

A NEW CHAPTER

AN ALUMNUS'S
RECORD-SETTING
SUPPORT FOR THE
FUTURE OF MEDICAL
EDUCATION SETS A
NEW HORIZON FOR
HIS ALMA MATER.

LARNER

On the afternoon of September 23, a large crowd of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and guests of the University of Vermont celebrated the announcement of an estate commitment with an estimated current market value of \$66 million from UVM dual-degree alum and Vermont native **ROBERT LARNER '39, M.D.'42**, and his wife, **HELEN**. The commitment to donate — the largest gift ever to a public university in New England — capped decades of philanthropic support from the Larners, whose lifetime giving now will now reach \$100 million.

To recognize and express gratitude for their extraordinary commitment to medical education at UVM, the University of Vermont Board of Trustees voted earlier in September to name the College of Medicine in honor of Dr. Lerner. The medical school is now known as The Robert Lerner, M.D. College of Medicine at The University of Vermont. When realized and combined with previously announced gifts from the Larners, the bequest will vastly accelerate the Lerner College of Medicine's ability to reach the institutional goal inspired by Dr. Lerner — to be recognized as second to none for medical education worldwide.

The Larners' gift marks an important moment in the history of U.S. medical schools: the first occasion in the nation for which a medical school is named to honor an alumnus physician and donor.

"Today, we stand at a defining moment in the history of this great university as we celebrate the goal we've shared with Dr. Lerner for years — to be recognized as second to none in medical education," said Tom Sullivan, president of the University of Vermont. "We remain in awe of how he embraces philanthropy. His love for humanity, and his desire to provide long-term endowment funding, will greatly enhance medical education at UVM — and by extension will elevate medical care for patients in Vermont and worldwide who are treated by those trained here — for many generations to come."



The historic gift announcement was made to a large crowd gathered outside the entrance to the Lerner College of Medicine with more than 150 medical students in their white coats standing behind the speakers at the podium. The students' presence demonstrated their profound gratitude to the Larners and acknowledged the pivotal role that endowment gifts make in the excellence and long-term growth of the medical college.

Once the Larners' bequest is realized, approximately 95 percent of their lifetime giving will be secured endowment funding, so their giving will generate roughly \$4 million annually to ensure that The Robert Lerner, M.D. College of Medicine remains at the forefront of medical education for generations to come.

For many years Dr. Lerner has supported innovation in medical education at UVM, and this gift will accelerate the transformation underway at the College. The data are clear that engaging students in active learning is superior to providing passive lectures for teaching science, especially so for women and minorities. With this data in mind, the College has been moving away from lecture-based courses and toward team-based learning, simulation, flipped classrooms, and other engaged learning activities. Recent initiatives include digitizing the entire curriculum, creating new innovative

classrooms that facilitate active learning, building an enhanced simulation center to help students learn clinical skills, and recruiting an endowed Professor of Medical Education to lead the Teaching Academy.

"This is a joyful day of recognition of an alumnus of the College of Medicine and his amazing act of generosity," said Dean Rick Morin. "This gift is the culmination of a commitment that Dr. Lerner made to me in his den several years ago, and it is now our awesome responsibility to deliver on our commitment by using his gift to ensure our students receive — in his words — a medical education second to none."

1 THE DEAN'S VIEW: Dean Rick Morin, M.D.

speaking at the naming ceremony

We believe the research regarding the future of scientific education is clear. As published in such prestigious scientific journals as the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *Nature*, and in such newspapers as the *New York Times*, engaging students in active learning experiences is far superior to delivering passive lectures in teaching science. We also believe that the same can be said for the development and support of traits such as empathy and altruism, and skills such as interpersonal communication and professionalism.



At top, UVM President Tom Sullivan and Dean Rick Morin pull the drapes off a sign celebrating the new name of the College at the September 23 event. Dean Morin, above, later spoke at the event.

Thus, with the support of the Larners, our College has been making the transformation from lectures to engaged active learning. We have developed what may be the busiest medical simulation center where our students learn clinical skills such as suturing, cardiac resuscitation and medical history taking in a safe environment. We have built innovative classrooms to support team based learning to replace lectures on topics such as diagnostic testing. We have developed a visionary four-year program of hands on, point of care ultrasound training for our students. And we have recruited what we believe is the first endowed Professor of Medical Education to lead the Teaching Academy in the development of the new teaching methods to deliver this active learning.

Completing this transformation will not be easy or inexpensive. That is why the Larners' gift is so important to our College. It will fuel this transformation. The gift announced today will unleash the creativity and fire in the belly of our faculty to provide our students with a medical education which is unquestionably second to none.

2 AN ALUMNA'S VIEW:
Mildred "Mimi" Reardon, M.D.'67

speaking at the naming ceremony

As an alumna who spent her career in this community, I could not be more proud to be here celebrating Dr. Larner's commitment to our shared alma mater. He has often said that his medical education from UVM served as the foundation for his success. That, along with his deeply-held belief that philanthropy should be used to inspire others and his delight in the accomplishments of UVM medical students, have made him an inspiration to many.

