

## Appointments



### Heather Smith, MD, named President-elect of AMA Foundation

The American Medical Association Foundation has announced the election of **HEATHER SMITH, MD, MPH**, as President-elect of its Board of Directors. Dr. Smith has a long history with the Foundation. She received an AMA Foundation

Leadership award in 2001, was appointed to the AMA Foundation Board of Directors in 2013 and most recently served as Secretary of the Board from 2019–2020.

Dr. Smith is an assistant professor in the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology at Women and Infants Hospital. She has been an active member of the AMA since 2002, serving as a delegate to the AMA House of Delegates since 2008, most recently representing the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She has previously served as the Vice Chair, as well as the Alternate Delegate for the Resident and Fellow Section. Additionally, Dr. Smith serves as a member on the Council on Legislation and has also served on the Council on Medical Services. Throughout her career and years of service, Dr. Smith has remained active in the Massachusetts Medical Society, the Connecticut State Medical Society, and now the Rhode Island Medical Society.

Dr. Smith completed a postdoctoral fellowship in health services research through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars program at Yale University. There, she performed research in the field of health equity with a focus on disparities for women and adolescents, particularly from marginalized and underserved populations. Employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, she investigated the impact of local and federal policies on issues including access to care, access to information, and resource utilization.

Since her appointment to the AMA Foundation Board of Directors, Dr. Smith has been vital in expanding and strengthening communications activities for the organization. As Chair of the Ad-Hoc Communications Committee, she managed the implementation of updated branding materials and increased the Foundation's web presence, including the launch of a new Foundation website in 2019. Dedicated to fostering physician leaders of tomorrow, Dr. Smith has also served as a mentor to medical students through the Foundation's Leadership Development Institute since its inception. ❖

### Kenneth E. Wood, DO, named Lifespan Executive Vice President of Physician Affairs and Chief Clinical Officer

After an extensive national search, **KENNETH E. WOOD, DO**, has been appointed Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer for Lifespan, Rhode Island's largest health system.

Dr. Wood is a veteran health care administrator, educator and researcher with three decades of clinical experience across diverse settings ranging from community hospitals to large, integrated academic medical centers. Dr. Wood assumed his role on June 24, 2020, and succeeds John B. Murphy, MD, who is serving as the President of Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's Hospital.

Dr. Wood comes to Lifespan from the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) where he was a Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, Associate Chief Medical Officer for the University of Maryland Medical System and Director of the University of Maryland Critical Care Network. Prior to these positions, Dr. Wood spent five years as the Chief Medical Officer at Geisinger Medical Center and was Director of the Center for Re-Engineering Healthcare for the Geisinger Health System in central Pennsylvania and previously spent 17 years at University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics where he held a number of leadership roles.

Dr. Wood holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania and a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine. He completed an internship at Union Memorial Hospital in Union, N.J., a residency in Internal Medicine at Abington Memorial Hospital in Abington, PA and a fellowship in Critical Care Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (now part of Rutgers University). Dr. Wood is board certified in internal medicine and critical care medicine. ❖

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### Lawrence Connell named Director of Providence VA Medical Center

BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS – The Department of Veterans Affairs appointed **LAWRENCE CONNELL** as the new director of the Providence VA Medical Center, effective as of June 23rd of this year.

Connell will oversee a comprehensive health care system that provides care to over 35,000 Veterans from Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, the Cape and Islands, with an operating budget of nearly \$300 million.

“We are pleased to appoint Lawrence Connell as the new director of Providence VA Medical Center,” said Ryan Lilly, network director for the VA New England Healthcare System. “His sound leadership qualities and proven experience will be valuable assets for the facility, the employees and volunteers, and for the Veterans we are honored to serve.”

