



VAGELOS COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
CLASS OF 2025  
WHITE COAT CEREMONY

AUGUST 20, 2021  
2:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

PROCESSION

Class of 2025

WELCOME

Lisa Mellman, MD

*Samuel Rudin Professor of Psychiatry at CUMC  
Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs*

INVOCATION

Jewelnel Davis, MDiv, MSW  
*University Chaplain*

GREETINGS

Anil Rustgi, MD

*Interim Executive Vice President and  
Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine  
Herbert and Florence Irving Professor of Medicine  
Director, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center*

Monica Lypson, MD, MHPE  
*Professor of Medicine at CUMC  
Vice Dean for Education*

THE EIGHTH  
FERN FELDMAN ANOLICK-GOLD  
FOUNDATION LECTURE

Sonia Y. Angell, MD, MPH  
*Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine*

PRESENTATION OF WHITE COATS

CLASS OF 2025 OATH

Lisa Mellman, MD

CLOSING REMARKS

Laura Forese, MD, MPH

*Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of NewYork-Presbyterian*

Anil Rustgi, MD

BENEDICTION

Chaplain Jewelnel Davis

Music provided by the VP&S Musicians Guild  
Lunch to students generously sponsored by NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital  
Student white coats sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation

## ABOUT VP&S

Founded in 1767, Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons (VP&S) was the second medical school established in the Colonies and the first to grant an MD degree, in 1770. VP&S became part of the nation's first academic medical center in 1928 when Columbia and Presbyterian Hospital (now NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital) moved to a 20-acre campus in New York City's Washington Heights neighborhood. VP&S ranks consistently among the very best medical schools in the nation and is also one of the nation's most research-intensive medical schools. Medical advances of VP&S faculty include creation of the Apgar score to assess the health of newborns, identification of a new genetic link for age-related macular degeneration, pioneering ways to use antibodies to treat the coronavirus, and Nobel Prize-winning research on topics such as cardiac catheterization, the molecular basis of memory, and the genetics of smell. Noted alumni include Benjamin Spock, better known as "Dr. Spock;" Charles Drew, a pioneer in blood banking; Allen Oldfather Whipple, who developed the Whipple procedure; astronaut Story Musgrave; novelist Walker Percy; industrialist Armand Hammer; Olympic swimming medalist Jenny Thompson; and Burrill Crohn, for whom Crohn's disease is named. Four VP&S graduates, six other former VP&S trainees, and eight faculty members—including three current faculty—have received Nobel Prizes. Since 1993 VP&S has been proud to host the White Coat Ceremony, which is also now a tradition at medical schools throughout the United States.

### VP&S SENIOR LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Anil Rustgi, MD

*Interim Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculties of  
Health Sciences and Medicine*

Monica Lypson, MD, MHPE

*Vice Dean for Education*

Lisa Mellman, MD

*Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs*

Hilda Hutcherson, MD

*Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs*

Anne Armstrong-Coben, MD

*Senior Associate Dean for Admissions*

Janis Cutler, MD

*Interim Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs*

Anil Lalwani, MD

*Associate Dean for Student Research*

Joseph Giovanelli

*Associate Dean for Education Administration*

## WHITE COAT HISTORY

The white coat is a symbolic, non-verbal communication used in our society to connote the role of the physician and our fundamental belief in science and medicine. Serving as a guidepost in the doctor-patient relationship, the dress of the physician reflects the serious purpose at hand and implies professional interest in the patient. The dress of the healer is rooted in history, as with tribal healers and medicine men. The dress of the physician must convey to even the most anxious patients reassurance that their complaints will be addressed sincerely and competently. Invoking compassion, the white coat is a powerful symbol to be worn respectfully and with humility.

White is a symbol of life, purity, and innocence, implying no malice or harm. In Judaism, the white kittel is worn at two important life events, as a wedding robe and in death as a burial shroud. Christ, and the saints, seen not merely as being powerful but also supremely good, are portrayed robed in white. Islamic prophets are often pictured in white, as is Buddha. The blindfolded Roman goddess of justice, seen holding balanced scales, is clothed in white. White signifies a super-human power, as cleanliness is next to godliness.

The physician's attire is a relatively modern invention, though one also steeped in history. Medicine men used a variety of symbols, including, in one tribe, a black circle above the ear and a bag around the waist. In other tribes, varied outfits were worn to control evil spirits and disease. In recent centuries, the coat became central. In the 17th century, a long coat signified a physician, while a short one represented the surgeon.