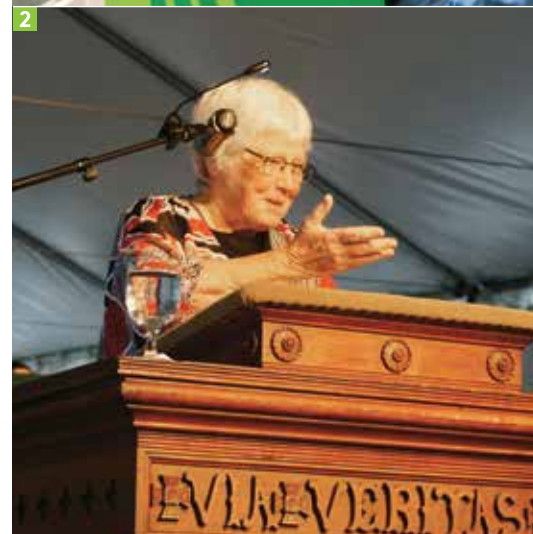
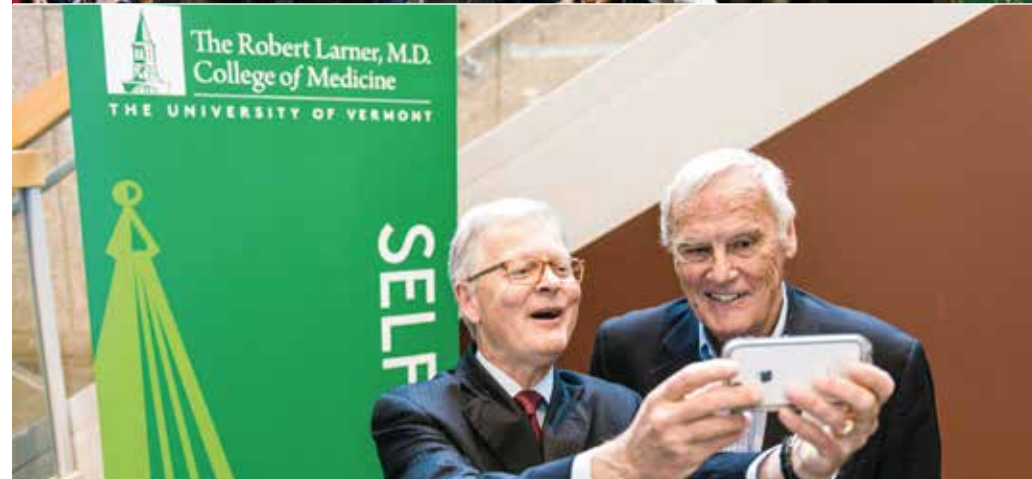
Over the years, Dr. and Mrs. Larner have clearly demonstrated their commitment to these tenets with their support of the College. Today, they have left no doubt exactly how deeply they believe in the value of a UVM medical education and how committed they are to making sure the students who enter the College each year will receive an education second to none.

3 A STUDENT'S VIEW:
Soraiya Thura '18

speaking at the naming ceremony

By so generously giving to support medical education in a sustainable way, Dr. Larner has a hand in shaping the future of medicine for myself and my classmates, and for generations to come. I can say with confidence, that this is the best equipped medical school in the nation to meet the challenges of an ever-changing health care landscape. This is because UVM is home to individuals who work so hard to learn, to improve, and

At right, from top, members of the UVM community gather for a celebratory toast after the naming ceremony on September 23; Dean Rick Morin and former Dean John Frymoyer take a selfie at the event; alumna Mimi Reardon, M.D.'67 and Soraiya Thura '18 speak at the ceremony.



ROBERT LARNER'S nearly 80-year relationship with The University of Vermont began during his childhood in Burlington's Old North End, where he was born in 1918, one of seven children of a local roofer. He received his elementary education at the H.O. Wheeler School on Archibald Street, and graduated from Burlington High School in 1936. The only one of his siblings to go to college, he attended UVM in part thanks to two scholarships he received for debating and essay writing. After graduating from the UVM College of Medicine, he served in World War II, settled in the Los Angeles area to build a successful medical practice, and invested in the burgeoning Southern California commercial real estate market.



"I GIVE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT COLLEGE OF MEDICINE BECAUSE THE EDUCATION I RECEIVED HERE MADE EVERYTHING GREAT THAT FOLLOWED IN MY LIFE POSSIBLE. I'M HUMBLLED THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT HAS DECIDED TO NAME THE MEDICAL COLLEGE IN MY HONOR, BUT I'M EQUALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS EXCEPTIONAL INSTITUTION WHICH IS TRULY

SECOND TO NONE."

— Robert Larner, '39, M.D.'42

to dedicate their lives so selflessly to the care of other people. I know this is true because I have been fortunate enough to get to know so many of you in this room personally. And I believe that it's this drive to give back and inspire others that is in Dr. Larner's DNA, but in each of our DNA as well. THIS is the common thread that will make our education "second to none."

Today, I know without a doubt that Dr. Larner believes in me. He believes in every student standing behind me; every alumnus who was ever a student here; and thanks to this incredibly generous gift, every student who walks through this door to begin their medical education will know he believes in them too. Thank you, Dr. Larner, for providing countless

opportunities for us to be the best physicians we can be, at the University that we love, and will always remember. **VM**



View videos of the ceremony and a short look at the life of Dr. Larner. Go to: uvm.edu/medicine/vtmedicine