

EVMS

magazine

ISSUE 16.1

50

A LEGACY & A PROMISE

High Hopes

Rio Castro, MD Class of 2025, took to the skies to celebrate completion of a challenging first year of medical school. "I wanted to give myself a White Coat Ceremony of my own," she says, "a celebration of my success!" The Vienna, Virginia, native plans to jump into the field of surgery when she graduates.

*Photo courtesy of RIO CASTRO/
SKYDIVE SUFFOLK*



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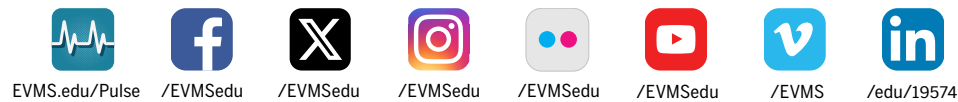
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have worked at EVMS as a practitioner, faculty member, department chair and now as President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine. Over more than 30 years of personal experience, I have learned that the EVMS story always has been one of audacious vision, resolve and commitment to the community.

This issue of EVMS Magazine celebrates the school's first half century. Throughout these pages, you'll read about the community members who had a noble vision of a medical school and a steadfast determination to achieve their vision. EVMS has prevailed and flourished to become a leader in medical education, research and clinical care — and a committed partner to regional groups and other institutions.

Our faculty, staff, students and supporters have dedicated their lives to something greater than themselves. You care for the sick. Teach the next generation. Study, research and experiment to find new answers — even cures. You invest in great ideas and new initiatives. You create families, friendships, partnerships, community. There is no greater work.

We are so proud of EVMS' impact on our community and so humbled to be entrusted with EVMS' future. We are excited about the great opportunity that lies ahead in our planned integration with Old Dominion University, effective July 1, 2024.

We strongly believe that EVMS and ODU — in partnership with other area universities such as Norfolk State University and Hampton University, along with our healthcare partners — will take a giant leap ahead to addressing the current and future urgent needs of our communities.

I want to take this moment to recognize Dr. Brian Hemphill, ODU's President, who has been my trusted partner through this invigorating and complex process. Also, I would like to express a great deal of gratitude to Sentara Health for its great and unwavering support of EVMS over the years and their commitment to a successful integration with ODU. We look forward to providing more details about this exciting new chapter.



On page 22, you'll see a photo of a billboard from 60 years ago, one of many around the region at that time that urged the community to make EVMS happen.

It's a call to action that still resonates. I thank you for your continued support of EVMS in the future, as we — together with our friends and partners — continue to transform Hampton Roads and the Commonwealth of Virginia for the next 50 years and beyond.

Thank you for your commitment.

Sincerely,

Alfred Abuhamad, MD



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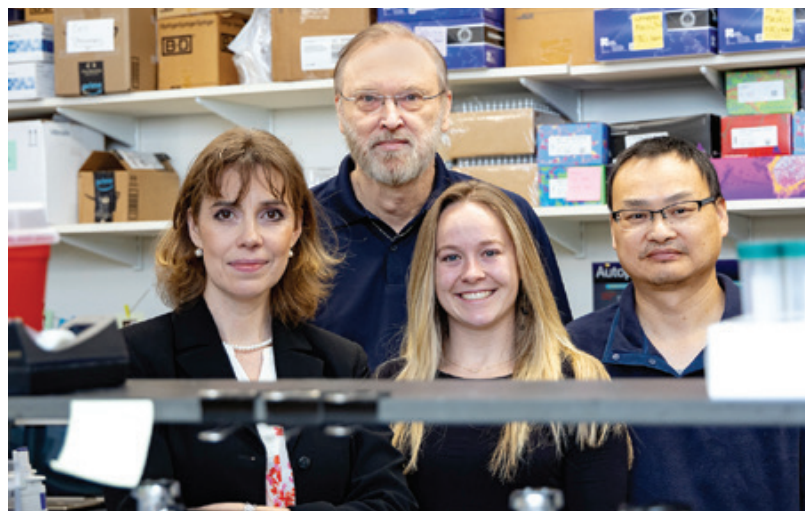
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Seen & Heard

The EVMS community makes news

Compiled by EVMS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



AHA supports research on HIV-associated atherosclerosis

Although people with HIV now live substantially longer than they once did, they also suffer inordinately from other chronic diseases. EVMS scientists have received funding from the American Heart Association (AHA) to study one of the deadliest culprits — atherosclerosis.

Elena Galkina, PhD, Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Cell Biology, is principal investigator for the \$200,000, two-year grant from the AHA's Innovative Project Award program. Joining in her research are co-investigator Ming-Lei Guo, PhD, Associate Professor of Pathology and Anatomy, and consultant Larry Sanford, PhD, Professor of Pathology and Anatomy.

“Picasso said the meaning of life is to find your gift, and the purpose of life is to give it away. I am glad I had the opportunity to share my gifts.”

Angela Hogan, MD, Professor of Pediatrics at EVMS and pediatric allergist and immunologist at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters

Dr. Hogan received the prestigious American Academy of Pediatrics Jerome Glaser Distinguished Service Award in 2023. The award is presented annually in recognition of outstanding service in the field of pediatric allergy.



Sylvia Ameen, MPA, joins EVMS as Senior Associate Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations in May 2024. She brings a wealth of expertise to her role, with 14 years of senior executive experience and more than three decades serving as a leader in development, institutional advancement and marketing and communications at not-for-profit and healthcare organizations.



Peter Netland, MD, PhD, has been appointed Chair of EVMS Ophthalmology effective June 17, 2024. Since 2009, he has been the DuPont Guerry III Professor and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. In 2012, he was named the school's Vernah Scott Moyston Professor of Ophthalmology. His dedication to the advancement of research, education and care make him an ideal addition to the EVMS community.



EVMS is the most diverse medical school in Virginia, according to U.S. News & World Report's 2023-2024 rankings.

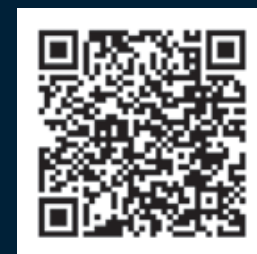
Approximately 22 percent of EVMS medical students identify as part of a racial or ethnic minority. “We want our student body to reflect the communities we serve, in the Commonwealth and beyond, and we believe our students' success is largely rooted in learning from life experiences and backgrounds different from their own,” says Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine.



Thank you!

THANK YOU for the incredible response to the Checkered Flag Challenge! With 233 gifts totaling \$87,561, EVMS Fund donors helped us cross the finish line. Sincere thanks to Checkered Flag for matching all gifts made to the EVMS Fund up to \$25,000.

Visit evms.edu/cfcthankyou or use the QR code to see what YOU made possible. **If you missed the challenge you can still have an impact by making your gift at evms.edu/fund.**



Q&A:

George Saade, MD

Story and Photos by DOUG GARDNER

In January 2023, George Saade, MD, a world authority in maternal-fetal medicine and highly accomplished researcher and clinician, was appointed Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at EVMS and Associate Dean for Women's Health.

Dr. Saade is considered a giant in the world of maternal-fetal medicine research. His research focuses on preeclampsia, preterm labor and fetal physiology and therapy. He is principal investigator on a broad range of research, including six current studies funded by the NIH. He is widely published and a reviewer for 49 journals, including some of the leading publications in obstetrics and in medicine.

Here, Dr. Saade discusses his work.

Why are pregnancy and childbirth so fraught with dangers?

I prefer not to say they are fraught with dangers. The vast majority of pregnancies and childbirth do not have dangers. However, given that pregnancy is typically straightforward, complicated pregnancies stand out more. The perception is really influenced by the expectation. No one speaks of brain surgery as fraught with dangers even though it is associated with much more morbidity than pregnancy. Having said that, pregnancy nowadays is not as simple as 50 years ago. While the expectations have not changed, reality has.



Dr. Saade is a former President of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine and prolific author, with more than 650 articles in peer-reviewed journals.

How has pregnancy changed over the last half century?

There are many ways it has changed. But let me give you one major change. More pregnant women are now older and heavier than before. The age is not the issue as much as someone who is older is more likely to have more co-morbidities (other conditions that impact their health like hypertension, diabetes), or be closer to such co-morbidities (pre-hypertension, pre-diabetes). All of these conditions increase the risk of pregnancy complications. We also have more patients with medical conditions like cystic fibrosis or heart abnormalities who 50 years ago were told not to get pregnant, or were not living long enough to get pregnant.

What's behind the stark racial discrepancies in pregnancy outcomes?

Where should I start? It is inequality in many things, including socio-economic factors, access to care, different care, etc. Unfortunately, care is not the same for everyone. There are certain things we can do to address this, but a drastic change to health policy is really needed. What we are doing at EVMS is making sure we include the community in our discussion, we highlight equity and inclusion, and we develop programs that improve access to care and follow up, such as patient navigators and community health workers.

From your perspective, what is the most important unanswered question surrounding pregnancy?

The most important unanswered question is what causes the complications of pregnancy like preeclampsia, preterm birth and stillbirth. Until we know the causes, it is going to be difficult to prevent them. Until we find the causes, the most important intervention we can think of to improve pregnancy outcomes would be to get patients to optimal health — including blood pressure, metabolic, nutrition and weight control — before they become pregnant.

What drew you to research in general and particularly maternal-fetal medicine?

To research in general is the hope to improve care and decrease suffering for more than one person, or family, at a time. When we find a better way to care for patients, we can impact a lot of people for a long time, even some we have never met. What drew me to maternal-fetal medicine in particular relates to the intricate physiology of pregnancy and fetal development. There is nothing in biology that is more elegant than what happens to maintain a pregnancy and have a healthy mother and baby. The pathways and mechanisms involve the entire body and every biologic principle we know of. From a pathologic process, it is one area that we know very little about. To me, the mother and baby are the last frontier in medicine, which makes this

field ripe for discovery. Finally, anything that impacts two individuals very early in their life is bound to have a much bigger impact than whatever we can do for one individual late in their life.

What are your major areas of research?

My overall area of research is to make pregnancy safer, either through developing novel treatments or strategies for managing pregnancy or developing health systems to support patients. Another area of research for me is what I call “pregnancy as a window to future health.” Pregnancy impacts the future health for both mother and baby, and appropriate follow up and management after delivery for both is important to optimize long-term health. The ultimate goal of every physician should be to decrease suffering, both physical and emotional, direct and indirect. How this is done can be different, but all of what we do should have this same goal.

“The ultimate goal of every physician should be to decrease suffering, both physical and emotional, direct and indirect. How this is done can be different, but all of what we do should have this same goal.”

– George Saade, MD

What attracted you to EVMS?

It is a community-focused, nimble institution with a can-do attitude, and an institution that punches above its weight. EVMS is the only referral institution for complex conditions in obstetrics and gynecology. Despite the limited health care resources provided, EVMS has been able to maintain high-quality care for the underserved patients.

A generation from now, how will maternal-fetal care be different than today? What advances do you expect to see in the next 10-20 years?

There is the social and the scientific answer. The social would be that every pregnant person will have the same access to high-level care. The scientific is that we will have individualized and personalized approaches to management of pregnancy.

What is something people may not know about you?

From a serious side, I get lost in my own thoughts. I love to spend time inside my mind doing thought experiments, finding solutions or answers to questions, sometimes silly ones. On the fun side, I am a big fan of Napolitan pizza, opera and English Premier League soccer. I am a big Liverpool supporter. Their official anthem, “You’ll Never Walk Alone,” always gives me goosebumps when I hear it. □



See a video of Dr. Saade discussing the importance of medical care during pregnancy at evms.edu/GeorgeSaade.

Trending

Highlights from conversations on EVMS social media

Compiled by CAYLA MORGAN



#Diversity EVMS' Student National Medical Association (SNMA) celebrated different cultures at its annual event featuring music, cuisine, performances and exhibitions.



#EVMSAlum Philippe Warren, MD (MD '18), is serving his community and country as the U.S. Navy Blue Angels Flight Surgeon. (Photo courtesy of WYDaily)



#SurgicalAssisting The annual Suture Fest is a powerful display of collaboration, as Surgical Assisting students (yellow) guide medical students and future colleagues (blue) through the intricacies of suturing, tying, scrubbing in, gowning and gloving.



#OBGYNResident This EVMS Obstetrics and Gynecology resident was all smiles following her first delivery via C-section. @evmsobgynresidency



#CommunityService Students spread love and crafted smiles one card at a time during a heartwarming Valentine's Day card-making session for patients at CHKD. The event was organized by the EVMS Pediatrics Interest Group.



#Students Student ambassadors shining bright during a 50th Anniversary event held in Fall 2023.



