

# VIEWPOINT

THE DEPARTMENT OF OPHTHALMOLOGY Columbia University at  
The Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute



Autumn  
1998

## Flanzer Eye Center Opens



(l-r) Mr. and Mrs. Louis Flanzer and Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Milstein in front of the entrance to the Flanzer Eye Center

### Center Offers Advanced Care in Pleasant Surroundings

The Flanzer Eye Center, which opened formally on November 18, 1998, is a state-of-the-art patient care facility that dramatically revitalizes clinical space on the Harkness Eye Institute's first floor. The new space combines an attractive, modern, and patient-friendly environment with today's most sophisticated technology, to accommodate physicians, staff, and patients of Columbia Ophthalmology Consultants, Inc., Columbia University's Ophthalmology faculty practice.

### Very Special Friends

Lead gifts from Mr. and Mrs. Louis Flanzer, Mr. and Mrs. Seymour Milstein, and a consortium of donors that includes Messrs. Samuel Sheng and Jack Clark, Fluorosystems, Ltd., The Fischbach Foundation, and Dr. and Mrs. Stanley Chang made creation of the Flanzer Eye Center possible. "We are fortunate to have a number of very special friends," said Dr. Chang, chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology and Edward S. Harkness Professor, "who, seeing a tremendous need to refurbish the Eye Institute's first floor offices, helped put together resources that gave our renovations project the ability to move forward."

Visitors to the new Flanzer Eye Center will enter through a light, airy lobby with gleaming marble floors and walls at the Eye Institute's 165th Street entrance. At the heart of the Center, is a large central reception area, surrounded by 13 examining rooms and separate treatment suites for imaging and other diagnostic exams, and for laser treatment. Muted shades of gray, green, and lavender throughout embellish the Center's comfortable seating, soft car-

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## Views from the Chair

Dear Friends:

At the beginning of another academic year, we can look back with pride on newly achieved successes and project more progress during the coming months. The Department continues to focus on maintaining the highest standards in vision research, education, and patient care. To that end, some of our most exciting recent accomplishments are helping to strengthen programs going forward in all three areas.

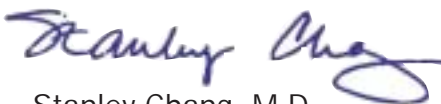
Continuing philanthropy and support from the Flanzer and Milstein families have given our clinical facilities beautifully refreshed surroundings appropriate to the caliber of our services. The Flanzer Eye Center, highlighted in this *Viewpoint* issue, provides our faculty with a modern and comfortable environment in which to offer their outstanding clinical care. This state-of-the-art facility also presents new opportunities for resident and medical student training as well as expanding the outlook for ongoing clinical research projects.

Our search for additional faculty has identified a selection of highly qualified investigators with whom negotiations are in progress. We hope, through the Department's *Research Scholars* program, to attract the best young minds from the scientific community to work at Columbia on vision disorders. Our three new residents, Dr. Timothy Du, Dr. Joan Li, and Dr. Marc Winnick, bring outstanding credentials and such boundless enthusiasm to their training in Ophthalmology that we have responded by enriching the Department's educational program to challenge their eager minds.

We are indebted to loyal and devoted friends for a great deal of our success in making the Eye Institute one of the nation's finest eye care, research, and education institutions. It is a delight to know that the Department of Ophthalmology's family of dedicated patients, alumni, and concerned individuals continues to grow, and we are extremely grateful for the many gifts received to support our efforts in making the gift of sight available to all.

My wife, Jean, and I wish all of you a happy holiday season and continued good health in the coming year.

Sincerely,



Stanley Chang, M.D.

Edward S. Harkness Professor and  
Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology





# Donors Spark Increase in Retina Research

Helen and Martin Kimmel were first brought together by their love of science about twelve years ago at a dinner given by Mrs. Kimmel on behalf of Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science. Since then, they have shared a strong commitment to helping advance scientific research, an enthusiasm that has benefited Columbia's Department of Ophthalmology. In fact, the Kimmels' generosity in supporting science has acted as a catalyst to encourage an increase in the Department's research initiatives concerning retinal disease.

