastrointestinal surgery and digestive diseases, he is the division chief for general surgery.

“To be a part of an award that emulates the practice and life of Dr. Franck and this institution is an extraordinary honor,” said Monzon. “I have a sincere interest and dedication to this place as a hospital and institution, and consider Bassett my alma mater and Cooperstown my home.” ■

THE BASSETT FAMILY ALBUM — ALUMNI NEWS

Please keep your notes and photos coming!

1950s

James Shepard, M.D.

(Internal Medicine Resident 1959-61) and his wife, Sally Jean, recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

William B. Greenough, III, M.D. (Hematology Fellow 1959-1961) has been given the Physician of the Year Award at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, one of six honors bestowed annually by the Johns Hopkins Medicine Clinical Awards for Physicians and Care Teams. Greenough is a professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. In addition to clinical expertise in geriatric medicine, he is an international expert in infectious diseases. He serves as the Associate Medical Director and Clinical Chief of the Ventilator Rehabilitation Unit at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center.

1960s

Bruce McClennan, M.D. (Rotating Resident 1967-68) reports that he took a drive down memory lane with a visit to Cooperstown after attending his 50th-year medical school reunion at State University of New York Upstate College of Medicine. in September. He writes, "It was a great morning, gorgeous weather, and the time well spent, basking in the memories of my days at MIBH as an intern and as the ONLY radiologist when I was moonlighting for **Otto Sahler, M.D.** (Attending Radiologist 1947-78) later on." He is now retired from radiology after 20 years at Yale and almost 20 years at Washington University in St. Louis, and before that at the Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology. He adds, "my time at MIBH was one of the best and the caliber of

teaching and care was as good as any place I've been."

1970s

Michael Roberts, M.D.

(Internal Medicine Resident 1977-79) visited Cooperstown and attended an informal mini-reunion for fellow residents and attendings from his era at Bassett.

John Davis, M.D. (Internal Medicine Resident 1956-58; Attending Physician, 1964-1995, Director of Medical Education) hosted Roberts and his wife Bonnie Beaver, M.D., for a tour of the Cooperstown campus and a dinner attended by other alumni including **John Dier, M.D.** (Internal Medicine resident 1976-79; Attending Physician 2002-17) and wife Joey Dier; **Carol Beechy, M.D.** (Medicine Resident 1978-82, Attending Physician 1985-present); **Alan Kozak, M.D.** (Medicine Resident 1969-70 and 1972-73; and Attending Physician 1977-present); **Walter Franck, M.D.** (Attending Physician 1974-2009) and wife Linda; **Emery Herman, M.D.** (Attending Physician 1961-94) and wife Nancy; **John Freehafer, M.D.** (Attending Physician 1971-99), and Marion Karl.



1980s

Madeline Waid, M.D.

(General Surgery Resident 1986-87) is now the Chief of Anesthesia at Gifford Medical Center in Randolph,

VT. Overseeing a department of four-and-a-half providers in a 25-bed critical access hospital allows her plenty of free time for gardening, playing the piano, and traveling extensively. She and her husband plan to retire to Valencia, Spain, in the next two to five years.

Richard Baker, M.D.

(Transitional Year Resident 1989-90) finds it hard to believe it's been more than 27 years since he was roaming the corridors of MIBH with the likes of **Nicholas Medugno** (General Surgery resident 1989-90) and many others. Baker recalls, "I have fond memories of that year and of the many wonderful people with whom I was fortunate to work alongside, while caring for patients." He has been practicing Interventional Vascular and Neurointerventional Radiology in Madison at St. Mary's Hospital for over 20 years. His first day on the job, he encountered former Bassett physician **James Couser, M.D.** (Medicine Attending 1989-91) with whom he worked until his recent retirement. He sends his best to great mentors and all the rest of the Bassett family.

2000s

Gary Chimes, M.D. (Internal Medicine Resident 2002-03) and his wife Elisabeth Goldstein Chimes welcomed their son James Gordon Chimes into the world on July 15, 2017. Gary and



Elisabeth were wed the prior summer. Fellow Bassett Alumni **Brian White, M.D.** (Transitional Year Resident 2004-05) and **Ethan Colliver, M.D.** (Transitional Year Resident 2004-05) were in attendance.



Former General Surgery Residents met up at the recent American College of Surgeons meeting where **Sanjay Thomas, M.D.** (2008-13), **Olivier Urayeneza, M.D.** (2009-14), and **Tarun Bajaj, M.D.** (2007-12) (pictured) along with **Rachel Wooldridge, M.D.** (2006-12) and **Lisa Hamilton, M.D.** (2009-14) were inducted as Fellows of the American College of Surgeons. **Congratulations!**

Kelly Currie, M.D. (General Surgery Resident 2008-13) and her husband Dean welcomed their first baby, Jackson Luke, in April. They relocated to St. Louis where she started her "dream job" as a Hand and Plastic/Reconstructive Surgeon.

