

GBMC

FOR
THE

**GREATER
GOOD**

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

HEALTH. HEALING. HOPE.

• Preparing to Celebrate
60 Years of Caring for Our Community

Celebrating 60 Years: Renaming Physicians Pavilion West to Honor GBMC's Founders



In celebration of GBMC's 60th anniversary, Physicians Pavilion West (PPW) will be renamed The Founders Pavilion. This new name honors institutions fundamental in establishing GBMC's reputation of excellence: the Presbyterian Eye, Ear & Throat Charity Hospital, the Board of Lady Managers, the Women's Hospital Foundation, the Milton J. Dance, Jr. Endowment, the GBMC Volunteer Auxiliary, and the GBMC Ophthalmology Educational Foundation.

Built in 1992, PPW has served GBMC for over three decades. To ensure it reflects the same thoughtfulness and modern comforts as our newest facilities — such as the Louis and Phyllis Friedman Building and the Sandra R. Berman Pavilion — a significant renovation is planned. These updates include a refreshed exterior façade, enhanced interior spaces, and a historical timeline in the main lobby celebrating GBMC's legacy. Additionally, the second floor will become the new home of GBMC's Ophthalmology Department.

Honoring GBMC's Founding Legacy

The Presbyterian Eye, Ear & Throat Charity Hospital and the Board of Lady Managers are cornerstones of this project. The Founders Pavilion will highlight this enduring legacy, honoring those who built GBMC's reputation and helped maintain its independence.

The Presbyterian Board of Governors and the Board of Lady Managers provided a lead gift of over \$2 million for this project. With their support, the Ophthalmology Department will be named "The Presbyterian Eye, Ear & Throat Charity Hospital Department of Ophthalmology at GBMC."

Photo (from left): Amy Wells, Board of Governors; Stephen Plano, President, Board of Governors and GBMC HealthCare Board member; James K. Porterfield, MD, FACC, Board of Governors and GBMC Physician Titan of Care; and Melvin "Chip" R. Hurley, Jr. Finance Chair, Board of Governors.



Thanks to a significant provision in their estate plans, Dr. and Mrs. Welch's dedication to ophthalmology will be honored with the naming of "The Dr. Robert B. and Betty Welch Eye Center at The Presbyterian Eye, Ear & Throat Charity Hospital Department of Ophthalmology at GBMC."

This recognition reflects their immeasurable contributions to advancing eye care at GBMC and their enduring impact on our community.

If you have questions or wish to learn more about this project, please contact GBMC Philanthropy at 443-849-2773 or philanthropy@gbmc.org

Photo: Dr. and Mrs. Welch pictured at the dedication of the Ophthalmology Chair named in his honor.

Honoring Dr. Robert and Betty Welch

Within the newly named department, GBMC will celebrate the legacy of renowned ophthalmologist and former Chair of Ophthalmology, Dr. Robert B. Welch, and his wife, Betty. Dr. Welch's affiliation with GBMC began in 1959 when he served on the board of the Presbyterian Eye Research Foundation. He remained a member of the Presbyterian Eye, Ear & Throat Charity Hospital Board until his 2021 passing.

The Wilkinson-Welch-Hoover Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology at GBMC, currently held by Dr. Mary Louise. Z. Collins, bears his name. Dr. Welch was named one of the original GBMC Physician Titans of Care when that distinguished group was created to mark GBMC's 50th anniversary in 2015. He and Betty are perpetual members of the Elizabeth Duncan Yaggy Society and the 1965 Society at GBMC.

Family Tradition

Many families have traditions that form a common thread, often spanning generations. For Mary Ann Jensen, her family tradition is rooted in the field of ophthalmology. Her father was an ophthalmologist and ear, nose, and throat specialist. In those days, physicians underwent a one-year training program to learn both specialties.

Mary Ann fondly recalls assisting her father as he “simulated” eye surgeries using grapes. Sophisticated training equipment was unavailable, so doctors improvised with what they had. His expertise proved invaluable when he diagnosed Mary Ann with amblyopia, an ophthalmologic condition that permanently and significantly impaired her vision in one eye.

Decades later, Mary Ann chose GBMC as her family healthcare provider, with all three of her children born at the hospital. She continued to manage her eye health through routine check-ups with former GBMC ophthalmologist Dr. Anthony Kameen.