The Kimmels were inspired by Department of Ophthalmology Chairman and Edward S. Harkness Professor, Dr. Stanley Chang's determination to improve prospects for the many patients affected by some form of retinal disorder. Both patients of Dr. Chang's, they have the "greatest admiration" for their doctor and his work. Consequently, wanting to do "something in return," for the "tremendous help he has given us," Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel made several significant gifts to the Department's research and clinical programs. It was their support that helped to recruit Dr. Janet Sparrow, an outstanding basic scientist whose work is devoted to retina research.

"What makes the Kimmels' gift so special is its multiplier effect," says Dr. Chang. Once Columbia's retina research program was underway, he explained, "Mr. and Mrs. Kimmel's involvement led to an exciting expansion of



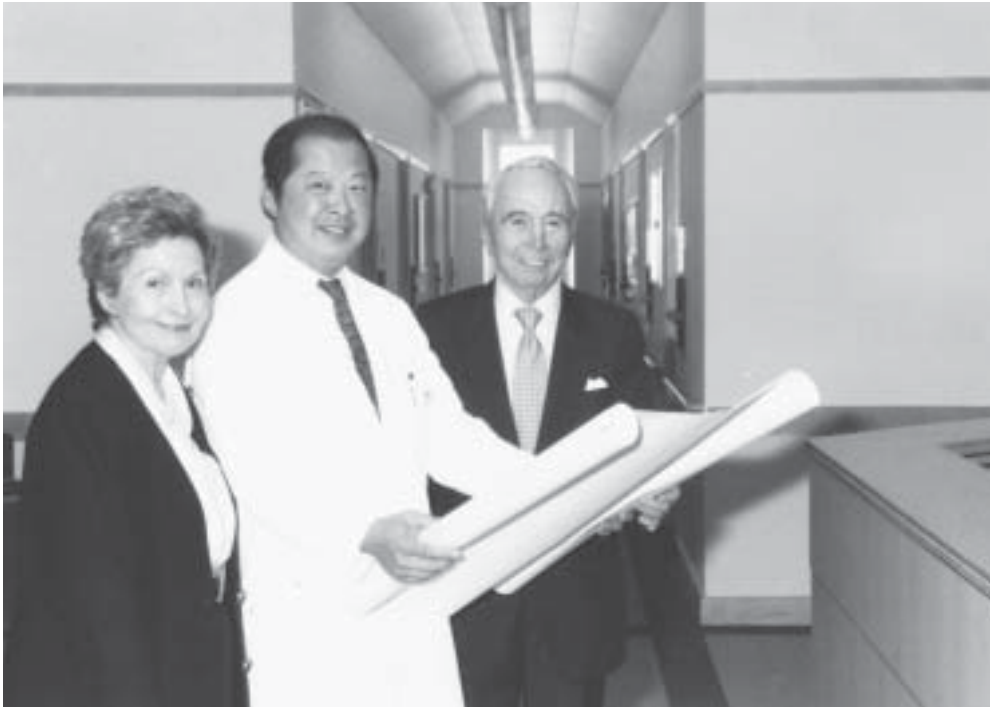
Martin and Helen Kimmel hope that "increased research will benefit patients with vision-robbing retinal disease."

investigations in the field." After the success of Dr. Sparrow's recruitment, the Department was able to appoint a superb researcher and clinician, Dr. Gaetano Barile, whose primary interest is diabetic retinopathy. "Now," Dr. Chang continued, "through our new *Research Scholars* program, we hope to build a young investigators team committed to preventing and treating vision loss from retinal disease."

Mrs. Kimmel, a Barnard graduate, is a trustee of New York University and the New York University Medical School Foundation. Mr. Kimmel, co-founder and chairman emeritus of Kimco Realty Corporation, also serves as a leader for numerous philanthropic organizations. They are members of the Board of Governors and the Executive Council of the Weizmann Institute of Science, which has awarded them honorary doctorates.



## New Flanzer Eye Center, cont.



Dr. Chang reviewing plans for the Eye Center with Gloria and Louis Flanzer

*continued from page 1*

peting, and lighting that can be adjusted as needed to prevent eye strain, creating a relaxed and pleasant environment.

### Expanded Training Opportunities

By providing patients with a full range of vision care services, the Flanzer Eye Center is also designed to expand and enrich resident training in Columbia's Department of Ophthalmology. Until the Center was completed, postdoctoral ophthalmologists in residence received the greatest portion of their training at Columbia-Presbyterian's community eye clinics, where the range of conditions treated on site is usually limited. Now, working beside attending physicians in the Flanzer Center, residents will have the opportunity to observe and develop the highly specialized skills needed for managing a

broader variety of eye diseases and their complications. The experience of working in a private setting will also help them to prepare in more realistic manner for similar conditions to be expected in their own future practices.

