

# MEDICAL ALUMNI NEWS

For Alumni of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine

## Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future

MEDICAL ALUMNI WEEKEND REFORTIIES MILLER TIES

Part family reunion, medical convention, and weekend-long excuse to party, Medical Alumni Weekend 2008 gave participants a unique opportunity to soak up the Miller School's illustrious past, its prestigious present, and its ultra-bright future. Sometimes all at the same time!

The essence of Medical Alumni Weekend is about ties that bind—it's an annual reaffirmation of the passion and dedication that lead one to pursue medicine, regardless of age and generational differences.

This year's event was no different. The proceedings got under way Friday, March 7, with a nod to the weekend's academic component. A continuing medical education seminar (CME) on Global Vascular Risk Prevention was conducted by recently recruited stroke expert Ralph Sacco, M.D., M.S., who chairs the Department of Neurology.

The latter part of March 7 was set aside for something that's been a Medical Alumni Weekend staple for eight years: freshman pinning. Renamed the John G. Clarkson Freshman Pinning Ceremony two years ago, after Dean Emeritus John Clarkson, M.D. '68, the ceremony provided one of the weekend's unforgettable moments—the joyful howl rising from the throats of 179 Miller School freshmen on the verge of getting pins signifying their welcome into the Miller School family. The accompanying roar from the medical students' friends and family members was equally impressive, as freshman pinning unfolded under a large white tent pitched on the Schoninger Research Quadrangle.

Pascal J. Goldschmidt, M.D., the Miller School's senior vice president for medical affairs and dean, smiled as he told the students that medicine is entering a fascinating phase where islet cells are being used to combat diabetes, and

followed by a reception and dinner Goldschmidt hosted on the quadrangle for returning alumni, students, and their families in the culminating activity for day one.

Friday and throughout the weekend, alumni were able to enjoy guided tours of the medical school and surrounding campus, prompting many to marvel at additions such as the architecturally striking and environmentally friendly Clinical Research Building.

Saturday morning featured additional CME sessions led by more of the Miller School's renowned faculty. A session focusing on The



**Welcome to the Miller family:**

It's all smiles for freshman Miller School student Vivek Patel and his parents, Prafulla (left) and Narendra Patel, at the John G. Clarkson Freshman Pinning Ceremony.

**Honoring Miller's best:** From left, Miller School Dean Pascal J. Goldschmidt, M.D., Dean Emeritus John G. Clarkson, M.D. '68, and Alumni Awards Selection Committee Chair Alberto A. Mitrani, M.D. '84, at Clarkson's induction into the Medical Alumni Hall of Fame.

It's an annual reaffirmation of the **passion and dedication** that lead one **to pursue medicine.**

genomics is providing insight into the causes of illnesses such as Alzheimer's disease.

But Goldschmidt reminded the Class of 2011 that "what has not changed is the highest calling to be a physician." Those fitting words were

Pharmacogenics of Antidepressant Treatment Response was entrusted to Julio Licinio, M.D., chairman of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences.

Understanding the Biology of Adult Stem Cells was the responsibility of Joshua Hare, M.D., chief of the Cardiovascular Division and director of the new Interdisciplinary Stem Cell Institute, who recently came from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

Up next was Miller School graduate Jorge J. Guerra, Jr., M.D. '72, the medical school's associate vice president for clinical affairs. Guerra, who's also chief medical officer of the University of Miami Medical Group and committee advisor to the Medical

Alumni Association, explained to alumni how the new UHealth System is collaborating with community practitioners to improve patient care.

Next on the agenda was the Scholarship Donor Recognition Luncheon, which gave Miller School students an opportunity to personally thank alumni and friends who support them on a regular basis.

"Scholarships and grants are critical," Bernie Nusbaum, M.D. '79, co-chair of the John K. Robinson Fund, told those gathered at the luncheon. "It is only through the generosity of our alumni and friends that we can increase the number of students receiving scholarships and address the rising cost of medical education."

When the evening rolled around, John Clarkson was inducted into the Medical Alumni Hall of Fame.

The honor was bestowed during an awards banquet at the Biltmore hotel, as 200 alumni and guests looked on. A former director of Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and chair of ophthalmology, Clarkson handled

his induction in characteristic fashion: with gratitude, humility, and an easy-going equanimity.

