

The
Class of 2005
Commencement

The College
of Medicine

and

The School
of Graduate Studies

of

SUNY Downstate
Medical Center

Four O'Clock
Tuesday Afternoon, May 24, 2005
Carnegie Hall • New York City, New York

The Music Program

Precommencement Musicale

Works by J. S. Bach, A. Banchieri, G. Gabrieli, J. Pezel, and A. Scarlatti played by The Physicians' Brass Ensemble of New York—Daniel Repole, M.A., Conductor; Benjamin A. Rosenberg*, M.D., '50, Music Chairman. Horn: Jeanine Gilson. Trombones: George Zorko (Tenor), Benjamin A. Rosenberg (Tenor/Bass, also Bass Trumpet). Trumpets: Anthony Bavota, Joseph Kaminski and Joseph Schufle (also Piccolo Trumpets).

* Founding Director 1972

Processional

Coronation March from *The Prophet* (1849, G. Meyerbeer)

Trumpet Tune (1696, J. Clarke)

March from *Dramico per Musica* (1726, J. S. Bach)

Triumphal March from *Aida* (1871, G. Verdi)

Pomp and Circumstance No. 1 (1901, E. Elgar)

National Anthem

Joey C. Fernandez (Soloist)

Recessional

Rondeau (1729, J. J. Mouret)

Trumpet Voluntary (1700, J. Clarke)

“See the Conquering Hero Comes” from *Judas Maccabeus* (1746, G. F. Handel)

Turkish March from *The Ruins of Athens* (1812, L.V. Beethoven)

March Militaire (1825, F. Schubert)

Promenade from *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874, M. Moussorgsky)

We would like to thank the following groups for their assistance in organizing this year's commencement ceremony: Office of the President, College of Medicine Alumni Association, Division of Student Affairs, Deans' Offices, Institutional Advancement, Office of Student Life, Office of University Police/Public Safety, and all the people who have given freely of themselves to enrich this year's graduation.

The Commencement Program

Presiding Marshal

Eva B. Cramer, PhD

*Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology and
Vice President for Biotechnology and Scientific Affairs*

Processional

(Audience, please rise for the Processional.)

Opening Remarks

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD

*Dean, College of Medicine, and Senior Vice President
for Biomedical Education and Research*

Greetings from the President

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

President

Greetings from the Graduates

Daniel Maurice Lugassy

College of Medicine, Class of 2005

Na Ma, MD

School of Graduate Studies, Class of 2005

Greetings from the College of Medicine Alumni Association

Norman B. Medow, MD, Class of '66

President, Alumni Association

Presentation of Honorary Degrees

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD

Conferring of the Honorary Degrees

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Hooding of Honorary Degree Recipients

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD

Honorary Degree Recipients

Sydney J. Winawer, MD

Harold Varmus, MD

Commencement Address

Harold Varmus, MD

School of Graduate Studies

Granting of Graduate Degrees

Presentation of Candidates

Susan Schwartz-Giblin, PhD

Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Conferring of Degrees

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Awarding of Diplomas

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Susan Schwartz-Giblin, PhD

Hooding of Candidates

Thesis Research Sponsors and

Mark Stewart, MD, PhD

*Associate Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology and
Program Director of Neural and Behavioral Science*

College of Medicine
Granting of the Master of Public
Health Degrees

Presentation of Candidates

Pascal James Imperato, MD, MPH, TM
*Distinguished Service Professor and Chairman,
Preventive Medicine and Community Health, and
Director of the Master of Public Health Program*

Conferring of Degrees

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Awarding of Diplomas

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Pascal James Imperato, MD, MPH, TM

Judith H. LaRosa, PhD, RN, FAAN
*Professor of Preventive Medicine and Community Health
and Deputy Director, Master of Public Health Program*

College of Medicine
Granting of the MD Degrees

Presentation of Candidates

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD

Conferring of Degrees

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Awarding of Diplomas

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Eugene B. Feigelson, MD

Hooding of Candidates

Edmund Bourke, MD

Professor and Chairman of Medicine

Michael Lucchesi, MD

Associate Professor and Chairman of Emergency Medicine

Closing Remarks and Administration
of the Hippocratic Oath

John C. LaRosa, MD, FACP

Recessional

*(Audience, please rise and remain standing until the
graduates have left the hall.)*

School of Graduate Studies

PhD Degree

Avraham Yakov Bluestone

Neural and Behavioral Science

Three dimensional optical tomographic imaging of the brain.

