Support Research: Make the Difference in the Lives of Patients Worldwide

Treating the whole person — the goal of Loyola University Health System (Loyola) — requires a team effort, and the players on that team include bench scientists, clinical researchers, and public health researchers who work for years behind the scenes, steadily progressing toward the discoveries that make health care advances possible. By making a donation to support research at Loyola, you can take an active role in promoting the kind of research that leads to improved treatments and outcomes for patients everywhere.

The Time is Right for Your Gift

Health sciences research has traditionally been funded through federal grants and other public resources. But private donations applied toward increasing the research-intensive faculty and providing seed money for new projects is critical: a researcher who has already begun a research project in a specific area and can show preliminary data to support his or her research hypothesis is at an advantage in receiving federal grants to support completion of the full project.

Become a Partner in Research

Together, we can support a future where research and patient care are intertwined, enabling researchers to make discoveries today that will benefit patients tomorrow.

If you are interested in learning more about how to help patients by supporting research, please contact the Office of Development, development@lumc.edu or (708) 216-3201 to explore some of the many ways your gift can make an impact.
New Loyola Hospital Tower Offers the Latest in Patient Care

Loyola University Hospital’s new patient tower demonstrates the institution’s continuing commitment to offer patients the highest quality care possible. The tower’s gala opening ceremony on Sunday, April 6, attended by more than 300 guests, included a Mass, three separate ribbon cuttings, guided tours and a reception.

The $120 million project, including a new 170,000-square-foot structure, combines the three-dimensional ultrasound heart imaging technology, a pharmacy robot and a super-strength 3 Tesla MRI machine, with a heightened awareness of the relationship between a patient’s environment and the healing process.

“We’ve created a facility that blends elements and colors from nature to enhance the healing experience,” said Paul K. Whelton, MB, MD, MSc, president and chief executive officer of Loyola University Health System (Loyola).

“At the same time, it elegantly assimilates the high-tech amenities that our patients have come to expect from Loyola as a leading academic medical center.” Each of the 64 spacious new private rooms, finished in soothing colors and materials, offer large bathrooms, flat-screen TVs, internet access and sofa beds for overnight family stays. East-facing rooms offer spectacular views of the Chicago skyline. Plenty of natural light streams in through thoughtfully placed windows.

The new building clearly establishes the hospital’s main entrance. Our identity as a Catholic Jesuit hospital is proclaimed with a cross built into its pinnacle and with stylized façade details derived from the St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, sword and shield. These elements also are repeated in the building’s interior detail. A healing garden offers patients and visitors a place for prayer and meditation, important elements of Loyola’s Catholic Jesuit tradition of reflection.

Earth, water and sky themes echo throughout the building. In the Frank W. & Nancy S. Considine atrium, finished in natural materials such as white maple and Egyptian limestone, water cascades down an 18-foot waterfall. Affixed to the base of the fountain in raised letters are the words “Only say the word, and I shall be healed,” affirming the faith-based heritage of the hospital. The lobby is named for former Loyola University Health System Board Chairman Frank W. Considine and his wife, Nancy S. Considine, whose pledged gift helped to create the serene space. Mr. and Mrs. Considine were on hand at the opening celebration to cut the ribbon, formally opening the atrium.

The new William G. & Mary A. Ryan Center for Heart & Vascular Medicine occupies a large portion of the main floor in the new building. It houses eight new interventional laboratories: four cardiac catheterization laboratories and four cardiac electrophysiology laboratories. It also features private patient waiting/recovery rooms and new areas for non-invasive cardiac and peripheral vascular diagnostics. The center holds the area’s first magnetic-guided navigation system for treatment of conditions such as heart rhythm disorders, heart failure and coronary artery disease. It is named for donors William G. and Mary A. Ryan, who, together with more than 30 of their children and grandchildren, attended the opening festivities. Upstairs, 12 state-of-the-art operating rooms are flanked by pre-operative and recovery areas. Surgical support equipment is powered by apparatus concealed on the third floor, allowing greater freedom of movement for staff and the highest possible degree of sterilization. A pathology laboratory adjacent to the operating suites allows for tissue testing that will provide quicker results for surgeons as they work. Patients in the new tower are transported to surgery and diagnostic tests via private hallways that continue the calming color scheme and feature nature-inspired artwork.