Connell previously served as the chief of staff for the Veterans Health Administration, Washington, DC. He is a retired U.S. Army colonel and served as the Deputy Chief of Operations, Joint Cyber Center, U.S. Pacific Command. Throughout his military career, he has held multiple leadership positions. He served more than 30 years as an Army medical service officer, including 15 years as a Medevac pilot. Additionally, Connell served as the Chief Operating Officer, Pacific Regional Medical Command, Honolulu, Hawaii; the Chief Executive Officer of Stuttgart U.S. Army Medical Health Clinic; the Commander of the 43rd Area Support Medical Battalion; and other medical-related staff positions.

Connell holds a Bachelor of Science in communications from the University of Rhode Island and a master’s degree in international relations from Troy State University. He is a certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and a graduate of the Disney Institute for Health Care Excellence. Connell is the recipient of the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster award and two Air Medals.

Providence VA Medical Center, part of VISN 1, is comprised of one main campus located in Providence and three community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) located in New Bedford, and Hyannis, Mass. and Middletown, R.I. VISN 1 is one of 18 Veterans Integrated Service Networks within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. VISN 1 has 11 medical centers, 45 CBOCs, six community living centers and two domiciliaries. ❖



### South County Health announces new providers to Cancer Center Team

The South County Health Cancer Center recently welcomed two new providers to its medical staff.

Hematologist/oncologist, **CHRISTOPHER W. SEIDLER, MD**, began seeing patients at the Cancer Center in May. Prior to joining the South County Health team, Dr. Seidler was the medical director at Harrington Hospital Cancer Center in Southbridge, MA. He received his medical degree from Rutgers Medical School and furthered his training in an internship and residencies in internal medicine at Brown University, Rhode Island Hospital. He then completed a fellowship in hematology/oncology at Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, NH.



**HANNAH WEINER, MSN**, an advanced oncology certified nurse practitioner (AOCNP), also joined the Cancer Center team. Hannah attended Medical University of South Carolina where she earned a BSN before earning an MSN as an Adult Nurse Practitioner from Barnes Jewish College, Goldfarb School of Nursing, St. Louis, MO. She is ANCC board-certified and has provided care in primary care and cancer care environments.



The South County Health Cancer Center is located at South County Hospital. The Cancer Center, accredited by the Commission on Cancer, allows patients a continuum of care from diagnosis to treatment and rehabilitation within the Wakefield campus. ❖

## Obituaries

**RUTH APPLETON BELL, MD**, widow of D. William J. Bell, MD, passed away on June 11th. She was the daughter of the late Paul Appleton, MD, Chief of Obstetrics at the former Providence Lying-In Hospital and Frances Ricker Appleton, RN.

Dr. Bell was a pediatrician in Providence and North Conway, New Hampshire. She retired to Great Falls, Montana, and moved to Williamsburg, Virginia, a few years ago. In 2019, she settled in Brandenburg, Kentucky. She was a 1939 graduate of the Lincoln School in Providence. In 1946, she earned her medical degree from the University of Michigan during World War II as one of four women out of 160 residents. Her class was accelerated into a three-year residency because of the wartime shortage of state-side doctors, and she was a member of Phi Kappa Phi and Alpha Omega Alpha. She was devoted to the university's medical school for the rest of her life.

She was a pioneer in pediatrics and a role model for aspiring female doctors. As a lifetime member of the American Board of Pediatrics, she presented at and attended the annual meetings up until her early 90s, co-authoring landmark findings on childhood diabetes in 2010. Dr. Bell was among the first group of pediatricians working with Dr. Sidney Farber to attain temporary remissions of acute lymphocytic leukemia, the most common cancer in children. She practiced in Providence from 1953–1984 and in North Conway from 1984 until retiring to Montana.

Dr. Bell was an intrepid world traveler and her travels took her to all corners of the Earth, including an expedition to Antarctica when she was in her 80s. She spent many summers on Jekyll Island in Georgia, and her final trip was a walking tour of Scandinavia at 88 years of age.

Dr. Bell's volunteer work included working with Visiting Nurses in Warwick, sitting on the board of Warwick Libraries, and St. Mary's Home. She conducted dozens of free baby wellness checks for those in need in Providence, New Hampshire and Montana. She continued to take medical courses throughout her life to remain current with pediatrics. She loved animals, especially her beloved dogs.