Mary Ann vividly remembers a particular emergency when she was experiencing issues with her “good” eye. Initially attributing the problem to stress or fatigue, she sought advice from her daughter, Allison, who was then in medical school. Though early in her training, Allison recognized the seriousness of the situation and urged her mother to contact Dr. Kameen for an urgent exam.

Dr. Kameen quickly identified the condition as a retinal detachment, a serious threat to Mary Ann’s vision. He understood the potential outcome — blindness in the affected eye — which would have been devastating, given her preexisting limitations in the other eye. Dr. Kameen immediately referred her to Dr. James Kelley, a comprehensive ophthalmologist and retina specialist at the time, who performed surgery to repair her retina at 11:00 p.m. that same day. Dr. Kelley spent his entire career at GBMC practicing with Dr. Richard Hoover, founding Chair of the Ophthalmology Department.



Dr. Kelley’s prompt and expert intervention efficiently spared Mary Ann’s sight. Today, she remains grateful, enjoying near-perfect vision in her only seeing eye, thanks to Dr. Kelley’s skill and dedication.

The family’s tradition continued with Mary Ann’s daughter, Dr. Allison Jensen, who pursued a career in pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus. Allison always envisioned working at GBMC but took time to broaden her experience, completing her residency at Northwestern University, a fellowship at the University of Minnesota, and working in private practice in Baltimore. In 2008, she joined GBMC at the invitation of Dr. Mary Louise Z. Collins, then Director of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, now Chair of Ophthalmology.

When Allison invited her mother to learn more about the Founders Building and the planned expansion of Ophthalmology, Mary Ann was reminded of her gratitude to Dr. Kelley and GBMC years earlier. The idea of honoring her father by naming a space in his memory held profound meaning for the Jensen family.

Photo: Mary Ann Jensen pictured with her daughter, Dr. Allison Jensen, Director of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus at GBMC.

RADIATION ONCOLOGY

\$23 Million Raised to Complete Oncology Capital Campaign



It is a new day in cancer care at GBMC. Patients are meeting their oncology teams in the welcoming, sunlit Sandra R. Berman Pavilion. A complete renovation, including new technology, is underway in the Sheila K. Riggs Radiation Oncology Center at the Sandra & Malcolm Berman Cancer Institute.

And, just in time for these improvements, the capital campaign to support the projects has met its \$23 million goal. Two key gifts came from organizations who know the program well.

Berman Pavilion capital campaign Co-Chair and Radiation Oncology Chair Geoffrey A. Neuner, MD (pictured above), led the efforts to raise funds for and redesign his department. Dr. Neuner gave a presentation in December to GBMC's Volunteer Auxiliary Board, which pledged \$500,000 toward the project. The trustees of the Milton

J. Dance, Jr. Endowment, after hearing from Dr. Neuner, have pledged \$1 million.

"Our volunteers are not only dedicated to helping patients each day, but they raise millions of dollars for GBMC," Dr. Neuner said. A few members of the Volunteer Auxiliary Board have firsthand experience. They are grateful for GBMC's patient-centered, multidisciplinary approach to treatment.

"Cancer care has changed," Dr. Neuner told both groups. "Patients and their oncologists now consider their options and plan a course of treatment together." For this reason, the redesign includes multiple consultation rooms, located between exam rooms, where patients and their loved ones meet with the oncologist to develop a treatment plan. "Currently, we are having these conversations in

the exam rooms," Dr. Neuner says. "We want to provide our patients with more confidence and dignity."

The trustees of the Dance Endowment, led by Chair John R. Saunders, Jr., MD, and Treasurer Barbara Messing, Ph.D., also have personal experience of GBMC's Radiation Oncology department as clinicians rather than as patients. Dr. Saunders serves on GBMC HealthCare's board of directors. Having retired as GBMC's chief medical officer in 2017, he cared for many patients who received radiation therapy as a surgeon here. Dr. Messing is the former manager of GBMC's Milton J. Dance, Jr. Head and Neck Center.

"The Dance Endowment board members understand our patients and their needs," said Dr. Neuner. "It is rewarding to have their support."

Renovations to Radiation Oncology are already underway. A new linear accelerator was installed last year, and the CT Simulation suite is under construction. Once redesign plans are complete, construction will begin throughout the department. Crews will work on weekends and overnight so that patient care continues with minimal disruption. Plans call for work to be completed in 2026.



March 30 Doctors' Day

National Doctors' Day, observed annually on March 30, is a special occasion to honor the vital contributions of physicians to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. It serves as an important reminder to appreciate the dedication, hard work, and sacrifices made by physicians throughout the year.



