2016 SYLVAN M. COHEN RETREAT & POSTER SESSION  
“To Sleep, per chance to age... and avoid Alzheimer’s disease”

On Wednesday, June 8, 2016, the Institute on Aging hosted its annual Sylvan M. Cohen Retreat and Poster Session. This year’s retreat, titled “To sleep, per chance to age... and avoid Alzheimer’s disease,” was co-sponsored by Penn’s Center for Sleep and Circadian Neurobiology and explored the effects of sleep loss and the possible link to Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative conditions.

As usual, the event began with lunch and a series of lectures, but this year we had the pleasure of having J. Larry Jameson, MD, PhD, dean of the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM), join us for opening remarks. He expressed his excitement to see such collaboration amongst the two sponsoring centers and encouraged more of this, not only in the PSOM, but also across the University as a whole.

“One of the secrets at Penn Medicine is that we have these catalytic centers and institutes and it’s even more impressive that there is often cross fertilization between them,” explained Dean Jameson.

Keynote speaker, David M. Holtzman, MD, professor and chairman, Department of Neurology at Washington University School of Medicine, kicked off the lectures discussing his research in “Understanding the Relationship between Sleep, Protein Aggregation, and Alzheimer’s disease,” followed by a variety of related talks by our 2016 Penn Presenters, Matthew S. Kayser, MD, PhD, David M. Raizen, MD, PhD, Nirinjini Naidoo, PhD, and Sigrid C. Veasey, MD.

Immediately following the lectures, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and beyond presented their aging-related work at our annual Poster Session. Categories included basic science, clinical research, and education and community.

See more, including poster winners, lecture titles, & video interviews at: www.penninstituteonaging.wordpress.com

RALSTON CENTER launches  
AGE FRIENDLY WEST PHILADELPHIA INITIATIVE

On May 31, 2016, Mayor Jim Kenney helped kick off the “Age Friendly West Philadelphia” initiative. Through this effort, the Ralston Center and its partners have identified the most pressing needs of older West Philadelphians—ranging from food access to increasing the safety of local public parks and spaces—and established a series of projects to address those needs.

The Ralston Center, located at 3615 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia PA 19104, houses a variety of other programs and services aimed at improving the lives of the elderly population.

Learn more at: www.ralstoncenter.org

WHAT’S INSIDE?

- Ali & Parkinson’s: Was boxing to blame?
- Penn Medicine Researcher receives $7.5 Million NIH Renewal for FTD Research
- $3 Million Gift will support a New Pulmonary Program for Patients with ALS and related disorders

+ more!
Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania recently launched the new Penn Neurodegeneration Genomics Center (PNGC), an interdisciplinary program that aims to bring together faculty members in neurodegenerative disorders, human genetics, genomics, bioinformatics, and biostatistics “to get at the root cause of Alzheimer’s disease,” according to Li-San Wang, PhD, Co-director of PNGC, in a recent Penn Medicine News Release.

The PNGC “will interact with other campus investigators with large-scale data sequence data sets to make Penn a national center for genomic-based disease research,” explains Gerard (Jerry) D. Schellenberg, PhD, Co-director of PNGC.

The center’s mission focuses on two main areas of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) research: 1.) to find new AD genes and 2.) to translate these findings to identify new drug targets.

“Th[e] establishment of the PNGC is both timely and important,” said John Q. Trojanowski, MD, PhD, Director of the Institute on Aging (IOA), also featured in the announcement. “Timely because of the new funding to harmonize the study of Alzheimer’s disease genomics among international partners, as well as new funding opportunities for research on Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias and important because of the growing surge in Alzheimer’s gene discovery that raises important new questions about disease mechanisms and treatment.”

To read more on this, and other aging-related Penn Medicine News Releases*, visit: www.med.upenn.edu/aging/news.html

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**MUHAMMAD ALI & PARKINSON’S DISEASE**

Did the sport itself lead to this boxing legend’s toughest battle?

In 1984, three years after retiring from boxing, the late, great Muhammad Ali was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, a neurological condition that affects movement, motor skills, and in some cases memory.

Over the years, we’ve started to hear more and more about the possible link between repeated head injury, especially concussions, and neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s… but could high-contact sports like boxing and football for example—which often result in these injuries—really be to blame?

According to a recent STAT news article, while it is difficult for a neurologist to pinpoint a definitive cause of Parkinson’s disease in any individual patient, John Q. Trojanowski, MD, PhD, director of the Institute on Aging and the Udall Center for Parkinson’s Research at the University of Pennsylvania, says it is “highly likely that [Ali’s] early on-set Parkinson’s was a result of his boxing.”

The underlying cause of Parkinson’s disease is believed to be the loss of dopamine, a compound in the brain which is vital for the control of muscle movement, due to protein misfolding. The theory is that head injury can cause inflammation in the brain which may ultimately lead to the chemical changes that cause Parkinson’s disease and related disorders.

For the full article on “Muhammad Ali and Parkinson’s disease: Was boxing to blame?” visit statnews.com

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**PENN NEURODEGENERATION GENOMICS CENTER: A National Hub for Alzheimer's Research**

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania recently launched the new Penn Neurodegeneration Genomics Center (PNGC), an interdisciplinary program that aims to bring together faculty members in neurodegenerative disorders, human genetics, genomics, bioinformatics, and biostatistics “to get at the root cause of Alzheimer’s disease,” according to Li-San Wang, PhD, Co-director of PNGC, in a recent Penn Medicine News Release.

