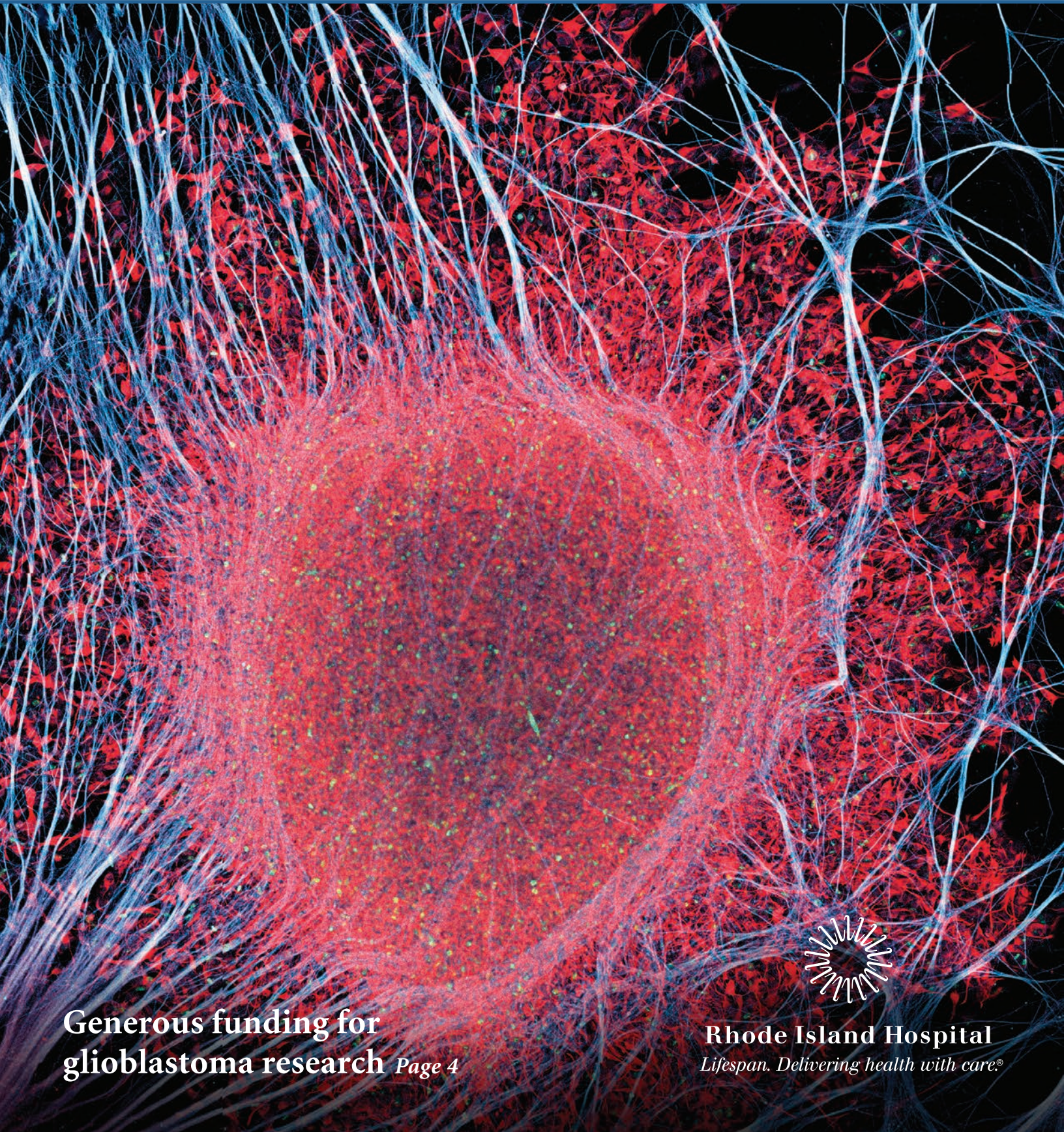
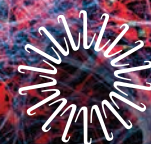


# Advancing Medicine. *Touching Lives.*

RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL • 2019/2020



**Generous funding for  
glioblastoma research** *Page 4*



**Rhode Island Hospital**  
*Lifespan. Delivering health with care.®*





**R**hode Island Hospital's supporters are some of the kindest, most generous people I've ever had the pleasure of meeting. So, thank you for being part of this great team!

