



MAA MATTERS

The newsletter for U of T Meds Alumni

Summer 2024

With the MD 2T8s arriving on campus last week for their orientation and starting their lifelong journeys as medical learners, I'm so pleased to introduce another new beginning — the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's inaugural edition of *MAA Matters*.

MAA Matters is the semi-annual newsletter for University of Toronto MD alumni that was historically produced by the U of T Medical Alumni Association (MAA). As previously announced, the MAA is ceasing independent operations and is transferring stewardship of its programs and funds to Temerty Medicine, including the publication of this newsletter going forward.

In its new form, *MAA Matters* will continue to feature life updates about MD alumni, information about class reunions, memorial tributes, alumni profiles and stories, as well as highlight events and benefits available to MD alumni.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the new *MAA Matters* newsletter. Feel free to reach out to me directly should you have any questions or feedback, and [do let us know if you have any news to share](#) in a future issue.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Cody Copeman Hubert

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We are excited to welcome our newest medical students – and future alumni – to the Temerty Medicine community!

FEATURE STORY

Class of 2T8: What was your path to medicine?

By Julia Soudat



Suhangi Brahmbhatt

My journey to a career in medicine quite literally spans a journey across the globe; my Indian background, Zambian childhood, and ultimately, my life as a Canadian citizen have shown me what healthcare can do for one's quality of life. I remember vividly the excitement on my parents' faces at the prospect of a health care system that treated all equally, but that belief was quickly met with the reality that our background, or rather our own unique 'Social Determinants of Health' as I came to learn much later, would uniquely impact our access to healthcare. Throughout high school and undergrad, I made active efforts to promote equitable access to health care for those from my community as well as other minority groups and along the way I discovered I not only loved health care, but medicine itself.

The unique interface between our body and environment is the area in which modern medicine exists as a balancing force and I focused my research in areas surrounding this connection as I continued to grow my passion for human biology, anatomy and physiology, and health policy. Becoming a doctor is the ultimate confluence of these interests, as this career enables me to combine both my academic pursuits and my advocacy to contribute to the healthcare system.

Prior to coming to Temerty Medicine, I completed my undergraduate degree in McMaster University's Health Sciences program, where my passion for a holistic approach to health was furthered through education in anatomy and physiology, epidemiology, health policy, as well as several inquiry based courses that encouraged me to explore how social circumstances, issues and opportunities contributed to health outcomes. At Temerty, I plan on actively working on the several parts of medicine and healthcare that I'm passionate about. From a health care delivery perspective, I am truly passionate about working to address gaps in healthcare especially within the realm of the social determinants of health because as an immigrant minority, I've seen firsthand how a lack of access to quality care can impede one's overall wellbeing and build mistrust in the healthcare system; I hope to work towards bridging that gap by advocating for my patients, and for health policies that reflect a changing dynamic in the healthcare landscape. From a medicine perspective, there is really nothing that brings me joy like knowing the physiological roots of a problem and how to fix it; the human body is so incredibly complex but extremely elegant in its design and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to learn how physicians can restore the balance that makes life itself. As I enter Temerty this fall, the thing that sparks the most excitement in me is the idea that I will finally get to learn medicine itself; the fact that

we, as future physicians, will possess the ability to treat and cure illness and disease is so unbelievably incredible to me and it is a privilege I do not take for granted.



Nolan Reinisch

I struggle to remember the exact moment I became interested in medicine, but perhaps that's because there wasn't one. It was one of those things that creeps into your life so slowly you don't notice it. I remember wanting to be an ecologist at the start of high school; traveling to the Amazon to document new species, that sort of thing. This changed to wanting to become a doctor probably through a combination of reading and talking to friends interested in medicine. While I don't remember the moment, I do remember when I first spoke aloud my desire to become a doctor. My highschool chemistry teacher, my first memorable academic mentor, asked one day after school what I planned to take in university and what careers I was looking at. It was to her that I first said, "I think I want to study neuroscience, then become a doctor", after which she replied with "I can see that". She had grounded a path for me that had up to this point been abstract, and for that I'll forever be grateful. My family has also been major contributors to my journey. My parents were always supportive and never dictated what path they thought I should take. I've also had family members fall victim to the Oxycontin overprescription debacle, inspiring me to pursue a career where I can work to provide better pain therapies. I also found myself attracted to the uniqueness and sanctity of the patient-doctor relationship, a responsibility I'm excited to take on.

I grew up and went to high school in Ottawa, just finished my B.Sc. in Neuroscience at McGill, and have been working this summer to finish a research project I started last year. I've been a camp counselor since the moment I turned 16 and have worked as a bartender for the past three years. In addition to work and school, I've played hockey and soccer my whole life and have started getting into running. I'm also working to expand the breadth of my hobbies. I want to get back into piano, begin reading again, and start playing more of the sports I love. Perhaps I'm being too ambitious with the start of the semester looming, but I like to be optimistic.

I have some vague ideas that have yet to be tested. One is the prospect of developing useful skills that can make life better for rural communities throughout Canada. There are so many parts of this country that remain unknown and mysterious, almost foreign. I would love to spend time with the people that make up this place I call home and help distribute medical resources by taking my skills into those communities. I'm also interested in transplantation. I think it's one of the greatest medical miracles that we can now take out a diseased heart and replace it with a healthier one. That being said, I'm keen to gain a wide breadth of experiences so that I can narrow down exactly where my interests lie.



