America’s top prize in medicine will be awarded this Friday right here in Albany. The Prize is a legacy to its founder – the late Morris ‘Marty’ Silverman.
IN ANNOUNCING THE establishment of the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research in the fall of 2000, Marty Silverman recognized something about the Albany Medical Center that few others in the Capital Region had up to that point in time – namely, that it is a healthcare institution where leading biomedical research flourishes. In identifying the Prize with the institution's namesake, he succeeded in bringing international recognition to the Medical Center, which currently conducts more research funded by the National Institutes of Health than any other academic institution in the Capital Region.

Albany Medical College scientists are at the forefront of medical discovery related to neurological disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, immunology and infectious diseases, among other disciplines. Through their educational and research activities, Albany Medical College scientists ensure that the Medical Center remains a focal point for the Capital Region’s most advanced patient care and treatments, and a steady contributor to the quality of life in the region.

Research at Albany Med is flourishing with grants nearly doubling in recent years to more than $23 million a year. This success has been a direct result of a carefully delineated institutional strategy that has reorganized research scientists at Albany Medical College into four interdisciplinary teams in an effort to ensure that bench work in the laboratories of the Albany Medical College gets translated into medical innovations at the patients’ bedsides in the Albany Medical Center Hospital. These research centers include Cardiovascular Sciences, Cell Biology and Cancer Research, Immunology and Microbial Disease and Neuropharmacology and Neuroscience.

In recent years, key recruitments have been made to fortify these teams and productive partnerships have been formed with a strong cadre of other research organizations also located in New York’s “Tech Valley.” Current collaborative efforts include the state Wadsworth Laboratories, the University at Albany, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the General Electric Global Research Center, and the Stratton VA Medical Center, among others.

Thanks to Marty’s vision, the future of biomedical research at Albany Med and throughout the region remains bright.
ON FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2006, Albany Medical Center and the greater Capital Region community will honor the recipient of America’s top prize in medicine, the $500,000 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research. Concurrently, the medical and biomedical research community will pay tribute to the extraordinary legacy of the man who founded the Albany Prize – Morris “Marty” Silverman, who passed away in January at the age of 93.

In fact, the story of how America’s largest prize in medicine evolved speaks volumes about its founder and benefactor. In 1999, Marty Silverman learned about the international humanitarian aid group, Doctors without Borders, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The story piqued Silverman’s interest and sparked his desire to create an American equivalent of the Nobel “to recognize a physician or scientist, or group, whose work has led to significant advances in the fields of health care and scientific research.”

Where for others the notion may have been a fleeting or quixotic endeavor, Silverman acted on his impulse, relying on a long trusted business philosophy and instinct: If it works once, try it twice.

Confident that the creation of an “American Nobel” was within reach, Silverman made a $50 million commitment to Albany Medical Center to establish the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research. The gift remains the largest in the 167-year history of Albany Med.

Citing another of his basic principles - the greatest charity is to give without expecting anything back and without telling people what you’ve done - Silverman had to be persuaded to abandon his desire for anonymity as the benefactor of the $500,000 annual prize.

“Marty’s goal in creating the Albany Prize was to focus attention on the life-saving work of extraordinary scientists, researchers and clinicians, while furthering the reputation of Albany Medical Center and the city of Albany as a world-class leader in medicine and the healthcare industry,” said James J. Barba, Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Albany Medical Center. “As we celebrate and pay tribute to Marty and his legacy during the awarding of this year's Prize, I can candidly say that as Marty watches over us today we are well on our way to realizing his extraordinary vision.”

A man of humble beginnings, Silver-
TO PROVIDE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL recognition to a physician or biomedical scientist who has made extraordinary and sustained leadership contributions to improving healthcare and patient care; or who has successfully pursued innovative biomedical research with demonstrated translational benefits applied to improved patient care.

Each year’s Prize winner will have demonstrated in his or her medical practice or biomedical research, significant outcomes that offer medical value of national or international importance. Prize winner activities will include but not be limited to disease and injury management, clinical research, and basic science investigations of diseases and injuries, leading to new discoveries and improved clinical outcomes.

