



**ROTARY CLUB
OF MIAMI**

*Thomas Brown
McClelland Trust*

ALUMNI NEWS

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June 2023

The #1 Recipient on Our TBM Database, Dr. David Byrd, Shares His Story

Every scholarship recipient has their own unique and personal story on how important the funds from the Thomas Brown McClelland Trust were to them. The #1 Alum on our database list – DAVID BYRD, MD – was generous enough to share his story. All of us at the Rotary Club of Miami thank Dr. Byrd and are touched by his words.

In 1985, I was barely treading water, both financially and emotionally. I was in my first year of medical school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and my wife of two years decided she wanted a different life so we divorced and I was left with little. I could not afford textbooks, so I photocopied my classmates' books. I sold my bone marrow to a research lab to pay for rent and food. I used the University restrooms because there was toilet paper. This all happened while I was grinding out untold hours of study. I was exhausted!



In this time of despair, I received a letter from the Rotary Club of Miami (I was a Florida resident and lived in Miami most of my life). The letter was an offer to apply for the Thomas McClelland Scholarship and required that I write an essay on the subject of why I wanted to be a physician. As you might imagine, I was in no mood to explain my motivations and was already questioning those motivations myself. Nevertheless, in a blur of self-pity I wrote an essay which centered on medicine as my second choice as a profession — a fallback position if you will.

My first professional desire was actually that of cat burglar. I listed my reasons, but then was confronted with my fear of heights, jail, and generally not looking good dressed in black. Given this, I took the opposite path of helping others rather than just myself. And I clearly looked good in a white coat. I signed my essay and mailed it, certainly not expecting to hear back from the Rotary Club. But, to my astonishment, I was invited to their annual meeting to accept the McClelland Scholarship! They said it was because of my honesty, but I wonder if they were curiously amused or, more so, sensed my plight.

The Scholarship effectively paid for two years of medical school and living expenses, reigniting my sense of purpose and motivation for medicine by alleviating the massive financial burden I had been struggling under. I am forever grateful. Grateful for the money, but mostly grateful for the love and kindness of anonymous Rotarians to materially care.

I deeply thank the Rotary Club of Miami for being the example of assistance to a person fighting battles they knew not of. I attempt to live that example with my patients every day. Rotary and Thomas Brown McClelland's gift, therefore, impacts so many more people than just myself.

I completed my post graduate training at Norwalk Hospital/Yale University. I now have a thriving gastroenterology practice that I established in coastal North Carolina in 1997, an amazing wife of 34 years, two wonderful children, and most recently, our first grandchild. Joy is now a daily part of my life.

What's Up with Our TBM Family????

Samuel R. Browd ('96) is Director of Seattle Children's Hydrocephalus Program, the Medical Director of Seattle Children's Sports Concussion Program and the Director of the Sports Institute at UW Medicine. His work in concussion has focused on materials, science and engineering solutions. His innovations and collaborative efforts with UW Mechanical Engineering have led to a new force reducing football helmet named VICIS. Dr. Browd currently serves as an unaffiliated neurologic consultant to the NFL and an independent neurologic consultant to the Seattle Seahawks.



Sherrie Bullard ('06) is a Dermatologist at Cleveland Clinic in Weston, Florida. She really appreciated the Brown McClelland Trust Scholarship, as it helped her in a time of need. She now has two children in college. [Any potential doctors down the road????] →

Jennifer Khajautia Burzawa ('99) is a gynecologic oncologist and a Clinical Associate Professor in the Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynecology at U Washington School of Medicine. She is inspired by the women she is privileged to care for and enjoys sharing their journey, as difficult as it may be, through surgery and chemotherapy as well.

Devin Bustin ('10) is Chief Medical Officer at OvaryIt and Associate Director of Informatics at Sollis Health. He has a passion for entrepreneurship centered on utilizing technology and novel healthcare delivery approaches to increase quality, efficiency, and access to care.



