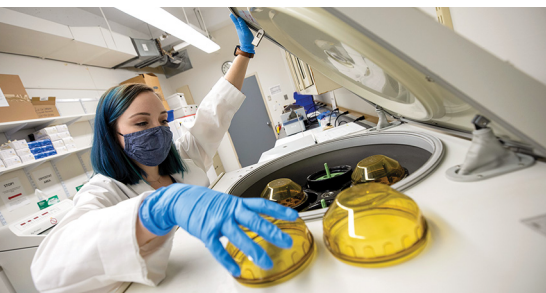


EVMS

magazine



[Deliver *on the* **PROMISE**]

Capital campaign exceeds **\$80 million** goal

In January, EVMS welcomed more than 80 members of the Physician Assistant, MPA program Class of 2025. Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine, praised the students during the event for answering a call to service: "You are a critical component of the solution to the healthcare workforce shortage."

Photo by
DOUG GARDNER





EVMS magazine

ISSUE 15.1 | 2022–2023

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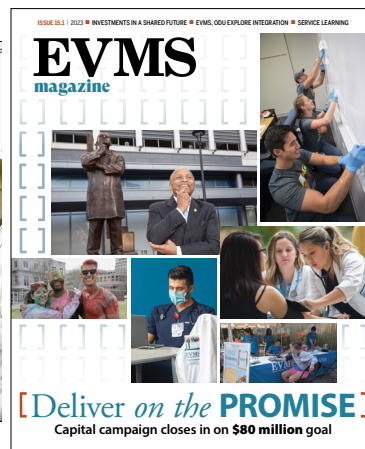
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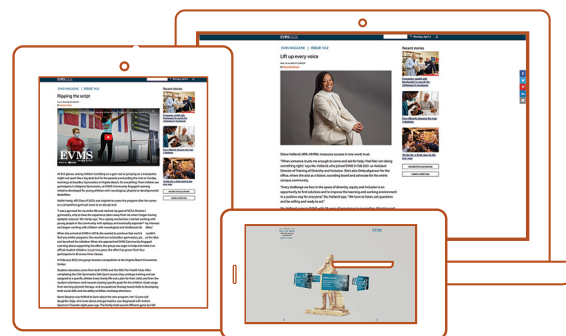
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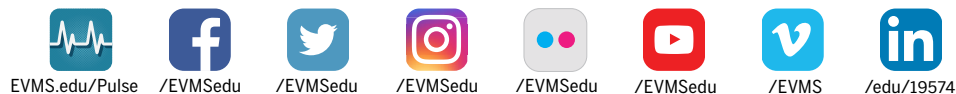
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FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Renewal is not just innovation and change. It is also the process of bringing the results of change into line with our purposes."

These words by pioneering social scientist John W. Gardner come to mind as we enter this transformative season of new beginnings.

This transformation will be on full display at our 2023 Commencement ceremony, where we will welcome hundreds of new graduates into the medical and health professions. This event builds upon the nearly 150 medical students who matched at some of the country's most prestigious residency programs earlier this year. Meanwhile, our School of Health Professions continues to grow in nimble and forward-thinking ways to meet the region's workforce and health needs — while also honing a national reputation. As just one example, U.S. News & World Report's latest edition of "Best Graduate Schools" ranked the EVMS Master of Physician Assistant (MPA) program 27th among the nation's 300 physician assistant programs.

We have much to be proud of and inspired by at EVMS, including the tremendous and long-lasting support of our community. That support is reflected in Deliver on the Promise, the capital campaign to support EVMS. The campaign concludes this summer after having raised more than \$80 million, truly a landmark achievement.

Thanks to generous contributions to the campaign, we already have leveraged funds for exceptional medical and healthcare education, ground-breaking research, community-centered care and life-changing scholarships. The campaign also transformed our physical campus through the creation of Waitzer Hall, a state-of-the-art academic hub that opened in Fall 2020, and the Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth, a first-of-its-kind center in Hampton Roads that addresses the complex needs of patients diagnosed with cognitive and movement disorders. The Goldrich Institute opened in November 2022.

Throughout the pages of this issue of EVMS magazine, you'll read more about the campaign's far-reaching impact — now and into the future. I want to personally thank our supporters for your belief in our institution and your commitment to our mission, vision and values. Your unwavering dedication fuels EVMS and sets us apart from other medical and healthcare academic centers.

We also have much to look forward to in the future.



This summer, we will begin marking our 50th anniversary — a milestone that represents half a century of research, education and care all aimed at improving the community's health and well-being and creating the skilled, professional health workforce of tomorrow. I cannot imagine a more meaningful or worthy legacy. I look forward to celebrating alongside our students, staff, faculty, alumni and supporters in myriad ways over the coming months as we reflect on our successes and cast our eyes forward to new goals.

Some of those goals undoubtedly include work to deepen our commitment to Hampton Roads and the commonwealth while also creating a sustainable financial framework for our future. We are focused on how to build and amplify our efforts to reduce health disparities, attract more students to the medical and health professions and contribute to the regional economy. To that end, we continue to explore an integration with Old Dominion University — a strategic alignment that would lead to a combined institution with the greatest number of health professions programs in Virginia. Teams across both campuses are working diligently, and we are incredibly grateful for the strong show of support we have received from Delegate Barry Knight and Senator Louise Lucas, along with Governor Glenn Youngkin.

ODU President Dr. Brian Hemphill and I anticipate budget negotiations will continue in a productive manner, and we are optimistic about a successful integration that benefits both institutions, the region and the commonwealth. I look forward to providing additional updates soon. In the meantime, the best place to stay updated on news is evms.edu/integration.

Thank you for your ongoing support of and service to EVMS. Wishing you and yours a healthy and happy summer.

Sincerely,

Alfred Abuhamad, MD



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A strategic integration between EVMS
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exclusive content, videos
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Seen & Heard

The EVMS community makes news

Compiled by EVMS MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



The Alzheimer's and Related Disease Research Award Fund has approved a grant to support research on the origins of Alzheimer's disease undertaken by Frank Castora, PhD, EVMS Professor of Physiological Sciences, and Randolph Coleman, PhD, Professor of Chemistry at the College of William and Mary.

"The grant reviewers felt that the project was very innovative and would open up further studies by us and others in the field to pursue an understanding of how mitochondria can become dysfunctional and lead to the death of neurons in the brain and, ultimately, Alzheimer's Disease," says Dr. Castora, pictured, left, with Dr. Coleman and EVMS Medical Student Morgan Shelton.

Beverly Roberts-Atwater, DO, PhD,

has been appointed Chair of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation after serving in the leadership position in an interim capacity. Previously, she also served as Vice Chair of the department.

"Dr. Roberts-Atwater is an exceptionally talented physician and administrator who is passionate about the care of her patients and the education of students, residents and fellows," Alfred Abuhamad, MD, President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine, said in appointing Dr. Roberts-Atwater.



27.6 million

Number of people worldwide estimated to be victims of human trafficking. Earlier this year, Megan Bianchetta, Medical Master's Class of 2023, enrolled in Red Flags to Freedom training about trauma-informed care for human-trafficking survivors — a session hosted by HOPES Blue Hearts Clinic. "This experience taught me that human trafficking is much more prevalent than I thought, especially in the Hampton Roads region," says Bianchetta, Executive Director of the Community-Engaged Learning initiative Medical Educators of Sexual Health (MESH).



Francis Counselman, MD,

Founding Chair of Emergency Medicine and now Vice Dean for Graduate Medical Education, received the 2023 Distinguished Service Award from the Association of Academic Chairs in Emergency Medicine. The award is the organization's highest honor and the top award for a chair of emergency medicine.

Trending

Highlights from conversations on EVMS social media

Compiled by CAYLA MORGAN



#SolidarityWeek Students passed out Valentine's Day flowers to patients to promote humanism in medicine as part of the Gold Humanism Honor Society's Patient Solidarity Week.



EVMS students, part of CEL initiatives Choosing Healthy Options for Wellness (CHOW) and Western Tidewater UNITED, hosted a Diabetes screening event with the Jordan-Newby Foodbank where they ran screenings and educated the participants about steps to make changes through lifestyle and nutrition.

#CommunityEngagedLearning



We honor the women in medical and health professions who have broken barriers, shattered stereotypes and changed the course of history. Happy International Women's Day! Thank you to the EVMS students, faculty and staff who joined us to **#EmbraceEquality**.



EVMS **#EmergencyMedicine** recently held its 4th annual internal SonoGames! Residents were challenged with a variety of skills, from performing a FAST exam on a simulated patient pinned in a crashed vehicle to performing an emergent transesophageal echocardiogram during a simulated cardiac arrest.