Did you know EVMS is on GIPHY? Share your EVMS spirit by adding customizable gifs and stickers to your social media posts. Search **EVMSedu** on [giphy.com](https://www.giphy.com).

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Dr. Julius Nyalwidhe (left) and Dr. John Semmes in the Leroy T. Canoles Jr. Cancer Research Center in Lester Hall.

Team-based science

EVMS scientists prioritize collaboration in research breakthroughs

Story by VIRGINIA HILTON AND MARY WESTBROOK | Photo by ERIC LUSHER

Last year, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) awarded researchers at the EVMS Leroy T. Canoles Jr. Cancer Research Center a \$4 million grant to continue work on a breakthrough around early detection of aggressive prostate cancer.

The news was significant because of the potentially life-changing implications of the research: an estimated 35,000 men will die from prostate cancer in 2024. In recognizing the research, however, NCI — part of the National Institutes of Health — also elevated the importance of team-based science.

The EVMS-led research team brings together research groups from the United States and Canada that are internationally recognized for their “translational” work to rapidly translate research from the lab to the patient’s bedside. The grant brings the total awarded to EVMS through this initiative to \$11 million and allows for a level of collaboration and expertise- and resource-sharing that can elevate an array of research initiatives at EVMS.

John Semmes, PhD, Founding Director of the Cancer Research Center and Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Cell Biology, says the teamwork behind the science represents a growing movement in the research and scientific community.

“Assembling multi-disciplinary research teams is critical to tackling complex medical and healthcare challenges,” Dr. Semmes says. “Our team’s efforts to improve the delivery of care to prostate cancer patients requires extensive interprofessional collaborative research to reach the bedside. We have been fortunate to assemble an outstanding Hampton Roads bench-to-bedside team that includes EVMS researchers with complementary expertise and clinical professionals at Urology of Virginia, as well as their patients that participate in our studies.”

In addition, he adds, the work is made possible through EVMS’ partnership with Sentara, which “provides resources through which patients can fulfill their wish to contribute to translational research.”

Better tests, healthier futures

The Early Detection Research Network is a prestigious program of the National Cancer Institute. The network supports the complete translational pipeline for cancer biomarker development and validation with an emphasis toward getting new biomarkers into the clinic.

The current award designates the multi-institutional team as a Biomarker Characterization Center — one of only 10 across the country.

The Biomarker Characterization Center consists of a lab to discover and develop new biomarkers, a reference lab to build clinical assays and an administrative core to coordinate the lab functions and integrate the center’s activities with the larger network and the NCI. These centers interact closely with sister Clinical Validation Centers and a Data Management and Coordinating Center.

“The focus of the Early Detection Research Network is to translate discovery and innovation into clinical tests that improve the lives of cancer patients,” he says. “The integrated structure builds additional expertise into a network that bridges the knowledge needed to bring a new biomarker to the clinic.”

The \$4 million grant awarded to EVMS “will help us continue our work to develop tests that can identify aggressive prostate cancer before it advances and to realize our dream of personalized care that tailors treatment decisions to fit the individual patient,” Dr. Semmes says. “We want to be able to identify advanced disease prior to surgery so that the best treatment options are implemented earlier.”

The EVMS group is co-led by Julius Nyalwidhe, PhD, also a member of the center and Associate Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Cell Biology. He agrees with Dr. Semmes.

“The goal is to advance the science to the point where we can provide patients with a better range of treatment options, based on their individual circumstances, so that we are not only improving outcomes but also lifestyles and well-being throughout the diagnosis and treatment process,” he says.

Landmark studies

In the initial phase of the study that forms the basis for the latest grant, researchers teamed up to develop a novel approach to move rapidly from discovery to validation of hundreds of proteins — each a potential component in a new cancer biomarker. The team took advantage of the existing interprofessional expertise and decided that urine would provide a convenient and non-invasive source of a new biomarkers.

The data resulted in the identification of a liquid-biopsy biomarker for aggressive prostate cancer — the first protein-based liquid biomarker of its kind. The team worked with Urology of Virginia to collect urine samples taken following routine digital rectal exams. They found the urine contained prostatic fluids that could identify whether a man had an aggressive form of prostate cancer.

The research, co-authored with researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles and University of Toronto, was published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

The next step in the study, Dr. Semmes says, is to build an optimized assay that meets stringent standards prior to large scale validation. Dr. Nyalwidhe is the program leader for the Biomarker Reference laboratory activities. His laboratory has published successful development of targeted mass spectrometry protein assays.

“We are working closely with our colleagues at UCLA and the University of Toronto to make this a reality,” Dr. Semmes says. “Our team’s goal is to bring non-invasive biomarkers into the clinic that will detect aggressive disease earlier and, ultimately, save lives.” □

“The goal is to advance the science to the point where we can provide patients with a better range of treatment options, based on their individual circumstances, so that we are not only improving outcomes but also lifestyles and well-being throughout the diagnosis and treatment process.”

– Dr. Julius Nyalwidhe

Power of *the people*

Over 30 years, a small but determined coalition has transformed into a powerful force for Hampton Roads kids

Story by KATIE VINCENT | Photo by ERIC LUSHER

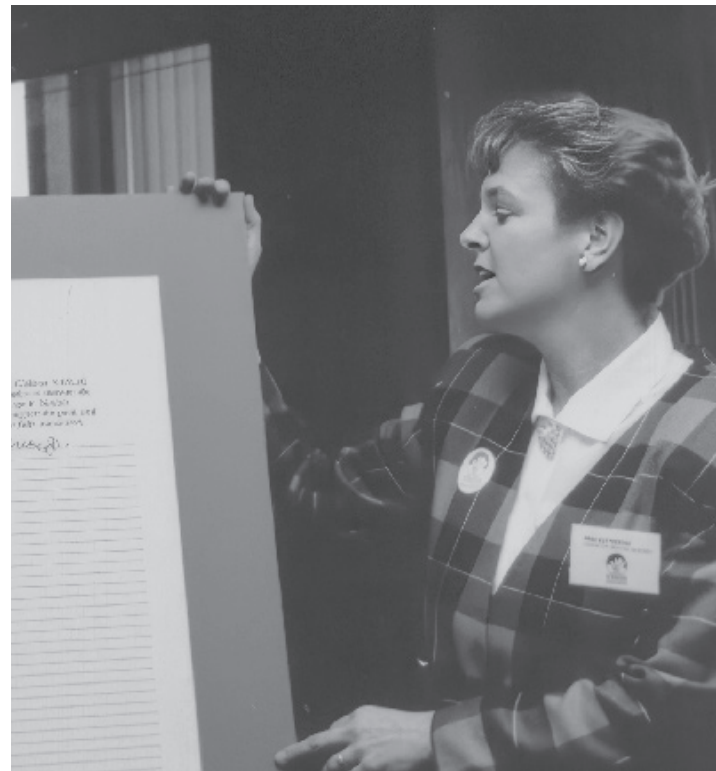
Fran Butterfoss, PhD, was worried. The year was 1993. The United States had come through a measles epidemic in the 1980s and was armed with new approaches to protect public health. To prevent future outbreaks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had issued grants to six cities — including Norfolk — to improve immunization rates of infants and preschool-aged children.

A professor in EVMS' Division of Community Health and Research, Dr. Butterfoss encountered regular resistance among parents and caregivers in Hampton Roads to the CDC initiative. And no wonder. As Dr. Butterfoss understood, many minority families distrusted the medical community — in part because of the painful legacy of the United States Public Health Service's Syphilis Study at Tuskegee. Misinformation was rampant.

Dr. Butterfoss knew that to turn public opinion, she needed to engage help from the community and put a human face on the importance of immunizations. The idea led to something big.

The Consortium for Immunization of Norfolk's Children, the original CINCH, held its first meeting January 29, 1993. The coalition of about 30 local health leaders was tasked with learning what kept parents from vaccinating their kids and how to remove those barriers.

"We started with many phone calls and visits to community organizations, with focus groups and door-to-door interviews of about 6,000 households," says Dr. Butterfoss, who served as the founding Director of CINCH. Such grassroots efforts, typically associated with political or social justice issues, represented a new approach to solving a health crisis.



CINCH Founding Director Dr. Fran Butterfoss.



Today CINCH is led by Executive Director Amy Paulson (right) with Assistant Director Sara Rothenberg.



Sara Rothenberg helping preschool-aged children build social and emotional skills as part of CINCH's Healthy Alternatives for Little Ones (HALO) initiative.

Thirty years later, CINCH is still going strong. The group's longevity has proven Dr. Butterfoss right: A team of health professionals in Hampton Roads that speaks directly with community members and listens to their stories can yield practical solutions to curb a major health issue. That radical tactic — and the vow to do it again and again — set the foundation for a robust village committed to supporting Southeastern Virginia families on their health journeys.

Pilot program

During their initial outreach, CINCH workers learned that many people didn't realize kids needed immunizations prior to grade school as their physicians didn't press the issue. In addition to their mistrust around vaccines, some families thought they couldn't afford shots; many described grueling logistics with bus transfers and long wait times with multiple children in tow.

Community members also voiced a laundry list of health and safety concerns that kept them up at night. "We promised them if this vaccination project succeeded, we would expand it to all children in the area, and we would do a major child-health assessment to prioritize other issues," Dr. Butterfoss says.

Extensive advertising, parent and physician education, work with the transit authority, reviews of physician records and reminder phone calls helped immunization rates rise by 17 percent within two years.

Bigger, broader goals

Following the immunization project, CINCH leaders kept their word, expanding their footprint to all cities in Hampton Roads and changing the acronym to represent the Consortium for Infant and Child Health. They've focused on issues such as obesity, asthma, injury prevention, health disparities, special needs and health insurance coverage. Their work has led to policy changes, safer playground equipment, bicycle paths through underserved communities, nutritional guidelines for aftercare facilities and breastfeeding accommodations in the workplace.

Collaboration made these and other accomplishments possible.

"What sets CINCH apart is the wide variety of community stakeholders involved with our work, as well as our focus of inviting to and valuing diverse voices in the coalition," says Amy Paulson, an Instructor in EVMS Pediatrics and CINCH's Executive Director since 2006.

In addition to hospitals, doctors, managed care organizations and public health experts, CINCH engages with schools, churches, city government, community organizations, such as the YMCA and The Up Center, public housing and advocacy groups like Moms Demand Action. Today, CINCH has 425 partners.

"The issues we're tackling would be insurmountable without community partnerships," says Sara Rothenberg, MPH, a fellow EVMS Pediatrics Instructor, and since 2018, CINCH's Assistant Director.

Much of CINCH's work involves aligning with people doing positive work and disseminating the efforts to a broader audience.

"CINCH avoids duplication of efforts," says Beth Parker, a CINCH member since 2019 and Assistant Director of Minus 9 to 5, an EVMS initiative that supports parents from pregnancy through their child's fifth year. "When we see overlap, we pool our knowledge and resources to enhance that particular area of focus."

This deliberation has become even more important since COVID as many CINCH partners have been spread thin.

"We have to be very efficient, focused and action-oriented, so we best engage very busy partners in ways that make the most of their time and contributions," says Paulson.

Additionally, CINCH leans heavily on community insight to understand what initiatives have real impact. Rather than relying on a few experts to come up with a plan, "tapping into the power of people gets results that are much more effective and meaningful," Paulson says.

From its inception, CINCH operated as a group where every volunteer's voice had equal weight, a value that inspires Matt Herman, Director of EVMS' M. Foscue Brock Institute for Community and Global Health and CINCH member since 2008. "So often, people in positions of power like government officials or physicians get all the attention," he says. "But community residents' opinions are just as important."



Next steps

Part of seeking partners' perspectives means acknowledging when to pivot. In September 2022, CINCH launched its latest strategic plan (pictured left).

"Our leadership team reviewed the landscape change COVID created," says Rothenberg. "What came out of it was a renewed interest in mental health."

This ranges from fostering social-emotional awareness with toddlers to addressing risky behavior in teenagers, as well as identifying warning signs for depression and suicide. It's a mission that taps experts from all stages of childhood development.

Reinvention has been key to CINCH's survival.

"Most coalitions only last a few years, so I was a bit nervous making that initial promise," says Dr. Butterfoss. "Thirty years is a remarkable longevity, and it's really come down to CINCH's willingness to evolve and stay relevant for the Hampton Roads community." □



Watch a video celebrating 30 years of CINCH at evms.edu/CINCH30.

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH

Honoring a legacy of service with a year of giving back

Story by VIRGINIA HILTON

Service. Community focus. Helping the underserved.

These are the words most often used when students, staff or faculty members are asked what drew them to EVMS.

It is certainly a motivation for Jason Azar. "I was attracted to the vision of wanting to be the most community-oriented school of medicine and health professions in the United States," says the EVMS Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons Administrator.