### Increased Convenience and Access to Treatment

In addition to the new Flanzer Center, satellite offices for Columbia Department of Ophthalmology faculty practice have also recently opened at One East 71st Street (Fifth Avenue), and at 3765 Riverdale Avenue (238th Street), in Riverdale. Led by Dr. Chang, the faculty practice members include: Drs. Gaetano R. Barile, Richard Braunstein, Thomas E. Flynn, Marc Odrich, Steven A. Odrich, William M. Schiff, Amilia Schrier, and Stephen Trokel. Their new offices have been strategically located to give



Inside the Flanzer Eye Center: view of reception desk, waiting area, and hallway leading to high-tech examination rooms



patients greater and more convenient access to the kind of specialized services available at the Flanzer Eye Center in Washington Heights and Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center's 16 East 60th Street location.

Each of the satellite sites is equipped with multi-terminal computer links to the Medical Center's electronic medical records core, giving doctors immediate access to patient information—including diagnostic images—from any of these sites. This electronic record keeping system makes it easier for patients to receive treatment at the practice plan location that is easiest for them to visit, or to switch treatment locations as needed. It will also help physicians to find important medical information in emergency situations and will facilitate the coordination of patient records as the Department's number of clinical trials grows.

#### SAMUEL SHENG LASER SUITE ESTABLISHED

"I'm fascinated by the prospect of finding high-tech cures for disease," says Sam Sheng, whose generous contribution helped to support construction of a laser treatment suite in the Flanzer Eye Center. Chairman of the board of Sheng's Corporation, a real estate development company, Mr. Sheng has a strong background in science and technology, having earned a Master's Degree in engineering from Columbia in 1951, shortly after his emigration to the United States from Shanghai. "When I learned about Dr. Chang's work with diseases of the eye," he says, "I knew I wanted to find a way to support it."





# Grappling With Thyroid Eye Disease



Robert James Graves

In 1835, Irish physician Robert James Graves described a puzzling protrusion of the eyeball affecting many women diagnosed with thyroid abnormality. The condition has been called Graves' disease ever since.

The most common type of hyperthyroidism in the United States, Graves' disease strikes millions of Americans yearly, including President George Bush and first lady Barbara Bush, but its basic cause is still unknown. Prevalent among women and smokers, especially between the ages of 30 to 50, the consequences of Graves' disease can be extremely unpleasant.

When the body's immune system goes awry it attacks vital tissues and organs just as if they were enemy bacteria or viruses. In Graves' disease, antibodies—the immune system's germ-fighting mechanisms—accumulate in the eye muscles and inflame them. An excess of thyroid hormones causes other complications that may include muscle weakness, rapid heartbeat, irregular menstrual periods, weight loss, heat intolerance or irritability. Eye problems in about 10 to 15 percent of Graves' disease patients can be devastating, though they rarely lead to blindness. The condition produces dry, red, itching eyes, swollen lids and intense tearing, as well as double vision when scar tissue from the disease restricts eye movement. Inflammation and swelling pushes the eyeball forward from the socket, giving patients a "pop-eyed," startled appearance.



The morning of December 4, 1997, is one Pat Knipper won't soon forget. While attending a medical meeting she had organized, her eyelids suddenly swelled up and her eyes filled with tears. Friends thought it was an allergic reaction, but, being a registered nurse, Ms. Knipper was skeptical. She decided her acute discomfort was related to Graves' disease, diagnosed some months earlier.