"I never envisioned being the chair of the Department of Ophthalmology or dean of the medical school either," Clarkson mused on a breezy rooftop hotel terrace prior to the awards banquet.

After the banquet was over and Clarkson had been inducted into the pantheon of Miller School greats, alumni danced the night away in various Biltmore ballrooms.

Sunday was marked by the Sixth Annual Senior Class Golf Classic at Melreese International Links. Also, the Coral Gables History Society conducted tours of the Biltmore, which included an explanation of the Miller School's origins in the building.

Afterward, those who participated in Medical Alumni Weekend 2008 trekked back to their respective hometowns, having refortified their ties with their Miller School compatriots until it's time for Medical Alumni Weekend 2009.

# The Sensitive Soul of ‘The Fight Doctor’

THE COLORFUL LIFE OF ALUMNUS FERDIE PACHECO, IN AND OUT OF THE RING

**B**utcher, baker, and candlestick maker may be the only vocations Ferdie Pacheco, M.D. '58, hasn't pursued in his 80 years on the planet. A gifted raconteur with a salty tongue and zero tolerance for political correctness, Pacheco has been a pharmacist, physician, broadcaster, author, and painter.

Want more? How about military officer or boxing insider who traveled the globe as one of Muhammad Ali's corner workers? Pacheco's been there/done that over the course of a colorful, eclectic life, and he's not bashful about sharing his experiences—or opinions. Like his take on Mike Tyson, whom Pacheco encountered during his 25-year career as a boxing analyst for NBC and then Showtime.

"I went to interview him a couple of times," Pacheco recalls, relaxing in a room of his northeast Miami home that serves as an art studio. "I said, 'Mike you really need treatment. You ought to get out of boxing and spend a year to straighten your head up. Right now, you're so (messed) up that you don't know which way you're going!'"

Known as "The Fight Doctor" during his announcer days, Pacheco

"I miss medicine. I miss the **contact with the patient** and me getting him well. **That is holy to me.** That is holy."

laughs uproariously. "He was mad as hell at me," he recounts. "I said, 'Join the club!'" Pacheco peers mischievously over his glasses, clearly delighting in the shock value an unexpected verbal left hook can deliver.

Yet behind the pugnacious facade lurks a sensitive soul that enables Pacheco to make money as a painter, despite having no formal art training. He's also a humanist who ran a general medicine practice in one of Miami's poorer neighborhoods, Overtown, for 25 years and routinely treated people regardless of ability to pay.

Pacheco's a complex man whose



**An artist and his works:** Ferdie Pacheco, M.D. '58, is ensconced in his living room as he gazes on portraits he created, including one of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (center).

intellectual curiosity burns as brightly now as it did when he entered medical school more than half a century ago. It also doesn't hurt that he's as competitive as all get out.

"You've got to be imbued with a desire to be the best," Pacheco says. "I mean, I go to an art show, and I'm just looking at the paintings saying, 'I can do better than that! I can do better than that!'"

"That's the way I went through my whole life."

Pacheco's odyssey started in Tampa, where his Spanish-American father worked as a pharmacist. After earning degrees in biology

that Miami-area black boxers were often denied emergency medical treatment due to Jim Crow, prompted Pacheco to start working as a corner man in local arenas and gyms. It led to an association with Muhammad Ali, which led to a lengthy broadcasting career.

Pacheco, who compiled a book of his medical cartoons and passed it out during his class's 50th reunion at Medical Alumni Weekend, hasn't practiced medicine since 1980 or announced a fight since 2002.

Does he miss the "sweet science"?

"No, I hate boxing!" Pacheco barks. "Because it's in disarray." Medicine, though, is a different story.

"I miss medicine," Pacheco says. "I miss the contact with the patient and me getting him well. That is holy to me. That is holy."