Helia Hatam Tehrani

My journey toward medicine began with my grandmother, who often expressed that she did not feel heard or advocated for by her healthcare team. As a little girl, I wanted to ease her pain in any way I could, and this desire to help sparked my initial interest in medicine. Growing up in the Middle East, I also noticed that women's health and hygiene were taboo topics, leading to feelings of anxiety and confusion among my peers and myself. I was curious about the lack of equitable access to resources and education on women's health, and I wondered if this contributed to my grandmother's health struggles. After immigrating to Canada, I found that while there was more health education here, menstrual hygiene advocacy and destigmatization were still inadequate. To address these issues, I co-founded Hygiene4Her, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering women, especially those from marginalized communities, through fundraising, advocacy, and health education.

My journey with Hygiene4Her, made me realize my passion for being an advocate for my community's health. Moreover, through my undergraduate research experiences, I discovered my interest in contributing to on-going scientific research. These valuable experiences reinforced my decision to pursue medicine. I want to bridge the gaps in healthcare that I have witnessed and ensure that my patients feel heard, understood, and supported. In my career, I will strive to be a proactive advocate for more equitable access to health education and patient-centred care.

I completed my undergraduate studies at Western University, where I completed an Honours Specialization in Physiology in the Medical Sciences program. During my undergraduate years, I worked as a Residence Education Advisor at Western university, mentoring first-year students in navigating and adjusting to university life. After graduation, I decided to take a year off to gain more life experiences. During this year, I worked as a high school tutor, working with over 40 students in math and science subjects and supporting them through university applications. At the same time, I volunteered as a research assistant at a nutritional sciences lab at U of T, where I continued to develop my research skills while applying to medical school.

Every aspect of medicine intrigues me, and I feel incredibly privileged to be on this career path. However, I am particularly passionate about providing compassionate, research-based patient care and advocating for the health and well-being of my patients and community. I am committed to promoting health equity and ensuring all patients have access to high-quality care. This includes working to eliminate health disparities, supporting public health initiatives, and engaging in community outreach to empower individuals. My passion for medicine is driven by a desire to learn from my peers and mentors, to make a meaningful difference in patients' lives, and to contribute to the advancement of healthcare.



Ariana Petrazzini

Growing up with a medically fragile sister immersed me in the world of medicine from a young age. I spent countless hours in hospitals and often had nurses and PSWs in my home, which naturally sparked my fascination with the tools of the trade such as stethoscopes, needles, and latex gloves. This fascination along with my academic strengths in the sciences led me to pursue a Bachelor of Health Sciences at McMaster University. My growth during undergrad extended far beyond the classroom. My deep involvement with the Black Student Success Center allowed me to volunteer in programs and initiatives focused on creating inclusive and safe environments for Black students, ensuring they had the same opportunities as the rest of the student body. I also engaged with healthcare-related clubs, such as McMaster Smiling Over Sickness, where I volunteered with and fundraised for pediatric patients. These experiences, along with many others, continually reinforced my passion for medicine. Now, I am both excited and grateful for the journey ahead as I continue my education at Temerty Medicine.

As someone who is biracial, with Argentine and Jamaican heritage, I've had a unique journey navigating the healthcare system. Throughout this journey, I rarely saw myself represented in medicine and experienced inadequate healthcare due to the way certain conditions present on my skin color. These experiences fueled my commitment to equitable care, with a focus on meeting the needs of underserved populations. I am deeply passionate about creating meaningful connections with patients and their families, ensuring they feel heard and valued in a system that may have previously made them feel overlooked. The opportunity to learn and practice in a city as diverse as Toronto aligns perfectly with my passion for understanding different cultures, practices, and beliefs.



Michael Zarathus-Cook

I must have been 5 or 6 when I had to go to the hospital for a minor emergency in my hometown in Southwest Nigeria. There was only one doctor in the small hospital; I remember him running back and forth between wards, very busy but composed and thorough with each patient. His name was also Michael. I think that's where I first got the idea of the good that a doctor could do. Every encounter with medicine since then has only reinforced the spirit of these first impressions.

My journey here has been unconventional. I was living in a homeless shelter when I started my undergrad at U of T, which complicated my timeline towards med school. But throughout this trajectory, I always believed that medicine was the path for me, and that Toronto was the place where I wanted to receive my training. The "You Belong Here" banner that used to hang on the west-facing wall of the Medical Sciences Building became a bit of a personal mantra throughout this journey. But it's the people in these buildings, U of T's administrators and faculty, that helped turn this mantra into a realistic mission. The unsung heroes of unconventional routes to medicine are the staff members who mix in a great deal of humanity into their job description by lending a listening ear or pointing out resources that make this process more equitable for people from all walks of life.

Most of my professional career so far has been in the arts. I founded a print and digital arts magazine in 2020, and we'll be publishing our 14th issue this fall. In 2023, I completed my Masters of Medical Physiology here at TemertyMed, an eye-opening experience that amplified my interest in medicine and activated what I had learned from my undergraduate degree as a Health & Disease Specialist. In the interim between my masters and starting med school, I had the good fortune of being the Managing Editor for the Toronto Symphony Orchestra during their 101st season.

The aspect of medicine I'm most passionate about is equity. It's where I think every conversation in healthcare should begin and end — *what are the barriers to accessing this new drug/intervention that we've painstakingly developed?* The universal healthcare we have in Canada is a miracle that we should never take for granted. But, in a city as diverse as Toronto, the socioeconomic barriers that some people face in *accessing* this care undermines the value and mission of universal healthcare. So I'm deeply motivated by how my training here can be in service of this city's underserved and underseen communities.

