

Development News



A Family Commitment to Family Medicine

Newton E. Kendig II, MD '84, Establishes Legacy Fund

- A commitment to providing compassionate clinical care.
- A commitment to serving the underserved.
- A commitment to educating tomorrow's healthcare leaders.
- A commitment to shaping the future of medicine.

This list echoes the basic tenets emphasized across Jefferson's campus every day. It also encapsulates the values shared by Newton E. Kendig II, MD '84, and his loved ones.

The sixth of seven relatives to study at Jefferson, Kendig recently strengthened his family's ties to the University by establishing the Kendig Family Legacy Fund in the Department of Family and Community Medicine. The fund will primarily support JeffHOPE, Jefferson's student-run organization for treating underserved Philadelphians, and the Physician Shortage Area Program, which recruits and trains medical students who were raised in rural areas or small towns

and intend to practice in similar regions after graduation.

"A common theme for Kendig physicians from any generation has been serving the underserved, mostly through practicing family medicine," says Kendig, explaining his interest in programs "for clinicians who are willing to serve where others are not."

Although he broke the family trend by pursuing a career in infectious diseases rather than family medicine, Kendig still focuses on treating underserved individuals. As medical director and assistant director of the Health Services Division for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, he oversees care for a patient population in which mental illness and chronic infectious disease are over-represented and under-treated.

Kendig's professional path was determined partially by chance. After earning his MD, he completed a residency in internal medicine at the University of Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital and went on to train

Six Generations, Seven Jefferson Physicians

Studying at Jefferson has proved a Kendig family tradition since 1872, with seven members having enrolled over six generations. Those physicians include:

- Benjamin Emmet Kendig (student from 1872-1873)
- Jerome Stauffer Kendig, MD 1889
- Harry Charles Kendig, MD '30
- Newton Emerson Kendig, MD '54
- James Willis Kendig, MD '70
- Newton Emerson Kendig II, MD '84
- Marshal Newton Miller, MD '12 (currently a third-year family and community medicine resident)

Miller's wife, Kirsten, is also part of the Jefferson community. A 2010 graduate of the Jefferson School of Health Professions, she now works as an occupational therapist at Jefferson.



Newton Kendig, MD '84, and members of his family visited Jefferson's campus Oct. 8, 2014. Pictured are Kirsten Miller; Dixon Miller, PhD; Marshal N. Miller, MD '12; Kendig; Gail Miller; and Sue Kendig (wife of the late James W. Kendig, MD '70).

Marshal and Newton are holding framed medical course tickets used by the first Kendig family member to attend Jefferson, Benjamin Emmet Kendig, who enrolled in 1972. Instructors at that time included renowned physicians John Barclay Biddle, MD; J.M. DaCosta, MD; Joseph Pancoast, MD; and Samuel Gross, MD.

Photos by Karen Kirchhoff

in infectious diseases at Johns Hopkins, where he accepted a faculty appointment in 1991 — as the HIV/AIDS epidemic was continuing to peak. The governor of Maryland reached out to Johns Hopkins for help managing care for imprisoned AIDS patients, and Kendig's mentor recommended him for the job. Kendig went on to serve as medical director of the Maryland Department of Corrections and Public Safety for five years.

"I felt like I was on the cusp of medicine during that time and realized I wanted to dedicate my career to public health," Kendig says.

An admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service, Kendig serves as an assistant surgeon general of the United States. He joined the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) in 1996 as chief of infectious diseases, and three years later he was appointed medical director — a title he still holds today, along with a second that came in 2006: assistant director of the BOP's Health Services Division.

His role is complex; he oversees a billion-dollar healthcare system covering 200,000 inmates. Based in Washington, D.C., he travels all over the nation to visit the 121 prisons in the federal system.

"I make decisions on everything from who gets an organ transplant to who gets compassionate release," Kendig says. "And I do a lot of teaching, including writing clinical practice guidelines on everything from hepatitis to hypertension to preventive care." He also remains a faculty member at Johns Hopkins.

Kendig says the best part of his job is the opportunity to collaborate with healthcare professionals all over the country: "I am a big proponent of team medicine. We have therapists, pharmacists, nurses, social workers and many others trying to tackle issues together collectively, and I get to meet them in all of our prisons, even in very rural areas."

Seeing family practitioners as the anchors of health care, Kendig is concerned that medical students' interest in primary care is decreasing as tuition — and therefore debt upon graduation — continually rises and more lucrative specialties draw

attention. He is proud that his nephew, Marshal Newton Miller, MD '12, has stayed at Jefferson to do a residency in family and community medicine with a focus on serving the underserved, particularly through participation in JeffHOPE, which he joined as a first-year student.

The sixth-generation Kendig family member to attend Jefferson, Miller has pledged to carry on his predecessors' tradition of caring for those with limited resources and, like his uncle, recognizes an urgent need for philanthropic support for primary-care programs.

"As family doctors, with our intimate knowledge of our patients and our pulse on the fabrics of our communities, we're in a position to have great impact. This is not just about supporting existing student and resident initiatives, clinical experiences and research experiences of the department, but about finding ways to support the next student who has a big heart and a brilliant idea and can make the same kind of change as other giants at Jefferson," Miller says.

Kendig calls his establishment of the Kendig Family Legacy Fund a "jumpstart," hoping it will grow over time through contributions from fellow alumni to provide the very foundation for the Department of Family and Community Medicine's activities involving the underserved.

"This is so much less about the Kendig name and so much more about helping to ensure that academic family medicine at Jefferson builds upon its proud history to graduate future primary care physicians, who in the spirit of the Kendig family will serve the underserved whether in rural America or the inner city," he says.

"Those who give to the fund don't even have to know who the Kendigs are. They just have to be committed to our mission."

To learn more about JeffHOPE or Jefferson's Physician Shortage Area Program or to support the Kendig Family Legacy Fund, please contact Michael Sutton, associate director for regional giving, at 215-503-7677 or michael.sutton@jefferson.edu.

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