In addition to incorporating new physical features to promote healing, the building is designed to support an evidence-based patient and family care model by eliminating large, central nursing stations on the patient floors and replacing them with smaller stations outside the patient rooms. Nurses also are now able to convene in small “hallway huddles” to confer about patients with complex conditions, and designated teaching areas have been included.

See Loyola Hospital Tower page 2
Loyola Hospital Tower from page 1

on the floors for doctors and nurses in training. The design change facilitates the new patient-and-family-centered model of care that has been adopted, which increases the time that nurses can spend at each patient’s bedside. In another patient-focused change, nurses are instantly identifiable in their new uniforms — fresh blue scrubs topped off with white jackets. Other staff members, such as patient care technicians and transporters, also will wear uniforms to help patients quickly recognize their roles.

Completion of the building concludes Phase I of the four phases of the $120 million expansion project. Although the new construction component is now complete, work to revamp the existing hospital building will continue through October 2009. The additional phases will include renovation and reconstruction of the adjoining Russo Pavilion, involving more than 60,000 square feet of the existing hospital’s first and second floors.

$2 Million Gift Allows Researchers to Address Cardiac Remodeling Questions

Every day, scientists consider the question, “How does it work?” as they study the mechanical, physical and biochemical functions of living organisms. Thanks to a $2 million gift to Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (Stritch) from the McCormick Foundation, Stritch physiologists can continue to advance their quest to learn more about the causes and effects of remodeling in the human heart.

“Cardiac remodeling” is a broad term used to refer to changes in the structure or function of the heart that can result from aging, heart attack, inherited diseases, chronic alcohol intake, high blood pressure, end-stage renal disease, diabetes and obesity. Although the word “remodeling” usually implies improvement, medically speaking, “cardiac remodeling” implies a decline in function, often progressing to the point of severe congestive heart failure and/or fatal cardiac arrhythmias. Therapies currently available to treat it include pharmaceuticals, implantable devices such as pacemakers, heart transplantation and other surgical interventions. As these existing therapies often cause significant side effects and complications, cardiac remodeling researchers are investigating alternate therapies.

To date, the McCormick grant has been used to bring five international cardiac experts to campus in the McCormick Seminar Series held at Loyola University Health System (Loyola). The most recent expert, Jeanne Wei, MD, PhD, professor and executive vice chair, Department of Geriatrics, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Medicine, gave a presentation on the effects of aging on cardiac function. The lecture series was popular with faculty and students alike.

Department leaders are using the remainder of the award to recruit two additional faculty members to Stritch, including a chair for the Department of Physiology and a general cardiac researcher. Once these new members are in place, the award also will support the piloting of new research projects on cardiac remodeling. “Science is a team sport; you need to get your players in order before you decide on your next play,” said Richard H. Kennedy, PhD, vice president for health sciences research, senior associate dean of research, professor of physiology and pharmacology at Stritch.

“The McCormick Foundation’s generous gift will add breadth and depth to our ongoing research in cardiac remodeling,” said Dr. Kennedy. “We’re very grateful the foundation has decided to partner with us in the project, and we’ll certainly steward its gift well.”

The McCormick Foundation (formerly The McCormick Tribune Foundation) is a non-profit organization committed to making life better for children and communities through its charitable grant-making programs. In the past, the foundation has provided grants to Loyola to be used toward nursing, early learning for children and vaccine and therapy development.

The Foundation is the steward of the funds left by Col. Robert McCormick when he died 52 years ago. Col. McCormick, the publisher and editor of the Chicago Tribune, gave many grants to community and civic causes. The Foundation continues his philanthropic work under his name.

For more information about supporting Loyola’s research activities, contact the Office of Development at development@lumc.edu or (708) 216-3201.