Resident in Radiology

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Kun Cai Molecular and Cellular Biology

The Sak1 RFX-like transcription factor is an important regulator of cell cycle progression and meiotic development in *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*.

Fellow in Pharmacology

Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Jing-Mei Hsu Molecular and Cellular Biology

Budding yeast ATP-dependent chromatin-remodeling complex RSC functions in chromosome transmission.

Resident in Internal Medicine

UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Matthew Kelly Neural and Behavioral Science

Characterization of atypical protein kinase C and its phosphorylation state in long-term potentiation.

Fellow in Physiology and Pharmacology

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Jie Ma Neural and Behavioral Science

Mechanisms of glucose sensing in the enteric nervous system.

Fellow in Biomedical Science

North Shore University Hospital

Kaiyu Ma Molecular and Cellular Biology

Characterization of conformation changes occurring during transcription by T7 RNA polymerase.

Fellow in Physiology

University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor

Na Ma Molecular and Cellular Biology

RNA displacement in transcription by T7 RNAP; Effects of mutations that affect refolding of the N-terminal subdomain of T7 RNA polymerase on the transition from initiation to elongation; What happens when two RNA polymerases collide head-on?

Resident in Ophthalmology

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

Rena Orman Neural and Behavioral Science

Learning-related changes in the levels of protein kinase C beta II in rat lateral/basolateral amygdala in vivo and in vitro: effects of conditioning and laterality.

Fellow in Psychology

University of Illinois College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign

Quan Sha Anatomy and Cell Biology

The interaction of IGF-1 and estradiol on Na⁺-K⁺-ATPase in vascular smooth muscle cells.

Fellow in Biochemistry

New York Blood Center

Zhi Sheng Molecular and Cellular Biology

18-kDa fibroblast growth factor-2 directly regulates ribosomal RNA transcription in the nucleolus.

Fellow in Gene Function and Expression

University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester

Annelyn Torres-Reverón Neural and Behavioral Science

Prenatal cocaine exposure: evaluation of behavioral and functional effects in adolescent rats in response to methylphenidate administration.

Fellow in Neurology and Neurobiology

Weill Medical College of Cornell University

Shaohua Xu Neural and Behavioral Science

Neurophysiological and psychophysical effects of microstimulation in somatosensory pathway.

Fellow in Physiology and Pharmacology

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

MS Degree

Kenneth Morris Kruta Microbiology and Immunology

Effects of poly (A) binding protein expressed by a recombinant vaccinia virus on protein synthesis.

College of Medicine

MPH Degree

Otito N. Anaka
Shalini Chhabra
Heidi C. Christensen
Sandra Yvonne Graham
Rodney E. Romain
Sima M. Terebelo
Rebecca S. Twersky
Sophia N. Williams
Tayumika Yuchika Zurita

MD Degree

Daniel Louis Aaron Orthopaedic Surgery
Heba Abdulla Dermatology
Ladislau Albert, Jr. Neurosurgery
Erum Ali Anesthesiology
Shilpa Kirit Amin Emergency Medicine
David Jeremy Amstel Internal Medicine
Jamie Mathurin Andre Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
Hasna W. Ansari Diagnostic Radiology
Koray Erol Arica Anesthesiology
* Johnny Issam Arnouk Orthopaedic Surgery
Kichiemon Asoma Ophthalmology
Bridget Ann Barrow Anesthesiology
Ovid Stephen Barrow Internal Medicine
Aron Alan Barsky Internal Medicine
* Tal S. Bash Surgery
* Shyamal Raj Bastola Internal Medicine
Kiesha Nicole Benn Obstetrics-Gynecology
Elisheva Berman Psychiatry
Avraham Yakov Bluestone Diagnostic Radiology
David Michael Brabeck Internal Medicine
Tracy Michelle Brenner Internal Medicine
Matthew John Callaghan
Jennifer Marie Carreiro Pediatrics