She will be remembered by her countless patients and those who dearly loved her. ❖



graduated from Spaulding High School in the class of 1966 and graduated from the University of Vermont in the class of 1970. He had joined Army ROTC while in college and served before going back to school. Skip went on to earn a master's degree in cell biology from the University of Vermont in 1973 and his medical degree from the University of Vermont, College of Medicine in 1977. He served a residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Tufts University, School of Medicine and completed a fellowship in gynecological oncology at New England Medical Center.

Over the course of his professional life, he was on the faculties of Tufts, Harvard and Brown Universities and on the staffs of the New England Medical Center and Massachusetts General Hospital, ultimately ending up at Women & Infants Hospital in Providence, where he became the Director of Women's Oncology and Executive Chief of Oncology for Care New England. That innovative, patient-centered program emphasized the importance of the arts and the heart in equal parts with medical knowledge in the practice of medicine. He taught the many oncology fellows and residents he trained to keep "fighting the good fight." Central to this belief is advocating strongly for what they learn is right from being at a patient's bedside and by remembering the values and privilege that brought them to medicine in the first place. He became a sought-after speaker and spread his message throughout the world. Skip loved his work and would have done it unsung, but he was awarded many honors, among them the Arnold P. Gold Foundation Humanism in Medicine Award, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Cancer Society and the Kaali Award which he received in Hungary for his "invaluable and lasting contribution in gynecologic oncology and integrative care, for his motivational speeches worldwide, and for his passionate humanism."

Those who know Skip understand that he would be embarrassed by a listing of any professional achievements. (His family usually found out about them because someone in his office would send his parents a notice.) He would much rather talk about anything else, especially something that would have him at odds with many of the people in a room. His wit and barbs were quick and his humor was ever-present. His skill at arguing his point led to many extended family dinners where those in the younger generation could learn the fine art of defending their beliefs. His keen understanding of human nature and his caring heart showed clearly in the poetry he wrote and the music he loved. He found inspiration in the beauty of the farm on which he lived and the work he would do on it. His final speaking engagement entitled "Moo" blended the farm and his life-long message of the humanistic way of practicing medicine. Above all of the other things in his life, he cherished his children. He loved their spirits, perspectives, and most importantly, their hearts. He knew what they could do, and he did all he could to encourage the best in them to come out whether in



**CORNELIUS O. (SKIP) GRANAI, III, MD**, died from cancer on June 28 at age 71 in his home in Ashaway, surrounded by the love of family.

Skip, the son of Ki and Loraine Granai, grew up in Barre, Vermont in a home across from the Lincoln School playground where there was always a ballgame to join. He

sports, arts, presentations or any other endeavor, and he taught them how to appreciate what new things life has to offer while respecting what and who came before. His support of the whole family will be sorely missed.

Skip is survived by Ann Kirby of Ashaway, his loving partner; his four children, Lieutenant Colonel Cornelius O. (Tad) Granai IV (wife Lindsey, children Hannah and Lilah) of East Greenwich, Rhode Island; Robert Granai (wife Audra, children Ava, Tyler and Ella) of Mapleville, Rhode Island and their mother Mary Manzi; Lily Granai and Kile Granai of Providence, and their mother Cheryl Granai; his sisters Susan Granai (husband David Van Slyke) of Yarmouth, Maine and Mary Corrigan (husband Ed) of Northfield Falls, Vermont; beloved nieces and nephews, caring aunts and cousins, faithful dog Jenna, and extended family in which he would include his many colleagues.