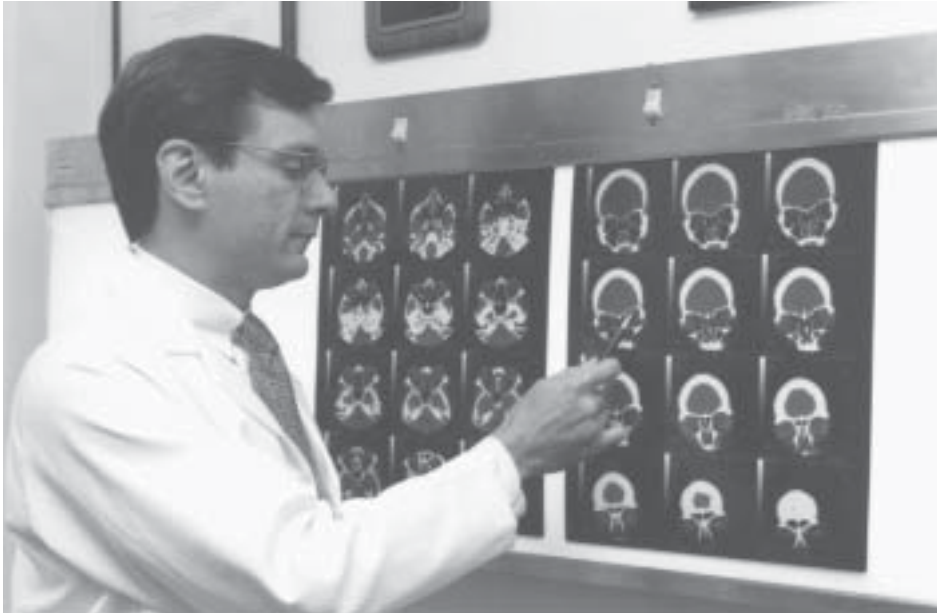
Graves' hyperthyroidism made her feel "completely out of control," with mood swings, a frightening, rapid heartbeat, increased appetite—but also weight loss, and other distressing effects. "I thought," she recalls, "that I was having a nervous breakdown." But, after receiving radioisotope therapy—standard for Graves' disease—Ms. Knipper's early symptoms disappeared. Unfortunately, her eye condition, which usually strikes within 18 months of Graves' disease onset, did not go away so easily. As it grew worse, she began losing color vision and feared becoming permanently blind. Fortunately, Ms. Knipper was under the care of Dr. Michael Kazim, assistant professor of clinical Ophthalmology and clinical surgery at Columbia and a specialist in treating Graves' disease eye problems. With computerized tomography (CT) imaging, Dr. Kazim was able to observe dangerously enlarged eye muscles beginning to compress her optic nerves. A course of steroids and radiation therapy restored color vision almost immediately and, soon, the swelling around her eyes improved at a slow but steady pace. Now, not even a year since it began, Ms. Knipper is past the most

acute phase of her illness. She is looking forward to the time—probably in a few months—when her eyes will appear nearly normal. Then, Dr. Kazim will be able to perform surgery restoring them to their pre-Graves' condition.

As a health care provider and patient, too, Ms. Knipper knows how important it is to raise public awareness of Graves' disease. She is forming a support group for people with Graves' disease who, she says, have an illness that is widely misunderstood, adding that the bulging eyes identifying a Graves' disease patient makes others uncomfortable. "No one wants to talk to you about your disease, so Graves' patients receive less empathy and compassion than they deserve," which, Ms. Knipper feels, threatens a positive self image.

*Patients with Graves' eye disease who are interested in joining a support group may contact Pat Knipper at 516-741-4811, or by e-mail at [pknipper@worldnet.att.net](mailto:pknipper@worldnet.att.net)*

Treating Graves' disease can be immensely successful. The five percent of patients who experience vision loss from pressure on the optic nerve often avoid permanent blindness with immediate use of steroids and radiation and, sometimes, surgery. Ironically, options for less severe forms of the disease are somewhat limited. The safety limits of cumulative radiation exposure often discourage its use except for rapidly deteriorating conditions or risk of imminent blindness. "If we use radiation for milder cases," says Dr. Kazim, "we may exhaust a



Dr. Michael Kazim reviewing CT-scans of Graves' disease patient

patient's radiation tolerance and, thereby, jeopardize future treatment of more serious, vision-threatening problems." Other options are also problematic. Undesirable side effects make it necessary to give steroids sparingly, and surgical removal of tissue behind the eye is also restricted because of possible risks.

"Our main goal is prevention of irreparable damage during the acute phase of illness," says Dr. Stephen Trokel, professor of Clinical Ophthalmology at Columbia. A pioneer in developing surgical procedures to treat Graves' eye disease, Dr. Trokel stresses advanced, comprehensive interdisciplinary care. "Successful control of thyroid eye disease often requires the talents and skills of endocrinologists, radiotherapists, and otolaryngologists, as well as eye and plastic surgery specialists. This diversity of specialties at one site exists only at a major medical center like Columbia-Presbyterian." CPMC is a leading referral center for the treatment of Graves' disease. Department of Ophthalmology Graves' disease specialists include

Drs. Trokel and Kazim, as well as Drs. Martin Leib and Peter Michalos.