John Nicholas Catanzaro Internal Medicine
Richard Peter Catanzaro Psychiatry
Sherman Chan Urology
Wai S. Chan Pediatrics
Nalini Chandra Pediatric Neurology
Merry Chen Neurology
Cindy Cheng Internal Medicine
* Natalya Chernichenko Otolaryngology
Sarah Freeman Chess
* Jaclyn Marie Coletta Obstetrics-Gynecology
Nancy Eileen Conroy Emergency Medicine
* Anthony Thomas Corcoran Urology
Steven Alberto Cortes Family Practice
Rose Yves-Lyne Daniel Internal Medicine
Lisa David Diagnostic Radiology
Michael Conrad Degen Urology
* Eugene Christopher DePasquale Internal Medicine
John Charles DePetrillo Internal Medicine
Bhavisha K. Dixit Obstetrics-Gynecology
Vedan Djesevic Anesthesiology
Joseph Dobtsis Diagnostic Radiology
Keith Edward Dombrowski Neurology
* Laurie Kay DuBois Emergency Medicine
Ida Janelle Dugger Surgery
Carolyn Suzanne Dupuis Diagnostic Radiology
Laurel Duphiney Edmundson Emergency Medicine
* Jyoti Teresa Elavunkal Emergency Medicine
* Valerie Ilana Elmalem Ophthalmology
Daniel D. Feldman Internal Medicine
* Joseph Raymund Feliciano Urology
Joey C. Fernandez Internal Medicine
Hakima Alima Fisher Obstetrics-Gynecology
Rebecca Lynn Fitch Internal Medicine
Judith Esther Flom Internal Medicine
Dean Kimton Fong Emergency Medicine

* Denotes Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society

Bertrand Bezanchong Teh Fonji Surgery
Dina Frid Psychiatry
Mark Scott Friedman Internal Medicine
Michael Lawrence Friedman Internal Medicine
Sarah Friedman Obstetrics-Gynecology
David Pat Fuschetto Internal Medicine
Majida A. Gaffar Ophthalmology
Alexis Mary Gage Surgery
David Jason Gallagher Orthopaedic Surgery
* Neelofar Ghaznawi Ophthalmology
* Christopher Frank Giordano Diagnostic Radiology
Karinn Ann Maureen Glover Psychiatry
* Michael Jonah Gold Diagnostic Radiology
Robert Clarence Goldstein Internal Medicine
Alexander Gorodnitskiy Internal Medicine
Evelina Grayver Internal Medicine
Adam Todd Graziani Anesthesiology
Julia Kelsey Gunther Pediatrics
* Ravi Gupta Internal Medicine
Jonathan Allen Harris Pathology
Lisa Jane Harris Surgery
Nadia Hashimi Pediatrics
Daena Meredith Heller Internal Medicine
Joshua Neil Hersh Internal Medicine
Peter Roger Hinds Surgery
Jing-Mei Hsu Internal Medicine
Liwei Livia Hua Psychiatry
Elizabeth Ann Hunt Pediatrics
Adam David Jacobowitz Ophthalmology
John J. James Emergency Medicine
Sophia Jan Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
Jerome Louis Jean-Gilles, Jr. Surgery
* Parminder Singh Kang Orthopaedic Surgery
Tushar Kapoor Emergency Medicine
Oksana Kapulina Anesthesiology
Martha Karakelides Internal Medicine
Yair Yonatan Keilson Internal Medicine
Amzad Khan Internal Medicine
Gloria Inyoung Kim Family Practice
Yong Han Kim Internal Medicine
Jonathan Sydney Kirschner Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
Robert D. Krinsky Internal Medicine
* Pranay Krishnan Diagnostic Radiology
Robin Kyin Anesthesiology
Linda W. Law Internal Medicine
Eric Lee Anesthesiology
Janice Y. Lee Diagnostic Radiology
Sharon Sangeun Lee Pediatrics
* Leonid Lempert Diagnostic Radiology
Sharon Szeyan Leung Internal Medicine
Wei Wei Li Internal Medicine
* Spencer Todd Liebman Internal Medicine
* Cui Li Lin Internal Medicine
Adam James Loavenbruck Neurology
Elias E. Loukas Internal Medicine
Daniel Maurice Lugassy Emergency Medicine
James Edward Lyles Surgery
Puja Roopa Mahindra Internal Medicine
Marissa Reich Malen Ophthalmology
John Patrick Maloy Psychiatry
* Katherine Florence Maloy Psychiatry
Ciara Siobhan Marley Surgery
Caroline L. Martinez Pediatrics
Beth Alyson McAvey Obstetrics-Gynecology
Sohita Mehra Diagnostic Radiology
Ninfa Mukesh Mehta Emergency Medicine
Sheon Hahseim Mendoza Internal Medicine-Pediatrics
Janaki Deepa Meyappan Anesthesiology
Rina Meyer Pediatrics
Joseph Mirakhor Emergency Medicine
Gayatri Mirani Pediatrics
Natacha Luz Montemuino Psychiatry
* Nah Yong Moon Obstetrics-Gynecology
Alyson Kemba Myers Internal Medicine-Psychiatry
Ravi Naik Anesthesiology
Monica Nayakwadi-Singer Pediatrics
Inna Nelipovich Internal Medicine
* Gillian Raemi Newman Anesthesiology
Henry Nguyen Anesthesiology