Research Series Presents the Breakfast of Cardiac Champions

The past, present and future of research in cardiovascular medicine at Loyola University Health System (Loyola) was outlined at the spring research breakfast in April. The fourth in the ongoing Future of Research Breakfast Series, the topic was chosen to correlate with the opening of the Loyola University Hospital Tower, which houses cutting edge technology in cardiovascular care.

The event included presentations by three researchers examining the causes and treatments of cardiovascular conditions. The laboratory of Allen Samarel, MD, director of research, Cardiovascular Institute, Loyola, is focused on clarifying the causes and consequences of cardiac hypertrophy (thickening of the heart muscle). Research by Holli DeVon, RN, PhD, associate professor, Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing, is examining the association of gender, age and diabetes on cardiac health. David Wilber, MD, director of the Cardiovascular Institute, Loyola, is conducting a clinical trial investigating the cardiac, clinical and genetic aspects of arrhythmogenic right ventricular dysplasia.

Loyola patient, Tom Oberhausen, relayed how an atrial fibrillation treated his irregular heart beat, “After the procedure I got my life back,” he said. “I feel great and am able to exercise again.”
Newest Hire First Step in Expanding Pediatric Cancer Care

Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine's newest endowed professor is setting the stage for the expansion of subspecialties in the Department of Pediatrics.

"We have a vibrant academic community in the Department of Pediatrics, but I envision additional faculty members, such as a pediatric bone marrow transplant specialist, and more resources for research in the treatment of children's cancer," said Charles Hemenway, MD, PhD, the Ronald McDonald® House Charities Endowed Professor in Pediatric Hematology Oncology. "I'd like pediatric oncology to be a more integral part of the Cardinal Bernardin Cancer Center."

Dr. Hemenway is the director of the Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Division of the Department of Pediatrics. Physicians in this division provide diagnosis and management of infants and children with cancer, anemia, bone marrow failure syndrome and bleeding disorders. This division has grown from one physician to two, since Dr. Hemenway joined the faculty in October. A third physician will be joining the division in August. The Department of Pediatrics has initiated subsequent recruitments to bolster faculty in this specialty and others.

A research hematologist, Dr. Hemenway's investigations are focused on finding new treatments for mixed-lineage leukemia (MLL), a type of leukemia diagnosed in children under 1 year of age. The disease is caused by a gene anomaly in which a piece of chromosome 11 has broken off and attached itself to another chromosome. Although children with MLL receive the same treatments as patients with the more common acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), MLL patients tend to relapse faster after chemotherapy and their cure rate is between 10 percent to 50 percent, compared to a cure rate up to 90 percent for children with ALL. The current thinking is that MLL is a separate cancer from ALL, requiring its own medications and treatments. The National Cancer Institute recently awarded Dr. Hemenway a grant for his investigation into an approach to block the formation of proteins necessary for the formation of MLL.

Dr. Hemenway's compensation and research costs are provided from an endowment started by the Ronald McDonald® House Charities in 1998. Endowed professorships are reserved for the most distinguished faculty, and Dr. Hemenway is internationally renowned for his work on childhood leukemia.

"Dr. Hemenway is a wonderful addition to the faculty at the Stritch School of Medicine," said Paul K. Whelton, MB, MD, MSc, president and chief executive officer, Loyola University Health System (Loyola). "He is a superb clinician, nationally recognized researcher, and skilled educator who is strongly committed to the mission and future of Loyola as a world-class health sciences campus."

Dr. Hemenway earned his medical degree at the University of Massachusetts in Worcester and a doctorate in genetics at Duke University in Durham, N.C. He came to Loyola from Tulane University in New Orleans, where he had spent 11 years as a researcher. "It was my first real job, I thought I'd stay there forever;" he said.

But when the effects of Hurricane Katrina left Dr. Hemenway with limited means to conduct his research, he began to consider other options. A friend and fellow researcher on staff at Loyola, Nancy Zeleznik-Le, PhD, associate professor, Department of Medicine, alerted him to the new position.

"I knew of Loyola's strong reputation for research, and when I learned that Dr. Whelton had left Tulane to become the president and CEO at Loyola, I thought the position was worth looking into," Dr. Hemenway explained.