#### A HISTORY OF CPMC LEADERSHIP IN THYROID TREATMENT

CPMC has been at the forefront of thyroid disease research, education and treatment for nearly 70 years and has produced many scientific advances in managing thyroid and related eye disease. They include:

- first use of radioactive iodine to treat thyroid disease
- first successful treatment of thyroid cancer with radioactive isotopes
- first to use prednisone for treating thyroid disease
- first to use CT scans of Graves' disease
- first to remove fat surgically from eye socket
- first to develop blood test for the thyroid cancer marker, thyroglobulin





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# Honors and Awards

**Stanley Chang, M.D.**, received this year's **American Academy of Ophthalmology Senior Honor Award**, given in recognition of his educational contributions at annual meetings. The Academy, which sponsors the largest annual Ophthalmology conference in the world, has also selected Dr. Chang to become a member of its Program Committee. **The Vitreous Society** honored Dr. Chang with the **W. Helmerich Award** for his outstanding retinal research on perfluorocarbon liquids. The \$15,000 grant will be used to support further retina research at Columbia. Dr. Chang also received the **Alcon Research Institute Award** at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology's most recent annual meeting. The \$100,000 award to support vision research is given to five individuals each year by the Alcon Foundation.

**Stephen Trokel, M.D.**, was awarded the **Barraquer Medal** this summer in recognition of his research and innovations in the field of refractive surgery and excimer laser.

**Gaetano Barile, M.D.**, received a **Career Development Award** from **Research to Prevent Blindness, Inc.** This three-year grant is given to young clinician-scientists, embarking on a research program that will lead to NIH funding. Dr. Barile is working on the role of advanced glycation endproducts in diabetic retinopathy.

**The Department of Ophthalmology** received an unrestricted research grant of \$100,000 from **Research to Prevent Blindness, Inc.**



# IN FOCUS

News Briefs



**George K. Smelser Lectureship to Resume**  
The Department of Ophthalmology has reestablished the George K. Smelser Lectureship, thanks to a generous bequest from the Estate of Victoria Ozanics. Originally created in 1975, the lectureship was suspended six years after it began because of insufficient funding. Now, Ms. Ozanics' thoughtfulness and devotion to the late Dr. Smelser has made it possible to recommence the annual series, whose distinguished roster of speakers has included Dr. Arthur DeVoe, former Department of Ophthalmology chairman, and Dr. David Maurice, professor of Ocular Physiology.

Professor of Anatomy (in Ophthalmology), Dr. Smelser was Director of Research in Ophthalmology at Columbia from 1956 until 1973. During that time, he played a key role in increasing the amount and quality of eye research in the Department and contributed extensively to the understanding of eye morphology and its relationship to function. All the while, Victoria Ozanics, a Columbia research associate, was Dr. Smelser's loyal assistant, co-authoring many of his papers and sharing his teaching responsibilities.

The Department of Ophthalmology will present the next Smelser lectureship at a date to be announced.

## **New Low Vision Clinic Established**

Columbia's Department of Ophthalmology has

established a low vision clinic, which offers patients with limited eyesight an array of devices to maximize remaining vision. Directed by Dean E. Hart, O.D., the clinic will also specialize in providing contact lenses for hard-to-fit patients and offer psychological and social support services for patients and families coping with the difficulties of vision loss.

Dr. Hart, a graduate of the New York College of Optometry, is an associate research scientist and assistant professor in Columbia's Department of Ophthalmology. The director of a low vision clinic at Harlem Hospital for the past ten years, he has frequently appeared on television and radio programs to talk about eye care.

#### Amilia Schrier, M.D., Joins Columbia Faculty



Dr. Amilia Schrier is the newest member of the Department of Ophthalmology's growing faculty. A graduate with "high distinction" of the University of Virginia, Dr. Schrier received her M.D.

degree from the SUNY Health Science Center at Brooklyn Medical School. She completed an internship at Long Island College Hospital and a residency at SUNY's Health Science Center in Brooklyn, where she also served as chief resident. Dr. Schrier then completed a fellowship in cornea and external disease at North Shore University Hospital-Cornell Medical College.

