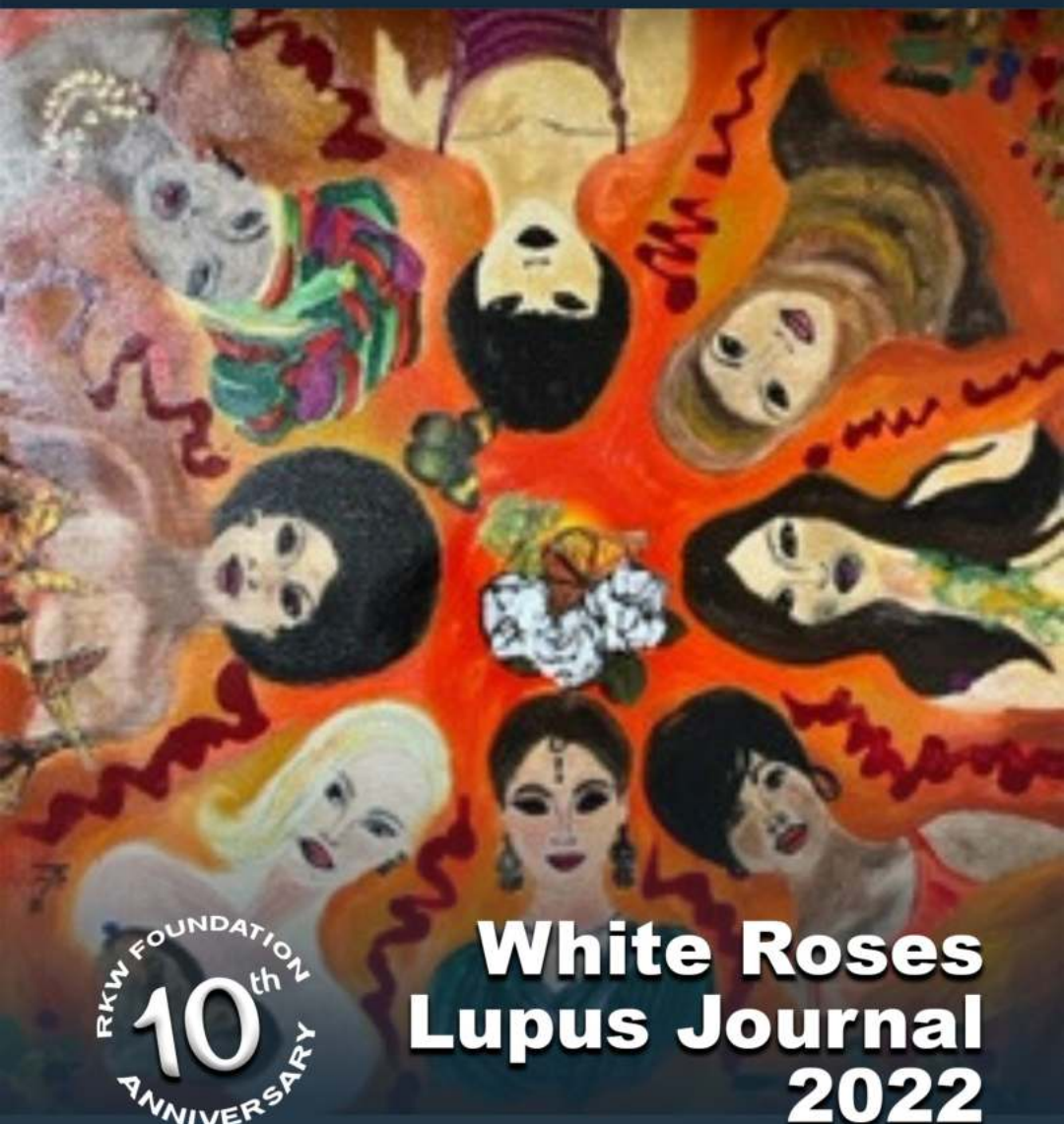


Journal 2022



**ROSEMARIE K. WITTER
FOUNDATION**

WHITE ROSES FOR A LUPUS CURE



RKW FOUNDATION
10th
ANNIVERSARY

**White Roses
Lupus Journal
2022**

www.rkwfoundation.org

Congratulations

to our Jaspán Schlesinger LLP partner

FRANK C. DELL' AMORE

on being selected as a

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OUR MISSION


The Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting medical research in finding effective treatment, leading to a cure for Lupus. The foundation promotes healthy lifestyles by presenting Wellness forums. As a sponsor of the Rose Garden Scholarship Fund; the foundation will award scholarships to women afflicted with Lupus who are pursuing a college degree thus assisting them financially to pursue their education.



Greetings, on behalf of the Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation, Inc. as we celebrate our 10th anniversary. We extend our sincere gratitude for your support towards our commitment to finding effective medical treatment for Lupus and ultimately a cure, while offering scholarship opportunities to young women. The RKW Foundation is unique as we are small, however committed and determined. We are extremely grateful for all the support received during the pandemic affording us the opportunity to fulfill our mission in 2020, 2021 and now 2022. As a result of this challenging time, we were forced to be creative to raise funds due to social distancing. Therefore, the RKW Team turned to technology in 2020 and created their first Virtual Wellness and Healthy Cooking Forum and first Virtual Lupus Stride; two very successful events. In 2021, we added a virtual art class RKW Paint and Sip along with the Healthy Cooking Forum and the Virtual 5K Race. All these events were successful in affording us the opportunity to present “RKW Honoree Night,” where we recognized our Sponsors and 5K finalist in person and via zoom.

As we move forward in this post pandemic climate; the RKW Team continues to support Lupus research, as the work must go on. We are exposed to Lupus up close and personal. In 2002, my sister Rosemarie Karenza Witter lost the battle to this dreadful disease at the youthful age of thirty-seven, in the prime of her life, an intellectual, Mechanical Engineer, with hopes of attending law school. Rosemarie – affectionately known as “Rosie” – was a humanitarian who genuinely cared about her fellow man. The vision to launch this foundation came to me immediately after Rosie’s passing, however it took 10 years to finally move forward. In July of 2012, the Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation, Inc. debuted as a nonprofit organization and was awarded the 501(c)(3) exempt status. Our mission is to raise significant funds to partner with research scientist, sharing some of our observations about patterns, in particularly people with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) (an autoimmune disease), in which the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue. In addition, a portion of the funds raised, will assist women in college suffering from this disease with a scholarship.

In 2011, BENLYSTA was the first and only drug approved to treat lupus in more than 50 years. This medicine was the first drug developed



specifically for Lupus since the disease was discovered more than a century ago. The good news is in 2021, the FDA has approved Saphnelo as a Lupus drug treatment. It is approved to treat moderate to severe disease in adults receiving standard therapy, including oral corticosteroids, antimalarials, and immunosuppressants. Saphnelo will be available as an intravenous (IV) infusion that's administered by a healthcare professional every 4 weeks. Other approved medications for Lupus have been borrowed from other diseases and conditions. To date there is no cure for Lupus, the goal of treatment is to control symptoms. In conjunction with your support, the RKW Foundation, Inc. will continue to utilize various disciplinary approaches in our quest to finding effective treatment and ultimately a cure, by advocating for corporate investments (public & private) to fund our cause in pursuit of a scientific breakthrough.

