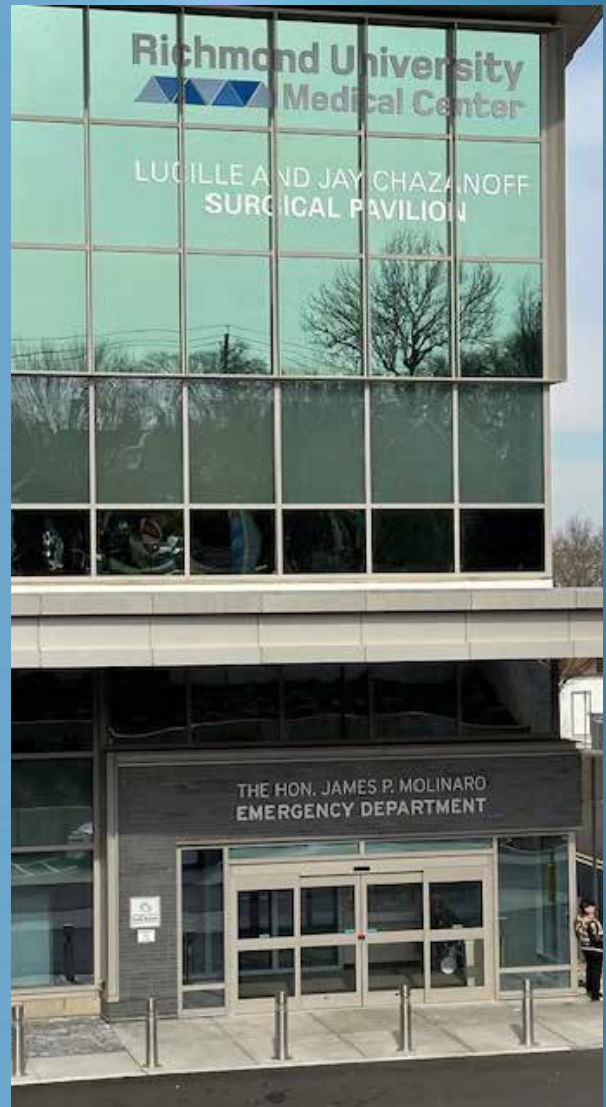


# RUMC REPORT

News from the Richmond University Medical Center Foundation

SPRING 2024 • RICHMOND UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER • WWW.RUMCSI.ORG



*Ribbon Cutting for the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion*

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## *Ribbon Cutting for the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion*



A new era of clinical care is underway at Richmond University Medical Center with the unveiling of a \$42 million state-of-the-art surgical unit named for two community champions. Located directly above the Emergency Department in a sleek addition at the back of the West Brighton hospital, the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion features 10 state-of-the-art operating rooms, three of which are designed to accommodate robotic-assisted surgery.

The Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion is named after Jay Chazanoff and his late wife, Lucille, who passed away in 2020. Serendipitously, the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on what would have been Lucille's 77th birthday. She was born on December 13, 1946, in the former St. Vincent's Hospital.

"Happy birthday, Sweetheart," her husband said, gazing upward from the podium. "I hope you are pleased with your birthday present."

"It's a little overwhelming," Jay Chazanoff shared as he prepared to cut the ribbon on the unit.

"Today is a significant milestone for RUMC ... that will raise the bar for healthcare in the community." He said his \$2.5 million gift to the hospital is a way of giving back to his hometown "with a sense of joy and a sense of purpose."

Lucille and Jay met in 1963 as accounting students at the former Staten Island Community College, married in 1970, and formed a powerful team as community champions. Their generosity benefitted numerous organizations — from the naming of the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff School of Business at the College of Staten Island to the Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Sunrise Day Camp at the Joan and Alan Bernikow Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, a free camp for children with cancer and their siblings — and is now making an enhanced surgical experience possible at RUMC with this extraordinary gift.

The Chazanoffs' association with RUMC began when it was St. Vincent's Hospital and operated under the direction of the Sisters of Charity. Jay served on its board of trustees and Lucille served on the board of the former Bayley Seton Hospital. "She was born at St. Vincent's," and appreciated the Catholic-based mission and level of compassion offered by the St. Vincent's system, Jay said.

Lucille later served as treasurer of the RUMC Foundation, and continued her fundraising work even after a cancer diagnosis. "I would drive Lucille to the Foundation meetings and sit in on them. I got to see Dan Messina in action, and witnessed firsthand his commitment to community," Jay recalled, referring to the hospital's president and CEO.