The hospital itself is part of a great team, too—and that's Lifespan. As such, people throughout our state and region always have direct access to a world-class academic health care system that offers the most advanced and highest quality medical care in the region.

Whatever our patients need, wherever they need it, there's a Lifespan solution that has them covered, and a committed staff ready to provide superior patient-centered care in a comfortable and compassionate environment.

Your generosity helps make that care possible, and we are forever grateful for your support.



**Lawrence A. Aubin Sr.**

Chairman,  
Lifespan Board of Directors  
Chairman, Rhode Island Hospital  
Board of Trustees

**COVER:** Close-up of a glioblastoma (red mass and red cells, green cells show proliferation) as they migrate in association with central nervous system axons (blue-strings). *More on page 4.*



**Timothy J. Babineau, MD**

President and  
Chief Executive Officer, Lifespan

**A**s I walk through the halls of Rhode Island Hospital, I find myself in awe of the humanity I see in the people who work here. They are compassionate professionals who put our patients at the heart of everything they do. Also inspiring is the generosity of our donor family—the caring individuals and organizations whose support enables us to carry out our mission of *delivering health with care*.

Our cover story focuses on a significant grant from the Warren Alpert Foundation in Providence, which will fund innovative research and treatment of the brain cancer glioblastoma. Also in this issue is a recap of our recent *President’s Pursuit of Excellence Dinner*, which celebrated Rhode Island Hospital’s accomplishments of the past year and honored three special community champions. Our annual Honor Roll of Supporters recognizes the generosity of caring people like you—our amazing donors. Philanthropy is our hospital’s lifeblood and I am very grateful for your support.

My heartfelt thanks to Roger Begin, who stepped down as Chair of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees at the end of 2019. You’ll hear more about this transition in the weeks to come, but I want to take the opportunity to share my appreciation for Roger’s six years of leadership today.

Happy reading!

