

VITAL SIGNS



THE NEWSLETTER OF MCGILL UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

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MCGILL LIFE SCIENCES INFLAMMATION AND CANCER PROGRAM

Dr. Maya Saleh, Associate Professor, Critical Care Division

It is an exciting time for inflammation and immunology research. With the sequencing of the human genome and the advent of new genetic tools and “omics” technologies, we are addressing research questions at an unprecedented rate. The recent revolution in the innate immunity field and improved understanding of inflammatory disease pathogenesis has led to instances of successful translation of fundamental discoveries into the clinic, re-evaluation of established therapies and renewed efforts to rationally design vaccines.

One of the large questions in immunology is how the organism discriminates between self and non-self or altered-self; i.e. how the immune system

“senses” the presence of an invading microorganism, tissue injury, organ malfunction or cellular transformation. A breakthrough came with the discovery of a set of receptors of the innate immune system, termed “pattern-recognition receptors” that fulfill this task. These receptors sense specific microbial motifs or endogenous “danger” signals and elicit the induction of inflammation, often through large complexes known as “inflammasomes”, as well as prime adaptive immunity to establish immunological memory. The identification of cognate ligands of these receptors in physiological and pathological contexts and determination of their effector mechanisms in infectious and sterile-inflammatory diseases have set the stage for the development of therapeutics to cure these diseases. Indeed, therapeutic success has been recently achieved with the use of Anakinra, an Interleukin (IL)-1 receptor antagonist, in the treatment of patients suffering from hereditary periodic fever syndromes. These diseases are caused by inflammasome hyperactivation and excessive production of IL-1. Clinical trials with Anakinra are now underway for other inflammatory diseases with inflammasome involvement including gout, arthritis and type 2 diabetes.

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EDITORIAL

*Dr. David Eidelman
Chair, Department of
Medicine*

LIFE GOES ON

There is a famous proverb which is also considered a serious curse, "May you live in interesting times". Well, it's hard to think of a time in the history of the McGill Department of Medicine that was more interesting than this one. For example, in the next few months we will change the administration of the Faculty of Medicine and the leadership of the MUHC. Moreover, Dr. Michel Bureau will retire after having served 10 years as Director-General of Health Services and Academic Medicine at the MSSS. At the same time, we are getting ready for negotiations between FMRQ and the government, we face severe budgetary problems in the hospital and the Faculty of Medicine, to say nothing of ER overcrowding.

It's more than enough to discourage anyone!

We offer this issue of the Newsletter as a way to soothe the discomfort of our current situation. You only have to glance at the extraordinary list of prizes, honours and accomplishments displayed in this issue to see that despite our many "crises", the Department of Medicine is not only in good shape, it flourishes!

As to the many problems of the day, I would remind you of another proverb, "This too shall pass". We have a great Department that will continue to excel long after all of these issues have been forgotten.

Best wishes for a warm, sunny and healthy summer.

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Our research program has contributed to the emergence of the inflammasome field and has implicated the inflammasome in a number of infectious diseases and sepsis. We are currently focused on the role of innate immunity in inflammatory bowel disease and cancer. We are specifically interested in the role of the crosstalk between the innate immune system and the microbiota in intestinal homeostasis, immune tolerance, colitis and colorectal cancer. It is now well established that chronic inflammation that is driven by extrinsic factors promotes several types of cancer, including gastrointestinal cancers but also cancers not typically associated with chronic inflammatory diseases, such as breast cancer. It is clear that inflammation is a double-edged sword in cancer: it mediates tumor progression and dissemination while activating immunity against the tumor. However, it is unclear what are the "initiating" events of immune cell engagement in cancer. We are exploring how innate immunity is triggered in cancer both in the intestine as well as in sterile tissues such as the breast and what are the "danger" signals produced by cancer cells that are sensed by innate immunity effectors. We have undertaken systems biology approaches including proteomics and large-scale genome-wide RNA interference screens, as well as forward genetics random mutagenesis screens in collaborations with investigators at the Complex Traits Group, including Dr. Silvia Vidal and Dr. Philippe Gros, to tackle our questions, with the hope that our endeavors will have a direct impact on patients suffering from cancer and chronic inflammatory diseases.