***“Today is a significant milestone for RUMC ... that will raise the bar for healthcare in the community. My \$2.5 million gift to the hospital is a way of giving back to my hometown with a sense of joy and a sense of purpose.”***

***— Jay Chazanoff***

The couple was honored by RUMC predecessor St. Vincent's in November 2001 with the St. Elizabeth Seton Humanitarian Award. Jay stepped into the role of Foundation treasurer after his wife's passing. He holds a bachelor's degree from Pace University and an MBA from Long Island University, and was a CPA at Ernst & Ernst before becoming a senior executive at a New York Stock Exchange-based financial services company for more than 20 years. He then co-founded a technology-based claims management company, providing corporate reorganization services, which he sold in 2000.

Lucille was named a Staten Island Advance Woman of Achievement in 1994, an honor she always treasured. The College of Staten Island awarded both Lucille (posthumously) and Jay Chazanoff the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, at the college's annual commencement ceremony on May 27, 2021. The generous Chazanoff leadership gift to RUMC, part of a \$250 million transformation, was motivated by “our long history with the hospital, and the critical need for Staten Island to have the highest quality care,” Jay explained. “It keeps Lucille's memory alive.”



Jay also became a partner in 1995 in Pembroke Companies Inc. Pembroke is a vertically integrated real estate investment and management firm that invests in various asset classes including multi-family, retail, net lease, and land development with a particular focus on the development, ownership, and management of market-rate and affordable multifamily properties in the New York City metropolitan area. Jay currently serves as vice chairman and remains active in the business.

Lucille earned a bachelor's degree from Pace University and worked as a certified public accountant for the international accounting firm Arthur Young & Co. for four years before joining NBC, where she rose to the position of Vice President and Controller. “She was a pioneer as a woman CPA,” her husband pointed out with pride.

After a seven-year career with NBC, Lucille joined her family's business, Royal Press, serving as Chief Operating Officer until her retirement in 2012. Her role at the Port Richmond print shop aligned perfectly with her involvement in the community, giving her the opportunity to facilitate fundraising journals and gala invitations for dozens of non-profit and cultural organizations.

“Lucille and I were blessed with success. This gift is our way of giving back to our Staten Island neighbors and the Staten Island community,” Jay added. “The Chazanoff name embodies integrity, generosity, and compassion,” CEO Messina said. “Lucille and Jay have been steady supporters of RUMC and their hometown community, and so it is fitting to acknowledge them with this dedication as part of the hospital's historic transformation.”



# Message from the President and Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to the 2023 Year-End Richmond University Medical Center Foundation Update. The remarkable and transformational growth at Richmond University Medical Center continued in 2023, highlighted by the opening of our new Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion. The generous support of our donors allows us to advance our mission to our community, and I am grateful

for the gifts that you provide. The pages that follow share some of the stories about our donors and the impact of their generosity. Please know that no matter the size of your gift, each contribution is critical to our success.

Sadly, my message to you is also a tribute to our former Vice President of Development, Laura Gajda. Laura passed away on January 5. She was a part of our RUMC Family for many years. Her work and expertise in fundraising and grant development continues to bear fruit for our hospital even after her retirement in 2022. I have often spoken about, written about, and discussed the over \$250 million in capital projects currently underway here at RUMC. Laura's influence is felt in all these projects, and it is fair to say that many of them would not be possible if not for the countless hours she put in filing funding applications, exploring possible sources of grants, cultivating donors, and following up in the sometimes-tedious process required to finally have the money come through the door.

From our new James P. Molinaro Emergency Department that celebrates a full year of service this month, to our recently unveiled Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion, Laura had a major role in bringing what started out as paper and pencil dreams for our institution into steel and concrete realities. Over her time with us, she took a lead in the messaging to numerous individual donors about the special story here at RUMC, growing our RUMC Foundation and its board into a powerhouse of support for our expansion plans. For Laura, this was easy to do simply because of her charm and personality,

and the friendly way in which she approached everyone she met. Her laugh often filled rooms no matter what the subject, and her smile was a welcome sight, no matter the setting.

She took great pride in growing our annual events like the RUMC/Arnold Obey 5K Run, the golf, tennis, and bocce event, our annual gala, and of course our highly successful capital campaigns. We would often spend hours developing themes and going over every detail to ensure the most successful event possible. Not surprisingly, each event often outperformed the previous one.