## Two Wonderful Ways to Make a Difference

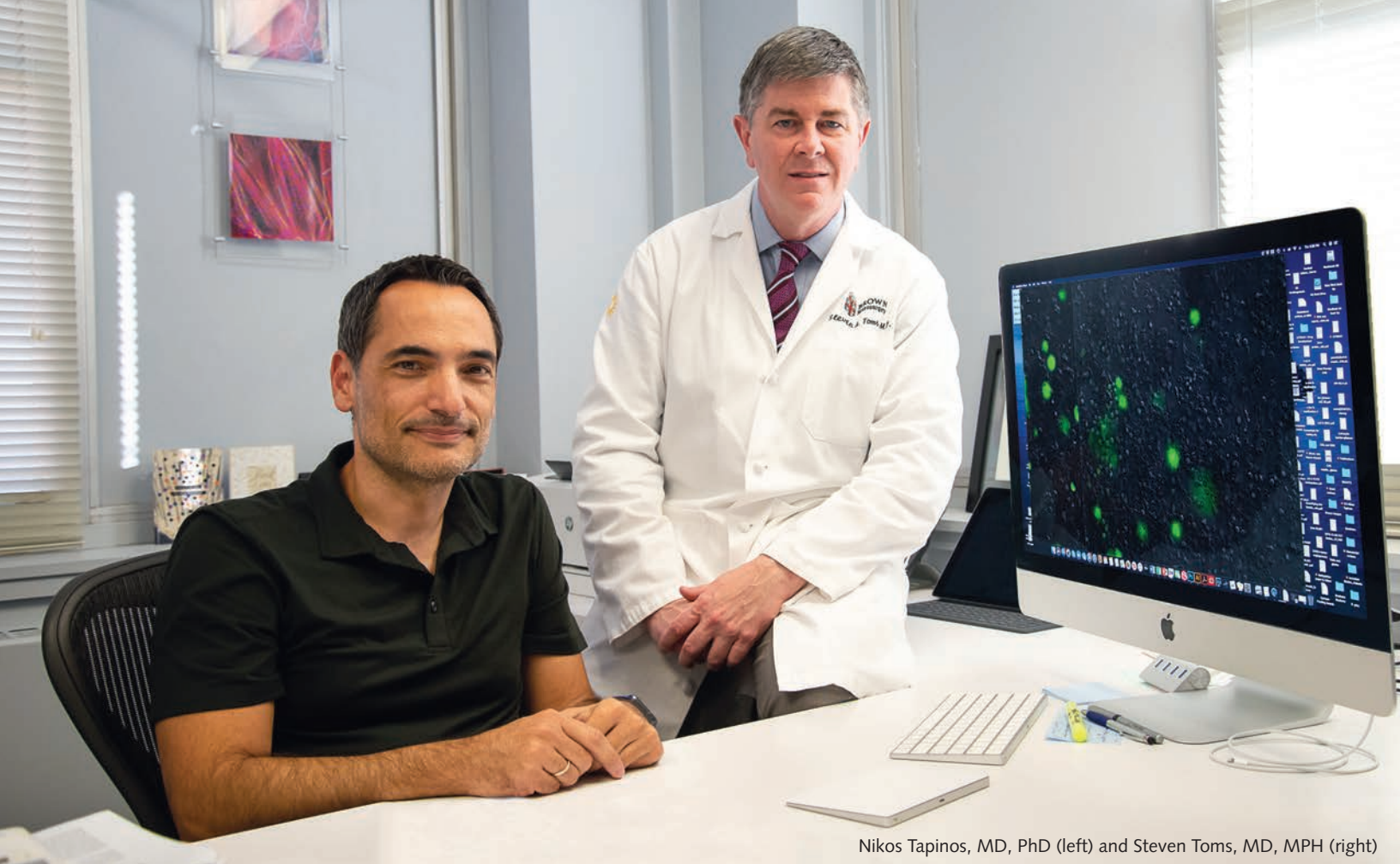
**S**ince 1863, the community’s support of Rhode Island Hospital has helped keep our institution strong as we meet the medical needs of the patients in our care.

To thank and celebrate donors who make an annual commitment of \$250 or more to our Fund for Excellence (noted on pages 13-15 with a #), we created the 1863 Society. Gifts to this fund support our areas of greatest needs, helping us to invest in the future of medicine, research and medical education in our region. To learn about the benefits of being part of the 1863 Society, please visit [rhodeislandhospital.org/1863-society](http://rhodeislandhospital.org/1863-society).

And to help our supporters leave a lasting legacy while helping to ensure Rhode Island Hospital’s future, we’d like to share the benefits of planned and estate giving. From bequests and charitable gift annuities, to charitable lead trusts and remainder unitrusts, there is an opportunity that will work for you. To learn more, please contact Chris Josephson at 401-444-6412 or email him at [chris.josephson@lifespan.org](mailto:chris.josephson@lifespan.org).







Nikos Tapinos, MD, PhD (left) and Steven Toms, MD, MPH (right)

## \$3.9 Million Grant Puts Brain Cancer in the Crosshairs

**I**n a laboratory on the campus of Rhode Island Hospital, two preeminent physician-scientists and their team of researchers are plotting a search-and-destroy mission.

Their target: glioblastoma, a highly aggressive and intractable cancer of the brain. Their weapon: a very generous grant of \$3.9 million from the Warren Alpert Foundation in Providence.