INTERNAL MEDICINE RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM

Dr. Thomas Maniatis, Assistant Professor and Program Director

The Internal Medicine Residency Training Program is the second largest residency Program at McGill, and forms the backbone of many of the Department of Medicine's clinical, teaching, and research activities. With this in mind, the Training Program's success is critical to the success of the entire Department of Medicine. Given the many changes in the Training Program over the last few years, I am very pleased to give the members of the Department a brief status update on the Training Program.

In the not-so-recent past, McGill's Training Program involved a predominant focus on inpatient activities spread across a small core of teaching hospitals in Montreal. Recognizing the changing nature of health-care in the 21st century and the importance of training physicians for both university-based and community practice, McGill's teaching network has expanded to include sites spread throughout the province. The Training Program has been sending residents to rural sites since 2006. These rotations are called CHIME (Community Hospital Internal Medicine Experiences). Residents must complete 3 such rotations before the end of their 3rd year of residency. This initiative has resulted in a dramatic increase in resident interest in General Internal Medicine as a career path. As you can imagine, this has generated a lot of attention across Canada, as training programs in other provinces have been struggling with how to promote generalism.

The Training Program has been highly innovative in terms of its expanding program-wide half-days, especially with regards to the use of simulation in residency education. With the opening of the Arnold and Blema Steinberg Medical Simulation Centre in 2006, the Training Program was one of the first to take advantage of this novel form of education.

Starting with sessions on ethics and communication skills and moving on to procedural skills, the Training Program has embraced the simulation paradigm in order to optimize resident education and improve patient safety. Other more recent sessions revolve around how to teach advocacy skills, one of the most challenging of the CanMEDS roles, as well as assessing physical exam and clinical reasoning skills with an annual OSCE. Finally, teamwork in critical situations has been a focus of the sessions this past year with the Training Program's Crisis Resource Management sessions.

Of course, all of these sessions have benefited from the ongoing support from faculty members of the Department as supervisors of these sessions. The Training Program would like to thank those members of the Department who have contributed their time and expertise. We would also like to encourage those who haven't to volunteer to help. Feedback from Faculty and Residents is overwhelmingly positive, and data gathered shows that these sessions are key to the Training Program's ongoing status as a leader in medical education in Canada.

MCGILL CORE GENERAL INTERNAL MEDICINE TRAINING PROGRAM AWARDS

Congratulations to the Residents who were recognized at the MUHC Departmental Annual Dinner on June 1st !

Department of Medicine Award

For Research by a Core Internal Medicine Resident

- **Dr. Ivan Litvinov**

The Harold Frank Prize

For Excellence in a Clinical Case Presentation (Winner of the Clinical Vignettes evening on Feb. 22, 2011)

- **Dr. Bertrand Routy**

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(Continued from page 3 / Internal Medicine Training Program)

The Training Program has taken a fundamental step in line with the patient safety movement in its adoption of a “night float” system. This transition away from 24-hour call has been a huge endeavour for the Training Program, but has been made a success thanks to ongoing support from both attending staff and residents. Feedback from both has been extremely favourable, with significant positive effects on the learning environments on our Clinical Teaching Units across all sites. The innovative nature of all of these changes is clear: other universities have invited the leadership of the Training Program to present on our experience with these changes. The Internal Medicine Residency Training Program is proud to be one of the educational innovators in Canada. You may be aware that all postgraduate training programs are being accredited in the spring of 2012. Accreditation will be a great opportunity to show off our accomplishments and to be proud of what we’ve achieved!!



THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

By Dr. James Martin

The McGill Department of Medicine Research Symposium was held on Friday, May 27th in the Ballroom of the Faculty Club. The event was well attended, attendees numbering 70. There were ten outstanding talks spanning basic concepts of cell biology to health services research. The audience was regaled with the molecular mechanisms of cell polarity (**Dr. Elena Torban**), the clinical genomics of endocrine disorders (**Dr. Brent Richards**), the Canadian experience with osteoporosis (**Dr. David Goltzman**), the future promise from a COPD cohort (**Dr. Jean Bourbeau**), the aryl hydrocarbon receptor in the development of COPD (**Dr. Carolyn Baglole**), the surprising vitamin deficiencies arising in hospitalized patients (**Dr. John Hoffer**), muscle protein synthesis in older subjects (**Dr. José Morais**), lymphoma in inflammatory bowel disease (**Dr. Waqqas Afif**), the problems of co-infection with HIV and hepatitis virus (**Dr. Marina Klein**) and anticoagulants and cancer risk (**Dr. Vicky Tagalakakis**). The keynote speaker was **Dr. Tom Hudson**, President and Scientific Director of the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research. Tom gave an excellent lecture on advances in genomics related to cancer and the contribution of these studies to the identification of targets for treatment. He painted a convincing picture of the application of personalized medicine to treat cancer sufferers. Delivered in his usual unassuming style, Tom rendered limpid the complexities of modern genomic technologies. One could not have found a better way to pass a wet Friday afternoon. We are looking forward to next year's event.

PROMOTIONS

Congratulations to our Faculty members for their achievements !

FULL PROFESSOR

Dr. Silvia Vidal, a member of the Centre for the Study of Host Resistance, is internationally recognized for her work on the genetic basis and molecular pathogenesis of the host response to infection with viruses.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSORS

Dr. Sasha Bernatsky is a clinical epidemiologist in the Division of Rheumatology based at the MGH whose research focuses on outcomes in the rheumatic diseases, including morbidity, mortality, and their economic impact.

Dr. Nandini Dendukuri: The Director of the Technology Assessment Unit of the MUHC, Dr. Dendukuri's research interests lie in the area of evaluating diagnostic tests in the absence of a gold standard, meta-analysis of diagnostic test properties and Bayesian estimation of small proportions.

Dr. Andrew Hirsch: Based at the JGH, Dr. Hirsch is a member of the Division of Respiratory Medicine whose principal academic interest is pulmonary hypertension and thromboembolic disease.

Dr. Stéphanie Lehoux: Based at the LDI, Dr. Lehoux holds the Canada Research Chair in Cardiovascular Physiology and is investigating the fundamental biology of major cardiovascular diseases including hypertension and atherosclerosis.

Dr. Chen Liang is based at the Lady Davis Institute and his research is aimed at elucidating the molecular events that take place during the assembly process of human immunodeficiency virus type 1 (HIV-1).

Dr. Christian Rocheleau's lab at the Royal Victoria Hospital uses the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans*, as a genetic model organism, to study the molecular and cellular functions of genes implicated in human disease.

Dr. Maya Saleh is a member of the Critical Care Division whose lab is in the Complex Traits Group, and her research group investigates innate immunity, inflammation and cell death mechanisms in host defense to pathogens and cancer.

Dr. Igal Sebag is a JGH based member of the Division of Cardiology whose work is focused on clinical and research applications of advanced techniques echocardiography.

Dr. Maida Sewitch, working at the MGH and St. Mary's, Dr. Sewitch is an epidemiologist who studies adherence to guidelines, colorectal cancer screening, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and the doctor-patient relationship.

Dr. Michael Tamilia: An endocrinologist whose research centers on parathyroid disorders, thyroid tumors and thyroid cancer, Dr. Michael Tamilia is Chief of the Thyroid Clinic at the Jewish General Hospital.

Dr. Marc Tischkowitz is a clinician-scientist in the Departments of Medicine, Human Genetics and Oncology based at the JGH whose work focuses on the molecular genetics of breast cancer and other common cancers.

TENURE

Congratulations to our Faculty members who have been awarded tenure !

- **Dr. Sasha Bernatsky**
- **Dr. Stéphanie Lehoux**
- **Dr. Chen Liang**
- **Dr. Christian Rocheleau**
- **Dr. Maya Saleh**
- **Dr. Maida Sewitch**
- **Dr. Marc Tischkowitz**

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE AWARDS

Congratulations to this year's recipients !

MUHC Departmental Annual Dinner -
Wednesday, June 1, 2011.