As the school prepared to celebrate its first half century, there was no question that a major part of the festivities should be about giving back.

"At EVMS, we are dedicated to improving the health and lives of everyone in our surrounding communities," says Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine and Mason C. Andrews Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology. "As part of the effort to celebrate our 50th Anniversary, we want to continue our legacy of service with a year of giving back."

Dr. Abuhamad asked all students, staff, residents, faculty, community faculty and alumni to join the effort to spend the next year serving the communities that worked so hard to build and sustain EVMS.

Since the Year of Service began in July 2023, volunteers have logged more than 15,000 hours.

"This was a great opportunity to help make my neighborhood and community a better place," says Kristine Meloche, MPA Class of 2024. "My neighbors and I helped clean up the park and the roads around our neighborhood."

In addition to volunteering, the EVMS community rallied for a campus-wide food drive to honor the milestone. The effort resulted in a donation of 2,893 pounds of food, which equates to 2,411 meals for families served by the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore.

Faculty, students and staff left donations in marked boxes around campus, and the EVMS Medical Group challenged each department to a Food Drive Battle to support the effort. In the end, EVMS Dermatology took home the trophy.

For many, giving back felt like the right thing to do as part of the celebration. "I am proud to have the opportunity to participate in community-oriented events such as the food drive," Azar says. "I hope everyone will join me in giving back during this 50-year anniversary celebration and moving forward into the future."

"I'm very proud and humbled by the EVMS Medical Group faculty and staff for supporting the food drive to address the food insecurity needs of our community," says Po Chou, EVMS Medical Group Chief Executive Officer. "What a fantastic contribution by our EVMS Medical Group family."

Dr. Abuhamad already is looking forward to the next chapter in EVMS' history of service.

"We often hear that people are drawn to EVMS because they are passionate about giving back and they know that service is a priority for this institution," he says. "Thank you to all for beginning our next 50 years with the biggest impact yet." □



Top: Several medical students rolled up their sleeves to volunteer in the kitchen at Freemason Street Baptist Church to make dinner for guests at the Housing Center at Tidewater. **Middle:** Po Chou, EVMS Medical Group Chief Executive Officer, presented the Food Drive Battle Champion's Cup to EVMS Dermatology. **Bottom:** Volunteers gathered donations from departments across campus which culminated in 2,893 pounds of food for the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore.

Campus Then and Now

Photos by DOUG GARDNER, BRENDAN ASH
AND FROM THE EVMS ARCHIVES
Layout and Illustration by JOHN COMERFORD
AND MATT HADDAWAY

There's something special about the EVMS campus. Standing proud along Colley Avenue in the heart of Norfolk's Ghent neighborhood, the institution plays an integral role in the community that surrounds it. Juxtaposing old and new, these photos capture an essence of growth and tell a story of progress, each revealing how EVMS has changed to meet the evolving needs of students, faculty, staff and the communities they serve.

Founded by a grassroots effort, the EVMS campus has grown since the 1960s to become a leader in groundbreaking educational, research and clinical programs.



THEN



NOW

When EVMS needed a space for its growing clinical practice, a founding family once again stepped forward. The Elise and Henry Clay Hofheimer II Hall of the Clinical Sciences (informally referred to as Hofheimer Hall) opened in 1985.

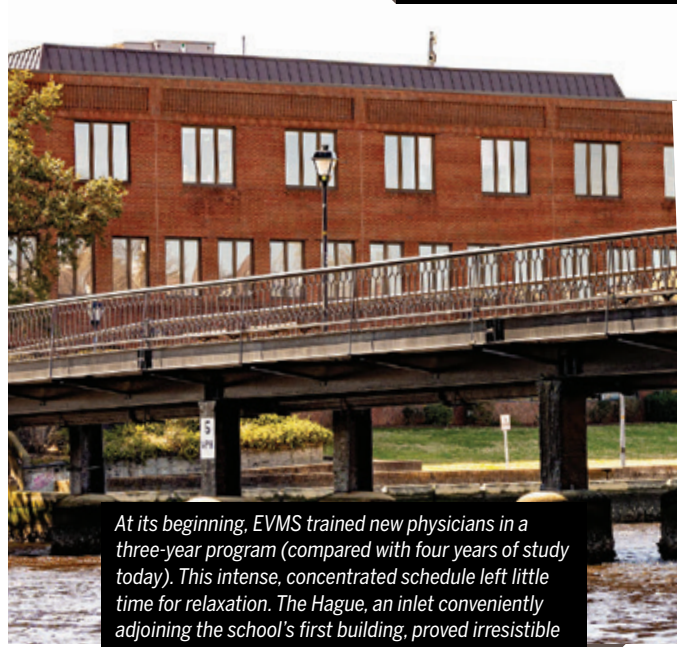


THEN



NOW

Construction of the Brickell Medical Sciences Library brought a signature building to the campus (modeled after the rotunda at the University of Virginia) along with space for the library's growing book and journal collection and desperately needed study areas for students.



THEN

NOW

At its beginning, EVMS trained new physicians in a three-year program (compared with four years of study today). This intense, concentrated schedule left little time for relaxation. The Hague, an inlet conveniently adjoining the school's first building, proved irresistible for students looking for some relief from their studies.



THEN



NOW

Photos taken 30+ years apart from the roof of Sentara Norfolk General Hospital show how the campus has grown and evolved.



THEN



NOW

A public campaign to raise funds for the opening of EVMS brought in donations large and small — including a piggybank from an inspired youth who would go on to make a career at EVMS. New billboards celebrated the school's 50th anniversary in 2023.

Discover more never-before-seen images of the early days of EVMS at evms.edu/50.



A Legacy & A Promise

EVMS celebrates its first half century during the 2023-2024 academic year

Eastern Virginia Medical School began in 1973 when community leaders created the institution to address the region's serious shortage of physicians — but its existence was not always a forgone conclusion. With the green light to launch a medical school but no money to do so, a group of committed citizens embarked on an ambitious fundraising campaign that narrowly succeeded. Thanks to these early pioneers, today EVMS continues to safeguard the community's health and has grown to approximately 1,500 medical and health professions students and 13,500 alumni.

From EVMS' humble beginnings, where passion and dedication laid the foundation of excellence, to its current standing as a beacon of medical innovation, this timeline is a testament to 50 years of unwavering commitment to education, healing and discovery.

“The world has changed dramatically over the past 50 years, but our vision has remained the same: to be the most community-oriented school of medicine and health professions in the country.”

Alfred Abuhamad, MD
EVMS President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine and Mason C. Andrews Distinguished Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology

1964

The Virginia legislature creates the Norfolk Area Medical Center Authority and empowers the authority to create a medical school. Prominent obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Mason C. Andrews, a key proponent of the new school, is appointed Chair.

1964

Supporters — led by businessman and philanthropist Henry Clay Hofheimer II and with the support of others such as attorney Harry Mansbach and former Congressman Porter Hardy — establish the Eastern Virginia Medical School Foundation.

1970

The initial fundraising campaign begins. Hampton Roads is the largest metropolitan area in the nation without a medical school.

1973

The inaugural MD class matriculates. Classes are held in Smith-Rogers Hall, a converted nursing school dormitory.

1974

The school opens a family practice residency training program to help alleviate a local physician shortage.

1976

EVMS graduates 23 physicians in its charter MD class.

1974

The school's first graduates complete training in what is now known as the Graduate Art Therapy and Counseling Program.

1972

The medical school receives provisional accreditation.



1995

A gift from Virginia Beach resident Virginia Glennan Ferguson leads to the establishment of the Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology.



1987

What is now known as the EVMS Strelitz Diabetes Center opens.



1986

The United States Agency for International Development awards a \$28 million grant to establish CONRAD, a program of EVMS Obstetrics and Gynecology.



1981

Elizabeth Carr, the nation's first child conceived through in vitro fertilization, is born at Norfolk General Hospital, thanks to the work of IVF pioneers Drs. Howard and Georgeanna Jones. Dr. Mason Andrews performs the delivery.



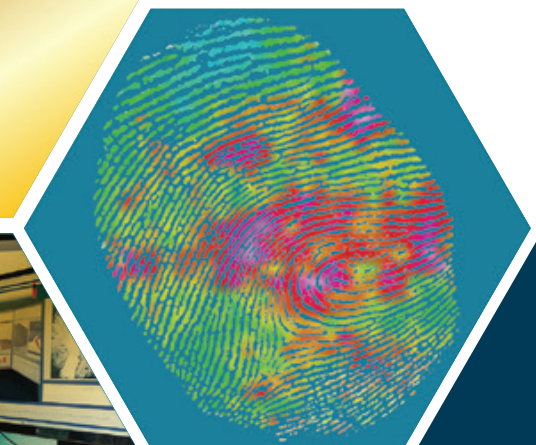
1978

EVMS celebrates the completion of its first building and names it Lewis Hall in honor of philanthropists Sydney and Frances Lewis.



1999

As pioneers in the new science of proteomics, EVMS scientists seek the "fingerprint of cancer" to improve diagnosis.



1994

EVMS becomes one of the nation's first medical schools to adopt the use of standardized patients, an innovative educational approach to medical education. The center later would be renamed the Sentara Center for Simulation and Immersive Learning at EVMS.



1990

EVMS otolaryngologists perform the region's first pediatric cochlear implant, allowing a 5-year-old Virginia Beach boy to hear for the first time.



1987

EVMS students launch Operation Overcoat, later renamed Coats for Kids, to pass along donated coats to children and families in need. It's one of dozens of outreach efforts, conceived of and led by students, that aid others.



1985

The Elise and Henry Clay Hofheimer II Hall of the Clinical Sciences (informally referred to as Hofheimer Hall) is dedicated.



2007

EVMS names an existing building E.V. Williams Hall in memory of the late businessman who supported the institution through a bequest, the largest single donation from an individual at the time.



2009

EVMS breaks ground on a new research and education building after the state, in a historic agreement, provides \$59 million in support. The building opens in 2011 and is named in honor of then-President Harry T. Lester.

EVMS dedicates Andrews Hall, formerly known as Fairfax Hall, in memory of EVMS founders and key faculty members Dr. Mason C. Andrews and his brother, Dr. William C. Andrews.



2011

Medical students establish a student-run free clinic, HOPES (Health Outreach Partnership of EVMS Students), to improve quality of life in the community by providing primary and specialty medical care. The first student-run free clinic in Virginia, HOPES is staffed by volunteer student clinicians, residents and physicians.



2014

CONRAD receives the inaugural Science and Technology Pioneers Prize from USAID for its work in developing an antiretroviral gel that helps halt the spread of HIV.



2019

EVMS welcomes the most diverse incoming class in its history and receives the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education's Institutional Excellence Award.



2019

The Health Sciences Academy is created to provide regional teens with early access and exposure to healthcare fields. The program launches in Portsmouth, eventually expanding to school systems in Portsmouth, Northampton and Chesapeake.




Diabetes
FACT OF THE DAY
200,000
hospital admissions attributed to diabetes in Virginia annually. Our region has the highest mortality rate for diabetes in Virginia.

Dot your i's & cross your t's. Know your diabetes risk.

2015

EVMS opens its first satellite diabetes clinic. The center is funded through a grant from the Obici Healthcare Foundation to meet the needs of uninsured and underinsured individuals in Western Tidewater.



2012

Thanks to a \$3 million gift from philanthropists Joan and Macon Brock, the M. Foscue Brock Institute for Community and Global Health is established.



2019

The Britt Pre-Medical Scholars program is established to provide longitudinal mentoring and support for students at Norfolk State University and Hampton University.

2008

EVMS establishes the School of Health Professions as a measure of the importance of the school's diverse range of academic programs.



2010

A gift from the Beazley Foundation supports the establishment of the Leroy T. Canoles Jr. Cancer Research Center.



2000

The Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library opens as a state-of-the-art facility serving EVMS and the region.

2020

From the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, EVMS faculty, students and staff rally to support and educate the Hampton Roads community. Students and faculty sew masks and assemble face shields, sharing the equipment with EVMS clinicians and surrounding hospitals. EVMS recruits and trains hundreds of student volunteers to provide vaccinations while individual EVMS groups create new pathways to safely connect with and serve marginalized local groups throughout Hampton Roads



2020

Waitzer Hall, an 11-story, glass-enclosed structure, brings expanded capacity for education, study, student support and administrative space. Financed through philanthropy and state support – and a pillar of EVMS' Deliver on the Promise Campaign – the \$80 million structure is a testament to EVMS' ever-growing value to the community.



2022

Sentara donates \$2 million to EVMS to support development of the first school of public health in Virginia. EVMS teams with Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University to establish the future Joint School of Public Health.