Glioblastoma is notorious for its capacity to invade brain tissue and evade treatment. The median survival time is two years following diagnosis, though some people live longer, including several patients of Steven Toms, MD, MPH. Dr. Toms is a neurosurgeon and

Director of the Brain Tumor Program for the Lifespan Cancer Institute and Vice Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital.

“I always tell my patients two things about glioblastoma,” he says. “This is warfare, because the tumor cells shrug off treatment. But what’s really happening—in our own bodies, in real time—is evolution in action. Glioma tumors, as we treat them, adapt to their environment.”

The tumor cells’ extraordinary resilience leads to recurrence, accounting for the grim prognosis of glioblastoma.

But today, armed with the Alpert Foundation's grant, Dr. Toms and his longtime research partner, Nikos Tapinos, MD, PhD, are exploring a new front in the battle against glioblastoma: epigenetics, the study of how genes are modified without changing the underlying DNA.

Our DNA stores the codes to create proteins, the building blocks of life. Our RNA serves as a link for passing that information from DNA to protein.

"We're targeting RNA, not the gene, to stop the migration of glioblastoma," says Dr. Tapinos, Director of Molecular Neuroscience and Neuro-Oncology Research at Rhode Island Hospital. "To go from gene to protein, you have several steps, and every step can be modified. Those modifications are epigenetics."

## **"At the end of the day, our goal is to terminate brain cancers in a different way... The epigenetic way."**

—Nikos Tapinos, MD, PhD

In the field of cancer, understanding how modification produces abnormal cells could lead to new ways of treating the uniformly deadly glioblastoma.

"If you're looking at the story of cancer, most of it involves the epigenetic component," says Dr. Toms. "We believe that the RNA-based mechanisms that allow for genes to be silenced or overexpressed are the ones that we're going to be able to leverage in cancer therapeutics. RNA is the lynch pin."

August (Gus) R. Schiesser, Executive Director of the Warren Alpert Foundation, says brain science was a special passion of businessman and philanthropist Warren Alpert. The founder of Warren Equities, Mr. Alpert established his charitable foundation in 1986 after his mother developed Alzheimer's disease.

"Neuroscience and cancer research are priorities of the Warren Alpert Foundation," say Mr. Schiesser. "We support work that can lead to breakthroughs and cures for disease. The project on epigenetics received very positive feedback from the doctors on our review committee. We recognize the expertise in these fields at Rhode Island Hospital."

The Alpert Foundation is famous for its Alpert Prize, a partnership with the Harvard Medical School that recognizes the world's foremost scientists, physicians, and researchers for their breakthroughs in biomedicine. Ten Alpert Prize winners have gone on to receive Nobel prizes.

Though Mr. Alpert was born and educated in Massachusetts, the Foundation's largest award—\$100 million—was made to Brown University to support the medical school that bears Warren Alpert's name. Drs. Toms and Tapinos are deeply grateful to be included in the Foundation's largesse.

"It means so much to have people who believe in what we are doing and are so generous," says Dr. Tapinos. "The committee that reviewed our proposal understands its significance, and these are very high-level scientists. It's wonderful to have the Foundation's support."

Dr. Toms hopes that one day he can tell his glioblastoma patients the same thing he was told by a doctor, decades ago, when his then 2-year-old son was diagnosed with leukemia: "Hey, we have a tough road ahead, but we're going to get you to the other side and back to your family."

He dreams of a future when surgeons like him, fighting glioblastoma, can put away their tools.

"At the end of the day, our goal is to terminate brain cancers in a different way," says Dr. Tapinos. "A more elegant way."

The epigenetic way.

# Walter's Stroke Miracle



Walter Marshalek

**W**alter Marshalek and Mari Montanino had turned in for the night after what had been a typical day for the East Taunton, Massachusetts, couple. They went to work, had dinner, watched TV, did a few household chores, and took their Yorkie “Penny” and Lab “Rocky” out for a walk.