A native of Missouri, Laura and her late husband Walt and their daughter Jackie enjoyed life here in New York and on Staten Island. I will always remember her first week at RUMC when she arrived in her Mini Cooper with the license plates GIVE2RUMC. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jackie and all of Laura's family and friends. To say Laura will be missed by me personally and our entire organization is an understatement. She will be missed for her professionalism and stewardship, but mostly, and perhaps, more importantly, for her warmth, kindness, laughter, and lasting friendship. I am sorry that in the hustle and bustle of my work I didn't pause more often to recognize how special Laura was to us all. Rather than shed a tear at her untimely loss, let us instead smile and recall her voice, her personality, and the many memories she has left us with. Laura, we love you and we miss you. You were a ray of sunshine who made our lives so much brighter and who made us all feel better when we were so fortunate to be in your company. Rest easy. Till we meet again —

**Remember the Power of One — You Make A Difference!**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Daniel J. Messina". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE**  
President and Chief Executive Officer



## In Memoriam

**Laura Gajda** — Former Vice President, Development

Laura was a beloved member of our RUMC family for many years. Her dedication to our hospital resulted in millions of dollars in support from individual donors and federal, state and local grants, and through funding conduits she worked tirelessly to create. Her warmth and incredible personality are no doubt what many of us will remember — and miss — most about her. Our thoughts are with her daughter Jackie and her entire family during this difficult time.

# A Message from the President of the Foundation Board



This newsletter features several of our donors who in their own way contribute to the ongoing transformation at Richmond University Medical Center. Their generosity allows RUMC to turn big dreams into reality. We are grateful for the gifts they give.

There are many others whose support is vital to our success. Every year, and again in 2024,

we work to retain their support and grow the number of donors who give to RUMC. Whether it's a pledge or our Capital Campaign, an Annual Gift, or support for one of our fundraising events, all contributions have an impact on our growth and advancement.

The opening of the new Lucille and Jay Chazanoff Surgical Pavilion is the latest example of what we can accomplish by working together. Our Campaign Cabinet, Foundation Board, and Hospital Administration lead together in reaching out to engage others and encourage their philanthropic support.

Giving in the service of others is the noblest of callings. We hope you will answer the call and join those already making a difference in bringing the highest quality healthcare to the people of Staten Island.

Thank you.

**Robert Urs**

## Foundation Board of Directors

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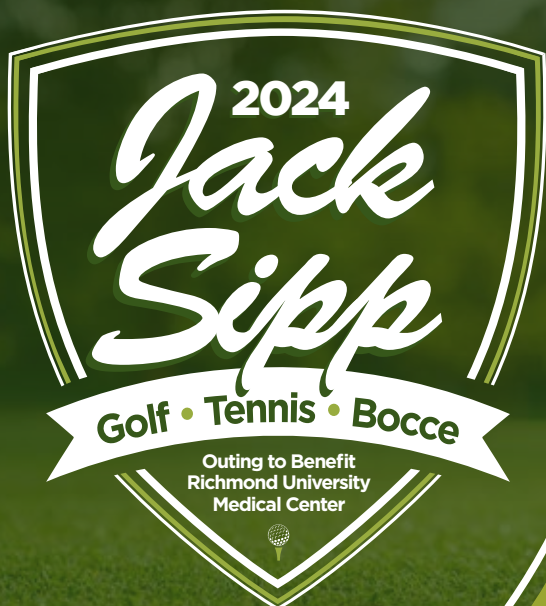
Richard S. Sansaricq

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Gregory Zenna

**Richmond University  
Medical Center**



**SAVE  
THE DATE**

**May 20, 2024**  
Richmond County  
Country Club



## Generous Gift from Dr. Richard Fazio in Memory of His Beloved Wife Jean



*"This naming has deep meaning for our family."*

*The plaque reads:*

***Richard A. Fazio, MD,***  
***Dedicated this nursing station***  
***in memory of his beloved wife***  
***Jean, a devoted nurse he met***  
***in this very hospital and***  
***married soon after.***

A central nurse's station in the new Emergency Department at Richmond University Medical Center has been named in honor of Jean Marie Fazio, a former head nurse at the hospital and the late wife of RUMC gastroenterologist Richard A. Fazio, MD.

The family's \$100,000 gift that made it possible is "the best way to honor her memory," said Vahe S. Shahnazarian, MD, Jean's son-in-law who is also a RUMC gastroenterologist and in private practice with Dr. Fazio. "This naming has deep meaning for our family."

Born in the Bronx, the former Jean Roginski moved to Staten Island as a child and grew up in Dongan Hills. She attended Countess Moore High School and received her RN degree from the Georgetown University School of Nursing in Washington, D.C.

In 2010, she earned a master's degree in nursing from Wagner College, where she taught nursing as an adjunct professor.

Jean and Richard met as staff members at the former St. Vincent's Hospital, now Richmond University Medical Center, and married in 1983. Their first date was dinner in Little Italy.

