

125 YEARS AND COUNTING

The Evolution of an Alumni Association on its 125th Anniversary

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President-Elect, Alumni Association



This year, 2005 is the 125th anniversary of our Alumni Association. A truly celebratory event! The Alumni Association is an integral part of SUNY Downstate in the Borough of New York that we fondly refer to as Brooklyn – former home of “Dem Bums” and home to Coney Island, Prospect Park, Nathans and Juniors among others.

The following is a look at the evolution of the Alumni Association and the environment that nurtured it!

- 1609** Although Henry Hudson landed on today's Coney Island in 1609, Breuckelen or Broken Land, so called by the early Dutch settlers because of its irregular terrain and surface, was not charted until the
- 1646** Dutch West India did so in 1646. The British replaced the Dutch West India Company in 1664 and they anglicized Breuckelen to Brooklyn.
- 1776** The Revolutionary War and particularly the Battle of Long Island, (Brooklyn) played a major role in the gentrification of Brooklyn. The Battle was actually fought near what is today Prospect Park and the influx of army soldiers and physicians led many of these men to settle in Brooklyn after the war was over. Little by little as Brooklyn flourished so did its medical community.
- 1822** Kings County Medical Society was founded in 1822. It is the oldest scientific institution in Brooklyn.
- 1831** Kings County Hospital was founded.
- 1834** Brooklyn was incorporated as a City.

1856 Brooklyn now had a population of 200,000. Private physicians and the two hospitals within its boundaries provided most of its medical care; (Kings County Hospital or Brooklyn City Hospital and the four free dispensaries that were in operation in Brooklyn at that time). South Brooklyn, an area with a large German immigrant population had no dispensary available to care for its poor people. To remedy this, two German physicians, Dr. Louis Bauer and Dr. Gustav Braeunlich joined forces to form the German General Dispensary. In March of 1856 it opened its doors at 132 Court Street.

1857 In need of larger quarters, the Dispensary moved up the block to 145 Court Street. The German Dispensary merged into St. John's Hospital on December 23, 1857.

1858 On January 20, 1858 the College gave notice to the Legislature of their intent to incorporate the Long Island College Hospital as the first medical school in America to be associated with a hospital. This was a popular model found in Europe under which many of the early founders of the Long Island College Hospital had been trained. On November 15, 1858 The Long Island College Hospital was formally opened.

1860 On March 29, 1860 the first course of lectures began. The length of study at the time was that the student had to apprentice for three years with a practicing physician. The student visited patients in their homes as well as in hospitals helping his preceptor prepare medicines and assisting him in all of his work. In addition, the student had to attend two sixteen-week lecture courses. Each course cost \$100.00. Following the three-year



Dr. Louis Bauer.



German General Dispensary.

Dr. Austin Flint.

*Long Island College Hospital circa 1858,
Percy Mansion.*



first graduating class in 1860. The first meeting of what was then to be the Alumni Association brought together 22 alumni who met in the amphitheater of the hospital. Upon unanimous consent, a constitution, bylaws, a slate of officers and six counselors were elected. The Alumni Association of Long Island College Hospital was formed. Article II reads as follows: “The objects of the Association are to promote the interests of the Long Island College Hospital in the work of medical education and to encourage and promote the scientific investigation of medical subjects.” These principles, written 125 years ago, are still followed. At this meeting all the members present were assessed one dollar to pay for start up costs, mostly for the printing of announcements and postage. The first president of the Association was Alexander Johnston Chalmers Skene (1837-1900).

1881 Two weeks after the Alumni Association was founded, President Skene offered a prize of \$100.00 to be given to the alumnus who wrote the best essay during 1881. On June 13, 1881 at the first annual meeting, Dr. Albert Leffingwell received this award for his paper entitled *Suicide in American Cities*. The first dinner dance of the Alumni Association was held that day at the Iron Pier in Coney Island after the meeting was completed. 150 members and guests attended. Early on, the Association realized that contact with its constituency was very important. A list of the Alumni from 1860-1881 was therefore published and sent to the alumni as well as to local medical community members.

1882 To further develop the association; the graduating Class of 1882 were invited to attend the alumni dinner. James Watt, class of 1860, offered to pay for these stu-

Title page from Dr. Skene's book.



Alexander Johnston Chalmers Skene.