2023

U.S. News & World Report names EVMS the most diverse medical school in Virginia.



2023

Starting in Fall 2023, EVMS begins its year-long 50th anniversary celebration. This celebration, which honors EVMS' legacy and its promise, includes campus, community and alumni celebrations and builds on the institution's long-standing commitment to the health and well-being of everyone living in Hampton Roads.



Deliver on the
[PROMISE]
The Campaign for EVMS

2023

EVMS' Deliver on the Promise campaign concludes after raising \$86 million, well over twice its original goal.



2022

The EVMS Center for Maternal and Child Health Equity and Advocacy is created to help address the region's alarming disparities in pregnancy and childbirth care and to improve health outcomes for Black and minority women and their children.



2022

The EVMS Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth opens and is the first of its kind in Hampton Roads. The Center was made possible through a generous \$15 million gift from longtime Virginia Beach resident Lawrence J. Goldrich and his wife, Janice T. Goldrich.



2024

Thanks to strong, ongoing support from the Virginia General Assembly, Gov. Glenn Youngkin and Sentara, EVMS and Old Dominion University complete plans for an integration on July 1, 2024. An integrated EVMS-ODU health sciences center creates the largest portfolio of health sciences degrees in the Commonwealth of Virginia.



2,604

MICROSCOPIC JELLYFISH POLYPS SENT INTO SPACE IN THE EARLY '90s BY AN EVMS RESEARCH SCIENTIST STUDYING THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN MICROGRAVITY

YEARS OF GROWTH


STUDENTS ON THE RISE

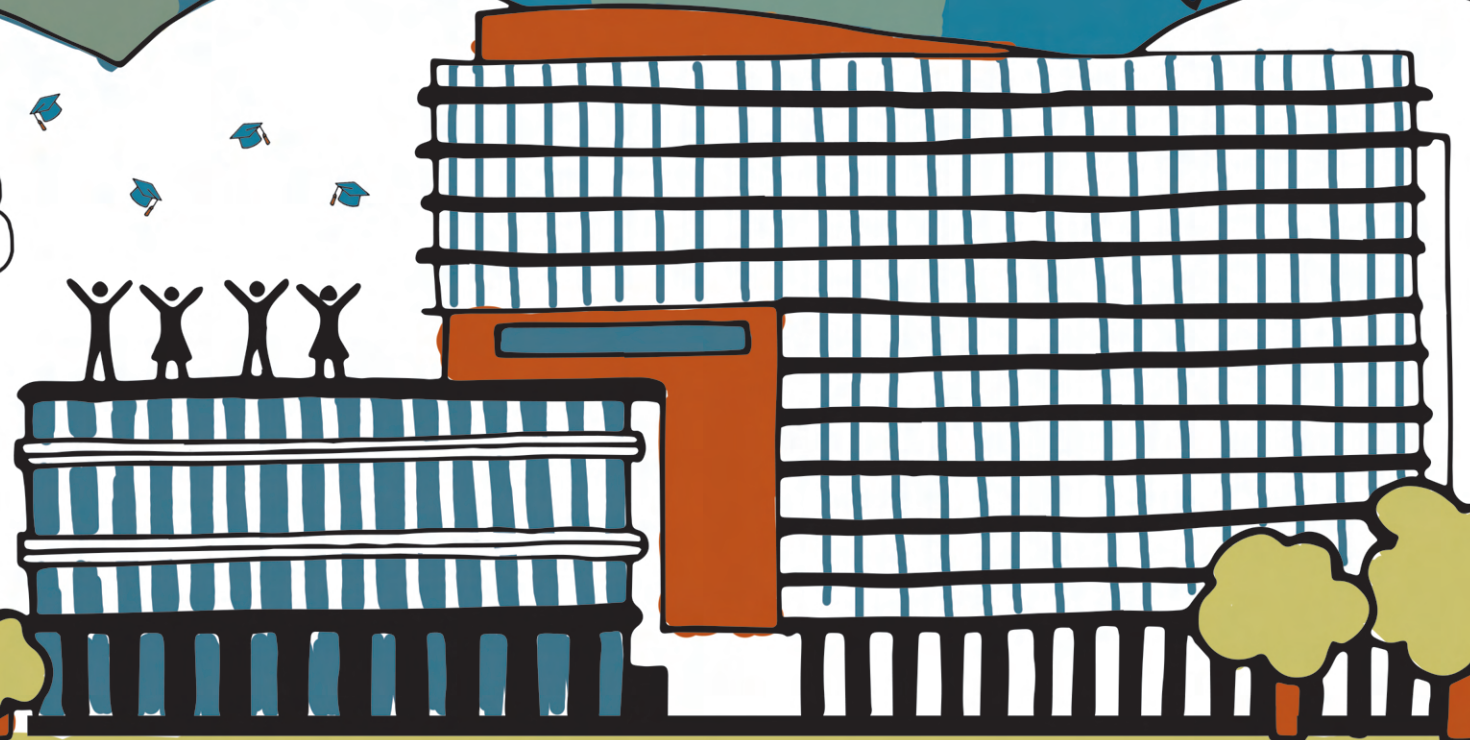
FUN FACT: TODAY EVMS HAS AS MANY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AS IT DID STUDENTS IN ITS FIRST YEAR



13,500
EVMS ALUMNI GLOBALLY



3,100
GRADUATES PRACTICING IN HAMPTON ROADS



436

RESIDENTS, INTERNS AND FELLOWS TRAINING IN 43 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



734

JOURNAL ARTICLES, BOOKS AND BOOK CHAPTERS AUTHORED BY FACULTY



21,000+

COMMUNITY-ENGAGEMENT HOURS PROVIDED BY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS



406,131

PATIENT APPOINTMENTS

STATISTICS ARE FROM FISCAL YEAR 2023 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

Best EVMS Memories

FEATURE

As part of EVMS' 50th anniversary celebrations, faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members were invited to share their favorite EVMS memories. These personal perspectives help capture the essence of this special community and the impact it has had on the world of healthcare.



“The Master of Public Health (MPH) international summer exchange program in Moldova during Summer 2016 was life changing. This trip engaged my interests in global health and ignited a desire to live abroad. That spark led to me moving to China two weeks after graduation. I still reside abroad today. **I am forever grateful to EVMS for the many great mentors, friends, life lessons, knowledge and memories.**” —Dara Wissinger, MPH, DHS Sc (MPH '17, DHS Sc '22)

“We met our fellow students and future professors on a retreat during orientation. The No. 1 priority was our mental and emotional health. It stayed that way throughout our education. In my second year, I had a difficult personal life change, and I contemplated leaving school. Dr. Pepe sat next to me and helped me through my loss. **There is no greater act of kindness. I owe my chance to serve children to his humanity in that moment.**” —Janet Black, MD (MD '91), Pediatrician at Children's Medical Center, recalling her interactions with Gerald Pepe, PhD, the EVMS Foundation Chair in Biomedical Sciences, Professor and Chair of Physiological Sciences and a former Dean of the School of Medicine

“Hooing my daughter Lauren Gregory, MD (MD'17), at the EVMS Commencement Ceremony in 2017 is one of my favorite memories. We were lining up, and the usher said 'Hey Doc, is this as big of a deal as when you graduated?' I said, 'Sir, this is 20 million times a bigger deal.' **And it really was kind of hard to believe. Like a magical moment.** On the jumbotron they played a video of Lauren's White Coat Ceremony, where she received her great-grandfather's white coat. He was a pediatrician at Washington University in St. Louis, and now she's on the faculty and a pediatrician at Wash U.” —Bruce Waldholtz, MD, EVMS Rector and Assistant Professor of Medicine (Community Faculty)



“I will never forget the first time I presented the Amputation Patient Panel to M1 students. There were five patients, all experiencing some form of limb amputation. **While these patients' experiences were not comfortable—and painful at times during their medical journey—the students' engagement and questions were insightful, empathetic and caring.** Seven years later, patient panels continue as one aspect of clinical teaching to deliver caring and effective interactions for patients and physicians. I am proud to be part of EVMS, which for 50 years has continued to drive enduring changes in improving our patient experiences while educating and training our medical students.” —Beverly Roberts-Atwater, DO, PhD, the Lydia I. Myers Endowed Professor in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Chair of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at EVMS



Friends from the MD Class of 2026 on a trip to Charlottesville, Virginia, in Fall 2023 (back row, from left): Luke Ekdahl, Ethan Brill, Shiv Sharma, Curtis Caughey, Jinho Dupont, Saxon Scott, Matthew Douglas, (front row, from left) Lauren Tucker, Leah McElheny, Julianne Ghorzi.

“My best memories are the ones that showcase how many incredible friends I have made during my time at EVMS. We all face the same struggles, so we have a relative understanding of how our colleagues feel, and we practice the empathy with each other that we strive to provide for patients. **When we see each other succeed, we cheer in joy for them.** If we encounter setbacks, we are right there to support each other. These bonds will last a lifetime as we continue through rotations, residency and as practicing physicians.” —Matthew Douglas, MD Class of 2026

“EVMS' former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion Dr. Mekbib Gemeda worked with our department to put on a massive, multi-station simulation to help students understand the effects of poverty. Students were forced into tight time and monetary constraints while having to make choices on house payments, electricity, child care, drugs and more. What people, including themselves, would resort to when in survival mode genuinely surprised them. In event debriefs, there were tears, confessions of not understanding what a loved one had endured and awe of what many patients navigate on a daily basis. **The compassion was real and so very pure.** We knew we had been a part of something extraordinarily special.” —Kristi Duke, Events Administrator, Sentara Center for Simulation and Immersive Learning at EVMS

“In the early 1990s one of our auto technicians here at First Team Auto Group informed me that he was losing his leg as a result of an untreatable infection caused by a scrape he received from a piling barnacle while guiding his boat onto the trailer. The amputation was scheduled within a week. Surgeon Jock Wheeler agreed to see the gentleman, and he saved his leg. **Without EVMS, he would have lost his leg.**” —W. Ashton Lewis, Sr., current member of the EVMS Board of Visitors and past acting President of EVMS

“My classmates and I spent hours in the anatomy lab. We practiced suturing and dissection and learned to use various surgical instruments while delving into the complexities of human anatomy. All of this prepared us to serve our patients in the operating room. **I will always be grateful to our anatomical donors for their gift and to the faculty and staff who devoted their time to teaching.**” —Stacey Twisdale, MSA (MSA '16), Surgical Assistant/Neurosurgery, Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, and EVMS Community Faculty

“This is a newspaper clipping from my dad's Match Day in 1984. He graduated from EVMS and went on to Ohio State's OB-GYN residency.” —Katie Sandy-Miller, Friend of EVMS



“Exam Administration staff was hosting the very last exam of the semester. After a series of back-to-back finals, both the doggedness and exhaustion of our examinees were nearly palpable. During pre-exam announcements, we took a rare pause to allow the students to recognize and appreciate their personal efforts. Promptly, a glorious applause erupted, smattering its way between fists and echoes of 'WHOOH, WHOOH!' **It's coming alongside for moments like those, witnessing these epic future healthcare professionals rise that makes working at EVMS so immensely fulfilling.**” —Victoria Evans-Quilloin, Testing Center Manager



When I was the incoming Assistant Chief Resident at EVMS Psychology, call shifts had to be redistributed among the more senior residents to ensure supervision for the interns.

