

Spring 2014

# The Miriam Memo

**“THE MIRIAM HOSPITAL HAS BEEN A WORLD  
LEADER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW  
TREATMENTS FOR ESOPHAGEAL CANCER.”**

— David Ilson, MD, MPH  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

*Full story on page 4*



**The Miriam Hospital**  
*A Lifespan Partner*



*Arthur J. Sampson*

Arthur J. Sampson

Welcome to your spring issue of *The Miriam Memo*. In these pages we showcase the vitally important work of physician-scientists at The Miriam Hospital who are conducting clinical trials that are advancing research for various types of cancer. I am very proud to share that this pioneering research has garnered high praise from several of the nation's top cancer research institutions. It is no exaggeration to say that The Miriam has emerged as an integral player on the national cancer research stage.

Though I am extremely proud of these accomplishments, I'm equally proud of everything else that takes place in our hospital each day. Our goal is to fulfill needs wherever we see them, and we're highlighting some of the ways we're meeting those needs in this issue. With our *Kids on Fain* program, we're extend-

ing care not only to our cancer patients but also to their children, helping them deal with the stresses and concerns of having a loved one with cancer. We also spotlight the exceptional work of our award-winning nurses who always strive to provide expert, compassionate care to all of our patients.

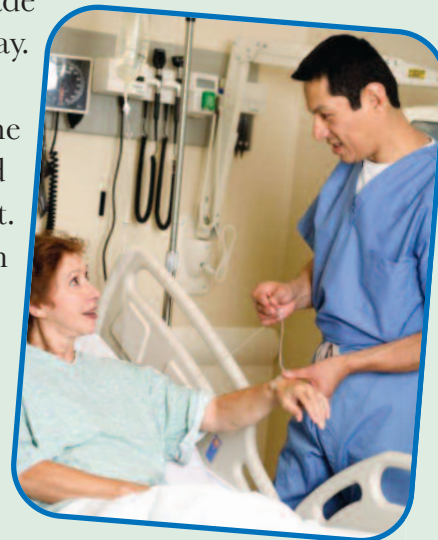
Never for a moment do we forget that it is...and always has been...the generosity of caring people like you that makes so much of our work possible. Please visit [Giving.lifespan.org/2013-Donor-Listing](http://Giving.lifespan.org/2013-Donor-Listing) to see our 2013 Honor Roll of generous supporters. And if you have questions, please contact Debbi Gilstein Jaffe, chief development officer, at 401-793-2062.

For all the ways you support The Miriam Hospital, my staff and I are forever thankful.

## Caring Professionals and Patients Who Care.



Our Caring Hearts Program at The Miriam Hospital gives grateful patients and their loved ones the opportunity to support the hospital while paying tribute to caregivers who made a difference during the patient's visit or stay. Each honored Caring Heart provider will receive a letter informing him or her of the thoughtful gift, as well as a custom-crafted lapel pin to wear proudly on their lab coat. Donations to The Caring Hearts Program will support The Miriam Hospital Fund for a New Generation, which provides vital resources to areas with the greatest funding needs, including patient care services, educational programs, and innovative research projects.



For more information, please contact Nicole Purcell at 401-793-2152 or email her at [npurcell@lifespan.org](mailto:npurcell@lifespan.org). You can also visit our website at [giving.lifespan.org/Caring-Hearts](http://giving.lifespan.org/Caring-Hearts)



## Raising the Bar in Cancer Research: Prominent Clinical Trials Changing Lives Locally and Nationally

**T**he Miriam Hospital is taking its place alongside some major cancer centers in the United States. That's exciting news for patients in Rhode Island and southeastern New England. And it offers reason for hope around the country and beyond.

The Miriam routinely offers hundreds of local patients access to leading-edge clinical trials to treat a variety of cancers (including breast, lung, prostate, bladder, esophageal, pancreas and blood). Some of the treatments developed at The Miriam

Hospital have subsequently been tested at renowned cancer centers such as Memorial Sloane-Kettering and have set the standard of care in the United States.