Since arriving at Loyola, Dr. Hemenway has been impressed with the helpfulness of his staff and the organization of the institution. "It's a great relief to be at a place where things work so efficiently," he remarked. "Everyone has been so welcoming and so helpful in helping me to settle into and continue with my research."

Although he devotes the majority of his time to research, he also sees patients and supervises graduate students in the laboratory. Dr. Hemenway has settled into the community, as well, taking up residence in Oak Park, Ill., with wife, Betsy, a history professor at Loyola University Chicago, and their twin 15-year-old sons. "The move to Chicago was a good opportunity for both of us," he said. "We are delighted to be here."

To learn how you can be a part of Dr. Hemenway's research efforts, contact Eva Moss, associate director, major gifts, at evmoss@lumc.edu or (708) 216-8249.

Local Artist and Donor Lives in the Light

Ruth Freeark lives surrounded by art, in a home with expansive glass walls that let the natural light shine in. The home, fashioned of two glass walls and two brick walls, was custom built more than 30 years ago for Mrs. Freeark and her husband, the late Robert J. Freeark, MD, former chair of the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (Stritch) Department of Surgery.

"I'm an artist and wanted to live in a house where the natural lighting is good," she said, simply.

Mrs. Freeark's mission is creating, collecting and promoting art. But she keeps a foothold in her husband's medical world, recently donating $151,000 from his estate to the Surgical Research and Education Endowment in the Department of Surgery.

Robert Freeark, MD, was the chair of the Department of Surgery from 1970 until his retirement in 1995. Before joining the staff at Loyola University Health System (Loyola), Dr. Freeark was the director of surgery at Cook County Hospital from 1958 to 1968, and the hospital director from 1968 to 1970. During his tenure at Cook County Hospital, he established America's first trauma unit in 1965 along with the Summer L. Koch Burn Center and the Robin Dean Heliport.

For everything he did to advance the practice of surgery, it's a fitting tribute that funds such as Mrs. Freeark's recent gift have been donated in Dr. Freeark's name to the Education and Research Endowment. Department of Surgery members are working to raise $5 million for the endowment.

"The goal is to create a non-clinical source of revenue for research and education," said Timothy O'Hern, director of administration, Department of Surgery. "The endowment will be used toward the education of department residents and fellows, new research projects and those projects that are awaiting renewal of their funding. Clinical revenue is down due to lower physician reimbursements through Medicare and Medicaid, and that lower revenue impacts our ability to manage our education and research missions."

Of her memorial gift, Mrs. Freeark said her husband would be pleased to have a part in raising money for education in the Department of Surgery. She described him as a first-class teacher who sought more credit for his students than himself. "Bob wrote numerous surgical papers..."
Health System Rolls Out Ambitious Strategic Plan

If anything has remained constant through the history of medicine at Loyola University Chicago (Loyola), it is change and evolution. From the beginning of medical education at Loyola in 1909 as a department of the university to the establishment of the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing (Niehoff) in 1935, and the creation of the medical center campus in Maywood in 1969, the Jesuit tradition of pursuing excellence and serving the underserved has demanded that the institution evolve. Today, in addition to the medical center campus, the health system includes 22 primary and specialty care facilities in Cook, Will and DuPage counties. In July, it will assume governance of Gottlieb Health Resources in Melrose Park. Earlier this year, Niehoff officially moved to the health system’s Board of Directors.

As a complex organization – 4 – Dr. Whelton and the health system’s Board of Directors are confident that this integrated approach will propel the organization to the top tier of academic medical centers and garner national and international recognition for excellence in patient care, research and education. Loyola University Health System will achieve that status by building on the impressive history of care for the individual and community, of education and training for health professions and of the pursuit of discovery and new knowledge. As a complex organization where we value science and discovery and strive to impart our knowledge to future generations, we must actively and uncompromisingly balance growth, investment and productivity in our three mission areas: patient care, education and research. Our newly created strategic plan for the health system, “Vision for a Health Sciences Campus,” serves as a roadmap for organizational growth and academic strengthening during the next five to 10 years. It reflects the entirety of the health sciences organization — the clinical health system as well as the academic and research worlds of the medical and nursing schools. In the future, this will include a school of public health.