All smiles from some of our @evmsim residents as we kick off Resident & Fellow Appreciation Week!

#ResidentAppreciationWeek



Workin' hard in Waitzer. **#Students**



Did you know EVMS is on GIPHY? Create and share customizable gifs and stickers to share your EVMS spirit. Search **@EVMSedu** on **giphy.com**.

Add your voice to the conversation. @EVMSedu

Patient-focused research

New research dean's initial effort is supporting clinical research, building an institute for women's health and boosting research commercialization.

Story and Photo by DOUG GARDNER

Milton Brown, MD, PhD, joined EVMS in 2022 following an extensive national search. As Vice Dean for Research, this renowned physician-scientist brings more than 20 years of experience. His research and educational focus are in translational medicine and therapeutics discovery.

Considered a pioneer in his field, Dr. Brown, the Prudence and Louis Ryan Chair of Research, is one of only a handful of physician-scientists in the U.S. to hold both a medical degree and a PhD in synthetic chemistry. With more than 40 patents in his name, Dr. Brown is an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. His licensed therapeutic inventions have led to the creation of five biotech companies, and he has successfully designed and synthesized two drugs, both of which are in clinical testing in humans.

In 2015, Dr. Brown received the Percy Julian Award by the National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers for significant contributions in pure and/or applied research in science. He is serving a four-year term as a scientific counselor on the National Toxicology Program Board and has served as a scientific reviewer of grants and programs for the National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Department of Defense and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Dr. Brown came to EVMS from George Mason University where he was Professor of Practice in the College of Science and Director of the Center for Drug Discovery. Prior to George Mason, Dr. Brown was the Founding Director of the Drug Discovery Program at the Georgetown University Medical Center.

How has your background prepared you for your role as Vice Dean of Research?

My unique academic training as a physician-scientist in a basic science field (organic chemistry) and medicine (MD) has prepared me to interact with a diverse group of clinicians and scientists and guide a broad range of research in a distinctive way. My career has spanned developing and leading academic programs and collaborations with

universities, community hospitals, academic centers and institutes, governmental agencies and large corporations to address areas of unmet medical need. To build these programs, I have raised significant financial resources through government grants, grateful patients and corporate partnerships. In addition, I enjoy interacting and working with people from broad backgrounds toward establishing common goals and developing solutions to complex problems.

What's the primary focus of your research?

To design, synthesize and discover new medicines.

How does your training as a physician and chemist influence your approach to research?

The chemistry training taught me how to make the new medicines, and the medical training taught me what pathways and diseases to make it for.

What is your vision for research at EVMS going forward?

We want to focus EVMS research to deliver on the promise of improving the lives of patients in our community. We have developed four initial areas to address: 1) Clinical research support center; 2) Comprehensive Institute for Women's Health; 3) an EVMS research portal and automation platform; and 4) EVMS Research Greenhouse for research commercialization and development in the community. We also plan to amplify existing research activities and programs, creating interconnects between existing programs and new initiatives.

What attracted you to EVMS?

I was drawn to EVMS by the promise of our leadership to continue research excellence, a talented faculty to engage, a hard-working, dedicated Research office and the determined focus to improve the health of our community through research innovation and delivery. Finally, it also helps that I love to fish and explore the ocean. □



“

**We want to focus
EVMS research to
deliver on the promise
of improving the lives
of patients in our
community.”**

Milton Brown, MD, PhD

Married scientists Dr. Pavla Brachova and Dr. Nehemiah Alvarz are focused on developing new treatments for infertility.



Infertility

From understanding RNA to developing risk communications, research is key

Story and Photos by DOUG GARDNER

In the world of medicine and health, nothing new happens without research. Research is a fundamental building block in the development of every new medication, treatment or behavioral therapy. To give readers an idea of the variety of research underway at EVMS, we asked a sampling of researchers to describe their work.

Pavla Brachova, PhD

Assistant Professor of Physiological Sciences

Nehemiah Seth Alvarez, PhD

Assistant Professor of Physiological Sciences
Director, Advanced Sequencing Program

Drs. Brachova and Alvarez are a married research team that came to EVMS in 2021 from the University of Kansas. The two are experts in RNA biology. RNA is a molecule in all cells vital for the function of tissues and organs. Their research, supported in part by funding from the National Institutes of Health, merges their expertise to develop new RNA therapeutics to treat infertility in women and to improve outcomes for couples who turn to in vitro fertilization when they experience difficulty conceiving a child.

Tetsuya Kawakita, MD

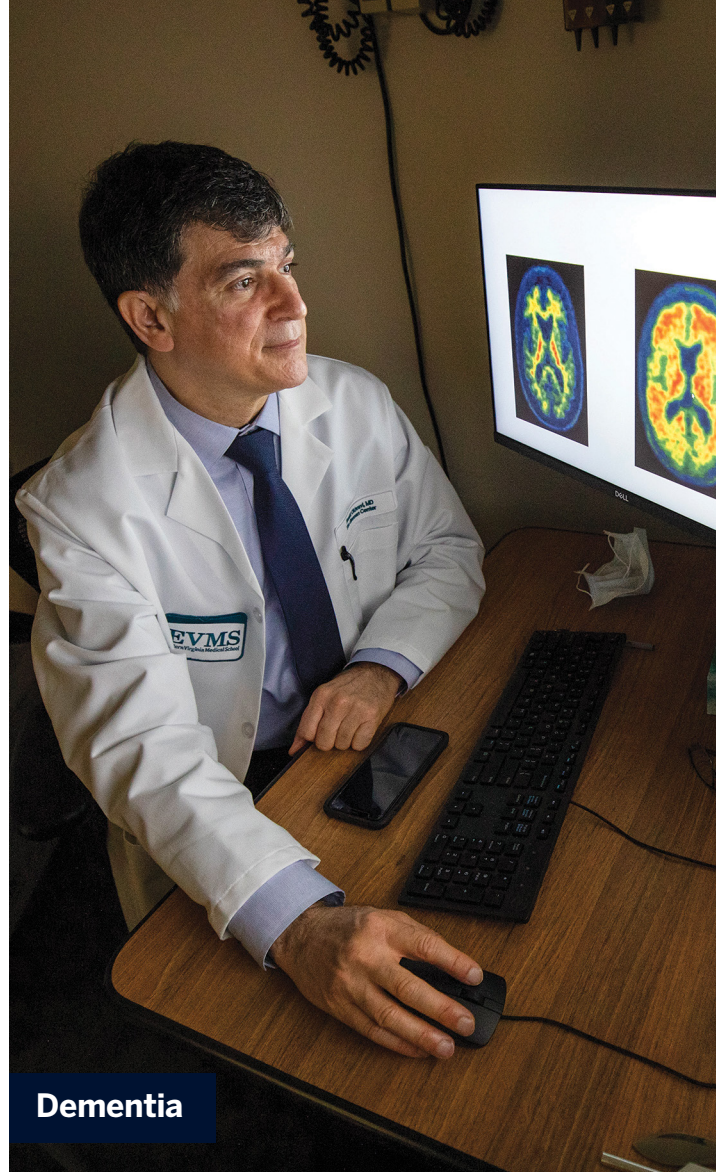
Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Dr. Kawakita is an expert in labor management who came to EVMS in 2021 from Georgetown University. The rate of births by C-section has been increasing in the United States, now accounting for 30% of deliveries. Dr. Kawakita has been conducting research on normal labor in order to safely decrease the number of C-sections. His studies used the dataset from the Consortium on Safe Labor through National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and discovered normal duration of labor after induction of labor. His effort is now focused on the examination of normal labor curve for pregnant individuals with various conditions such as obesity, chronic hypertension and preeclampsia.

Dr. Tetsuya Kawakita depends on the assistance of nurses at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital in his effort to develop ways to safely decrease the rate of births from C-sections.



C-sections



Dementia

Dr. Hamid Okhravi oversees the study of experimental treatments for Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive disorders.

Hamid Okhravi, MD

Al Abiouness Distinguished Professor
of Geriatrics
Director, Comprehensive Memory Center
at the Goldrich Neurohealth Institute

In addition to his work diagnosing and treating patients with different types of cognitive disorders, Dr. Okhravi is focused on research of Alzheimer's disease and other types of cognitive disorders. He has more than 20 active research studies, including clinical trials, diagnostic studies and big-data projects. He is the site Principal Investigator for one of the first primary prevention clinical trials in Alzheimer's disease (AHEAD3-45 Study) and for a clinical trial on the effects of THC-free CBD oil on agitation in patients with Alzheimer's. His main areas of interest are therapeutics and biomarkers discovery in Alzheimer's and other types of dementia.