This year, GBMC proudly celebrates our exceptional physicians and honors a transformative leader who has profoundly impacted the care we provide to our community.

After 15 years of visionary leadership, our esteemed President and CEO, John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, is set to retire in June 2025. Dr. Chessare's commitment to patient-centered care, healthcare innovation, and refining GBMC's approach to medicine has set a remarkable standard. His guiding principle — asking, "What if it was your loved one?" — has shaped our approach to delivering compassionate, high-quality care.

Throughout his tenure, Dr. Chessare has been a strong advocate for advanced primary care, preventive health, chronic disease management, and continuous quality improvement. His leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic earned the trust of both staff and the community. Dr. Chessare leaves behind a legacy of collaboration, patient-centered innovation, and a lasting commitment to healthcare excellence.

This National Doctors' Day, we invite our community to honor Dr. Chessare and his invaluable contributions to GBMC and beyond. Please consider leaving a note or making a gift in his honor using the enclosed return

envelope or the QR code on the back. Together, let us celebrate the incredible impact of a leader who has given so much to our community.

National Doctors' Day is an opportunity for our community to support the physicians who have significantly impacted their lives, and those of their loved ones. Every GBMC doctor lives by the standards set by our President and CEO, Dr. John Chessare.

Featured here are some of GBMC's doctors who receive regular accolades from our community. Please take a moment to include a note and a gift in honor of your GBMC physicians using the enclosed return envelope or the QR code on the back of this newsletter.

Each note is shared with the doctors, who truly appreciate your kind words.



Dr. Robert Donegan serves as the chief of medical oncology in the Sandra & Malcolm Berman Cancer Institute at GBMC. Patients appreciate that Dr. Donegan cares for them as whole individuals, not just as patients. Dr. Donegan takes into consideration spiritual, emotional, and quality of life concerns that patients might face throughout their journey. Here are just a few of the many heartfelt words shared in his honor.

"I have a more than 10-year relationship with Dr. Donegan, beginning with my daughter's treatments and then mine. He is very intelligent, professional, and competent. But more than that, he is sincere and warm during times we were scared and unsure of life." - Lynn

"You are hands down the best doctor I've ever had in my life. What makes you so special is your humanity. You are patient and listen well. You were made to be an oncologist. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for leading my life-saving team." - Karissa

"I had stage 4 colon cancer. I wouldn't be here without Dr. Donegan. Dr. Donegan and everyone at GBMC are the kind of people that get you to the end zone." - Bob



Dr. Clara Anizoba, an internal medicine physician, specializes in the detection and prevention of illnesses and maintenance of wellness. She works to prevent and treat diseases, helping her patients to live full, healthy lives. She also focuses on assisting patients through the emotional journey that might accompany physical illnesses. Below are a few of many messages from her grateful patients.

"You are the MOST caring doctor that I've ever known! Thank you for being the dedicated, thoughtful, and compassionate doctor that you are! There are not enough words to express my gratitude." - Mirose

"I'm very grateful for Dr. Anizoba & I truly appreciate the time & care she gives to me and my family. May all the guidance and healthy speeches you give to all be returned to you and your family!" - Roslyn

"A wonderful thanks to Dr. Anizoba for just being the most wonderful, compassionate, caring doctor ever. I can't say enough about her. Outstanding in every way." - Vickie



Dr. Rachel Plotnick is a board-certified pediatrician with the GBMC Pediatric Group. Dr. Plotnick, beloved by many, cares for children of all ages and has a special interest in infant nutrition and child psychiatry. Below are just a few of the kind messages that Dr. Plotnick receives from her patients' parents.

"Dr. Rachel Plotnick is truly like family to us. Our children are happy to be in her care, and as parents, we are truly grateful for her calming presence, profound knowledge, and empathetic guidance through every stage of parenting." - Samantha

"Thank you for your kind and compassionate care. It gives me such peace of mind to know that you are always so responsive. I am honored to have you as our family's pediatrician." - Molly

"Thank you for being there for us - in the joyous times and in the challenging times. A visit with you always puts me at ease. We trust and value you immensely!" - Tim



In 1958, Congress declared National Doctor's Day a national holiday, marked by doctors wearing a red carnation in recognition of their service.