Physician-in-Chief Award

For highly distinguished service to the MUHC
Department

- **Ms. Maureen Dowd**

Department of Medicine Physicianship Award

Exemplary Physician

- **Dr. David Hornstein**

Outreach Award

- **Dr. David Morris**

Department of Medicine Award

For Innovation in Clinical Care or Quality

- **Dr. Patrick Willemot**

Department of Medicine Award

For Research by a Subspecialty Resident

- **Dr. Mamatha Bhat**

Department of Medicine Staff Research Award

- **Dr. Richard Menzies**

The Louis G. Johnson Award

For excellence in Teaching by a Medical Resident
– selected by RVH Residents

- **Dr. Amal Bessissow**

The Lorne E. Cassidy Teaching Award

For Excellence in Teaching by a Medical Resident
– selected by MGH Residents

- **Dr. Rayan Kaedbey**

The Douglas G. Kinnear Award

Outstanding Clinician-Teacher at the MUHC

- **Dr. David Dawson**

The W.H. Philip Hill Award

Outstanding Clinician-Teacher at the MUHC

- **Dr. Linda Snell**

JEWISH GENERAL HOSPITAL

Department of Medicine Staff and Residents Year
-End Party, Thursday June 2, 2011.

Dave Feder Award

To the resident who practices medicine with most
compassion and sensitivity, displays kindness,
respect and camaraderie towards colleagues and
educators and carries a positive outlook enabling
him/her to enjoy a meaningful balanced life
beyond his/her profession.

- **Dr. Amjad Al Rajhi**

Sheldon Zelman Memorial Award

For academic excellence and outstanding
contribution to patient care.

- **Dr. Pernilla D'Souza**

Dr. Allen Spanier Internal Medicine Award

To the resident who exhibits an enduring passion
for the practice of medicine through the
enjoyment of solving the challenges of patient
care and sharing the solutions with others, while
maintaining a high level of professionalism, which
best embodies the unique legacy of Dr. Spanier.

- **Dr. Michael Palumbo**

Teacher of the Year voted by the residents

- **Dr. Sharon Nessim**

Medical Resident Research Award

To the medical resident who has achieved
excellence with regard to intellectual curiosity,
initiative, originality and accomplishment in
medical research performed during residency.

- **Dr. Bennett Haynen**

APPOINTMENTS and NEW CHALLENGES

Dr. Linda Moreau has been appointed as the Director of the McGill Division of Dermatology and as Chief of the MUHC Division of Dermatology, retroactive to April 1, 2011 for an initial 5-year term. Dr. Moreau obtained her M.D. from McGill University and completed training in dermatology and contact dermatitis at McGill. She has held the position of Assistant Professor in our Department since 2005 and will continue to serve as the Program Director for the McGill Dermatology Residency Training Program until such time as a successor for that position is found. Dr. Moreau succeeds **Dr. Denis Sasseville**, who served with great distinction as Director of the Division of Dermatology. The Department is in his debt for his many years of dedication and hard work. We would like to thank Dr. Sasseville and wish him great success in his future endeavours as well as extending warm wishes to Dr. Moreau as we welcome her into her new role as Director of the Division.

Dr. Josée Verdon has been appointed to the newly created position of Site Director for the Core Internal Medicine Training Program at the Royal Victoria Hospital, effective April 1, 2011. A member of the Geriatrics Division, Dr. Verdon comes to this position with a very rich background of clinical care, teaching and clinical research experience. Dr. Verdon is a graduate of the Université de Montréal who trained in Internal Medicine at McMaster and in Geriatrics at the University of Toronto. She is known as an outstanding teacher and clinician. She will add greatly to the strength of the core training program. **Ms. Carol Séguin** will be assisting Dr. Verdon in the newly created administrative position of Student Affairs Coordinator. We wish them both every success in their respective new positions.

Dr. Thomas Maniatis, who for many years has played the dual role of RVH and McGill Training Program Director, will now be able to focus his energies at the McGill level alone. The Department owes a debt of thanks to Dr. Maniatis, who did an exceptional job leading the training program at the RVH with imagination, vision and commitment. We also wish to acknowledge the dedication of **Ms. Maureen Dowd**, who for many years now, has played a complementary dual role as Administrator for the McGill and RVH site-based training program. The Department is very fortunate that Ms. Dowd will continue to serve as overall administrator of the McGill program, working closely with Dr. Maniatis, the Site Directors and Administrators.