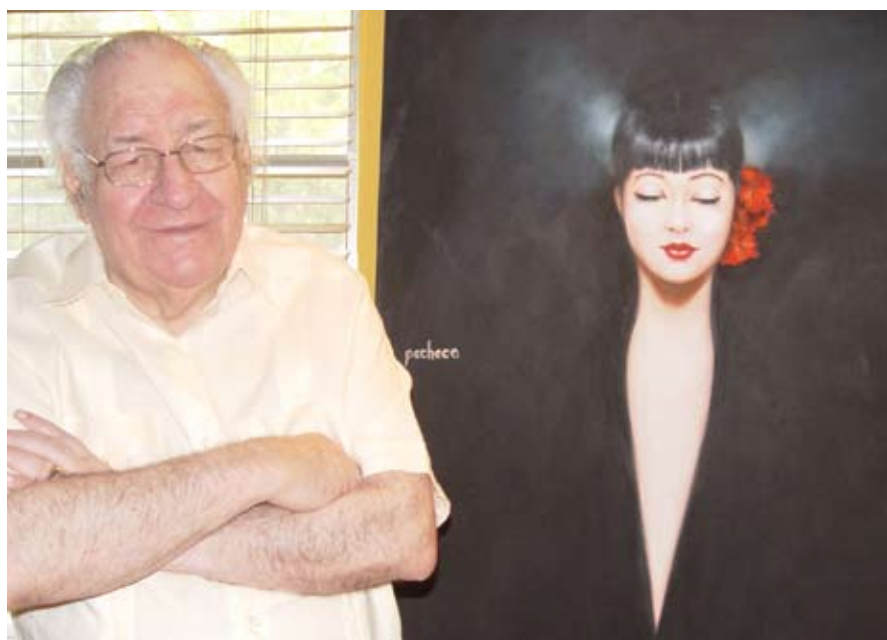
"But the rest of the (stuff) that goes with it, all the paperwork ... all the arguing with Medicare and Medicaid ... no, I don't miss that at all."

The author of 16 books and the creator of innumerable paintings, Pacheco says he thought he'd be ready to die at 80, but he's having so much fun now that he wouldn't mind seeing the odometer hit 90.

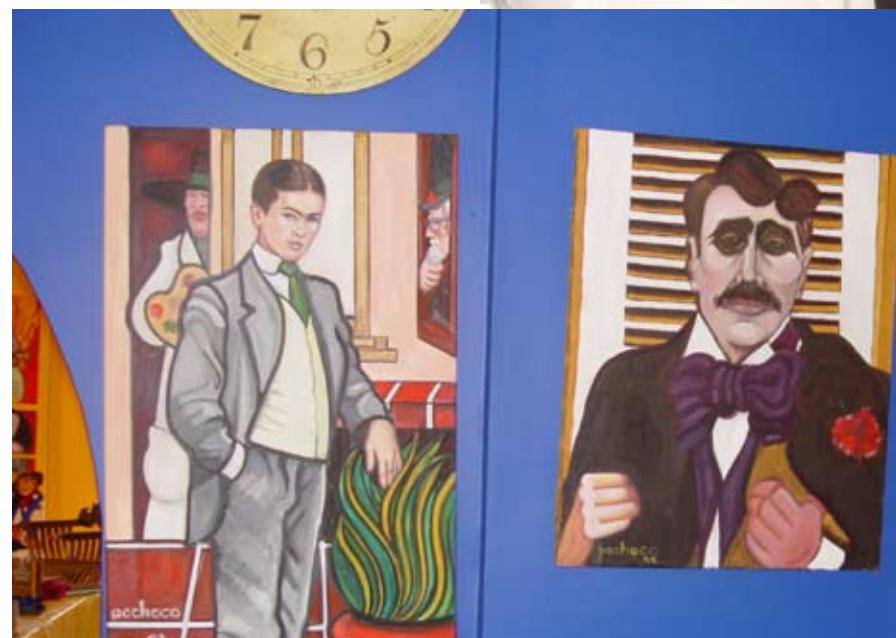
Surrounded by books, as well as military hats from various wars, Pacheco gestures at a portrait.

"This was the hardest painting I've ever done," he blurts, smiling. "It was hard not to make this woman look ugly! Men, on the other hand, the uglier they are, the better the painting comes out."

Some people might disagree with that—which would probably please irascible Ferdie Pacheco to no end.



**A doctor with many facets:** While he's best known for his longtime association with boxing, Ferdie Pacheco, M.D. '58, has also had successful careers as a physician, painter, and author.



and chemistry from Spring Hill College in Alabama, Pacheco followed in dad's footsteps by receiving a pharmacy degree from the University of Florida.

