



Louis L. Levine, MA, LHD, CSW—Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

Mr. Levine has been president of NYCPM
for 30 years.

BY MARK H. SWARTZ, MD

It is with great pleasure that I write about my dear friend and colleague, Mr. Louis L. Levine, as he is honored by election to the *Podiatry Management (PM) Hall of Fame* and selection for *PM's Lifetime Achievement Award*. Lou, as we all know him, was selected by New York College of Podiatric Medicine's (NYCPM) Board of Trustees in January 1991 and formally installed as President and CEO (of both NYCPM and its affiliate, the Foot Center of New York) in March 1991. I first met Lou 30 years ago when I was a Visiting Professor at NYCPM. I'm a cardiologist and was working as Professor of Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and teaching clinical skills at NYCPM. I left Mount Sinai in 2003 and was asked by Lou to become a full-time faculty member at NYCPM to bring more allopathic medical education to the school and I have worked there ever since.

Lou had illustrious careers in government and healthcare prior to coming to NYCPM. Lou was the Corporate Vice President for Governmental and Public Affairs for Empire Blue Cross-Blue Shield, and before that had been Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of Group Health, Inc., a non-profit New York-based insurer. Before that, Lou had been



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Commissioner of Labor Affairs and Industrial Commissioner for the State of New York under Governors Nelson Rockefeller, Malcolm Wilson, and Hugh Carey. While in government, he was able to gain recognition for podiatrists so that they would be eligible for workers compensation, and at Blue Cross-Blue Shield, he achieved certification as a Medicare delivery system for the Foot Center of New York (FCNY).

After his arrival at NYCPM in

1991, Lou quickly set goals for the college, seeking to provide NYCPM students with the highest quality podiatric medical instruction possible and to meet, through FCNY, the foot care needs of the Harlem community in which the college is located. He set about making physical changes and internal changes to the college's aging building, with the goal of making the school more welcoming to students and making a superb education easier to achieve. Emphasizing the students' education, he had the school's upper floors renovated, created new labs, new lecture halls, a conference center, a lounge for students, established the school's first true cafeteria, and improved the exterior of the building. He personally established a new student scholarship fund, which functions to this day. These changes provided the entire faculty and administration a major boost as well.

The quality of the education NYCPM provided was also immeasurably improved by Lou. He changed the school's academics as well as its academic administration. He appointed a commission to study the school's curriculum, which pointed to an APMA report that described the need for schools and podiatric practitioners to end the pro-

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profession's "isolation" from other medical fields and to integrate with and emulate allopathic medical education curricula. In 1993, Lou appointed three alumni—Michael J. Trepal, DPM as Dean/Chief Academic Officer, Kevin T. Jules, DPM as Chairman of the Department of Surgical Sciences, and Russell G. Volpe, DPM as Chairman of the new Division of Pediatrics—to help achieve his goals. In addition, in the years since he started, Lou has kept his eye on the digital needs of the students and faculty, hiring experts in the field to continually improve the in-house IT department, putting NYCPM on an advanced footing.

Lou observed that the fourth-year education at NYCPM differed little from the third year and initiated the practice of sending seniors out on externships, where students receive further training at external institutions.

With a large grant, he was able to fund residency positions at the school (which currently number nine) and instituted what we now call our annual Residency Fair, in which pro-

rotations for both NYCPM students and faculty. We're now affiliated with several hospitals of the New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation in Harlem and in the South

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gram representatives come to NYCPM to talk directly to students about their respective residency programs.

Not ignoring the needs of the first-year students, Lou inaugurated an annual White Coat Ceremony, in which incoming first-year students receive and don their white coats; symbols of their membership in a medical profession. They also take the Hippocratic Oath for the first time.

Related to the clinical rotations, Lou changed the concept of these

Bronx, staffing their podiatry departments and benefitting community patients. Students now obtain the hands-on experiences they need—a facet of their education they never had before—and the hospital podiatry departments have improved greatly. NYCPM offers more rotations in hospitals for students than any other podiatric medical college. Lou says that when he started, we were paying hospitals to take our students and now they pay us!

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His outreach was not limited to local city hospitals. Lou formed relationships with schools in a number of other countries which send podology students to NYCPM to take courses in surgical skills and dissections; the international schools host our students or faculty members in turn. The longest-running relationships have been with the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and the Université du Québec à Trois Rivières. Italy, Poland, China, and India are also among the countries with which NYCPM has been associated. The relationship with the school in Madrid is over 25 years old, and one of its directors, a graduate of NYCPM, was the first DPM in Spain.

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Early on, Lou recognized that while he needed to improve and broaden the school's curriculum, podiatric medicine would ultimately have to achieve greater integration with other medical professions. As a leader who has never stopped making changes, he is now leading NYCPM into its new chapter—the affiliation of NYCPM into the Touro College and University System, a medical education system with a number of medical and health-related colleges. Medical and health education have changed dramatically, and this integration will be mutually beneficial. Lou's new title will be President Emeritus and President of a new NYCPM Advisory Board/Foundation. This Foundation will raise funds to provide services to the College for its continued educational growth in podiatric medicine.