Risk Communications

Kelli England, PhD

Toy Savage Endowed Professor in Pediatrics
Director, Community Health and Research in Pediatrics

Dr. England conducts research involving the design and evaluation of programs that benefit the health and safety of children, teens and families. Her main areas of interest are risk communication, injury control and prevention of substance abuse. As a clinical health psychologist, she blends behavioral theory, psychological principles and best practices in public health and risk communication to devise novel program approaches that motivate behavior change. She is particularly interested in the role of risk perceptions, efficacy, trust and normative beliefs in the public's acceptance or avoidance of risk. Her research is community-engaged and applied on a large scale, such as in schools, organizations and mass/social media. Recent grant-funded programs have focused on the development of effective countermeasures to combat vaping among teens (see rethinkvape.org) and the creation of messaging approaches in child passenger safety (see carsafetynow.org). □

Dr. Kelli England designs and evaluates new ways to change risky behaviors, such as vaping among teens and improper use of car seats.



Checkered Flag

**YOU GAVE.
THEY GAVE.**

Thank You!

You helped us cross the finish line! Checkered Flag has contributed \$25,000 to support the EVMS Fund, bringing the total amount raised through the Checkered Flag Challenge to more than \$100,000.

Thank you!

EVMS
Eastern Virginia Medical School

PHOTO ESSAY

Match Makers

Story by VIRIGNIA HILTON

Photos by DOUG GARDNER AND EYLUL KUMSAL

On Friday, March 17, graduating medical students learned where in the country they will spend their residencies.

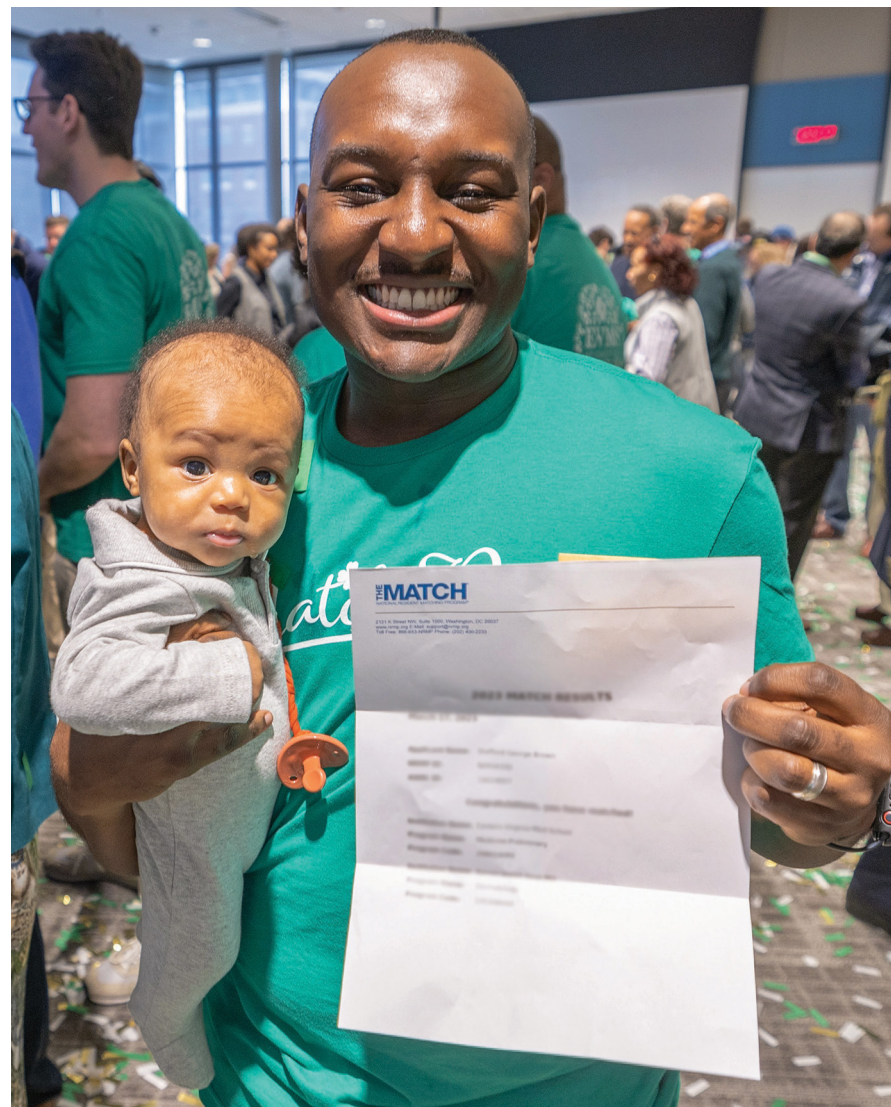
Students picked up their Match Day envelopes and many celebrated the news with family and friends inside Waitzer Hall.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, nearly 42,000 U.S. and international applicants matched to residency training positions at the nation's teaching hospitals this year. A total of 146 EVMS students participated in Match Day and are headed to several of the nation's most prestigious residency programs, including Yale, Harvard, UNC and Mayo Clinic.

"This is an exciting time in the lives of our medical students," says Ronald Flenner, MD (MD '89) Vice Dean of Academic Affairs. "We are very proud of the work and dedication our students have put forth to get to this point in their medical school careers."



See a video of Match Day 2023 at
evms.edu/MatchDay2023Video.
Find more photos at Flickr.com/EVMS.



Top Left: Julia Worley celebrated her match in EVMS Pediatrics with Cameron Palmer (left) and James Worfolk (right). Palmer matched at EVMS Internal Medicine. Worfolk matched in pediatrics at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, New York.

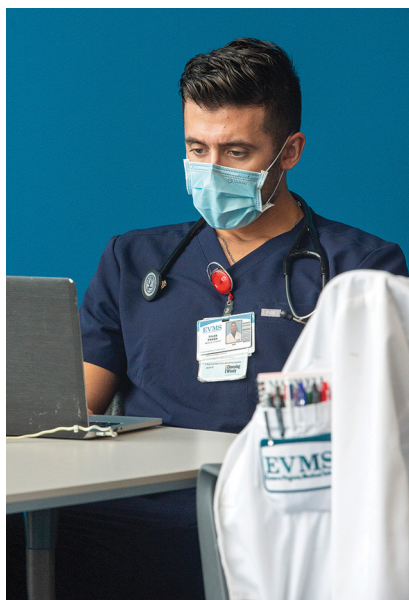
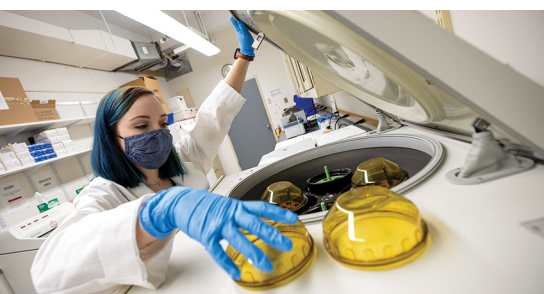
Above: Stafford Brown (Medical Master's '18) proudly shared the news of his match in dermatology at Washington University/Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis with his son, Stafford Brown IV.

Bottom Left: Wesley Washington took photos with family after learning he matched in anesthesiology at University of Alabama Medical Center in Birmingham.

Bottom Middle: Heather Ots (left) and Vivian Burton (right) were thrilled to match at their top picks. Ots matched in general surgery at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Burton matched in emergency medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess/Harvard Medical School in Boston.

Bottom Right: As confetti fell from the sky, Andrew Rickelmann opened his envelope to learn he's heading to Asheville, North Carolina, with a match in general surgery at Mountain Area Health Education Center.

FEATURE



[*Deliver on the* PROMISE]

Capital campaign exceeds **\$80 million** goal

Story by MARY WESTBROOK

Nearly 50 years ago, a group of community members in Hampton Roads came together to start something new and necessary: a local medical school aimed at addressing the region's lack of healthcare providers. This was no easy task. A medical school is a complex and expensive system. Starting a stand-alone institution is almost unheard of; however, the founders of Eastern Virginia Medical School came together and worked through financial and logistical challenges. They recruited top talent. They spread the word — and the vision — and brought in additional, like-minded supporters, people who also wanted a healthier future for Hampton Roads. Their investments — of time, money and talent — paid off. In 1973, EVMS welcomed its first students. Then, the school had just 27 students. Today, there are nearly 1,400 students studying across more than 20 academic programs, which have been carefully designed to meet current and future workforce needs in southeastern Virginia. EVMS now attracts applicants from across the country, prospective students who seek out the school's collaborative environment and share the institution's commitment to community service. The school also draws leading researchers who develop life-changing and life-saving treatments and techniques for

some of the region's most pressing health issues, including inequities in care and outcomes.

