



## Meet <sup>the</sup> Dean

VIKAS P. SUKHATME, MD



**Vikas Sukhatme, MD, ScD**

Dean, Emory School of Medicine  
Chief Academic Officer, Emory Healthcare  
Robert W. Woodruff Professor, Emory School of Medicine

This past November, Emory University School of Medicine welcomed a new dean, Vikas P. Sukhatme, MD, ScD, the former Victor J. Aresty Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. A highly recognized biomedical scientist, clinician, and teacher, Dean Sukhatme also served as chief academic officer and Harvard faculty dean for academic programs at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

Over the past six months, faculty, staff, students, and alumni have become better acquainted with Dean Sukhatme’s vision for the School of Medicine, one that centers around innovation and collaboration, a focus on fundamental sciences and translational research, and a charge to create more programming opportunities for students, residents, and fellows. He has been keen to understand the School of Medicine’s needs and potential from all sides.

Dean Sukhatme talks from a patient’s perspective about the importance of a strong academic medical center

like Emory. “People come here because our physicians are curious and will go the extra mile,” he says, referring to Emory’s ability to bring cutting-edge research to each patient’s case. From a physician-scholar perspective, he discusses the importance of each patient encounter as an opportunity to help, learn, and share—in that order.

Dean Sukhatme learned firsthand the importance of joining research and clinical work. While consulting on a patient, he made an observation that, through collaborative research, led to the discovery of the cause of preeclampsia. “It was just one patient and one observation,” he says, still marveling at the impact of that moment. He realizes that physicians focus on providing quality patient care and may overlook opportunities for discovery. “A practicing physician will see hundreds of patients,” he says. “There’s no time to pull data from

the charts or to make use of it on a larger scale. But sometimes you notice something unusual.”

Dean Sukhatme sees the potential for more discovery within the Emory community. “I think that’s where our alumni can really contribute,” he says, referring to their various patient pools and experiences. “Alumni in practice may feel like they have little to give back to the academic medical center. But they have much to give.” Alumni can see the impact of their philanthropy in named classrooms, professorships, and scholarships. Dean Sukhatme wants alumni to know that they can add value to Emory with their experience as well. *[Continued on Page 4]*

# Alumni Profile: **Drs. Croft Thomas and Hilary Robbins Thomas**

## Who was your most memorable mentor at Emory?

**Hilary:** It's hard to narrow that down as there are numerous physicians that I still think about today. Joyce Doyle was a thoughtful, thorough, and empathetic clinician as well as an incredibly effective teacher. I still group medication lists by indication because of her. John Galloway exemplified quiet dedication, perseverance, and humility in an unforgettable way.

## What was the most useful piece of advice you received while at Emory?

**Croft:** Peter Johnstone, who was a radiation oncologist at Emory at the time, told me that the hardest part of

anything is the last 10%. Careers are made not by doing things, but by finishing something.

## Please describe a challenge you met while at Emory and how you approached it.

**Hilary:** Fainting. I had a tendency to faint when witnessing something that could be perceived as painful. Spending time on the trauma service at Grady was effective exposure therapy for that.

**Croft:** I really wanted to make AOA. I realized that I was surrounded by people who were a lot smarter than me. But I knew if I really dedicated myself to consistently perform, I could achieve that goal.



**Drs. Croft Thomas 07M and Hilary Robbins Thomas 07M**



### **Hilary Robbins Thomas**

Emory School of Medicine 2007  
 Johns Hopkins Osler Internal Medicine Residency 2010  
 UCSF Endocrinology Fellowship 2013  
 Endocrinology, Asheville Endocrinology Consultants

## How did your view of medicine change during your time at Emory?

**Croft:** I went from thinking that I was starting this very serious career in medicine to finding the human aspect and humor in medicine. Our classmates were very bright, but they were also great, fun-loving people who brought some perspective to medical school.

## In what ways are medical students of today different from you and your peers? In what ways are they alike?

Medical students today are much more aware of healthcare policy and healthcare delivery systems than we were. Another difference is the millennial mentality. They are brutally honest no matter if they are telling their opinion of the rotation or that they have plans other than being at work on Friday.

## What three words best describe an Emory alumnus?

Committed, well-rounded, capable



### **Croft Thomas**

Emory School of Medicine 2007  
 Johns Hopkins Osler Internal Medicine Residency 2010  
 UCSF Cardiology Fellowship 2016  
 Cardiology, Asheville Cardiology Associates

Nearly a decade after Emory University School of Medicine moved to a new curriculum, the **Outpatient Experience program (OPEX)** continues to thrive as a marquee element of the first- and second-year medical student experience. Developed to provide more exposure to the clinical setting, OPEX pairs M1 and M2 students with volunteer preceptors who observe and tutor students on patient care.



