

Friends and Family Remember Former VP for Development, Laura Gajda



Department, which broke ground in 2016 and opened in 2023.

Among those who shared memories of Laura during the memorial service were President and CEO Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE; RUMC Foundation Board Chair and trustee Bobby Urs; Foundation Board Vice Chair and trustee Joseph Torres; and Foundation Board Secretary and trustee Marcello Sciarrino.

Laura was predeceased by her husband, Walter, and her parents Jack R. Niemi and Doris Gilley Niemi. She is survived by her only daughter, Jacqueline; sister Sandra; brother John; sister-in-law Cheryl; brother-in-law Thomas; nieces Anne, Ava, and Vivian; nephews Andrew, Joseph, and Cash; and grandniece and grandnephew Alice and Brock.

On May 8, friends and colleagues joined together to remember former Vice President for Development Laura Gajda, who passed away earlier this year. Laura's daughter Jacqueline was on hand as a tree was planted on hospital grounds near Castleton Avenue and a memorial plaque was unveiled.

Laura was born October 14, 1958, in St. Louis, Missouri, spending most of her youth in Chesterfield, Missouri. Laura attended the University of Missouri-Columbia where she earned a bachelor's degree in journalism. Laura earned a master of business administration from Maryville University and was a fellow for the Association of Healthcare Philanthropy Association.

Laura initially worked for the Rolla Daily News before enjoying a long and productive career in foundation and institutional fundraising. In Missouri she was employed by the Missouri Lottery, Phelps Regional Hospital, Lake Regional Hospital, and the University of Missouri in both Rolla and Columbia. Laura's last role was with Richmond University Medical Center.

While at RUMC, Laura was instrumental in securing support for many of the hospital's capital projects including the James P. Molinaro Emergency

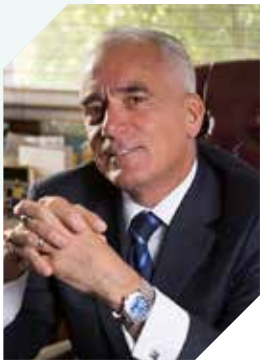


A tree was planted and a memorial plaque unveiled in memory of Laura Gajda.



Laura's daughter Jackie with RUMC Foundation Trustee Robert Urs during the tree dedication ceremony.

From the President & CEO, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE



June is National Cancer Survivors Month, a time to honor and celebrate cancer survivors, raise awareness of cancer survivors and the issues they face, and advocate for cancer survivorship research. Yet as we celebrate cancer survivors, this year National Cancer Survivors Month comes with a grim milestone. For the first time ever, new cases of cancer across the United States are expected to surpass the 2 million mark by the end of this year. That equates to nearly

5,500 new cancer diagnoses a day.

This startling projection, according to the American Cancer Society, is largely being driven by the aging and growth of our population and by a rise in diagnoses of 6 of the 10 most common cancers—breast, prostate, endometrial, pancreatic, kidney, and melanoma. The other 4 top 10 cancers are lung, colorectal, bladder, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Also, some types of cancer are not increasing in overall incidence, but are increasing in subgroups, including colorectal cancer in people younger than age 55; liver cancer in women; oral cancers associated with HPV; and cervical cancer in women ages 30 through 44.

Closer to home, over 123,000 New York State residents will be told they have cancer this year. That is the fourth highest projection behind California, Florida, and Texas. Staten Island has historically also led New York City with some of the highest cancer rates among the five boroughs.

So what can we do? The good news is that over the last 30 years, the risk of dying from cancer has steadily declined. This downward trend is due largely in part to a substantial drop in smoking, advancements in treatment, and early cancer detection. In fact four of the most common cancers — breast, prostate, colorectal and cervical — have highly accurate screenings available. So it

should come as no surprise when I say: get screened! If you have symptoms, see a doctor immediately. If you have known risk factors, ask for a screening when you have your annual physical. The earlier the detection, the higher the rate of successful treatment. If you want to know what screenings are available and when you should take them, visit our website, RUMCSI.org, and under our oncology services page, there is a comprehensive list for you to consider.