In our recent communication with our lupus scientist Dr. Barbara Vilen Ph.D. stated that things in the lab are moving; she has almost completed her manuscript with next stage of successful findings. Furthermore, she stated donations are very much needed to move the positive findings she has discovered ahead. How exciting is this news and knowing that your support has made a difference in Lupus research where you can hear first-hand of how your donation has contributed to our mission. We are working on new initiatives to raise funds and look forward to sharing these new ideas in 2023. On behalf of the RKW Foundation, we would like to extend our appreciation and sincere thanks for your participation in this "White Roses Lupus Gala" charity event. We are grateful for your generosity in allowing us to bring awareness to this destructive disease – Lupus. In addition, we would like to express sincere appreciation to all our Sponsors & Donors; your commitment allows our team to focus and work towards the mission. Once again, thank you all for your committed support. I look forward to sharing some great news in the future!

Sincerely,
Marcia Witter-Williams Chairperson.

ROSE GARDEN LUPUS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation Inc. is honored to provide a scholarship to two young women who will be attending or is currently enrolled in a college/university and has been diagnosed with Lupus. To be eligible for consideration, applicants must meet the criteria for the scholarship guidelines as referenced in the application on our website.



HOW TO APPLY

STEP

1

Visit our website www.rkwfoundation.org
Select the scholarship tab

STEP

2

Submit the application and provide the following information by
October 1, 2022.:

- Application Essay
- Letter of Recommendation
- Complete Interview with the Board of Directors

STEP

3

Application review and award selection are based on:

- Eligibility Requirements
- Scholarship award grant winner will be announced on 11/6/2022 during our RKW Foundation 10th Anniversary White Roses Gala

CONTACT US



www.rkwfoundation.org



info@rkwfoundation.org



www.facebook.com/rkwfoundation



[rkwf4lupus](https://twitter.com/rkwf4lupus)

About **ROSEMARIE K. WITTER**



Rosemarie K. Witter was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and grew up in New York City. She earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and aspired to study for a law degree. In 2002, her life was cut short by Lupus before she even got a chance to pursue her life's dream. Affectionately known as Rosie, she was a loving and caring individual, and a humanitarian who was passionate about the causes in which she believed.

Had she lived, Rosemarie would have dedicated her life to finding a cure for Lupus and supporting research to identify new therapies. Her family and friends are committed to carrying the torch, and are honored to continue her legacy.

STILL, WE FIGHT

By S. Maria Salesman

*Rosemarie, brilliant was she, she was going to change the world
I know this, because I did not know her but somehow, she is changing me
Her presence can still be felt in the atmosphere, making sadness and sorrow
disappear
Her heart was open, her soul was pure
She had beauty with a purpose that could not be ignored
But lupus got a hold of her; it took her by surprise
It brought her down so quickly, but not without a fight
She never gave up, she gave her best
She fought with all her might, knowing an end was in sight
Lupus stripped her to the core, her body could take no more
She gave it her all, then on God she called
He answered and took her to a better place
A place with no more pain, no more sorrows to gain, no more sadness in sight,
no more she had to fight....ALONE
All the pain, all the tears, all the sorrows throughout the years have now left her
body for good
But she says to tell how wonderful it feels
Knowing ten long years have passed and gone, but her beautiful lupus warriors
are still going strong
So, sis, even though I was private and kept my feeling close
And that makes you wonder if what you are doing is to impose
Know that with the help of others you are doing an awesome job, even on those
days when you feel unsure
And to my beautiful lupus warriors, do not give up hope
Lupus has not seen the last of us
So, while lupus has robbed me of my physical being
And is still trying to steal survivors' beauty and self esteem
Still, we fight, fight for more
We fight for the cure*

MEET THE BOARD

Marcia Witter-Williams

President & Founder, Marcia serves as the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and Director of Development. Marcia is currently employed as a Banking professional in the financial industry; in addition, she is a Notary Public and is an active member in her local church. Marcia's eclectic background encompasses Art & Design, Paralegal Studies and Mortgage Banking. She obtained an Executive Master's in Business Administration (EMBA) from Hofstra University. Additional educational background consists of degrees in Fashion Design - F.I.T. (SUNY), Communication from the College of New Rochelle and a Paralegal Certificate.



Santo A. Cipolla

*Litigation Paralegal, Kramer
Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP*

Santo Cipolla has been on the Board of Directors of the Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation since its inception in 2012. Santo serves as Vice President and was the former secretary of the Rosemarie K. Witter Foundation. He became a Board Member due to his close family ties with the Witter family and his friendship to Rosie and has played an active role in the formation of the organization.

Santo Cipolla has over 37 years of experience as a paralegal. He is a native New Yorker. Born in Brooklyn and raised in Queens, he was



educated through the New York City public school system and attended the City University of New York at Queens College. In 1985, he graduated from Queens College with a B.A. in Political Science/Communications. In 1986, he enrolled in the ABA Approved Queens College Paralegal Program. From 1989 until 2019, he was a member of the Advisory Board to the Queens College Paralegal Studies Program. In addition, from 1995 until 2021, he was a member of the New Hyde Park Zoning Board of Appeals.

Throughout his paralegal career, he has worked in various New York City law firms and has worked on some very prominent cases. As a litigation paralegal at Kramer Levin, Santo has worked on some of the largest bankruptcy and litigation cases around. Santo worked with Rosemarie when they were both paralegals at Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle and then at Kramer Levin where he was a member of the Bankruptcy Department before becoming the litigation paralegal coordinator and senior litigation paralegal.

Santo has also devoted much of his career to pro bono cases involving political asylum, assisting Veterans with obtaining the necessary help that they need to survive. He also teamed up with his daughter Allison and her classmates to help the homeless. They traveled throughout Manhattan and offered the homeless sweaters, warm clothes, sneakers, and food.



Stacian Freckleton

Director of Communication and Marketing joined the Rosemarie K Witter Foundation board in 2020. The search for a cure is personal to her after losing a dear friend to Lupus, and later discovering that her goddaughter was diagnosed with this disease. Stacian has worked as a marketer in business for 20+ years. She is a proud Baruch College Alumni.

Charlene Quashie

Secretary Charlene has been a Lupus survivor for 28 years, and is an entrepreneur in both the Health & Fitness industries as well as Online Marketing. Her professional background includes working as an Administrative Assistant at a leading national law firm, and she is currently the owner of Charlene Quashie Enterprises, LLC. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration.



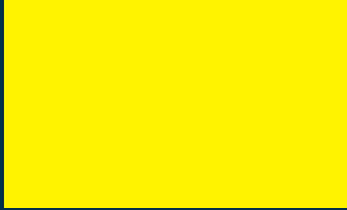
Maria Masi

Treasurer Maria has been in the Financial Services Industry for 30 years most of which has been devoted to banking. She holds a Bachelors degree in finance from Hofstra University. Maria has a family member who is a 25 year lupus survivor.



My name is Loredana Maliziola I was born in a small town in Lazio, Italy called Ceccano. It has been an honor to paint the cover portraits for the RKW Foundation for the last 6 years. I am a Lupus survivor, I continue my therapy sessions and take a variety of medications including an immune suppressant, which includes antirejection drugs used in transplant patients.