Following military service, Pacheco went to medical school at the University of Miami and then practiced in Overtown. His interest in boxing and his outrage over the fact

# A Renowned Innovator in Radiation Oncology Returns Home to Miami

ALUMNUS ALAN POLLACK TO SERVE AT UM/SYLVESTER AND JMH

**A**lan Pollack, Ph.D. '79, M.D. '87, a leading physician-scientist at Philadelphia's Fox Chase Cancer Center, is coming back to the Miller School as the new chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology. He'll oversee clinical and research teams at UM/Sylvester and serve as chief of service at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

A Miami Beach native, Pollack has been the Gerald E. Hanks, M.D., Endowed Chair and chairman of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the Fox Chase Cancer Center since 2001. He's an internationally renowned expert on prostate cancer and other cancers.

Under Pollack's leadership, the Fox Chase radiation oncology program has

made significant strides in industry, National Institutes of Health, and donor funding and in performing major clinical trials. A passionate and prolific researcher, Pollack boosted research programs in his department and attracted top



Alan Pollack, M.D. '87

researchers and physicians to Fox Chase. "We are fortunate to have recruited such a distinguished clinician, scientist, and leader," says Miller School Dean Pascal J. Goldschmidt, M.D. "Dr. Pollack's return to Miami and the Miller

School is one more step in our efforts to provide our patients with the best doctors in the nation and give our medical students access to the innovators in research and health care."

Goldschmidt also praised outgoing chair Arnold M. Markoe, M.D., Sc.D. "We thank Dr. Markoe for his distinguished service on our faculty since 1981 and for his leadership as chairman since 1995. We are pleased he will remain as an outstanding faculty colleague after passing the chairmanship baton to Dr. Pollack."

W. Jarrard Goodwin, M.D., FACS, director of UM/Sylvester, joined Goldschmidt in applauding the hiring of Pollack. "Dr. Pollack brings an unwavering commitment to finding the most

effective weapons in the fight against cancer," Goodwin says.

Pollack, whose Ph.D. is in microbiology and immunology, completed his internship at Jackson Memorial Hospital, followed by a residency and an assistant professor position at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas.

The Miller School's "Department of Radiation Oncology has a great foundation of clinicians and physicists," Pollack says. "The goal is to build on that and expand the department and bring in the latest technology."

Pollack has written and lectured extensively and presented numerous cancer-related scientific papers in the United States and abroad. He starts at the Miller School in June.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

## PERRI ELIZABETH YOUNG, M.D. '99

*Born and raised in Miami, Perri Elizabeth Young, M.D. '99, is an internist with a private practice in her hometown.*

**Profession:** I trained at Jackson from 1999 through 2002 in internal medicine and was chief resident from 2002 through 2003. Afterward, I took a position with an endocrinologist in an office- and hospital-based practice, and then I realized that was not for me. So I started my own practice in November 2004 in internal medicine. It is completely office-based. I now have a special interest in women's issues because more than two-thirds of my patients are women. I run a high-end practice, call referring physicians personally, and give out my cell phone number for emergencies.

I share office space with my father, Jerrold Young, M.D., who is a general surgeon at Jackson and who runs the Hernia Institute of Miami. I also work with my husband, Sean A. Simon, M.D. '99, who is a plastic surgeon who completed his general surgery and plastic surgery residencies at Jackson.

### Professional accomplishment I'm proudest of:

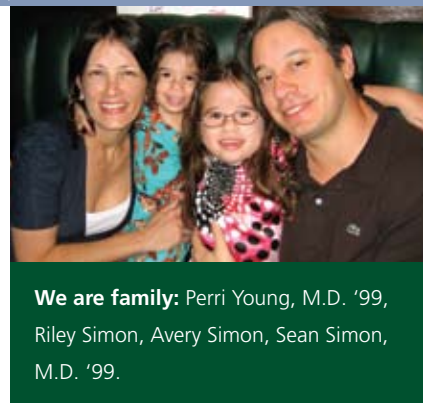
I am proud that I take care of my entire family, all my close friends and their families, my children's teachers, and even some of my own teachers. I also provide health care to many other integral members of our community and do so right next to the hospital where I was born! I run into my patients everywhere I go and, more importantly, they seem happy to see me!

### Person who influenced me most in

**medical school:** Some doctors who I love are Mark O'Connell, Karl Muench (who was my second-year mentor), Alex and Hilit Mechaber, Daniel Lichtstein, and Maureen Lowery.