Overarching Goals

Through the strategic planning process complementary goals were identified as a key to achieving success for each of the three mission areas and for the health system as a whole. We are committed to:

• Recruit, develop and maintain faculty and critical administrative talent for all areas of teaching, discovery and patient care, and educate future health professionals to develop as multi-dimensional faculty and clinicians, clinician investigators and clinician educators

• Develop and enhance our facilities and technology infrastructure, both on the Maywood campus and in off-site locations

• Build system capital and capabilities through philanthropy and more robust revenue streams

• Develop a durable, integrated and efficient clinical management structure that supports a practice environment where the patient is the center of all we do

• To accomplish our goals, we will:
  • Invest in areas of strength and distinction
  • Establish a patient-centric culture and collaborative, team-based operating model
  • Emphasize population sciences and public health initiatives — prevention, community health and wellness, and knowledge transfer
  • Engage our education and research expertise to create a culture of safety that permeates the organization
  • Develop leadership and structures that facilitate change and sustainable growth
  • First implement high-impact, low-cost initiatives

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Votes Deliver Videogame Fun to Pediatric Patients

Young patients who like to play Wii are the big winners of a good-natured contest that recently pitted Ronald McDonald® Children’s Hospital of Loyola University Medical Center (RMCH of LUMC) against Shriners Hospital for Children, Chicago, in a vote-off competing for a portable videogame system. The contest was sponsored by the Starlight Starbright Children’s Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children with serious medical conditions by providing entertainment, education and family activities that help them cope with prolonged illness.

Under the contest rules, Loyola University Health System (Loyola) employees and their friends and family were able to log on to a Starlight Starbright web site every day in March and vote for RMCH of LUMC to receive the videogame system. Tensions ran high as Shriners appeared to have the lead for most of the month-long contest. Then RMCH pulled ahead at the last minute. “We had people from across the nation and as far away as England voting for us,” said Cindi LaPorte, RN, nurse manager, Pediatrics, Pediatric Critical Care. “The contest would have been a success even if we hadn’t won because it really brought the Loyola community together.” In the end everyone was a winner: RMCH of LUMC received two game systems and Shriners received one.

Virtual-reality Therapy Cools Down Burn Patients

Loyola is the first health system in Illinois to offer pain relief to burn patients using “cooling” virtual-reality technology. During treatment, a patient wears a position-tracking helmet that displays a world of three-dimensional graphics of gently falling snowflakes, snowmen, penguins and polar bears perched on icy ledges or floating in a frigid river. The snowmen throw snowballs at the patient who can, with the click of a mouse, deflect the incoming snowball with one of his or her own. The therapy’s interactive, multi-sensory features distract patients with cool images so they pay less attention to their body’s pain signals. Recent studies found that burn patients undergoing wound care reported that their pain dropped dramatically when they were engaged in virtual-reality programs. The Para Family Charitable Foundation donated $25,000 to purchase the virtual-reality system.

Study: Gene Testing May Predict the Necessity of Chemotherapy

Breast cancer care is becoming more individualized, using genes from a patient’s malignant tissue to determine the most efficient treatment, according to a recent national study led by Kathy S. Albin, MD, Department of Medicine, Division of Hematology/Oncology. The study has oncologists taking a closer look at traditional breast cancer treatment prescriptions that add chemotherapy to tamoxifen (a drug that blocks the action of estrogen on cells) in women with estrogen receptor-positive disease. Study results indicate that a score derived from a panel of genes on an individual woman’s breast cancer might be used to predict if she has a better chance of living longer with chemotherapy given before tamoxifen is started, or if she might be able to avoid the chemotherapy altogether. “The principle of using the genomics of every patient’s tumor to guide therapy decisions will become the norm in oncology practice in the not-too-distant future,” said Dr. Albin.