It was a normal day in every way . . . until it wasn't.

“Walter started fidgeting and making these odd grunting noises,” Mari recalls. “So, I turned the bedroom light on and asked him if he was okay.” Mari says that Walter tried to respond but could not. And when he attempted to get out of bed and stand up, he fell to the floor. “He was looking at me, but not focusing,” Mari says, “and his lips looked droopy. I thought he might be having a stroke. So, I called 911.” Her instincts were correct.

Paramedics rushed Walter to Morton Hospital in Taunton, Massachusetts. There, he underwent a CT angiogram, which confirmed that he had suffered an emergent large vessel occlusion (ELVO) stroke of the

left-middle cerebral artery. As is protocol, Morton contacted Rhode Island Hospital—home to the only comprehensive stroke center in the region—and our emergency transportation services team brought Walter here.

“When Walter arrived, he was in very tough shape,” explains Mahesh V. Jayaraman, MD, Director of the Neurovascular Center at Rhode Island Hospital. “He was unable to speak or move the right side of his body.” Immediately, Walter was taken to the new state-of-the-art biplane interventional radiology suite at Rhode Island Hospital.

The suite—which features the most advanced medical imaging technology available in the world to diagnose and treat neurovascular conditions including stroke—is a “first-of-its-kind” room, because no other hospital in the region has a stroke surgery suite located directly in the emergency department.

Biplane imaging uses two mounted rotating cameras—one on each side of the patient—that move front-to-back and side-to-side, simultaneously taking detailed pictures of blood vessels, soft tissue and blood flow in real-time. The 3-D images give doctors unprecedented access to data and helps them create a roadmap for reaching the exact location of a blockage or malformation. In Walter's case, the images helped his care team precisely target the clot blocking blood flow to his brain, and they performed a mechanical thrombectomy to remove it.

The thrombectomy consisted of snaking a hollow plastic tube from an artery in Walter's upper leg to his brain, and then sending a stent retriever in to grab the clot and pull it out, restoring normal blood flow. In the span of about 15 minutes, Walter went from being a person clinging to life to a person on the road to recovery.



**“Time is of the essence in any emergency care situation, but it is especially so when treating severe strokes...and our goal at Rhode Island Hospital is to continually raise the bar and lead the way.”**

—Ryan A. McTaggart, MD

“Just a few short years ago, people like Walter who suffered a severe stroke were faced with a 75 percent chance of death or disability,” reports Ryan A. McTaggart, MD, Director of Interventional Neuroradiology at Rhode Island Hospital. “Today, we are swinging the pendulum the other way, and patients are looking at a 75 percent chance of a good outcome.”

But, Dr. McTaggart points out, there’s still more work to do. Getting stroke victims the care they need faster and

making Rhode Island Hospital their first destination, even if it’s not their closest hospital, is key. “Time is of the essence in any emergency care situation, but it is especially so when treating severe strokes. Every minute saved is a week of independent living the patient gets back. As the saying goes, ‘time is brain.’”

“The sea change in stroke care is really unlike anything we’ve seen before,” Dr. McTaggart says, “and our goal at Rhode Island Hospital is to continually raise the bar and lead the way. Quite simply, the more resources we have, the more we can do.”

Although he says he doesn’t remember anything from that fateful night in late June 2019, Walter does remember a lot about his stay at Rhode Island Hospital. “The level of care I received was excellent from start to finish,” he says. “Everybody was professional and compassionate, they knew their jobs, and the entire team was in sync. They saved my life . . . what more can I say?”

These days, Walter is back to his old self and feels only minor effects from his stroke. “I have a slight limp and some fatigue,” he says, “but that won’t stop me.” In fact, he and Mari just came back from a vacation to Aruba!