By keeping its focus on the community that it serves, EVMS has positively affected the region on a scale the school's founders could scarcely have imagined. And, with continued innovation and sustained community support, the institution is just getting started, says Lewis Webb III, Esq., Co-Chair of EVMS' Deliver on the Promise Campaign Steering Committee.

"It's staggering to see the impact that EVMS has had on the community in less than 50 years," says Webb, a member of the EVMS Foundation Board of Trustees and the Chair of the Private Client Services at the Norfolk-based law firm Kaufman & Canoles. "For an academic institution, 50 years is nothing — a snap of your fingers. But in that time, EVMS has grown and evolved tremendously alongside Hampton Roads. It continues to grow and evolve."

That's a sentiment echoed by Justin Ballard, Director of Business Development for S.B. Ballard Construction Company.

"As a patient, a former board member and a community member, I wholeheartedly believe in the EVMS mission and the school's long-term vision," Ballard says.

EVMS' Deliver on the Promise Campaign is set to conclude this summer having raised more than \$80 million for the institution. Every gift made to EVMS through the campaign is an investment in the future of healthcare in Hampton Roads, says Shirley Baldwin, CPA, CFP, Co-Chair of the Campaign Steering Committee and Chair of the EVMS Foundation Board of Trustees.

"In terms of research and patient care, community outreach and education, EVMS speaks for itself," says Baldwin, owner of Baldwin Advisory. "Future investments will help EVMS continue to recruit the brightest students and to ensure that the healthcare workforce serving Hampton Roads reflects our community and is prepared to meet our region's health needs."

As the campaign draws to its conclusion, we're looking back on the success of Deliver on the Promise along with the strong ties that exist between EVMS and Hampton Roads, thanks to a dedicated and growing group of community supporters.

[COMMUNITY-FOCUSED EDUCATION]

EVMS students don't just learn to care for patients. They also develop the mindset and skills of service learning and caring for an entire community — particularly for those who might go without medical care, such as underserved minorities.

For many students, EVMS' 19 Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) initiatives serve as the cornerstone for this culture of service learning.

Through CEL, EVMS students refine their understanding of the community's needs and their responsibilities to meet them. They deepen their capacity for compassion for patients and families, and they learn interdisciplinary problem solving in real-world settings.

Working in EVMS Street Health taught Tamanna Sahni, MD (MD '22) "the need for creativity in patient care."

A major pillar of the Deliver on the Promise Campaign, Waitzer Hall opened in Fall 2020. Gifts from the Leah and Richard Waitzer Foundation and many other generous supporters enabled the creation of the building.



“You never know which patient will walk in through the door, whether they have stable insurance, a job, a house — or if they cannot access food and thus cannot take their medicines as directed,” explains Dr. Sahni. “Community-Engaged Learning taught me to have conversations with patients that pull out these pieces of information and reminded me that each person walking into a clinic has more in their life than just diagnoses and medication.”

CEL students “learn to be leaders” says Maryanne Gathambo, MPH (MPH ’13), Director of Community-Engaged Learning.

“Students learn humility, they learn to embody humanism,” she says. “Through their medical school curriculum, they are taught to think clinically and make sound clinical decisions. In Community-Engaged Learning, we strive to complement that training and also to reinforce the importance of being a community-oriented physician and provider.”

Donor investments support many CEL initiatives, including operations for the HOPES Free Clinic.

As the first student-run free clinic in Virginia, HOPES has served more than 1,000 uninsured adult residents through weekly evening clinics. The clinic is staffed by volunteer EVMS students, residents and physicians, who work together to provide patient-centered care.

“I felt a sense of ownership once I visited HOPES, because these patients are our neighbors,” says James Hinton Jr., Vice President of Community Development for Dollar Bank. “The experience also showed me that EVMS is much more than ‘just’ a medical school. The EVMS community is advancing people’s lives in a way they cannot afford to do on their own.”

Supporting HOPES and scholarships for EVMS students has been a main focus for the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin-Hampton Roads (AAPI) “because of the health disparities we see in the community,” says Soham Sheth, MD, MPH, Past President of the group.

In Fall 2022 the group held its 11th Annual Gala to help fundraise for several local initiatives, including HOPES. Overall, the group has donated roughly \$225,000 to EVMS.

For longtime supporter Frank Castellanos, EVMS’ community focus and outreach also has been an important factor.



EVMS is focused on growing its workforce to meet the future needs of the region.



Miles Parks-Tiller spoke in 2022 at the unveiling of the L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, statue on the EVMS' campus. Parks-Tiller is part of EVMS' L.D. Britt Premedical Scholars program.

“I’ve seen firsthand the impact that EVMS and efforts like the student-run clinic have on the community, because we’re all beneficiaries of it,” he says. “At our core, we believe that we can’t be successful if our communities aren’t successful.”

The PRA Group has contributed to EVMS through donation drives to help support the CEL initiative EVMS Street Health, along with an additional investment in the Deliver on the Promise Campaign.

“EVMS spans two of our company’s philanthropic giving pillars: education and health and human services,” says Elizabeth Kersey, Senior Vice President of Communications and Public Policy. “We are privileged to see the results of EVMS’ work firsthand, and we are grateful to EVMS for also providing ways our employees can get involved and help make a difference on an individual level.”

[BUILDING THE BENCH]

EVMS remains committed to building a deep healthcare workforce bench and introducing health and science professions to promising young people — especially those who have historically been marginalized or might not see themselves on such a career path.

EVMS works to effect change in this area through endowed scholarships that provide financial support to students from underrepresented backgrounds and initiatives such as the L.D. Britt Premedical Scholars program, which pairs promising students from Norfolk State and Hampton University with Black physician mentors at EVMS, among many other efforts.

Myles Parks-Tiller, an aspiring physician and sophomore at NSU, is one such scholar.

“The L.D. Britt Premedical Scholars program provided me with an opportunity to experience fellowship and connect with high-achieving, goal-oriented scholars who look like me,” Parks-Tiller explains. “Together, we constantly work toward accomplishing a common goal: increasing the number of Black medical doctors.”



Thanks to Louis and Prudence Ryan's generous gift to Deliver on the Promise, EVMS established the Ryan Translational Research Fund.

In addition, the EVMS Summer Scholars Program is a mentored 11-week research internship for college seniors and first- or second-year graduate or medical students who are exploring potential careers in medical, biomedical, public health or behavioral research.

Launched in 2019, The EVMS Health Sciences Academy is a multi-year, tuition-free, enrichment program providing high school students with an opportunity to explore diverse career paths in healthcare.

The Health Sciences Academy was established to benefit Portsmouth Public School students in 2021 and expanded to include Northampton County students on the Eastern Shore. This summer, HSA will be extending its services to include high school students in the Chesapeake City Public School System, thanks to a generous gift from the Beazley Foundation.

"The Beazley Foundation is proud to stand for enhanced opportunities and improved health around our region," says Steve Best, President and CEO of the Beazley Foundation. "We are excited

to support EVMS' Health Sciences Academy and expand its reach to even more students."

For dedicated EVMS champion Steve Snyder, President of Checkered Flag Motor Car Company, that message rings true. In 2023, the Checkered Flag Challenge generated 348 gifts totaling more than \$100,000 for the EVMS Fund. Checkered Flag matched all gifts made to the Fund — up to \$25,000. This was the seventh year that Checkered Flag had initiated the challenge in support of EVMS.

"EVMS' mission is so clear and so important, and healthcare is such a necessity," Snyder says. "We need to make sure we have great care and a good supply of healthcare providers moving forward. EVMS is the only solution. Through our matching contribution programs, we hope to give others in the community an incentive to give, too."

[LIFE-CHANGING RESEARCH]

More than 100 EVMS faculty members are engaged in basic and clinical research focused in areas where the community has pressing needs. The success of many of those efforts can be directly tied to a donor's investment.