My passion now consists of painting portraits of women, this year portrait of women of different ethnics was very therapeutic. It was a reminder of how the illness impacts all genders and walk of life, reminding us we are not alone in our battle to beat Lupus.



I also love taking in puppies for which I find homes. My puppies are my family, they help me feel better and they are there for me, always keeping me company no matter how I'm feeling. In the past 10 years I feel blessed, even with this illness. My message to all my fellow Lupus sufferers and friends is to remember to love life and appreciate everything that life has to offer.

We are a gift and because of our conviction, tomorrow will always be one more day better for us.

FOCUS ON LUPUS

Barbara J. Vilen, PHD



Personal Statement

The goals of my research are to elucidate the mechanisms that regulate immune responses to self- and foreign-antigen, and to identify how these mechanisms are dysregulated in autoimmunity and host-pathogen responses. My experience studying MHC class II gene expression with Dr. Jenny Ting, and B cell signal transduction with Dr. John Cambier, provided a broad immunology background for studies aimed at achieving

these goals. Our recent studies (see #4 below) reveal that macrophages from lupus-prone (MRL/lpr) mice harbor defects in lysosomal acidification, diminishing degradation and promoting the recycling of Fc γ R-bound IgG-immune complexes (IgG-ICs) back to the cell surface. This creates a feedforward loop wherein lysosome dysfunction results from, and leads to, chronic Fc γ RI activation. Chronic

activation promotes autoantibody and BAFF secretion, and diminished lysosomal degradation prolongs intracellular residency of ICs. This induces phagosomes to leak apoptotic antigens and IgG into the cytosol activating innate sensors and promoting inflammation. In our collaboration with Dr. Phil Smith we are currently using mass spectrometry to assess whether chronic FcγRI signal transduction is the consequence of the diminished activity of SHP-1 in dephosphorylating the Immunoreceptor Tyrosine-based Activation Motif (ITAM) in the FcRγ chain of FcγRI. We also have an ongoing human translational study to define whether lysosome dysfunction is evident in human SLE and whether the accumulation of recycled antigens on the surface of blood cells associates with pathogenic hematopoietic subsets.

Positions and Honors

Position and Employment

1984-1986 Research Technician-University of Minnesota, Department of Medicine/Hematology, Minneapolis, MN, **Laboratory of Phil McGlave MD**

1986-1987 Research Technician-Mayo Clinic, Department of Immunology, Rochester, MN,

Laboratory of Paul Leibson MD/PhD

1987-1993 Graduate Student-University of N. Carolina-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC

Thesis Advisor: Jenny Ting PhD

1994-2000 Postdoctoral fellow-National Jewish Research Center, Denver, CO,

Post-doc Mentor: John Cambier PhD

2001-2007 Assistant Professor-Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

2008-present Associate Professor-Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Honors and Professional Memberships

1992 Lineberger Predoctoral Fellowship Award

1994 NRSA Postdoctoral Fellowship

1995 Leukemia Society Fellow Award

2000 NIAID Research Scholar Development Award

2008 Arthritis Foundation J.V. Satterfield Research Award

2009-2012 Associate Editor, Journal of Immunology

2012-2015 AAI Program Committee

2018 RoseMarie Witter Research Award

Contributions to Science

Overview: Our studies focus on B cell innate and adaptive immune responses during immunity and autoimmunity. We elucidated several mechanisms of B cell tolerance and identified how these mechanisms are overcome in murine systemic lupus erythematosus with ongoing studies assessing defects in human disease.

1. During my post-doc and the first years as an assistant professor my research focused on mechanisms of B cell tolerance involving the B cell antigen receptor (BCR). These studies identified that one mechanism of BCR desensitization resulted from dissociation of the Ig- α /Ig- α signal transducing complex from mu-heavy chain. Subsequent co-aggregation of receptors lacking Ig- α /Ig- α with signal competent receptors attenuated BCR-mediated signaling. Mechanistically, we found that unshoothing of mu-heavy chain was required for clathrin-mediated endocytosis and delivery of antigen to the lysosome for antigen processing/presentation.

a. Vilen, BJ, T Nakamura, JC Cambier. (1999) Antigen stimulated dissociation of BCR mIg from Ig-alpha/Ig-beta: Implications for receptor desensitization. *Immunity* 10: 239-248. PMID: 10072076.

b. Vilen, BJ, KM Burke, M Sleater, JC Cambier. (2002) Transmodulation of BCR signaling by transduction-incompetent receptors: implications for impaired signaling in anergic B cells. *J. Immunol.* 168:4344-4351. PMID: 11970976, PMCID: 3726184.

c. Kim, J-H, L Cramer, H Mueller, B Wilson, BJ Vilen. (2005) Independent trafficking of Ig-alpha/Ig-beta and mu-heavy chain is facilitated by dissociation of the B cell antigen receptor complex. *J. Immunol.* 175:147-154. PMID: 15972641, PMCID 3895480.

d. Kim J-H, JA Rutan, and BJ Vilen. (2007) The transmembrane tyrosine of mu-heavy chain is required for BCR destabilization and entry of antigen into clathrin-coated vesicles. *Int. Immunol.* 19(12):1403-1412. PMID: 17981794, PMCID: 3716379.

2. After my post-doc, my interest in tolerance extended to how autoreactive B cells were regulated during innate immune responses. Although TLR4 activation was known as a polyclonal activator of B cells, it remained unclear how autoreactive B cells maintained unresponsive during TLR4 stimulation since TLR4 is expressed on autoreactive and naïve cells. We found that concurrent TLR4 stimulation of dendritic cells and macrophages induced the secretion of IL-6 and soluble CD40L, which selectively repressed Ig secretion by autoreactive B cells. Mechanistically, chronic BCR signaling limited nuclear translocation of phospho-ERK. Thus, autoreactive B cells remain anergic because of receptor cross-talk between chronic BCR signaling and IL-6 receptor/CD40 signaling to regulate Ig secretion by TLR4. Current studies of B cell tolerance during innate immune activation focus on NLRC3, and its potential role as a negative regulator of Ig secretion upon innate stimulation of autoreactive B cells.

a. Kilmon, MA, JA Rutan, SH Clarke, BJ Vilen. (2005) Low-affinity, Smith antigen-specific B cells are tolerized by dendritic cells and macrophages. *J. Immunol-Cutting Edge* 175:37-41. PMID:15972629, PMCID: 3724409.

b. Kilmon, MA, NJ Wagner, AL Garland, L Lin, K Aviszus, LK Wysocki, BJ Vilen. (2007) Macrophages prevent the differentiation of autoreactive B cells by secreting CD40 ligand and interleukin-6. *Blood* 110:1595-1602. PMID: 17712049; PMCID: 1952615

c. Gilbert, MR, Wagner, NJ, SZ Jones, AB Wisz, J Roques, KN Krum, S-Y Lee, V Nicleleit, C Hulbert, JW Thomas, SB Gauld, and BJ Vilen. (2012) Autoreactive pre-plasma cells break tolerance in the absence of regulation by dendritic cells and macrophages. *J. Immunol.* 189: 711-20. PMID: 22675201, PMCID: 3392546.

d. Lee, S-R, Rutan, JA, MA Kilmon, NJ Wagner, SZ Jones, SH Clarke, and BJ Vilen. (2012) Receptor cross-talk spatially restricts p-ERK during TLR4 stimulation of autoreactive B cells. *J. Immunol.* 189: 3859-68. PMID: 22984080; PMCID: 3466401.