For nearly a century, our hospital has provided a wide range of oncology services for patients throughout the New York metropolitan area. First accredited by the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer in 1937, Richmond University Medical Center is home to the longest consecutively accredited cancer program on Staten Island. From initial diagnosis through treatment and recovery, patients who have been diagnosed with cancer can take advantage of the many investments we have made to provide high quality oncology services close to home. From our dedicated Center for Cancer Care to our Breast and Imaging Center to our Ambulatory Infusion Center, the latest treatments and technology are right here at RUMC. We provide comprehensive cancer care services including pediatric, radiologic, smoking cessation, palliative care, and cancer rehabilitation, to name just a few. All are staffed by experienced professionals that include board certified and fellowship trained medical and radiation oncologists. Working together, we can turn the tide on cancer!

Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE
President and Chief Executive Officer

Patient Satisfaction: A Note of Thanks

"I have to say, for an ER, and I have been to a few over the years, this was the most pleasant experience I have ever had. I appreciate that all the staff was courteous, respectful, and kind. Some more than others but we never felt dismissed, ignored, or disrespected in any way, quite the opposite. The place looked clean and taken care of. Hopefully, I won't have to go there anytime soon, but if I have to, I'll feel content and at ease, knowing that the nursing staff, and the doctors are there to help me."

— D.M

★★★★★ "Dr. Peter Stathopoulos is an excellent physician. He is thorough and kind and caring. I have had wonderful care

from him. The office staff is considerate and helpful. I highly recommend this facility."

— E.L.

★★★★★ "Dr. Jimenez is a Godsend, not to mention the staff."

— T.T.

"I don't know what, if any, special recognitions are awarded to RUMC's resident doctors, but for the extraordinary care, concern, and gentle bedside manner he provided to both my husband and me during such a difficult, stressful time, I would nominate Joseph Picone for Resident of the Year."

— Yolanda L. Rudich

Bariatric and Metabolic Institute Earns Reaccreditation

Richmond University Medical Center's Bariatric and Metabolic Institute has earned reaccreditation as a Comprehensive Center with Adolescent and Obesity Medicine Qualifications, as well as a Center of Excellence in Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. To complement these reaccreditations, the Institute also earned a new designation: Center of Excellence in Obesity Medicine. These national designations were awarded through the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), a joint quality program of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS).

"These reaccreditations formally acknowledge our commitment to providing high quality, multidisciplinary, patient-centered care to metabolic and bariatric surgery patients, while supporting continuous quality improvement and patient safety efforts," Alex Barkan, MD, said. Dr. Barkan is RUMC's metabolic and bariatric surgery director, obesity medicine director, and director of the



Institute, which he founded in 2018. "In order to earn this accreditation, we underwent an independent, voluntary and rigorous peer evaluation in accordance with nationally recognized standards provided by the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program."

The MBSAQIP standards ensure that metabolic and bariatric patients receive multidisciplinary medical care, which improves patient outcomes and long-term success. MBSAQIP-accredited centers, like RUMC's Institute, offer preoperative

and postoperative care designed specifically for patients with obesity. To earn MBSAQIP reaccreditation, the Institute met criteria for staffing, training, facility infrastructure, and patient care pathways, ensuring its ability to support patients with obesity. The center also participates in a national data registry that yields semiannual reports on the quality of its surgical outcomes and identifying opportunities for quality improvement. The Institute underwent an extensive site visit by an experienced bariatric surgeon who reviewed the Institute's structure, processes, and clinical outcomes data.

Established in 2018, RUMC's Bariatric and Metabolic Institute provides a diverse range of surgical and support services, including sleeve-gastrectomy and gastric bypass. Since opening, over 2,000 patients have been assisted through the Institute. Dr. Barkan and his team have performed over 500 weight loss surgeries and surgical patients of the Institute have lost a combined total of more than 22,000 pounds.