Thanks to Louis and Prudence Ryan's generous gift to Deliver on the Promise, for example, EVMS established the Ryan Translational Research Fund, which supports creative interdisciplinary research among EVMS faculty with expertise in biomedical science, healthcare disparities and delivery science and clinical disciplines. The Ryans' investments in EVMS also have led to the creation of the Prudence and Louis Ryan Chair of Research through the EVMS Foundation. Milton Brown, MD, PhD, EVMS' new Vice Dean of Research currently holds the endowed position. (Read more about Dr. Brown on p. 10.)

From basic science that leads to scientific breakthroughs, to clinical and population-based research that tests new care models and improves patient outcomes, the Ryan Translational Research Fund holds the potential to move the needle on public health in Hampton Roads — and beyond.

Spotlight on Donors

For Dawn Glynn and Tim Glynn (Surgical Assisting Certificate '91), both EVMS and philanthropy are family affairs.

Tim earned his Surgical Assisting Certificate from EVMS in 1991 and has been a champion of the profession and the growing Master of Surgical Assisting program. Dawn, President and Chief Experience Officer of TowneBank, is a member of the EVMS Board of Trustees and the Deliver on the Promise Campaign Steering Committee. In addition, the

couple's daughter, Madison Glynn, is a member of the Master of Physician Assistant program Class of 2023.

In 2020, the Glynns began supporting The School of Health Professions Endowed Scholarship. The gift, they say, is an investment in the future of Hampton Roads.

"We were excited when we were able to craft this gift and tie it to a scholarship," Tim says. "There are so many talented students and prospective students with aspirations to help others. We wanted to make

sure they have the opportunity to pursue their dreams."

Dawn adds, "If you live in Hampton Roads, EVMS has touched your life in some way whether through research, patient care or education. And the reality is most people in the community don't even have a full picture of just how much the school does. We're very proud to help get the word out about EVMS and contribute to its future."

Many health issues that trouble the community are too complicated for easy answers. For those situations, EVMS institutes bring vital resources and expertise to the table. Donor investments play a critical role here, too.

In 2020, EVMS announced the establishment of a new institute focusing on the complex healthcare needs of those diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, cognitive and memory disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease, and patients in need of palliative care.

A key component of the Deliver on the Promise Campaign, the EVMS Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth is the first of its kind in Hampton Roads and was made possible through a generous \$15 million gift from longtime Virginia Beach resident Lawrence J. Goldrich and his wife, Janice T. Goldrich. (Read more about the Goldrich Institute on p. 34.)

[THE POWER OF COMMUNITY FUNDERS]

While EVMS researchers often earn prestigious national grants — notably from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health — smaller community funders provide consistent support and strengthen critical local ties.

Indeed, through the Deliver on the Promise Campaign, community fundraisers have raised more than \$1 million to support EVMS. These varied groups organize galas, runs, walks and tournaments to raise funds in support of EVMS programs. Hearts 4 Progress, founded in 2020, already has generated \$89,000 to provide scholarships for African American students at EVMS. The Kiwanis Club of Norfolk has pledged to endow a scholarship for an MD student interested in pediatrics. The Cosmopolitan Club of Norfolk meanwhile remains a stalwart supporter of diabetes research.

Many of these community groups have been founded because of a personal connection to EVMS or a particular health issue.

Kevin Walck and the Coach Ray Barlow “Believe in Yourself” Foundation, for example, have raised more than \$200,000 through an annual golf tournament for prostate cancer research at EVMS. The foundation honors the late Ray Barlow, a beloved baseball coach in Virginia Beach who died in 2008.

“Coach Barlow passed away within a year of receiving his cancer diagnosis,” explains Walck, one of Barlow’s former players. “After his death, we brainstormed ways to bring more attention to prostate cancer and research. We’re working with EVMS because we want to help create better outcomes for others through prevention, testing and early screenings.”

Organized by the Chesapeake Bay Wine Classic Foundation, Wine, Women and Fishing draws dozens of teams annually to Virginia Beach for a women’s-only billfish tournament and post-event party. Over the course of two decades, the event has raised close to \$1 million for breast cancer research through the Leroy T. Canoles Jr. Cancer Research Center.

“So many people have been impacted by breast cancer or lost someone they loved to it,” says Linda Church, Chair of Wine, Women and Fishing. “One of my best friends died of breast cancer in 2006. I’ll do whatever I can to help researchers develop new treatments and find a cure.”



The Nancy Langhorne Foundation’s Annual Xmas Eve Eve Benefit Concert also benefits EVMS cancer research initiatives. Richard Langhorne started the foundation in his late mother’s name in 2017 alongside his family and friends.

“Cancer is something that will touch most of our lives, if not directly, then adjacently with friends and family. Research, trials and early screening are the only real hopes for beating aggressive cancer types,” says Langhorne.

Ann Hupp, Co-Owner of Mettle Events and President of the Mettle Events Foundation, has helped raise nearly \$20,000 for the EVMS Fund and melanoma education and research. She was inspired to help after watching her best friend’s struggle with cancer — and learning more about the impact of EVMS locally.

“EVMS is behind some truly cutting-edge research that directly impacts and improves the quality of life of people living right here in Hampton Roads,” she says. □

Deliver on your promise today

Learn more about the Deliver on the Promise Campaign and how you can be part of the vision to help EVMS grow. evms.edu/promise

Find out more about campaign donors' stories at evms.edu/PromiseProfiles2023.

PICTURE THIS

Deliver on the Promise campaign highlights

This summer, EVMS will conclude Deliver on the Promise – The Campaign for EVMS. Through the campaign, our donors and supporters are helping EVMS address priorities critical to the growing number of physicians and health professionals that we train. Every gift made to EVMS is an investment in the future of healthcare in Hampton Roads.

\$81.3 million raised as of May 2023



new academic honors created to bring the total academic honors to **49**

More than \$20 million

raised for new programs, including the Fine Family Academy of Educators, Health Sciences Academy and the Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth

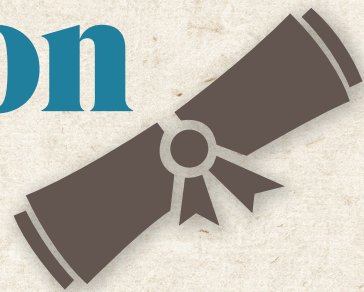
More than **\$1 million** raised through community fundraisers

\$13.8 million

raised for research, including the Louis & Prudence Ryan Translational Research Fund

\$9.7 million

raised for scholarships, creating **74** new scholarships



FEATURE


Investments in a shared Future

EVMS SCHOLARSHIPS TRANSFORM LIVES

Story by MARY WESTBROOK

Photos by DOUG GARDNER AND CORY HOOPER





When Fatima Sabti recalls her early childhood in Iraq, she thinks of earmuffs. In the 2000s, violence and unrest filled the country. If danger came close, the Sabtis would retreat to their basement. Fatima remembers her grandfather placing earmuffs over her ears and those of her twin sister, Sarah, to protect the girls from the sounds of bombs detonating nearby. “Years later, my mom confirmed our memories,” Fatima says. “She told us that the bombings happened frequently.”

In 2004, when the twins were 4, the Sabtis fled Iraq. They wanted a safer, healthier future. Their path was not easy. The family immigrated first to the United Arab Emirates and then, 10 years later, to the United States.

“We experienced isolation, fear and homesickness,” Sarah says. “We missed our family and friends. At the same time, we were trying hard to excel in school.”

Fatima and Sarah share a lifelong love of science and a desire to make a difference in the world. The latter, in particular, propelled them successfully through their undergraduate studies and drew them to medical school and, specifically, to EVMS.

“We chose EVMS because we wanted to go to a medical school that was really part of its community with people who want to give back,” Sarah says.

The sisters are now members of EVMS’ MD Class of 2025 and recipients of need-based scholarships. Sarah received the Lillie

P. Walker Memorial Scholarship and Fatima, the EVMS Sidney & Odie Kellam Scholarship.

The investments in their education have been critical.

“Without the scholarships, we would be so much more focused on the financial burden of our education,” Fatima says.

Filling a need

The experience of the Sabti sisters is not unique.

Donors’ support for scholarships helps EVMS attract the best, most diverse and most deserving students.

Thanks to the generosity of its donors and community funders, EVMS is able to offer more than 100 scholarships to students, such as Sarah and Fatima every year, including 74 new scholarships funded through the Deliver on the Promise Campaign. In fact, the campaign has increased scholarship funding at EVMS by 40%. EVMS has

increased its number of scholarships more in the last five years than during the prior 45.

Still, unmet needs remain significant.

Many deserving practitioners, researchers and educators begin their careers in medical and health professions fields with sizable financial obligations to pay back. At EVMS, more than 80% of students rely on financial aid, and many still incur heavy debt loads. Nationwide, the Association of American Medical Colleges reports the median medical school debt for graduating students is about \$200,000.