"She was a remarkable lady," Dr. Fazio said of his wife, who passed away from cancer in June 2022. "She meant everything to me and I miss her dearly."

Jean managed her husband's gastroenterology offices on Staten Island and in Brooklyn.

"She wore many hats in those offices," Dr. Shahnazarian said — from registered nurse to bookkeeper and scheduler.

Jean enjoyed working alongside her husband and looked forward to his early days off from work, when the two would enjoy dinner at Angelina's Ristorante, Trattoria Romana, or the Richmond County Country Club.

The Fazios raised three children — Richard Mark, now a gastroenterologist in Westchester; Laura, an anesthesiologist at Staten Island University Hospital, and Kerry, a financial executive with Google. Five grandchildren round out the family circle.

Dr. Fazio, who wanted to be a doctor since the young age of five, was a pioneer in the field of gastroenterology, choosing to focus on endoscopy when few physicians were specializing in it.

He earned his medical degree from the University Di Bologna in Italy and completed an internal medicine residency at Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, and a gastroenterology fellowship at the former St. Vincent's Hospital.

Dr. Fazio has "a sense of loyalty" to RUMC, his son-in-law said. With the gift, he wanted to honor Jean's memory and support the hospital's historic transformation.

The donation "hits on so many good points," Dr. Shahnazarian summarized.

The two gastroenterologists live five minutes away from each other on the South Shore of Staten Island and enjoy a close family bond.

"My in-laws were always warm and welcoming people," Dr. Shahnazarian said. "They have been like parents to me."

# Young Goalie's Goal Is Simple: Help Sick Children



*Andrew Brandon is joined by his parents, Dr. Mark and Bianca Brandon, in presenting a check for the Pediatric Unit to Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.*

He may only be in the eighth grade, but Andrew Brandon already knows about the value of community service.

A hockey player since he was five, Andrew has put his love of the sport to work for a good cause, the Pediatric Unit at Richmond University Medical Center. For every save he makes as a goalie on his hockey team, Metropolitan Militia, he makes a personal pledge and asks others to do the same.

"If I make 10 saves, even at 50 cents per save, that's \$5 or whatever anyone wants to contribute — even more if possible," Andrew explained to a Staten Island Advance reporter.

In spite of interruptions caused by the pandemic, the young philanthropist managed more than 1,000 saves over a few seasons, which amounted to a substantial donation.

On April 9, 2022, at the second annual Arnold Obey/RUMC 5K Run/Walk/Bike event at Clove Lakes Park, a delighted Andrew presented a check for \$6,025 to the Pediatric Unit.

The pre-teen was especially interested in raising money for sick children when he learned about the hospital's new unit from his father, Mark Brandon, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at RUMC.

"My dad works at the hospital where he is donating to the Pediatric Unit, where there are sick children. So I thought I might as well help them as well," the Castleton Corners youngster told the Advance.

Andrew was also inspired to create the campaign because a fellow student at St. Joseph Hill Academy had been sick for several years.



Dr. Brandon pitched in by distributing flyers and posting them in the staff lounge, encouraging his colleagues to support the cause.

Andrew, who also plays with the Richmond County Baseball Club at Snug Harbor, has now surpassed his fund-raising goal of \$10,000 and has raised over \$14,000 for the Pediatric Unit. He plans to use a website and social media to spread the word.



# ***Hylan Company Golf Outing Supports Palliative Care***



*Robert DiLeo, Thomas Forlenza, MD, John DiLeo, Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, Robert Bianco, Carmine Manna, and Joseph Romano.*

HYLAN, a leading communications solutions company, hosted its fifth annual golf outing on Monday, September 25, at Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson, New Jersey.

A record number of golfers were greeted with gray skies and light rain, but the sun was shining on RUMC, as the event raised an impressive \$75,000.

“We are grateful to Robert DiLeo, John DiLeo Jr., and Robert Bianco for leading this effort. My thanks to the entire HYLAN team and the outing sponsors for their generous support,” said RUMC President and Chief Executive Officer Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE.

Under the direction of Dr. Thomas J. Forlenza, Chief of Palliative Care, the goal of the program is to improve the quality of life for patients and their families dealing with a diagnosis and the symptoms of a limiting, serious, or even terminal illness.

Dr. Forlenza shared that this gift was “a dream come true as we work to enhance palliative care with a dedicated pain management program, music therapy, and pastoral care services.”