The original plan placed a heavy burden on second-year residents. I wasn't sure how to tell my classmates, but one-by-one my fellow third-year residents volunteered for more call. We made the shift without problem. **All it took was a group of people looking out for their juniors and each other.** I truly feel those are the sort of people who make up EVMS, and it made me proud." —*Jessica Mees-Campbell, MD (Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Residency '13), EVMS Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*



On May 22, 2023, I woke

up to an email notifying me that I had been accepted to EVMS' MD Class of 2027. I screamed so loudly my wife thought I was injured! That August, I donned my white coat for the first time. After a career change, two years in the Medical Master's program and countless early mornings of studying, **I was officially taking my first steps toward my MD at the medical school I dreamed of attending, in the community I have always called home!**" —*Chris Finocchio, MD Class of 2027*



In 1990, I was appointed Director of Emergency Medicine, which at the time was a division of Family & Community Medicine. In this role, it was clear how far we had come in terms of patient care, training, teaching and scholarly activity. I wrote a white paper on the tremendous accomplishments made by the many members of the division. I reviewed the document with the Chair of Family Medicine (Terence Davies, MD) and requested permission to seek independent academic department status. He graciously agreed and pledged his support. In August of 1992, the Board approved the creation of the academic department of Emergency Medicine at EVMS — the first in Virginia and only the 26th in the nation at the time. **It was an incredibly exciting time and only came about through the hard work of many.** It was another, of many, firsts for EVMS." —*Frank Counselman, MD (MD '83, Emergency Medicine Residency '86), Vice Dean for Graduate Medical Education and Professor of Emergency Medicine*

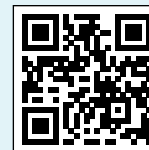


One of my favorite memories is participating in EVMS' celebration of the Indian festival, Holi — a Hindu festival commemorating the coming of spring. We get together and throw bright-colored powder on each other to welcome the season. It was so fun running around with orange in my hair, yellow on my cheek and a handful of blue ready to hit the white shirts of the other participants. **I am so glad EVMS has cultural celebrations like these so I can learn more about the heritage of my friends and peers.**" —*Kelly Hogan, MD Class of 2025*



In 1997 when I was a student participating in Match Day, I wanted to stay in the area, because I am a Norfolk native and knew there was a great Internal Medicine program right here at EVMS. The theme for our year was Mardi Gras. We decorated McCombs Auditorium in purple, gold and green, and masks and beads abounded. We all got called up to receive our envelope, and at the end the last person to be called got the 'pot' and we found out where we were going for residency. I matched at my first choice, EVMS. So much fun and energy. **I've had an amazing time at EVMS experiencing life at every level—from student, to resident, to fellow and ultimately to faculty.**" —*Marissa Galicia-Castillo, MD, MEd (MD '97, Internal Medicine Residency '00), the John Franklin Distinguished Chair for Geriatrics and Director of the Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology at EVMS*

Read more EVMS memories at evms.edu/50.



The photojournalist Walker Evans once said, 'Good photography is unpretentious.' For 31 years — as technology changed, people shifted and EVMS reinvented itself — Doug Gardner, Director of News, has been ready, camera in hand, to capture our shared memories. **With precision, clarity and kindness, Doug has photographed both the extraordinary events and quiet interactions that define EVMS.** He would not want us to draw attention to his contributions — our excellent photographer is unpretentious — but we all are deeply indebted to him. Thank you, Doug! —*EVMS Marketing and Communications (Photo of Waitzer Hall at sunrise, left, by Doug Gardner)*



I have been fortunate enough to spend the last 34 years studying, training and working alongside my dear friend Doug Markert, MD (MD '94). We were Histology lab partners and, while I was focusing the objective lens of the microscope to study slides, he was focusing on his future wife, Jae Lee, MD (MD '94). Matching in Diagnostic Radiology at University of Maryland afforded us another four intense years of shared experiences, and then through simultaneous fellowships, we continued to foster our friendships and build each other's confidence. In 2002, after I served three years of active duty in the Navy, Doug recruited me to his private practice group in Northern Virginia. **To this day, we work together and maintain a friendship and trust that is irreplaceable.** Our families have grown up together, and now Jae and Doug's daughter Olivia Markert is completing her second year of medicine at EVMS. How cool is that?" —*Maria Breton-Pace (MD '94), Radiologist at UVA Health*



As a research scientist, I had the privilege of teaching medical students both in the laboratory and in lecture halls. As I offered constructive criticism in the lab or wrote exam questions for lecture material, I recall the mantra among faculty: 'Be nice to the medical students as they may be your treatment providers one day in the future.' We joked about that at the time, but then it became a reality for me. **EVMS graduates I taught are now my providers! They are not only highly skilled and knowledgeable, but compassionate and dedicated to patients' well-being.** Attendings involve me and my family in treatment plans, embrace outside opinions, and respectfully address all questions and concerns. Residents bring insight, laughter and words of encouragement to 5 a.m. rounds. And I am convinced the entire team treats all patients with kindness, respect and competence, not just their former professors." —*Ann Campbell, PhD, EVMS Professor Emerita, Microbiology and Molecular Cell Biology*



EVMS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Bright futures

At EVMS, 85% of MD students — including Zachary Bouker, MD Class of 2027 (center) — rely on some level of financial aid.



Brad Waitzer's Scholarship Challenge raised more than \$3 million from 135 donors to fund 18 new MD scholarships.

Donor investments open doors for MD students

Story by MARY WESTBROOK

Two recent scholarship initiatives at EVMS have the potential to both expand the pipeline into medical school for deserving candidates and diversify the range of specialties students consider post-graduation.

Earlier this year, the Beazley Foundation solidified its commitment to education and healthcare by establishing the W. Ashton Lewis Sr. Endowed Scholarship at EVMS.

This scholarship aims to support first-year medical students hailing from the Hampton Roads area. It serves as a tribute to Lewis, a distinguished member of the EVMS Board of Visitors and a trustee of the Beazley Foundation since 1990. Lewis also served as acting President of EVMS in 1987 and 1988.

"Ashton's unwavering dedication to the betterment of our community, particularly in the realm of education and healthcare, is truly commendable," says Steve Best, President and CEO of the foundation. "This scholarship is a fitting tribute to this remarkable contribution."



Dr. Alfred Abuhamad and Steve Best, CEO of the Beazley Foundation.

In recognizing the Beazley Foundation’s contribution, Alfred Abuhamad, MD, EVMS President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine, highlighted the importance of community support.

“We are grateful to have community partners such as the Beazley Foundation who invest in our future healthcare providers and help ease students’ financial burdens,” says Dr. Abuhamad. “As these students graduate and move into their careers, they have the potential to improve and support healthcare and health innovations here in Hampton Roads.”

The Beazley Foundation’s longstanding support for EVMS dates to the academic institution’s inception in 1973. The foundation contributed to the original fund drive that established EVMS. The group’s support has extended to other vital initiatives, including investments in the Leroy T. Canoles Jr. Cancer Research Center and expansion of the Health Sciences Academy to Chesapeake Public Schools.

The need for scholarships

The W. Ashton Lewis Sr. Endowed Scholarship comes at a time when more medical students are faced with daunting debt upon graduation.

According to a 2021 report from the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), 73% of medical school graduates have education debt. The median amount is \$203,000.

The weight of that debt can have long-term, negative effects on a community’s health: 32% of medical students say debt level influences their specialty choice, according to a separate AAMC report from 2022. The situation contributes to a nationwide shortage of primary care providers and pediatricians as graduates opt for more lucrative specialties.

At EVMS, 85% of EVMS MD students rely on some level of financial aid. Meanwhile, the median EVMS medical school scholarship is \$10,000, compared to \$30,000 nationally.

Dr. Abuhamad says those numbers underscore what make scholarship gifts so powerful.

“Every dollar invested in scholarships at EVMS represents the potential for expansion — an opened door, a broadened horizon, a wider path, another seat at a decision-making table,” he says. “This is the future we are working toward — a world of greater access, equity and care.”

The announcement of the new scholarship builds on momentum generated by other fundraising efforts, including the contributions of Brad Waitzer and the Waitzer Scholarship Challenge.

That effort, which ran from February to August in 2023, raised more than \$3 million from 135 donors to fund 18 new MD scholarships. The challenge capped the final months of EVMS’ Deliver on the Promise campaign, which generated a total of \$85.4 million for campus initiatives and funded 76 new scholarships for students in both the Medical School and School of Health Professions.

“In supporting scholarships at EVMS these donors have signaled their commitment to a healthier future in Hampton Roads, supported by healthcare and medical professionals who are not unduly burdened by debt and financial worry,” Dr. Abuhamad says. “They have signaled their commitment to ensuring that EVMS students maintain the freedom to pursue practice areas motivated not by financial concerns and limitations but rather community needs and personal passions and skills.” □

To learn more about scholarships or how to support EVMS, contact Development at 757.965.8500 or giving@evms.edu.



Watch a video about the importance of EVMS scholarships at evms.edu/ScholarshipSupport.



PHOTO ESSAY

Milestone moments

Photos by DOUG GARDNER, CAYLA MORGAN AND STEPHANIE SMAGLO

50th anniversary celebrations were in full swing in Fall 2023 at EVMS. Various events — with a theme of “A Legacy & A Promise” — were held on campus to honor the institution’s esteemed history and bright future.

EVMS faculty, staff, residents, fellows, community faculty and emeriti faculty were celebrated on Oct. 11 with a Campus Picnic on TowneBank Lawn. A special 50th Anniversary-themed Alumni Weekend brought 250 guests to campus Oct. 13-14, and hundreds more gathered under the celebration tent for the Student Fest on Oct. 14.



Opposite Top: Members of the MD Class of 1993 gathered at the Alumni Family Barbecue on TowneBank Lawn.

Opposite Bottom Left: Thomas Kimble, MD, Assistant Vice Dean of Admissions and Enrollment; Stafford Brown III, MD (MD '23) and Alvin Harris, MD (MD '78) at EVMS' inaugural Black Alumni Social held as part of Alumni Weekend.

Opposite Bottom Right: Members of the Art Therapy and Counseling, MS, team stopped by the celebratory 50 outside Lewis Hall during the Campus Picnic. (From left) Janet Kempf, PhD, Instructor; Carrie Pasquarello, Art Therapy Outreach Specialist and Assistant Director of the EVMS Arts for Optimal Health Program; Matthew Bernier, MCAT, Associate Professor; and Mary Roberts, PhD, Art Therapy and Counseling Program Director and Professor.

Top Left: Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine, with EVMS staff members (from left) Chrisney Pettit, MPH, Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Office Coordinator; Alena Stewart, PhD, CEL Assistant Director; Eusheka Hewitt, EdD, Academic Development Counselor; Melissa Scott, MEd, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs; Emily Terifay, MLIS, CEL Programs Outreach Coordinator; Adam Obstein, MA, Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities; Melody Johnson, Residency/Fellowship Program Specialist; and Maryanne Gathambo, MPH, CEL Director.

Top Right: MD Class of 2027 students Neevedita Goswami (left) and Himali Patel enjoyed Student Fest fun, including a cornhole tournament and other games, an EVMS swag prize wheel and food and dessert trucks

Left: Faculty and staff from the Master of Physician Assistant program showed their love for EVMS during the Campus Picnic. (Back row, from left) Amanda Kubin, MEd, MPA, Assistant Professor; Tiffany Smith, Clinical Coordinator; Christopher Roberts, MPA, Assistant Professor; Kimberly Dempsey, EdD, MPA, Program Director and Associate Professor; Megan Senter, MPA, Assistant Professor; and Ashleigh Rose, Didactic Coordinator. (Front row, from left) Jennifer Wohl, DHSc, MPAS, Associate Professor; Angela J. Cerezo, MPA, Assistant Professor; Angela Conrad, MPA, Associate Professor; and Erin Suit, Program Administrator.

Bottom Left: The Ventricles provided the perfect soundtrack for Student Fest. MD Class of 2024 bandmates included (from left) Evan Leung, Nick Walsh, Zak Kolkey and Noah Kathe.



Watch a video highlighting 50th Anniversary celebration events at evms.edu/50thEventsVideo. Find more photos at [Flickr.com/EVMS](https://www.flickr.com/photos/EVMS/).

Dr. Britt with scholars (from left) Wayne Cochran, Myles Parks-Tiller and Amber Austin



Hitting their strides

Members of the inaugural cohort of the L.D. Britt Pre-Medical Scholars program graduate — and set their sights on the future

Story by MARY WESTBROOK | Photo by DOUG GARDNER

As a high school student in Suffolk, Virginia, Wayne Cochran fell in love with chemistry. The exposure to a new way of seeing and understanding the world — along with the potential with every experiment for a radical transformation — dazzled him and energized his naturally curious mind.

After school, Cochran volunteered in a local hospital's emergency department where he experienced a different rush, one generated by clinical care and patient interactions. He leaned into the organized chaos of the ER and absorbed the adrenaline of medical teams as they hurried to help others.

"This is what I want to do," Cochran remembers thinking as he observed physicians. "Find a way to use that combination of classroom study and insight with actual hands-on experience."

When Cochran earned admission to Norfolk State's prestigious Dozoretz National Institute for Mathematics and Applied Sciences, he felt closer to achieving his dream of becoming a physician — even though, up until that point, he'd interacted with few doctors who looked like him.

"Black men and women don't make up a large percentage of the healthcare workforce," Cochran explains. "I didn't necessarily have someone I could go to for advice. It felt like it was just me, finding a path on my own."

Thanks to an EVMS Diversity and Inclusion-led initiative that aims to increase the number of talented Black students entering the health professions, Cochran now has a defined path and plenty of companionship along his way.

Cochran — who will matriculate to EVMS as an MD student in Fall 2024 after graduating from NSU this spring — is one of 14 members of

the inaugural cohort of the L.D. Britt Pre-Medical Scholars program.