Paying it forward, right away

Scholarship recipients at EVMS aren’t just on the receiving end of donors’ generosity. They also give back to the community themselves.

Thanks to their scholarships, for example, Sarah and Fatima have dedicated themselves not only to their studies at EVMS but also to efforts such as Refugee Health, an EVMS Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) initiative that improves the quality of life and health outcomes for members of refugee communities living in Southeastern Virginia.

Through Refugee Health, the sisters have helped organize health screenings and launched efforts aimed at enhancing the mental and physical health of refugee children, among other projects.

“We’re passionate about refugees because we were refugees ourselves,” Sarah says. “I see emotions I recognize in the eyes of the kids — sadness but also hopefulness. Fatima and I want them to know that they can be a doctor, too, if they want to become one — that the community is here to help them.”

Like Fatima and Sarah, Amir Hasani, MD (MD ’25) came to the U.S. as an immigrant. As a young man in Tehran, he watched in wonder as his father, a

cardiologist, changed the trajectory of his patients’ lives. Hasani knew he wanted to follow in his father’s footsteps and pursue a similar calling.

“Once, when I was maybe 6 years old, I was at the hospital with my dad, and I realized that a patient was able to walk out of the hospital on her own because of his care,” Hasani says. “Memories like that were impactful. They moved me in the direction of medicine.”

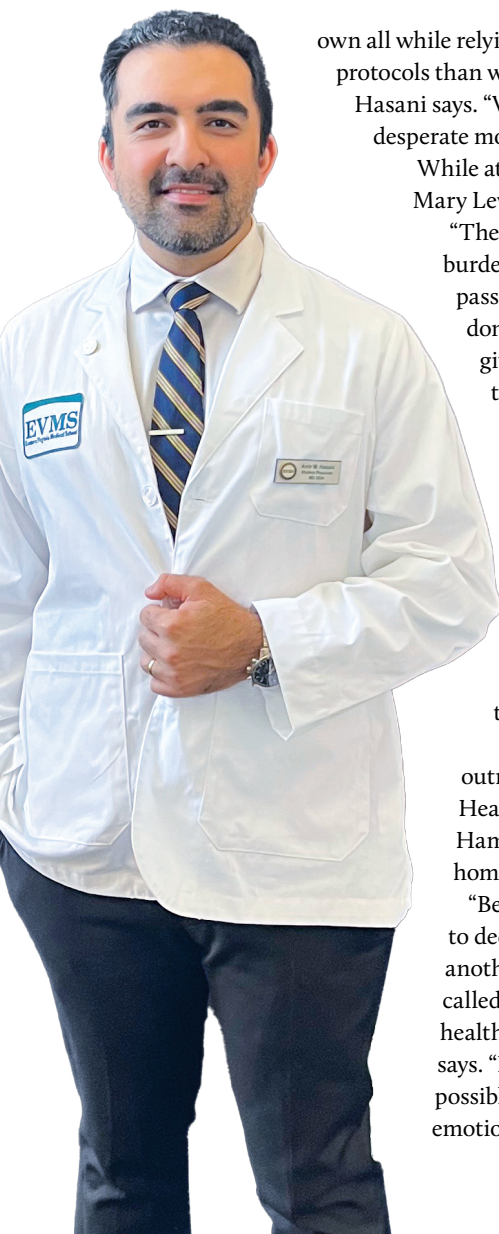
Hasani attended medical school in Iran before relocating to the U.S. in 2010. He worked as an EMT in Northern Virginia for five years and then enrolled at EVMS. That experience cemented his desire to provide care for those in greatest need.

“Working as an EMT allowed me to experience healthcare in different settings among patients with different cultures than my



**We chose
EVMS because
we wanted to
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was really
part of its
community.”**

**Sarah Sabti
MD Class of 2025**



own all while relying on a different set of rules and protocols than what I had learned in Tehran,” Hasani says. “We helped patients in their most desperate moments.”

While at EVMS, Hasani was awarded the Mary Lewis and Charles Weddle Scholarship. “The scholarship lightened my financial burden and enabled me to focus on my passion for medicine,” Hasani says. “The donors’ generosity also inspired me to give back. I hope one day I will be able to fund other students in need.”

During his time at EVMS, Hasani co-founded an EVMS chapter of the American PTSD Association. The group raises awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder by providing educational content to members of medical teams and distributing resources to individuals suffering from PTSD in the community.

Hasani also was active in many outreach efforts, including EVMS’ Street Health, a CEL initiative that helps Hampton Roads residents experiencing homelessness receive the care they need. “Because of my scholarship, I was able to dedicate my free time to cofound another branch under Street Health called Street Talk to improve mental health within the community,” Hasani says. “None of this would have been possible if I did not have the financial and emotional support of this scholarship.”

AMIR HASANI

Attracting and keeping talent

EVMS scholarships also play a critical role in filling workforce gaps and building a stronger pipeline of local healthcare professionals in Hampton Roads.

Matt Brubaker, MPA Class of 2023, was awarded the Jo Melchor Hackney and John H. Hackney, Jr. Family Foundation Physician Assistant Scholarship.

A native of Richmond and 2017 graduate of James Madison University’s School of Nursing, Brubaker worked at Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters before deciding to enroll in EVMS’ Master of Physician Assistant (MPA) program.

“I knew that I wanted to obtain an advanced degree, but I was trying to decide between becoming a nurse practitioner or physician assistant,”

Brubaker says. “Working with incredible PAs at CHKD and using the advice from friends, physicians and mentors helped me to decide to pursue my MPA at EVMS.”

EVMS’ MPA program, which ranks as a top 10% program in the country, according to U.S. News and World Report, was a natural fit for Brubaker — not only because of the rigorous curriculum but also the broader connection he felt for the region.

“Having worked at CHKD, I was aware of EVMS’ commitment to the community and I already felt invested here,” he explains. “As a healthcare provider, I want to be able to establish long-lasting relationships with my patients over time. I felt like I could do that here through the MPA program and as a PA.”

Brubaker says his scholarship opened doors and relieved burdens.

“I’m grateful to have been given this opportunity,” he says. “The scholarship helped remove the barrier of finances for me so that I can enter a workforce that needs skilled PAs.”

The cycle continues

EVMS scholarships often create “full circle” moments when recipients have the opportunity to pay-it-forward themselves.

Sometimes, that moment can be dramatic, even profound.

While enrolled as a medical student at EVMS, Lexie Soult, MD (MD ’14, Surgical residency ’19) earned the Nannie & Luther Upton Scholarship, a merit-based award presented to a second-year medical student who demonstrates academic strength and community service.

Several years later, Dr. Soult ended up unexpectedly treating a member of the donor’s family in the operating room. Once the patient had stabilized and was recovering, the two marveled at the connection between them.

“It was a special moment because I was able to say thank you personally,” Dr. Soult says, adding that, beyond the financial benefits, scholarships can diminish feelings of imposter syndrome in highly competitive medical and health professions fields.

“It was a big boost of confidence to be recognized in that way,” she says.

T.J. Tzavaras, MD (MD ’15, Emergency Medicine Residency ’18), EVMS’ first Middleton Scholar, also has had the chance to pay forward a generous gift.

A graduate of Ocean Lakes High School and Virginia Tech, Dr. Tzavaras initially pursued mechanical engineering and biomedical engineering; however, time volunteering with rescue squads in both Virginia Beach and Blacksburg

MATT BRUBAKER, MPA



helped him see that his true path was centered on patient care and patient interactions.

The Middleton Scholarship, funded by a \$3.5 million endowment bequeathed by the late Dorothy M. Middleton of Norfolk, was EVMS' first full-tuition scholarship for four years of medical school.

Earning the scholarship had a profound impact on Dr. Tzavaras' life and that of his family.

Today, he and his wife, Jennifer Ash, and their two young daughters, Effie and Dede, still call Norfolk home — in part thanks to that life-changing gift.

"At the end of medical school, some of my colleagues allowed salaries to have a hand in their residency decisions, due in part to their debt burden," Dr. Tzavaras explains. "Because of the Middleton Scholarship, I had more freedom. I wanted to stay in Hampton Roads to establish my career and my family here. I could because of that freedom."

The Tzavarases never forgot Middleton's generosity.

In 2015, Dr. Tzavaras' parents, George and Elaine Tzavaras, created the Tzavaras Family Scholarship Fund, which finances a scholarship presented to a first-year MD student from Hampton Roads with an engineering or non-traditional undergraduate degree program. So far, it has been given to five students.

