Annual Dinner Honors Jane Fonda, Highlights Women’s Mental Health

On June 20, 2014, almost 400 members of the McLean community gathered at the InterContinental Boston to celebrate a year of achievements and to honor Jane Fonda with the 2014 McLean Award, given to individuals who have furthered the public’s understanding of psychiatric illness and mental health. In addition to being a critically-acclaimed actor with two Oscars, an Emmy and an American Film Institute Lifetime Achievement Award, Fonda has been a longtime advocate for mental health awareness. She has been open about her personal struggles with an eating disorder as well as her family history marked by trauma and suicide.

Today, Fonda’s efforts are focused on promoting mental health for adolescents, particularly young women.

"I am grateful for the compassion that McLean brings to its work," said Fonda.

Before the dinner, Fonda toured the McLean campus.


Upon accepting the McLean Award, Fonda cited her mother, who had been a victim of sexual abuse and later took her own life, as her main source of inspiration. Fonda recognized the legacy that her mother’s trauma had left in her own life, impacting her own self-image. In her acceptance speech, Fonda commended the McLean staff for their wonderful work, particularly in the field of women’s mental health.

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stopping at the Hill Center for Women and the Klarman Eating Disorders Center. She wrote about her experience on her blog at www.janefonda.com. “Having suffered from eating disorders myself for many years as a young woman, it made me happy that [McLean’s patients] were in a program that has such good success rates and I told several of them a bit about my own experiences and not to give up.”

Fonda’s appearance was just one of what turned out to be a star-studded evening attended by other celebrities, including 2013 McLean Award honoree and film director David O. Russell. Three former McLean patients became stars in their own right as their moving recovery stories were screened at the event.

The unofficial themes of the evening were women’s mental health and scientific discovery, as President and Psychiatrist in Chief Scott L. Rauch, MD, announced two significant gifts to McLean: one to endow a chair for McLean’s chief scientific officer; another to support trauma research and McLean’s Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health. (See related stories on pages 3; 4-5).

“I am grateful for the compassion that McLean brings to its work.”

Jane Fonda

At the evening’s close, Dr. Rauch and Board Chairman David S. Barlow presented Fonda with a portrait by internationally renowned pop artist and McLean donor Romero Britto, painted especially for the occasion.

Jane Fonda next to her portrait by internationally known pop artist Romero Britto. Mr. Britto has produced commissioned artworks for the Olympics, Disney, the White House and the World Cup, to name a few. Among his most famous portraits are the Royals of England and Spain, plus other iconic figures from Madonna to the Kennedy family. He produced this portrait as a gift to Jane and in honor of her receiving the McLean Award.
$2M Gift Fuels Trauma Research, Shapes Center for Women’s Mental Health

Sherry Winternitz, MD, clinical director of the Dissociative Disorders and Trauma Program, and Milissa Kaufman, MD, PhD, medical director of the Hill Center for Women

A $2 million gift from an anonymous family will have far-reaching impact on the field of trauma disorders and special influence on women’s mental health, in particular.

$1.5M of the gift has created an endowment to support an annual Trauma Studies Scholar whose work is informing our knowledge of trauma-based disorders, while $500,000 will support the Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health, augmenting the donors’ previous gift to fuel its launch (see story on p. 4).

The family was inspired to make this significant gift because of Dr. Sherry Winternitz, clinical director of the Dissociative Disorders and Trauma Program, who has a long history of clinical leadership at McLean and who is widely regarded for her compassionate work with women. The donors wished to recognize Dr. Winternitz, in particular, and her many caring colleagues who give their best everyday to women who have experienced trauma.

Milissa Kaufman, MD, PhD, is one such colleague, and she considers herself fortunate. As medical director of the Hill Center for Women, which treats women with histories of trauma, mood and anxiety disorders, as well as borderline personality disorder, she credits Dr. Winternitz as one of the main reasons she came to work at McLean.

“By reputation, I knew she was an unusually gifted clinician,” said Kaufman. “I hoped to learn from her how to make a positive, enduring impact on patients who survived difficult early-life circumstances, and she has been the ideal role-model. Through the years, she has taught me—selflessly, and by example—so much about how to work with patients in a way that is both compassionate and effective. It truly is an honor to work on Dr. Winternitz’s clinical team.”

An outstanding mentor, Dr. Winternitz has consistently nurtured Dr. Kaufman’s goal to bring state-of-the-art research methods to the study of childhood adversity. Dr. Kaufman is part of a growing community of researchers who are examining the effects of severe childhood abuse on women.

It is fitting, therefore, that Dr. Kaufman has been appointed the first Trauma Studies Scholar for her innovative research on changes in the brains of adult women who suffered childhood abuse. She and her collaborators are starting a three-year study using behavioral, neuroimaging and genetic analyses to study brain differences in women with trauma-based disorders.