Named in honor of L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, a pioneering surgeon, researcher, educator and the Chair of EVMS Surgery, the initiative brings in students from historically Black universities in Hampton Roads with whom EVMS has an established BS/MD program. It was started through a five-year grant from the Hampton Roads Community Foundation and also has been supported by the Sentara Cares Foundation.

"One of the most important aspects of this program is that we get to the students early," says Mekbib Gameda, EdD, EVMS' former Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, who launched the program in 2020. "They start experiencing what it means to be part of the medical and health professions field from their first semester in college."

Representation matters

Cochran's experience of not seeing Black mentors in healthcare is common.

Only about 8% of Virginia's roughly 22,800 active physicians identify as African American, making the ratio of Black doctors to Black patients within the commonwealth about one to 1,000, according to the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC).

"We have a shortage of health professionals overall in the United States, and we do not have enough diversity in the field," Dr. Gameda says. "A growing body of research shows us why diversity is important. For one thing, medical professionals from underrepresented minority backgrounds tend to work in geographic areas where the need is higher. Minority patients also tend to experience better health outcomes when they work with a physician from a similar background."

When it comes to the relationship between patient and provider race, "studies have shown correlations including a reduction in infant mortality, greater patient adherence to healthcare guidelines, higher patient satisfaction and better patient understanding of cancer risks," according to AAMC research. A separate 2023 study of county-level data, led by the Health Resources and Services Administration, found that for every 10% increase in the representation of Black primary care physicians, Black patients experience 30.6 days of greater life expectancy.

"Diversity in medical education is important for many reasons," says Thomas Kimble, MD, Assistant Vice Dean of Admissions and Enrollment and an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "It's good for students and instructors to be in a classroom with people who are from different backgrounds. We pick up on and start to better understand cultural differences. We learn from each other together."

A 'mini medical school'

During their time in the program, Britt Pre-Medical Scholars experience what can amount to a mini-medical school opportunity. They learn alongside EVMS faculty, students and residents and engage in enrichment and mentoring opportunities in clinical-based human anatomy while also receiving hands-on experience in ultrasound, suturing and simulated patient care and taking part in research initiatives.

The students also participate in summer clinical rotations in surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, otorhinolaryngology, psychology and family medicine. In addition, students dedicate time to early MCAT prep and leverage longitudinal mentoring and advisement and portfolio review starting their freshman year. During their sophomore year, they apply to their respective BS/MD programs.

"We pick up on and start to better understand cultural differences. We learn from each other together."

— Thomas Kimble, MD, Assistant Vice Dean of Admissions

For the past several years, Natascha Heise, PhD, Assistant Professor Pathology and Anatomy, has played a key role in organizing the students' activities at EVMS. She is impressed by their dedication.

"These are undergraduate students who already have a pre-medical heavy course load," Dr. Heise says. "They show up to every event and do their best. Nothing compares to their motivation."

Gary Ohanian, MD '16, Family Medicine Residency '19), Associate Director of EVMS' Family Medicine Residency program, says the pre-medical scholars enrich the lives of EVMS volunteers.

"I was surprised by how many of our residents wanted to be involved," he explains, noting that up to 20 EVMS residents interact with the scholars during each rotation. "It's extra work for them, but the program itself has been so well received. The students are willing to put themselves out there as they learn. In turn, the residents are committed to giving the students a better understanding of what it means to be a physician."

Amber Austin, a junior at Hampton University, has seen that commitment firsthand from myriad EVMS representatives, including Medical Master's students, who assist pre-medical scholars with case studies.

"My interactions with those students were some of my favorite experiences," Austin says. "I gained a lot of knowledge about anatomy by working with mentors in that group."

Shifting paradigms

NSU senior Myles Parks-Tiller says the experience of participating in the program has been formative.

"It means a lot to me to be welcomed into EVMS and encouraged along this really hard, historically denied path," says Parks-Tiller, who, like Cochran, will matriculate to EVMS. "It will be interesting to come back 10, 20 or even 30 years down the line to look at our cohort and to see how many people went on to a career in healthcare and who maintained this foundational connection because of EVMS."

Some impacts of the program are more immediately recognizable, says Dr. Kimble.

"Because of the program, we went from having hardly any MD applicants from Norfolk State University to the situation today, where NSU represents the largest cohort in our BS/MD program," he says. "These students are top-notch, eager-to-learn go-getters. Honestly, they've blown us away."

Dr. Gameda says he is excited the program has become part of EVMS' community-engaged legacy.

"I'm proud of these students," Dr. Gameda says. "I'm also proud of the EVMS faculty, staff and residents who have put their hearts into this program to ensure that our scholars feel welcome here and at home in medicine. We're helping them project — to see their future selves and careers — and that is huge. It's very difficult to become something, or someone, you do not regularly see."



Members of the first Britt Pre-Medical Scholars cohort expand on their experience in a video at evms.edu/BrittPreMed.

YOUR SUPPORT

Standing in the gap

Middleton Scholar Phavon Sage is committed to advocacy for Hampton Roads patients



“Knowing what it’s like to be clinically misunderstood and knowing that there’s a disconnect and a disparity between the pain that you’re experiencing versus how the physician or the healthcare professional interprets that pain — I have been in that gap, and I want to continue to stand in that gap for patients who struggle to communicate.”

—Phavon Sage

Story by STEPHANIE SMAGLO

The phone call brought Phavon Sage to his knees. Tears fell as he processed what he was hearing — his entire four-year medical degree would be funded by EVMS’ only full-tuition MD scholarship.

It hasn’t been an easy road for Sage. Growing up in Norfolk, his childhood was one of poverty and pain. A congenital bleeding disorder left him feeling frustrated and misunderstood but ultimately cultivated compassion for others and a pushed him toward a career in medicine.

“I was able to get a front row seat and a real-time education against prejudice and discrimination,” he says of the struggles he saw around him. “I learned that people are different, and they have different preferences and experiences in life.”

His own experience led him to the Medical and Health Specialties Program at Maury High School, an advanced curriculum that prepares students for careers in health professions. Next he pursued a bachelor’s degree in data analytics and business management from Old Dominion University before moving onto EVMS for a master’s in anatomical sciences and a medical master’s degree.

Becoming financially independent at 18 meant paying for his education entirely on his own. Sage built fences and worked at fast food restaurants until he secured a position as a standardized patient with the Sentara Center for Simulation and Immersive Learning at EVMS.

“Being able to gain such an immersive perspective on empathy and compassion,” he says, “it really helped me and added to my tools, my skill set that I think a physician should have.”

When it came time to fund his medical degree, Sage knew he would need help. That’s when he learned of the Dorothy M. Middleton Memorial Scholarship. The full-tuition scholarship is funded by an endowment from its late namesake, a businesswoman who owned an apartment building near campus and rented discounted rooms to medical students to help offset their tuition.

“She’s a hero,” says Sage, now a member of the MD Class of 2027. “The one thing I would say to Dorothy Middleton is, I hope to be just half the person you were in the time that you were alive. And I hope to even just scratch the surface on the community, compared to the footprints that you left in Hampton Roads.”

He gets emotional when talking about EVMS and the gifts he feels the institution has given him. He even met his wife, Megan (Golliher) Sage (MS ’20), while she was completing a master’s in biomedical sciences research at EVMS. She is now in the biomedical sciences PhD program.

Sage has not yet decided which path of medicine he will take — maybe surgery or primary care — but he knows for sure he wants to work with children.

“Knowing what it’s like to be clinically misunderstood and knowing that there’s a disconnect and a disparity between the pain that you’re experiencing versus how the physician or the healthcare professional interprets that pain — I have been in that gap, and I want to continue to stand in that gap for patients who struggle to communicate.” □

Phavon Sage and his wife Megan Sage outside their alma mater Maury High School.



EVMS graduation (from left): sister Winborne "Winnie" Leigh Hamlin, mother Maud Winborne Leigh, Margaret "Magee" Leigh, MD, and sister Sarah Leigh Kinberg.



Lester "Pete" Sanders III, MD (MD '76), giving Magee the game ball after the first EVMS class beat the second EVMS class in flag football. Magee caught a touchdown pass from Pete to win the game.

Pediatrics trailblazer

Dr. Margaret Leigh carries on family legacy in medicine, champions rare lung disease research

Story by SONJA BARISIC | Photos courtesy of DR. MARGARET LEIGH AND UNC HEALTH

Margaret Leigh, MD (MD '76), a pediatrician, educator and leading researcher of rare lung diseases, seemed predestined to become a doctor.

Her grandfather, Dr. Southgate Leigh, was a surgeon who founded Leigh Memorial Hospital in Norfolk in 1903. Her father, Dr. Southgate Leigh Jr., also was a surgeon.

Despite the family's medical heritage, Dr. Leigh's father initially discouraged her from pursuing medicine in the early '70s because of the challenges women faced in the field at the time.

"Magee," as Dr. Leigh is known among friends and colleagues, was undeterred.

"I pretty much wanted to go into medicine or science," she recalls. "I liked to take care of people, listen to people, understand people."

Dr. Leigh grew up in Norfolk, where she was a debutante. She skipped kindergarten and first grade, went to Sweet Briar College at 16 and graduated with a bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1973. That September, she started at EVMS as a member of the first class.

"When I got into medical school, he was very happy," Dr. Leigh says of her father, who loved to talk with her about her anatomy studies.

Dr. Leigh was one of two dozen people — and just four women — in her class. Being so small, the class was very close and supportive, she says.

That nurturing environment was crucial, especially following the sudden death of Dr. Leigh's father from a ruptured aortic aneurysm at the end of her first year, a time that brought her closer to peers and faculty.

Throughout medical school, Dr. Leigh was drawn to pediatrics, though surgery was appealing. Ultimately, she chose pediatrics, a field she found more welcoming to women.



After an EVMS internship at Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters in Norfolk, she took a "period of reckoning" to reflect and figure out what she wanted to do.

She resumed her training with a residency at the University of Kentucky. There, her career began to take shape, leading her toward academic medicine and a focus on cystic fibrosis.

After a fellowship in the then-new field of pediatric pulmonology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, she stayed there to care for children with chronic lung diseases; teach medical students, residents and pulmonary fellows; and research chronic lung diseases. For 20 years, she was director of UNC's Cystic Fibrosis Center.

Dr. Leigh is an expert in primary ciliary dyskinesia, or PCD, a lung disease even rarer than cystic fibrosis. She is involved in research to improve and develop tools to help diagnose and evaluate patients with PCD. Her work has helped define the clinical characteristics of PCD and expanded the understanding of genetic complexities in such diseases.

She retired from clinical practice in 2023 but remains busy as a professor emeritus and as a member of the board of directors of the Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia Foundation. Her legacy continues through the Foundation's Margaret W. Leigh Early Career Investigator Award to support emerging PhD and physician scientists researching PCD.

With her partner of more than 40 years, fellow physician Marsha Davenport, MD, Dr. Leigh adopted and raised two children from Guatemala.

In her free time, she loves to snorkel and travel to places like the Galapagos, where she can see interesting creatures.

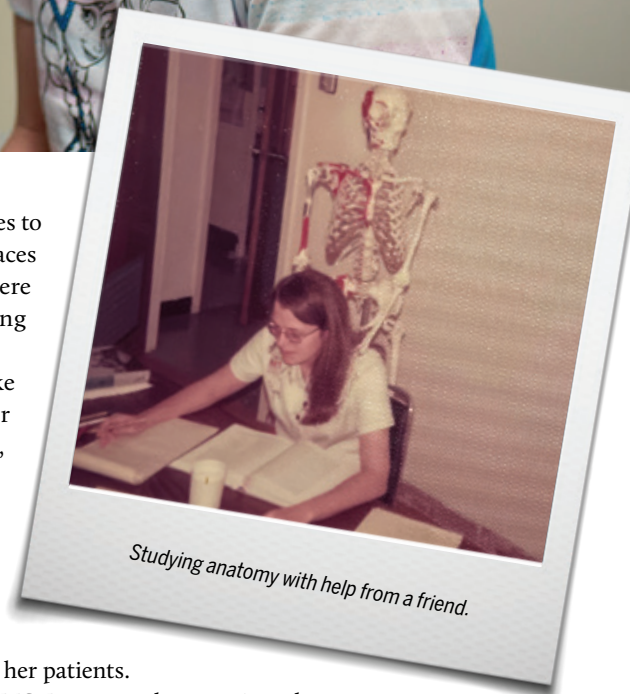
Asked what she'd like to be known for in her career, Dr. Leigh says, laughing, "The word that most people would associate with me is 'perseverance.'"

Another thing, she adds, is that she has good relationships with her patients.

"I think this is from EVMS. I very much appreciate the patients and their interactions. I learn from them."

Dr. Leigh attended the 50th anniversary celebration for EVMS and found that the school "has really matured. It's special."