The Center for Medical Education has appointed **Dr. Colin Chalk** to the position of Director of Curriculum Development, Fundamentals of Clinical Medicine. The goal of this portfolio is to design a curriculum for the first year and a half of the MDCM curriculum, following the principles laid out by the Faculty of Medicine Education Design Group and the numerous others who were involved as part of Dean Levin's *Year of Thinking Dangerously*.

SALARY AWARDS

CIHR New Investigator

- **Dr. Maziar Divangahi**
- **Dr. Robert Sladek**

FRSQ Chercheur Boursier - Junior 2

- **Dr. Stéphanie Chevalier**
- **Dr. Maya Saleh**
- **Dr. Maida Sewitch**
- **Dr. Robert Sladek**

FRSQ Chercheur Boursier - Junior 1

- **Dr. Maziar Divangahi**

FRSQ Chercheur Boursier Clinicien - Junior 2

- **Dr. Bruno Gagnon**
- **Dr. Chantal Séguin**
- **Dr. Marc Tischkowitz**

FRSQ Chercheur Boursier Clinicien - Junior 1

- **Dr. Nathalie Johnson**
- **Dr. Suzanne Morin**

CRC - TIER 2

Dr. Nathalie Johnson

JAMES MCGILL AWARD

Dr. Erwin Schurr (renewal)

WILLIAM DAWSON SCHOLAR

Dr. Maya Saleh

HONOURS



Dr. Margaret (Margot) Becklake, Professor Emerita, a respiratory physician and clinical epidemiologist based at the Montreal Chest

Institute, has been named **Grande officière de l'Ordre national du Québec** for her pioneering work in respiratory medicine and epidemiology. Internationally recognized for her research on the occupational and environmental determinants of lung disease for more than 55 years, Dr. Becklake has also served as teacher, mentor and role model for generations of aspiring respirologists.



Dr. J.A. Peter Paré, Professor Emeritus, received the **Distinguished Achievement Award** from the **American Thoracic Society**. This award is given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to fighting respiratory disease through research, education, patient care and advocacy. Dr. Paré influenced two generations of respiratory specialists at McGill and, at age 94, remains the model for teaching with a humorous, gentle and always encouraging style.



On June 16, 2011, **Dr. Michelle Elizov**, Assistant Professor in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Site Director of the McGill Core Internal Medicine Residency Training Program at the JGH, will be presented with the **Faculty Honour for Educational Excellence Award**

in recognition of her outstanding contributions to teaching in the Faculty of Medicine.



Assistant Professor **Dr. George Ghattas** and the RVH Endoscopy Unit have received the CAG Quality Endoscopy Award in recognition for their work and dedication in the CAG Quality Program Endoscopy (QP-E).

This award embodies the concept of continual quality improvement and represents an ongoing commitment to quality endoscopy, as endorsed by the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology.



Dr. Jacques Genest, Professor, former Director of the Division of Cardiology and Director of the Centre for Innovative Medicine at the MUHC-RI, has been awarded

the **2010 inaugural Margolese National Heart Disorders Prize** by the **UBC Faculty of Medicine**. This prize is bestowed on researchers who have made outstanding contributions to the treatment, amelioration, or cure of heart disorders.



Dr. Qutayba Hamid, Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pathology and Director of the [Meakins-Christie Laboratories](#), has been selected as this year's **Distinguished Lecturer in Respiratory Sciences** by the **CIHR's Institute of Circulatory and Respiratory Health (ICRH)** and the **Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS)**. This award is given to an outstanding investigator who has conducted the majority of his research in Canada and who has contributed significantly to the advancement of respiratory sciences.



Dr. Ariane Marelli, Associate Professor in the Division of Cardiology, is the recipient of the **2011 Heart Heroes Award** by the **Adult Congenital Heart Association** presented to recipients who have served as national and international

leaders showing sustained commitment to transforming life-long outcomes for those born with congenital heart disease. She was recognized for her groundbreaking work in adult congenital epidemiology, quality improvement, and health informatics helping to lay the foundation on which the future of care for these patients can be built.

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Photo: FMSQ



Dr. Lucy Opatrny, Assistant Professor in the Divisions of General Internal Medicine and Clinical Epidemiology, has been elected to the **Board of Directors of the *Fédération des médecins spécialistes***

du Québec (FMSQ). See [FMSQ Press Release](#).