Biplane Suite



Champions Ed Iannuccilli, MD, Robert Vincent, and Diane N. Weiss

## *President's Pursuit of Excellence* Honors Local Champions



Beth and John Bruscato

**C**elebrating those who help to make Rhode Island Hospital a special place of healing, Lifespan president Timothy J. Babineau, MD, welcomed more than 500 guests at the Rhode Island Convention Center for the *President's Pursuit of Excellence Dinner* on November 21. The signature event—chaired by Elizabeth and Michael Huber, and Donna Paolino Coia and Arthur Coia—cast light on recent hospital accomplishments and honored three community champions for their significant contributions.

“Standing here tonight, I would like to thank all of our doctors, nurses, clinicians and administrators at Rhode Island Hospital for the care and compassion you provide to our patients,” said Dr. Babineau. “I would also like to thank all our donors who help to make so much of our work possible. Medicine, as I’m fond of saying, is a team sport. And the team at Rhode Island Hospital is among the best in the country.”





Alissa Lambert and Ashley Kelley

Among the accomplishments shared at the event were IBM Watson naming Rhode Island Hospital among the top 50 cardiac hospitals in the country for the fifth time, and the Cardiovascular Institute receiving a national designation as a “Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care” by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of RI. Special guest speakers, hospital oncology nurses Ashley Kelley and Alissa Lambert, and grateful patients Beth and John Bruscato, took to the stage to share their personal journeys.

Together, Ashley and Alissa recounted their care of a 20-year-old patient diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia and how the connection they forged had a tremendous impact on all their lives. Beth and John Bruscato shared their story of heart issues that prevented them from being able to do many of the things they enjoyed and compromised their quality of life – until they received the surgical procedures at Rhode Island Hospital that gave them their lives back.

The event concluded with the recognition of the 2019 Champions for their significant contributions to advancing the mission and vision of the state’s leading academic medical center: **IGT**, formerly GTECH, accepted by Robert Vincent as Corporate Champion; **Diane N. Weiss** for Individual Champion; and **Ed Iannuccilli, MD**, for Lifetime Achievement.

To learn more about the event and view honoree videos, visit [giving.lifespan.org/RIH/PPOE-Videos](http://giving.lifespan.org/RIH/PPOE-Videos).



## Past Champions

### 2018

Corporate Champion  
**H. Carr & Sons, Inc.**

Individual Champion  
**Rosalyn Sinclair**

Lifetime Achievement Award  
**Richard J. Goldberg, MD, MS**

### 2017

Corporate Champion  
**Citizens Bank**

Individual Champions  
**Lisette Prince and Her Family:  
Diana Oehrli, Guillaume de Ramel  
and Regis de Ramel**

Lifetime Achievement Award  
**Sandy Stamoulis, RN, MBA**

### 2016

Corporate Champion  
**Local Dunkin’ Donuts Franchisees**

Individual Champions  
**Al and Gerrie Verrecchia**

Lifetime Achievement Award  
**Arthur A. Bert, MD**

# A Message from the Immediate Past Chair of the Foundation Board of Trustees



Roger Begin

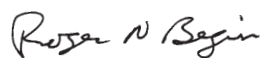
For the past six years, I have had the privilege of serving as chair of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees. It is a role that I both enjoyed and found deeply fulfilling.

But as the saying goes, nothing lasts forever. Therefore, I decided to step down as chair at the end of December 2019.

I am delighted to pass the baton of leadership to Robert Vincent, one of Rhode Island's foremost community leaders and someone I am grateful to call a friend. For years, Rhode Island Hospital, and particularly Hasbro Children's Hospital, have been central to Bob's life, as well as to his wife, Grace. We are fortunate to have someone of Bob's caliber and character leading our foundation into the next decade.

Words cannot properly express my appreciation and gratitude to you—our donor community—for the generous philanthropic support you've provided. It is truly central to our hospital's work.

