Columbia University Medical Center’s Department of Anesthesiology is pleased to announce a $2,500,000 campaign to establish an endowed Professorship in the Division of Obstetric Anesthesiology to honor the life and work of Virginia Apgar, M.D. This professorship, to be held by the Division Chair, would pay tribute to Dr. Apgar’s legacy while recognizing superior achievement in the individual appointed. In addition, the Professorship will provide strength and direction through a steady funding stream that will permit the Division Chair to expand the Division’s efforts in research, patient care, and education.

Your investment in the vital area of faculty development ensures that Columbia retains visionary leadership and continues to break new ground in the field of obstetric anesthesiology, giving the patients who come through our doors today and tomorrow the opportunity to experience the utmost in patient care during their birthing experience. We would be delighted to have your partnership in this worthy endeavor, and thank you for your consideration.

The Division of Obstetric Anesthesiology: From one generation to the next

In 1952, Dr. Virginia Apgar first presented the scoring system that would make her famous—the Apgar test, which measures a baby’s heart rate, respiratory effort, muscle tone, reflex irritability and color at birth. The Apgar test continues to be the best predictor of infant health in the first month of life and is used throughout the world. Dr. Apgar received her medical degree from P&S and was the first woman to be named full professor at the medical school. During her tenure she not only created the Apgar test, but also developed the then new anesthesiology division where she conducted research into the effects of anesthesia given to mothers during childbirth, and led the effort to discontinue the use of those that were harmful to newborns.

Today, the Division of Obstetric Anesthesia carries on Dr. Apgar’s pioneering legacy and thrives under the leadership of Richard Smiley, M.D., Ph.D., Director of Obstetrical Anesthesia and Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology in OB-GYN. Dr. Smiley is renowned for both his expert clinical care and his robust research on the effect of genetic variation on the response to anesthesia, analgesia and pregnancy. The
Division of Obstetric Anesthesia, in the Department of Anesthesiology, participates in over 7,100 deliveries each year, provides a high-risk consultation service as well as a patient education program, and runs the Critical Care Obstetric service in concert with the Obstetrics and Gynecology Divisions. The Division’s mission is to provide the best possible patient care, educate the next generation of obstetric anesthesiologists and pursue innovative research.

One of the division’s outstanding junior faculty members who represents the future of obstetric anesthesia is Elena Reitman, M.D. Dr. Reitman is a member of the Virginia Apgar Society at P&S which includes basic and clinical research fellows in the division. During her fellowship, Dr. Reitman chose to focus on obstetric pain and genomic research under the mentorship of Drs. Flood and Smiley. Of her experience as a fellow, Dr. Reitman says: “Being part of the Apgar program has given me the opportunity to work with some of the brightest minds in the field of Anesthesia. I have enjoyed a challenging and dynamic academic environment. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to learn and develop my research interests in such a collegiate and inspiring atmosphere. It has been a truly rewarding experience.”

With tremendous leadership at its helm, and a spectacular group of promising young physician-scientists working together, the Division of Obstetric Anesthesiology upholds the standards of care and innovation set forth by Dr. Apgar. The Virginia Apgar Professorship of Anesthesiology will pay due tribute to Dr. Apgar’s important contributions to the field as well as bolster the current leadership and help secure the Division’s future for generations to come.

**Contributing To The Virginia Apgar Professorship of Anesthesiology**

Appointment to an endowed professorship is the highest honor Columbia University can bestow upon a faculty member. The establishment of this professorship will have far-reaching impact, and will guarantee that the important work of Dr. Smiley and his talented faculty continues. In the event that we are not able to reach this ambitious goal of $2,500,000 to establish a full Professorship, we will establish an Assistant/Associate Professorship, or create an endowed Fund to support research and fellowships within the Division of Obstetric Anesthesiology.

For more information about our campaign to establish The Virginia Apgar Professorship of Anesthesiology, please contact:

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