

Outstanding Miller School Instructors Honored with George Paff Awards

Students at the Miller School of Medicine recently honored 11 faculty members with George Paff Awards for their outstanding teaching abilities. Three others were recognized with the J. Donald Temple, M.D., Unsung Hero Award for demonstrating exceptional service and commitment to medical education.

“Every year, students cast ballots to nominate faculty and staff members who go above and beyond their responsibilities to deliver the highest quality of education and mentorship,” said Ashley Vander Does, class of 2022 and co-chair of the George Paff Awards Committee. “Although this year’s in-person ceremony was canceled due to the pandemic, we will not let the efforts of our amazing teachers and mentors go unrecognized.”



Dr. George H. Paff with students.

Vander Does noted that the 2019-2020 academic year was filled with extra challenges that required adaptability, thoughtfulness, and empathy. “Many faculty members had to dispose of their well-thought plans and schedules and adapt to providing education online,” she said. “The Miller School is fortunate to have many dedicated, passionate, and hard-working instructors to assist us in our development into future physicians. For that, we thank you.”

The annual awards honor George H. Paff, Ph.D., a legendary UM professor of anatomy who used a wide range of teaching methods to engage medical students and help them learn the core concepts of his field. Students on the 2019-2020 Paff Awards Committee included Shannon Wagner, John Tsatalis, Akshat Sanan, Brianna Mussman, and Brianna Valdes.

“Let me add my congratulations to all the winners of these awards,” said Latha Chandran, M.D., M.P.H., executive dean and founding chair of the Miller School Department of Education. “Thank you for your dedication to teaching our students. They deserve our best, and you all serve as the role models!”

Here are the recipients of the 2019-2020 George Paff Teaching Awards, along with select quotes from students:

Class of 2022 M.D.

- Pasquale W. Benedetto, M.D., professor of medicine. “Dr. Benedetto’s passion for shared decision making in the field of hematology and oncology, attention to detail in

- the lecture hall and willingness to teach in the hospital makes for a unique learning experience.”
- Warren Kupin, M.D., professor of medicine. “Dr. Kupin delivers quality medical education that provides memorable, easily understood and distilled scientific and medical content. He highlights relevant information, and dives into detail.”
 - Daniel Sussman, M.D., associate professor of clinical medicine. “Dr. Sussman encouraged creative thinking, inquisitive investigation, and helped develop our strong foundation for pathophysiology. His empathy, assuredness, and good nature are all things that I hope to model in my own future medical career.”

Class of 2022 M.D./M.P.H.

- Warren Kupin, M.D., professor of medicine. “Dr. Kupin is a wonderful educator and mentor, with a genuine passion for teaching. He possesses a wonderful ability to break down tough subjects and make them accessible to students. His enthusiasm was infectious and he made learning fun!”
- Daniel Sussman, M.D., associate professor of clinical medicine. “Dr. Sussman treats us like future colleagues and enjoys engaging with students. I particularly loved his dry sense of humor and his patience and amusement with even the most hypothetical of questions. I think everyone in the class agreed his course was well organized, well rounded, and overall excellent.”
- Jeffrey Brosco, M.D., Ph.D., professor of clinical pediatrics. “Dr. Brosco made us think about the challenges in medicine that make it an art. I always

left his lectures and small groups with a slightly different perspective on some issue in medicine. He engages students and directs discussion about difficult topics with ease.”

Class of 2023 M.D.

- Douglas Broadfield, Ph.D., associate professor of cell biology. “Dr. Broadfield was always very enthusiastic to teach. We asked him so many questions, and he was always willing to help us. His patience and desire for students to learn was always very evident.”
- Thomas Champney, Ph.D., associate professor of cell biology and anatomy. “Dr. Champney’s courses were always organized, thoughtful, and intentional. His expectations were clear and high, which I think really helped us step up and amaze ourselves with how much we really could learn.”
- Michael Dyal, M.D., assistant professor of medicine. “Dr. Dyal’s passion for cardiology is infectious and we could all tell he wanted to make the module the best it could be for us. He is a fantastic educator and clinician.”
- Carmen Gomez-Fernandez, M.D., professor of clinical pathology. “Dr. Gomez loves pathology. I can still hear her voice when I look at pathology slides. Her excitement made me think about becoming a pathologist – something I never considered.”

Class of 2023 M.D./M.P.H.

- Gauri Agarwal, M.D., associate professor of medicine and associate dean for clinical curriculum. “Dr. Agarwal is

a wonderful teacher who takes the time to clearly explain difficult material. I appreciate her as a teacher inside and outside of the classroom.”

- Raymond Balise, Ph.D., assistant professor of biostatistics. “Dr. Balise is a rare and special individual. He makes statistics digestible and enjoyable. His kindness towards his students set the tone for how we should act towards one another.”
- Alberto Caban-Martinez, Ph.D., D.O., M.P.H., assistant professor of public health sciences. “Dr. Caban’s passion for medicine is evident in each interaction. He has opened my eyes to what medicine can look like, sparked passion for projects, and through his example encouraged me to shoot for more in my studies and career.”

J. Donald Temple, M.D., Unsung Hero Award

- Chrisfouad Alabiad, M.D., associate professor of clinical medicine and assistant dean for student affairs, Miami campus. “Dr. Alabiad goes above and beyond for students. He is a fabulous mentor and teacher. He helps students in times of need and is a huge staple in the student support system of Miller.”
- Richard Riley, Ph.D., professor of microbiology and immunology, associate dean for preclinical medical curriculum, and director for curriculum, M.D./M.P.H. program. “Along with managing the curriculum, Dr. Riley was one of my best professors. He goes above and beyond for us in every way possible.”
- Stephen Symes, M.D., associate professor of clinical medicine. “Dr. Symes is the epitome of service. He

selflessly volunteers his time and knowledge to help those who are most in need. He is an inspiration to us with a calm demeanor and passion for connecting with students. His altruistic involvement with free clinics and services (Center for Haitian Studies, the Human Rights Asylum Clinic, and THRIVE) is the perfect reminder of what it looks like to provide compassionate care for the community.”

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