Jada Bussey-Jones 92M mentors an M1 student.

## Meet the Outpatient Experience

According to Jada Bussey-Jones 92M, OPEX course director, professor of Medicine at Emory School of Medicine, chief of General Medicine and Geriatrics at Grady Memorial Hospital, and co-director of the Urban Health Initiative, the program is not meant to develop a student's technical skills. "These students are mostly fresh to the world of medicine," says Dr. Bussey-Jones, who helped develop the program and took over

clinical team, and a variety of patients." In many cases, students are able to see the same patient more than once during their 12 months in the program. This makes the experience all the more fulfilling, especially when students see how a physician's relationship with a patient develops over time.

Students also get to see the ins and outs of a physician's practice. Not surprising, what shines most in student

and sensitivity with my own patients," he wrote. One student remarked that their preceptor "was warm and approachable. He's a top-notch mentor with whom I hope to keep in touch."

One of the goals of OPEX and the new curriculum is to create physicians who continue to be passionate about medicine and about making a difference. With that in mind, it isn't surprising that nearly half of the

preceptors are Emory faculty or that many of them are Emory School of Medicine alumni.

Alumni have found the OPEX program to be a great way to keep connected with Emory.

And, while it is a commitment, there are several benefits to being a preceptor, including Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit, faculty development support, awards, and an appreciation dinner. Many preceptors note

that working with fresh and enthusiastic young medical students invigorates their love for medicine and patient care. Others say that it feels like they're making a difference when mentoring in the OPEX program, and that they have an opportunity to instruct and influence the future of medicine.

"We're always recruiting preceptors," Dr. Bussey-Jones says. "As the medical school grows, we have an ongoing need for volunteers who want to make a difference." As an alumna herself, Dr. Bussey-Jones encourages other Emory School of Medicine alumni to participate. "It's a great way to give back," she says. "For many of our alumni preceptors, it's the only way they stay connected to Emory."

Interested alumni can contact Dr. Bussey Jones directly by email at [jcbusse@emory.edu](mailto:jcbusse@emory.edu) to learn more about making a difference as an OPEX preceptor.

### Some students build lasting professional relationships with their mentors.

as director in 2014. "OPEX first helps new medical learners to develop basic communications skills with patients and other medical professionals."

According to the website, OPEX provides students with the opportunity to "develop a relationship with a clinical preceptor, a multidisciplinary

feedback is their admiration and respect for their preceptor. One student wrote that her preceptor "made sure I always had ample opportunity to practice my history-taking and physical exam skills." Another student said that their preceptor was excellent with patients. "I look forward to emulating his communication skills

Among his ideas for the School of Medicine's future, Dean Sukhatme plans to increase alumni engagement with students. "I would like to offer more student programming that connects alumni and students," he says, as he discusses ideas for bringing alumni to campus for activities like hackathons, where students work collaboratively to solve problems while alumni mentor and serve on judging panels. This engagement extends to off-campus clinical opportunities for students. He says that the new curriculum is a step in the right direction for medical

education, and programs like OPEX, the Outpatient Experience program, are critical.

After meeting a number of alumni, many of whom are on the faculty, he recognizes their strengths. "Students, residents, and fellows can learn a lot from our alumni," he says. "Especially from those in practice. And practicing physicians can benefit from students' fresh perspectives, too."

What seems clear is that Dean Sukhatme wants to create more opportunities

for all areas in the School of Medicine. He plans to give faculty more room to develop research, medical professionals more ways to gain training and mentorship, and students more hands-on clinical experience. "I want to focus on collaboration," he says of bringing together all this talent. "Alumni can be more involved. Faculty, fellows, and researchers can work together more. And students are the glue that holds it all together." ■

## Annual School of Medicine Alumni Awards

In the spring of each year, Emory School of Medicine Alumni Association takes time to acknowledge and honor some of its outstanding members. Alumni of Emory School of Medicine are exceptional physicians, changing the lives of patients locally, nationally, and around the world. The 2018 honorees received their awards in a ceremony held on May 3, 2018, and attended by fellow alumni, family, and friends.

### Distinguished Medical Achievement Award

Dr. Jonas "Jack" Shulman

### Emory School of Medicine Award of Honor

Dr. Barbara J. Stoll 79MR

### The Distinction in Community Service Award

Dr. Gulshan Harjee 82M 85MR

### The Arnall Patz Lifetime Achievement Award

Dr. Thomas M. McNish 78M

All medical alumni are encouraged to submit nominations for next year's awards by February 1, 2019. For more information or to submit a nomination, contact Ruthy Cunningham at 404.727.5913 or [ruth.cunningham@emory.edu](mailto:ruth.cunningham@emory.edu).