3. B cell memory is an important aspect of humoral immunity and autoreactive memory cells play a role in perpetuating autoimmune response. Our studies of B cell memory responses during immune activation to foreign antigens and pathogens identified that BAFF secretion, elicited by productive antigen-antibody immune complexes, is a key cytokine involved in upregulating Bcl-6 expression in activated T and B cells. We hypothesized that the lack of long-lasting protection following *Staphylococcus aureus* infection is disrupted because Protein A inhibits binding of immune complexes to Fc γ Rs. Instead we found that memory responses formed; however, *S. aureus* Protein A disrupted formation of long-lived plasma cells subsequently leading to a decline in *S. aureus*-specific antibody. This occurred by expanding the short-lived extrafollicular B cell response, and limiting the proliferation of B cells that arrive in the bone marrow but fail to establish in long-lived bone marrow niches.

a. Gohlke, PR, Williams, JC, Vilen, BJ, Dillon, SR, Tisch, R, GK Matsushima. (2009) The receptor tyrosine kinase MerTK regulates dendritic cell production of BAFF. *Autoimmunity* 42:183-97 PMID: 19301199, PMCID: 2892231

b. Kang, SA, AB Keener, SZ Jones, RJ Benschop, AC Maldonado, JC Rathmell, SH Clarke, GK Matsushima, JK Whitmire, and BJ Vilen. (2015) IgG-immune complexes promote B cell memory by inducing BAFF. *J. Immunol.* 196: 196-206. PMID: 26621863; PMCID: 4684997

c. Keener, AB, LT Thurlow, NA Spidale, KM Cunnion, R Tisch, AR Richardson, and BJ Vilen. (2017) *Staphylococcus aureus* Protein A disrupts long-lived plasma cell-mediated immunity. *J. Immunol.* 198:1263-73. PMID: 28031339, PMCID: PMC5266639.

d. Kang, SA, AB Keener, SZ Jones, RJ Benschop, AC Maldonado, JC Rathmell, SH Clarke, GK Matsushima, JK Whitmire, and BJ Vilen. (2015) IgG-immune complexes promote B cell memory by inducing BAFF. *J. Immunol.* 196: 196-206. PMID: 26621863; PMCID: 4684997

4. Published work shows that apoptotic debris accumulates on the surface of murine and human hematopoietic cells in SLE. On myeloid cells this represents IgG-immune complexes that promote heightened BAFF secretion, autoantibody, migration of cells to the kidney and renal disease (SLE phenotypes). Reducing BAFF to levels found in normal mice protects glomeruli from T cell infiltration and prevents renal disease.

Mechanistically we find that the accumulation of ICs results from diminished acidification of the lysosome impairing degradation and promoting the recycling of Fc γ R-bound ICs back to the cell membrane where they accumulate and sustain Fc γ RI signal transduction. The prolonged intracellular residency of nucleic acid and IgG from internalized IgG-ICs leads to TLR activation and causes the phagosome to leak cargo into the cytosol, promoting activation of AIM2 and TRIM21. Mechanistically, chronic mTOR activation is central to lysosome dysfunction, and mislocalization of mTOR within MRL/lpr macrophages dysregulates caspase1/11 impeding caspase 1 activation and cleavage of Rab39a, a key event in lysosomal maturation. Our current work focuses on defining whether targeting defects in lysosomal acidification through crosslinking Fc γ RI with Fc γ RIIb is a possible lupus therapy aimed at attenuating the lysosome defect and chronic Fc γ RI activation. As part of that goal, we are defining whether human SLE has a similar underlying lysosome defect that might be amenable to a similar targeting strategy and lastly, we are defining how nuclear antigens accumulate on lymphoid cells.

a. Kang, SA, JL Rogers, A Monteith, C Jiang, T Tarrant, R Roubey, M Dooley, R Falk, J Schmitz, M Diaz, G Fedoriw, and BJ Vilen. (2016) Apoptotic debris accumulates on hematopoietic cells and promotes disease in murine and human SLE. *J. Immunol.* 196:4030-9. PMID: 27059595, PMCID: 4868781

b. Monteith, AJ, SA, Kang, E Scott, K Hillman, Z Rajfur, KA Jacobson, MJ Costello, and BJ Vilen. (2016) Defects in lysosomal maturation facilitate the activation of innate sensors in SLE. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 113: 2142-51. PMID: 27035940. PMCID: 4839468

c. Kang, SA, G Fedoriw, K Kikly, M Diaz, BJ Vilen. (2017) BAFF induces lupus nephritis by promoting T cell entry into the glomeruli. *J. Immunol.* 198:2602-11 PMID: 28235864. PMCID:5360485

d. Monteith, AJ, HA Vincent, SA Kang, P Li, TM Claiborne, NJ Moorman, BJ Vilen. (2018) mTORC2 activity disrupts lysosome acidification in systemic lupus erythematosus by impairing caspase-1 cleavage of Rab39a. *J. Immunol.* 201:371-382 PMID: 29866702, PMCID: 6039264

e. SA Kang, Saxena-Beem S, K Grier, ME Clowse, L Arbeeve, SZ Sheikh, JL Rogers, BJ Vilen. Lysosome dysfunction is evident in active SLE and precedes the accumulation of surface immune complexes on activated naïve (DN2) B cells. Manuscript in prep.

Patents

1. Issued patent: Product and method for treatment of conditions associated with receptor-desensitization. Patent #00914700.0-2116. Issued 2002.
2. Issued patent: Compositions and Methods for Repressing B cell Autoantibody Secretion and Treating Autoimmune Disease. Patent # 8,795,653; Issued 2014.
3. Provisional patent: Composition and Methods for Crosslinking Fc Receptors. National Phase Filing Ref. No.: 5470-825; Ref. No.: 17-0011. May 2019.

Complete List of Published Work in My Bibliography:

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/myncbi/barbara.vilen.1/bibliography/41141027/public/?sort=date&direction=ascending>

WHAT IS LUPUS?

TYPES

SYSTEMIC LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS (SLE):

Most serious form of lupus, which can affect the skin, mouth, kidneys, brain, lungs, and heart. Underlying cause of this disease is still unknown. The highest incidence of SLE is observed in women ages 20 – 40.

CUTANEOUS LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS:

This type of lupus primarily affects the skin. This condition causes inflammation and sores around the face, ears, scalp, and other areas of the body.

DRUG-INDUCED LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS:

This form of lupus is similar to SLE. Patients develop this condition due to a hypersensitivity reaction to medication. Isoniazid, hydralazine, and procainamide are some of the medications which have been known to cause drug-induced lupus.

NEONATAL LUPUS ERYTHEMATOSUS:

This is a rare form of Lupus which can occur in infants born to mothers who have SLE. These infants show symptoms of lupus at birth, because they are affected by their mother's antibodies in the womb.