My masters program – along with my time at the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Mount Sinai – also cultivated my passion in Cardiovascular research, particularly in the modulation of blood flow in the pulmonary and systemic microvasculature. So I'm looking forward to developing this interest through further research opportunities.



Cedar Davidson

In my last year of high school I had the opportunity to attend the Ontario Science Centre Science School. This program emphasized my interest in science and research which helped me decide to pursue my undergraduate degree in Biology while also triple minoring in French, Human Services and

Bioinformatics. Growing up, I often helped take care of my elderly grandmother where I recognized the impact that bedside manner and physician communication has on patients and their families. I decided to pursue a career as a physician because it would allow me collaborate with other healthcare professionals to support patients in their vulnerable moments.

Before joining the TemertyMed family, I was very involved in my community. I volunteered as a Bilingual Kids Help Phone Crisis Responder and also as a child life volunteer at SickKids and Southlake Regional Health Centre. For the past two summers I had the privilege to spend time at Campfire Circle, a paediatric oncology camp for patients and their families. I also recently completed my Master's in Public Health (MPH) through Brock University. In 2023 I joined Dr. **Darren Kadis'** lab at SickKids as a Clinical Research Project Assistant in the Neuroscience & Mental Health Department. We are currently working on a study about hearing, language, and speech in kids with autism spectrum disorder. I look forward to contributing to research throughout my medical career.

Attending a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) in undergrad shaped who I hope to become as a leader and advocate in the field of healthcare equity. This is one area of medicine that I am passionate about and hope to greatly impact as a physician. Understanding how social determinants of health affect my patients will be top of mind as I work to develop trust and accessible treatment options in the communities I serve.



Sahib Singh Madahar

One experience that my parents often recount is when they first moved from Montreal to Toronto and the challenges they experienced with finding a specialist for my medical care. Fortunately, they found a remarkable pediatric hematologist who provided exceptional care, comfort and support during a time of instability and uncertainty. This meant a lot to my parents and to this day, I continue to be inspired by his practice. During every visit until the age of 21, my pediatrician would always inquire about how my studies are going, encourage my passion for science and answer any pressing questions that I had, simply out of my curiosity. This experience has left an everlasting imprint of how I view medical doctors and has instilled the importance of positive and meaningful physician-patient interactions that I aspire to embody and reflect in my practice.

As I continued to learn more about the healthcare system and help support close family members during their medical treatments, I became exposed to the barriers that impact medical care. Troubled by the lack of dissemination of medical knowledge to make informed decisions, I wanted to pursue higher education to equip myself with the resources and knowledge to provide equitable care, advocate for communities facing barriers and empower patients to overcome any disparities that prevent them from seeking treatment.

I have always been fascinated by learning more about science, the complexities and interconnectedness of the human body and the underlying mechanisms in health and disease. My growth over the years as

an avid biomedical scientist has fostered my curiosity of medical research, encouraged me to learn from the lived experiences of diverse and marginalized communities, and driven me to advocate for increased accessibility to medical care and knowledge. Practicing medicine also aligns very well with the principles of my Sikh religion which include continual learning, oneness, seva (selfless community service), and social justice, to name a few.

I completed my undergraduate studies at York University in the Biomedical Science program with a minor in Psychology. The research experiences I gained during my undergraduate studies encouraged me to pursue graduate studies. I recently completed my M.Sc. in Biology in the Cell and Molecular Biology stream with a focus on Immunology at York University. One of the many highlights of graduate school for me included being a lab TA where I communicated my knowledge, helped students succeed and shared with them the best practices of working in a research lab.

I'm very interested in cutting-edge advances and discoveries in the field of cancer immunotherapy. While these advances are promising, several challenges and obstacles exist. Cancer immunotherapy is an area of research that aligns with my interests of discovering innovative and personalized immunotherapy treatments, along with advocating for low- and middle-income countries and marginalized groups to help reduce the socioeconomic barriers in accessing these treatments in a timely manner. As a future physician, I hope to become a leader in the medical profession, collaborate across disciplines to improve accessibility to personalized medicine and healthcare globally, and educate patients about their health with up-to-date literature to help them make informed decisions.

CLASS NOTES



News from your classmates

Class of 5T7

Dr. Maurice KELTZ practiced medicine in Toronto for 66 years before retiring on November 30, 2023. "He has been a pillar of our community, providing exceptional care and demonstrating unwavering commitment to his patients," says his colleague, Robin Kincaid. "Throughout his career, Dr. Keltz has exemplified the highest standards of medical practice, earning the respect and admiration of both colleagues and patients."

Dr. Elizabeth OLIVER-MALONE pays tribute to her "WE 4" group, assigned to the same cadaver in 1953-4, three of whom are now deceased: Beverly Lewis, Dorothea Liedke and Sharon (Saeko) Nabeta. Each represented different cultural backgrounds and religions, but together they remained good friends for life. "We brought our husbands to every five-year class reunion we could, and donated to student bursaries," she says. She hopes for a Canada where people continue to embrace multiculturalism and diverse equity, and solve differences with respect, cooperation and love.