Left to right: Drs. Jonas "Jack" Shulman, Barbara J. Stoll, Gulshan Harjee, and Thomas M. McNish

## A Special Thanks to our 2017–2018 Emory University School of Medicine Alumni Association Board Members

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# Honoring Dr. H. Kenneth Walker



As part of the Emory Medal ceremony in early March, the Emory community celebrated the life and legacy of Dr. Kenneth Walker 56Ox 50C 63M 65MR 70MR 71 MR, professor of medicine and neurology at Emory University School of Medicine and professor of global health in the Rollins School of Public Health. Dr. Walker, who passed away in late February, was to receive the honor for, among an assortment of achievements,

six decades of excellent patient care at Grady Memorial Hospital and extraordinary dedication to training future medical leaders.

In addition to being a dedicated mentor to thousands of medical students and residents, Dr. Walker is best remembered for his global health outreach in the Republic of Georgia where he led the development of healthcare management education for mid-level hospital administrators, established a modern emergency room and Women's Wellness Center, and collaborated with scientists and physicians in AIDS and tuberculosis research. Many of his colleagues cited these accomplishments as reasons why Dr. Walker earned the award.

Even with all Dr. Walker accomplished, he was still surprised and delighted by the honor. "He was proud to know that he was an Emory Medal winner," President Claire Sterk remarked at the Emory Medal ceremony. Bill Eley 79C 83M 86MR 89FM 90PH, executive associate dean of Medical Education and

Student Affairs, Graduate Medical Education, and Continuing Medical Education at Emory School of Medicine, read from notes that Dr. Walker had prepared for his acceptance. They revealed his humility and humble nature. "Regarding the Emory Medal," Dr. Eley said, "Ken jotted two words: unexpected and undeserved."

Of course, everyone agrees that, as an outstanding alum and faculty member, Dr. Walker was more than deserving. As Dr. Eley explained, Dr. Walker's vision for Emory revolved around one question: "What can Emory do next for the world?" He was a true champion for Emory.

The loss of Dr. Ken Walker is felt throughout Emory and across the world. Dr. Archil Undilashvili o6PH, director of Educational Programs and adjunct assistant professor of behavioral sciences at the Rollins School of Public Health, who thanks Dr. Walker for introducing him to Emory, said it best. "His life and heart were always with Emory University. He will always be remembered and he will be in our hearts forever."



Memorial gifts to the **H. Kenneth Walker Resident Education Fund** in support of residents of the J. Willis Hurst Internal Medicine Residency program can be made online or by check. Make checks out to "Emory University" with "Ken Walker Fund" in the memo line and send to the Office of Gift Records, Emory University; 1762 Clifton Road, Suite 1400; MS: 0970-001-8AA; Atlanta, GA 30322-4001, or visit: <http://engage.emory.edu/kenwalker>.

Please contact Allison Tillotson, Associate Director of Development at Emory University School of Medicine at [allison.tillotson@emory.edu](mailto:allison.tillotson@emory.edu) or 404.727.9595 with any giving questions.

## MATCH DAY!

On Friday, March 16, a room full of excited graduating medical students gathered for the greatly anticipated Match Day 2018 ceremony. More at [http://news.emory.edu/stories/2018/03/som\\_match\\_day\\_2018/](http://news.emory.edu/stories/2018/03/som_match_day_2018/)

**143** medical students participated in a Residency Match.

**47** students will spend all or part of their residencies in the state of Georgia.

**37** will remain at Emory for their entire residency training.



## The residencies chosen by our 2018 graduates include:

- Internal Medicine (34)
- Pediatrics (17)
- General Surgery (13)
- Ophthalmology (9)
- Orthopedic Surgery (8)
- Emergency Medicine (7)
- Psychiatry (7)
- Obstetrics/Gynecology (6)



**EMORY**  
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Atlanta, GA 30322

## School of Medicine Alumni Events

### **Welcome Reception for New Medical Students and Stethoscope Presentation by Alumni Association**

**Wednesday, July 25, 2018, 3:30 p.m.**  
Woodruff Health Sciences Center  
Administration Building Plaza

### **Emory Medical Alumni Weekend**

*in conjunction with Emory Homecoming  
and Family Weekend*

**Friday–Sunday, October 19-20, 2018**

### **Emory School of Medicine Alumni and Faculty Reception at AAMC Conference**

**Sunday, November 4, 2018**  
Austin, Texas

### **Emory School of Medicine Alumni Awards**

**Thursday, April 25, 2019**

If you no longer wish to receive fundraising requests to support Emory University, Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University, or Emory Healthcare, please contact us at 1762 Clifton Road, NE, Suite 1400, Atlanta, GA 30322, email [askemory@emory.edu](mailto:askemory@emory.edu), or call 404.727.9503, and we will remove you from our list.

## Comments... Questions... Suggestions...

Please contact the  
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