

My fellow alumni,

Happy and Healthy New Year! As we begin 2009, it is important to reflect on the past year and the difference that our alumni and student programs have made for the medical school. Thanks to the work of my fellow board members, important programs, such as the Community Physician Lunchroom, Distinguished Medical Alumni Dinners, Reunion Weekend and UB HOST, were able to bring many alumni together with each other and with current medical students. I’d also like to recognize Dr. Helen Cappuccino’s work initiating UB Breathe Free, a campus-wide effort to create a smoke-free environment at UB.

As many of us know, finding a residency program can be timely and costly, so we are excited about being able to offer our students the UB HOST (Help Our Students Travel) program. If you are interested in becoming a UB HOST or in volunteering in another capacity, I encourage you to visit the Medical Alumni Association’s website or email Jennifer Lobaugh, staff liaison for the Medical Alumni Association, at the address listed below.

As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas, so please feel free to email me.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Niles, MD ’83
President, Medical Alumni Association

P.S. Reunion Weekend and Spring Clinical Day 2009 will be held April 17-18 at the Adam’s Mark Hotel in Buffalo. Please read more about the Spring Clinical Day speaker on the outside back cover of this issue of Buffalo Physician.

Thursday, November 27, 2008

Irene S. Levine, PhD [also known as Irene Levine] was born in Russia in 1949, at the outbreak of World War II. Lithuania just prior to the Russian occupation and the huffingtonpost.fracturedfriendships.com. E-mail address is: jeromelevine@gmail.com. Please read more about her career in mental health, is a well-known scientist and the huffingtonpost.fracturedfriendships.com. 

As we begin 2009, it is important to reflect on the past year and the difference that our alumni and student programs have made for the medical school. Thanks to the work of my fellow board members, important programs, such as the Community Physician Lunchroom, Distinguished Medical Alumni Dinners, Reunion Weekend and UB HOST, were able to bring many alumni together with each other and with current medical students. I’d also like to recognize Dr. Helen Cappuccino’s work initiating UB Breathe Free, a campus-wide effort to create a smoke-free environment at UB.

As many of us know, finding a residency program can be timely and costly, so we are excited about being able to offer our students the UB HOST (Help Our Students Travel) program. If you are interested in becoming a UB HOST or in volunteering in another capacity, I encourage you to visit the Medical Alumni Association’s website or email Jennifer Lobaugh, staff liaison for the Medical Alumni Association, at the address listed below.

As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas, so please feel free to email me.

Sincerely,

Charles R. Niles, MD ’83
President, Medical Alumni Association

P.S. Reunion Weekend and Spring Clinical Day 2009 will be held April 17-18 at the Adam’s Mark Hotel in Buffalo. Please read more about the Spring Clinical Day speaker on the outside back cover of this issue of Buffalo Physician.
John P. Pryor, MD '94, leader of the University of Pennsylvania’s trauma program and a major in the U.S. Army Reserve, died on Christmas Day in a mortar blast in Mosul, Iraq.

Pryor was on his second tour of duty in Iraq and was with a forward surgical team with the Army’s 1st Medical Detachment. He was deployed on December 6, 2008, and was due to come home in April 2009. He died instantly when shrapnel hit the trailer where he was sleeping.

“Could he have gone anywhere? He had that level of skill,” remembers James Hassett, MD, a professor of surgery in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences who helped train Pryor.

“He felt he had a special obligation to use his talents, and he had a very high level of compassion.”

Pryor published opinion pieces in the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Washington Post that chronicled some of his experiences as a surgeon in Iraq and was frequently interviewed by NPR and ABC News.

In a 2006 Inquirer opinion piece he described his first tour of duty at the 344th Combat Support Hospital in Abu Ghrab and wrote of the “palpable grief” that came over him when a soldier didn’t survive.

“As a trauma surgeon, every death I have is painful; every one takes a little out of me.”

“Losing these kids here in Iraq rips a hole through my soul so large that it’s hard for me to continue breathing.”

Pryor was born in Mount Vernon, New York, and raised near Albany. He earned his medical degree and completed surgical training at UB after which he served a fellowship in trauma surgery and critical care at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. He then joined Penn’s surgical faculty and served as director of the hospital’s nationally recognized trauma program.

“JP was a magical man, with boundless energy and goodness,” said Pryor’s mentor at Penn, C. William Schwab, MD.

“He was a devoted son, husband, father, colleague and friend. . . . At his core were many great values, but his passion for service to others’ stood out. Pryor had aspired to work in trauma care at a very early age. He was certified in CPR when he was 14 years old, joined a local ambulance corps at 17, and became a New York State emergency medical technician at 18. Friends said a favorite quote from Albert Schweitzer that hung on the wall in Pryor’s office captured his spirit. It reads: Seek always to do some good, somewhere. Even if it’s a little thing, do something for those who need help, something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it. For remember, you don’t live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here, too.”

Pryor is survived by his wife, Carmela V. Calvo, MD, a pediatrician at St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children; a daughter, Danielle; sons Francis and John Jr.; a brother; and his parents, Richard C. and Victoria.
Nancy H. Nielsen, MD ’76, PhD, president of the American Medical Association and senior associate dean for medical education in the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, is the recipient of the University at Buffalo’s 2008 Distinguished Medical Alumna Award.

A DINNER IN HER HONOR, hosted by the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and the Medical Alumni Association (MAA) was held September 19, 2008, at the Buffalo Club. In attendance were MAA officers and other alumni; Dean Michael E. Cain, MD; faculty; and friends and family of Nielsen. A native of West Virginia, Nielsen earned a doctorate in microbiology at Catholic University in 1976. Nielsen was elected president of the American Medical Association (AMA) on June 17, 2008, previously serving three terms as vice speaker. She is a delegate from New York and served two terms on the AMA Council on Scientific Affairs to help formulate policy positions for AMA-HOD debates on the diagnosis and treatment of depression, alcoholism among women, Alzheimer’s disease, priorities in clinical preventive services, colorectal cancer screening, asthma control, nicotine content of cigarettes and safety in dispensing prescriptions.

Among other AMA positions, Nielsen has served as a member of the National Patient Safety Board of directors, the Commission for the Prevention of Youth Violence, and the Task Force on Quality and Patient Safety. She currently serves as a delegate to the AMA Medical School Section and is a liaison to the Council on Medical Education. She is the AMA representative on several quality initiatives, including the National Quality Forum, the AMA-convened Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement, and the Ambulatory Care Quality Alliance. She serves on the Institute of Medicine’s Roundtable on Evidence-Based Medicine, and on the Consumer Empowerment Committee on Regulatory Reform. In 2002, Nielsen was appointed to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Regulatory Reform. She was chief medical officer at Independent Health until 2007, having served eight years as associate medical director for quality. She was speaker of the Medical Society of the State of New York House of Delegates and a member of the board of directors of the Medical Liability Mutual Insurance Company—one of the largest malpractice carriers in the country. She also has served as president of the Erie County Medical Society.