DEMOGRAPHICS & STATS

1.5MM

Americans affected by Lupus

5.0MM

People affected globally by Lupus



About 90% of Lupus cases are diagnosed in women.



80% of those with Systemic Lupus developed the disease between the ages of 15 to 45



70% of lupus cases – systemic or (SLE).

A major organ will be affected in about 50% of SLE cases.



In 20% of Lupus patients, a close family member (parent/sibling) has, or will develop, lupus.

SYMPTOMS

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF RHEUMATOLOGY'S CRITERIA USED TO DIAGNOSE LUPUS:

Malar Rash

Discoid rash

Photosensitivity

Oral ulcers

Arthritis

Serositis

Kidney Disorder

Seizures

Psychosis

Blood Disorder

Immunologic Disorder

Abnormal antinuclear antibody



Enter to win

Presents

The RKW Lupus Stride



Enter to win

Join us **in-person** or **virtually** for our



ANNUAL 5K STRIDE EVENT

Walking | Running | Jogging, etc.

September 24, 2022

Visit our website for event details and registration: www.rkwfoundation.org

Participants will be entered to **win prizes and stride recognition**. Winners will be announced on **November 6, 2022** during the **RKW Foundation 10th Anniversary White Roses Gala**



Name: _____

Date: _____

Lupus

W K O Y G N Y P V D V U G D B C E P L E D B G S
 C V W S T I F F N E S S N X D R L W E W U W J J
 L U M C V W H Z B Q T V W F I E R F J T V M X V
 M D I V M Z E Q M P Z S F J U K S F T I M I J X
 I E J C I L Y X G X Z Q A R H D F E N A E I B S
 E U G I T A F X A M B U I E C N R O G E Q O E I
 G F Q Y S Y H Y R F H S A E S F I A C K S K R T
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|--------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| ULCERS | DIARRHEA | NSAIDS | BIOPSY |
| URINALYSIS | CBC | PLEURISY | GENDER |
| RACE | PHOTOSENSITIVITY | JOINT PAIN | STIFFNESS |
| SELENA GOMEZ | HEADACHES | HYPERTENSION | DEPRESSION |
| FATIGUE | SEIZURES | RENAL FAILURE | BUTTERFLY RASH |
| MISCARRIAGES | PERICARDITIS | MYOCARDITIS | EDEMA |
| INFLAMMATION | AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE | LUPUS | |

My Lupus Story

My name is Charlene Quashie and I am a Lupus Survivor. In 1993, I was officially diagnosed with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus – “SLE” or Lupus. Lupus was unknown to me up until that time. I learned that lupus is a chronic, autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body (skin, joints, and/or organs inside the body). It is estimated that at least 1.5 million Americans have lupus. Annually, across the country, more than 16,000 new cases of lupus are reported. It is suspected that 5 million people throughout the world have a form of lupus. Lupus is mostly found in women of childbearing age (15-44), however, children, teenagers and a small percentage of men develop lupus too. People of all races and ethnic groups have the potential to develop lupus, but women of color are two to three times more likely to develop this disease than their Caucasian counterparts.

I was a junior in college when this rash appeared on my face out of nowhere. I was concerned but not alarmed. I remember I was on summer break when my family and I saw a dermatologist in the city, who basically gave me the run around and only had the intention of selling me his product line. None of my doctors could tell me what was going on. I returned to school with questions unanswered and feeling insecure because I had what is known now as the “butterfly rash” across the bridge of my nose and my cheeks, out there for the world to see. I ended up speaking to a nurse on campus who recommended that I see a dermatologist in Albany, NY. I went to school in Alfred, NY, so that was a 4+ hour drive for a doctor’s appointment. The run around was exhausting. I was upstate away from my family and my emotions was all over the place, but I knew I had to be strong throughout this process. I was determined to uncover this mystery, so I made the trip there and back by myself. The doctor examined me and right away he was certain of what it was, but wanted to verify, so he took a biopsy of my cheek and referred me to a specialist at Strong Memorial in Rochester, NY, to have additional testing. I had several of the symptoms they test for. My symptoms were: Raynaud’s disease, anemia, a low white blood cell count, butterfly rash across my nose and cheeks (prompted by the sun), protein in my urine, extreme fatigue, and unexplained hair loss. Once they realized I had protein in my urine, they suggested I have a kidney biopsy to see what stage my kidneys were in. I was in stage 3 (out of 5) which was manageable, but I needed to start treatment right away before it worsened.

I was an emotional roller-coaster, I was scared because this was serious and I’m dealing with it all by myself. My mother was very worried and wanted me to get a second opinion, but a friend of hers who was a nurse explained the importance of acting fast and treating it, before things took a turn. I had a biopsy done and it showed that the lupus was very active, but with treatment it could be controlled. My family decided to come up and meet the doctor and discuss my condition. The doctor reassured all of us that with treatment I can manage my condition and live a normal, healthy life. The same doctor treated me while I was away at school up until graduation and arranged for me to follow-up with a doctor in my hometown.

One thing that I learned about Lupus is that it affects everyone differently. In most cases, lupus patients suffer from joint pains. My situation is unique because I don’t suffer from any joint pains. I don’t even know when my Lupus is flaring up, unless I have blood work done to check my levels. I am thankful that I can function normally, and that this disease doesn’t affect my daily living, but in most cases it prevents patients from leading a normal life, in some cases, unable to hold down a job. I’ve noticed that I have some health issues that can’t be explained

Brain and Nervous System

Have you ever had a seizure or convulsion or become confused for no known reason? Have you had unexplained fever higher than 100 F/ 38 C for more than a few days?

Eyes, Nose, and Mouth

Have you had sores in your mouth or nose that lasted for more than a week? Have you developed irritation or dryness in your eyes or mouth for more than a few weeks?

Heart or Lungs

Have you felt chest pain while taking deep breaths?

Stomach and Intestines

Have you had unexplained weight loss or abdominal pain that is worse when you breathe?

Kidneys

Have you ever been told you have protein in your urine? Have you ever had swelling in your legs and ankles on both sides at the same time?

Muscles and Joints

Have you had stiff, tender, and swollen joints that are worse in the morning?

Have you felt extremely tired, weak, or achy for days or weeks, even after plenty of sleep?

Blood and Circulatory System

Have you ever been told you have anemia, low white cell count, or low platelet count?

Do your fingers and/or toes become pale or red or blue and numb or painful in the cold?

Have you ever had blood clotting problems or a miscarriage?

Skin

Has your skin ever broken out after being in the sun but it's not sunburn?

Have you ever had redness or rash across your nose and cheeks in the shape of a butterfly?

Has your hair fallen out for no reason?