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Milissa Kaufman, MD, PhD

“I’m honored, humbled and very grateful to receive this award,” said Dr. Kaufman. “I became a doctor in order to help people who suffered childhood abuse and neglect. But, I’m also a researcher and it is often

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Question and Answer: Shelly F. Greenfield, MD, MPH, Chief of the Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health

In September 2013, McLean launched the Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health with Shelly F. Greenfield, MD, MPH, as its Chief. We recently sat down with Dr. Greenfield to talk about the Center’s roots, goals and projects.

Horizons: What was the genesis of the Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health?
Dr. Greenfield: The Center began through what we called the Women’s Mental Health Initiative, which emerged from McLean’s strategic planning process in 2006. We convened the leadership of various clinical and research programs across the hospital that focus on the mental health of girls and women. From our many discussions, it became clear that McLean had tremendous strength in clinical programs serving girls and women and that these programs would greatly benefit through expanded opportunities to collaborate. Yet, we needed a more formal mechanism to foster that collaboration.

Several things helped inform our work and thinking. One of the most exciting was a scientific symposium we held at McLean in fall 2012 to bring together local and national experts in the field of women’s mental health. In April 2013, we hosted a visiting scholar, renowned women’s mental health researcher and clinician Donna Stewart, MD, from the University of Toronto, who advised our steering committee.

After much work by both leadership and staff over 18 months, we had an excellent framework and were ready to launch a center dedicated to serving the mental health needs of girls and women and to advancing women’s mental health through clinical care, research and training.

Horizons: Viewing women’s mental health as a distinct field is a relatively new phenomenon. Why is McLean taking this approach?
Dr. Greenfield: McLean is responding to a shift in focus of the medical field toward recognizing the unique health needs of women. Historically, medical research and clinical trials were conducted primarily with male subjects. Beginning in the 1990s, the National Institutes of Health played a large role in making sure that women (and minorities) were included in research studies. These studies have revealed that many diseases do

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indeed have certain sex and gender specific characteristics, etiologies and treatments, so McLean has taken new, innovative approaches to treating women and girls.

Horizons: How is McLean unique in the ways it serves women and girls?
Dr. Greenfield: McLean has a number of specialized programs serving the needs of girls and women. They include 3East, a continuum of programs for girls and young women who exhibit impulsive and self-endangering behaviors; the McLean Gunderson Residence, serving women with borderline personality disorder and other complex issues; the Klarman Eating Disorders Center; and the Hill Center for women with histories of trauma, mood and anxiety disorders, and borderline personality disorder. We also have two programs that disproportionately serve women: the Gunderson Outpatient Program for people with borderline personality disorder and an inpatient unit in the Dissociative Disorders and Trauma Program.

McLean researchers have conducted landmark research studies on borderline personality disorder (the work of John Gunderson, MD, and Mary Zanarini, EdD), women and addiction (my own research), and newer investigations into dissociative identity disorder and post traumatic stress disorder (Milissa Kaufman, MD, PhD).

Horizons: What role has philanthropy played in the formation of the Center?
Dr. Greenfield: Our programs focusing on women and girls have a long history of philanthropic support. But we could not have launched the Women’s Mental Health Initiative or created this Center of Excellence without the tremendous generosity of an anonymous family over many years (see story on p. 3). Philanthropy also has enabled us to recruit an exciting young researcher, Kristin, Javaras, DPhil, PhD, who will be joining us in March 2015.

Dr. Javaras’ research will focus on binge eating and obesity, as well as borderline personality disorder, conditions that disproportionately affect women.

Horizons: What are some of the most important issues around women’s mental health today?
Dr. Greenfield: We are seeking to understand the etiology, or causes, of disorders that are more prevalent in women and girls and how to prevent them. These illnesses include major depressive disorders, stress-related disorders, such as PTSD, and eating disorders, all of which are often further complicated by co-occurring substance use. We know that the lifetime course of these disorders often differs by gender. Investigating those gender differences is essential for advancing our understanding and informing better treatments.

Horizons: How will the Center address these challenges?
Dr. Greenfield: Foremost by increasing collaboration across clinical, research and training programs to provide cutting-edge, evidence-based clinical treatment for girls and women. McLean can also play a significant role in disseminating knowledge so that girls and women everywhere have access to gender-responsive care. Currently, we are looking at best practices for caring for females with co-occurring disorders, as well as how to share treatment practices throughout and beyond McLean.

We are also implementing our new evidence-based Women’s Recovery Group in our alcohol and drug abuse treatment program and will soon launch it in other units that treat women with substance use disorders, such as our eating disorders program.

Additionally, we are providing a first-ever clinical training experience for a mental health fellow who is focusing on reproductive health issues at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Finally, we are advancing research in eating disorders and borderline personality disorder through our new recruit, Dr. Javaras.
Poitras Chair Brings World-Class Research Leader to McLean

For longtime donors and McLean National Council members Pat and Jim Poitras, supporting new discoveries in psychiatry has been a common thread in their philanthropy. That is why they have, for many years, invested in research at McLean Hospital.