Clinical research trials are key to developing new ways to prevent, treat and detect cancer, and may be a patient's best chance to prolong or save their life. With access to so many trials at The Miriam, patients no longer have to travel to Boston or New York to get the latest treatments.

*"We know we can offer the same state-of-the-art cancer treatments right here at The Miriam Hospital as anywhere in the country,"* says Howard Safran, MD, a medical oncologist at The Miriam and professor of medicine at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. William Sikov, MD, FACP, a medical oncologist at The Miriam and clinical associate professor of medicine at Alpert Medical School, says: *"What is impressive is, given its size and resources, how many major advances in the treatment of cancer have come out of The Miriam in the past 10 to 20 years."*

***"The Miriam Hospital has done remarkable research that has led to promising treatments for pancreatic cancer patients."***

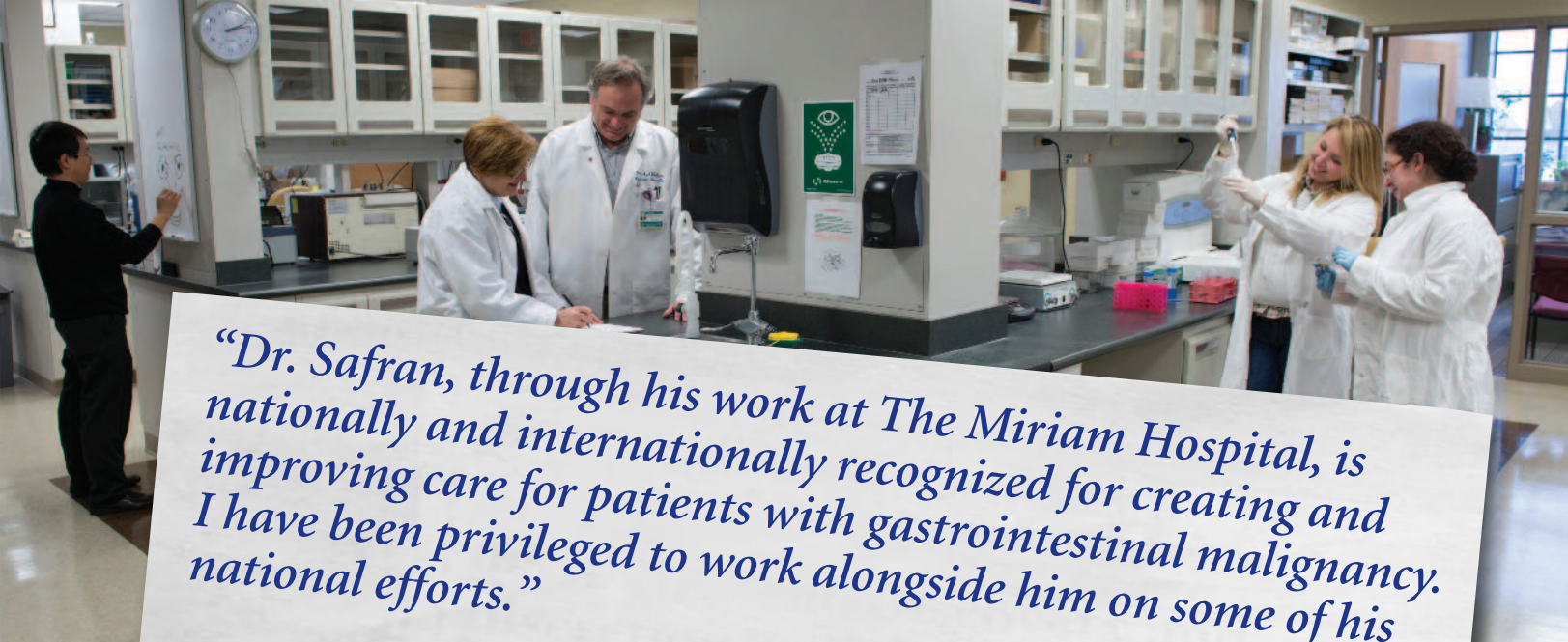
**— Christopher Crane, MD  
M.D. Anderson Cancer Center**