For more information, visit lupus.org/southeast

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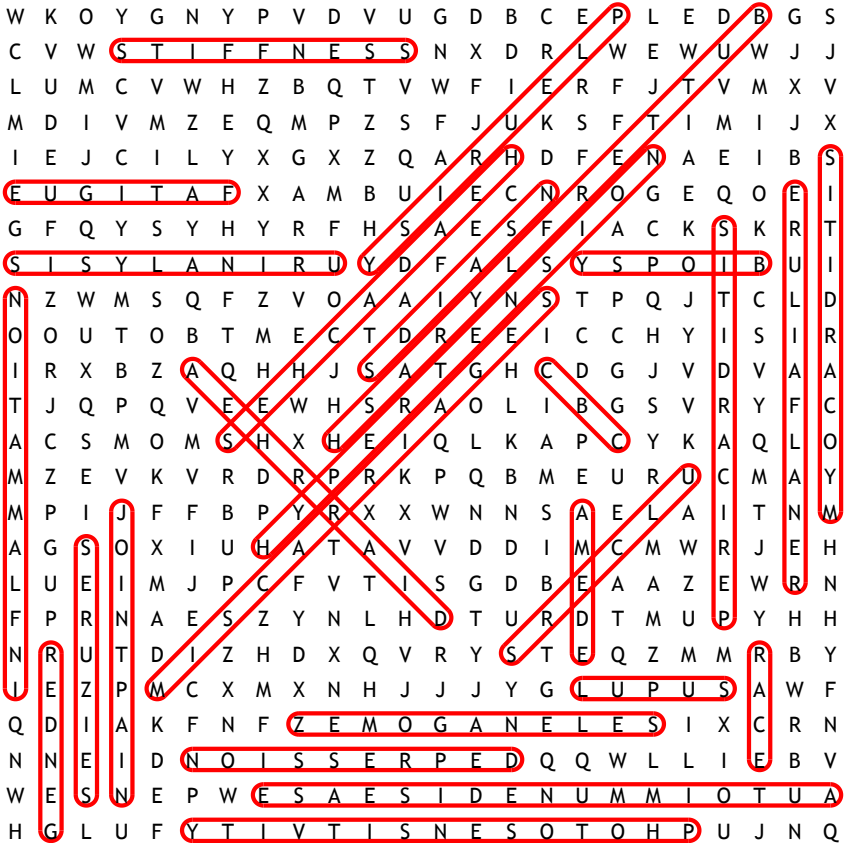
Congratulations to The RKW Virtual 5K Lupus Stride Winners

Lou Figueroa – 1st Place winner
Stephanie Plotkin – 2nd Place winner
Colleen Windross – 3rd Place winner



Name: _____ Date: _____

Lupus



- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE | PHOTOSENSITIVITY | BUTTERFLY RASH | RENAL FAILURE |
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| LUPUS | RACE | CBC | |

RKW FOUNDATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Flushing Bank Serves



The Flushing Bank Serves committee is pleased to highlight another inspiring employee, **Marcia Witter-Williams**. As we continue to celebrate Women's History Month, FB Serves would like to share a bit about Marcia and the organization she brought to life.

Marcia joined Flushing Bank in 1996 and has been a key member of the Bank's Commercial Real Estate department. Her most recent position is VP/ Loan Servicing Manager. Marcia was a top fundraiser for the American Heart Association during the Bank's fundraising drive.

Sadly, in 2002 Marcia's sister, Rosemarie Karenza Witter passed away from Lupus, an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue. After this devastating loss, Marcia realized she wanted to help others fight this disease and decided to do something about it.

In 2012, Marcia founded the RKW Foundation. The RKW Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting medical research in finding effective treatment, hoping to find a cure for Lupus. Additionally, the foundation also awards scholarships to women afflicted with Lupus, who are pursuing a college degree in the areas of engineering, science, mathematics, medicine, or law.

Marcia works tirelessly to continue to fundraise, manage, and support this worthy foundation and the amazing work it continues to accomplish.

Flushing Bank is proud to celebrate Marcia and her commitment to supporting this cause as well as her commitment to other charitable endeavors. FB Serves appreciates Marcia and her commitment to volunteerism.

Flushing Bank Serves would like to hear from you. Please email FBserves@flushingbank.com and share your volunteer activities with us. We look forward to celebrating more of your inspiring stories.

Vaccines and Lupus

Vaccines help protect against serious infections like the flu or pneumonia by imitating an infection and safely developing immunity to the pathogen (bacteria or virus that causes disease) targeted by the vaccine. Vaccines for specific diseases cause the immune system to produce cells that will learn and remember how to fight that disease when you are exposed to it in the future.ⁱ

The following answers commonly asked questions about vaccines with information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the “nation’s health protection agency.”

Why are vaccines important?

Vaccines are among the best public health measures ever developed. They have greatly reduced the numbers of adults, children and infants who develop and could die from serious infectious diseases. Vaccines are important to protect the person who gets the vaccine and helps prevent spreading diseases to others.ⁱⁱ

Will I get sick from a vaccine?

The vaccine imitates a very mild version of an infection, but rarely causes illness. Sometimes you might get minor symptoms such as a fever but this is a sign that the body is building up immunity to the disease.ⁱⁱⁱ

Do vaccines cause side effects?

Like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects, but serious side effects are very rare. For most people, side effects are mild such as soreness at the spot where a shot was given.^{iv}

How long does it take for the vaccine to work?

It usually it takes a few weeks for the body to produce enough cells that protect against infection. That’s why it is possible that a person can be infected just before or soon after being vaccinated because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.^v

Are vaccines safe?

Vaccines are tested carefully in clinical trials before the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will approve them for use. The FDA also inspects the manufacturing plants where the vaccine will be produced to make sure strict guidelines are followed. Even after a vaccine is approved, the FDA and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) monitor the vaccines’ use to detect any long-term safety concerns.^{vi}

Why are vaccines recommended for people who are immunocompromised such as people with lupus?

The CDC recommends specific vaccines to protect people who are at greatest risk for illness, including people with chronic conditions and weakened immune systems. Lupus lowers the immune system’s ability to fight infections.^{vii}



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- **SLE Workshop** is a monthly education and support group, ongoing since 1985, for people with lupus, their family and friends.
- **LupusLine®** is a national telephone peer counseling service focusing on one-to-one support for people with lupus and their families.
- **Charla de Lupus (Lupus Chat)®** is a national peer health education and support program for Spanish-speaking communities with lupus including an in-person chat group for teens with lupus and their parents.
- **LANtern® (Lupus Asian Network)** is a bilingual (Chinese) national support and education program for Asian-Americans with lupus and their loved ones.

Ciné

Jonas



My name is Jonas Ciné ; best known as Maestro Jonas

A very talented Haitian musician, music teacher, song writer, producer, sequencer and arranger & more.

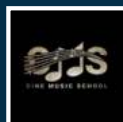
I opened CINE MUSIC SCHOOL because I saw the need in the community and I wanted to make a difference, with the talent God has blessed me with which made a difference in my life.

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Micahl Evans Bio



Singer and Pianist

Micahl Evans is a multi-talented musician with 10+ years in music school experience. He most recently graduated from the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts High School. Micahl is a self-taught pianist and classically trained singer. Currently he works at the Eternal Love Baptist Church where he serves as the Minister of Music. Micahl has performed on Broadway and other off-Broadway shows where he chases his dream to become a Broadway Star. Micahl is a heart driven performer who not only enjoys to play music but also enjoys to put smiles on people's faces when he does.