Those honored will be practitioners and/or scientists whose accomplishments and outcomes have been demonstrated in the past quarter century, with preference to demonstrated accomplishments in the past decade. It is the expectation of the Prize Committee that each year’s $500,000 award will be used by the recipient to advance further positive outcomes in his or her field of endeavor. The Prize is designed to be both a public award and an important resource for sustaining excellence.

Nominations will be sought each fall, with a deadline of early January and will be reviewed by a panel of distinguished physicians and scientists. The panel will be selected and chaired by the CEO and President of Albany Medical Center who will be joined in service on the panel by the Dean of the Albany Medical College.

ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER PRIZE IN MEDICINE

Prize Criteria

ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER PRIZE IN MEDICINE AND BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH PLANNING COMMITTEE

JAMES J. BARBA, CHAIR
Chairman, President and CEO
Albany Medical Center

PAUL J. DAVIS, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research
Director, Ordway Research

STANLEY GLICK, PH.D., M.D.
Director
Center for Neuropharmacology and Neuroscience

MARY C. KAHL, PH.D.
Former Chair
Albany Medical Center Foundation

ROBERT E. PALAZZO, PH.D.
Director, Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

LAWRENCE S. STURMAN, M.D., PH.D.
Director, Wadsworth Center
NYS Department of Health

FERDINAND J. VENDITTI, JR., M.D., FACC
Richard T. Beebe Professor and Chair
Department of Medicine
Albany Medical College

VINCENT VERDILE, M.D.
Dean, Albany Medical College
Executive Vice President for Health Affairs,
Albany Medical Center

FARDIN SANAI, SECRETARY
Senior Vice President for Development and Foundation Operations, Albany Medical Center

THE MISSION OF ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER

To provide the region with excellence in medical education, biomedical research, and patient care.

ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER is the only academic health sciences center in the 25 counties of eastern New York and western New England. The Medical Center incorporates the 651-bed Albany Medical Center Hospital, one of upstate New York’s largest teaching hospitals; The Albany Medical College, which was founded in 1839 as one of the nation’s first private medical schools; The Albany Medical Center Faculty Group Practice, staffed by about 250 full-time clinical faculty members of the Medical College; and the Albany Medical Center Foundation, Inc., one of the largest fund-raising organizations in the region.

THE MEDICAL CENTER INCLUDES:

• The Albany Medical Center Hospital including the Children’s Hospital and the South Clinical Campus
• The Albany Medical College including its Physician Group
• The Albany Medical Center Foundation, Inc.
THE ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER PRIZE IN MEDICINE AND BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

SELECTION COMMITTEE

JAMES J. BARBA, CHAIRMAN

James J. Barba is President and Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Albany Medical Center. In these capacities, he oversees the medical education, biomedical research and patient care activities of northeastern New York’s only academic health sciences center. Mr. Barba serves as Chairman of the Albany Medical Center Prize National Selection Committee.

MARLENE BELFORT, PH.D.

Dr. Marlene Belfort is the Director of the Division of Genetic Disorders at the Wadsworth Center, New York State Department of Health. Located in Albany, N.Y., the Wadsworth Center is the most comprehensive public health laboratory in the nation.

ANTHONY S. FAUCI, M.D.

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. He became a member of the national selection committee in 2004, two years after being awarded the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine for his seminal research in AIDS and other diseases of the immune system.

JUDAH FOLKMAN, M.D.

Dr. Judah Folkman is the Julia Dyckman Andrus Professor of Pediatric Surgery at the Children’s Hospital Medical Center in Boston, Mass., home to the world’s largest pediatric research facility. Dr. Folkman founded the field of angiogenesis research, demonstrated that tumor growth is angiogenesis-dependent, and discovered the first angiogenesis inhibitors, three of which have gone into clinical trial. Other angiogenesis inhibitors have now received FDA approval in the U.S. and in 28 other countries.

IVAR GIAEVER, PH.D.

Dr. Ivar Giaever, a Nobel Laureate, is President of Applied Bio-physics, Inc. in Troy, N.Y., and a Professor-at-Large at the University of Oslo in Norway. In 1973, Dr. Giaever won the Nobel Prize for his work regarding tunneling phenomena in semiconductors and superconductors.