**"The Miriam Hospital has been a leader in cancer research while remaining true to its heritage and identity."**

**— Joseph Michael Herman, MD  
Johns Hopkins Medicine**

Some of these advances include:

- Using the chemotherapy drug paclitaxel in a new way so that cancer cells are more easily destroyed by radiation to better treat lung cancer;
- Shrinking pancreatic cancer tumors in half of patients enrolled in a study testing an experimental combination of four cancer drugs;
- Changing the sequence of common treatments—chemotherapy, surgery and radiation—in patients with rectal cancer to produce better outcomes;



*“Dr. Safran, through his work at The Miriam Hospital, is nationally and internationally recognized for creating and improving care for patients with gastrointestinal malignancy. I have been privileged to work alongside him on some of his national efforts.”*

— Ross Abrams, MD  
Rush University Medical Center

- Extending the lives of patients with a certain type of esophageal cancer by using the breast cancer drug trastuzumab in combination with chemotherapy

This last advance has kept Lee Killingsworth alive, and cancer-free, for 10 years.

One Sunday morning, Lee woke up vomiting blood.

He and his wife Agnes, who live in Foster, Rhode Island, insisted the ambulance take Lee to The Miriam Hospital. After a few hours, and a few tests, he learned that a tumor in his esophagus had burst and spread to his lymph nodes. And the tumor was cancerous.

Lee was stunned. Other than some acid reflux, he felt fine. “No,” he thought. *“You’re wrong. I don’t have cancer.”*

Dr. Edward Wittels, a Miriam hematologist caring for Lee, explained the cancer protocol he would undergo

to treat his esophageal cancer, involving both chemotherapy and radiation. But unfortunately, the initial treatment didn’t work for Lee. It was then Dr. Wittels told him about Dr. Safran and a clinical trial he was leading at The Miriam: *“Do you want to see if*

*a breast cancer drug can kill your cancer?”*

*“Give me what you got,”*

Lee responded. After a grueling year of treatment, Lee’s health improved. Cancer was disappearing in his lymph nodes. Finally, Dr. Wittels delivered the verdict that every person with cancer wants to get: NED,

**“We know we can offer the same state-of-the-art cancer treatments right here at The Miriam Hospital as anywhere in the country.”**

— Howard Safran, MD

**“THE INVESTIGATION OF TRASTUZUMAB FOR HER2+ ESOPHAGEAL CANCER AT THE MIRIAM HOSPITAL WAS CRITICAL TO DEVELOPING RTOG 1010—ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NATIONAL STUDIES OF ESOPHAGEAL CANCER.”**

— Theodore Sunki Hong, MD  
Massachusetts General Hospital



**“Through the contributions of Dr. Sikov and other leading oncologists, The Miriam Hospital is playing a role in the global fight to prevent, control and cure breast cancer and many other of the most common and challenging cancers.”**

— Clifford Hudis, MD  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer

or no evidence of disease. In January 2013, Dr. Wittels and Lee had their final appointment. Lee has been cancer-free for a decade.

Because of the treatment he received from the clinical trial, Lee's dream of attending both of his daughters' weddings came true.

*“Every day,” he says, “is good.”*

Lee shared his story in a video presentation

at The Miriam's “*Experience SoHo*” Gala and Auction held this past April. The fund-a-need part of the evening raised money to support an expansion of clinical trials for cancer. Dr. Safran said that the generosity of Miriam donors is critical for fueling innovation in cancer treatment: *“Philanthropy keeps a lot of our trials going. It's the donors who help us be nimble. If we get a great idea, we can try it here. Donors make that happen.”*



# Kids on Fain Tames Children's Cancer Fears



Cancer. Just the word can evoke fear. This is especially true for children whose parent, grandparent or someone they care about is diagnosed with cancer. It's hard for them to understand what's happening, and they are often excluded from the conversations about the disease and treatment.

Questions abound: **Where's Mom going? What's happening to her? Is she going to die? Can I catch her cancer? Am I going to die?**

A child's imagination can create frightening scenarios. The team at The Leonard and Adele R. Decof Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at The Miriam Hospital has created the *Kids on Fain* program to give children, ages 5 through 17, a chance to see firsthand what their loved one is experiencing and get direct answers to their questions—straight from members of The Miriam's oncology team.

