Masonic Medical Research Laboratory Hires New Director of Development

For the first time in three decades, the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL) has a new Director of Development. Alex Simon started as the new fund-raising head on Monday, May 15 and comes to MMRL after a nearly 10-year career in which he has served in fund-raising and advancement roles at several different colleges and universities across upstate New York.

“Hiring Alex marks the beginning of an exciting new era for MMRL,” said John S. Zielinski, CPA, and the CFO of MMRL. “We have been very successful over the years at sharing the message of our cutting edge research with our Masonic brethren, and they have been the bedrock on which MMRL has been able to flourish. I am extremely confident that Alex’s experience as a seasoned fundraiser will allow us to build on our existing network of support and grow in new and previously untapped streams of funding.”

(cont. on next page)
Simon has been an integral part of fund-raising teams at Cazenovia College, Union College, and SUNY Polytechnic Institute that achieved record-breaking support. In these roles, Simon has worked with corporate partners to fund student research programs, campaigned for unrestricted capital, and established scholarships for deserving students. “The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is a world-class center for research in cardiovascular disease, and I am excited to take the reins of their fund-raising operation,” said Simon. “The Laboratory has been incredibly successful due in no small part to the support of Freemasonry, including the Grand Lodge of New York as well as supporters in other states. We are going to build on that success by cultivating new advocates and implementing fresh revenue streams, all the while continuing to foster our personal relationships.”

Simon succeeds the former Director of Development and Communications, Ronald P. Kamp, who retired in January 2017 after 32 years of service.

Kamp Retires After 32 Years at MMRL

RW Ronald P. Kamp, former Director of Development and Communications and member of Utica Lodge #47, retired in January 2017 after 32 years of service at MMRL. During his time at MMRL Kamp initiated several fund-raising projects including the Raymond C. Ellis Tree of Life and Roswell T. Swits Vine of Life. He logged thousands of miles giving presentations on behalf of the Laboratory in Masonic organizations across the country.

In addition to his work at MMRL, Kamp served on the board of many organizations around the Mohawk Valley including the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society the Rotary Club of Utica and as a member of several classic car clubs.

Schneeweiss Honored with Charles Henry Johnson Medal

On Tuesday May, 2, Grand Master MW Jeffrey M. Williamson presented RW David F. Schneeweiss with the Charles Henry Johnson Medal. In his remarks, Grand Master Williamson noted, “He should be recognized for his benevolence; his distinguished and exceptional service to the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, and it is my pleasure to give him the Charles Henry Johnson Medal.”

One of the highest honors a Mason can receive, the Charles Henry Johnson Medal is awarded by the Grand Master to members of the Fraternity in good standing in this or any other Jurisdiction, irrespective of rank or title, who have rendered distinguished or unusual service in furthering the good name of the Craft, its principles and purposes.

Dr. Sheldon Stachel was born in 1940 in Brooklyn, NY. The lifelong Brooklyn resident graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School and continued his education at City University of New York obtaining a bachelor’s degree. He then went on to New York University School of Dentistry and obtained his D.D.S. degree in 1966. Following that, he established his private dental practice in the Marine Park

Masonic Medical Research Laboratory Pays Tribute to Two Long-Time Board Members

The winter of 2017 brought sad news to the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory family. In February, Emeritus Board Member Dr. Sheldon Stachel of Brooklyn, NY passed away at the age of 76. Then on March 18, Emeritus Board Member Dr. Anthony Boccabella of Summit, NJ passed away.

Dr. Sheldon Stachel
Dr. Boccabella was an active member of the New York State Masons. He served 20 years on the Board of Directors of Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL) in a variety of roles including as President and Chairman of the Board.

“Brother Boccabella was a thoughtful, kind and caring person who was always there in times of need,” said Alvaro Quiroga, Vice President of the Board of Directors of MMRL. “His dedication to MMRL was an inspiration to me and everyone who had the privilege to work with him. He will be greatly missed by me and all who knew him.”
MMRL Research Scientist Welcomed by Franklin Lodge #90 and Unity Lodge #22

On Monday, April 24th, nearly fifty people gathered in Ballston Spa, NY just south of Saratoga Springs at the stately home of Franklin Lodge #90 and Unity Lodge #22 for their annual Ladies Night event. This year the lodges graciously invited Dr. Gary Aistrup of the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL) to give a lecture on the Laboratory and the ongoing scientific research.

Following dinner those assembled heard Dr. Aistrup explain the history of MMRL as well as some of his specific research focusing on cardiac arrhythmias. Dr. Aistrup's presentation included not only information on various ailments of the heart, but also a video showing cardiac stem cells beating.

Following his presentation, Dr. Aistrup fielded many questions from the audience. At the conclusion of the evening, RW Joseph Rossi, Franklin Lodge #90 and RW Robert Coates, Unity Lodge #22 presented donations to MMRL, which Dr. Aistrup accepted on behalf of the Laboratory.

L-R RW Joseph Rossi, Franklin Lodge #90, Dr. Gary Aistrup, MMRL and RW Robert Coates, Unity Lodge #22