← **Marni Chanoff** ('01) practices and teaches Integrative Psychiatry. She founded Joy In Health to inspire and empower people to work towards their health goals with support from a collaborative team. Trained in ketamine assisted psychotherapy, she finds the approach deepens psychotherapy by helping people connect with their thoughts and feelings and explore their authentic self with less interference from critical, rigid, and often fearful thought patterns.

Frank B Cortazar ('09) is the Director of the New York Nephrology Vasculitis and Glomerular Center. His primary interest is improving the care of patients with vasculitis and glomerular diseases. As a clinical researcher, he conducts patient-oriented observational studies and has served as a principal investigator for multiple international randomized trials evaluating novel therapeutic agents for ANCA vasculitis and glomerular diseases. →



Alexandra Diaz ('22) is attending the University of Chicago Medical School and reports that Chicago is cold and gray, and she misses the Miami sunshine, but is not complaining and is definitely keeping busy. She has begun volunteering at one of the free clinics and will be doing research during the summer.

Timothy Ekhlassi ('09) specializes in oculoplastic and reconstructive surgery at Fraser Valley Cataract & Laser in Surrey, British Columbia. He believes that "by rebuilding the structure and function of the tissues surrounding the eyes, and improving patients' aesthetic outcomes, I have been extremely fortunate to impact the lives of my patients."

Michael Farbowitz ('92) wanted to be an ophthalmologist ever since grade school and now feels blessed to be able to fulfill the childhood dream of helping people restore and maintain their precious gift of sight. At Short Hills Ophthalmology in New Jersey, he practices comprehensive ophthalmology, taking care of patients of all ages and all eye conditions. →



← **Garth Graham** ('00) is a leading authority on social determinants of health and the Director and Global Head of Healthcare and Public Health at Google/YouTube. He works for accuracy and equity at the vital intersection of public discourse and public health and does it at a scale that only the world's most powerful internet platforms can achieve.

Michael Kaplan ('86) has been living in New Zealand. A scientific researcher at the start of his career, his current work in stroke and rehabilitative medicine has allowed him to develop unique insights into how the wealth of neurogenesis research can be used to help people.

Nisa Kubiliun ('02) is an Associate Professor in UT Southwestern Medical Center's Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Kubiliun serves as the Medical Director of Endoscopy Services at UT Southwestern, where she employs advanced endoscopic techniques to treat a variety of gastrointestinal disorders and cancers. →



Krista N. Larson ('13) is a Board Certified general, surgical and cosmetic dermatologist. She completed her dermatology residency at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, where she was named Chief Resident in 2019 and is actively affiliated with multiple professional organizations. She is also a certified Spanish translator.



← **Jennifer Ledon** ('13) is a dermatologist at WestDerm in Fullerton CA. She says "It has been my dream to be a physician my entire life, and I've known ever since I can remember that this is the path for me. As the first physician in my family, I feel honored to be able to help patients live better lives."

Bruce Martin ('83) has been working as a cardiologist in Delray Beach, Florida. He has also written and published a book on religion and philosophy and is about to publish a collection of short stories.

Jonell Mahoney ('88) is a pediatrician with Mahoney Pediatrics in Loxahatchee, Florida, a patient centered medical home program developed to provide comprehensive primary care that encourages partnership between patients and their physicians. Their mission to support children and families as they grow by educating, mentoring, and delivering excellent medical care in a safe and loving environment. The center specializes in the care of children from birth to 21 years of age. →



Rachael Morrison ('16) is currently working in the Miami VA as a primary care physician. She also does quality improvement projects for the facility as well as work with internal medicine medical residents and medical students from UM and FIU.

Prashant Parekh ('10) is an Ophthalmologist specializing in the medical and surgical management of retinal disease at the Center for Excellence in Eye Care, located at Baptist Hospital in Miami. She enjoys teaching medical students as Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine.