George Tzavaras passed away in 2018, but Dr. Tzavaras says he is confident his father would be proud of the scholarship's legacy and ripple effect.

"My parents were proud of me and all of their kids, and they were appreciative," Dr. Tzavaras says. "They wanted to give back." □

T.J. Tzavaras, MD, and his wife, Jennifer Ash, with their children in Norfolk.



BE A CHANGE AGENT

Interested in contributing to or creating a scholarship fund to assist future healthcare professionals in obtaining their educational goals? Find out how to be part of their transformational story with an investment in EVMS scholarships at evms.edu/giving.



Find out more about the Sabti sisters' story by watching a video at evms.edu/Sabti2023.

Waitzer Scholarship Challenge

Looking for a way to give back and help EVMS empower even more medical students?


Civic leader and philanthropist Brad Waitzer is challenging the community to close the scholarship gap for EVMS medical students with a new gift. The Brad Waitzer Scholarship Challenge is the largest challenge gift in the history of the institution.

For every dollar invested in MD scholarships through June 30, 2023, Waitzer will contribute scholarship funding \$0.50 per \$1 — up to \$1 million. This challenge will create a \$3 million scholarship impact for EVMS medical students.

This is not the first time the Waitzer family has invested in EVMS. The late Leah and Richard Waitzer helped envision and finance EVMS' Waitzer Hall. The construction of the state-of-the-art academic hub is a key accomplishment of the Deliver on the Promise Campaign.

Find out more at evms.edu/WaitzerChallenge.





FEATURE

bigger. better. BOLDER together

Story by VINCENT RHODES, PhD, APR

By 2030, almost one in five Hampton Roads residents will be 65 or older, increasing the strain on a system already facing workforce shortages. A strategic integration between EVMS and ODU would create an estimated 2,000 graduates annually, with 1,100 staying in the region.



A strategic integration between EVMS and ODU would result in the largest health sciences center in Virginia.

EVMS and Old Dominion University have much in common — a strong history of collaboration; renowned experts in their respective disciplines; complementary cultures; proven track records of emphasizing diversity, equity and inclusion; and a deep commitment to making the community a better place to live.

Separately, both institutions have storied histories with profound legacies. Collectively, they have made a united commitment to address the alarming health disparities facing our region. Toward that end, ODU and EVMS are working toward a strategic integration, which would result in the largest health sciences center — with the highest number of health sciences programs — in the commonwealth.

“Coming together as a comprehensive health sciences center would allow our impact to be magnified exponentially,” says ODU President Brian O. Hemphill, PhD.

Alfred Abuhamad, EVMS’ President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine says the proposed integration has the potential to effect positive, lasting change for Hampton Roads.

“A successful integration would improve education, research and patient care, transforming the health and economy of the Hampton Roads region and beyond,” he says.

Among the benefits would be an expanded pipeline of sorely needed healthcare workers. According to Old Dominion’s 2022 State of the Region report, an anticipated 23% of the nursing workforce in Virginia will retire within the next decade. Meanwhile, by 2030, almost one in five Hampton Roads residents will be 65 or older, increasing the strain

on a system already facing workforce shortages. A strategic integration would create an estimated 2,000 graduates annually, with 1,100 staying in the region.

The combined entities could help turn the tide to decrease the region’s alarming health disparities. In Virginia, Black residents live an average of four years less than white residents and are 3.4 times more likely to be hospitalized with heart failure. An integrated academic healthcare center will be poised to tackle many of the barriers to care — including systemic social inequities, an inadequate supply of providers from underrepresented groups and difficulties navigating the system.

The creation of a collaborative health sciences center would also magnify the institutions’ already significant economic impact to the commonwealth. ODU’s Frank Reidy Research Center for Bioelectronics, for example, already has developed a technology that utilizes nanosecond electric pulses to treat a range of dermatologic conditions and tumors.

The commercialization of this discovery to spinout company Pulse Biosciences — a first for ODU — showcases how a university-developed technology can reach the marketplace.

Similarly, EVMS partnered with Children’s Hospital of The King’s Daughters and a life sciences

firm to establish a spinoff company that could save infant lives and revolutionize the care of autoimmune and inflammatory diseases. The company, ReAlta Life Sciences, received fast-track designation this summer from the Federal Drug Administration to expedite review of one of its novel treatments.

Bringing together ODU — with its R1 research classification — and EVMS — and its powerhouse team — will attract additional research opportunities and increase jobs. Combined with planned investments to build a stronger, more diverse workforce, this proposed integration could create generational change, propel the economy and improve lives for years to come.

EVMS and ODU are working toward full integration in 2024. Find out more and stay updated on news at evms.edu/integration. □



A successful integration would improve education, research and patient care, transforming the health and economy of the Hampton Roads region and beyond.”

Dr. Alfred Abuhamad



In January, EVMS and ODU hosted two Town Halls to discuss a proposed integration. The institutions’ presidents — Dr. Alfred Abuhamad and Dr. Brian Hemphill — talked about their vision for the future.

Service learning

Derwin Gray II, MD (MD '16) keeps community service central to his professional life.

Story by MARY WESTBROOK | Photo by BRENDEN ASH

For Derwin Gray II, MD (MD '16), a career in medicine could have felt like a forgone conclusion.

His father, Derwin Gray, MD, is a longtime physician in Chesapeake, former member of the EVMS Board of Visitors and current Community Faculty member and Preceptor. He also is a man who had a profound impact on his son.

"My dad was a major influence on me — without question," Dr. Gray says. "Growing up, everywhere we went, people stopped him and wanted to show him pictures of babies he'd delivered."

Still, the younger Dr. Gray, a graduate of Norfolk Academy and Morehouse College, took his time coming to his own professional path.

"I felt very strongly that if I pursued medicine, I wanted it to be my decision, not just because of my dad," he says. "I always knew that I wanted a career that was service-based. I still believe that it's important to come home proud every night and go to work every morning feeling happy and invigorated."

Today, father and son practice together at the Virginia Center for Women, providing a full range of obstetrics and gynecologic care to women. Dr. Gray, who completed his residency at New York University, specializes in minimally invasive procedures and performs advanced procedures with the da Vinci Robot.

What drew you to medicine?

My father provided a clear example of how medicine directly touched lives. At Morehouse College, I double-majored in biology and Spanish. During the academic year, I focused on the basic sciences and my research project with mesenchymal stem cells, but the summers allowed me to study abroad in Europe and Central America.

I think it was important for me as an aspiring physician to see how people of different ethnicities, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds can live in very different circumstances but still share the same human values. After living and studying abroad, I knew I wanted to directly serve people, and medicine was the obvious choice.

What stands out most to you about your time as a medical student at EVMS?

I always appreciated EVMS' community focus. The service-learning projects and hands-on clerkship experiences stood out the most in my clinical development.

While you were a student, you received both the Dean's Scholarship and the William L. Donley Memorial Scholarship, which provides support to a male African American student with an interest in primary care. How did those investments in your education affect your trajectory?

Medical school is incredibly challenging and expensive. The financial burden of paying for medical school can make focusing on patient care difficult. Receiving those generous scholarships allowed me to breathe a bit easier and to study harder for my patients.

To be selected for the William L. Donley Memorial Scholarship especially also gave me a sense of belonging. It helped me to remember in those difficult times that I was in the right place and that this community was supporting me.

What challenges in healthcare and patient care do you regularly see, and how do you try to navigate those?

Most frequently, I see patients struggling to pay for care or struggling to understand the need for care.

I think it's important to take the extra time to consider how our care can be individualized to accommodate a patient's schedule, work or childcare. Subsequently, providing good counseling and explaining your methods and reasoning help to build that important trust.

Did the pandemic change the way you practice?

More than anything, the pandemic illustrated that we are a community in medicine and we should support one another.

The first three months of the pandemic were my final three months of residency in New York City. I was incredibly inspired by our colleagues in the medicine and emergency departments. We did our best to try to assist them and fill in where they needed coverage. I think healthcare providers generally became more collegial between departments and did more to help each other.

What is the best advice you've ever received? What advice would you give to medical students today?

The best advice I received that I try to pass to students is to seek as much experience as possible. See as many patients as possible. At the end of a long day, it can be easy to take shortcuts or leave the last patient for the night team. Work through the fatigue. Learn as much as you can. Within reason, continue to push yourself through your training. That one extra patient you saw may teach you a valuable lesson that saves a life in the future. □



Watch a video of Dr. Gray talking more about his career and the impact of EVMS on his life at evms.edu/Gray2023.