*"Many adults are fearful of having an open conversation like this with the kids. Our approach normalizes the discussion, which helps to reduce fears and anxiety,"* says Kathleen Higginbotham, LICSW, the clinical social worker who created and manages *Kids on Fain*.

**"I went to see the doctors who take care of my mommy. They talked about what they do to help her and other patients,"**says Julia, age 9.

**"I was excited about going. I really wanted to learn. Before I went, I was really scared of cancer."**

The two-hour program, funded by the Michael H. Flanagan Foundation and Tasca Racing, starts with the children creating nametags and transforming a drawing of a tree into their own "Tree of Hope" or "Tree of Strength" decorated with special words and colors. As they color, they start to talk—asking questions and sharing their experiences. They soon realize they aren't alone in what they feel or fear.

Next, the group heads off for a detailed tour of the outpatient clinic. Kids are guided through the process a patient experiences from the moment they get off the elevator on Fain 3, the outpatient hematology/oncology suite. At each stop—registration, blood drawing, exam room, infusion center—a different child plays the role of the patient.

Everyone gets a chance to sit in the recliners in the infusion center and to look through a microscope in the laboratory. During the tour, caregivers don't wear their white coats, helping to make them more approachable.

The final stop is a visit to the inpatient oncology unit to meet a patient. *"Typically the children don't think of their loved one as a patient. Through our program, they get to have the experience of meeting a patient in a hospital bed and getting to talk to them. It helps alleviate their fears of the hospital so when they come to visit for real, it won't be so intimidating,"* Kathy says.

Armed with new information and gifts such as teddy bears, iTunes gift cards, T-shirts and baseball caps, the children leave Fain better prepared to deal with their loved one's illness. Julia summarizes the impact: **"It made me feel braver."**





# Alan Litwin Named Chair of The Miriam Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees

The Miriam congratulates Alan H. Litwin, CPA, MST, MBA—managing director of Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co.—on becoming chair of The Miriam Hospital Foundation board of trustees. As a teenager, Alan volunteered in The Miriam’s pharmacy, and for the past three decades he has been a very active member of The Miriam community. He has served as chair and treasurer of The Miriam Hospital board of trustees. He is chair of the Lifespan finance committee and serves on the Lifespan board of directors. He is also co-chair of *Advancing Emergency and Cardiac Care: The Miriam’s Campaign for Excellence*. In addition to receiving several prominent awards from the Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island and serving on its board, Alan has also served numerous community organizations, including the Wheeler School, YMCA – Camp Fuller, the Jewish Community Center, Temple Emanu-El, the Jewish Family Service, the Fox Point East Side Little League, the Rhode Island Expenditures Council, the City of Providence Economic Development Task Force, Cherrystone Angel Group, and Rhode Island Kids Count.

We spoke with Alan about his new role and his longtime connection to The Miriam.

## How do you view your role as Foundation board chair, and what do you foresee?

I’m very proud of the way that The Miriam has evolved over the past 28 years since I joined the finance committee in 1986. I’m excited about many things going on at the hospital—the consistently high patient satisfaction ratings and the care being given to members of our community.

As management continues to develop the strategy for



The Miriam and Lifespan, we look forward to supporting that strategy through our development efforts while at the same time maintaining the culture of The Miriam.

It’s a critical time because of the challenges in the health care environment—not only at The Miriam, but globally. The changes in health care are so rapid that hospitals need to change as the health care world evolves, and it’s very important that The Miriam be at the forefront of those changes.

Also, for the past three years I’ve been chairing *Advancing Emergency and Cardiac Care: The Miriam’s Campaign for Excellence*, and I’m looking forward to completing that fundraising effort. It’s amazing how much activity goes through that emergency department. The ED staff has done a fabulous job despite challenging physical limitations.