G. TIMOTHY JOHNSON, M.D.

As Chief Medical Editor for ABC News, Dr. Johnson provides on-air medical analysis for “World News Tonight”, “Nightline” and “20/20”. He has provided commentary on medical issues for viewers of ABC News “Good Morning America” since the program’s debut in 1975. Johnson is the founding editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter and co-editor of the Harvard Medical School Health Letter Book. He is also co-editor of the book, “Your Good Health”, co-author of “Let’s Talk”, and author of Dr. Tim Johnson’s “On Call Guide to Men’s Heath and Finding God in the Questions: A Personal Journey.”

A. JOHN POPP, M.D.

Dr. A John Popp is the Henry and Sally Schaffer Chair of Surgery and Director of the Neurosciences Center at Albany Medical Center. An active neurosurgeon at Albany Medical Center, Dr. Popp has served as President of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the largest neurosurgical organization in the world.

DOMINICK P. PURPURA, M.D.

Dr. Dominick P. Purpura is the Dean of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York. An internationally renowned neuroscientist, Dr. Purpura is one of the world’s leading experts in the field of brain sciences. He is especially noted for his seminal contributions to the study of mental retardation.

STEVEN A. SCHROEDER, M.D.

Dr. Steven A. Schroeder is Distinguished Professor of Health and Health Care, Division of General Internal Medicine, Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, where he also heads the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center. The Center is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which Dr. Schroeder presided over from 1990 – 2002.

H. JAMES T. SEARS, M.D.

H. James T. Sears, M.D., is a health care consultant and retired executive director of the Department of Defense’s TRICARE Management Activity, which oversees the Department of Defense’s TRICARE managed health care program for members of the uniformed services, their families, and other eligible persons.

SUSAN L. SWAIN, PH.D.

Dr. Susan L. Swain is the Director of the Trudeau Institute, Inc., a not-for-profit biomedical research organization that uses its growing knowledge of the immune system to find unique ways to fight human disease. An internationally-known immunologist and noted author in her field, Dr. Swain is on the editorial board of the Journal of Experimental Medicine, Journal of Immunology, International Immunology and Current Biology. She has authored more than 160 articles published in leading scientific journals.

 DANIEL C. TOSTESON, M.D.

Dr. Daniel C. Tosteson is the Caroline Shields Walker Distinguished Professor of Cell Biology and Dean Emeritus at Harvard Medical School. An active scientist throughout his career, his research is directed toward understanding the cellular functions and molecular mechanisms of ion transport across membranes.

VINCENT VERDILE, M.D.

Dr. Vincent Verdile is Dean of the Albany Medical College and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs for Albany Medical Center.
Dr. Robert S. Langer

The 2005 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research was awarded to Dr. Robert S. Langer, a chemical engineer by trade whose groundbreaking research with polymers - or plastics - has revolutionized the field of drug delivery systems and improved the lives of more than 60 million people each year. Dr. Langer's work has spawned revolutionary advances in cancer treatment, has given birth to an entirely new field of biotechnology known as tissue engineering, and most recently has fueled the development of cardiac stents that have virtually eliminated the risk of restenosis in patients undergoing treatment for cardiovascular disease.

Coincidentally, Dr. Langer was born at Albany Hospital, the forerunner to Albany Medical Center for which the Albany Prize is named. He attended Albany School 27 and the now defunct Milne High School. Langer received his Bachelor's Degree from Cornell University in 1970 and his Sc.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1974, both in Chemical Engineering. Langer is currently one of 14 Institute Professors at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the highest honor awarded to a faculty member there.

Langer was selected for the Albany Medical Center Prize for his entire body of scientific work, most notably his seminal research on polymer-based drug delivery systems, which has allowed clinicians to control the release of large molecules in a slow, steady and controlled manner. The practical application of Langer's work has led to the development of an array of plastic devices that are surgically implanted to deliver medicines and hormones in precisely regulated amounts over long periods of time. The polymer-coated, drug-eluting stent that was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2003 for use in the treatment of cardiovascular disease is one of the more celebrated examples of the translational benefits of this research. Langer's work with polymers has also led to the development of artificial skin which is used in the treatment of burn patients.