By the 19th century, three factors further influenced the use of the white coat. First, germs were discovered to be a basis for disease, leading to vital understanding of the role of asepsis in disease prevention. Although in paintings of operating theaters from the 1840s no one is wearing a white coat, in photographs from a mere 40 years later, surgeons and nurses wear short-sleeved white coats. White coats in the operating room serve as an aseptic barrier between patients and caretakers.

The second influence of the 19th century, first promoted centuries earlier by Hippocrates, was the emergence of science. Science replaced the old "cures," even quackery, of medicine. Physicians began to base care on scientific principles, leading to further validation of science from the laboratory in the practice of medicine.

In the early 20th century, physicians began to wear the long white coat worn by laboratory scientists to show the importance of science in medicine. The white coat implied physicians were capable of defeating the deadly scourges that plagued mankind, rendering them innocuous. The physician/scientist was granted tremendous authority, respect, and permission to touch patients and become intimate with their private lives. The third factor influencing the role of the white coat was the emergence of the hospital as the site for the care of the sick. Before hospitals existed, the sick were tended to and died in the privacy of their homes. Physicians in long dark coats were invited to tend to those dying at home and students wore black when working on

## WHITE COAT HISTORY

cadavers. Nurses from religious orders, dressed in black and white and representing death and mourning, nursed the poor in alms houses. When hospitals were built, clerical caretakers wore black robes, conveying mourning. Nurses began wearing white uniforms in the early 1900s, and interns quickly followed in white coats and pants.

Physicians' access to the patient in a setting other than home and access to the patient's body were mediated by the white coat. Before the 20th century, medicine was not invasive. As active intervention in the patient's health and body increased, so did the need for a protective barrier between doctor and patient: the gown for the patient and white coat for the physician. In modern times, a clean, white hospital coat implies knowledge, compassion, and protection from harm. The white coat permits patient and physician to meet in a trusting relationship in which health of the patient is foremost.

In our country, violating the rights of another's body invokes potential accusations of battery. Touching may be construed as battery. Access to the mind and the body of another is a unique privilege, one bestowed upon the physician, for the patient reveals the secrets of their innermost soul, submitting to the physician's most thorough scrutiny. The white coat conveys a professional relationship, even in doctor-patient interactions that may be, at times, unsettling.

The white coat is the cloak that gives you, the student-physician, the sacred right of access to your patients and the responsibility to maintain their confidentiality. You must never wear it with arrogance, contempt, or undue authority. Beginning today, you assume the responsibility for the care of your patients, for respectful excellent care, and promise to act as their advocate. Although modern medicine focuses on patients, their families, communities, and even populations, and care is often team-oriented, you have a special relationship with each individual patient. You must be humane, honorable, just, and compassionate. You will relieve pain and suffering; you will cure and you will care. Your patients should feel better after they have been seen by you. That very special, private interaction between doctor and patient is sacred. You, in turn, will grow in understanding, tolerance, knowledge, empathy, and the commitment to values other than self. Be kind, be on time, be respectful. The white coat you don today is a cloak of compassion and an honor to wear.

## THE ARNOLD P. GOLD FOUNDATION

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation was founded to perpetuate the tradition of the caring physician. The Foundation's mission is to advance humanism in medicine and help to build a health care workforce that values, provides, and protects compassionate care.

The Foundation has been instrumental in developing, through curriculae, research, conferences, ceremonies, and awards, more than 20 diverse programs that support the education and training of humanistic providers. The Foundation's focus on humanistic values and behaviors in the medical education experience begins on the first day of medical school and continues through the last day of residency and into practice.

Inspiration for the Foundation's work emanates from the leadership of Arnold P. Gold, MD, a role model physician and mentor. Dr. Gold, until his death in January 2018, was a Professor of Clinical Neurology and Clinical Pediatrics at VP&S for more than 40 years. He believed that, with proper instruction, personalized mentoring, recognition, and rewards, medical students will acquire the "habit of humanism" and thereby improve patient care, thus fulfilling his vision of people and their relationships at the center of every health care interaction.

A signature program of the Foundation, offered to medical schools throughout the United States and abroad, is the White Coat Ceremony. The Foundation developed this ritual based on the conviction that students be given a clear set of expectations and responsibilities appropriate for the medical profession upon entering medical school. The White Coat Ceremony was established to celebrate this important transition and to promote within students a strong commitment to humanistic practice as future physicians. Initiated in 1993 at VP&S, the Arnold P. Gold White Coat Ceremony or similar rite of passage is now a tradition welcoming students into the medical profession at 96% of the nation's schools of medicine and osteopathy.