## What makes The Miriam unique and special?

The caregivers are so outstanding that they develop relationships with the patients and the volunteers. It’s an environment unlike any other hospital I’ve ever encountered, or any that the physicians have ever encountered. We have physicians moving here from all over the country, and they can’t get over how good the relationship is between the hospital and the community and how important the institution is to the community. It shows in our patient satisfaction surveys and in the number of people I encounter on a daily basis who say, “If I have a need, The Miriam is my hospital of choice.”

## How would you describe the leadership of immediate past chair, Edward D. Feldstein?

Ed’s a terrific leader. During his chairmanship of the hospital board, there were a lot of changes going on within The Miriam and Lifespan. Ed was a calm, strategic-thinking leader of the board who guided The Miriam through the shifting landscape. His extraordinary leadership has helped make The Miriam the very successful hospital that it is.

## The Miriam Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees

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Marianne and Jessica Mancini

## The Miriam Meets Magnet Standards and Fosters an Exceptional Culture of Nursing

Growing up watching her mother pursue her passion for nursing, it didn't take long for Jessica Mancini to develop the desire to help others in a similar way. While she sometimes dreamed of becoming a news anchor or veterinarian, Jessica always found herself drawn back to nursing. Today, both Jessica and her mother, Marianne, are nurses at The Miriam Hospital.

*"I remember helping my mother type notes for nursing school and taking quizzes together when she would prepare for a test. It was always so exciting when I got a question right,"* recalls Jessica, now an Emergency Department nurse after three years on Unit 3N. *"I just knew I wanted to become a nurse; it's all about helping people when they need it most. I can't express the satisfaction that comes with knowing I helped a patient feel better—nurses truly make a difference every day."*

Marianne, who recently became a nursing supervisor after eight years as a radiology nurse and four years on Unit 3N, adds, *"I did some of my clinical hours at The Miriam and saw immediately how it was different from*

*other hospitals. When I had an opportunity to join the team, I was told it's like a family and that I'd get the support I needed to develop into the nurse I want to be. That promise not only brought me here, it's also what has kept me here."*

From our earliest days, The Miriam has been known for the highest quality of patient care that nurses like Jessica and Marianne provide. In 1998, The Miriam Hospital was recognized nationally by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a Magnet hospital. The Miriam was the ninth Magnet hospital in the country and the first in Rhode Island to achieve this status. Since that time, The Miriam has maintained this designation by passing rigorous standards related to the quality of care and demonstrating sustained excellence in nursing care. Currently, only 6 percent of health care organizations have achieved this designation.

*"We work collaboratively with the interdisciplinary team, as well as the patient and family, with a goal of exemplary patient outcomes and experience."*

**"Our nurses are continuously looking to expand their knowledge and education and are encouraged and expected to have an active voice in critical decisions around their practice. They are the coordinators of care at the bedside with a unique perspective on a patient's specific needs."**

— Maria P. Ducharme, MS, RN, NEA-BC, senior vice president, patient care services, and chief nursing officer at The Miriam

## Intensive Care Unit Receives Beacon Award for Excellence

The Intensive Care Unit at The Miriam Hospital has earned a silver-level Beacon Award for Excellence from The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN). The three-year award recognizes the hospital for its exceptional patient care and improved patient outcomes, and practices that follow the AACN's Healthy Work Environment Standards.

***"Receiving the Beacon Award affirms the remarkable commitment The Miriam Hospital nursing staff and the entire interdisciplinary team provide to the critically ill patients we serve,"*** says Maria P. Ducharme, MS, RN, NEA-BC, senior vice president, patient care services, and chief nursing officer at The Miriam. ***"This consistent emphasis on improved quality of care naturally leads to improved patient outcomes, and that's what we're always striving for."***



# Donor Profile: Arthur Hurvitz



*"Arthur has been a mentor for so many of us who volunteer at The Miriam. He leads by example in establishing the highest standards for quality and philanthropy,"* says Edward D. Feldstein, immediate past chair of the Foundation board. *"For 40 years, Arthur's efforts have helped us become a nationally recognized leader providing the highest quality of hospital care among academic medical facilities."*

Adds Arthur Sampson, president of The Miriam Hospital, *"Arthur has enthusiastically taken on any task, mundane or complex, to support the hospital's mission and ensure that the hospital's name continues to be synonymous with the highest quality health care. On behalf of everyone who works at The Miriam Hospital, I am enormously grateful for the friendship and support of Arthur and Joyce."*

Arthur and Joyce have also included The Miriam Hospital as a beneficiary of their estate plan. Their provision will provide critical future support to ensure that The Miriam will continue to offer highest level of care and commitment, for which we are renowned, to our patients and community. *"The Miriam Hospital is here to make people well so that they can leave the hospital and go on with their lives. That's what I work for and I hope my gifts will help accomplish,"* Arthur says.