Langer is the author of more than 800 scholarly papers, has over 500 issued or pending patents, and his research has spawned more than a dozen biotech firms. In addition to the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine, Langer has received more than 130 major awards including the $500,000 Charles Stark Draper Prize – considered the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for engineers -- and the $500,000 Lemelson-MIT Prize, the nation's largest and most prestigious prize for invention. Recently, Parade magazine selected Langer as one of six heroes whose research may save your life, while Time magazine named him one of the 100 most important people in America.

As an Albany native, it’s wonderful to see Albany as the center (of attention) for this incredible award.”

ROBERT S. LANGER, PH.D.

Dr. Stanley N. Cohen and Herbert W. Boyer, Ph.D.

The 2004 Albany Medical Center Prize was awarded to Dr. Stanley N. Cohen and Herbert W. Boyer, Ph.D., two pioneering scientists whose seminal research discovering recombinant DNA – more commonly known as gene cloning – paved the way for the modern biotechnology industry.

Cohen and Boyer were selected for their groundbreaking research that allowed scientists to isolate and clone genes in living cells; their discovery that genes could be propagated and expressed in biological species other than the natural host; and their subsequent contributions to biomedical research stemming from these discoveries.

The practical application of their combined research has led to the development of a multitude of critical vaccines and life-saving drugs including human insulin for the treatment of diabetes, a clot-dissolving agent for stroke and heart attack victims, a human growth hormone for underdeveloped children, and interferon for cancer patients.

Cohen currently holds an endowed professorship at Stanford University while Boyer, the co-founder of one of the world's first biotechnology companies, Genentech, Inc., is professor emeritus at the University of California at San Francisco.

In addition to the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine, Cohen and Boyer have both received the Albert D. Lasker Award for Basic Medical Research, the National Medal of Science, the National Medal of Technology, and the Lemelson-MIT Prize. The pair was elected to the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2001 and are members of the National Academy of Sciences.
In the weeks and months after September 11, 2001, Dr. Anthony S. Fauci was a ubiquitous and reassuring presence for the American public. He was credited with helping to allay widespread fear of a potential bio-terrorist attack in the immediate aftermath of 9-11 through his appearances at White House press briefings, on news talk shows, and in testimony before Congress.

Throughout his distinguished scientific career, Fauci has authored, co-authored and edited more than 1,000 scientific publications, including several textbooks. Between 1981 and 1994, Fauci was the fifth most cited scientist among more than one million of his peers who had published papers during that time frame. He also has received numerous prestigious awards for his scientific accomplishments, including 22 honorary doctorate degrees from universities in the United States and abroad.

Dr. Fauci has served as the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health for more than 20 years. He has guided a research agenda focused on nucleic acid defenses, for his groundbreaking work in developing effective therapies for several once fatal rheumatic diseases, for his current efforts in spearheading the drive for vaccines to prevent the HIV virus, smallpox, anthrax and the Ebola virus, and for his overall scientific leadership and public service.

Fauci has headed up the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institutes of Health for more than 20 years.

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“This is one of the great honors that we’ll receive in our career. I plan to use this award as seed money to create a trust fund for medical research.”

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN, PH.D.

The 2003 Albany Medical Center Prize was awarded to Nobel Laureates Dr. Michael S. Brown and Dr. Joseph L. Goldstein, two pioneering researchers whose studies of cholesterol have served as the foundation for the development of life-saving, cholesterol lowering drugs used by millions of people worldwide. The Albany Medical Center Prize recognized Drs. Brown and Goldstein for their post-Nobel contributions pertaining to how a family of proteins regulates cholesterol synthesis by specifically controlling the LDL receptors, which play a key role in cholesterol build-up. Additionally, the Prize recognized their most recent research into the discovery of an insulin-sensitive regulator, which offers tremendous promise in the field of drug therapy for the treatment of diabetes melitus.

Brown and Goldstein both currently hold distinguished chair positions at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas.

Brown and Goldstein have published more than 400 scientific papers that have helped unravel the mystery behind elevated cholesterol levels in the bloodstream. In addition to the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and the Nobel Prize (1985), the two have shared several of science’s most prestigious awards including the Albert D. Lasker Award in Basic Medical Research (1985) and the National Medal of Science (1988).

The pair has also has received numerous honorary degrees including one from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, N.Y., in 1982.