Since 1993 the VP&S White Coat Ceremony has been supported by the Foundation, with founding philanthropic generosity from Russell Berrie. Mr. Berrie made a difference in the lives of many by devoting his endless energy and resources to charitable causes, including the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center at Columbia University Irving Medical Center. He believed strongly in the value of community, and the Russell Berrie Foundation continues to focus on community giving and major initiatives in research and humanistic treatments that it hopes will lead to new medical breakthroughs.

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation is a public, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charity, established in 1988 by Drs. Arnold and Sandra Gold with colleagues at VP&S and dedicated community leaders and philanthropists.

THE ANNUAL FERN FELDMAN ANOLICK-GOLD  
FOUNDATION LECTURE

In 2014, Sheldon Feldman, MD, established the Fern Feldman Anolick-Gold Foundation Lectureship to be presented annually at the VP&S White Coat Ceremony. The lectureship honors Dr. Feldman's late sister, Fern, whose legacy of compassion for others resonates perfectly with the Arnold P. Gold Foundation's mission to nurture future generations of caring physicians.

Fern, the daughter of Betty and Seymour Feldman, was born on August 2, 1942, in Brooklyn, New York. A beautiful, happy, loving child, Fern had a magnetic personality that lit up every room with her presence. Her approach to everyday living was defined by passion and generosity. At age 18, after excelling academically, Fern married Irwin Anolick, the love of her life, and shortly thereafter gave birth to three wonderful children, Elyse, Marc, and Keith. She was a devoted mother, wife, daughter, sister, and aunt. Innately compassionate, Fern had scores of devoted friends who loved her deeply and she was always more concerned about others than herself. Tragically, Fern lost her courageous battle against breast cancer at age 37, depriving her of the chance to meet her four grandchildren and two nephews. She is a guardian angel who continues to inspire her brother, Dr. Feldman, in his tireless fight against breast cancer. This lecture at VP&S honors her memory, as does the Fern Feldman Anolick Breast Cancer Center at Benedictine Hospital in Kingston, New York. In the brief time Fern was here, she made the world a better place.

Sonia Y. Angell MD, MPH

Sonia Angell, MD, MPH, is a physician, epidemiologist, and expert in public health, policy, and systems change, with over 15 years of experience working in population health from local to global levels.

She is assistant clinical professor of medicine at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and an assistant attending physician at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center

She is former Director of the California Department of Public Health and California State Public Health Officer (2019-2020) and a former Deputy Commissioner at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (2014-2019). She was a senior advisor on Global Noncommunicable Diseases and founder of the Global Noncommunicable Disease Unit at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta (2011-2014). Before that, she was founding director of the Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Control Program for the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (2004-2011).

Dr. Angell is the author or co-author of more than 100 presentations, abstracts, chapters, editorials, and publications, and she has served on numerous boards and committees at the local, regional, national, and international levels. She was a member of the National Academy of Medicine's Committee on Strategies to Reduce Sodium

THE ANNUAL FERN FELDMAN ANOLICK-GOLD  
FOUNDATION LECTURE

Intake in the United States and a member of the Lancet Commission on Hypertension. She also co-chaired the American Heart Association 2030 Goal Setting Task Force. In 2020, she received the American Heart Association's Chairman's Award.

Dr. Angell is board certified in internal medicine. She received her medical degree from the University of California San Francisco and completed an internal medicine residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital. She has a Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and a Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan. She is a former Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar and a Fellow of the second class of the Aspen Institute Health Innovators Program. In 2020, she was elected to the National Academy of Medicine.