Maintaining The Miriam's outstanding culture of nursing care and excellence means offering the best continuing education opportunities we can for our staff. Few people know this better than Arthur Hurvitz—an invaluable member of The Miriam family for four decades and the 2009 Miriam Hospital Person of the Year—who has become one of our leading champions for nursing excellence, as well as advancement of the hospital overall.

Arthur and his wife, Joyce, have furthered nursing education at The Miriam by establishing the *Hurvitz Nursing Scholarship Endowed Fund*, which provides ongoing education for the hospital's award-winning nurses. Arthur even received the status of honorary nurse from Maria P. Ducharme, MS, NEA-BC, RN, The Miriam's senior vice president, patient care services, and chief nursing officer.

*"I was first introduced to nursing at The Miriam by Jeannette Matrone, RN, PhD, who led the program when the hospital first received Magnet status. She was my mentor, and I quickly learned that the nurses largely make the culture of The Miriam what it is,"* Arthur says. *"Doctors might spend short periods with each patient, but nurses spend all day and night with them. They are the ones who make the hospital feel like home for the patient. The Miriam nurses deserve all the credit they get—they're the best. And the more education they receive, the better our patient outcomes will be."*

A veteran of World War II who received the Purple Heart after being wounded in the Battle of the Bulge, Arthur attended Georgia Institute of Technology on the GI Bill and received bachelor's degrees in industrial engineering and textile engineering. He had a successful career and retired as the president of Health-Tex, one of the largest manufacturers of children's clothing.

Arthur joined The Miriam Hospital board of trustees in 1974 and has served as a trustee and an officer, in addition to countless committee assignments, during his tenure. When he completed his term as trustee in 2004, he joined the Foundation board and co-chaired *The Campaign for the Next Generation* along with Marie J. Langlois. This was the largest campaign in the hospital's history, raising more than \$30 million and leading to the opening of The Victor and Gussie Baxt Building.

*"The Miriam nurses deserve all the credit they get—they're the best. And the more education they receive, the better our patient outcomes will be."*

—Arthur Hurvitz



# The Miriam Hospital's Experience SoHo

On April 5, The Miriam Hospital transformed Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston into a chic New York City arts setting at its 2014 "Experience SoHo" Gala and Auction. This signature event, co-chaired by Susan and David Bazar, welcomed more than 560 supporters and guests and raised \$612,375 to support *The Miriam Fund for a New Generation*. As part of the total amount raised at the event,

the auction and fund-a-need raised \$217,050 to support clinical research trials for cancer patients at The Leonard and Adele R. Decof Family Comprehensive Cancer Center at The Miriam Hospital.

*"This event has allowed us to showcase the remarkable inroads The Miriam Hospital has made—and certainly philanthropy has helped to make this possible—in the area of clinical research cancer trials,"* said Alan H. Litwin, chair of The Miriam Hospital Foundation board of trustees. *"Each step forward, and every milestone we achieve, is a shining example of the strength of our donor community, and for that we are forever grateful."*

Guests bid on an exciting selection of auction items presented by professional auctioneer Paul Zekos of The Zekos Group, enjoyed cuisine by Russell Morin Fine Catering and danced to the sounds of World Premier Band. The title sponsors were Amica and Nortek, and the platinum sponsors were GTECH, Med Tech Ambulance Service and Roberts Carroll Feldstein & Peirce Attorneys at Law.