Receiving those generous scholarships allowed me to breathe a bit easier and to study harder for my patients.”

Dr. Derwin Gray II

Dr. Derwin Gray II followed in the footsteps of his father in becoming a physician. The elder Dr. Gray coated his son at EVMS (lower left). Today the pair practice together at the Virginia Center for Women.



LEARN MORE

The William L. Donley Memorial Scholarship provides support to a male African American student with an interest in primary care. Multiple members of Dr. Donley's family came together to ensure this endowed scholarship continues in his memory. Find out more about how you can be part of his legacy or start your own at evms.edu/giving.



EVMS-NSU program expands pathways into health professions

Story by MARY WESTBROOK

Photos by DOUG GARDNER



The ENRIChe program launched in early 2023 with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between EVMS and NSU. Javaune Adams-Gaston, PhD, President of NSU, and Alfred Abuhamad, MD, EVMS' President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine, each spoke at the signing event.

A new joint initiative between Eastern Virginia Medical School and Norfolk State University is dedicated to helping the two institutions better address regional health disparities and attract more minority students into health professions.

The EVMS-NSU Research and Training Incubator for Collaboration in Health Equity Initiative (ENRICHe) program also will enhance opportunities for collaborative research for faculty, staff and students at both schools.

"I am truly excited that our institutions were able to create an initiative that will not only help the community, but also continue to forge a long-standing relationship together," says Javaune Adams-Gaston, PhD, President of NSU. "This is what equity and social justice look like: Identifying a problem, working toward a solution through collaboration, for the equitable distribution of social, economic and healthcare resources to the community."

The ENRICHe program launched in January, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Dr. Adams-Gaston and Alfred Abuhamad, MD, EVMS' President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine.

"Only about 8 percent of Virginia's roughly 22,800 active physicians identify as African American," says Dr. Abuhamad. "That's one of the reasons that our longstanding partnership with NSU is so important to EVMS. I am very proud of our track record in this area, and I'm confident the ENRICHe program will make a lasting and meaningful impact in its core focus areas."

During the signing event, Drs. Adams-Gaston and Abuhamad also announced a shared commitment to provide a total of \$500,000 to the new venture, with \$250,000 from EVMS and \$250,000 from NSU. The funds will be invested as seed grants to support research on health disparities conducted by students and faculty at both institutions.

"This is an important commitment that both EVMS and NSU are making, and we expect support for the initiative to grow," Dr. Adams-Gaston says.

ENRICHe will provide networking experiences, along with capacity building and team research opportunities and resources for both NSU and EVMS community members. It also will engage NSU and EVMS trainees in long-term mentored research and professional development.

The idea of ENRICHe began "when key stakeholders from NSU and EVMS came together to discuss the wonderful assets we have jointly in our students and faculty," says Mekbib Gemed, EdD, EVMS' Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion.

"We discussed that day how we might leverage our relationship to forge an even stronger partnership, one that advances health equity in our region," he says. "The ENRICHe concept was a result of that highly productive gathering."

Moving forward, the overall goal of ENRICHe will be to enhance research focused on health disparities, advance health equity and improve pathways to health professions careers for NSU students. □

Forward momentum

Planned initiatives of the new ENRICHe program include:

- The development of a network of NSU and EVMS faculty focused on health disparities research through annual speed-networking activities and structured experiences for students to engage in research at both institutions and with national groups.
- Training focused on grantsmanship and team science support in developing team projects.
- Support and training for community-engaged research, along with timely subject areas such as data analytics and population health.
- Opportunities for seed funds for competitive projects and training and grant opportunities.
- The creation of an Annual Health Disparities Workshop to highlight the work of ENRICHe participants.



The ENRICHe program builds on a long-standing partnership between EVMS and NSU. One initiative includes the Dr. L.D. Britt Premedical Scholars program, which is generously funded by the Hampton Roads Community Foundation. Named for L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, the Edward J. Brickhouse Chair in Surgery, the Henry Ford Professor of Surgery and Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs, the program pairs NSU students with EVMS mentors and resources. Pictured are some of those scholars, along with NSU senior leadership members, Dr. Britt (center), Mekbib Gemed, EdD, Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion (far left) and Alfred Abuhamad, MD, (center, right) EVMS President, Provost and Dean of the School of Medicine.

Watch a video highlight of the ENRICHe program signing at evms.edu/ENRICHe2023.



Andrus Hall
The Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute
EVMS for Integrated NeuroHealth

Compassionate, comprehensive care: The Goldrich Institute opens its doors

Story by MARY WESTBROOK | Photos by DOUG GARDNER

About five years ago, Tommy Vaughn started having trouble remembering details. He grew short and irritated with his wife, Rita, and their three adult children.

None of this was normal behavior for Tommy. He always had been a loving and patient husband and father.

"When Tommy came to me and said, 'I think I need help,' we didn't wait," Rita says. "His mother had dementia, and Tommy also had a cousin with dementia, so we were hyper-aware."

Getting Tommy the help that he needed wasn't easy. Even with the Vaughns' experience caring for family members, navigating Tommy's new world — finding the right experts, getting answers, ensuring Rita had the support she needed as a caregiver — was time-consuming and frustrating. Several providers dismissed Tommy's memory loss as routine aging.

The Vaughns persisted.

When Tommy finally was referred to Hamid Okhravi, MD, the family felt immediate relief. Within weeks, they had a diagnosis — Lewy body dementia — and a treatment plan.

"I don't know that the other physicians we've seen would have been as proactive as Dr. Okhravi was," Rita says. "If we hadn't found him, Tommy might not be in such a good place, physically and mentally, right now."

In Hampton Roads, roughly 40,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease. About 4,000 live with Parkinson's disease. The keys to effective treatment are early identification and intervention. Too often, however, those with neurodegenerative diseases go undiagnosed for years after their initial symptoms. That's why the establishment of the EVMS Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth is so important.

A pillar of the EVMS Deliver on the Promise Campaign, the Goldrich Institute opened to patients in November 2022. Its establishment was made possible through a \$15 million gift from Virginia Beach residents Larry and Janice Goldrich. It was created to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary care for patients suffering from neurodegenerative disorders, including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

The Goldrich Institute also will support patients and their families and be a centralized site for specialists in neurology,



Janice Goldrich, next to a picture of her late husband, Larry, at the opening of the Goldrich Institute.

geriatrics, psychology, occupational and speech therapy and social work. In addition, it will improve access to new drug therapies and clinical trials and accelerate research that may lead to better treatment and possible cures.

The comprehensive nature of the Goldrich Institute has the potential to be transformative for patients and their loved ones, providing them with a level and scope of care they might otherwise have to travel hundreds of miles to obtain.

"The Goldrich Institute is unique in this area," Dr. Okhravi says. "We will be able to communicate directly with specialists and also have interdisciplinary relationships and reduce the amount of time from diagnosis to disease management. It will allow us to better support our patients and their caregivers and, ultimately, could help give families more quality time together with their loved ones."

That was the case for the Vaughns. Thanks to Dr. Okhravi's careful interventions and treatment plans, Tommy and Rita have been able to better prepare for the future and make the most of the present, including a planned trip to Ecuador to visit their daughter and her family.

"We're trying to make the most of our time together because we don't know for sure if we'll be up for the trip in the future, but we know that we can travel now," Rita says.

In addition to providing high-quality patient care, physician-scientists at the Goldrich Institute will focus their work on identifying ways to improve diagnostics and therapeutics for patients. EVMS students and residents also will have opportunities to learn from experts in neurodegenerative diseases.

For the next generation of geriatricians, including Bahar Niknejad, MD (Internal Medicine Residency '20, Internal Medicine Fellowship '21), the Goldrich Institute fills a critical gap and provides new opportunities.

"With our multidisciplinary teams and

approaches, this is a chance to provide the highest quality care to patients," says Dr. Niknejad, Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine. "We are the only institute in the area to provide this kind of comprehensive care for patients with memory problems." □



Hamid Okhravi, MD

The AI Abiouness Distinguished Professor in Geriatrics

Director, Comprehensive Memory Center
Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth



Bahar Niknejad, MD

Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine

LEARN MORE

The EVMS Lawrence J. Goldrich Institute for Integrated NeuroHealth was established through a \$15 million gift from the Virginia Beach residents Larry and Janice Goldrich. Be part of the Goldrich family's legacy and invest in the future health of our community. For more information, contact EVMS Development at giving@evms.edu or **757.965.8500**.

Hear more about the need for these services at evms.edu/GoldrichStories2023.

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