TREATISE ON THE
DISEASES OF WOMEN

FOR THE USE OF
STUDENTS AND PRACTITIONERS

BY
ALEXANDER J. C. SKENE, M. D.

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS, THE
NEW YORK MEDICAL SOCIETY, AND THE SOCIETY OF OBSTETRIC
SURGEONS OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

WITH 261 ILLUSTRATIONS AND 3 CHROMO-LITHOGRAPHS.

NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1888



dents should the Alumni Association have any shortfall from their treasury. Other initiatives during these early years included the formation of (1) an alumni glee club, (2) an alumni orchestra and (3) a public lecture program.

- 1890** An Alumni pin was designed and medical students were permitted to wear it after their completion of the first year. This proved to be a very popular article to own and to wear and many students and physicians, not alumni, were politely asked not to wear the pin.
- 1892** A third roster of members was published with 1,276 names being included.
- 1893** The bylaws were amended to provide for annual dues of one dollar and the election of a permanent historian.

1899 The history of Long Island College Hospital and its graduates was published by the Alumni Association and was edited by Joseph H. Raymond, Class of 1868.

1900 There were 1,748 graduates.

1908 A register was published listing 2,239 graduates.

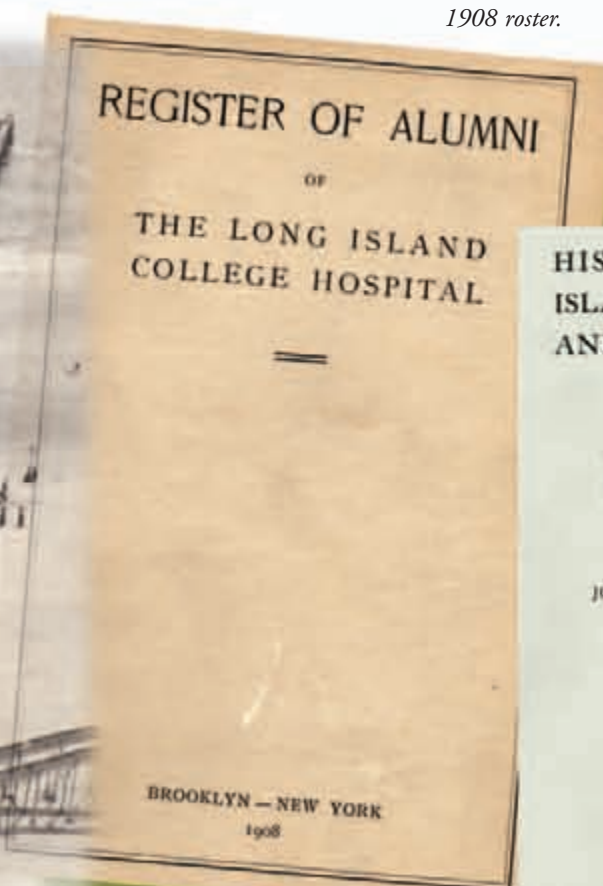
1912 Associate membership was approved for graduates of other medical schools who were affiliated with the teaching department of Long Island College Hospital. A two-dollar initiation fee was assessed to all of the associate members.

1919 Alumni Day was first begun. This was to be a means of binding the alumni more firmly to its alma mater and to foster a closer relationship with the administration and faculty by their participation in this activity.

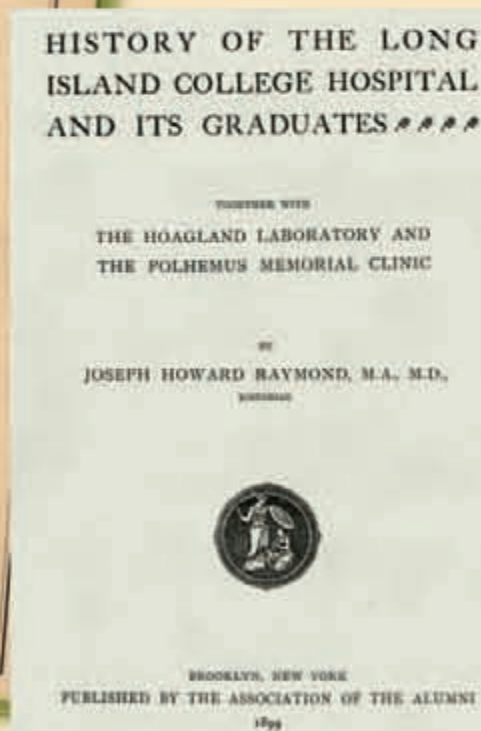
Iron Pier at Coney Island.