Proviso Teens Gather Healthy Living Tips at Fair

In late April, more than 1,500 students at Proviso East High School in Maywood learned about health promotion interventions and gleaned tips for healthy living during a health fair sponsored by Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing (Niehoff). The annual event is a component of the primary health care and health promotion services provided by Niehoff’s school-based health center, located within the high school itself. While dietician interns from Niehoff whipped up hundreds of smoothies, volunteers from the Cook County Department of Public Health, the Girl Scouts of the United States of America, the Respiratory Health Association, Niehoff nurses, community organizations and a variety of other groups talked to students and led demonstrations to encourage risk reduction and positive lifestyle choices. Students were free to talk to volunteers about subjects ranging from smoking cessation, dental hygiene, cancer detection and asthma screening to stress management, gun violence prevention, drug and alcohol use and self-esteem programs.

Loyola University Dinner Honors Falk Foundation

The Dr. Ralph and Marian Falk Medical Research Trust received a Caritas Award at Loyola University Chicago’s 2008 Founders’ Dinner held in June. The Caritas Award is given to a corporation or foundation that has contributed significantly to the betterment of society and the university community through its philanthropy. Since 1992, the Falk trust has provided grants to support numerous research initiatives at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (Stritch). The trust’s contributions have been instrumental in funding research training, recruiting research faculty and advancing research in general at four of Stritch’s institutes: the Cardiovascular Institute, Neuroscience Institute, Oncology Institute and Burn & Shock Trauma Institute. The trust was established by Marian Falk, widow of Ralph Falk, MD, the founder of Baxter International Inc. Earlier at the dinner, Loyola University Chicago President Rev. Michael Garanzini, SJ, presented Damen Awards recognizing alumni for community and industry leadership and service. Two of the award recipients were Stritch alumnus John L. Wilhelm, MD, (’69) and Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing alumna Sheila Haas, RN, PhD, (’74).

Breast Cancer Researchers Awarded $2 Million Grant

Linda Janusek, RN, PhD, professor, Niehoff, and Herbert L. Mathews, PhD, professor, Department of Microbiology & Immunology, Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, received a $2.4 million grant from the National Cancer Institute. The five-year grant is for a study examining the effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on breast cancer patients’ immune response.

General Practitioner Makes Gift in Gratitude for Career in Medicine

A committed family man, Charles D. Martin, MD, (’47) feels a strong pull to assist the institution that enabled him to support his family.

“I had an obligation to provide for my family first,” Dr. Martin said. “Then I turned my attention to the place that helped me provide for my family — Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine (Stritch).” Dr. Martin and his wife, Elaine N. Martin, have created a gift annuity, funded by stock, to benefit Stritch. Gift annuities are contracts between donors and an institution stating that in exchange for a gift of cash or other property, the institution will pay the donors a fixed amount each year for their rest of their lives. When the annuity terminates, the remaining assets transfer to the benefitting institution for unrestricted use.

Dr. Martin, 85, retired in 1999 after approximately 50 years as a general practitioner. “The last of the species,” he joked. At the time of his retirement, he was practicing at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center South Side Hospital. He has practiced at several other Pittsburgh hospitals including St. Joseph Hospital, Jefferson Regional Medical Center and Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh, where he met his wife, a nurse. Dr. and Mrs. Martin have been married for 54 years and have four children and seven grandchildren.

A native of Pittsburgh, Dr. Martin recalls fondly his time getting to know Chicago and his classmates. “I spent my first two years hating Chicago because I was homesick, and the next two not wanting to leave,” he said.

Dr. Martin found his studies at Stritch challenging. “My teachers had me working harder than I had ever worked before. The first year was the most difficult, but the disciplined studying was good for me,” he said. “Stritch did a good job of preparing me for my 50 years as a doctor.”

Dr. Martin believes all Stritch alumni should share his sense of responsibility toward the institution that helped them find their lifelong careers. “I would encourage all my fellow graduates to share this obligation in gratitude for their learning at Stritch,” he said.