### Funniest medical school experience:

I don't have a funniest, but I have a most memorable. It took place in March 1999, on Match Day. My husband, Sean, and I were waiting to find out where we were going, and after Sean got into Miami, I knew we were staying here. We were so excited that we exchanged a dramatic, whirlwind kiss. NBC6 cameras were there and taped it,



**We are family:** Perri Young, M.D. '99, Riley Simon, Avery Simon, Sean Simon, M.D. '99.

Step 2 boards at the end of our second year. Our two daughters, Riley Claire, 5, and Avery Jayne, 2, are incredible. Riley already helps Sean with procedures and wants to be a doctor when she grows up ("But not a surgeon, because Daddy works too hard!")

**Pet peeve:** It's a tossup. New patients who walk in and tell you that they had a problem with their last doctor—who happens to be my friend! That's probably equal to an insurance company having a low-level telemarketer ask me clinical questions that they can't understand the answers to.

**Has being a physician met your expectations?:** Yes. To all the fledgling M.D.s out there: If you are studying medicine because you actually do want to "heal and help people" (like you said on the application) and you want to use science, reason, AND your heart and soul to treat people comprehensively, you will be successful and you will feel fulfilled in this profession.

**P.S.:** Please let the Class of '99 know that I want to participate in our ten-year anniversary!

so we were on the local news.

### What about medical school could have been improved?:

We were in the first year of a new numerical grading system, and the compulsive med students were literally freaking out about getting a percentage and not a letter grade. This grading system was improved and enhanced in subsequent years. Kudos to those involved in that progress.

### Personal accomplishment I'm proudest of:

My family. Sean and I met in medical school at orientation and were married the week after

in her throat was fastened securely to a respirator that made a loud whooshing sound every few seconds.

Out of the corner of my eyes I saw our pediatric cardiologist approach the little one. A tall man with coarse features and a balding head, he placed his stethoscope first on the neonate's chest and then sides. His large hands swept across the infant's abdomen feeling for an enlarged liver or spleen. Placing his medical instruments on the table, he glanced at the green luminescence of the EKG and other monitoring devices.

He took a deep breath, sauntered to a nearby sink, and poured a small amount of water into a white paper cup. He returned to his ashen patient. The monitor's bell began to ring and he made an adjustment on the breathing machine until the clanging ceased.

He placed a small amount of water on the child's forehead and made a symbolic cross with his finger. His lips moved as he whispered a short, barely audible prayer.

As he left the darkened room, his glance caught mine for the first time. He put his hand on my shoulder and pressed it firmly. "Son, in my business you need all the help you can get," he said. He then disappeared into the adjoining hallway, his long white clinic coat rhythmically moving to the pace of his steps.

*Julian Haber, M.D. '61, currently serves as developmental behavioral pediatrician for Cook Children's Medical Center at the Child Study Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Haber is the author of ADHD: The Great Misdiagnosis.*

## THE POET'S CORNER

*The Poet's Corner is a showcase for alumni who regularly heed their muse. If you have a poem or essay 600 words or shorter that you'd like to share, please forward it to: Glenda Weiss Rodriguez, director for Medical Alumni Development, at grodriguez3@med.miami.edu.*

### Say a Little Prayer

By Julian Haber, M.D. '61

I sat at a small desk in the corner of the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit of a large teaching hospital in San Antonio. My eyes strained against the dim light as I finished my chart notes for December 24, 1963. At 2 a.m. only one nurse patrolled the ward. The



outside corridors were void of traffic, except for an occasional orderly or intern.

A solitary infant occupied the room as the attending physicians discharged all the other patients for the holidays. We lost more than 50 percent of our babies from cardiac surgery in the early '60s. This infant struggled to survive. Less than four pounds, her translucent skin bore a large bandage across the chest and a small intravenous needle in a scalp vein provided fluid and nutrition and controlled blood pressure.

Plastic tubing protruded from her thorax to a bottle of water on the ground. The tube

## 1970s

**Robert Leo**, M.D. '77, has offered to be a full-time volunteer physician in the Good Samaritan Clinic, a health center located in Morgantown, North Carolina. Leo had previously been an emergency room physician at Grace Hospital, a not-for-profit Morgantown health care facility committed to providing affordable care to local residents.

## 1980s

**John Richmond**, M.D. '81, has been named medical director of Genesis Behavioral Health, a community mental health center with facilities in Laconia and Plymouth, New Hampshire. Richmond, a psychiatrist who lives in Concord, New Hampshire, was previously chief of the Department of Behavioral Health at Ireland Army Community Hospital in Kentucky.