2010s

Wisit Cheungpasitporn, M.D.

(Internal Medicine Resident 2010-13), recently a renal transplant fellow at the Mayo School of Graduate Medical Education, has joined the University of Mississippi Medical Center faculty as an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Transplant Nephrologist. He has also been appointed as a Fellow of the American Society of Nephrology.

Family to page 5

Family from page 4

Patompong "Tom" Ungprasert, M.D. (Internal Medicine Resident 2011-14) just finished his training (a rheumatology fellowship and Master's in clinical and translational science from Mayo Clinic) and returned to his home country, Thailand. He is now on the Attending Staff at the Division of Clinical Epidemiology, at Siriraj Medical Research Center, Mahidol University in Bangkok. His appointment is research-based with the focus on providing help in methodology and statistics for attending staff and trainees across the university.

Supawat Ratanapo M.D. (Internal Medicine Resident 2011-14) is currently an Interventional Cardiology Fellow at Emory University School of Medicine. He and his wife had their second baby, a son named Sira Ratanapo, in April. ■



Davis Visiting Professor



This year's John Davis Visiting Professor (shown here with John S. Davis, M.D.) was Marci Bowers, M.D., a national leader in transgender health and gender confirmation surgery. Bowers practices gender confirmation surgery in Burlingame, California, and as the first out trans woman to perform such operations, is considered a pioneer in the field. In addition, Bowers is one of only a few physicians in the U.S., performing surgery upon women impacted by female genital mutilation.

While here, Bowers participated in a number of educational sessions and presentations with residents, medical students, the Medical staff and others. Also, one panel discussion included patients from the Gender Wellness Center in Oneonta, which has been a part of A.O. Fox Hospital for three years. (See the page 1 article in the Summer 2017 issue of The Cupola for more details on this program.) Her discussions with smaller groups of residents and students were far-ranging and included probing and informative Q&A sessions.

Dinner for Bassett Physician Retirees



Local Bassett physician retirees gathered for an evening of socializing and camaraderie at the Otesaga Resort Hotel on September 19, 2017. The guest list included Mrs. Charles Ashley, widow of the hospital's long-time director from 1967-84.

Photo left, L to R: Mrs. Charles Ashley, Theodore Peters, Ph.D., Emery Herman, M.D.

Photo right, L to R: Alan Kozak, M.D., Charles Deichman, M.D., Robert Dewell, M.D., Herb Marx, M.D.



Front row, L to R: Mary Anne Whalen, M.D., Nancy Herman, Cheryl Wright, Linda Franck, Mrs. Charles Ashley, (Audrey) Patricia Mower, M.D., Martha Vaules, Theodore Peters, Ph.D., Karen Streck, Maryann Dietz, Marian Karl, John Davis, M.D. Back row: Emery Herman, Jr., M.D., Walt Franck, M.D., Vance Brown, M.D., Adrian Kuzminski, Ph.D., Antoinette Kuzminski, M.D., Charles Deichman, M.D., Alan Kozak, M.D., Anne Dewell, Robert Dewell, M.D., Philip Mower, Carla MacMillan, Herb Marx, M.D., Mary Marx, David Vaules, M.D., Patrick Dietz, M.D., Roger MacMillan, M.D., William F. Streck, M.D. (not facing the camera)

Bassett Surgeons Travel to Southern Africa



Bassett and Zambian surgeons collaborate on a surgical case at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia.

Four surgeons from Bassett Medical Center recently returned from a trip to southern Africa where they trained a group of surgeons there how to perform abdominal laparoscopic surgery, also known as minimally invasive surgery. The surgeons they trained will extend the reach of the Bassett project by training fellow African doctors in this more advanced surgical technique, which is expected to result in expanded access to this type of surgery for the poor, shorter hospital stays and better outcomes.

Bassett Medical Center fourth-year surgery resident Sarah Smith, M.D. and surgeons Andrew Griffiths, M.D., Steve Heneghan, M.D., and Theodor Kaufman, M.D., traveled to the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka, Zambia to train five surgeons there. ■

Bassett Welcomes Returning Alumni



Sowmya Boddhula, M.D.

Sowmya Boddhula, M.D., joined Bassett Medical Center as an attending physician in General Internal Medicine and Primary Care. She earned her medical degree from Sri Venkata Sai Medical College, Mahaboobnagar, India. She completed a residency in internal medicine at Bassett and served as Chief Resident. She is certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine.