If you would like to discuss planned gift options with the Office of Development, contact Robert Barto, executive director, leadership & major gifts, at rbarto@lumc.edu or (708) 216-3203.
When she matriculated at Wheaton College in 1953, Helen Grace, RN (‘63), PhD, was thinking she might go to medical school. But the prevailing social climate was not especially conducive to that career track for women, and she received little support to pursue it. Her mother had been a nurse, however, and encouraged her to take that path. “That seemed to be the thing to do,” she said recently in an interview, so she left Wheaton after one year and enrolled at West Suburban Hospital School of Nursing (Oak Park, Ill.) where she completed the program in 1957.

After three years as a practicing nurse, she saw that a bachelor’s degree in nursing would offer opportunities to branch out beyond a hospital setting and enrolled in the nursing program at Loyola University Chicago. “When I was in the [Loyola] baccalaureate program, taking five philosophy courses seemed like a lot, but it was really very helpful. For someone coming out of a diploma nursing program, it was a real challenge,” she noted. “For some reason, logic has never been my strong suit.”

Graduating in 1963, she spent two years teaching physical patient care to psychiatric nursing aides for the Mental Health Department of Illinois, then entered the newly developed master’s program in psychiatric nursing at the University of Illinois Medical Center. Shortly after that, she entered the doctoral program at Northwestern University, Evanston, where she completed a PhD in sociology in 1969. The years of her rich and varied career have offered both significant opportunities and significant challenges. Asked to summarize her career trajectory, she said, “I’m always stirring the pot — that’s the story of my life. And I always seem to move on so somebody else has to make it rational.”

According to Mary K. Walker, RN (‘72), PhD, dean, Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing (Niehoff), Dr. Grace is a remarkable woman with a major gift for navigating bureaucratic systems. Referring to one of Dr. Grace’s major achievements, Dr. Walker noted that “The doctoral program in nursing that Dr. Grace started while dean at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) was absolutely seminal — she has had a profound impact on nursing as a discipline.”

In the health sciences field, then dominated by the biological and biomedical sciences, it was an uphill battle to carve out a PhD in nursing, Dean Walker observed, and Dr. Grace helped legitimize nursing as a discipline with its own body of knowledge, distinct from medicine and pharmaceuticals. Commenting on that particular challenge in her career, Dr. Grace observed with a chuckle that “going through the approval process was a real challenge. There were about 20 approving boards before you got to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and every one of them had a different concern you had to address.”

The lack of well-developed models of stand-alone doctoral nursing programs in the country on which to base a new one also presented a major hurdle. The ones that did exist came out of education and basic science, and many educators were satisfied with that status quo. To further complicate matters, there was a scarcity of doctorally prepared nursing professors to teach at that level. “We used the consortium of the Big Ten (conference) universities to address that issue —

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Communication Technology Grant Brings Hospitalized Kids Out of Isolation

Patients at the Ronald McDonald® Children’s Hospital of Loyola University Medical Center (RMCH of LUMC) are now just a few keystrokes away from family and friends, thanks to a $48,830 grant from the Tellabs Foundation, which provided 20 laptop computers for their use.

Richard Taylor, school services coordinator, RMCH of LUMC’s Reading, Writing & Recovery School Program,® sought the grant for equipment to assist young patients who are in the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) or confined to their beds. The laptops can be set up at the bedside, allowing these patients access to e-mail and the internet and a tool to keep up with their school work.

“Many children and teens use computers daily at home and school, so having this technology available to them during their hospital stay provides a sense of normalcy for them,” said Mr. Taylor. “It also provides diversion from hectic hospital life.”

In addition to providing the laptops, the grant is funding the installation of a closed-circuit television system. This allows PICU patients or those on bed rest to view and participate in all activities, special guest appearances and academic instruction. For instance, they can watch demonstrations by local chefs cooking in the RMCH of LUMC kitchen.

“These diversions help distract our PICU patients from their pain and maximize our teaching services for all students, not just the ambulatory ones,” said Cindi LaPorte, RN, nurse manager, Pediatrics, Pediatric Critical Care.