The PNGC “will interact with other campus investigators with large-scale data sequence data sets to make Penn a national center for genomic-based disease research,” explains Gerard (Jerry) D. Schellenberg, PhD, Co-director of PNGC.

The center’s mission focuses on two main areas of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) research: 1.) to find new AD genes and 2.) to translate these findings to identify new drug targets.

“We know that at some threshold... exposure to traumatic brain injury and repetitive brain injury sets the stage for early onset forms of neurodegeneration.”

- John Trojanowski, MD, PhD

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS for our future events**

**JOSEPH A. PIGNOLO AWARD IN AGING RESEARCH**

**TOPIC:** TBD

October 27, 2016 | 3:00pm | Smilow Center
Keynote Speaker: Luigi Ferrucci, MD, PhD

**STEPHEN SALLOWAY, MD, MS: VISITING SCHOLARS SERIES**

**TOPIC:** TBD

November 15, 2016 | 3:00pm | Location TBD

**VINCENT J. CRISTOFALO LECTURESHIP & RECEPTION**

**TOPIC:** TBD

November 29, 2016 | 3:00pm | Location TBD
Keynote Speaker: S. Jay Olshansky, PhD

**EDWARD MARCANTONIO, MD, SM: VISITING SCHOLARS SERIES**

**TOPIC:** TBD

April 18, 2017 | Time: TBD | Location TBD

**SYLVAN M. COHEN RETREAT & POSTER SESSION:**

“GENETICS OF AGING-RELATED NEURODEGENERATION”

May 23, 2017 | 11:30am | Location TBD
Keynote Speaker: Philip De Jager, MD, PhD
Co-sponsor: Penn Neurodegeneration Genomics Center

Our calendar is updated on a rolling basis. Visit us online to check for newly added lectures, updated talk titles, and event details!

[www.med.upenn.edu/aging/events.html](http://www.med.upenn.edu/aging/events.html)
A $3 million gift from University of Pennsylvania alumnus Jay Fishman, and his wife, Randy, will support comprehensive at-home respiratory care for adult Penn Medicine patients with chronic respiratory insufficiency due to neurological, muscular, skeletal or chronic respiratory diseases, including Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig’s disease), a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord.

The multidisciplinary Randy and Jay Fishman Program for Home Assisted Ventilation will reside within Penn’s Harron Lung Center as part of the division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Critical Care in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Penn Medicine is partnering with The ALS Association to have the program recognized as an ALS Association-approved program in pulmonary care. Such a designation would be a first for a specific medical practice within the broad ALS clinical arena. The intent of the program is to deliver the benefits of rapidly emerging new technologies and related data to physicians caring for patients whose breathing is compromised.

The inspiration behind this gift was personal. Mr. Fishman, Executive Chairman of the Board and former Chief Executive Officer of The Travelers Companies, Inc. and a member of the University of Pennsylvania Board Of Trustees, was diagnosed with ALS in 2014.

“I sought pulmonary treatment at Penn,” Mr. Fishman said, “and it was through my relationship with Dr. Hansen-Flaschen that I became excited by the opportunity to work with Penn Medicine in bringing the most recent technological advancements in non-invasive ventilation therapy to the ALS community. John’s commitment, passion and thoughtfulness to help patients ‘lean into’ these difficult diseases is remarkable. Randy and I are privileged to support his vision.”

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Penn is home of the Frontotemporal Degeneration Center (Penn FTD Center), directed by Murray Grossman, MD, who also leads a project and a core in the PPG. Drs. Lee and Grossman’s teams work very closely to bring together researchers and clinicians dedicated to the investigation and treatment of FTD.

The newest Virtual Tour video, produced by the IOA, illustrates this collaborative partnership and highlights the research and care taking place here at Penn to better the lives of those affected by Frontotemporal degeneration.

To view the Virtual Tour video, visit: www.youtube.com/penninstituteonaging
The mission of the Institute on Aging at the University of Pennsylvania is to improve the health of older adults by increasing the quality and quantity of clinical and basic research as well as educational programs focusing on normal aging and aging-related diseases across the entire Penn campus.

Make a Gift
To support aging-related research and care at Penn’s Institute on Aging, contact:

Aubre Naughton, Penn Medicine Development
aubren@upenn.edu or 215-898-9174

Become an IOA Fellow
Learn more about becoming an IOA Fellow at: www.med.upenn.edu/aging/fellows.html

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IOA External Advisory Board
Meet our External Advisory Board (EAB) members at:
www.med.upenn.edu/aging/ExternalAdvBoard.html

REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.PENNMEDICINE.ORG/5KIOA
$25 before September 9th | $30 after September 9th | $35 on Race Day (Cash Only!) | $20 with Penn Student ID
Online Registration will close Sunday, September 18th at Midnight

PENN’S 5K FOR THE IOA & THE MEMORY MILE WALK | DOGS WELCOMED FOR WALK
Sunday, September 25th, 2016 • 8:00 am @ Penn Park
Questions? Contact Elizabeth Yannes at elyannes@upenn.edu or 215-573-4961

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