With heartfelt thanks,



Roger N. Begin

## Thank you to all the members of the Rhode Island Hospital Foundation

Robert K. Vincent, Chair

Elizabeth Huber, Vice Chair

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# Meet Donna Paolino Coia



Donna Paolino Coia

**D**onna Paolino Coia's connection to Rhode Island Hospital is a deeply personal one. It was here, three years ago, that she and her husband, Arthur, found the neurosurgeon who would ultimately perform the delicate spinal operation Arthur desperately needed to return full function to his life.

"We were on a quest for the best doctor to treat Arthur's degenerative cervical myelopathy," Donna recalls. "At Johns Hopkins, we were told there was only one surgeon to be recommended—Ziya Gokaslan, Chief of Neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital. Rhode Island is our home," Donna continues, "and we are thrilled that Rhode Island Hospital is attracting the leading lights in medicine, like Dr. Gokaslan, to practice and conduct research here." Donna, who joined the

Foundation Board in 2018, is a leading light in her own field as a partner and owner of Paolino Properties. She is also passionate about the education of girls and women. She is an avid supporter of the Lincoln School—which she and her two grown daughters attended—as well as other community organizations.

Donna and Arthur give generously to Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's hospitals, and joined Beth and Michael Huber as co-chairs of this year's *President's Pursuit of Excellence Dinner*. "We want to help get the word out about Rhode Island Hospital," says Donna. "This place is a treasure. The best and most comprehensive medical care is right here in our own back yard."

# Meet Anthony J. Thomas Jr.

**T**ony Thomas, a principal and partner of The Foundry office and residential complex in Providence, is a huge basketball fan, going back to his days at Boston College. He played in an over-30 league for years. But by the time he reached his 50s, basketball had taken its toll. "Everything was wrong with my spine," says Tony, now 65. "You name it, I had it. The pain got so bad I could barely walk. People told me that Rhode Island Hospital was the place to go—that the best neurosurgeons in the world practice there. They were right."

Thanks to spinal surgery performed last year by Ziya Gokaslan, MD, Tony says he's a "new man." He is also a proud new member of the Foundation Board, in addition to serving on its Board of Governors. "I can't think of another entity that's more important to the community than Rhode Island Hospital," says Tony, who grew up in the Mount Pleasant neighborhood of Providence. "It gives me great pride and satisfaction to support the talented and dedicated team there." The family-owned Foundry comprises 26 acres and 13 historic mill buildings restored and renovated as office and residential space, including the Promenade Apartments. "I've been successful and it's time to give back to the community," says Tony, who recently retired. "It's an honor to belong to the Rhode Island Hospital family."



Anthony J. Thomas Jr.

Tony and his wife, Virginia, regularly sponsor the fundraising events of Rhode Island and Hasbro Children's hospitals. They have two grown children.

# Doctor and Patient Share “One-in-a-Million” Bond



Joe McGovern and his daughter Mia

**F**ebruary 20, 2015, was a very memorable day for Joe McGovern. It was his sixty-seventh birthday and the day he found out he had cancer. A lingering pain in his ribcage and back prompted Joe to go see a doctor. At first, he thought the pain might have been caused by a fall he had while skiing. But it wasn't. It was a chordoma.

“A chordoma is an exceedingly rare type of cancerous tumor that can occur anywhere along the spine,” explains Ziya Gokaslan, MD, FACS, Chief of Neurosurgery at Rhode Island Hospital. “Literally, only one in a million people will get it and—unfortunately for Joe—he was the one.” But fortunately for Joe, he found his way to Dr. Gokaslan. Right before he came to Rhode Island Hospital, Dr. Gokaslan was practicing at Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland. There, on June 1, 2015, he performed successful surgery on Joe and put him on the road to recovery.

Today, Dr. Gokaslan continues to focus on complex spinal reconstruction and radical surgical treatment of both primary and metastatic spinal tumors, sacral

neoplasms, and spinal cord tumors. He is regarded as one of world's foremost experts in this area, and a prime example of the level of excellence in care that Rhode Island Hospital possesses—and why the hospital is the principal provider of specialty care in our state and a major teaching and research center.