Generational Care and a Lasting Gift



For longtime Gilchrist nurse Ann Carico, giving back to the healthcare institutions that supported her family for generations was a natural decision. Over the decades, GBMC has provided compassionate care to multiple generations of her family — from her grandmother in the 1960s, to her mother’s cancer diagnosis in the 1970s, to her father in the 1990s. Most recently, both she and her brother received care, solidifying her deep gratitude for the hospital’s enduring presence in her life.

“It’s been a generational benefit, and the hospital has given us so much,” Ann said. “I can’t say enough about the good care my family has always received.”

Her most recent personal experience with GBMC and Gilchrist came after a fall in March 2024, which left her unable to care for her brother, who was battling a brain tumor. In that difficult moment, Gilchrist became a valued resource, admitting her brother the next day and providing compassionate care until the end of his life. The seamless support provided by Gilchrist gave Ann immense relief, knowing he was in good hands.

A dedicated nurse herself, Ann has been with Gilchrist since 2007, drawn to the organization’s patient-centered philosophy. Before joining Gilchrist, she worked at a large hospital system where she specialized in wound and ostomy care. While she spent

many years at that hospital, she found that Gilchrist offered her an opportunity for professional and personal growth.

“I just love our philosophy,” she expressed about Gilchrist. “There is diversity, equity, inclusion, and respect for end-of-life care. It is a wonderful place.”

Though she is retired, she remains active at Gilchrist, working around 40 hours a month, as needed. She appreciates the flexibility and the ability to continue making an impact on patients and families in critical moments.

Reflecting on leadership, she praised GBMC President and CEO John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, for his steady guidance, particularly during the pandemic and its political upheaval. Ann also commended Gilchrist President and GBMC HealthCare Executive Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer Cathy Hamel for her compassionate leadership and her dedication to excellence in hospice and elder care.

Her gratitude for the care she received at GBMC and Gilchrist inspired her to support both organizations through a charitable gift annuity which will provide her with a generous 9.2% lifetime of income and 2024 income tax deduction.

“It’s really just a thank you,” she said. Through planned giving, she hopes to contribute to the hospital’s continued growth and outreach programs that serve the community.

With her gift, she has become a member of the Elizabeth Duncan Yaggy Society, which honors loyal benefactors who have provided for GBMC in their estate plans or life income gifts, like Ann’s charitable gift annuity.

Receiving the Yaggy Society medal and meeting Dr. Chessare was a great honor for her, symbolizing the

deep connection she has with the institutions she holds dear.

Dr. Chessare presented Ann with her Yaggy Society medal. He said, “People like Ann Carico are what differentiate GBMC and Gilchrist from other institutions. Ann represents the very best of our healthcare system!”

As she looks to the future, she remains committed to supporting GBMC and Gilchrist.

“Because of my affection for both organizations, I decided to contribute a charitable gift annuity that benefits both GBMC and Gilchrist.”

Ann Carico’s story is a testament to the lasting impact of compassionate care and the power of giving back.

Photo: GBMC President and CEO John B. Chessare, MD, MPH, presents Ann Carico with a medal, celebrating her induction into the Elizabeth Duncan Yaggy Society after her generous contribution of a charitable gift annuity.

Did You Know?



One of the most powerful ways to give as a loyal supporter of GBMC is to add a provision to your estate plan. You can choose to leave a percentage, a specific sum or the residual of your estate, according to your philanthropic goals. We are prepared to provide the necessary wording for you to share with your attorney and/or advisor that will help you leave a gift to GBMC through your will, trust, retirement plan (IRA or 401(k)) or life insurance policy.

For more information, please contact: Senior Director of Principal Gifts John C. Jeppi at jjeppi@gbmc.org, or visit: gbmcplannedgiving.org

Dedicated to Giving: Harvey Shankman’s Remarkable Legacy

On January 21, 2025, GBMC and the community lost a true friend whose loyalty seemed boundless. Harvey Shankman was a patient of the Sandra & Malcolm Berman Cancer Institute, which benefited from his consistent philanthropy.

His gifts, relatively modest in themselves, began 22 years ago and marked significant occasions, including birthdays, anniversaries, and the passing of close friends. In total, he made 537 gifts to the Berman Cancer Institute that have assisted countless patients and families.

Shankman credited GBMC’s former Berman Cancer Institute Medical Director Dr. Gary I. Cohen and his team with saving his daughter Lisa’s life. Lisa Shankman was diagnosed with a rare, aggressive cancer at age 38. She lived and continued raising her children for 15 more years, each of which was considered a gift by the Shankman family.