Their most recent gift to McLean—and largest at $4M—established the James and Patricia Poitras Endowed Chair in Psychiatry at McLean Hospital. Thanks to the Poitrases’ generosity, McLean was able to recruit a stellar chief scientific officer, world-renowned clinician-researcher Kerry Ressler, MD, PhD, who will succeed Joseph Coyle, MD, in this important role. Dr. Ressler is an expert in fear-based disorders whose research examines how fear works in the mammalian brain on cellular and molecular levels, informing the treatment and prevention of disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “We have often thought that the people you recruit to an institution are crucial,” said Pat. “It sounds obvious, but it is a very competitive environment, and there are many institutions interested in candidates like Dr. Ressler. This opportunity was exciting for us because we knew that endowing the chair would greatly increase the probability that he would come to McLean.”

Dr. Ressler is currently a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator and professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences in the Yerkes Research Center of Emory University, as well as a member of the Institute of Medicine and chair of the Scientific Council of the Anxiety and Depression Association of America. He has also been very involved in training physician scientists as the current director of Emory’s MD/PhD program. Thus, he will bring a tremendous amount of scientific, clinical and training experience when he assumes his new role at McLean next August.

As chief scientific officer at McLean, Dr. Ressler will oversee the hospital’s comprehensive research enterprise, enhancing the breadth and depth of the scientific portfolio, promoting research collaborations, and advancing a vision for improved lab facilities.

“Dr. Ressler is unique in that he is both an outstanding neuroscientist and trained as a clinical psychiatrist. He bridges both worlds to come up with creative and powerful scientific insights about the genetics and epigenetics of anxiety disorders like PTSD,” said Dr. Coyle.

What drew Dr. Ressler to McLean was the opportunity to be part of the “best clinical psychiatric program in the country, and probably the world, and its outstanding, cutting-edge research program,” he said. The fact that McLean’s basic and clinical research takes place on the same campus as its treatment programs—unlike many other research operations—was another huge draw. “I’ve spent my career doing translational research, from bench

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Kerry Ressler, MD, PhD, incoming chief scientific officer and James and Patricia Poitras chair in psychiatry

to bedside and back again. I see my charge at McLean as fostering further translation by helping the clinicians intersect with the basic scientists and vice versa," said Dr. Ressler.

Taken a step further, discoveries made in one area of brain disorders often inform others, sometimes even the entire field. This notion was compelling to the Poitrases, along with the idea that, from an administrative perspective, the chief scientific officer position is essential. "Having someone like Dr. Ressler who is responsible for institution-wide research is important to the coordination, direction and focus of the overall operation," said Jim.

The Poitrases' gift comes at a critical juncture for McLean, with the fields of neuroscience and psychiatric genetics exploding, according to Scott L. Rauch, MD, McLean's president and psychiatrist in chief and Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo chair of psychiatry.

"McLean has a 200-year commitment to improving the quality of care for those with mental illness through neuroscientific discoveries," he said. "The Poitrases' tremendous gift helps us build on that incredible legacy."

Pat Poitras

"The people you recruit to an institution are crucial. It sounds obvious, but it is a very competitive environment, and there are many institutions interested in candidates like Dr. Ressler."

If you are interested in supporting McLean, please contact Director of Development Lori Etringer at 617-855-3840 or letringer@partners.org.
$2M Gift Fuels Trauma Research

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hard to do both. This wonderful gift will allow me to dedicate a portion of my time each week to research for the first time since graduate school."

In addition to honoring Dr. Winternitz and her dedicated clinician colleagues, the family hopes their gift also will help men suffering trauma-related disorders. In fact, there is much to learn in this field that will benefit both genders, and it is good fortune that McLean recently recruited one of the nation’s leading translational researchers in fear-based and trauma disorders (see story on p. 6).

The $500,000 portion of the gift earmarked for the Center of Excellence in Women’s Mental Health continues the family’s earlier, generous support and will fund junior faculty with clinical and research interests in women’s mental health; spawn training opportunities for clinical fellows; attract visiting scholars; convene lectures on topics in women’s mental health; and support clinical collaborations geared toward implementing and disseminating evidence-based treatments designed to provide women with the best care possible.

“Both through our clinical programs focused on women and our research, I’d like to help destigmatize these disorders in women, just as PTSD has finally been destigmatized for soldiers coming back from war,” said Dr. Kaufman. “I am grateful for this opportunity to shed new light on these issues and bring hope to more women and girls.”

Visit the new McLean website

McLean recently launched its re-designed website, mcleanhospital.org, which serves as a welcoming virtual front door to the hospital.

We invite you to visit the many new features, videos and our new blog.

Note: The site is optimized for Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome.