



UMass Chan
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Chancellor Michael F. Collins, MD

“ADVANCING TOGETHER”

2023 Convocation & Investiture Ceremony

Chancellor's 2023 Convocation Address

September 14, 2023 | ASC Auditorium

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“Advancing Together”

Thursday, September 14, 2023

[Musical Interlude]

Mr. Willey was an eighth-grade music teacher. He was rough and gruff; prompt and precise; prim and proper. He lived two doors away on Lewis Avenue: our lived version of what David Halberstam wrote about in his acclaimed book, *The Fifties*. He would have loved to hear that beautiful selection from Beethoven's 9th Symphony. For him, music was an ode to joy!

One summer day, having just delivered his afternoon newspaper, we began a conversation about the upcoming school year. He inquired as to whether I would be enrolled in his music class that fall. I was quite sure that my schedule was full of math and science classes, but I wanted to console him with the knowledge that I wished I could be present to learn from him.

However, I made the mistake of proclaiming, “I wish I could learn to play the piano!” Immediately he countered, “Never say you *wish* that you could play a musical instrument!” He continued by chiding me, “Either you want to or not. This is not something you can *wish for*! Either you want to work hard and learn to play music, or you don't!” He proffered, “If you decide you want to play the piano, this is something that we can do together.”

I couldn't wait to get across the street to the Spear's home and by so doing, end this uncomfortable line of questioning. I was positive that the piano would not be in my future!

Now, with nearly 60 years more of lived experience, I *wish* I had heeded Mr. Willey's words. How wonderful would it be to have the extraordinary talent to light up a room by being able to sit at the piano and play! In fact, piano players have been described as “quiet, intelligent, inquisitive and analytical.” Oh, if that were my case!

Truth be told, tempered by the reality of my musical inadequacy, over the years, I have hidden behind the podium to shelter myself from Mr. Willey's admonishment.

But, in this place, along with Provost Flotte for the seventeenth time, I want you to know what a privilege it is to welcome you to the start of another academic year and to welcome those who have been so generous to our beloved medical school.

Observing those with musical ability, like Beethoven, or the talented musicians from the Seven Hills Symphony who join us today, we recognize that the crescendo of an orchestra,

under the direction of a maestro conductor, can bring a symphony to life and transport an audience to another world.

In *our* universe, as the PI convenes the lab team to structure an experiment; as a cardiologist completes a Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement; or a surgeon guides the operating room team; each, in their own right, acts as a conductor, leading so many who possess individual talents, that when combined, assure that the hum of the laboratory or procedure room moves in unison, with orchestral magnificence, all to benefit those for whom it is our privilege to help and care.

Such feats, be they in the lab or clinical setting, are not achieved solely by one exceptional individual. Truly, it takes the talents of a team, working collaboratively, towards a common goal of advancing to a higher purpose; together!

As we gather for this convocation, a celebration of the beginnings of a new academic year, we are surrounded by the spirit of innovation and the pursuit of excellence. We are reminded of the transformative power of collaboration, which at UMass Chan is not a marriage of convenience, but a purposeful and intentional commitment to a greater good.

It's not just *what* we do here: Training the next generation of physicians, nurses, and scientists or leading groundbreaking research and conducting clinical trials. Working to make our communities healthier. It's *how* we do it. Advancing Together!

Advancing the Talents of our Faculty, Together

Each year, at our Convocation assembly and at the Investiture Ceremony that follows, together, we take a moment to celebrate the accomplishments of a most talented faculty who are the heart and soul of UMass Chan.

As teaching, the centerpiece of our professional efforts, sits in the first chair throughout the faculty, it is appropriate that we begin this year's medal presentation with the Distinguished Medal for Teaching.

Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Teaching

An educator who has been described as “approachable, compassionate, dedicated, emulated, exceptional, instinctive, inspiring, sought-after,” and who is an “unfailingly patient, enthusiastic and passionate teacher” with a “gift for ‘seeing’ everyone in the room, acknowledging their importance and engaging them,” it is a privilege to present this year's medal for distinguished teaching to Dr. Susan Zweizig.

Dr. Zweizig, for more than two decades you have made a major impact on the education of medical students, residents, fellows, and faculty. Your record of academic innovation and reinvigoration stands apart; as a leader of the Reproductive Medicine Block, you revised the course and curriculum multiple times to meet current knowledge and our students' needs. It is said that you have been able to “transform the otherwise

indecipherable hormones, body parts and tumor markers into a riveting series of lectures ... on the reproductive system.” Further, you were the developer of the Patient Safety/Medical Error interstitial course and have become a major supporter of interprofessional educational efforts.

For your specialty society, the Society for Gynecologic Oncology, you have demonstrated meritorious service as a dedicated member of the Education Committee and were especially engaged throughout the pandemic as an innovator of curriculum that could serve not only members of your specialty, but also, physicians throughout the wide spectrum of specialties.

You have received numerous awards and accolades for your teaching in the classroom and in the operating room, but it is the inspiration that you have brought to your learners that is most notable. Those learners believe that “you have maintained a perfect balance between prioritization of the patient and engagement as an educator, while delivering instruction to learners at all levels, even in critical moments.” In fact, it is said that your learners, to this day, say, “Do the Zweizig!” or exclaim, “Z says always restore normal anatomy!”

“Your presence commands the room;” “you are a quintessential professional medical educator, but [these talents] are inseparable from [your] humanity;” as with “eloquence and compassion,” and as a most proficient educator, you have “the ability to inspire the youngest of students and the most senior of [colleagues].” One who commented on your nomination noted that “miraculously,” you have been able to “guide the hands of your learners with your voice.” Yours is a “shining example of a dedicated professional who besides being an outstanding clinician, surgeon, and researcher, has consistently worked to improve the educational opportunities for all learners at many different levels of experience;” such that learners feel “valued in [your] presence.”

Dr. Zweizig, as the recipient of this year’s medal for distinguished teaching, I invite you to present the 2024 Last Lecture, a celebration of teaching where all of us can benefit from your commitment to teaching, as we become your learners. So, too, you shall receive the Manning Prize, a \$10,000 prize established by Donna and former UMass Board Chair and current Chair of the UMass Foundation, Robert Manning. These are fitting recognitions for one who has been committed to teaching throughout a most illustrious career.

It is a privilege to present you with this year’s Chancellor’s Medal for Distinguished Teaching.

Congratulations!

[Musical Interlude]

Chancellor’s Medal for Distinguished Scholarship

At an institution that is replete with superb and committed scientists, it is a special privilege each year to recognize an outstanding investigator by bestowing the Chancellor’s Medal for Distinguished Scholarship.

The research accomplishments of our faculty are cited across the globe. As a medical school, we have been most fortunate to recruit exceptional scientists and clinical investigators to create a research enterprise that is known for its collaboration, collegiality, and groundbreaking innovation. Each year, we recognize from amongst our great faculty, one member whose research accomplishments bring distinction to our institution.

This year's recipient has been described as "committed," "innovative," "engaging," "a leading expert, of international standing," and as a "model scientific citizen of the world!" To know and respect such an outstanding colleague is a gift many of us at UMass Chan appreciate. Therefore, it is a wonderful privilege to present this year's Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Scholarship to Dr. Douglas Golenbock.

Dr. Golenbock, yours is a record of extraordinary scientific accomplishment. In fact, in the field of innate immunity, you are known as the "consummate clinician/scientist ... who [is unraveling] the immunologic basis for inflammation in sepsis, malaria, ... gout and Alzheimer's Disease." With such recognition, across such a span of human illness that infects or affects so many, it is no surprise that you are an author on more than three hundred publications with more than 81,000 citations from that body of work!

As one of "the world's most prominent investigators in the Toll-like receptor field," your work has helped to "dissect the role of the individual components of the Lipopolysaccharide (LPS) signaling complex." Your "laboratory provided the first direct experimental evidence for the existence of a bona fide signaling receptor for LPS." "Although TLR4 was later identified as the "LPS receptor," [your] group is responsible for showing that a second non-membrane spanning protein, myeloid differentiation-2 (MD-2), interacts with the extracellular domain of TLR4 and is absolutely essential for TLR4 signal induction."

Your science has led to the understanding that "differential use of adapter proteins by distinct TLRs define the signaling pathways that are activated by distinct human pathways." More recently, you have "identified the molecular mechanisms driving the symptoms of human malaria," and this led to a clearer understanding of "sterile inflammation" and its impact in disease processes such as gout. Similarly, "the role of the NLRP3 inflammasome as a sensor of Amyloid-beta, a protein that is essential to the tissue damage [found] in Alzheimer's disease...and could provide a novel approach to limiting the destruction caused" by this disease, was a discovery made in your laboratory with collaboration across our institution.

Even more impressive is that you have elucidated such elegant science while leading a successful clinical division of Infectious Diseases; been a mentor to so many; brought the scientific world together with your leadership of the Toll-like Receptor conferences; and have broadened our students' interest in infectious diseases seen throughout the world, through your sponsorship of electives and research experiences throughout South America.

Doug, as the recipient of this year's medal for distinguished scholarship, I invite you to present this year's plenary lecture at our upcoming research retreat. This is most fitting recognition for one who has made such a major impact on science and our community.

It is a privilege to present you with this year's Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Scholarship.

Congratulations!

[Musical Interlude]

Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Clinical Excellence

Each year, it is a wonderful privilege to present a medal to a clinician who has made a lasting impact on the lives of their patients. It is heartwarming, always, to read the words of a dedicated clinician's patients as they recount the many ways their caregiver has cared for and about them.

This year's recipient has been heralded as having "unparalleled clinical expertise," is "beloved by ...patients; cherished by ...mentees; and greatly respected by ...colleagues." Known as a "thought leader... a consummate collaborative partner ... and one who is able to articulate strength, grace and support," it is indeed a pleasure to present this year's Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Clinical Excellence to Dr. Kathryn Edmiston.

Dr. Edmiston, yours has been a most distinguished career in service to women with breast cancer. As a co-founder of the comprehensive, team-based approach for those who come for care when confronted with this challenging diagnosis, you have been a "consummate collaborative partner," striving to assure that "the patient's interests [are] always at the forefront of [your] goals." In fact, you have been called the "linchpin of success" of these patient-centered efforts!

One who advocated for your selection commented that you are "the matriarch of medical oncology" at our academic health sciences center, a physician who has a "mastery of her craft" and who "reacts calmly, decisively, and according to genuine therapeutic alliance with each patient."

Patients described you as a "rock of support, clinical expertise, wisdom, and compassion in [their] long journey" with breast cancer; noting that you have done so with "clinical brilliance and a deep reservoir of compassion." They have gone on to say that you "epitomize what every patient wants in their doctor: compassion; great and extensive expertise; genuine care; and respect; – in sum, a physician who explains things in understandable terms and who really listens to what the patient has to say." In fact, the ability to listen and to hear what the patient is saying is described as "one of your best traits."

As one who must "tell it like it is," patients have always "admired [your] ability to make [each patient] feel as if they were [your] only patient," even though they knew that wasn't true. Your patients have benefited from "feeling confident that [they] are in the most expert of hands...[your] hands!" Indeed, your patients believe, you are "the complete physician!" You "understand that we cannot continue to advance in cancer care without a strong clinical research platform and [most] importantly, we cannot continue to provide for the high quality of care for our patients without the help of the community!"

Kathryn, I invite you to lead the first-year class in the recitation of the Oath of Maimonides at the 2024 White Coat Ceremony for the newest of our medical school learners, a fitting recognition for one who has cared for so many with such compassion, empathy and concern throughout a career of true distinction.

It is a privilege to present you with this year's Chancellors Medal for Distinguished Clinical Excellence.

Congratulations!

[Musical Interlude]

Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Service

Finally, each year, one individual, from amongst so many committed members of our community, is recognized for a career-long dedication to our institution and their profession. The medal for distinguished service celebrates extraordinary commitment; it conveys sincere appreciation for notable, career-long contributions; and it respects one among us who is singular in their dedication to our medical school.

This year's recipient is known as "outstanding and [an] exemplar...who integrates the worlds of academia, practice and scholarship;" "a revered professional role model;" "a champion of interprofessional education and collaboration;" and a "wonderful mentor." Now, we honor one who demonstrates "passions for patient advocacy [and] public service," and who constantly emulates the "epitome of professionalism and grace," while impacting the lives and careers of thousands by "bringing service to life," over many years. It gives me great pleasure to present this year's Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Service to Dr. Jill Terrien!

Dr. Terrien, for more than two decades you have served our institution, its learners and those most vulnerable among us. Your "passion to increase workforce diversity and inclusion, decrease health disparities, eliminate health inequities, and improve health outcomes has impacted multiple academic and community entities while inspiring hundreds of students and faculty to share in [your] service-mindedness!"

You have become known as the "consummate team player, who embraces and values the synergy created through interprofessional collaboration." In fact, during the pandemic, you were most influential in assuring the success of the UMass Chan Vaccine Corps, as thousands in our medical school community came together to assure that all in our local communities had access to vaccine. Furthermore, you have been instrumental, here at home and across the nation, as you worked together with colleagues to create the Opioid Safety Training Initiative, an outstanding exemplar of interprofessional commitment and training of health care providers so that they could serve those most in need.

You are "an influential nursing leader and patient advocate." You are most well-known for your service to the Greater Worcester community and have modeled your personal commitment through the creation of "team-based, interprofessional, community-engaged experiences" for our learners, with a focus on "homelessness, substance abuse

disorder and geriatric care.” Your collegiality has brought “credibility and influence on clinical practice,” all the while inspiring those of us to follow your example, as you “are a champion for everyone whose path [you] cross.”

Jill, I would like to invite you to carry the mace at all university functions throughout this next academic year. This recognition is most fitting for one who has been such an outstanding collaborator and leader for our institution over your many years of service.

It is a distinct and special privilege to honor one who has meant so much to our medical school community with this year’s Chancellor’s Medal for Distinguished Service.

Congratulations!

[Musical Interlude]

Advancing Our Community Together

Like an accomplished orchestra, ours is a singularly special institution; and we know it! We have Nobel Prize, Breakthrough Prize and Gruber Prize recipients and many members of prestigious national and international academies among our faculty; we attract outstanding learners, 1,400 strong and growing; we have a most committed staff of more than 6,000 people; we are part of a great university system; we have branch campuses in Springfield and Burlington and most committed clinical affiliates, more than 100 strong. In 2024, we shall be opening an incredible new research and education building, uniting research efforts along our campus green.

Institutions have their moments, and this is ours!

Over this past year, we have reflected upon what makes this institution so special. We sought the opinions of many, both within and outside of the medical school. Many of you here assembled, participated in this colloquy.

Repeatedly, we were told that what makes this medical school so unique, indeed what has made us a magnet for the best minds in academic medicine, is our deep and abiding commitment to collaboration.

Together. Community. Shared purpose. Progressive. Innovative.

Those are just some of the words that we heard, repeatedly.

In the world of classical music, where every instrument has its own role to play, each adding its unique influence, the contribution of many individuals brings unity of purpose to the composition.

[Musical Interlude]

Similarly, within our institution, the diverse array of minds, talents, and perspectives, all come together in harmony, to become the very foundation of our success. Here, collaboration matters. It is not a mere idealistic notion, nor is it a weakness. On the

contrary, we see it as a superpower that always has – and continues to - set us apart. Collaboration drives innovation, discoveries, and excellence. By embracing it, we ensure that each member of our community is given the opportunity to shine; to contribute their unique expertise and passion to improve health care; make a difference in the lives of those within our communities; indeed, change the course of history of disease.

Through collaboration, we tap into the power of serendipity, where chance encounters and unexpected connections lead to groundbreaking discoveries and novel approaches to patient care.

As we grow. As we deepen scientific understanding. And as we make people healthier, we do so with the uncommon collaboration and teamwork, for which UMass Chan has come to be known.

Unquestionably, you have told us collaboration is our hallmark; our values construct that sets us apart.

We call this Advancing Together!

For half a century we have developed this very special collaborative culture where our faculty, learners and staff can thrive. As we look to the future, we know we must hold onto this very special trait because we are just getting started in defining and advancing the next fifty years of the academic health sciences.

Our profile around the world is growing. UMass Chan is proudly stepping up. Globally, people are seeing that we are driving change, with purpose, in the worlds of medicine, science, and nursing.

More and more, faculty and learners who could advance their careers *anywhere* are choosing to come here, where they can partner, grow, discover and, yes, dream; together with some of the brightest minds in the world.

In the years ahead we will be moving forward boldly and enthusiastically to spread the word about what Advancing Together means: to us; to our future learners and colleagues; to our lawmakers and advocates; to grant makers; to our donors; and to the broader world.

[Musical Interlude]

Advancing Philanthropy Together

A symphony of support, if you will, is necessary to ensure that our medical school continues to have the resources to support plans for our ambitious future growth. I am pleased to announce that today, we begin the public phase of *Advancing Together: The Campaign for UMass Chan Medical School*. The silent phase of this comprehensive campaign began on July 1, 2019. Four years in, I am pleased to announce that we have raised over \$350 million towards our goal of \$500 million, a 70 percent achievement, with the anticipated completion date of the campaign being June 30, 2026.

Thanks to the efforts of everyone in this room, together with our Advancement staff, we can share in the joy of this accomplishment. To those of you who have been so generous to our institution, particularly the Morningside Foundation and Dr. Gerald Chan and the members of his family, please know of our heartfelt appreciation for the confidence in us that you demonstrate with such generosity.

Advancing philanthropy together is the very essence of progress. It propels us to offer dynamic curricula, create new discoveries, generate novel treatments, and promote innovation to revolutionize the health care landscape.

Throughout the campaign, we will continue to identify support for research and discovery; for faculty excellence; for teaching and learning; for scholarships; and for initiatives assuring equity and community health. By fostering an environment that encourages interdisciplinary partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and open dialogue, we create a symphony of minds, each playing their part to amplify our impact and create a better future for all.

[Musical Interlude]

Together, we can achieve the extraordinary, pushing the boundaries of what is possible and paving the way for a healthier, brighter future. Together, we can create a splendid symphony replete with innovation, compassion and excellence that resonates far beyond the walls of our institution.

Advancing the Future of Academic Medicine Together

This past year, we celebrated our 50th commencement, a milestone accomplishment for our relatively young medical school community, made even more special by the presence of Katie Couric as our keynote speaker. From those first 16 graduates who learned at the furthest corner of our campus, in the modest confines of the Shaw Building, to our current day class of 200 in medicine and many more in the ranks of nursing and graduate school learners, our alumni have now swelled to 7,400 and are bringing essential health care services and scientific knowhow throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

Into the future, we shall advance the fields of science, nursing and medicine as our people work tirelessly to assure that the mission of this medical school is advanced. For sure, we will continue to fulfill a founding mission of this school and Advance primary care together!

We shall continue to recruit faculty, staff, and learners from among the best in the world. We will broaden our capabilities and expand to our second regional campus in Burlington as the new Lead at Lahey educational track gets underway one year from now. We continue to see more qualified applicants than ever before because talented learners understand how their potential can be realized by becoming members of this vibrant academic community.

Beyond our campus, surrounding communities are healthier because of our involvement and commitment to their needs. I am particularly encouraged by our efforts to address and reduce health care inequities and disparities. Further, our recruitment of learners and faculty from diverse backgrounds is a signature accomplishment of the past few years because we know it is essential that our patients see their faces reflected in the faces of our faculty and learners.

Advancing the UMass Chan Vision Together

It is a most exciting time to be part of the UMass Chan community.

The concept of “Advancing Together” is particularly relevant in *our* times, as academic medicine faces increasingly complex and interconnected challenges. The integration of technology; emerging diseases; the continued strain on financial resources to provide care for all who need it; the pressures on our people to provide more care with diminishing resources; and the evolving needs of diverse patient populations; necessitate a collaborative approach that transcends individual disciplines.

We recognize the imperative which makes our shared values of collegiality and collaboration among our diverse community more relevant. By fostering an environment where differing perspectives are valued and celebrated, expertise is shared, and innovation is encouraged, UMass Chan Medical School embodies the idea of “Advancing diversity and equity together” in a unique and transformative manner.

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So many years later, I am not sure what Mr. Willey would think about the fact that I never became a musician. Though I wish I had been musically blessed, frankly, I did not make the time that could have been devoted, under his tutelage, to practicing an instrument. The papers had to be delivered and I needed every other moment I could muster to keep my math and science grades where they needed to be!

For those of you who have been able to do both, you have my utmost admiration.

But, if Mr. Willey were still alive, I would tell him that it has been the privilege of a lifetime to stand at this podium and to witness the talent and generosity of those assembled here. There are scientists who are committed to improving and bringing hope to the human condition. There are nurses who are practicing with innate intellectual ability at the top of their degree and offer care, compassion and leadership that will define the future of the nursing profession. There are physicians who know the importance of lifelong learning and how essential it is that they take the moments given to them to hold the hands of their patients with esteem.

Earlier today, we heard of four exceptional soloists, if you will. Could each of us learn from Dr. Susan Zweizig and redouble the commitment to our learners as we steward their education? Could we follow the example of Dr. Douglas Golenbock and combine scientific expertise and leadership to assure that disease and suffering are ameliorated? Could we

emulate the thoughtful and compassionate patient-centered care that has been the hallmark of Dr. Kathryn Edmiston's career? Could we lead with Dr. Jill Terrien's talent and commitment, and make our communities better by having done so?

The music of those four soloists, when combined into a quartet, is surely something to behold.

[Musical Interlude]

At UMass Chan Medical School we are all in for Massachusetts and a place where uncommon collaborations drive new knowledge and inspire caregivers who put *others* first. We offer hope for those with ALS, Cancer, HIV, Diabetes, and countless rare diseases.

We continue to be ranked a top place to work, and perennially, are recognized as one of the best in the nation for primary care education. This very special Medical School has made a difference in the lives of more people than we could ever know.

And the best part of all is that we are just getting started. Many great minds. One UMass Chan.

We are Advancing Together!

[Musical Interlude]