1908 roster.



History of Long Island College Hospital book.

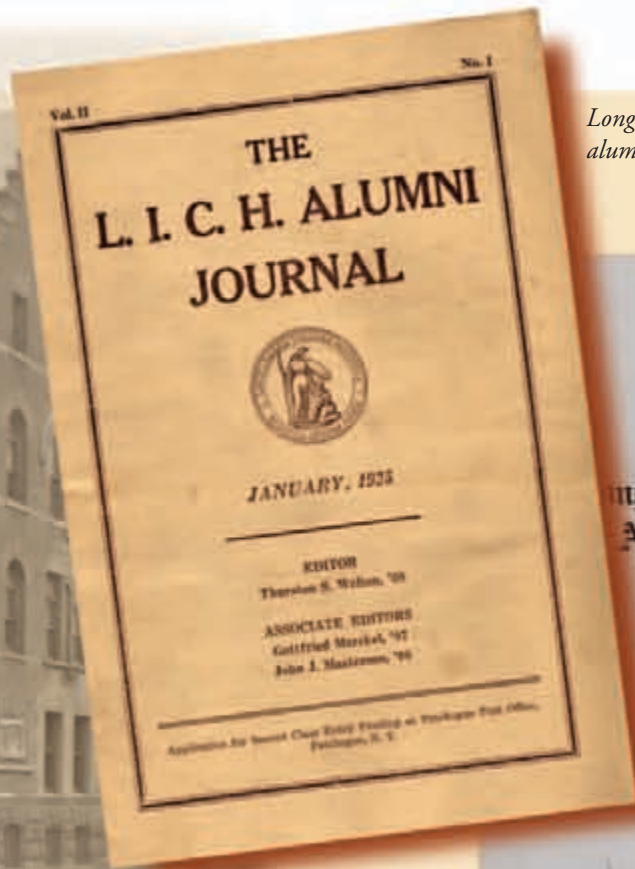


- 1925** The initial issue of the Long Island College Hospital Alumni Journal was published.
- 1930** Long Island College Hospital formally becomes the Long Island College of Medicine. Each of these entities had their own administration and governing bodies but worked together in the education of physicians.
- 1931** Article I of the Constitution was changed to read that the organization shall henceforth be called the Alumni Association of the Long Island College of Medicine.
- 1935** The alumni journal's name was changed to the *Long Islander Medical Journal*. This allowed for broader advertising potentials thereby increasing revenue.
- 1936** Dues were increased to three dollars. The Alumni Fund was established to help

subsidize projects such as research, scholarship and student aid. The Class of 1906 gave five hundred dollars as an initial start with the Classes of 1911 and 1914 pledging also to give five hundred dollars each.

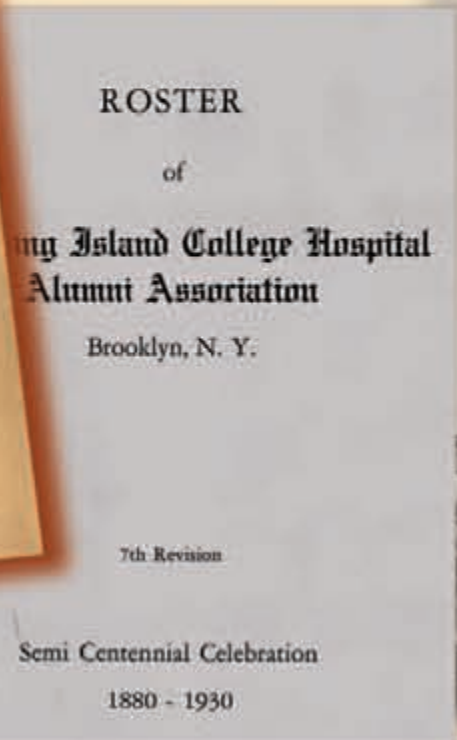
- 1938** The Alumni Fund had \$5,000. Snapshots of alumni and faculty were first published in the Alumni Journal.
- 1939** The scientific session on Alumni Day had topics that included: (1) Ancient and Modern Methods of Poisoning (2) The Management of Pelvic Malignancies and (3) The Reconstruction of the Arm and Hand.
- 1941** The Alumni Fund had \$8,000 in its treasury. As the request of the War Department the alumni and faculty established the 79th general hospital in

Hoagland lab.



