



This neuron is stained to show the presence of a nerve growth factor that is important for the survival of certain neurons typically lost in neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's. (Image courtesy of the lab of Hermes Yeh.)

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DONORS LOOK TO THE FUTURE OF NEUROSCIENCE

CARDIOLOGIST FRANK WEISER (D’54, MED’55) has witnessed the transformation of what it means to live with heart disease. For many, like his own father who died of a heart attack at age 59 after suffering for years from angina, heart disease was once a death sentence. Now many forms of heart disease are managed as chronic conditions or cured. He sees a similar transformation on the horizon for neurologic conditions, such as autism, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and Alzheimer’s. Eager to be part of that transformation and grateful for the education he received at Dartmouth Medical School, he and his wife, Myra, have established an endowed fellowship to support neuroscience researchers at the Geisel School.

The Weisers’ donation is one of three major gifts made to the neurosciences at Geisel within the past year (see opposite page). A \$6.25 million gift from the estate of Susan Diamond, formerly of Omaha, Neb., will support neurology research, and a generous gift from the family of Murray B. Bornstein, MD (D’39), established a neurology professorship in his name.

“This is an exciting time in neuroscience research because of all the tools and improved technology that can be brought to bear on understanding how the brain functions normally and what goes wrong in disease,” says Duane Compton, PhD, interim dean of Geisel.

Thanks to advances in the basic sciences and biomedical imaging, it is now possible to study the inner workings of the brain and nervous system—such as the activity of neurons and the various proteins and chemicals that affect them. Combine this with the growing societal need for new and better treatments for neurologic illnesses, and it’s easy to identify with the donors’ enthusiasm for

supporting this work.

“We need brilliant young scientists to make the discoveries that will lead to better treatments for these disabling conditions of the brain and nervous system,” says Frank Weiser. “Geisel already has tremendous strength in the neurosciences and it’s the perfect size for collaboration and innovation.”

Research fellowships—such as the one established by the Weisers—can provide the boost many faculty need to pursue new lines of research. Researchers often rely on private philanthropy and small grants from their own institutions for such investigations. Data gathered in those studies can then be used to compete for the larger federal grants that are needed to thoroughly test and scale up a discovery or innovation.

Professorships—such as the Murray B. Bornstein Professorship in Neurology—provide senior faculty with the flexibility and financial support to pursue their passions in a particular field. Professorships, also called endowed chairs, ensure an

institution's enduring leadership in an area of study. The Bornstein Professorship was recently awarded to Andrew Pachner, MD, a physician-scientist whose laboratory focuses on developing improved biomarkers and therapies for patients with multiple sclerosis—the area of expertise of Murray Bornstein.

“Along with a large body of research, Dr. Bornstein was a compassionate and highly skilled clinician,” says Pachner. “I have read his evaluations of a number of patients with multiple sclerosis whose care I have assumed since coming to Dartmouth. They attest to his empathy and excellence as a neurologist caring for very complex patients.”

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“Endowing the professorship is a profound experience for me,” says Selma Bornstein, who was married to Murray for nearly 40 years, until his death in 1995. “It establishes an enduring legacy for my late husband and makes it easier for future researchers to make important discoveries about multiple sclerosis—a disease to which Murray dedicated his life and work.”

The gift from the estate of Susan Diamond comes from a woman who experienced firsthand the toll of neurologic illness on patients and families, during the 20 years her mother lived with Alzheimer's disease. Diamond's search for treatment for her mother revealed just how little was known about the causes of dementia and likely fueled her commitment to make an impact in this area.

“Neuroscience research is gaining speed at Geisel,” adds Compton. “These three generous gifts will be used to quicken that pace by supporting the work of our faculty and fellows.”

JENNIFER DURGIN

Three Major Gifts Fuel Neuroscience Research



A TRANSFORMATIVE BEQUEST

A \$6.25 million gift from the estate of Susan Diamond, formerly of Omaha, Neb., will support neurology research. Diamond's desire to contribute to research in neurology was likely borne out of her mother's long struggle with Alzheimer's. During the 20 years that she cared for her ailing mother, Diamond investigated where the leading neuroscience research was being done. “Ms. Diamond's transformative gift will allow us to expand our neurology faculty and more rapidly translate discoveries made in the lab into better clinical care for our patients with neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's,” says Jeffrey Cohen, MD, chair of Geisel's Department of Neurology.

Jon Gilbert Fox



A SCIENTIFIC LEGACY

Murray Bornstein, MD, was a renowned clinician and researcher in the field of multiple sclerosis. Now his legacy will live on in an endowed professorship, made possible by the generosity of his wife, Selma, and their five children. In June, the Murray B. Bornstein Professorship in Neurology was awarded to Andrew Pachner, MD, a professor of neurology at Geisel and director of the Multiple Sclerosis

Center at Dartmouth-Hitchcock. “Andy embodies the spirit, the wisdom, the commitment to both science and patient care that Murray had,” says Selma Bornstein (pictured here with Pachner). “All of these qualities combine to produce a great scientist and humanist, one worthy of carrying on the Bornstein tradition in medicine and life.”



THE NEXT FRONTIER

Inspired by the potential for great advances in neurosciences at the Geisel School, Frank Weiser (D'54, Med'55) and his wife, Myra, made a \$500,000 donation to establish an endowment supporting basic science and translational research concerning neurological diseases. The endowment will support the Frank and Myra Weiser Scholar in the Neurosciences, who will be selected by the dean of the medical

school and the senior associate dean for research, with a preference for young faculty members conducting promising research. “There's a tremendous potential—and a tremendous need—for understanding the brain in ways that were never before possible,” says Frank Weiser.