**Dan Barry**, M.D. '82, a former astronaut who participated in three space shuttle missions, has created a company that makes robotic assistants for people with disabilities. Barry launched Denbar Robotics subsequent to retiring from NASA in 2005.

**Celia M. Witten**, M.D. '82, Ph.D., is director of the Office of Cellular, Tissue and Gene Therapy and the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. She worked for more than ten years as a practicing physician at the National Rehabilitative Hospital in Washington, D.C., before joining FDA as division director for General, Restorative and Neurological Devices in the Center for Devices and Radiological Health.

**Russell Eggert**, M.D. '84, is the Florida Department of Health's director of disease control. Eggert recently wrote an op-ed piece stating that schoolchildren are not a

high-risk group vis-à-vis methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA). Eggert is a fellow of both the American College for Preventive Medicine and the American Academy of Family Physicians.

**Ernest F. J. Block**, M.D. '86, graduated from the University of Tennessee's Physician Executive MBA program in December. "The program has helped me see the world from a different perspective—as a physician leader with the analytical approach of business," he says.

**Mark Eisenberg**, M.D. '88, is the new chief of neurosurgery and director of the neurosurgery residency program at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in New Hyde Park, New York. He is also a clinical assistant professor in the New York University neurosurgery department.

## 1990s

**Carlos Nunez**, M.D. '93, is the chief physician executive for Picis, a health care information technology solutions firm based in Wakefield, Massachusetts. Prior to joining Picis in 2000, Nunez had been director of education and research for the division of critical care medicine at NorthEast Medical Center in Concord, North Carolina. Nunez has published and presented extensively on the topics of anesthesia and critical care informatics, clinical data analysis, cerebral blood flow auto-regulation, and anesthesia history.

**Rick Baker**, M.D. '98, is the chief of family medicine at the Indian River Medical Center.

**Nancy Baker**, M.D. '98, has a family medicine/urgent care practice in Vero

Beach, Florida. Baker is also the medical director for her local Red Cross chapter and is the clerkship director in family medicine for the Fort Pierce campus of Florida State University.

**Jason Goldman**, M.D. '98, is a solo practitioner in family medicine in Coral Springs, Florida. He and his wife, Joy, are expecting their second child in May.

## In Memoriam

**Reginald J. Stambaugh**, M.D. '59, died at his Palm Beach home in December 2007 at the age of 77. Stambaugh worked as an ophthalmologist and was the founding chairman of Ophthalmic Mutual Insurance Co., which provides insurance to ophthalmologists.

## BEST & BRIGHTEST

*Profiles of exceptional Miller School students*

A Miller School senior and sophomore are the first recipients of an award created to spur on budding physician-scientists.



**Fledgling physician-scientists:** Miller School students Seth Miller and Christine Dinh are the first winners of the Dr. Carl and Barbara Alving Endowed Award.

**Christine Dinh**, a member of the class of '08, and **Seth Miller**, '10, have been presented with the Dr. Carl and Barbara Alving Endowed Award, which is for the student with the most outstanding research achievement during the school year.

Dinh's and Miller's projects were deemed exceptional enough that the inaugural award was given to both of them, instead of a single winner. The two were among 21 candidates who had their work assessed by six judges.

Dinh's research focused on the manner in which auditory hair cells undergo cell death in trauma-induced hearing loss, while Miller's examined RNA differences in metastatic, very primary tumor cell lines. The students split a one-time gift of \$3,000.

"This prestigious award inspires students like me and Seth to ask difficult questions that challenge us to use what we've learned,"

Dinh says. "Expenses in medical school are increasing every year, so it's nice to have a little extra money on the side."

Winning the Dr. Carl and Barbara Alving Endowed Award was a "culminating event" in Miller's view.

"A career in research, especially when you're a medical student and time tends to be very limited, can be very frustrating," Miller says. "There's a high rate of failure in research. So to have an award like this, recognizing the work that you've done, is very encouraging and uplifting."

A married couple that both have M.D. degrees, Carl and Barbara Alving made a \$100,000 gift to the Miller School to endow the award. Carl Alving, M.D. '66, heads the Department of Vaccine Production and Delivery in the Division of Retrovirology at the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research.

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