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Kwame Agyako Ohemeng Anesthesiology
 Ojedapo Adedamola Ojeyemi Orthopaedic Surgery
 Krystal Kareem Pagan Emergency Medicine
 * Nicholas Palamidessi Emergency Medicine
 Laura Papadimitropoulos Pediatrics
 Mee Soon Park Psychiatry
 Neil Suresh Patel Ophthalmology
 Nicole Danielle Porti Pediatrics
 Jennifer Baldwin Pula Psychiatry
 Jennifer Marie Pynn Pediatrics
 Chantal Myrta Pyram Anesthesiology
 David S. Rad Psychiatry
 Aileen Raizner Pediatrics
 Jermaine Compton Ralph Internal Medicine
 * Irina Rapoport Diagnostic Radiology
 Sean Rim Surgery
 Leena Sayedy Internal Medicine
 * Josephine Scalici Pediatrics
 * David Schreiber Radiation Oncology
 Sarah Joan Schweber Internal Medicine
 Swati Sehgal Internal Medicine
 Papia Sen Pediatrics
 Stacy Serebnitsky Anesthesiology
 Slava Shapiro Oral Surgery
 Ali Nima Shariat Anesthesiology
 Peter Yi Shen Diagnostic Radiology
 Ritu Shrotriya Internal Medicine
 Michael Simonetti Emergency Medicine
 Rochelle Sims Anesthesiology
 Deepika Singh Emergency Medicine
 KarLeung Siu Internal Medicine
 Kelley Alana Sookraj Surgery
 * Michael Anthony Sorace Dermatology
 Amanda Patrice Stewart Obstetrics-Gynecology
 Kara Ilene Storck Pathology
 Gainosuke Sugiyama Surgery
 Eunyi S. Suk Family Practice
 * Alina Sumarokov Pediatric Neurology
 Sarah Mintu Sunny Neurology

Igor Tarlo Oral Surgery
 Philip Teitelbaum Diagnostic Radiology
 * Ervin Teper Urology
 * Laura Elizabeth Tomaselli Pediatrics
 Biana Trost Internal Medicine
 Brian Chan Truong Obstetrics-Gynecology
 Gloria Lilian Tsan Emergency Medicine
 Ming K. Tsang Anesthesiology
 Chekai Tsao Internal Medicine
 * Catherine Mary Tubridy Internal Medicine-Emergency
 Medicine
 Joseph W. Tucker Pediatrics
 Chika Ugorji Pediatrics
 * Anzhelika Listopadova Vaccaro Ophthalmology
 Luis Velasquez Anesthesiology
 Yuliya Vinnitskaya Anesthesiology
 Francene Ayanna Warner Internal Medicine
 Menachem Mendel Weiner Anesthesiology
 Veleka Maritza Willis Obstetrics-Gynecology
 Sabrina Janelle Wyllie Family Practice
 Reuven Yakubov Internal Medicine
 Timur Yasin Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
 Xiaoyi Ye Internal Medicine
 Anne Yim Internal Medicine-Emergency Medicine
 Jessica Zerzan Pediatrics
 Louisa Shair Ziglar Internal Medicine

Distinction in Research

John Nicholas Catanzaro
 Sherman Chan
 Adam Todd Graziani
 Jing-Mei Hsu
 Sharon Szeyan Leung
 Ciara Siobhan Marley
 Peter Yi Shen

Commendation in
 Investigative Scholarship
 Michael Lawrence Friedman
 Tushar Kapoor
 Swati Sehgal

* Denotes Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society

Honorary Degree Recipient

Doctor of Science: Sidney J. Winawer, MD

Dr. Sidney J. Winawer, a 1956 graduate of SUNY Downstate, has made extraordinary contributions to the prevention of colorectal cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. He is widely recognized for his pioneering work in describing the developmental stages of colorectal cancer and is lead author of the current national guidelines for colorectal cancer screening.