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The 2002 Albany Medical Center Prize was awarded to Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, who for more than three decades has been one of the world’s leading clinicians and researchers on the pathogenesis and treatment of immune-mediated diseases, including AIDS. The Albany Medical Center Prize recognized Fauci for his seminal contributions in helping researchers understand how the AIDS virus destroys the body’s defenses, for his groundbreaking work in developing effective therapies for several once fatal rheumatic diseases, for his current efforts in spearheading the drive for vaccines to prevent the HIV virus, smallpox, anthrax and the Ebola virus, and for his overall scientific leadership and public service.

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JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN, PH.D.
COMMUNITY ACCOLADES FOR marty silverman

IN THE FALL OF 2000, MARTY SILVERMAN CREATED a living legacy when he established the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research. It is a prize that keeps focusing worldwide attention each year on Albany and the Albany Medical Center. Earmarking $500,000 of funds each spring from the Marty and Dorothy Silverman Foundation for the purpose of recognizing a worthy scientist or physician — or group of scientists or physicians — Marty eschewed personal attention in favor of spotlighting the region and institution he loved so dearly.

It is only fitting that we recognize Marty’s spirit of selfless dedication and philanthropy with this tribute document in his honor. His vision in creating the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research was, like Marty himself, extraordinary. We take great pride in joining the leaders on these two pages in saluting him proudly and remembering him fondly for the difference he has made in the lives of so many.

— James J. Barba, Chairman of the Board, President and Chief Executive Officer of Albany Medical Center

IT IS A PLEASURE TO SEND GREETINGS and to express my admiration for a great human being and generous philanthropist whose legacy of meaningful contributions to many causes will endure forever.

The Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research is a lasting and fitting tribute to Morris “Marty” Silverman, a remarkable man who did so much during his life to embellish the outstanding institutions of higher education within the capital city of New York State. Through his many and significant philanthropic activities and through his unique personal and visionary style, Marty raised awareness — on the national and international levels — of the Albany Medical Center, the greater Capital Region, and, the entire Empire State for its ongoing leadership in biomedical research, education and leading edge patient care.

As a pillar of the community, Marty served with distinction in a variety of ways, and over the course of his life, he demonstrated an admirable sense of public commitment and concern for the people of the Capital Region. Today, all New Yorkers remember this extraordinary gentleman who made a valuable difference in the lives of others, and who found inspiration in a simple desire to bring positive change to the world. Through his outstanding efforts on behalf of the people and institutions of Albany, Marty earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and fellow citizens both locally and statewide, as evidenced by the outpouring of affection that continues to be shown by all who knew and loved him.

I take great pride in joining with so many who honor Marty posthumously for his wonderful spirit of generosity and selflessness. For decades to come, the yearly awarding of the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research will continue to reflect Marty’s deep admiration and vision for the Albany Medical Center, as well as for our great capital city and state.

— George Pataki, New York State Governor

I WRITE TO HONOR THE MEMORY of Morris “Marty” Silverman, a native of Troy NY, and benefactor of The Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.

Mr. Silverman was more than an entrepreneur, he was a dedicated philanthropist. In 1985, Mr. Silverman created the Marty and Dorothy Silverman Foundation. Since then, the foundation has provided support for various programs that benefit our most vulnerable citizens.

Marty also made significant contributions to Troy and the entire Capital District. Along with endowing Albany Medical Center with the funding it needs to award the largest prize in medicine in the United States every year, Mr. Silverman was the driving force behind the University Heights Association and developed a blueprint to rehabilitate a portion of the City he once called home. Though Marty made his home in New York City, he never forgot his roots in upstate New York.

His family can take much pride in the fact that Mr. Silverman was a deeply respected and beloved man who left an indelible legacy. His memory will live on through all of his charitable work still seen all over the Capital Region.

— Charles E. Schumer, United States Senator

I AM SO PLEASED TO JOIN Albany Medical Center in honoring Marty Silverman posthumously; a man who stood by his motto “you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

Marty Silverman played an integral role in health care, higher education and research that stands as a shining example of the benefits of collective planning and collaborative action. For many years, Marty was a leader in giving to many local organizations, he was an inspiration to neighbors, friends and residents of not only his own community, but of New York State. To say that Marty had a heart of gold would be an understatement.