Rachel Zehr, M.D.

Rachel Zehr, M.D., joined Bassett Healthcare Network as an attending surgeon in General Surgery with Oneonta Surgical Associates. She earned her medical degree at the State University of New York Upstate Medical University, in Syracuse, N.Y. and completed a residency in General Surgery at the Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital. ■

Bassett Looks Back

It's gratifying when a reader has a critical eye and responds accordingly! Reacting to "Bassett Looks Back" in the Summer edition of *The Cupola*, Robert Walker, M.D. (Transitional Intern 1985-86) pointed out that Poonputt Chotiprasidhi, M.D. was not the next Bassett international graduate to follow Walter Luft, M.D. in 1938. Rather it was Walker's wife Yvonne Walker, M.D. (Transitional Resident 1987-88), who had graduated with an M.B.B.S. from the University of London's Guys Hospital Medical School. The author remembers both of them fondly!

To compound the error, John S. Davis, M.D. then realized that in his recent book, *Bassett Hospital in Cooperstown New York, 200 Years of Health Care in Rural America*, he had wrongly labeled Costa Andreou, M.D. (Internal Medicine Resident 1992-95) as that second international graduate. So to set the record straight, the correct numerical order is Luft, Walker, Andreou and Chotiprasidhi. Always instructive, if humbling, to go back to the drawing board! And always satisfying to keep celebrating Bassett's rich history as we race into the future. ■

Physician Employment Opportunities in the Bassett Healthcare Network

Thinking of a career move? Do you know another physician seeking a position in an award-winning network of six hospitals and 30 regional sites? Consider these openings in Central New York and Cooperstown.

For more information visit:

<http://recruitment.bassett.org/physician-jobs/>

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or call the Medical Staff Affairs office at
607-547-6982.

IN MEMORIAM: BASSETT REMEMBERS

Alumni: Please send copies of obituaries of former Bassett trainees, faculty or other members of the "Bassett Family" to cupola@bassett.org

Gerald Evans, M.D.

Gerald Evans, M.D., a retired Bassett Hospital ophthalmologist, died on August 30, 2017, at Vassar Brothers Hospital in Poughkeepsie.

Evans was born in Brooklyn on February 13, 1930. He attended the Bronx High School of Science, and Columbia University, where he was manager of the undefeated 1951 basketball team. He received his M.D. in 1955 from New York Medical College. After serving in the Air Force as a medical officer, he trained as an ophthalmologist at NYU and Bellevue Hospitals, and established a practice on Staten Island.

In July 1985, Evans joined the ophthalmology department of Bassett Hospital, retiring after one year of service. For more than 30 years he and his wife Anne remained social fixtures of the Cooperstown community.

Ever the optimist, Gerald was a man of wit, humor and humanism, and always left a smile on the face of those who met him. He is survived by his second wife, Anne, his former wife Joan Evans, and his two daughters. His widow, Anne, is the mother of Bassett's Physician-in-Chief, Charles Hyman, M.D.

Donald R. Grinols, M.D.

Born on January 8, 1932 and raised in Seattle, Donald Grinols, M.D. received his medical degree with honors from the University of Washington School of Medicine in 1957. He drove east for a rotating internship at Bassett Hospital, where he met his wife to be, Marjorie Flint, R.N., daughter of Orin Q. Flint, M.D., of the O'Connor Hospital in the village of Delhi. Following a three-year psychiatric residency at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, he served two years as Chief of Psychiatry at the U.S.A.F. Hospital Wright-Patterson, Dayton, Ohio. He then returned to the University of Rochester where he was Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Associate Dean and Chairman, Admissions Committee from 1963 to 1975.

Grinols loved the technology associated with such things as Hammond organs, printing presses, and eventually computers. He was among the first physicians in Rochester to install a computer in his office. Remembered as a caring and thoughtful physician, father, husband, and friend, in 2013 he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's dementia.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Marjorie Flint Grinols; four children and two grandchildren.

Helen Gurian

Helen Gurian, psychiatric social worker and wife of Bassett psychiatrist Harvey Gurian, M.D., died May 27, 2017 in Cambridge, MA. She attended Vassar and graduated with a B.A. in economics and she obtained a Masters in Social Work at Columbia University. As a psychiatric social worker at Middletown State Hospital she met and married Harvey Gurian, her spouse of over 58 years.

In 1959, the couple moved to Cooperstown, where he was Chief of Psychiatry at Bassett Hospital and she continued to work as a psychiatric social worker, assisting with liaison between the Department of Psychiatry and the hospital at large, as well as running bereavement and chronic illness support groups.