The former chief of gastroenterology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center for 20 years, as well as chairman of the Cancer Prevention Program and first director of the Integrative Medicine Program, Dr. Winawer now holds the Paul Sherlock endowed chair. He also serves as professor of medicine at Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

Dr. Winawer was principal investigator of the National Institutes of Health's multi-site National Polyp Study and Screening Colonoscopy studies, which recommended greater population screening and less frequent follow-up for patients with polyps, and demonstrated that removing polyps can prevent colon cancer.

Dr. Winawer has used his prominence to raise public awareness of the need for early cancer detection. He participated in the White House Colorectal Cancer Campaign kickoff in 1999 and worked closely with *Today Show* host Katie Couric on her public awareness campaign following the death of her husband from the disease. As co-chair of the International Digestive Cancer Alliance, Dr. Winawer launched a global education campaign in 2002 at the Vatican to combat colorectal cancer. Using this special platform and with the blessing of Pope John Paul II, he spread the message of the need for screening worldwide.

In addition to more than 250 scientific papers and several books, Dr. Winawer has written a memoir, *Healing Lessons*, which chronicles his wife's struggle with metastatic stomach cancer. His account is intended to build bridges between physicians and patients by encouraging doctors to step beyond the narrow confines of traditional medical training.

Dr. Winawer's pioneering work has earned him numerous honors and awards, including the Rudolf Schindler Award, the highest honor by the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, the Fiterman Award by the American Gastroenterology Association, and the Clinical Achievement Award by the American College of Gastroenterology. He has served as president of the American College of Gastroenterology and was a founding member of the New York Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy.

Honorary Degree Recipient and Commencement Speaker

Doctor of Science: Harold Varmus, MD

Harold Varmus, MD, is president of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and one of the world's foremost experts on cancer-causing genes and retroviruses. The co-recipient of the 1989 Nobel Prize for Medicine, Dr. Varmus has vastly increased our understanding of the genetic basis of cancer.

A graduate of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, Dr. Varmus conducted most of his scientific work at the University of California, San Francisco, where he and Dr. J. Michael Bishop demonstrated the cellular origins of the oncogene of a chicken retrovirus. This discovery led to the isolation of cellular genes that normally control growth and development but frequently mutate in human cancer. For their work, Drs. Bishop and Varmus were awarded the Nobel Prize and many other honors.

As president of Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Dr. Varmus now heads one of the leading centers for cancer research and clinical care, while continuing to direct his own laboratory work. Previously, from 1993 to 1999, he played a prominent national role in medical science as director of the National Institutes of Health. During his tenure, he initiated many changes in the conduct of intramural and extramural research programs, recruited new leadership, and helped increase the NIH annual budget to nearly \$18 billion.

On his departure from the NIH, former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said, "History will judge him as the leader who brought new energy, vision, and excitement to the world's greatest scientific institution. His legacy will be the brightest young scientists of this generation...."

The author of more than 300 scientific papers and four books, Dr. Varmus has been an advisor to the federal government, pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms, and many academic institutions. He has been a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences since 1984 and of the Institute of Medicine since 1991. In 2001, he was awarded the National Medal of Science.

In recent years, Dr. Varmus has become increasingly involved in international health and science. In addition to establishing the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria and serving on the World Health Organization's Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, he chairs the Board of Directors of the Public Library of Science and leads the Scientific Board of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Grand Challenges in Global Health.

SUNY Downstate Medical Center

SUNY Downstate Medical Center, formally known as the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn, is one of four academic health centers within the 64-unit State University of New York. Located on an urban campus in the East Flatbush section of Brooklyn, SUNY Downstate includes the College of Medicine, School of Graduate Studies, College of Nursing, College of Health Related Professions, Master of Public Health Program, a major research center, and University Hospital of Brooklyn.

Over the years, SUNY Downstate has undergone several name changes. In 1856, two physicians established a dispensary in downtown Brooklyn to provide care for poor immigrants. The Long Island College Hospital grew out of this dispensary. In 1858, the state granted the hospital's request for a charter to launch a medical school. The school, which opened its doors two years later, revolutionized medical education in the United States. The new school was unique because, for the first time in this country, the teaching of medicine was brought to the hospital bedside and the idea that physicians should be trained exclusively in university classrooms and lecture halls was rejected. It was truly a *college hospital*.

In 1931 the school was rechartered as the Long Island College of Medicine, with affiliated hospitals throughout Brooklyn. The "Downstate" era began on April 5, 1950 with a special ceremony at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, where a merger contract was signed between the Long Island College of Medicine and the newly constituted State University of New York. Several years later, the current campus was built in East Flatbush. In April 1953, ground was broken for the Basic Sciences Building, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower laid the cornerstone in 1954. The complex was expanded in 1966 with the opening of University Hospital of Brooklyn. The School of Graduate Studies, the College of Health Related Professions, and the College of Nursing were also added that year.