Long Island College of Medicine alumni journal, 1925.

1929 semi-centennial roster.



which 35 to 40 teaching staff volunteered. This was activated in November of 1942. The 79th hospital was to have 1,000 beds, 55 medical officers, 100 nurses and 500 enlisted men.

- 1943** To meet the growing demand of the armed forces for medical officers, the College merged two classes into three years. The first endowed scholarship fund was established in honor of Dr. Peter Yudkowski.
- 1944** The Alumni Association established an alumni achievement award to be given for distinguished service to American medicine. The first recipient was Robert L. Dickinson of the Class of 1882.
- 1945** During the sixty-fifth year, the *Alumni Bulletin* of the Long Island College Hospital of Medicine first appeared with

Duncan Clark, M. D., Class of 1936 being named the Editor. In July of 1945 the *Alumni Bulletin*, 2nd issue, was devoted to those who gave their lives in service to their country.

- 1946** The idea of building a medical center is first inaugurated. Six acres of land facing Kings County was purchased on Clarkson Avenue.
- 1949** The Medical College had a shortfall of \$200,000 for operating expenses. The Alumni Association pledged \$20,000 to aid the College. Duncan Clark, M.D. Class of 1936 was appointed Dean and resigned as the Editor of the *Alumni Journal*. The State of New York at this time was actively considering a merger with the Long Island College of Medicine in hopes of forming a State Medical School located in the New York City area.

1945 *Alumni Bulletin of the Long Island College of Medicine, Vol. 1, No. 1.*

July 1945, second issue of the *Alumni Bulletin*, a memorial to those fallen in war.



Polhemus building.

1950 A formal ceremony to merge the College with the State University system took place at the Waldorf Astoria on April 5, 1950.

1952 The Board of Managers of the Alumni Association was no longer able to elect representatives to the Board of the Medical School as this prerogative was now placed in the hands of Albany. Plans for the basic science building were to provide office space for the Alumni Association.

1953 On April 9, 1953 a groundbreaking ceremony for the new basic sciences building takes place.

1954 The diamond anniversary year was highlighted by the cornerstone ceremony performed on October 21, 1954. President Dwight David Eisenhower and Governor Thomas E. Dewey attended the ceremo-

ny. Other attendees included representatives from the State and City Of New York.

1955 The History of Long Island College Hospital and Long Island College of Medicine and SUNY College of Medicine was published by the Alumni Association.

1968 *Alumni Today*, Volume 1, Number 1, the Bulletin of the Alumni Association of the College of Medicine of the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center was first published.

1980 The 100th anniversary of the Alumni Association had 300 people attend the alumni dinner. In addition, there was a Lincoln Center event held on the same evening. An alumni directory and a centennial logo were published as well. The cost of the dinner dance was \$50.00 per

Basic sciences building under construction.



1954 cornerstone ceremony.



Groundbreaking 1953.

person. Dues were voted to be fifteen dollars for the first five years and fifteen dollars after fifty years with thirty-five dollars being the annual fee for all other years.

Since the development of SUNY Downstate Medical Center, the Alumni Association has been active. They continue the principles set forth in Article II of the 1880 bylaws: To aid students in their education by supporting scholarship research and the overall growth and development of its students and acknowledging the accomplishments and achievements of its alumni.

2004-2005- This anniversary year, the accomplishments of your Alumni Association include: (1) The raising of more than one million dollars earmarked for tuition scholarships. (2) The granting in excess of \$350,000 for such diverse activities as:

tuition scholarships to 65 students, summer research fellowships to 22 students, health care in developing countries to 16 students, mentoring programs for 275 students, support of the student art and poetry publication, and support of faculty gem lectures. From little acorns, trees grow!

From the \$500.00 seed placed by the Class of 1906 to the 10 million dollar present endowment, our forest enlarges. If we are to support those activities that are important for the education and development of our students, we must continue our financial growth and development. It is only through our caring, and most importantly our giving, that this can be accomplished. As President-Elect of your Alumni Association for the year 2005-2006, our 125th year, I ask you to remember these efforts and to support them in deeds. ☞



Alumni Today
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ALUMNI TODAY

Science Education Building, 1999.



1957 first
graduating
class and
building
dedication.