Marty was an amazing citizen who was committed to giving back to the community. Many institutions both locally and nationally benefited from his generosity. The Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research is a testament to Marty’s giving spirit. The Prize is the largest medical research award in the nation, second only to Sweden’s Nobel Prize. It’s hard to put into words the scope of Marty Silverman’s philanthropy and how many lives he has helped.

Marty Silverman is a man who made a difference in New York State and throughout the country. His contributions are greatly appreciated, and will benefit generations to come. His passion, generosity and dedication to helping those around him are an example to us all. This great man will be truly missed.

— Joseph L. Bruno, New York State Senate Majority Leader

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THIS opportunity to recognize the achievements of the late Morris “Marty” Silverman for his vision and generosity in creating the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.

Each year, the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research is given to a physician or biomedical scientist who has made extraordinary contributions to improving health care and patient care or has pursued innovative biomedical research. The $500,000 award — the nation’s largest medical prize and second worldwide only to the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine — was made possible by Marty’s $50 million gift commitment in November 2000. This gift remains the largest in the 165-year history of Albany Medical Center.

Although Marty is no longer with us, he is still leaving his mark on the community. Marty founded the Marty and Dorothy Silverman Foundation that provides support to several programs that benefit education, abused and neglected children and indigent senior citizens. He was also the driving force behind the University Heights Association, a consortium of Albany Medical College, Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany Law School and the Sage Colleges. Marty’s legacy and generosity will ensure that the Capital District region and New York will continue to be a leader in first-class education and health care.

I am proud to join with the community in celebrating and honoring Marty’s life and lasting contributions.

— Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Senator
I AM HONORED TO JOIN the Capital District community in saluting the man behind the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, the late Morris ‘Marty’ Silverman.

Despite humble beginnings in Troy, Marty lived a truly extraordinary life. Marty was known as a heroic veteran, a successful businessman, and a dedicated husband and father. He also became known as a generous philanthropist, a visionary benefactor, and a tireless humanitarian.

Marty believed passionately in his responsibility to give back to the community, which led to the establishment of the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.

You have my best wishes for a successful 2006

— Michael R. McNulty, United States Congressman

EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE REGION LOST A GREAT FRIEND with the passing of Morris “Marty” Silverman. Marty was a humble man who, through his simple upbringing in Troy, developed a sense of community that he embodied throughout his entire adult life. Through his local philanthropic efforts, Marty undoubtedly made a significant impact on the lives of all Capital Region residents.

In 1999, he first conceived the notion of a world-class medical prize that would recognize the outstanding achievements of physicians and scientist, but also give Albany the notoriety as a premier center for innovation in healthcare. Through his efforts and generosity the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research was created. The prize has worked to make Marty’s vision a reality, as the annual $500,000 prize is regarded in the biomedical research community as “America’s Nobel.”

This year, sadly, Marty will not be with us as the 2006 recipient is selected later this month. There is no doubt his presence will be felt, and his commitment to the Medical Center and the entire region will be cherished for many generations to come.

— John E. Sweeney, United States Congressman

IT IS AN HONOR TO RECOGNIZE the tremendous life of a humble benefactor like Marty Silverman. His support for scientific research is immeasurable. Thanks to his overwhelming generosity, we can support physicians and scientists through the Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.

We work in Congress to provide the means to conduct research and encourage the best and brightest to realize the American spirit of always striving to find the next cure or improve the quality of every life. Marty Silverman’s personal commitment is an important component to the public-private partnerships that allow the American spirit to thrive and help humans overcome suffering.

This award also provides hope to those who will directly benefit from the scientific research. For that, we honor the late Marty Silverman and humbly thank him.

— John E. Sweeney, United States Congressman

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING BACK to the community and helping others was a constant theme throughout Marty Silverman’s life. The Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research is the largest annual prize in medicine offered in the United States. Widely recognized as “America’s Nobel,” the award is one of the many enduring gifts Mr. Silverman left to the community he felt played such an integral role in shaping his character.

Established in 2000, this award is a world-class medical prize which realizes Marty’s goal of recognizing the outstanding achievements and contributions of physicians and scientists, and simultaneously secures our region’s place as a national and international center of excellence in the health care industry.