*"Our SoHo theme was especially exciting because art and imagination are such important sources of healing for so many of The Miriam's patients,"* said event chairs Susan and David Bazar. *"Our special gratitude goes to Jeffrey Sparr of PeaceLove Studios for his beautiful works of art, generosity and enduring creativity."*



President of The Miriam Hospital Arthur Sampson and his wife, Lynda; event chairs David and Susan Bazar; Marianne and Alan Litwin, chair of The Miriam Hospital Foundation board of trustees



Sharon Gaines, Marianne Litwin, Susan Froehlich and Mitzi Berkelhammer

***"This event has allowed us to showcase the remarkable inroads The Miriam Hospital has made—and certainly philanthropy has helped to make this possible—in the area of clinical research cancer trials. Each step forward, and every milestone we achieve, is a shining example of the strength of our donor community, and for that we are forever grateful."***

— Alan H. Litwin, chair of The Miriam Hospital Foundation board of trustees





# Gala & Auction

## Raises \$612,375



Experience SoHo guests "dancing in the streets," to the sounds of World Premier Band



Artist Jeffrey Sparr of PeaceLove Studios after painting his piece to begin the evening's festivities



Robin and Michael Prescott with Kathy and Jamie Reavis

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# Spotlight on The Miriam Hospital Foundation Annual Meeting

In November 2013, The Miriam Hospital Foundation's 2013 Annual Meeting brought The Miriam family together at the hospital's Sopkin Auditorium to celebrate another year of the hospital's outstanding accomplishments and time-honored traditions. Speakers included Arthur J. Sampson, president, The Miriam Hospital; Edward D. Feldstein, outgoing chair, The Miriam Hospital Foundation board of trustees; Steven Graff, MD, president, The Miriam Hospital Medical Staff Association; Kathleen C. Hittner, MD, president emeriti, The Miriam Hospital; Robin Engle, president, The Miriam Hospital Women's Association; Scott B. Laurans, chair, Lifespan board of directors; and Alan H. Litwin, incoming chair, Foundation board of trustees.

During the event, H. Jack Feibelman was named the 2013 Miriam Person of the Year. Feibelman served as a member of the hospital's board of governors from 2001 to 2007, the finance committee from 2006 to 2012, and the Foundation board of trustees since 2011. In 2002, at the age of 82, he received a Master of Arts degree from Brown University. A well-known figure in the Rhode Island business community, he founded A&H Mfg. Co. in 1967 to produce a new concept for displaying



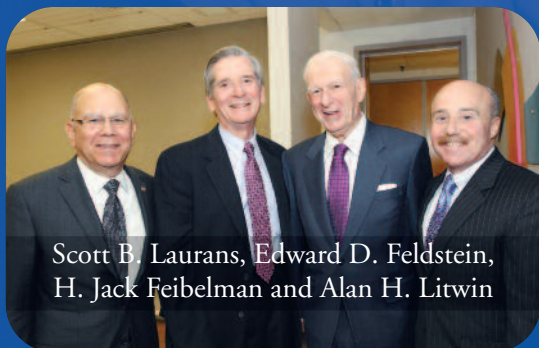
H. Jack Feibelman (first row, third from left)  
and his family

jewelry. Recognizing the need for a better approach for merchandising jewelry, he designed and created the first hanging display card for earrings as we know it today. This innovation revolutionized the fashion jewelry industry and has since led to numerous creative packaging developments by A&H, now a global company headquartered in Johnston.

***"Jack's long history of philanthropy and leadership at The Miriam Hospital has greatly benefited the lives of our patients and their families,"*** said Edward D. Feldstein.

In his remarks, Arthur Sampson spoke about the importance of The Miriam Hospital's role as part of the Lifespan system. ***"The coordination of clinical services among The Miriam, Rhode Island Hospital and Newport Hospital continues, as evidenced by our expanding role in the Cardiovascular Institute, the Total Joint Center, the Bariatric Surgery Center, and the Comprehensive Cancer Center."***

He added, ***"Through good management and a carefully constructed scope of clinical services that are being provided here, The Miriam continues to excel and meet the needs of the communities we serve. And that will remain our priority for years to come."***



Scott B. Laurans, Edward D. Feldstein,  
H. Jack Feibelman and Alan H. Litwin

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