None of Dr. Leigh's four siblings went into medicine, and neither did any family members in the following generation. She proudly notes, though, that one great-niece has started medical school while another great-niece has been accepted to medical school, ensuring the family heritage lives on. □



Studying anatomy with help from a friend.

Anatomy of success

Ali Chambers is the first EVMS surgical assisting graduate to become an operating room manager

Story by SONJA BARISIC
Photo by DOUG GARDNER



Inspired by the nursing careers of her mother and her great-grandmother, Ali Chambers, MSA, CSA (MSA '15), grew up knowing she would pursue medicine in some way.

Her interest in the medical field intensified in high school when she attended the Health Sciences Academy at Virginia Beach's Bayside High School. Through the program, she went to the Eastern Virginia Medical School campus for the first time and took a trip to an anatomy lab — a visit that made her determined to attend EVMS.

After earning a bachelor's degree in biology in 2011 from Longwood University, she did wind up at EVMS. Fascinated with anatomy and encouraged by her boss at the time, Chambers chose to specialize as a surgical assistant, graduating with a Master of Surgical Assisting in 2015.

"As much as I respect nurses, I did not pursue nursing," Chambers says. "The idea of going into surgery — that just seemed so different and cool and not anything I was exposed to growing up. Anatomy and surgery were the perfect combination."

Chambers has been working at Sentara Leigh Hospital in Virginia Beach as a licensed, certified surgical assistant since 2015. In this role, she works with the surgical team to prepare the operating room, assists with patient positioning and provides direct support to surgeons during procedures.

In 2023, she became the Operating Room Business Manager — the first graduate of the EVMS Surgical Assisting program to do so — while maintaining her practice as a surgical assistant. As the business manager, she handles the non-clinical aspects of the OR from developing policy to ensuring efficiency and meeting operational metrics.

Chambers credits EVMS for its academic rigor and immersive rotations at local hospitals in helping her build her skills, learn how to interact with others in the OR and think critically on her feet. She says her education at EVMS was enriched by small class sizes, allowing for personalized learning experiences.

She also cites the school's emphasis on professional development, including a business course for surgical assistants. These opportunities broadened her perspective beyond the clinical aspects of her profession.

"We are incredibly proud of this accomplishment," says Clinton Crews, PsyD, MPH, Program Director for the Master of Surgical Assisting. "It was an intention of our program from the start to arm students with the skills to manage and lead an operating room."

The program as a whole has high expectations for its students, Chambers says. "They really work hard on how you can present yourself professionally."

Post-graduation, Chambers' career has been intertwined with EVMS. As a preceptor, she has been fostering a cycle of mentorship and continuous learning for current students. She's also attended lectures at EVMS during Alumni Weekend to learn about what's happening and what new practices are coming out of the school. She notes that many of her coworkers also are alumni.

Chambers says remaining involved with the school as an alum is important to her.

"I really love the school. I grew up wanting to go there. They're based in the community. I'm a part of the community. I plan on staying here. My whole family is here," says Chambers, who lives in Chesapeake with her husband — her high school sweetheart — and their two young daughters. □



Ali Chambers gets to work in the OR.



With the team of surgical assistants at Sentara Leigh Hospital.



Watch a video of Ali Chambers talking more about her career and the EVMS Surgical Assisting program at evms.edu/AliChambers.



Leading by example

Family & Community Medicine Chair shares passion for service and mentorship

Story by VIRGINIA HILTON | Photo by ERIC LUSHER



Dr. Snellings joined residents to raise money for EVMS at the Heart of Ghent 10K.



EVMS Family & Community Medicine physicians and residents assisted in providing sports physicals for ODU Athletics in 2023.

If 5-year-old John Snellings had his way, his future may have looked quite different.

“If you ask my mother, I was talking about being a doctor when I was 5 years old, but I don’t remember that,” says John Snellings, MD, Associate Professor of Family & Community Medicine. “I remember wanting to be a meteorologist and watching The Weather Channel for hours at a time. It was science based, and they were helping people — it really piqued my interest.”

Thankfully for EVMS, he followed his mother’s recollection instead, and today he is the Glenn R. Mitchell Chair in Generalist Medicine and Chair and Associate Professor of Family and Community Medicine.

“Medicine is all about helping people, and being able to have a career that had a component of service was important to me,” Dr. Snellings says.

After attending the University of Virginia, the Hampton Roads native earned a master’s and medical degree from EVMS and then completed his residency training there as well. He later became Associate Program Director of the Ghent Family Medicine Residency Program. After a promotion to Program Director, he helped combine the Portsmouth Family Medicine and Ghent Family Medicine residencies.

Returning to Hampton Roads and serving the community that helped raise him was a dream come true. “EVMS is extremely community focused on the underserved population,” Dr. Snellings says. “It’s not just a catch phrase, it’s what we really do, and I feel fortunate to be here.”

In addition to his time caring for patients in the office, you will likely see Dr. Snellings and his colleagues volunteering at community events on evenings and weekends. You’ll often find them providing free physicals for high school students, holding community health screenings or running a 10K to raise awareness for health issues.

As Residency Program Director and now Chair, he leads by example. “You can’t ask others to commit and volunteer their time and talent if you aren’t willing to do it yourself.”

In addition to volunteer work, he prioritizes mentoring medical students, residents and junior faculty. “I had exposure to great mentors and teachers here, both in medical school and during residency, and they were the types of people who made me want to stay long term and who continue to support me now,” Dr. Snellings says.

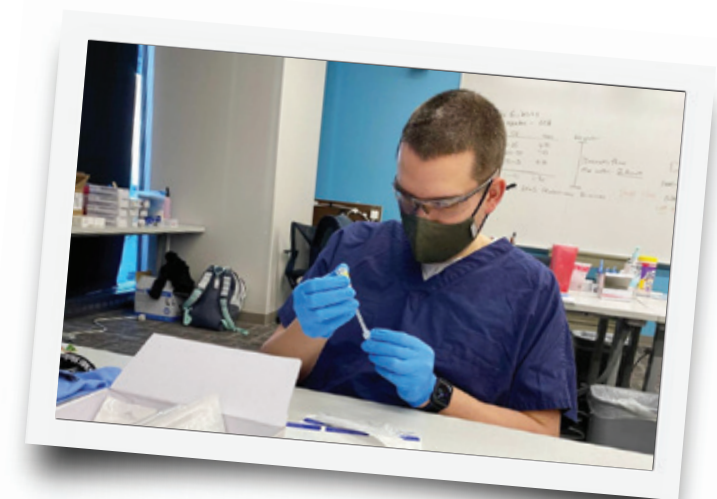
He also feels mentorship is critical to the future of healthcare. “It’s important to be able to mentor and cultivate the next generation of primary care providers because there’s such a shortage, and we need to fill that pipeline.”

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the United States is expected to face a major shortage of primary care physicians within the next 10 years.

“When community leaders turned dream into reality 50 years ago with the opening of EVMS, a key objective was to increase the number of physicians in the region,” says Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine and the Mason C. Andrews Professor in Obstetrics and Gynecology. “Dr. Snellings stands as a wonderful example of the school’s workforce success.”

While it isn’t warning Hampton Roads residents about potential weather threats, Dr. Snellings, his colleagues and the many he has mentored or trained are certainly providing a much-needed public service for the community.

“There are people in this area who need access to healthcare,” Dr. Snellings says. “We have a great opportunity now to partner with ODU and Sentara and look forward to exploring new avenues to better serve the community and provide that access.” □



During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Snellings volunteered to administer vaccines for EVMS employees and Hampton Roads residents.

Finding their match

Story by VIRGINIA HILTON

Photos by DOUG GARDNER, CAYLA MORGAN AND EYLUL KUMSAL

On March 15, 2024, graduating medical students joined MD students across the nation in celebrating Match Day by opening their envelopes and learning where in the country they will spend their residencies.

According to the AAMC, more than 44,000 applicants matched to residency training positions at the nation's teaching hospitals this year. A total of 135 EVMS students participated in Match Day and are headed to prestigious residency programs including Duke, Johns Hopkins and Mayo Clinic.

EVMS by the numbers:

- Students matched in 19 specialties
- 41% of the class is pursuing primary care
- Top represented specialties: internal medicine, family medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency medicine and surgery



Opposite Top: Members of the MD Class of 2024 celebrated Match Day with a class photo in the Beazley Foundation Rotunda of the Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library.

Opposite Bottom Left: As confetti fell around her, Abby Hargis opened her envelope to learn of her match in EVMS Dermatology.

Opposite Bottom Right: These friends proudly posed for a photo with their new match information (from left): Hajara Ouattara matched in obstetrics and gynecology at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis; Imadul Haque matched in EVMS Radiology; and Yousef Beidas and Saad Jafri both matched in anesthesiology at the University of Maryland in Baltimore.

Top: The Ken Keller Standard Time Express Dixieland Band led students in a Match Day March from the Brickell Medical Sciences Library to Waitzer Hall.

Middle: It was all smiles for Oluwatobi Akande (left), who matched in EVMS Emergency Medicine, and Emmanuel Marfo, who matched in internal medicine at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta.

Bottom Left: Jonah Hu hugs a friend after learning of his match in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Hawaii in Honolulu.

Bottom Right: Natalie Simon celebrated her match in anesthesiology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City with a hug from Alfred Abuhamad, MD, EVMS President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine — who delivered Natalie and her triplet sisters.



See highlights from the day at evms.edu/MatchDay2024Video.

MY STORY

Finding her voice – *again*: A TALE OF PASSION AND REHABILITATION

Story by KIMBERLY CARR
Photo by DOUG GARDNER AND CORY HOOPER

Ever since Katelyn Swiader watched “The Little Mermaid” at 8 years old, she has been captivated with the voice.

“I wanted to sing like Ariel when I grew up,” says Swiader, who is now a Speech Pathologist and Professional Voice Specialist at EVMS. “No one in my house knew how to sing, and there was no musical talent, but I was adamant.”



Katelyn Swiader carried her love for “The Little Mermaid” into her graduation cap when she earned her master’s degree from Old Dominion University.



A classmate gave her the phone number of a voice coach, and she begged her mom for lessons. These lessons and her love for song eventually led to the Governor’s School for the Arts in Norfolk. When she was cast as the lead in the opera “Amahl and the Night Visitors,” she felt a new energy.

“The night the lights went up, I was hooked on singing on stage.”



WHEN I HEARD PEOPLE SING, I COULD FEEL WHERE THEIR TENSION WAS OR WHAT THEY NEEDED TO WORK ON. IT FELT LIKE A SECRET SPECIAL POWER.”

KATELYN SWIADER

Just before an opening night performance with the Virginia Opera in her junior year of high school, Swiader’s voice unexpectedly began to fade. She was seen at EVMS Laryngology, where they used a long flexible camera and strobe light to perform a stroboscopic exam on her vocal folds.

“That was the first time I ever got to see my voice on video,” Swiader says. “I just fell in love. I was always curious how I was able to get my voice to do certain things.

When I heard people sing, I could feel where their tension was or what they needed to work on. It felt like a secret special power.”

Swiader and her doctors managed the issue with her voice, and she returned to the stage. But the experience sparked an interest, and she began to investigate the science of voice.

“Do I want to go to school to be an opera singer? Do I want to go to school to be an ear, nose and throat doctor? I compared the trajectory of how to become either.”

Ultimately, Swiader pursued a degree in vocal performance at George Mason University on a path to become a professional opera singer. She traveled the world singing and training in opera, but the mechanics of the voice continued to fascinate her.

Then, her voice failed her again.

“Extreme stress, certain medications, not taking good care of myself and having to use my voice all the time,” she says, “I would have zero voice by the end of the day.”

Her teacher suggested that she visit a general ear, nose and throat doctor.

“My voice did get better, but I should have gone straight to a laryngologist,” Swiader says. “They extensively understand the mechanics of the voice in motion. None of the teachers I had since Governor’s School ever said the word laryngologist or speech therapist in my entire career of music.”

Swiader continued to master roles on stage and managed other artists at an opera company. But after witnessing the lifestyle of a professional opera singer, she decided it may not align with her future goals. She accepted a job at the Governor’s School teaching musical theater and classical voice opera. She also started a business in private instruction, which is where she learned more about speech therapy.

After shadowing a speech therapist, Swiader realized the profound effect that voice therapy could have on the quality of people’s lives.

Today, Swiader helps others find their voices as part of the EVMS Voice and Swallowing Center.



“There was someone my age, in her young twenties, who was using a computer device to speak,” she recalls. “People could be in car accidents and have their voices taken from them. I knew I wanted to help them regain their voices.”