The Tellabs Foundation began in 1997 with an endowment by Tellabs, a global telecommunications company headquartered in Naperville, Ill. In the foundation’s 11-year history, it has provided approximately $11 million in grants to non-profit organizations seeking support for initiatives in three areas: education, health and wellness, and environmentalism. “We were pleased to fund this initiative because it meets two of our priority areas — education and health — and helps kids keep up with their classmates,” said Meredith Hilt, executive director of the foundation. “Keeping kids happy and connected is vital to the healing process.”

The grant is the first time the Tellabs Foundation has supported Loyola University Health System (Loyola), and Ms. Hilt expects it won’t be the last. “Our mission is to advance specific strategic endeavors in communities where Tellabs employees live and work,” she said. “As a health-care provider for our employees and their families, we feel it is a duty to support Loyola in such an imaginative endeavor.”

Find out how you can improve the patient experience for those in the pediatric intensive care unit by contacting Eva Moss, associate director, major gifts, at evmoss@lumc.edu or (708) 216-8249.
Karen Lewis Alexander, a fundraising specialist with more than two decades of experience in development and communications strategy, has been named vice president of development for Loyola University Health System (Loyola). In this position, Ms. Alexander will oversee the planning, management, and implementation of the fundraising program and long-term development goals for the health system, as well as for the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine and Loyola University Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing.

“Karen joins us at a pivotal time in our health system’s history,” said President and Chief Executive Officer Paul K. Whelton, MD, MB, MSc. “We have just unveiled an ambitious strategic plan that will set our course for the next 10 years. I have every confidence that Karen will advance our development efforts to new levels of success.”

Before joining Loyola, Ms. Alexander was associate vice president for alumni and development communications and advancement initiatives at the University of Chicago (U of C), where she had worked for seven years. During her time at U of C, Ms. Alexander helped to develop strategic plans to advance the university’s short- and long-term fundraising agendas, and coordinated marketing efforts to support its comprehensive $2 billion capital campaign.

Ms. Alexander explained that she chose Loyola not only because of its commitment to research, teaching and service to the community, but because of the exciting period that lies ahead in the health system’s immediate future. “Loyola has positioned itself to take a significant leap forward at this moment in its history. With Dr. Whelton at the helm, Loyola’s board has developed a multi-year strategic plan and I believe that by working together, we’ll reach more people in the community, the nation and beyond,” she said.

Ms. Alexander said that she hopes to introduce events that will provide Loyola’s supporters with increased opportunities to participate in the life and the work of the institution. “We want our donors to know that we value the investment that they have made and that we are stewarding those resources responsibly.”

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so the pool of faculty in the whole system was available,” noted Dr. Grace.

Looking back on her work in getting the research-focused PhD program started and legitimized, Dr. Grace noted, “But we also have to take care of the clinical practice side of nursing.” She is pleased to see the more recent development of programs with a clinical focus leading to a doctor of nursing practice (DNP) degree. “I wrote articles in the ’70s advocating this, even outlining the curriculum, so it’s good to see it happening now,” she said.

Having finished five years as dean of UIC’s College of Nursing, Dr. Grace intended to continue teaching and directing graduate students. But a new door opened. “Kellogg [The W. K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Mich.] came looking for me, and I kind of got intrigued. It was something different to do, and I accepted, much to the horror of my nursing colleagues, who thought being a dean was the epitome of things to do,” she said. She remained at Kellogg until her retirement in 1996, serving in a variety of roles, including program director for health and vice president of programs.

Kellogg was changing at that time, she noted, shifting its health grant-making from a focus on funding health professional education to a focus on communities and youth. In 1985 - 86, the foundation began funding scholarships for black university students in southern Africa. She was asked to take the lead in programming for that region. Later, she worked extensively to support university medical/nursing/dental teams going out to establish local clinics and also did a great deal of work trying to improve the education of nurse-midwives and lay midwives.

Although she observed wryly that her “real role these days is as a grandmother, transporting my grandson to school and all over the place,” Dr. Grace remains committed to higher education.

However, her role has shifted from institutional grant-maker to private donor. Recently, leveraging the gift with a 2:1 matching grant from the Kellogg Foundation, she established an endowment fund for Niehoff to help recruit underrepresented high school students and support them with scholar-