Class of 6T1

Dr. Theodore Herzl (Ted) TULCHINSKY graduated from Yale grad in public health 1968, followed by a wide public health career in Canada, Israel, U.S. and countries in eastern Europe and central Asia. He is also lead author of an international textbook of public health (*The New Public Health*), first published in 1999/2000 in Russian and English editions. This was followed by second and third English editions in 2005 and 2014 respectively, with translations/publications in Mongolian, Moldovan, Bulgarian, Georgian, Uzbek, and Turkish. The [fourth English edition was issued in January, 2023](#) and is now available for publication in many languages with free copyright (pro bono).

Class of 6T7

Dr. Arthur WEINSTEIN has found a new "love" and challenge in his retirement — competitive duplicate bridge.



Class of 8T1

[Dr. Adriana PECORARI](#) reports her class had a 40+2-year reunion on Saturday, November 4th. It was well attended and they all enjoyed themselves.



Class of 8T4

[Dr. MaryRose MacDONALD](#) fully retired in 2021 after 32 years as a family physician at Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre in Toronto. For years, she was clinical director and spearheaded some of the country's early harm reduction, needle exchange and addiction treatment programs. Care of refugees, newcomers, homeless, mental health, the impoverished and non-insured in Toronto's inner city Parkdale community was the heart of the work. At age 59, she completed a Master of Public Health (Family Medicine and Global Health focus) at U of T, winning an award for high academic achievement after 30 years out of school! In 2021, she received a Fellowship Designation (FCFP) from the College of Family Physicians of Canada. She lives with her husband Steve and two dogs between homes in Collingwood, Ontario and Toronto, and her favourite Caribbean beach town of Playa del Carmen, Mexico. Her daughter is planning a wedding this summer. Vowing to pursue more art in retirement, MaryRose paints, is a flamenco dancer, musician, and actor in local community theatre. "Life is good!"

Class of 8T6

[Dr. Robert BANKS](#) recently had his name added to the Royal Military College Wall of Honour in Kingston in recognition of his professional accomplishments. Now in early retirement, he wrote a book: *Warriors and Warships: Conflict on the Great Lakes and the Legacy of Point Frederick*. It's available where you buy books in hardcover, audible book and eBook.

Class of 9T9

[Dr. Christine GIBSON](#) wrote her first book. Published with HacheJe Go (U.S.), *The Modern Trauma Toolkit* is an accessible and inclusive look at trauma and toxic stress. Solution-focused activities are shared for individual nervous system regulation and communities facing oppression. "As a mental health educator on TikTok ([tiktotraumadoc](#)), I believe knowledge transfer has to go beyond academy and exclusive journals," she says. "The book and my socials are a way that I leverage systems change." She has completed a master's in medical education (Dundee University) through creating a residency in health equity at the University of Calgary, and she is now working on a doctor of professional studies in transdisciplinary studies. Her clinical work is in family medicine and also trauma therapy with refugee and adult addiction clinics.

Class of 1T9

Dr. Kimia SOROURI has completed her PGY-3 in Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the University of Alberta, and is thrilled to share that her research with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute at Harvard University was among four abstracts selected from over 7,000 abstracts submitted to the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Conference, to be highlighted in the Press Program this year. As a result, [several news outlets have covered the research](#), which found that a majority of 200 young women treated for breast cancer who tried to conceive after treatment were able to become pregnant and give birth to a child.

CLASS REUNIONS



Is this your reunion year?

Confirmed MD Class Reunions:

35-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1988

Friday, September 6, 2024 | 6:00 p.m. – midnight (ET)
Library Room, George Restaurant | 111C Queen St E, Toronto

60-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1964

Tuesday, September 10, 2024 | 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. (ET)
Faculty Club at the University of Toronto | 41 Willcocks St, Toronto

58-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1966

Friday, September 20 – Saturday, September 21, 2024
Faculty Club at the University of Toronto | 41 Willcocks St, Toronto

30-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1994

Saturday, September 21, 2024 | 6:00 – 9:30 p.m. (ET)
Capocaccia Trattoria | 1366 Yonge St, Toronto

40-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1984

Saturday, November 9, 2024 | 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. (ET)
Donalda Golf Club | 12 Bushbury Dr, North York

25-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 2000

Friday, May 23, 2025 | 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. (ET)
The Great Hall, Hart House | 7 Hart House Cir, Toronto

To Be Confirmed

25-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1980
35-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 1989
15-Year Reunion for U of T MD Class of 2009

IN MEMORIAM



In Memory of Dr. Robert (Bob) Stephens

March 18, 1924 – April 23, 2024

This tribute was originally published in the [Aspira Retirement Living blog](#) to celebrate Dr. Stephens' 100th birthday, and has been republished posthumously with the family's consent.

In Canadian medical history, few individuals have had such a meaningful and influential life as **Robert O'Dowda Stephens** (MD '47) or “Dr. Bob” as he is more affectionately known. Born on March 18, 1924, in Toronto, Dr. Stephens’ subsequent studies, achievements, and existence transformed the lives of countless individuals across the globe.

Studies and qualifications

After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1947 and completing his internship at Toronto Western Hospital, Dr. Stephens' passion for medicine and service took him from the remote First Nations reservation in Bella Bella, BC, to the halls of the Prince Leopold Institute in Antwerp, Belgium. It was here he received his diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, a qualification that would set the stage for his remarkable contributions to global health.