Before coming to Columbia last July, Dr. Schrier was a resident instructor and assistant chief of service at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital, where she was voted "Teacher of the Year" in 1995 and again in 1997 and 1998, accomplishments she describes as "highlights" of her career. Specializing in the treatment of corneal and external disease, cataract and anterior segment surgery, and trauma-related reconstruction, she has also published and lectured extensively on the treatment of infectious corneal disease.

**Harold Spalter, M.D.**, announced his retirement from clinical practice on October 1, 1998. He plans to continue his work with Research to Prevent Blindness, Inc., as well as to train residents and help to conduct clinical research.

**George Florakis, M.D., Michael Kazim, M.D., and Hermann Schubert, M.D.**, recently volunteered their services on a medical mission to Morocco. Accompanying them were senior resident, Alexandra Elliot, M.D., and Eye Institute operating room senior staff nurse, Emily Bonduc, R.N.

**Schering-Plough Corporation and Mr. Joseph C. Connors** have generously supported the acquisition of a new fluorescence microscope for scientific investigations by Department of Ophthalmology research faculty.



# Giving Well

*Giving Well* is the Columbia University Health Sciences planned gifts program, through which the Health Sciences Development Office can assist you in making gifts to the Department of Ophthalmology. *Giving Well* offers a range of choices from which you and your advisors can select the amount and type of gift that will best accomplish your goals.

## Making a Charitable Gift Annuity

The Charitable Gift Annuity is one of the planned giving options available through the *Giving Well* program. Here is a description of how a charitable gift annuity can benefit you and the Department of Ophthalmology. We have included some questions that are frequently asked about this popular category of planned gift—and provided the answers.

*Mr. A. is an 80-year-old patient of the Eye Institute who has a personal interest in supporting eye research. He asks about funding a charitable gift annuity at Columbia University to the Department of Ophthalmology, from which he and his wife, who is 75, will receive annual income throughout their lives.*

*After receiving a description of the benefits to them, Mr. and Mrs. A. decide to purchase their charitable gift annuity with appreciated securities that are now worth \$50,000, and for which they originally paid \$40,000. In the year they make the gift they may take a one-time tax deduction of \$19,369, an amount based on the IRS-determined value of their gift. Then, based on their ages, Columbia University will pay Mr. and Mrs. A. a 7.5% annuity each year, equal to \$3,750. Of that amount, \$1,641 will be tax-free. Ultimately, Mr. and Mrs. A.'s generosity will provide funding for the important efforts of Columbia's Department of Ophthalmology to improve the treatment of eye disease.*

Q: What is a Charitable Gift Annuity?

A: A charitable gift annuity is a simple arrangement that provides a secure lifetime income for you and/or someone you choose, while providing a substantial gift to Columbia University's Department of Ophthalmology.

Q: What are the advantages of a Charitable Gift Annuity for me?

A: A charitable gift annuity provides you with a sizeable income tax charitable deduction, guaranteed lifetime annual income, and reduced capital gains taxes (if you use appreciated securities).

Q: How much income can I expect to receive from a Charitable Gift Annuity?

A: Income payments are based on age. For example, a 60-year-old donor will receive annual lifetime income, partially tax free, equal to 6.7% of the gift. A donor who is 75 years old when making the gift will receive partially tax-free annual lifetime income equal to 8.2 % of the gift amount. Income to joint donors is based on both their ages.

Q: Is any portion of my Charitable Gift Annuity gift tax deductible?

A: Yes, in addition to lifetime income, in the year you make your gift you will receive a charitable tax deduction for a portion of its value. The amount of your deduction will be based on your age and the amount of your gift.

Q: How do I purchase a Charitable Gift Annuity?

A: To establish a gift annuity, you enter into a simple agreement with Columbia University Health Sciences promising to donate cash or marketable securities in exchange for our promise to pay you and/or another individual an annual lifetime income.

For more information about *Giving Well*, please contact:

Elia Desruisseaux  
Director of Planned Giving  
Columbia University Health Sciences  
100 Haven Avenue, Suite 29D  
New York, N.Y. 10032  
(212) 304-7200  
TOLL FREE: 1 (888) 277-9375  
Fax: (212) 544-1920  
E-Mail: [givingwell@Columbia.edu](mailto:givingwell@Columbia.edu)





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