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Frank C. Dell'Amore focuses his practice in the areas of banking and financial services and creditors' rights. He represents and advises financial institutions, private lenders, equity fund managers, and other entities in all matters relating to foreclosure, bankruptcy, real estate, workout, loan acquisition, and general litigation and appellate matters. Frank routinely guides his clients through difficult situations with a practical approach that is tailored to meet the varying goals and desired outcomes of his clients.

Frank regularly appears in court on behalf of clients in matters relating to distressed loan situations. While he strives to reach amicable resolutions in such matters when possible, Frank is always prepared to protect his clients' rights through litigation and other legal measures, having successfully conducted trials and framed-issue hearings, often involving challenging and unique issues of law. He has also proven himself to be a trusted adviser to his clients with respect to creditor-related bankruptcy cases, wherein he provides guidance in all aspects of chapters 7, 11, and 13 bankruptcy matters. In this capacity, Frank has represented secured and unsecured creditors, chapter 7 trustees, landlords, and other parties-in-interest with respect to adversary proceedings, evidentiary hearings, contested plan confirmation hearings, motions to use or prohibit the use of cash collateral, and applications seeking relief from the automatic bankruptcy stay.

Education

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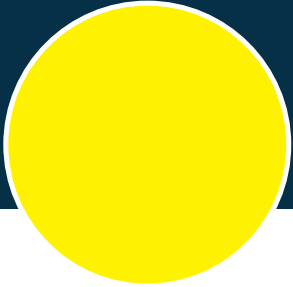
Sabrina HoSang Jordan

CEO, Caribbean Food Delights



Sabrina HoSang Jordan is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Caribbean Food Delights. She is an award winning young professional entrepreneur and business leader who is recognized among her peers as a model team builder and motivator. Sabrina’s collaborative approach with staff on all levels has propelled her to build and maintain a successfully family owned and operated business. This profound characteristic trait is seen as one of her strongest assets and is also credited for her being the strong community advocate and mentor she is today. Sabrina is married to longtime beau, Sean Jordan and lives in Rockland County, New York.

Sabrina received her formative education at Immaculate Conception School in Bronx, New York before entering Byram Hills High School in Armonk, New York and later earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and a Minor in Management Information Systems from Villanova University in Villanova, Pennsylvania in 2001. Since 2001, Sabrina has worked her way up through the ranks from Director of Operations, to COO and then to CEO in 2016. As CEO, Sabrina has led the company in reaching various goals such as expanding the company portfolio to include international distribution, increasing nationwide distribution to “Big Box Supermarkets, and expanding the company’s workforce, among other things. Under her leadership, Caribbean Food Delights also secured the largest “New York-Empire State Development Grant” of 2018, in the amount of \$2.75 million. She is currently working with her team to develop expansion plans as a result of being awarded this grant. Sabrina feels it is important to continue growing the family business so that her parents’ success can be carried



on for generations to come. She epitomizes the words of John Wooden who said, “Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.

Some of her esteemed accolades include the Ernst & Young LLP, Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2019 Award in the Family Business category in New York, Jamaican Diaspora Northeast Trailblazer Award in October 2016, Rockland Business Women’s Network (RBWN) 2015 Woman of Achievement Award, and the 2014 Outstanding 50 Asian Americans in Business Award.

Since 2003, Sabrina has also been sponsoring young children in deprived areas in Honduras, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, via World Vision, providing them access to education, and clean water and food. She is also actively involved in mentoring many young people to become the leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. The young business leader not only lends her expertise and time to the Vincent HoSang Family Foundation, (VHFF) where she is a director, but also to various community organizations whose mission are geared to individual and community empowerment. She is an active board member of Worldwide Community First Responder (WCFR), Jamaican Civic and Cultural Association of Rockland (JAMCCAR), Jawonio (Foundation), the Rockland based organization that provides lifespan services for those with special needs, and Chair of People to People, Rockland County’s largest food pantry. Sabrina is a graduate of Leadership Rockland Class of 2015. She was appointed to the New York Forward Re-Opening Advisory Board in April 2020 and appointed to the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council as a voting member in August 2020.

*Maria
Masi-Schampier*



Maria Masi-Schampier is the Senior Vice President of Wealth Management and Customer Experience she has been with Flushing Bank for over 30 years. As the program sales manager for the Investment and Insurance businesses, Maria has expanded the Wealth Management program offerings to include new financial solutions to help her clients achieve their financial goals. She has organized women in business seminars, as well retirement-focused events for the client base.

Maria began her career as a teller and advanced through various roles, while earning her Bachelor of Finance degree from Hofstra University. She was asked to start up the Wealth Management business and has grown it into a successful and profitable enterprise. She is a member of Bank Investment Securities Association and serves on the Board of Lupus Foundation for Women. She was also featured in Long Island Business News for her role at Flushing Bank.

Maria also works with her sisters at a chocolate store, The Sundae Palace a long-time sponsor of the RKW foundation. The store has been in the New Hyde Park community for over 45 years, they purchased it almost 14 years ago. The store has been featured in Newsday, the New Hyde Park Patch and been on the Long Island Medium show. They contribute to the local organizations as well as being active in the community.

**Corinne
M. Mullen**



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Corinne M. Mullen is a partner in the firm's Banking and Financial Services department. She focuses her practice on representing banks and other financial institutions with respect to commercial real estate financing transactions, including loans secured by commercial and multi-family properties. Corinne also advises the firm's banking clients with regard to servicing issues, and she regularly represents clients in the purchase, sale, and financing of residential and commercial properties.

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Bar Admissions

Cullen and Dykman LLP - cullenlp.com 1 of 2
New York

Education

J.D., St. John's University School of Law, 1985
B.S., Binghamton University, 1982

***Professional and Community
Activities***

Festival Legal Advisor, Hong Kong Dragon
Boat Festival in New York, Inc., 2011—Present

EvaRay Thomas



EvaRay Thomas, was born to Parents of Panamanian descent, who taught her the value of work ethics. Mrs. Olga & Raymond Thomas, worked 16 hours a day in the Medical Fields to provide for their 5 children. Between the both of them they were able to earn their Bachelors and Masters Degree while working full time jobs. Eva and her siblings were well kept children who knew the value of love, sharing, and caring, and also giving to those who were less fortunate. She shared these values with her 4 children as well. Growing up in a household where laughter and love abounds through the nurturing spirit of her parents, it became a part of her naturally.

This natural ability to love, nurture and care for others was more so discovered and extended outside the family , when she created ONI-BODI in 2008. This business started as a skin care company, and grew into a “sanctuary of wellness modalities.” ONI-BODI, LLC was initially created through the inspiration of her twins who were born prematurely and,with a skin condition called eczema. Eva faced many challenges from the doctors throughout her pregnancy who told her the pregnancy was risky and how she should terminate it because, the twins could be retarded, have cerebral palsey and it would cause her life long expenses, along with other negative outcomes at only 3 weeks into the pregnancy! She responded with, “ I trust God and not man, for that is not the God I serve, my twins will be fine” Eva’s faith never waivered as she was in and out of the hospital 12 times with many days in between each episode. When the twins were born, their skin condition caused her to research and create natural products using botanical herbs, especially after learning the prescribed creams had steroids. While creating, and freely sharing these small batches with others it was strongly suggested that she

turn it into a business, since the demand for them started to increase. She also had the desire to become, a neonatal physical therapist by enrolling in Stony Brook who offered a Masters and PH combination program at the time. Since the program was full time, she could not enroll due to her commitment to her day job as a Trade Support Analyst. Eva enrolled at New York College of Health Professions and, and became a Licensed Medical Massage Therapist, and then went on to become a Licensed Esthetician(Skin Care Therapist). At the College's request, she became a Health Science Instructor and taught Clay Anatomy and Physiology as an assistant one of the Doctors, Medical Ethics & Practice Management, Therapeutic Chair Massage, and Supervised the teaching clinic for several years.