Missionary work in Africa

Dr. Stephens' early medical work took place in what was then known as the Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic of Congo), where he founded a 100-bed hospital and established nursing and midwifery schools, along with satellite clinics. “I was always interested in working overseas. Partly because my grandad was a missionary in China in the 1800s. So I wanted to do that kind of work, to follow my religious beliefs and make the world better,” he said. Despite being forced to leave the country due to political turmoil and violent civil unrest after a ten-year stint, his foundational work there blossomed into a major referral center, a beacon of hope and healing. Sadly a lot of Bob’s friends were massacred during the Congo’s civil war as the country aimed to claim its independence from Belgian rule.

Specializing in tropical medicine back in Toronto

Returning to Canada in the 1960s, Dr. Stephens' commitment to care and community continued unabated. He played a pivotal role in establishing North York General Hospital in Toronto, where he also served as President of the Medical Staff. His expertise in tropical diseases led him to develop a specialized clinic, the International Medical Service, which caters to travelers and immigrants from developing countries.

"I had a degree in tropical medicine so I set up a clinic in 1971 and it still stands today near North York Regional Hospital," said Dr. Bob. The clinic provides people with vaccinations for travel but it also prepares people for cultural changes and helps individuals with depression who have come from war-torn areas so "it was more than just giving people needles" Dr. Stephens added.

Helping those less fortunate abroad

Beyond his practice, Dr. Stephens' leadership within the Evangelical Medical Aid Society as director and the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada saw him making frequent trips abroad. He travelled to China, Africa, the West Indies, and Eastern Europe, expanding access to medical care and education. During his 20-year stint with EMAS, his work - especially in remote northwest China, Cuba, and across Africa - earned him international recognition, including an honorary title from the Chinese government and an honorary Health Administration diploma from Uganda.

On top of this, when doctors go abroad to help and educate countries with struggling healthcare systems, Bob - working with Health Partners International Canada - standardized the kit that doctors would take with them.



Order of Canada, love, loss and retirement living

In 2006 Dr. Stephens' dedication to service was acknowledged with the Order of Canada, the nation's most prestigious civilian award, celebrating his lifetime of outstanding humanitarian service. His efforts brought great honour to Canada, as recognized in a special acknowledgment by the Canadian House of Commons.

After retiring, Dr. Stephens' life continued to be marked by love, adventure, service and sadly some heartache. Following the loss of his wife, Ruth, to cancer, Dr. Stephens later found love and married Sylver, with whom he traveled extensively. They eventually settled at Aspira Island Park in Campbellford, Ontario, where Dr. Stephens celebrated his 100th birthday in style. PSWs play a large role in his life at Island Park, helping him with day-to-day tasks but he still manages to socialize a lot with his fellow residents. "He knows half the people here at least," his wife

Sylver said with a smile.

His secret to a long life and why he likes retirement living

When asked about his secret to a long life Bob said "Firstly there is your genes. You can't change those. My mother lived until she was 96. Secondly, you have to take care of your mind, body and spirit. I kept moving, I never smoked and I never got drunk. With the mind it's important to keep learning and thinking and I nourished my spirit with religion but there are other ways to nourish your spirit too."



Bob said the last ten years of his life have been the hardest. He's had multiple health problems and although his mind is still strong, his body is getting weaker. But he still maintains a positive outlook and often tells his wife Sylvie (pictured left) that he is "in great shape for the shape that he is in." He wholeheartedly recommends life at Aspira because of the amazing staff. "The staff are great. It's a good place to live."

Dr. Robert Stephens' journey through life is one of intense compassion and commitment. From the remote corners of the Belgian Congo to the bustling streets of Toronto, his legacy is a vivid portrait of a life well-lived, dedicated to the service of humanity. Dr. Stephens remains a cherished member of the Island Park community and his story is a source of inspiration for all who have the privilege of knowing him.

IN MEMORIAM



In Memory of Dr. Matthew Nelms

August 2, 1995 – July 30, 2024

It is with heavy hearts that we share that a member of our University of Toronto MD alumni community, Dr. **Matthew William Nelms** (MD '23), has passed away.

Matthew was a graduate of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine's MD Class of 2T3, enrolled in residency in anesthesiology at McMaster University. Soon after graduation he was diagnosed with colorectal cancer and fought his battle with cancer right until the end. He passed away peacefully on July 30, 2024, surrounded by his loving family and his beautiful wife Jessica.

Although he was taken from us far too young, not a day went by where he did not do everything in his power to pursue his goals, challenge his cancer and enjoy his life with Jessica, their dog Ryder and his family. We are proud to write that he never once let his cancer define who he was, or the life that he wanted for himself and his family; truly an inspiration to others battling this life shattering disease.

Matthew was more than just an excellent academic and clinician; he was an outstanding human being who truly understood how to capitalize on the gift of life. Dr. Nelms lived life ferociously and without fear, a quality he inspired in those around him. A true adventurer at heart, Matthew was always eager to explore new horizons and embrace life's challenges with an open mind. Whether it was skiing, fishing, golfing, camping or a plane ride to a new corner of the world, Matthew loved seeking out all the unique experiences the world has to offer.

Matthew approached life with a level of enthusiasm and curiosity that serves as an inspiration to all those who love him. His love for living in, and making the most of, every moment is something he has instilled

in his friends and family. Even when faced with the rigours of medical training, Matthew never failed to achieve a full and balanced life. When faced with the transition to online learning during the pandemic, Matthew made sure to make the most of a challenging situation by moving to Golden, British Columbia. While there, he worked hard throughout the days to ensure his academic duties were fulfilled before spending his evening doing what he loved on the slopes of the Rockies with his wife and brother. In the midst of a busy clerkship schedule, his limited time off was dedicated to hosting his friends at his family cottage for weekends full of laughter and celebration of achievement. His commitment to being a dedicated friend, family member and partner was unwavering and he was never too busy to be there for those who needed him.