Swiader continued teaching at the Governor’s School but felt pulled back to speech therapy. She enrolled in several science classes at Old Dominion University. This helped earn her a spot in their speech-language pathology graduate program, where she learned resonant voice therapy and worked with the transgender population. She also gained experience with cochlear implants and hearing aids.

Today, Swiader is certified in speech-language pathology and works closely with the team at the EVMS Voice and Swallowing Center as its first speech therapist in over a decade. Patients are evaluated by Benjamin Rubinstein, MD, Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology, or John Sinacori, MD, Associate Professor of Otolaryngology, and often begin sessions with her at the same visit.

“Sometimes I see patients all day in one-on-one therapy,” Swiader says. “We may do aerodynamic measures, behavioral assessments, measure

the voice with a spectrogram or vocal exercises. We work on techniques like laryngeal massage manipulation, relaxing tension and airflow and resonance.”

EVMS Laryngology providers often assist performers at Virginia Musical Theater by conducting collaborative voice evaluations.

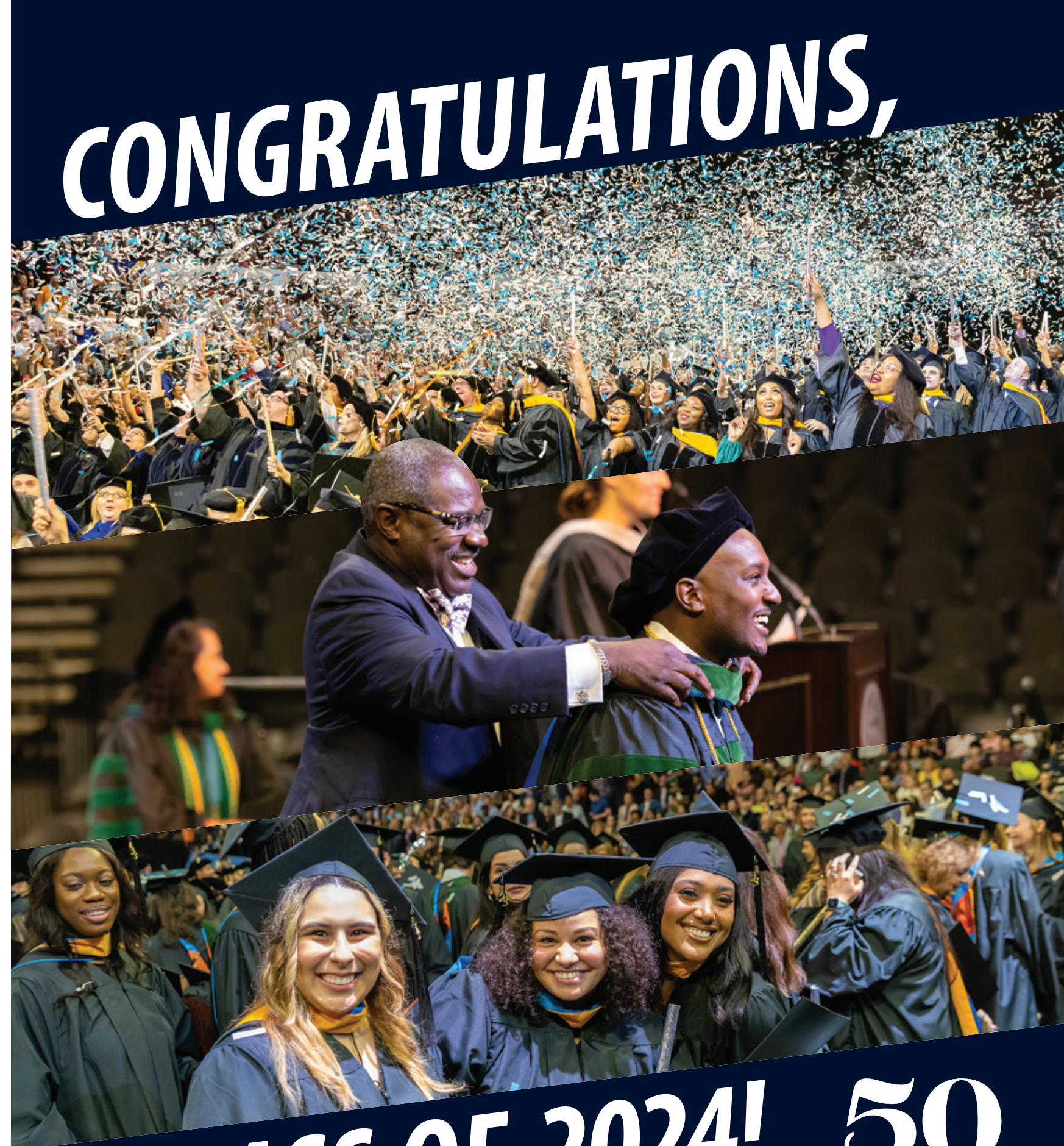
For Swiader, the serendipitous turn from professional singing to speech-language pathology led her on the greater path to mentoring students and helping to rehabilitate voices at EVMS.

“My voice has always been such a huge part of everything I do,” she shares. “Our voices are much more than moving people on stage. I don’t want to just help people make pretty sounds — but to live their lives by getting their voices back.” □



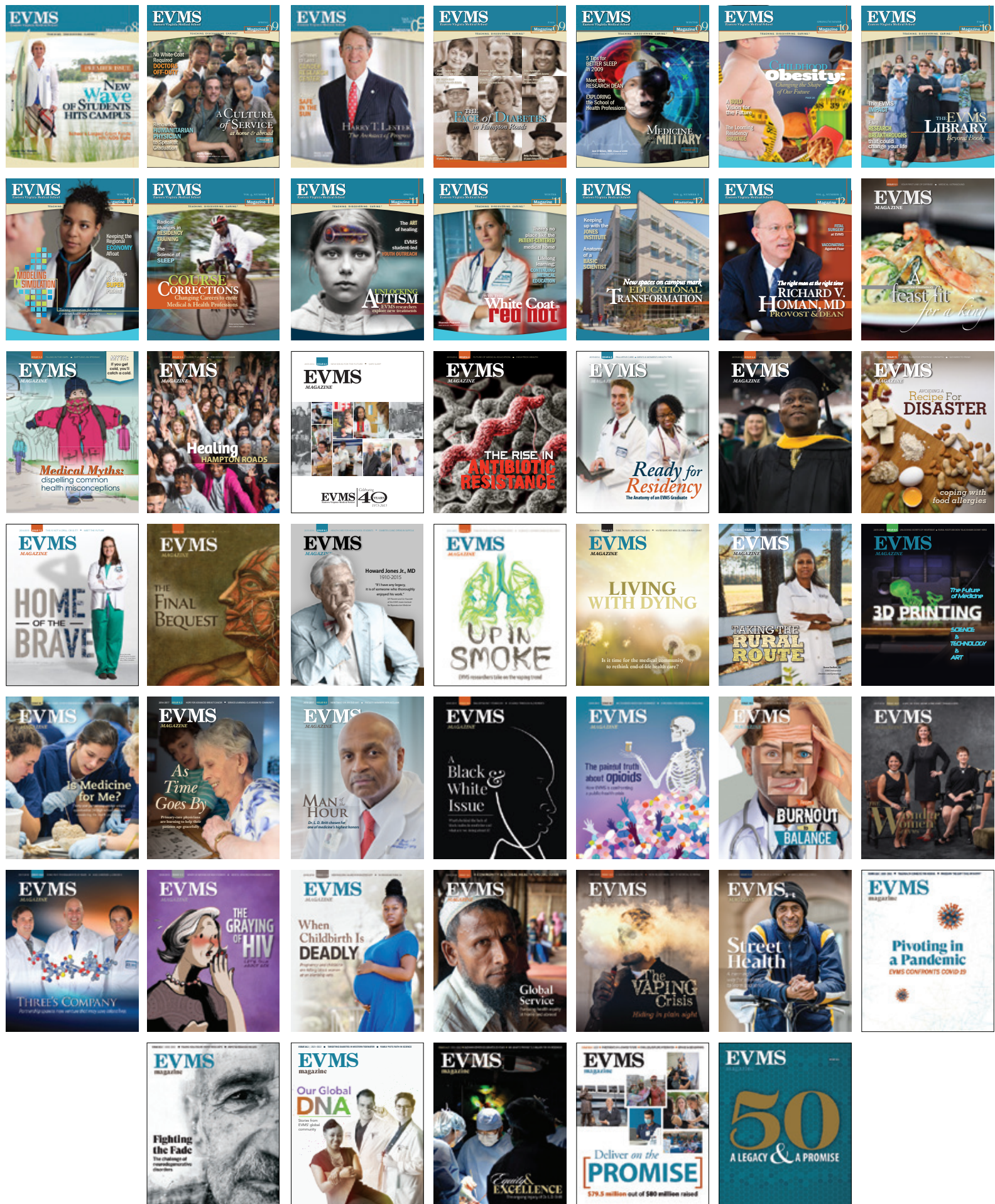
See a video highlighting Katelyn Swiader’s experience as a singer and her road to speech-language pathology at evms.edu/KatelynSwiader.

CONGRATULATIONS,



CLASS OF 2024!

50
A LEGACY & A PROMISE
EVMS



Our storied history

Dear friends,

It's an honor to share this letter in this special anniversary issue of EVMS Magazine. For the past 15 years, beginning as Director of Marketing and extending today as Chief Communications & Marketing Officer and Associate Vice President, I have been invested in the production of this publication. As we look back on our institutional anniversary, I am so proud to also reflect on the legacy of this magazine.

That's because EVMS Magazine always has been a fearless publication. Just take a look at the covers on the preceding page. Throughout the years, we've covered some of the timeliest and most consequential health issues of our time: HIV, vaping, the shortage of primary care physicians, disparities and inequities in healthcare and the complex and layered intersection and overlap of socioeconomic, race, gender and health. In every story, we've tried to approach the topic with discernment and intelligence. Although EVMS Magazine has only ever been created by a small team, we've endeavored, always, to publish something that is informative, memorable and outside-the-box when it comes to storytelling.

I want to thank the EVMS Marketing and Communications team, both current and past, for the hard work and heart they have put into this magazine over the years. Through writing, copy editing, photography, video, graphic design, illustration, and so much more, your talents shine through and your ideas and energy have always fueled our efforts.

Thank you as well to our colleagues around campus who contribute to this effort in so many ways, and to President Abuhamad, who has continued to prioritize the value of this publication. Thank you for trusting us with your stories and allowing us to amplify the attention focused on your clinical care, research and training.

Most of all, thank you to our readers and our campus community for sharing your stories and entrusting us to tell them. It means the world to us to look at the magazine and know that it reflects and amplifies the core values and mission of EVMS, of which we are all so proud. More than anyone else, you have made this magazine, and this legacy, a reality.

As EVMS moves closer to its integration with Old Dominion University, we can commit to you that our team will continue to produce the same level of reporting, storytelling and excellence in our next chapter in collaboration with the outstanding team from ODU. The publication you receive post-integration may look different, but the power of the stories — our stories — will remain strong. We are as committed as ever to bringing you timely updates on the medical and professional programs, research initiatives and community outreach efforts that have shaped your lives and ours for the better. Please be on the lookout for additional updates in the future.

In the meantime, happy 50th anniversary, EVMS! Thank you for allowing us to join you for this adventure.

Sincerely,

Vincent Rhodes, PhD, APR

Chief Communications & Marketing Officer
Associate Vice President



Most of all, thank you to our readers and our campus community for sharing your stories and entrusting us to tell them. It means the world to us to look at the magazine and know that it reflects and amplifies the core values and mission of EVMS, of which we are all so proud. More than anyone else, you have made this magazine, and this legacy, a reality.”



COMING TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM HAMPTON ROADS

EVMS and ODU have embarked upon an exciting mission — the integration of the two institutions to create a new **health sciences center** in Hampton Roads.

Why join forces?

- **EVMS and ODU share a strong history of collaboration.**
- **We are renowned experts in our respective disciplines.**
- **We share complementary cultures.**
- **We have proven track records of emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion.**
- **We are deeply committed to making our community a better place to live.**

The new center will be the largest in the Commonwealth in both the number of health sciences programs offered and the number of students enrolled in those programs.

Leveraging the expertise at each institution allows us to offer stronger educational programs, resulting in a significant expansion of Virginia's healthcare workforce and enhanced patient care.

By working as a team, we increase our ability to address healthcare disparities in the region and have a much stronger impact on the local economy than would be possible if we acted separately.

Together we can craft a bolder vision for a robust academic healthcare center that powers the region.

Together we can be a catalyst for concrete change in Hampton Roads and across the Commonwealth.

Together we can lead the way to a bolder tomorrow.

Follow our progress at evms.edu/integration



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