Lou started making changes when he arrived, and he has never stopped. I could not be prouder of my esteemed friend Louis L. Levine.

Tributes

Gabriel Caprio, MBA, LHD

I have known Lou Levine for over twenty years and unequivocally state that he is the wisest and most intelligent person with whom I have ever been associated. He is a great leader whose talents have been clearly demonstrated over many years. His tenure as New York State Secretary of Labor under three governors and his lengthy successful tenure as President and CEO of New York College of Podiatric Medicine clearly attest to his abundant

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management skills and leadership qualities.

Since 1991, Lou has served as President and CEO of the New York College of Podiatric Medicine and the Foot Center of New York. During his

he retired in 1987 as a Lt. Colonel. His dedication to public service was equally commendable. From 1966-76, he served as Commissioner of Labor Affairs, and as Industrial Commissioner of the State of New York under Governors Nelson Rockefeller, Malcolm Wilson, and Hugh Carey.

he has become a greatly admired, respected, and esteemed colleague, and a trusted and loyal friend. My respect for and pride in knowing him have grown continually. I have never met anyone in my entire life quite like Lou. An exceptional human being, he is highly intelligent, a decisive decision maker, with a keen sense of insight into situations surrounding him. He has an unusual ability to foresee the future, zero in on the problem at hand, make plans, and move forward with the solution. If you review the curriculum vitae of Mr. Levine, you can see the variety of his work and accomplishments, which are simply astonishing, with endless successes. His intuitive ability and ingenious personality enable him to see through things and get to the heart of the matter in any situation.

With his benevolent personality, Lou continuously seeks ways to help and improve the lives of others, by focusing on their personal development and helping others to improve their situations. He inspires people to do things they never thought they

“Lou Levine is a truly exceptional leader who is dedicated to the practice of podiatric medicine.”—Caprio

tenure, he has very skillfully and successfully navigated the College and Foot Center through the numerous educational and financial challenges that have seriously affected the podiatric world and the entire healthcare system.

Based upon the quality of the curriculum and employment/graduation rate outcomes, the World Scholarship Forum has recently ranked NYCPM at the top of its list of the best podiatry schools in the world. This is certainly a testimony to Lou’s leadership and dedication to the practice of podiatric medicine. Lou has continually prioritized a strategy for the College’s long-term development. This effort has been extraordinarily challenging. Due to Lou’s leadership, this major effort has culminated in a Board of Trustees-approved plan that provides a clear path for continued success of the College.

In summary, Lou Levine is a truly exceptional leader who is dedicated to the practice of podiatric medicine. NYCPM’s long record of producing graduates with outstanding levels of student outcomes is clearly visible and attests to this fact.

Alan Kadish, MD

The particulars of Louis L. Levine’s journey tell the story of a determined, dynamic individual who sets the bar high for himself and the organizations that he associates with. Lou served our country for more than four decades, first in the Army Air Corps during World War II, then in the U.S. Army Reserve, from which

In all of our conversations, I was always impressed by Lou’s dedication to education. Holding an M.A. in Industrial Sociology from NYU, and a B.A. in Sociology and Psychology from CUNY’s City College, Lou never ceased in his dedication to academia. He has been awarded honorary doctoral degrees from three prominent institutions.

For the last three decades, Lou has been President and CEO of the New York College of Podiatric Med-

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icine and Foot Center of New York. It was in this capacity that I had the good fortune to spend time with Lou. In August, I was delighted to announce that New York College of Podiatric Medicine will join the Touro College and University System—and I was proud to stand alongside Lou as we signed a membership agreement. I have been honored by and greatly enjoyed our association both personally and professionally.

Bijan Safai, MD, DSc

I feel especially honored and privileged to have this opportunity to write about my dear friend Mr. Louis L. Levine. Throughout the last 30-plus years that I’ve known Lou,

could. Lou works tirelessly and in a humble way to provide the best possible help and assistance to those who are close to him and need his help. Lou is a positive thinker and has led this college with the same positive mindset as he lives his personal life. He leads with resilience, integrity, compassion, and humility; he’s a strategic and critical thinker with a vision for the future. The New York School of Podiatric Medicine is so fortunate to have Lou at its helm. He has strategically, intuitively, and innovatively led the school, stabilized its condition, and increased the value and standing of the college and all its assets. Lou, with his exceptional

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personality and characteristics, represents a unique and ultimate human being.

Hussein M. Matari, MD

It is an honor and gives me great happiness to write about my dear friend Louis L. Levine. I had the pleasure of meeting him back in 1993 when establishing and enhancing the prosperous relationship between Metropolitan Hospital and NYCPM. He is the definition of a true leader and the most supportive, thoughtful, down-to-earth individual that I have ever encountered.