In keeping with his thoughtful generosity, the family requested that memorial donations in Harvey Shankman’s name be made to GBMC.



The Newest Member of the Philanthropy Team Knows GBMC Well



Jessica Schlee joined the GBMC Philanthropy Department in early January 2025. This moment marked the culmination of her deep belief in the power of care, community, and connection, aligning seamlessly with GBMC's mission to provide compassionate, high-quality healthcare. She feels immensely grateful for the opportunity to contribute to a cause so deeply connected to her values.

Her professional journey with GBMC began four years earlier as the Assistant Director of Volunteer Services, where she witnessed the transformative power of volunteers and philanthropy in improving lives. The experience inspired admiration for GBMC's mission and fueled her desire to contribute on a larger scale. A drive to amplify her impact led Jessica to the Philanthropy team.

For Jessica, GBMC is more than just a workplace — it holds a special place in her heart. It is where two of her three children were born, and she remembers the exceptional

care her family received. "It isn't just the doctors or nurses; it's the techs, the support staff, and everyone who makes GBMC more than a hospital — it's a model of connected care," Jessica said. Pursuing her MBA at the University of Maryland was a challenging yet rewarding endeavor. Balancing her studies with family life and work, Jessica emerged stronger and more resilient, embracing the value of continued learning. Her degree was not just a professional milestone; it was a testament to her dedication to personal growth and lifelong learning.

At home in Baltimore County, Jessica's life is just as fulfilling. She and her husband, Larry, are busy raising their two younger children, Anthony and Isabella, amidst a whirlwind of soccer practices and family activities. Their home is a lively, loving hub often visited by their eldest son, Joseph, and his wife, Reese. Jessica's parents frequently visit from Florida, while her nearby siblings and their families add to the warmth and support of a close-knit community. Their playful black lab, Raven, ensures there is never a dull moment.

Jessica is driven by the stories of patients, families, and staff whose lives have been touched by GBMC. These narratives inspire her mission to ensure that GBMC can continue delivering exceptional care to the community. Jessica often reflects on

how philanthropy and volunteerism create ripples of change, transforming lives in ways that are both profound and enduring. For Jessica, this work is not just a job; it is a purpose. She welcomes anyone with a GBMC story to share it, knowing that these tales of hope and resilience will inspire her and others dedicated to making a difference. Each day deepens her passion for GBMC's mission, and she is committed to ensuring its legacy of care and compassion for generations to come.

To reach Jessica Schlee, email her at jschlee@gbmc.org or phone her at 443-849-3234. To donate, please visit www.gbmc.org/give.



Photo: Associate Director of Leadership Giving Jessica Schlee and longtime Volunteer Shirley Lewis during the 60th Anniversary of the Volunteer Auxiliary



HONORARY CHAIR
John Harbaugh
Head Coach,
Baltimore Ravens



Save the Date!

The 10th Annual Walk A Mile in Their Shoes will be held on Friday, April 11. We are thrilled to have Ravens Coach John Harbaugh serving as our honorary chair alongside event chairs Alexis "Lucky" Thompson, a member of the GBMC HealthCare Board, and GBMC Chief Medical Information Officer Dr. Fred Chan.

Walk A Mile will benefit the Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) and Domestic Violence (DV) program at GBMC. SAFE & DV provides confidential services to patients of all ages who have been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking.

Walk A Mile is a crucial event for the SAFE & DV Program — not only to raise necessary funds, but also awareness of the services available for our community.



Scan to the QR or visit www.gbmc.org/walk to register.
We hope to see you on April 11 at GBMC!

EmpowHER...A Celebration of Breast Health and Education

Join us for EmpowHER, an evening of celebration, self-care, and breast health education at the GBMC Sandra and Malcolm Berman Comprehensive Breast Care Center located in the newly opened Sandra R. Berman Pavilion on Thursday, May 15, from 5:30 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Activities will include:

- Guided tours of the new center
- Wellness activities
- Exclusive vendors
- Light bites and beverages

Space is limited—reserve your spot today
at www.gbmc.org/empowher or scan the QR code





6701 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21204

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTIMORE, MD
PERMIT NO. 4406



March 30
Doctors' Day

Every March, we take time to celebrate our doctors and the difference they make in the lives of their patients. Help us show your appreciation for the role doctors play in caring for our community.



DONATE TODAY

To make a gift online,
scan the QR code.

gbmc.org/doctorsday