Two-Week Stay at Albany Med Inspires an Enduring Gift

When J. Eric King, of Latham, learned that his spleen had to be removed, due to a potentially cancerous lesion, he was nervous, but he tried to focus on the things he had going for him: doctors he trusted and a very supportive family.

“My wife combed Web MD,” said the 73-year-old real estate developer. “We learned that you can live without a spleen.”

While the surgery went smoothly and confirmed the lesion had, indeed, been cancerous—inspiring much relief among King and his family that it had been removed—his recovery took a bit longer than expected.

“It took some time for my body to bounce back,” he said. “I spent two weeks at Albany Medical Center, and I sure came home saying, wow, this is a heck of an operation.”

There were frequent and reassuring bedside conversations with his surgeon, Ankesh Nigam, MD, director of Albany Med’s surgical oncology program. A seasoned surgical oncologist, Dr. Nigam has performed some of the most complex cancer surgeries in the nation.

“He was able to gauge my post-op progress so seamlessly,” King said. “I was really impressed by that.”

And that was just the start. “After two weeks, you really see what happens inside a hospital,” King said. “The nurses work so tirelessly. I’d see somebody, I’d go to sleep, and I’d wake up in the morning and it would be the same nurse again.

“There is also what I call ‘the back of the house,’” King said, “the people, aside from the doctors and nurses, who keep the hospital running. The cleaning staff. Support services. You don’t notice any of this as you come in through the halls and go to visit someone.”

King was so impressed by what he saw—and the care he received—that he and his wife, Kathy, decided to make an annual contribution to the Medical Center. They dedicated their gift to Dr. Nigam and Ira Zackon, MD, director of the New York Oncology Hematology Stem Cell Transplant Program at Albany Med, for the patient care they provided.

The gift in honor of Dr. Nigam will fund the 3rd Annual King Surgical Oncology Lecture next month. This event brings distinguished speakers to Albany Med who share their knowledge with the community.

This year’s speaker is Robert Udelsman, MD, FACS, of the Yale University School of Medicine, who is world-renowned for his innovative and highly successful surgical approach to performing parathyroid operations. (For event information, see page 3.)

“Eric’s generosity has made it much easier for us to bring preeminent lecturers here to Albany Med,” Dr. Nigam said. “Considering we are a teaching hospital, a community of people who are dedicated to learning and improving patient care, I can’t think of a better gift.”

To watch a video of J. Eric King’s story, visit: www.amc.edu/EricKingOncology.

A Great Day for Research

In September, Albany Medical College students participated in the 13th annual Medical Student Investigation Day, held at the Hilton Garden Inn. Students shared poster presentations on a wide range of research studies that were conducted over the summer. The event was well attended by faculty and members of the wider community, including Arthur Horwich, MD, right, one the three winners of this year’s Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research, who stopped to talk with Telly Cheung, ’19.
Dr. Loay Salman Named Thomas Ordway Distinguished Chair in Medicine

Loay Salman, MD, an interventional nephrologist who was recently appointed chief of Albany Med’s Division of Nephrology and Hypertension, has been named the Thomas Ordway, M.D., Distinguished Chair in Medicine.

Dr. Salman comes to Albany Med from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, where he served as a professor of clinical medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension and the chief of Interventional Nephrology. He is the co-principal investigator of a $1.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, and he has authored numerous articles, books and book chapters.

Dr. Salman trained at New York University, where he served as a chief resident. He received his medical degree from Tishreen University in Lattakia, Syria, and also holds an executive MBA in health sector management and policy from the University of Miami’s School of Business Administration.

Matthew A. Adamo, MD, associate professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, is now dual board certified, having recently achieved certification by the American Board of Pediatric Neurological Surgery. Dr. Adamo was certified by the American Board of Neurological Surgery in 2012.

Charles E. Argoff, MD, professor of neurology and director of the Comprehensive Pain Center, received the 2016 Bonica Award from the Eastern Pain Association at its annual meeting in New York City in October.

Felicia Ashley, cash posting lead in Patient Billing Services, received a YWCA Woman of Inspiration Award at the Greater Capital Region’s 17th Annual Resourceful Women’s Awards Luncheon in October. Ashley was honored for her professional accomplishments and for exemplifying the YWCA’s ideals of resourcefulness and empowerment for women and girls.

Alan Boulos, MD, ’94, FACS, FAANS chair of the Department of Neurosurgery and Stall Chair of Endovascular Neurosurgery, gave presentations at the World Academy of Neurological Surgeons Annual Meeting and the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies 2016 Congress. Both meetings were held in Athens, Greece, in September.

Francis D. Ferdinand, MD, chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery and director of the cardiothoracic surgery program, recently gave a presentation and served on a panel at the University of North Carolina & International Society for Minimally Invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery’s “UNC/ISMICS Heart Team Summit” in Chapel Hill. He was also a speaker at the plenary session of the 30th Annual Meeting of the European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery in Barcelona in October.

Ronald P. Kaufman, Jr., MD, FACS, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Urological Surgery, led the Northeastern Section of the American Urological Association’s 68th Annual Meeting in Buffalo in September. Dr. Kaufman is the section’s president. Iljja Aleksee, MD, Alex Arnoux, MD, Joseph Mahon, MD, Alexandra Rehfuss, MD, and William Ulmer, MD, residents in the Division of Urological Surgery, and Matthew Bruha, ’18, gave presentations at the meeting.

