

# ALUMNAE COME FULL CIRCLE

## with the Centennial Circle



Bonnie Henderson, MD  
D '89, MED '93



Holly Andersen, MD  
D '85



Joanne Conroy, MD  
D '77

**WHEN A SMALL GROUP OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE ALUMNAE CALLED UPON** fellow Dartmouth women to support their alma mater in 2014, the women of Dartmouth stepped up. It was the 100th anniversary of the Dartmouth College Fund, and the goal of the initiative was to recruit 100 alumnae to make gifts of \$100,000 or more. In less than three months, 114 women joined the newly formed Centennial Circle of Dartmouth Alumnae, raising close to \$15 million. Now almost 200 women are members of the Circle. And three of them—Bonnie Henderson, MD, Holly Andersen, MD, and Joanne Conroy, MD—joined through generous gifts to Geisel.

“We owe a lot to Dartmouth for how it contributed to our lives and successes,” says Henderson, a partner at Ophthalmic Consultants of Boston, a clinical professor at Tufts University School of Medicine, and a current member of the Geisel Board of Advisors. “I’m open to giving back in any way I can, and this is a great, innovative way.”

Also on the Geisel Board of Advisors is Andersen, an attending cardiologist and associate professor of clinical medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, Weill Cornell Medical Center and director of education and outreach for the Ronald O. Perelman Heart Institute. Andersen, who was among the first 100 women to join the Circle, says, “The Circle is the first initiative of women philanthropists at Dartmouth. Joining was a great opportunity to show the institution how much I care.”

Conroy, chief executive officer and president of Dartmouth-Hitchcock and the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health system since 2017, found out about the Circle shortly after beginning her leadership role. “Part of being a leader is giving back,” Conroy says, “and a gift to Geisel through the Centennial Circle was a wonderful way to support the hospital’s partnership with the medical school.”

## ONE DARTMOUTH, THREE EXPERIENCES

Henderson attended both Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Medical School, so her decision to make a Centennial Circle

gift to Geisel was clear.

“The medical school made me the physician I am,” she says. “It was a cohesive, supportive community where I formed strong friendships not only with my peers but also with faculty.”

Andersen, a Dartmouth College graduate who created her own major in neuroscience, explains, “Having the med school at my disposal as an undergrad enhanced my education. I took classes from med school faculty, did research in the microbiology lab. Talking to faculty physicians shaped my interest and belief in becoming a doctor.”

Conroy entered Dartmouth College as a scholarship student in just the second class to admit women. “It taught me to be courageous,” she says, describing a dining hall full of young men and a choice to either introduce herself or eat alone. A chemistry major, Conroy didn’t encounter the medical school in her undergraduate days. But her Centennial Circle gift demonstrates her commitment to Geisel.

“Geisel focuses on attracting the right students to train for a career in medicine—students who are motivated by more than status, who want to become doctors for the right reasons,” she says. “And great basic research is coming out of Geisel, in cancer, neuroscience, immunotherapy. For anyone with interest in this work, it’s worthwhile to invest here.”

# TRAILBLAZERS IN HEALTHCARE AND PHILANTHROPY

Medical school alumnae have a proud legacy of breaking new ground—at Dartmouth and beyond. Ten years before the College began admitting women undergraduates, Dartmouth's first female student graduated from the medical school in 1962; and in 1985 the medical school became the first at Dartmouth to matriculate a class that was over 50 percent women.

Professionally, alumnae have led the way in fields traditionally dominated by men. Henderson is an internationally recognized expert in cataract and refractive surgery and has invented and commercialized a number of medical instruments. Andersen is one of the nation's top advocates for women's heart health, petitioning policymakers in Washington, D.C., to pay more attention to deadly cardiovascular disease in women. Conroy, an anesthesiologist, held executive leadership roles at the Atlantic Health System in New Jersey and Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Massachusetts before coming to Dartmouth-Hitchcock. In February 2019 she was named one of five "luminaries" by "Modern Healthcare" in its annual recognition of top women leaders in U.S. healthcare.

With the Centennial Circle, Dartmouth alumnae are now helping to close the gender gap in philanthropy, too.

"Historically, men were the wage earners, so they were also the philanthropists. But that's changing and progressing," Henderson says.

A national model for women's philanthropy in higher education, the Centennial Circle is about more than money. It offers members the opportunity to meet and foster relationships across Dartmouth, which leads to more women serving on—and steering—various advisory boards and committees.

As a proud member of the Geisel Board of Advisors, Andersen says, "If you're lucky enough to be in philanthropy, also make sure you're doing good work. You can give of your time, energy, and expertise—it's not just about money."

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## CIRCLING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Henderson is now a member of both the Dartmouth Centennial Circle and a Dartmouth family circle; her son graduated with the class of 2018, and her twins will be matriculating with the class of 2023. "The Dartmouth community is so special, it's what drew me to stay for medical school. I'm so grateful to have my

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—Bonnie Henderson D '89, MED '93

children join the Dartmouth family!"

Andersen is also grateful to have an ongoing connection to Dartmouth, through the Centennial Circle and her role on the Geisel Board of Advisors. "I love that alumnae are forward-thinking and want to support the institution. Our education was a prize, and with that comes the responsibility to impart positive change in the world, and that includes at the institution we love."

And when Conroy returned to the Upper Valley and joined the Centennial Circle, she had a fulfilling realization. "I'm able to contribute to the community that gave me the opportunity for my career. I've made a full circle in life."

LAUREN SEIDMAN



## PHILANTHROPY POWERED BY WOMEN

**INSPIRED BY THE 100-YEAR HISTORY OF ALUMNI PHILANTHROPY**, alumnae from across the undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools have joined together to create the Centennial Circle of Dartmouth Alumnae, an initiative to set the course for a new century of philanthropic support—powered by women.

The mission of the Centennial Circle is to connect alumnae to one another and to faculty, leaders, and students in order to build community; foster dialogue about critical campus, national, and global issues; and contribute meaningfully to Dartmouth and its graduate and professional schools.

### Five Annual Funds: Find Your Fit

Geisel School of Medicine alumnae can give to their choice of annual funds:

- **The Fund for Geisel** provides funds for student programs, scholarly projects, student travel, and other support for students and faculty.
- **Dean's Discretionary Fund** provides funding for innovative programs in the medical school.
- **Fund for Research and Discovery** provides funds for faculty and student research projects.
- **MD Student Scholarship Fund** provides scholarships for MD students with demonstrated need.

- **The Dartmouth Institute Annual Fund** provides support for the influential work of top scholars leading reform in health-care delivery and the education of future healthcare leaders.

You can be part of a legacy of leadership and philanthropy by Dartmouth women.

For more information, please visit [dartmouthcentennialcircle.com](http://dartmouthcentennialcircle.com) or contact Julie Bressor, [Julie.P.Bressor@Dartmouth.edu](mailto:Julie.P.Bressor@Dartmouth.edu), 603-653-0742.