While balancing a personal life was a priority to Matthew, his clinical duties and caring for his patients was something he was certain to never compromise. This commitment was recognized by those around as he was awarded the Golden Stethoscope Award, a prestigious award given to medical students who demonstrate outstanding compassion, altruism, and clinical excellence. Those who had the privilege to work with Matthew can attest to the fact that these qualities do not even begin to describe the exemplary young physician he was. Matthew will be remembered by those who knew him as the type of person who went above and beyond for those in need, lending a hand to all no matter the request. An integral part of his kind nature was to put others before himself and always give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps this was what allowed Matthew to foster deep connections in any room he entered. His warmth, kindness and charisma were contagious as he livened up every gathering. Everyone who had the privilege of knowing Matthew can speak to his compassionate nature and will cherish his memory fondly no matter when or where their connection began.

Beyond these traits, one of the greatest losses with his passing is the love that Matthew gave to those close to him. He was an amazing brother, an exemplary son, the greatest friend and a devoted partner. His memory lives on in the hearts of all those who loved him and his legacy will be carried on by the many lives he's forever impacted.

In his final days, Matthew's giving and caring spirit was never lost. Amongst his final wishes, he asked that his memory be used to continue to help others pursue their dreams of providing care for their communities. In light of this, his family and friends are in the midst of organizing the *Matthew Nelms Foundation*, which will be dedicated to financially supporting young adults suffering from cancer.

*Written with love by his forever friends, bound deeply by their years as MD 2T3 students, **Amanda, Mitchell, Shakiba, Victoria, Sean, Benji and Lukas.***

IN MEMORIAM



Lives well lived

Class of 5T0

Dr. Joseph LEVENTHAL, on Saturday, February 4, 2023, peacefully surrounded by his family. Joey, with distinction, served his country in World War II. He was a physician, artist, comedian — a true renaissance man. Many thanks to Dr. Christa Sinclair Mills, and caregivers Mylene, Rowena and Loida.

Class of 5T2

Dr. Henry BLOCK, peacefully on February 16, 2023 at Diamond House in Warman, SK. Henry was born on February 3, 1926 in Orenburg, Russia. He worked as Chief of Pathology at Saskatoon City Hospital and was well respected within the community. "Chips" is survived by his church family, with numerous brothers and sisters in Christ that he came to know over his many years of faithful dedication and service to God through the Camp Oshkidee ministry he helped found. He was a peaceful man of deep conviction; he walked by faith and lived a life of obedient service to God and to others.

Dr. Ronald R. (Ron) TASKER, peacefully on April 19, 2023, near his home of 50 years in Toronto, following a long and productive life. In medical school, Ron won the 1950 Saddington Medal in Pathology, and the 1952 Cody Silver Medal. Ron studied neurosurgery and neurophysiology under the mentorship of Dr. E. Harry Botterell, and as a postdoctoral McLaughlin Traveling Fellow (1959-1961) in the U.S. and Europe. Ron joined the Division of Neurosurgery at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) in 1961, and was distinguished as a Markle Scholar (1961-1966). He travelled the world training neurosurgeons in the field of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery, and later became head of neurosurgery at TGH from 1979 to 1988. Ron taught in the now-Temerty Faculty of Medicine for more than 40 years, becoming full professor in 1978, and was honoured with the title of Professor Emeritus of Neurosurgery in 2005, along with Officer of the Order of Canada. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 5T3

Dr. Richard (Dick) KIMOFF, peacefully on April 16, 2023, surrounded by his loving family. Dick established a general practice in Sherbrooke, QC after graduating from medical school. Twelve busy years later, wanting to make more time for his family, he moved to Montreal to train in radiology, which he then practiced into his early 80s. Dick was highly regarded by his patients as a dedicated, compassionate physician and by his colleagues as an approachable and astute consultant. He was also a man of great personal faith, who played a lifelong leadership role in his church. He influenced many lives both through his teaching of scripture and by the example he set in living a life of faith. However, Dick's greatest love in life was his family and he will be forever remembered as a devoted husband and caring father who never failed to give unconditional love, support and encouragement to those he loved so much.

Class of 5T5

Dr. James (Jim) Bucklin BASSINGTHWAIGHTE, quietly at his home in Seattle, Washington, on February 2, 2022, at age 92. Jim was born in Toronto, Canada and attended the University of Toronto through medical school. In 1955, he married Joan, began his family and practiced rural medicine. He then continued training in London, UK, moving into research after returning to North America. He pursued a PhD in cardiovascular physiology at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine and Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and joined their faculty after completing a residency in medicine and cardiology. Ten years later he moved to Seattle to join the University of Washington Department of Bioengineering. Jim modeled curiosity, connecting ideas and observation with hard work. He loved tennis and traveling. Dinner tables were filled with guests and lively discussions. May we emulate his strengths and learn from his life fully lived. [Published obituary.](#)

