

A Conversation with Helen Cappuccino, MD '88



THE OPPORTUNITY, AND HONOR, TO SERVE AND SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL, ITS ALUMNI AND STUDENTS

Helen Cappuccino, MD '88, has been a member of the Governing Board of the Medical Alumni Association (MAA) for five years. This spring, she began a one-year term as president of the association.

Cappuccino is a general oncologic surgeon who practices at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

Recently, she took time out of her busy schedule to talk with *Buffalo Physician* about her interest in and dedication to the MAA, as well as to share her thoughts and plans regarding the future of the association.

—S. A. UNGER, EDITOR

Q: *What motivated you to join the Medical Alumni Association's [MAA] Governing Board five years ago?*

A: I joined the Governing Board in response to an invitation I received from a colleague whom I admire a great deal for his own record of service to the school, Dr. John Bodkin. I was eager to follow the example he had set and to make my own contributions. Also, in years past, my husband, Andy, and I have served as reunion chairs for our class, so joining the MAA seemed a natural next step in demonstrating my commitment to the school and to the medical students.

Q: *What type of activities and events are supported by the MAA? Why are they important?*

A: One of the reasons I value the MAA so much, and want to participate in it, is the tremendous commitment its members have to our current medical students.

It's a real pleasure to interact with the students at the events they plan and to help sponsor both social and educational programs that are meaningful to them. I remember how important such activities were to me, my husband and the rest of our classmates when we were in medical school at UB.

I am also a staunch proponent of the social and networking opportunities afforded by the MAA, especially at events such as Reunion Weekend and Spring Clinical Day. These are truly fun things to be involved in, and they provide a great opportunity to reconnect with classmates.

Too, being involved at the school helps me stay connected to the greater university community and to the medical school administration, especially Dean Cain, who is a fantastic choice to lead the medical school.

Also, it's a real honor to help choose and celebrate our Distinguished Alumni each year.

Q: *What are some new MAA initiatives that alumni can look forward to this year?*

A: Dr. Martin Mahoney did such a great job last year [as president of the MAA], he will be a tough act to follow.

I hope to build on his accomplishments by keeping the MAA's web site—www.medicalalumni.buffalo.edu—updated so that it can continue to be another way for alumni to stay connected, or to reconnect. I'd also like to work toward making it a more helpful tool for students. In particular, I'd like to make it something they find useful should they wish to contact practicing physicians for advice and counsel.

We are also planning on expanding one of my favorite medical student programs, the Community Physician Luncheon Series. This has always been popular with our students, and so one of my goals this year is to look for ways we can enhance it.

Another of my foremost goals for this year is to help make the UB South Campus a smoke-free environment.

Q: *What is the Practice Giving campaign? How can alumni and others support it?*

A: *Practice Giving* is the alumni association's first fundraising campaign to benefit the Medical Alumni Endowed Scholarship Fund. This fund was established in 1995 by members of the Medical Alumni Association to provide scholarship support for incoming medical students. Last year, alumni and friends contributed over \$165,000 to the fund, and scholarship support was awarded to 12 medical students. I encourage all fellow alumni and also physicians practicing in the Buffalo area to visit www.practicegiving.org

to make a gift, or return the giving envelope included in this issue. Scholarship support plays an integral role in a student's decision on where to attend medical school—let's help them choose UB.

Q: *How can alumni join the MAA? What are some of the volunteer opportunities associated with this membership?*

A: It's easy, just visit the MAA web site at www.medical-alumni.buffalo.edu, or look for the membership information you'll receive in the mail this fall.

As a member of the MAA, you support our alumni activities and current student programs. Also, our partnership with the greater UB Alumni Association allows you to become a member of both organizations and receive perks, such as access to UB's libraries, discounts on merchandise, vacation packages and events at the Center for the Arts, and more.

For members of the MAA, there are also great volunteer opportunities, including serving on the admissions board or as a reunion chair, and assisting with the Student Physician Mentoring Program and Community Physician Luncheons.

Eventually, we also hope to set up a network of MAA members to host current medical students when they interview for jobs or residencies in different cities.

Q: *How can someone update their address information to continue to receive alumni news and Buffalo Physician?*

A: You can do this by visiting the MAA website—at www.medicalalumni.buffalo.edu—or by calling the Medical Alumni Association in the Office of Advancement at (716) 829-2773/toll free 1-877-826-3246.

Q: *What else would you like to tell our readers about the Medical Alumni Association?*

A: The goals of the MAA include cultivating and maintaining relationships with current students, alumni and the school. We do this through many different programs that are sustained from year to year by membership dues. So this is a goal that is accomplished by having a healthy membership roster and by attracting great volunteer leaders, like Dr. John Bodkin, who is serving as chair of the *Practice Giving* campaign.

With the funds raised, we can attract the best and brightest students, which, among other things, serves to enhance the reputation and standing of the school where we earned our degrees.

Because we are doing more with and for our students, we are seeing that they tend to stay better connected to the school immediately after graduation and on into their careers.

Therefore, I would strongly encourage anyone with an interest in serving such a mission to consider joining and giving back to the school with either your time or your money—or both! Without the great education UB gave us, none of us would be where we are today. Everyone has different talents and capabilities—whether it's time, money, mentoring, organizing or fundraising, the MAA can use you! So, give us a call, or visit our web site at www.medicalalumni.buffalo.edu. **BP**

Save *the* Dates

REUNION WEEKEND AND SPRING CLINICAL DAY

Are you celebrating your Medical School Reunion in 2008?

If so, Save the Dates!

Reunion Weekend and Spring Clinical Day will be held **Friday, May 2, and Saturday, May 3, 2008**, at the Marriott Hotel and the Statler Towers in Buffalo, NY.

Visit www.medicalalumni.buffalo.edu. Click "events" for more details!

For additional information about the weekend call the medical school's Office of Advancement at 716-829-2773 or email Jennifer Lobaugh at jlobaugh@buffalo.edu.

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