Eva is a Holistic Health Educator, Medicinal/Herbal Tea Consultant and a Philanthropist. As a Medical Massage Therapist she is experienced in providing therapy for many clients with diseases and disorders such as Parkinson, Multiple Sclerosis, Fibromyalgia, Sickle Cell Anemia and more! She believes the Holistic Approach to Wellness is important because, it is treating the mind, body, and spirit as a “whole”, not just the symptoms of a medical condition.

You may also connect with Eva through www.oni-bodi.com or eva@oni-bodi.com
Instagram: [@onibodiwellnesssanctuary](https://www.instagram.com/onibodiwellnesssanctuary) or [@evaraybae](https://www.instagram.com/evaraybae)
Facebook: [ONI-BODI](https://www.facebook.com/ONI-BODI) or [onibodiwellnesssanctuary](https://www.facebook.com/onibodiwellnesssanctuary) or [Beauteasoireewellness](https://www.facebook.com/Beauteasoireewellness)

Mary Ray



I'm Mary Ray, owner and creator of Wingin' It Creations a handmade crafting and vending company. I began this journey in 2017. I started putting together gift baskets and making wooden plaques. My company has expanded and grown in several directions. I still work full time in accounting, but my nights and weekends (and lunch hours) are dedicated to making ornaments, tumblers, dish towels and home décor; it's definitely a labor of love. I have two children, my daughter plays basketball for, and attends a private boarding school in CT. My son is in 3rd grade and loves soccer and Roblox. My husband and I are getting ready to celebrate 10 years of wedded bliss. You can find Wingin' It Creations on Instagram at www.instagram.com/wingin_it_creations.



Sadie Garrick
Vice President,
Head of Corporate and Philanthropic Initiatives

Sadie is a Vice President and Head of Corporate and Philanthropic Initiatives at ClearBridge Investments, LLC. She also chairs their Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. Sadie joined the firm in 2016 and has held various positions within the company.

Sadie is married and lives with her husband in Long Island, NY. Sadie is passionate about advocacy, spending quality time with family and friends and travelling.

Sadie has a bachelor's degree in marketing and Economics with honors from Baruch College and an MBA in Strategic Business Management also with honors from Hofstra's Zarb School of Business.

Lisa Gathright is both a visual and performing artist; she began painting six years ago her Art is inspired by her love for family friends and life. The daughter of renown soul and folk musician William Gathright, Lisa has been highly influenced by music throughout her life. Performing under the stage name “Willie Wright” from 1960s through the 1980s, Lisa’s father is considered to be one of the most gifted singers, song writers and musicians of his era. So gifted, that his cult album, Telling the Truth, a remarkable fusion

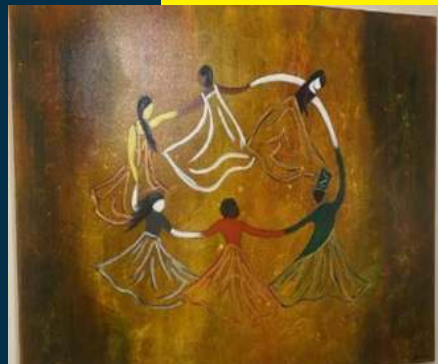


Lisa Gathright

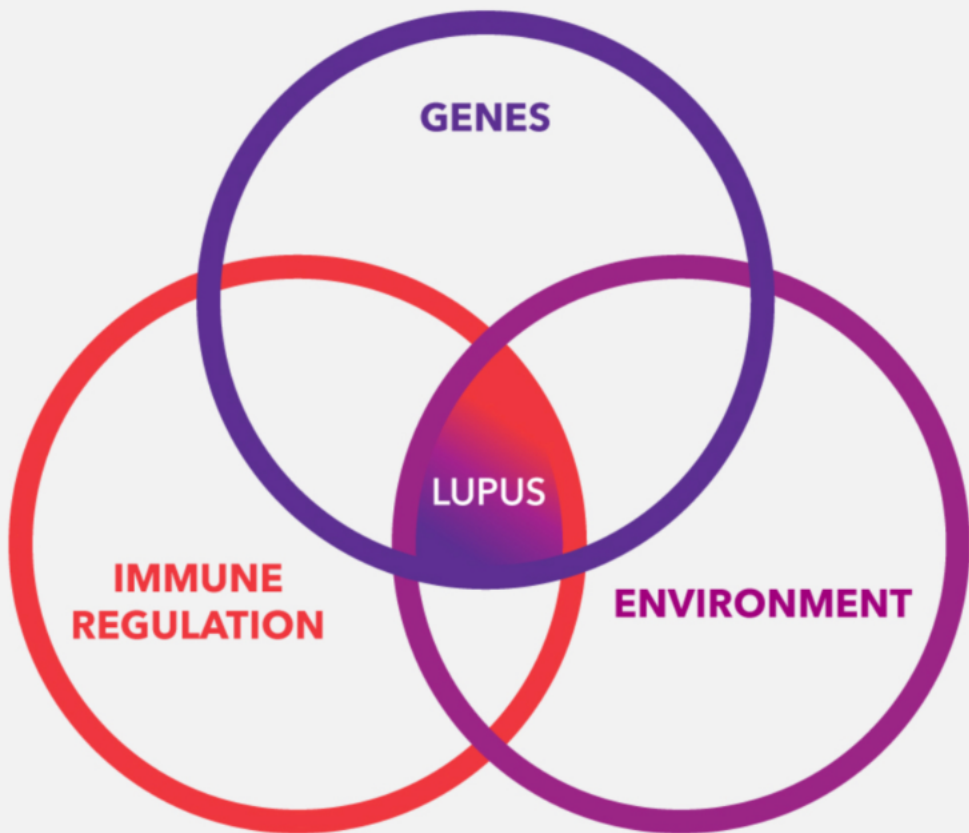


of folk music, jazz, soul and pop music, originally released in 1977, has recently been re-released at the consistent urging of his fans. “Music has had a big influence on me. I used to play my father’s albums when I was young, and that allowed me to escape into another world full of colors, shapes, tones and unlimited possibility. When I look over my life, I find that music

– particularly folk, soul and jazz – also helped me to express and to deal with various experiences and emotions. All of this is represented in my visual work,” Gathright remarked.



WHAT CAUSES LUPUS?



INFLAMMATION

(swelling or scarring)



**THE SMALL
BLOOD VESSELS**
that filter wastes in the kidneys

is caused by



LUPUS NEPHRITIS

(kidney damage)

As the kidneys
do not work properly,
waste builds up and
the body retains
too much fluid.



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