The Gurians were a fixture at Bassett and after their retirement they were still a familiar sight, walking arm in arm most afternoons well into their 80s. Dr. Gurian died in 2015. She is survived by four children and five grandchildren.

David James Hosbein, M.D

David James (Jim) Hosbein, M.D., age 86, died at his home in Grass Valley, Calif. on March 20, 2016. He obtained his M.D. from Northwestern University Medical School in 1956. In 1957, while on duty as a medical officer in the U.S. Air Force in England, he met and soon married a fellow skier named Florence. They came to Cooperstown where he completed his surgery residency at Bassett Hospital (Assistant Resident 1958-60 and Chief Resident 1960-61).

With their beginning family the Hosbeins moved to Grass Valley, where he practiced general (and especially abdominal) surgery for over 40 years. A staunch Libertarian and a member of the St. Patrick's Catholic Church choir, he also remained a vigorous athlete into his 80s. He is survived by his beloved wife, Florence, his two daughters and three sons, and nine grandchildren. ■

Alumni from page 8

"I started going to patients' funerals," she notes. "It gave me a nice sense of closure, and it was also good for the patients' families."

One of the things she rated as "fantastic" about working at Bassett, especially when she was new to the profession, was the accessibility of her colleagues. "Although I knew a lot about nephrology, there were other things I did not know about, and people at the hospital were so friendly and open, I could just go up the stairs and ask. If I had a question about cardiology, I could just go ask someone. It was so much easier to get information than it would have been if I had started in a private practice."

In 2013, Mower retired for the second time, this time for real. She and her husband continue to spend time in Cooperstown, but they also go south when they get tired of the winter.

One highlight of her career here was teaching. "Teaching the residents keeps you honest. I loved that part of it," Mower said. The residents clearly loved her as well, awarding her the Golden Apple, their choice for the most distinguished teacher of the year.

Mower thinks that her success in medical school owes not just to her drive and serious studies, but to the support of her husband, who never objected to her shift in direction, even when it was difficult. And despite her doubts about making it in medical school, she did very well, graduating third in her class.

She also did well at Bassett, serving as head of the nephrology division for 12 years. Now she supports Bassett in another way, by donating. To add your support to hers, call the Friends at 607-547-3928, or email us at friends.office@bassett.org. **Thank you!** ■



THE CUPOLA
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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Alumni Donor Profile: Patricia Mower, M.D.

By Jill Maney



Patricia Mower, M.D.

Patricia Mower, M.D., began her medical career as a nurse. She decided to go to medical school when a good friend reminded her of her childhood dream. At that point, she was married, had a seven-year-old and a nine-year-old child at home, and was teaching nursing at Pace University.

When her husband came home one night from his actuarial job in New York City, she announced to him, "I'm going to medical school."

It was not an easy task. While working and caring for her young children, she took a year of organic chemistry, physics, and the MCATs. Then she applied to just one school: New York Medical College, because it was a short distance from her home in White Plains.

She learned that she'd been put on a waiting list, so she put her teaching materials together and went off to Pace to face the first day of teaching. When she got home, the phone was ringing. It was the medical college asking if she still wanted to attend. "Yes!" she told them. "Then come tomorrow and bring your checkbook," they said, so she did.

The first two years of lectures were daunting, sitting in classrooms full of students who had just graduated from college. She had been out of school for 15 years and felt she had to study all the time to keep up. When they moved into

a clinical setting, she was much more comfortable. "I was used to making observations about patients and waiting to tell the doctor what I had noticed," Mower said. "It took a little while to remember that now, I was the doctor!"

When Mower decided to come to Bassett and moved with her family to Cooperstown, her children were puzzled by their parents' desire to relocate in rural central New York. To the Mowers, though, coming to Bassett "felt like coming home."

When the patient roster appeared each morning for the hospital, Mower would scan it to see if it included anyone she knew. Often it did.

She chose to specialize in nephrology, partly because she liked the science involved, but also because she thought it would be less brutal on call than cardiology, since so many people seemed to have heart attacks in the middle of the night! She soon learned that being on call for nephrology was equally stressful, especially during the two years when she was the only nephrologist on Bassett's staff.

Not being on call is the best thing about being retired, Mower says. It was difficult for her to retire, however. She returned to Bassett in 2008, when Douglas DeLong, M.D., urged her to join him in Prime Care, which she did, part-time.

"Prime Care was so much fun. I would probably do Prime Care if I had to do it over again," Mower said. The continuity of care is important, as is being able to care for people you know. As patients she treated aged and eventually passed away,