— Michael G. Breslin, Albany County Executive
Marty Silverman was a dreamer who had the uncanny ability to turn dreams into reality. The Albany Medical Prize in Biomedical Research was only one of his noble goals intended to make Albany an International Center for Health and Education. With his passing we are left to “steer by the stars,” knowing full well that he would smile and say “The Lord has provided.”

-FRIEND
“Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you’ll find one at the end of your arm. As you grow older you will discover that you have two hands. One for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

“There are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wonder what happened. We will make things happen.”

“The thing that keeps me going is the fact that I have to get out of the bed in the morning.”

“If it is to be, it is up to me.”

“This is the beginning. This is the steppingstone. We will take the torch and lead the way into the 22nd century.”

“I honestly believe that my character and all the things I’ve accomplished over the years were born right here in the Capital Region.”

“Danger is a terror when it’s happening, but an adventure when it’s past.”

“To succeed in the world, act as if you’re already a success.”

“If it works once, try it twice. If it works twice, marry it.”

“From fancy tastes get fancy problems.”

“The greatest charity is to give without expecting anything back and without telling people what you’ve done.”

MARTY SILVERMAN: In his own words:

Throughout his lifetime, referring to it as “simpatico,” the reality of having little, but being willing to help those around you. It was also a principle by which Marty lived, as he committed his life to helping others through numerous philanthropic efforts and humanitarian causes.

After high school, Silverman attended Albany Law School. In order to pay for his education, he opened up a local gas station, Silverman’s Service Station. As word spread throughout the community, Silverman discovered that people were traveling great distances to lend their support. The gas station, located near the Menands Bridge, flourished primarily through the help of strangers – an experience which fueled Silverman’s desire to give back to the area that had played such an integral role in shaping his character.

One of the first Jewish graduates of Albany Law School in 1936, Silverman initially embarked on a legal career with the fledgling Legal Aid Society in Albany, but soon stumbled upon a new business opportunity: Capital Auto Sales. Silverman bought used cars from government agencies at bargain prices, and then sold them for twice the purchase amount.

With the advent of World War II, Silverman recognized the lessening need for automobiles and the burgeoning need for war materials. He promptly abandoned car sales and moved to New York City, with his wife, Dorothy, to sell used equipment.

Silverman’s nascent business career was put on hold to serve his country. He entered the Army as a private and was assigned to the 95th Infantry Division, known as “The Iron Men of Metz.” He overcame early anti-Semitism to rise to the rank of major. Wounded twice while in combat – once by a piece of shrapnel, and once by a bullet traveling through his steel helmet, across his scalp, and down his back – Silverman emerged from the War as a decorated combat veteran with a pair of Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars, a Silver Star, four Battle Stars and a Combat Infantry Badge.

After his discharge in 1946, Silverman returned to New York, where he and Dorothy pioneered what has since become known as the leasing business. Silverman’s company would buy the equipment and then lease it to customers on a monthly payment plan, plus interest. At the end of the lease the customer could buy the machine or return it.

In 1950, he founded his first leasing company called National Equipment Rental, specializing in forklifts, heavy construction equipment, computers, airplanes and other durable goods. Over the next few decades the business grew dramatically. It later changed its name to North American Corporation and played an integral role in the early successes of the MCI Corporation and other fledgling telecom businesses.

In 1984, Silverman sold what had evolved into the largest privately owned leasing company in the United States for $40 million – a sum that later ballooned into a quarter of a billion dollars with the aid of Wall Street.

After his wife passed away in 1985, Silverman retired and created the Marty and Dorothy Silverman Foundation. Throughout the years, the Foundation has provided support for numerous programs that benefit education, abused and neglected children, and indigent senior citizens.

The 2006 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine salutes, honors, and pays tribute to the life and legacy of Morris “Marty” Silverman, a remarkable and generous man whose commitment to advancing biomedical research and supporting humanitarian efforts - in Albany and beyond - will forever be remembered.
“We are starting a tradition here today. At the end of 100 years, we will have 100 candles which will light the way to a healthier and better world.”

— Marty Silverman

At the inaugural awards ceremony in Albany, NY in March 2001, Albany Medical Center Prize founder Marty Silverman started a tradition that will be carried on for the duration of the Prize – 100 years.

Marty’s promise was to light one candle each year to honor that year’s recipient.