CLASS OF 2025

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Claudia Aiello               | Bryton Fett        |
| Temitope Akinade             | Harrison Fillmore  |
| Sofia Ali                    | Sophie Fisher      |
| Alina Andrews                | Grace Franzese     |
| Chloe Ayers                  | Courtney Gao       |
| Ketty Bai                    | Kiavash Garakani   |
| Johnathan Bailey             | Mariam Gbadamosi   |
| Connor Barrett               | Jacob Gonzalez     |
| Michelle Batlle              | Lindsey Gorsch     |
| Thomas Benz                  | Alaka Gorur        |
| Kishan Bhatt                 | Laura Goy          |
| Luke Cai                     | Shawn Hadavi       |
| Hsin Yi Chen                 | Gregory Heinonen   |
| Justin Cheong                | Thomas Heisler     |
| Justin Chestang              | Katherine Ho       |
| Isadora Comens               | Katharina Horn     |
| Gabriel Conte Cortez Martins | Harrison Howell    |
| Kevin Crosby                 | Charlene Hsu       |
| Katherine Cunningham         | Isaac Hughes       |
| Alexander Dagi               | Emily Ishak        |
| Gabriel Dardik               | Jenny Jin          |
| Joshua Dawson                | Matthew Johnson    |
| Audrey De Paepe              | Colby Joncas       |
| Elyse Decker                 | Ansley Jones       |
| Nicholas DeWalt              | Alexander Kaminsky |
| Sarah Diaddigo               | Cole Khamnei       |
| Quang Do                     | Nadine Khoury      |
| Kateri Donahoe               | Michael Kirschner  |
| Jeremiah Douchee             | Moses Kitakule     |
| Edridge D'Souza              | Alex Klein         |
| Jacob Dubner                 | Peter Koch         |
| Kenechukwu Egbuonu           | Prashanth Kumar    |
| Dany El-Najjar               | Rachel Kutler      |
| Chisom Enwere                | Samantha Lai       |
| Gabriela Escalante           | Anna Lampe         |
| Mustafa Fattah               | Myles LaValley     |
| Iris Feng                    | Jonathan Lee       |

CLASS OF 2025

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Valia Leifer         | Catherine Shang    |
| Juliana Levy         | Benjamin Shapiro   |
| Justin Love          | Devlin Shea        |
| Benjamin Lynch       | Michelle Shui      |
| Konje Machini        | Carina Sirochinsky |
| Alysala Malik        | Catherine Smilow   |
| Jeremy McGale        | Victoria Solomon   |
| Kathryn McHenry      | Matthew Spence     |
| Julie McInvale       | Arin Stowman       |
| Apoorva Mehta        | Dean Strup         |
| Amanda Mitchell      | Varun Sudunagunta  |
| Jude Okonkwo         | Sararose Suhl      |
| Olufemi Olatidoye    | Anna Sun           |
| Oliver Oz            | Timothy Swingle    |
| Cheryl Pan           | Caroline Taber     |
| James Park           | Adrian Thompson    |
| Alexander Pascal     | Emma Tucker        |
| Andres Pascual-Leone | Carly Tymm         |
| Kathleen Perry       | Michelle Vancura   |
| Jasmyne Pierre       | Charu Vyas         |
| Oliver Piltch        | Emma Weatherford   |
| Isabella Pirozzolo   | Hannah Weinstein   |
| Carolyna Quiles Luna | Isaac Wendler      |
| Gerardo Ramos-Lemos  | Moshe Willner      |
| Jonah Rodgers        | Gabrielle Wimer    |
| Nathaniel Rolfe      | Christine Yang     |
| Lielle Ross          | Mitchell Yeary     |
| Joseph Ryu           | Peter Zeiger       |
| Tiana Saak           | Ashley Zhou        |
| Prateek Sahni        |                    |
| Sidney Saint-Hilaire |                    |
| Kimberly Sanchez     |                    |
| William Savage       |                    |
| Alexis Schiazza      |                    |
| Brian Schibler       |                    |
| Riley Sevensky       |                    |
| Mansi Shah           |                    |

*Class list as of July 16, 2021*

PREVIOUS WHITE COAT CEREMONY SPEAKERS AT VP&S

- 1993 Benjamin Carson
- 1994 David Rogers
- 1995 June Osborn
- 1996 Carola Eisenberg
- 1997 Jerome Groopman
- 1998 Kenneth Shine
- 1999 Margaret Heagarty
- 2000 Rachel Naomi Remen
- 2001 Maureen Strafford
- 2002 Benjamin Carson
- 2003 Jordan Cohen
- 2004 Antonia Novello
- 2005 Daniel Federman
- 2006 David Leach
- 2007 Abraham Verghese
- 2008 Thomas Inui
- 2009 Ezekiel Emanuel
- 2010 Rita Charon
- 2011 Jo Ivey Boufford
- 2012 Kenneth Forde
- 2013 Siddhartha Mukherjee
- 2014 Olajide Williams
- 2015 Paul Appelbaum
- 2016 P. Roy Vagelos
- 2017 Eric R. Kandel
- 2018 Darrell G. Kirch
- 2019 Gerald E. Thomson
- 2020 Angela Mills



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