Dr. Donald Irwin MATHESON peacefully, with family by his side, on May 17, 2023, at the age of 92. Donald was a respected anesthesiologist and professor of anesthesia for 35 years at Michael Garron Hospital (formerly Toronto East General). He continued to practice medicine part-time until the age of 76. He was a longtime member of Kew Beach United Church where he taught Sunday School for many years. Upon retirement, he joined the Wyevale United Church where he was also invited to conduct readings. Don enjoyed reading in his study overlooking Georgian Bay, especially philosophy, and listening to classical music. He was a car enthusiast and an NFL football fanatic who rarely missed a televised game. We will remember his quick wit, his intelligence and thoughtfulness. Special thanks to the caregivers at the Villa in Midland and the staff at Georgian Bay General Hospital. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 5T7

Dr. Beverly Ann LEWIS-HARRIS was born on April 12, 1933, in Ottawa and grew up in Westfort, Fort William (now Thunder Bay), Ontario. She passed peacefully in her 91st year on May 16, 2023, in Toronto. Beverly attended Francis Street Public School and Fort William Collegiate prior to moving to Toronto to attend the University of Toronto where she excelled. After medical school she completed her residency, becoming a pathologist. She retired after 40 years, and following retirement she studied art history at U of T. Beverly and her husband Peter John Harris (predeceased) had multiple interests — in particular they enjoyed jazz, attending jazz festivals throughout North America and befriending several jazz musicians. Other interests included art, film, nostalgia, sports cars and cats. [Published obituary.](#)

Dr. Gordon WARME, on June 1, 2023, at the age of 90, exactly one year after retiring and giving up his medical license. Gordon was born and raised in Toronto to German/Austrian immigrant parents and spent many happy summers working at the Banff Springs Hotel as a bellboy to pay for his medical school tuition. He graduated from the University of Toronto in medicine and then psychiatry, also attending the University of Heidelberg in Germany. In 1961, he moved to Topeka, Kansas with his wife, Barbara, to attend the Menninger School of Psychiatry for psychoanalytic training and begin raising his family. He settled back in Toronto in 1969, where he worked at the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry (now CAMH) for most of his career. In 1976 he was one of the founders and first director of the Child

Psychoanalytic Program, which is still up and running. He also had a private practice and was a faculty member in U of T's Department of Psychiatry for over 40 years. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 6T2

Dr. Dale DOTTEN, peacefully, on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at the age of 84. Born in Tisdale, SK, Dale was an eminent hematologist at the Wellesley Hospital, and later at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. He was well-respected by his colleagues and loved by his patients. Dale will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Dr. David LORENZEN, in his 87th year on Wednesday, August 16, 2023, with family at his side. Born in St. Catharines on April 21, 1936, David graduated from the University of Toronto's medical school and was a practicing family physician for 50 years in the Niagara Region. During that time, he was also the medical officer for the Lincoln and Welland Regiment and City Coroner. He was an avid ham radio operator and expert marksman, and enjoyed sailing and spending time with his dog, Belle. David will be dearly missed by all who knew him. The next time you are at the pub, raise a pint of Smithwicks in his honour.

Class of 6T3

Dr. Allan SANDLER, on Tuesday, May 23, 2023. Allan was a dedicated family physician who served the Bathurst Manor community for over 30 years. He was a lover of music, an avid reader of fiction and a stamp collector. He loved the game of baseball and spending time with his dogs. Most importantly, he was passionate about his family and friends.

Class of 6T5

Dr. Herman HUGENHOLTZ, peacefully at home on Sunday, June 25, 2023. Born in the Netherlands, Herman practiced as a neurosurgeon at the Scarborough General Hospital, the Ottawa General Hospital, and the QE2 in Halifax, where he retired in 2006. He enjoyed several years of travel, building canoes and kayaks, and winters in Florida. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 6T6

Dr. Alexander E. JONES, on October 24, 2023. Alexander was a family medicine and emergency room doctor, Ontario coroner and active staff member of Humber River Hospital for 56 years. Avid skier, on snow or water, world traveller and self-taught handyman. Worldly, yet roots mattered. Born in Greece in 1939, Alexander emigrated to Canada at the age of nine and fostered his love for Greek culture, language and food. His family, the pursuit of travel, winter and summer sports, literature, theatre, the arts, helping people and good food (especially sweets) were at the top of his list throughout his life. [Published obituary.](#)

Dr. Baiba ROZKALNS, on January 10, 2023. Baiba was born on September 12, 1939, in Valka, Latvia and emigrated to Canada as a teen. She excelled in her studies and went on to earn a BA in home economics and then an MD from the University of Toronto. She left home and traveled alone to San Francisco, California for a residency in medical oncology. In 1976 she moved to San Mateo, California and set up her solo practice in medical oncology in a four-physician office building where she met her future husband, J. Bryant Calhoun MD, a practicing general ophthalmologist. She was highly respected by her colleagues and greatly loved by her patients, not only for her professional expertise but also for her highly unusual empathy and kindness. After a very successful career, she retired in October, 1999. She moved with her husband to Ashland, Oregon in 2007 where they established a small vineyard and their dream home and regularly attended the local theatre and concerts. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 6T8

Dr. William (Bill) KYLE, at age 81, died with dignity on October 9, 2023, surrounded by loved ones at his favourite place, the cottage he built on Lake of the Woods in Kenora, Ontario. Bill initially pursued

engineering at the University of Toronto before switching his focus to medicine. While at U of T, Bill made many lifelong friends, played football and rugby and met the love of his life, Eleanor Johnson. In 1981, he was recruited to lead the radiology department at Lake of the Woods District Hospital. His dedication spanned 30 years, including serving as chief of the radiology department, a period as chief of staff in the mid-90s, and playing a pivotal role in bringing new imaging technologies to the hospital. At the age of 59, Bill was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which altered the course of his retirement. Yet, his unwavering determination and enthusiasm for life allowed him to share countless adventures with family and friends. His resilience and courage in the face of adversity were remarkable, and he will be remembered with profound love and respect. [Published obituary.](#)