Dr. Louise Pilote, Professor and Director of the General Internal Medicine Division, is the recipient of the 2011 **Dr. George Fraser Award** for excellence in clinical research in cardiology.



Dr. Michael Rasminsky, Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Neurology and Neurosurgery, has been selected for the Canadian Association of Medical Education 2011 (**CAME**) **Certificate of Merit**.

Dr. Maya Saleh, Associate Professor in the Division of Critical Care, has been selected as the laureate of the **2011 inaugural Maude Abbott Prize**. This prize was established in 2010 by the Faculty of Medicine in order to recognize outstanding women faculty members who excel in education, research or administration with a focus on those at the early stages of their careers.



Dr. Mark Wainberg, Professor in our Division of Allergy and Immunology and Director of the McGill AIDS Center at the LDI-JGH, will be receiving an **Honorary Doctorate from the University of Montréal** at the

graduation exercises of their medical school class on June 20th.

Dr. Mathieu Walker, Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiology and based at St. Mary's, is this year's recipient of the **Osler Award**. This recognition is presented to a professor in the Faculty of Medicine who, in the opinion of the senior medical students, has made the most outstanding contribution to their medical education.



RECRUITMENT

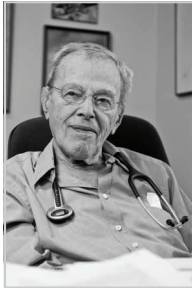
We are pleased to welcome the following new member to our Department:

Dr. Lama Sakr, Assistant Professor to the Respiratory Division and based at the Jewish General Hospital. Dr. Sakr did her pulmonary training at the University of Montréal and subsequently did a year of interventional bronchoscopy training in Marseille, France, followed by a year of a pulmonary oncology fellowship at the MUHC and the Jewish General Hospital. She will be embarking on a Master's in Epidemiology that will start in September of this year. Dr. Sakr brings a wealth of experience in interventional procedures to the Jewish General Hospital, which complements their current expertise in lung cancer.

The Department of Medicine's number of successes is prolific. Although every attempt is made to acknowledge them all at the time we go "to press", some announcements may be delayed. Do not hesitate to contact us to let us know of your successes.

IN MEMORY OF DR. MICHAEL (MICKEY) GOLD (1919-2011)

By: Dr. Ernesto Schiffrin



Dr. Mickey Gold, internist at the Jewish General Hospital for over 61 years, passed away at his home on April 6, 2011 at the age of 91. He had seen his last patient the day before and had only recently taught students for the last time. He will remain an icon for many years to come to numerous patients, students and fellow physicians, admired as a kind, generous, hard working, devoted, eloquent and erudite doctor, teacher and colleague.

Mickey Gold was born in Montreal of immigrant parents who came from Ukraine and Latvia. He spent most of his life in Montreal, where he graduated as a physician from McGill University in 1943, and completed further training later in New York City and in Boston. Mickey joined the JGH in 1950 as an internist and served as Acting Physician-in-Chief, Director of Professional Services, Director of Graduate Education and Director of Undergraduate Medical Education, the latter for 31 years until 2010. He was one of the most dynamic and influential teachers in the history of the Jewish General Hospital. He will always be remembered as a model teacher who was highly regarded by students, and a caring, brilliant and generous physician. Throughout his career, he imparted his knowledge with extraordinary enthusiasm to his many students and colleagues. By the vote of his students he was awarded the Osler Award for Outstanding Teaching of the Faculty of Medicine in 2000 at the age of 80.

Mickey Gold was not only a wonderful teacher and doctor; he was also devoted to his children and grandchildren. He was a fantastic swimmer, at some point candidate to represent Canada in the Olympics, and a daring skier who came down one of the most difficult runs in North America, Corbet's Couloir in Jackson Hole, at the age of 75. While skiing in Stowe, at age 45, he had had a massive heart attack, which he apparently managed with usual cool giving orders to those around him. Until recently, on top of the latest knowledge as he was, he would wonder whether he should be a candidate for some trial on the use of stem cells to improve his cardiovascular performance.

For those of us who had the privilege to interact with him, the passing of Mickey Gold represents a deep loss. We are immensely grateful to him for his contributions to the Department, the JGH and the University and will miss him greatly.

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