RUMC's Vice Chair for Department of Medicine Honored by United Hospital Fund

On May 6, the United Hospital Fund honored over 60 quality improvement leaders from health care organizations across the metropolitan region for their tireless efforts to improve the quality, safety, and equity of patient care at their institutions. Richmond University Medical Center's Jay Mbeng Nfonoyim, MD, MPA, FCCP, FACP, CPE, was among this year's honorees who were recognized by the UHF as Quality Improvement Champions. Dr. Nfonoyim is vice chair for the Department of Medicine; program director of Internal Medicine Residency; and chief of the Critical Care Division.

"I am humbled, deeply honored, and grateful to be a recipient of this award," Dr. Nfonoyim said. "I would like to thank The United Hospital Fund for its great contribution to quality care in New York

and beyond, our hospital's leadership for nominating me, and the members of our healthcare team — physicians, nurses and ancillary staff — for making this possible."

Dr. Nfonoyim was honored during the UHF's sixth annual Tribute to Excellence in Health Care. More than 500 members of the New York City area's health care community attended. The honorees include physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and a broad range of other health care leaders, each selected by a senior executive at their institution. The honorees represented nearly 70 hospital systems, long-term care facilities, home care organizations, independent practice associations, federally qualified health centers, medical groups, and behavioral health organizations.



Jay Mbeng Nfonoyim, MD, MPA, FCCP, FACP, CPE

Emergency Department Celebrates Graduating Interns



Last month, the Emergency Department celebrated its latest graduating class of interns. The Emergency Department Intern Program is for licensed nursing graduates who seek to specialize in emergency nursing. It is designed to

nurture the new graduate nurses in the transition from student to professional. This program generally runs about a year and provides a strong foundation and the full complement of didactic and clinical experiences needed to develop

competency in the Emergency Department. Over 60% of RUMC's registered nursing staff are currently attending or have completed our nurse intern program.

Tottenville HS Medical Tech Students Tour RUMC

On May 16, over 30 students from Tottenville High School visited Richmond University Medical Center meeting with medical staff and touring the hospital's facility.

The students are currently enrolled in the school's medical technology program, which helps them further develop the fundamental skills necessary to pursue a career in medicine.

After meeting several physicians and nurses as part of a career panel, the students went on a tour that included the hospital's pharmacy, Labor and Delivery Unit, Respiratory, Emergency Department, and new Surgical Pavilion.



Tottenville High School's medical tech students with RUMC medical professionals following a careers panel.

RUMC Auxiliary Holds Pocketbook Bingo



A designer purse bingo was held on April 14 at The Historic Old Bermuda Inn to raise funds for the Richmond University Medical Center Auxiliary Grant Program. The event, chaired by Debbie Messina and Diane Scanlon, was sold out, with over 250 people in attendance. All the designer purse prizes were donated. The Auxiliary would like to thank all the donors and supporters for their generosity and the attendees who helped make this a successful event.



Chief of Woman's Cardiovascular Health Talks Heart Health with SI Advance

On May 13, board certified cardiologist and chief of Women's Cardiovascular Health, Fiona Shehaj, MD, participated in a panel on women's heart health sponsored by the Staten Island Advance. The panel was the second in the Advance's series entitled "Conversations with Community Giants," and was broadcast live on the Advance's Facebook page, allowing viewers to listen in and submit questions. Dr. Shehaj spoke about many topics including the different symptoms and risk factors women face compared to men, shared cardiac statistics related to trends among women on Staten Island, and provided advice for women so they can stay heart healthy. Dr. Shehaj also fielded questions from a panel of Advance reporters including executive editor Brian J. Laline and CEO of Advance Local Caroline Diamond Harrison.