## ***Generous Gift from Incredibly Blessed to Make the Lives of RUMC Patients Better***

AnnMarie Catello, founder of Incredibly Blessed, presented Daniel J. Messina, PhD, FACHE, President and Chief Executive Officer of Richmond University Medical Center, and Thomas J. Forlenza, MD, RUMC’s Chief of Palliative Care, with a \$50,000 check for the Palliative Care Unit at their fourth Annual Holiday Gala on December 1.

“Our Palliative Care Program is a comprehensive resource, providing patients direction and support with compassion and dignity. We are grateful to AnnMarie, the Board, and members of Incredibly Blessed for their extraordinary support and partnership,” shared Dr. Forlenza.

Plans for expanding and enhancing the Palliative Care Program include establishing a Pain Management Unit and the addition of a Music Therapy Program to provide comfort and assist patients and their families in coping with their illness.

Incredibly Blessed is a non-profit charity serving the people of Staten Island.

“I am convinced that by sharing kindness with others, we all have the power to change this world ... one act of kindness at a time,” shared Catello.

“We share similar missions,” offered Dan Messina. “We work to bring the highest quality, compassionate healthcare to the Staten Island Community, one patient at a time. All of us at RUMC are honored and grateful to be the beneficiaries of this outstanding event.”



*Vienna Profetta, Dan Messina, and AnnMarie Catello at the Incredibly Blessed Gala. (Photo Courtesy of the Staten Island Advance)*



## RUMC Pediatrics Gets the Help of “Angels”



(l-r): Milla Ahmadullina, Regional Director, Richmond Health Network; Joseph Burt, Vice President, Development; and Catherine Burns from Angels on the Bay.

On October 18, Richmond University Medical Center was one of several hospitals honored by Angels on the Bay, a Queens-based nonprofit supporting programs and facilities that provide quality health care and services to children. Angels

on the Bay presented RUMC with a check for \$22,815. Based in Howard Beach, Queens, Angels on the Bay has supported RUMC annually for the past several years.

## RUMC Receives Support from the Northfield Bank Foundation



On May 1, 2023, the Northfield Bank Foundation held its annual golf outing at the Richmond County Country Club. Proceeds from the event benefited Richmond University Medical Center and other non-profit organizations in the area. Pictured at the check presentation are Steve Klein, Chairman, President, and CEO of Northfield Bank and RUMC Board of Trustees member;

Daniel J. Messina, FACHE, President and CEO of the hospital; Timothy C. Harrison, Chair, RUMC Board of Trustees and the Northfield Bank Foundation Directors; and John C. Santora, Vice President, RUMC Board of Trustees and member, RUMC Foundation Board of Directors.

## The Magic of the Season

Several community organizations and local companies helped to make the holidays special for our youngest patients by providing toys for children treated at RUMC and our Family Health Center at 800 Castleton Avenue.



*Angela Olsen and Ronald Cutrone pose with RUMC staff.*



*Knights of Pythias, left to right, Alan Kaplan, Avery Marder, Bob Degennaro, Madeline Quinn, Donna Martino, Hospital Teacher, Susan Gilliam, PCA.*



*Left to right, Elizabeth Pinciotto, Registrar, Paula Caputo, Assistant Vice President, Ambulatory Care Services, Camille Pace, M. Donato & Company Real Estate, Lauren Wall, Administrative Assistant, M. Donato & Company Real Estate and Anthony Lugara, Director of Operations, M. Donato & Company Real Estate.*



*Ebrard Evangelista, age 3, and his sister, Leslie, age 12, receive gifts donated by M. Donato & Company Real Estate, New Dorp High School and Mike's Oakwood Diner.*



*Matthew Perfetto, Patricia Perfetto, Foundation Board Member, Donna Martino, Hospital Teacher, Joseph Burt, VP Development, and Yazmin Diaz-Nieves, Child Life Specialist.*





**ARNOLD OBEY/RUMC**

# **5K** RUN OR **WALK**

**SATURDAY,  
APRIL 13, 2024**

**CLOVE LAKES PARK**

1150 CLOVE RD., STATEN ISLAND, NY 10301

**PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THE FAMILY OF  
RORY DECRISTOFORO**

**REGISTRATION AT 8AM**

**KIDS DASH STARTS AT 9AM • 5K RUN STARTS AT 9:30AM**

**5K WALK STARTS AT 9:45AM**

Awards Reception to be held immediately after the conclusion of the race at  
**Headquarters of Staten Island Marine Corps League Detachment 246, 46 Ontario Avenue, SI, NY 10301**

Food and drinks will be provided

Race participants and kids are free • All other guests \$10

**For more information, visit [rumcsi.org/5K](http://rumcsi.org/5K)** *Race shirts will not be guaranteed on the day of the race.*

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*We Care For You Like Family, Because You Are.*



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