Amy Hahn, PhD, professor of surgery and director of the Transplantation Immunology Laboratory, has received the 2016 Distinguished Service Award by the American Society for Histocompatibility & Immunogenetics (ASHI). Dr. Hahn was also recently appointed editor-in-chief of Human Immunology, the official scientific journal of the ASHI.

Vikramjit Kanwar, MD, director of the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at the Melodies Center, has been named a chief editor at Medicope, a part of WebMD.

Loay Salman, MD

Badar Mian, MD, FACS, associate professor of surgery in the Division of Urological Surgery, has co-authored a paper that recently appeared in the journal *Nanomedicine*. The pre-clinical study, conducted in collaboration with Shaker Mousa, PhD, from the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, examines the nano-targeted delivery of drugs and imaging agents to treat prostate cancer.

A. John Popp, MD, ’67, FACS, FAANS, professor emeritus in the Department of Neurosurgery, was the 45th Donald D. Matson Lecturer and commencement speaker for the Brigham and Women’s Hospital – Boston Children’s Hospital neurosurgical training program earlier this year. Dr. Popp also gave a presentation on leadership at the World Academy of Neurological Surgeons in Athens, Greece, in September.

Elena Rosenbaum, MD, assistant professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine and director of Integrative Medicine, and Shilpa Darivemula, ’18, co-authored a paper on creative ways to decrease clinic wait times that recently appeared in the journal *Family Doctor*.

Theresa Weinman, administrative coordinator in the Department of Family and Community Medicine, was honored with a Volunteer Leadership Award from Unity House of Troy at its Domestic Violence Awareness Event and Art Show in October. Weinman was recognized for her year-round work with Unity House, including her significant efforts on behalf of its domestic violence shelter through the annual Albany Med Neighbors in Need Holiday Drive.
Pioneering Research Explores Harnessing Body’s Innate Ability to Prevent Heart Attacks and Stroke

Gabrielle Fredman, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Molecular and Cellular Physiology, is the lead author of a study that has identified a promising new approach to the treatment of clogged arteries, a condition that can lead to heart attacks and stroke.

Scientists at Albany Medical College, Columbia University Medical Center, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital collaborated on the research, which was published online in *Nature Communications*. Albany Med attending pathologist David M. Jones, MD, associate professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, was among the study’s co-authors.

Patients with clogged or “hardened” arteries suffer from a disease known as atherosclerosis, a build-up of plaque along the artery walls that compromises the flow of blood to the heart and other parts of the body. Some strokes and heart attacks are caused when these plaques rupture.

The study’s investigators identified a crucial dysfunction in the way immune cells communicate in these plaques.

“There’s an imbalance in the chemical mediators that promote inflammation versus those that quell inflammation,” Dr. Fredman said.

In healthy cells, mediators that calm inflammation and promote tissue repair are called resolvins.

Dr. Fredman found that administering resolvins to mice prevented the formation of unstable, rupture-prone plaques. And it follows, she said, that resolvin-based drugs could be developed that might prevent the clinical progression of plaques. She imagines such treatments could be used in conjunction with current therapies, like statins.

“The best part of this approach is that it takes advantage of nature’s own design for preventing inflammation-induced damage,” said Ira Tabas, MD, PhD, professor of pathology and cell biology at Columbia and a study co-author.

“Despite the use of cholesterol-lowering drugs and other treatments, cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death in the Western world. So, while current drugs can be effective, there is much more to understand about heart disease,” Dr. Fredman said. “We look forward to continuing to pursue this path of inquiry in our lab.”

Dr. Jones added that the study is “a fantastic example of the collegial, collaborative atmosphere here at Albany Medical College. Dean Verdile and our department chairs have worked hard to build our translational research program, and it is very exciting to be a part of it.”

New Physician to Lead Surgical Ethics Curriculum at Albany Medical College

Megan Applewhite, MD, ’09, an endocrine surgeon who also performs breast and other general surgeries, recently joined the Department of Surgery and will soon be appointed to a dual assistant professorship in surgery and biomedical ethics.

In addition to caring for patients at Albany Med, Dr. Applewhite will lead a new avenue of study at Albany Medical College by introducing a surgical ethics curriculum into the educational platforms of the medical school and the general surgery residency program.

An alumna of Albany Medical College, Dr. Applewhite completed her fellowship training in endocrine surgery at the University of Chicago Medical Center and, while there, also received fellowship training in clinical medical ethics at the university’s prestigious MacLean Center. Her research interests include the surgeon-patient relationship, quality of life and end-of-life care.
Support Services Celebrates First-Ever ‘Employee Engagement Day’

In October, hundreds of employees from Support Services gathered for Albany Med’s first annual Employee Engagement Day. The event brought together representatives from multiple service lines, including environmental services, patient support associates, transportation, retail, the kitchen and café, and the call center, to help promote employee engagement and to highlight how different departments work together to positively impact the patient experience.

The afternoon was organized by the Support Services Employee Engagement Team, which is made up of 12 people from seven different departments and meets bi-weekly to strategize different ways to improve workplace engagement and patient care.

Stepping Out in Support of Breast Cancer Awareness

In October, 369 members of “Team Albany Med” proudly participated in the American Cancer Society’s Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Albany’s Washington Park. Albany Med walkers raised nearly $6,000 to help the American Cancer Society make a positive difference in the lives of breast cancer patients and survivors. Thank you to all our employees who showed those fighting breast cancer they are not alone.