June Observances

Please join us in acknowledging the following health-related observances for the month of June:

Month-Long:

Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month
Cataract Awareness Month
Cancer Survivors Month
Men's Health Month
Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month
National Aphasia Awareness Month
National Congenital Cytomegalovirus Awareness Month
National Migraine and Headache Awareness Month
National Scleroderma Awareness Month
PTSD Awareness Month
Scoliosis Awareness Month

Week-Long:

Men's Health Week: June 10 to 16
Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week: June 25-July 1

Recognition Days:

June 2: National Cancer Survivors Day
June 8: World Brain Tumor Day
June 8: Family Health and Fitness Day
June 14: World Blood Donor Day
June 18: Autistic Pride Day
June 19: World Sickle Cell Day
June 25: World Vitiligo Day
June 27: National HIV Testing Day

Hillel of Staten Island Salutes RUMC Staffer for Years of Support



Congratulations to senior administration executive assistant Nancy Tricorico. Nancy was honored on May 2 by Hillel of Staten Island at their Hillel Kavod Circle

Reception. Nancy was honored for her longtime support and dedication to Hillel and its chapters at Wagner College and the College of Staten Island. Nancy was

honored along with New York City Council Member David Carr and the Honorable Philip Straniere. The reception was held at the JCC of Staten Island.

New Hires — Welcome to RUMC!

Achiaa Adu-Gyamfi — *Respiratory Therapist*
Soloman Balban — *Mental Health Tech*
Shannon Barnes — *Mental Health Tech*
Muhammad Bhatti — *Respiratory Therapist*
Diana Buzukja — *Receptionist*
Renee Calzaretta — *Guest Rep*
Tyrese Charles — *Food Service Worker*
Kiana Cornejo — *Medical Assistant*
Frank Cortese — *Radiology Tech*
William Coyle — *Paramedic*
Peterson Desir — *Respiratory Therapist*
Dede Fationa — *Unit Clerk*
David Ferrer — *Peer Counselor*
Kevin Hernandez — *Transporter*
Tinamarie Howe — *Mental Health Tech*
Niyasha James — *Receptionist*
Sharmaine Johnson — *Pharmacy Tech*
Carla Johnson — *Nursing Assistant*
Kiara Lorenzana — *Social Worker*

Nour Maali — *Classroom Sub*
Lawrence Mann — *Security Guard*
Caitlyn Murphy — *Unit Assistant*
Heba Paradise — *RN*
Kristen Parry — *RN*
Jeff Quintero — *Unit Clerk*
Genesis Rodriguez — *Receptionist*
Cinthia Sanchez-Parades — *Receptionist*
Oriana Shi — *Staffing Specialist*
Andrawes Soliman — *Pharmacy Tech*
Angelo Spatola — *Radiology Tech/ X-Ray Tech*
Emily Torres — *RN Intern*
Miriam Urbina — *Medical Assistant*
Carlos - Gael Valentin — *Food Service Worker*
Kessia Varghese — *Pharmacy Tech*
Johnny Vasquez — *Paramedic*
Victoria Vega — *RN*
Ken Werner — *Facilities Engineer*

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to our employees of the month for May:



James Moore
Special Procedure
Technologist
Radiology Department

Frank Scaglione
Catscan Tech Lead
Radiology Department

Over 350 People Make RUMC's Annual Jack Sipp Outing a Huge Success

On May 20, supporters of Richmond University Medical Center took to the links, tennis courts and bocce courts at Richmond County Country Club to support the hospital and celebrate this year's honorees. Recognized for their dedication to the hospital and its services were trustee Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD, and her husband Thomas A. Tormey, Jr. Also honored was board certified

orthopedic surgeon Mark Brandon, MD, FAAOS.

As the CEO and Director of Scientific Affairs at the Cancer Research Institute (CRI), a global nonprofit organization dedicated to investing in the most promising areas of cancer immunotherapy, O'Donnell-Tormey, is supervising research to harness the power of the immune

system to conquer and cure all cancers.

Dr. Brandon is board certified in orthopedic surgery and a longtime member of the RUMC medical staff. Dr. Brandon is the first doctor on Staten Island to perform reverse shoulder replacement for irreparable rotator cuff tears, fractures, or arthritis with a rotator cuff tear.



Allison Cohen eyeing the bocce target.



Brian Farley escaping the bunker.



Honoree Mark Brandon, MD, with his son Andrew and wife Bianca.



Wing Law returns serve.



Honorees Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, PhD, and her husband Thomas accepting their award.



Borough President Vito Fossella on the links.