If so inclined, memorial contributions can be made to: The Skip Granai Endowed Lectureship "Humanism in Medicine: What Matters Matter" at <https://foundation.womenandinfants.org/> (online designation: "Lectureship in Honor of Skip Granai") or payable to "Women & Infants Foundation" (memo: "Skip Granai Endowed Lectureship") addressed to WIH Philanthropy Department, 300 Richmond Street, Providence, RI 02903; The University of Vermont, Larner College of Medicine, Medical Alumni Association Scholarship Fund at <http://www.med.uvm.edu/alumni/support> (online designation: "Medical Alumni Association Scholarship") or call for more information at (802) 656-4014. A celebration of Skip's life will take place in the future. ❖

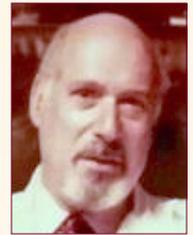
 **HAROLD M. HARGER, JR., MD,** 87, passed away on May 30, 2020. He graduated from Tulane University Medical School and was a practicing radiologist in Rhode Island for many years before retirement. He was a veteran of the United States Air Force.



An avid boater for most of his life, Harold was a long-standing member of the Florida Coast Guard Auxiliary, serving in many capacities, including Flotilla Commander and IO Officer, during his tenure. He enjoyed building and flying model airplanes in his spare time and was a member of Aero Modeler Associations in both Rhode Island and Florida. He is survived by his wife of almost 42 years, Madelyn K. Harger, of Port St. Lucie, FL; sister, Muriel (Kit) Lipps and her husband Fred of Metairie, LA; daughter, Donna L. Harmon of Coventry, RI; grandchildren Trevor W. Harmon, Tyler J. Harmon, Tanner R. Wilkins and Sierra N. Wilkins; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Shirley E. Wilkins; son, H. Kevin Harger and his former wife, Janice H. Godbout. ❖

 **BANICE MORDECAI WEBBER,** MD, 94, died on May 27th, 2020.

He was born in Providence on June 26, 1925, the only son of Joseph and Sarah Olch Webber. He attended Brown University and graduated from Tufts Medical School in 1947. He trained as a surgeon, like his father, and later in his medical career went on to become a radiation oncologist, ultimately founding Radiation Oncology Associates in Providence.



He served his country, entering the Army in June 1943 prior to attending Tufts Medical School and was sent to Korea in 1952 as an Army surgeon. He was a Fellow in the Department of Radiation Oncology at Tufts New England Medical Center, an attending radiation oncologist at Rhode Island Hospital, and a member of the Brown University Medical School faculty. He was a Clinical Associate Professor Emeritus of Radiation Medicine at Brown University and an Associate Professor of Radiation Oncology at Tufts University School of Medicine. His long and distinguished medical career included stints as President, New England Cancer Society; President, New England Society of Radiation Oncology; President, Miriam Hospital Staff Association, a trustee of The Miriam Hospital; Chairman, Mediation Committee of the Rhode Island Medical Society, and member of the Board of Trustees of Home and Hospice Care of Rhode Island.

He retired in 2003 and in his later years tutored 4th and 5th grade children at the Paul Cuffee School, which he loved dearly. A lifelong sailing enthusiast, photographer, intrepid traveler and occasional musician among many other interests, Dr. Webber loved clams, oysters, mussels and chowder almost as much as he loved the summer. His many friends, colleagues and patients were all familiar with his deep intellect, endless curiosity, sharp wit and humor. He was a devoted son, brother, husband, parent, delighted grandparent and above all, a man of science, who honored the traditions but charted his own path.

He was married to Helen Ross Webber (1952–1962), Sherry Polan Webber (1963–1999), and Marie Clarke (2014–2016). He is survived by his two daughters, Rachel Webber Ryser of Brooklyn, NY, and Susan Webber Gatto of New York City and Park City, Utah; their spouses, Scott Ryser and James Gatto, and 4 grandchildren, Samuel Joel Ryser, Nina Sarah Ryser, Alexander Webber Gatto and Owen Edward Gatto. His two sons, Joel Benjamin Webber and Daniel Saul Webber, predeceased him.

World circumstances have forced postponement of a funeral/memorial service.

Eventually he will be buried in Providence, at Sons of Israel and David Cemetery. Donations will be gratefully accepted in his name at The American Cancer Society. ❖