Dr. William (Bill) TUCKER, former head of the Division of Neurosurgery at St. Michael's Hospital (SMH) and a renowned surgical educator, passed away peacefully on Monday, October 2, 2023. Bill joined SMH as a neurosurgeon in 1972. He rapidly built a practice encompassing all realms of the specialty and was recognized for his clinical skill, exacting standards and devotion to patient care. He was the founding director of the trauma service at SMH and was involved in surgical education at SMH and the University of Toronto, winning numerous teaching awards throughout his career. Bill also had an interest in the legal aspects of medical practice and served on the council of the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) for 18 years (1994 to 2012), including three years as president. Bill had an excellent career admired by colleagues and patients alike — the consummate consultant surgeon. He practiced at SMH until his retirement in 2012. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 6T9

Dr. William (Bill) N. FITZGERALD, peacefully on Monday, April 17, 2023, at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital, Sydney, Nova Scotia, at the age of 78. Bill spent his professional life as a rural general surgeon in St. Anthony, Newfoundland. He was a former president of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. He was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 2008. Recently, he was Chairman of B.O.L.D. in Baddeck, Nova Scotia. He loved his family, his work as a rural general surgeon in Northern Newfoundland and Labrador, and sailing on his Concordia yawl, Tosca. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 7T7

Dr. James (Jim) Joseph Andre McALISTER, on February 9, 2023, at the age of 71. Jim was a dedicated physician for 45 years. He had a passion for serving those in the North, including Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. When not working, Jim enjoyed spending time relaxing in nature with his family at camp. [Published obituary.](#)

Class of 7T8

Dr. Adrianus (Art) Arie vanWALRAVEN, as were his wishes, died peacefully, calmly, with dignity and family at home on November 28, 2023, following a 2022 diagnosis of brain cancer. Art spent the majority of his career practicing at the Stratford General Hospital where he built up a trusted network of colleagues and friends. Before and during his tenure as chief of staff, his driving ambition was to make it the 'tiny, perfect hospital'. For the last 10 years of his career, Art worked in the ICU at Grand River Hospital where he was known for his amazing bedside manner, skill and undying enthusiasm for long night shifts. His tireless work ethic, compassion and care were matched only by his dry humour and quick wit which will be remembered through many oft-quoted Art-isms and his legendary chart notes. Despite his long hours at the hospital, nothing was more important to Art than his family (except perhaps solo canoe trips to Algonquin Park in less-than-ideal conditions). An inspiration and mentor to many, Art was an undeniable presence in his internal medicine specialty, the ICU and the wider medical community. 'If I could live forever, I'd never stop working.' - Art [Published obituary.](#)

MD ALUMNI STORIES



[Lisa Robinson becomes Temerty Medicine dean](#)

On July 1, **Lisa Robinson** (MD '91, PGME Internal Medicine '92) began her [five-year term as dean of the Temerty Faculty of Medicine](#).



[U of T MD 50th Reunion: Celebrating lifelong bonds](#)

Classmates from the MD Class of 7T4 attended a [special 50-year milestone reception and dinner in late-May](#), sharing updates, swapping photos and reminiscing about one of the most formative periods of their lives.



[By students, for students: team at Toronto Notes endows award to support medical learners](#)

Acknowledging contributions from previous generations of editors as well as faculty and staff, [the editors of the Toronto Notes med school study guide have taken their historic support of their peers to a new level](#) and endowed the **Toronto Notes 2024 Medical Student Award**.



[2024 Dean's Alumni Award recipients](#)

Dafna Gladman (MD '71, PGME '76 Rheumatology) and **Anna Banerji** (MD '89, PGME '90 Paediatrics) are among the recipients of [this year's Dean's Alumni Awards](#).

[VIEW ALL NEWS](#)

MD ALUMNI EVENTS, BENEFITS & OPPORTUNITIES



Become an MD alumni volunteer

There are many ways you can enhance the MD alumni community, including submitting content for *MAA Matters*, speaking at events and participating on committees. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact **Katrina Heisz** at katrina.heisz@utoronto.ca.



Be a mentor and impact the MD student experience

MD mentorship programs offer both learners and mentors a rewarding experience and an opportunity to build networks and relationships. Apply now for the September-December [MD mentorship program](#) and September-May [MD/PhD mentorship program](#).



Planning your MD class reunion? We can help!

Temerty Medicine supports MD alumni with coordinating class reunion events throughout the year. Visit the [Class Reunions page](#) or contact **Katrina Heisz** at katrina.heisz@utoronto.ca for more information.

MAA Matters is a semi-annual digital publication featuring news, events and updates for University of Toronto MD alumni.

Do you have a life update, memorial tribute or other special news to share with your fellow alumni?

SUBMIT ALUMNI NEWS

Alumni Give Back

Consider joining your fellow alumni with a donation in support of new generations of Temerty Medicine students (and future alumni). Gifts are eligible for a tax receipt and can be directed to the [Medical Alumni Association \(MAA\) Awards](#), [class funds](#), the [Dean's Priority Fund](#) or [any other priority area](#) at Temerty Medicine.