Today, SUNY Downstate is the focal point of a health education network that encompasses 30 hospitals, with a campus of 13 acres, a total student body of 1,500, a faculty of 4,755 (including full-time, part-time, and voluntary staff), and support staff of 3,182. In 1998, one of its researchers, Dr. Robert F. Furchgott, received the Nobel Prize in Medicine.

Faculty Members Serving as Marshals

Stacy Blain, PhD Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Anatomy and Cell Biology

Edmund Bourke, MD Professor and Chairman of Medicine

Hugh J. Carroll, MD Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus of Medicine

Margaret Clark-Golden, MD Clinical Associate Professor of Pediatrics

Eva B. Cramer, PhD Professor of Anatomy and Cell Biology and Vice President for Biotechnology and Scientific Affairs

George Frangos, PhD Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education

Donald Gerber, MD Professor of Medicine and Clinical Assistant Dean

Marcia Gerber, MD Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Clinical Assistant Dean, and Director of Student/Employee Health Service

Constance Hill, MD Clinical Professor of Anesthesiology and Associate Dean for Minority Affairs

Michael Lucchesi, MD Associate Professor, Chairman of Emergency Medicine, and Clinical Assistant Dean

Thomas McGinn, MD Clinical Professor of Medicine

Steven Ostrow, MD Clinical Associate Professor of Radiology

Christopher A. J. Roman, PhD Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology and Molecular and Cellular Biology Program

Mark Stewart, MD, PhD Associate Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology and Program Director of Neural and Behavioral Science

Miriam T. Vincent, MD, PhD Professor and Chairwoman of Family Practice

SUNY Board of Trustees

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John J. O'Connor, MS

Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the University

The Academic Procession

The procession is led by the presiding marshal. Other members of the procession include faculty marshals (chosen by the graduates), faculty members, deans, honorary degree recipients, and the president of SUNY Downstate.

The academic gown worn by procession members is said to be symbolic of the “democracy of scholarship,” for it covers any dress of rank or social standing underneath.

Academic gowns originated in the Middle Ages, the period when universities were beginning to take form. At that time, most scholars were also clerics—and therefore dressed as clerics, in long gowns. Over time, the gown became the accepted dress code for scholars: in England, in the second half of the 14th century, for example, several colleges forbade “excess in apparel” and decreed the wearing of long gowns.

The assignment of colors to signify different academic disciplines developed much later, and was standardized in the United States in the late 19th century. In 1895, an intercollegiate commission composed of representatives from leading colleges established a code of academic dress that prescribed cut, style, and materials of the gowns, as well as colors to represent different fields of learning. Today, academic dress code is regulated by a formal Committee on Academic Costumes and Ceremonies created by the American Council on Education in 1952.

The gown is usually black for all degrees, with variations in the sleeves, the front cut, and trim. The bachelor’s degree gown is black with long pointed sleeves. The master’s degree gown is black without trim and has oblong sleeves so the upper part of the arm comes through the slit in the sleeve. Doctoral (Ph.D.) gowns are black with bell-shaped sleeves. Mortarboards (caps) with tassels have their own significance. Master’s and bachelor’s tassels are black, while the Ph.D. tassel may be black or gold; medicine is green.

Hood colors indicate the field of learning: dark blue—philosophy; green—medicine; light blue—education; apricot—nursing; science—golden yellow; history—white; law—purple; psychology—dark blue.

Details of academic attire may vary depending on where faculty members completed their degrees. Some foreign degree holders, for example, wear special hats, distinctive to their degree and institution. Whatever the differences, however, the governing tradition is continuity of the academic symbols from the Middle Ages.

The Hippocratic Oath

I do solemnly swear by that which I hold most sacred:

That I will be loyal to the profession of medicine
and just and generous to its members;

That I will lead my life and practice my art
in uprightness and honor;

That whatever house I shall enter, it shall be for the good
of the sick to the utmost of my power;

That I will hold myself aloof from wrong;

That I will exercise my art solely for the cure of my patients,
and will give no drug and perform no operation
for a wrongful purpose;

That whatsoever I shall see or hear of the lives of men
and women that should not be spoken, I will keep secret;

These I do promise, and in proportion as I am faithful to
this my oath may happiness and good repute be ever mine.