“There are only 200 to 300 new cases a year in North America, so you need a specialized team in place to provide this lifesaving care,” Dr. Gokaslan says. “We have that capability here at Rhode Island Hospital.”

Dr. Gokaslan and his team have provided world-class care to patients from 14 countries and numerous states—including California, where Joe is from.

“I was blown away by Dr. Gokaslan's care, compassion, and frankness as well as the amount of time he spent with me,” Joe recounts. “So, when he went to Rhode Island, I did too.” Every six months, Joe makes the cross-country trek from La Jolla, California, just to see Dr. Gokaslan and get evaluated.

Joe's daughter recently got married in Temecula wine country. “The photographs of me walking Mia down the aisle are poignant reminders of my journey,” he says. “It took a couple of years to learn how to walk again without a cane—and there were some dark moments—but on Memorial Day weekend 2019, I was the proudest father in the world.”

Joe has also become a strong supporter of Rhode Island Hospital's Chordoma Research Program. “Philanthropy makes all the difference,” Dr. Gokaslan points out, “and the gifts we receive from generous supporters like Joe foster research and enable better outcomes.” Joe adds: “I've been so impressed with the professionalism of the entire Rhode Island Hospital staff and I have tremendous confidence in Dr. Gokaslan . . . he saved my life.”



# 2018 Honor Roll of Supporters

Rhode Island Hospital Foundation is proud to recognize its generous supporters whose philanthropy enables the hospital to provide exceptional, compassionate, patient-centered care to the people of Rhode Island and beyond. This list reflects cumulative gifts and pledges of \$250 or more in the calendar year 2018. Many thanks for your generosity!



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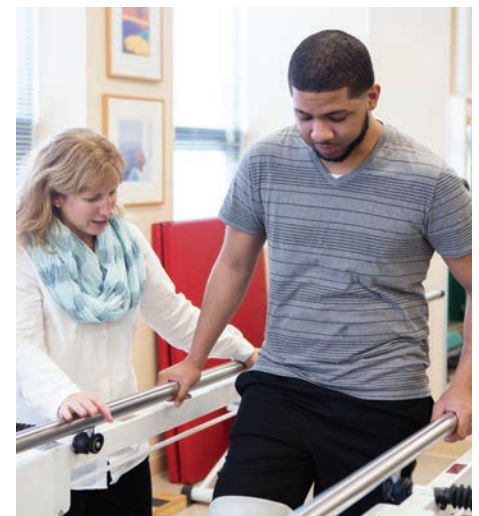
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## Rising Above Cancer

**D**espite temperatures climbing into the 90s on Saturday, July 20, more than 800 people came out to support the Lifespan Cancer Institute’s fourth annual Rise Above Cancer 5K Walk/Run at City Park in Warwick. The funds raised at the event—more than \$75,000—benefit a patient support fund that provides financial help to people battling cancer.

“Cancer patients often experience financial challenges during and after treatment and this fund helps cover everything from medications, to utility bills and transportation,” explains David Wazer, MD, Director of the Lifespan Cancer Institute. The fund was recently renamed the Malloy Strong Fund in honor of Sgt. Edmond F. Malloy Jr., a Providence police officer who fought metastatic liver cancer for five years. Since the event began, Sgt. Malloy’s team has grown bigger and bigger; this year it was more than 400 members “Malloy Strong.”

Sadly, Ed Malloy passed away on October 31. He was one of the bravest, toughest, and most beloved patients at the Lifespan Cancer Institute. Even when ill, he did whatever he could to support efforts to fight cancer. “Ed was an inspiration to everyone he met and the ever-growing number of people that joined his team each year for this event was a testament to that,” says his oncologist Howard Safran, MD.



Edmond F. Malloy Jr.



Team Malloy Strong

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