Jonathan Shults ('96) offers expert orthopedic and sports medicine care at Coastal Empire Orthopedics, in Savannah, Georgia. A competitive cyclist and runner, he personally understands an athlete's passion and dedication to get back in the game so they can perform at their best, pain-free.

Scott Tannenbaum ('84) has served as medical director of Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sunrise since 1995. He maintains a private practice within the hospital and is also an attending physician.



← **Mark Venturi** ('98) is a plastic surgeon at the National Center for Plastic Surgery. His goal is to deliver the highest level of patient care to both his aesthetic and reconstructive patients. He believes in an individualized approach to each patient in order to attain outstanding results. He employs the latest techniques in breast reconstruction and other cancer restorative surgeries.

George M. Zacur ('06) is a faculty member of the Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology in the Dept. of Pediatrics at C. S. Mott Children's Hospital/University of Michigan Health. He has a special interest in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (Crohn Disease and Ulcerative Colitis) and advanced endoscopy. →



Chi Zhang ('04) is currently working for Broward Health as the Director of Bariatric Surgery.

2023-24 Student Interviews Completed

This year 71 students applied for scholarships from the Thomas Brown McClelland Trust. We were so thrilled to once again be able to interview our applicants in person at the Miami-Dade Medical Examiner's Offices. The partnership with the M.E.'s office is a long-standing one and is greatly appreciated.

A special note of thanks to two TBM Alum: **Eric Teplicki** ('09) and **Elizabeth Vainder** ('96) for graciously giving their time to help interview students early on a Saturday morning. Your input and participation meant a lot to the Rotary Club of Miami.

As always, the interviewers were awed and inspired by the outstanding applicants. These young adults have already accomplished so much in their lives. We're sure the healthcare profession will benefit greatly from their contributions in the future.

Results of the 2022 Match

The Rotary Club of Miami Foundation generously decided to match every contribution to the Thomas Brown McClelland Trust in the calendar year of 2022. The contributions from our Alumni family alone totaled \$40,366. Donations from other sources were \$4,114, making a grand total of \$44,480 to be matched by the Foundation. Thank you to all who took part and helped increase the value of the Trust. As the Trust value rises, it also increases the funds available to help those following in your footsteps.



Missing in Action and Data Base Update Requests

If you've been in touch with any of these Alums, please reach out to them and let them know we'd like to reconnect at MiamiRotaryTBMAlum@yahoo.com: Taylor G. Poole, Patricia Hill, Marcelyn K. Coley, Fabio Alfonso Cardenas, Diana Morcote Triana, Sherri Birchansky, Randy Fischer, Robert C. Stoker, Jodi Clark

The following recipients' email addresses are no longer valid....if you are in contact with them, please ask them to email their new email address to MiamiRotaryTBMAlum@yahoo.com: Dillon Arango, Isaac Marco Chocron Kaswan, Alexander Jonas Egusquiza, Ashley Anne Taggart, Stephanie M. Arcia, Kristan A. Scott, Miguel Enrique Diaz, Liana Angeli Nicholabo Apolis, Christian Geldi Aguado, Sofia Elena Gomez, George Sanchez, Emily Quintero, Andrea Alonzo.

ALL ALUMNI - PLEASE NOTE: If any of you would prefer to have the newsletter mailed to your home, rather than your office, please let me know. Additionally, if you are using a university or school email address, they do often expire and we would prefer a personal email address that will be long lasting. Please send us any changes. BTW - The data base is not shared with any outside sources and is secure.



Please use the enclosed envelope and consider making a tax deductible contribution today:

"Thomas Brown McClelland Trust"
P.O. Box 43-1466, Miami, FL 33243



Name: _____ Email: _____

Mailing address: _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

In a few words – let us know what you've been doing:

If you have any suggestions, ideas, or thoughts on the newsletter, please contact TBM Alumni Coordinator and Newsletter Editor, Marcia Brod at: miamirotarytbmalum@yahoo.com. **We would love to hear from you!**