As I think back to all of my memories with him, I can't help but remember the first time we met. He arrived

“(Lou) has encouraged and mentored numerous students and faculty into publications and research and guided them to success.”—Matari

at Metropolitan Hospital and invited me to have lunch in the hospital cafeteria, where we both ordered the lentil soup. Little did I know, this would mirror the rest of my life and friendship with him.

We began to talk about business and then quickly went from professional colleagues to friends. I would come home and rave about his qualities, which spiked my wife's curiosity. She too, was blown away and agreed with me that he is an astounding human being. Our relationship grew, as did my respect for him, quickly becoming admiration. It is easy to be drawn to his personality and from this, he quickly became a pillar in my life and became a mentor. As the popular saying goes, “chance made us colleagues but the fun and laughter made us friends.”

For the last 25 years, whether deciding what to order for lunch or what to do when I was at a crossroads with a momentous decision, both personally or professionally, I knew that I can always count on Louis to guide me in the right direction. Our weekly phone calls are conversations that I look forward to. His knowledge and expertise are inconceivable and inspiring. Another major reason I admire him is how his humility shines through in every conversation. His humble nature is evident whether you are janitor, professor, or CEO. You are treated with the utmost respect, as no title or accomplishment overshadows the commonality of being human.

Whenever I gave a lecture at NYCPM, I would look for him to say hello. Professionally, he has accomplished so much. He is the president and CEO of the oldest and most prestigious podiatry medical school in the country.

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He is able to maintain strong financial stability of the institution. He managed to merge the oldest, most prestigious podiatry school with New York Medical College; together, both share the same vision of advancing with his guidance and support. He

my dream of a podiatric university in Canada and behind what became the first podiatric medical program outside the U.S., as well as the world's first French-speaking one.

Surrounded for that endeavor by eminent colleagues such as the late Bruce Frankel, DPM and Michael J. Trepal, DPM, he furthered the cause

years ago, he has understood that society demands professionals in medicine and surgery of the foot to have high cultural, scientific, and technical standards. By cultivating the lifelong training of podiatrists, he has helped numerous professionals understand the social and economic order and attain personal and professional self-realization. I am truly grateful for his wisdom and example.

“The positive impact he has had on the podiatric profession warrants our admiration and this official recognition by the readers of *Podiatry Management Magazine*.”—Allart

**New York State Assembly Member
Robert J. Rodriguez**

I have admired Mr. Levine for many years, as he has served the podiatric medical community, the community of East Harlem residents in need of podiatric medicine, and the City of New York through the Foot Center of New York. His dedication and commitment to those he serves is truly admirable and comes from a place of true passion. His work embodies a mission that is two-fold: to help people live better lives through access to medical care regardless of race or income, and encourage others to change their community through education and service. Congratulations, Mr. Louis L. Levine; it is an honor to see all that you have achieved and all that we have benefited from your unwavering mission. **PM**

has helped thousands of students graduate and excel in the specialty field of the lower extremity. In addition, he has encouraged and mentored numerous students and faculty into publications and research and guided them to success.

It gives me great honor to know his lovely wife, children, and grandchildren. I'm honored and humbled to call this gentleman my mentor. To be given the opportunity to be involved in the process of his presentation with this prestigious award is something I will never forget, as he is ever so worthy of it. He has been, and always will be, one of my favorite human beings.

François Allart, DPM

It is a great honor for me to pay tribute to Mr. Louis Levine on the occasion of this much-deserved induction into the Podiatry Hall of Fame. Louis has been involved in progressive causes on many levels, up to the highest spheres of the government, seeking to effect long-lasting changes in our society and in the field of podiatry. The positive impact he has had on the podiatric profession warrants our admiration and this official recognition by the readers of *Podiatry Management Magazine*.

Among his many accomplishments, Louis has propelled our Quebec University forward in a joint venture with NYCPM. His dedication has influenced my professional life forever. He is the driving force behind

of podiatry and opened it to new horizons. On a more personal level, through his actions and his kind personality, this esteemed person and mentor has taught me the value of perseverance, dedication, and respect. The dream came true. Canada—and especially Quebec—will be forever grateful for his dedication.

Prof. Dr. Ricardo Becerro de Bengoa Vallejo, RN, BSc, MLIS, DPM, PhD, DHL (Honoris Causa)

Thanks to Mr. Louis Levine, I understand that an institution should not be managed coldly, distantly, and anonymously. From Mr. Levine, I learned it is better to manage an institution by focusing on the feelings and emotions of the people within it.

Institutions are expressions of the people who lead them. Likewise, NYCPM is one of the most advanced Colleges of Podiatric Medicine because Mr. Levine is compassionate and empathetic, always striving to achieve the best for others.

During Mr. Levine's 30-year presidency, the NYCPM has set the pace for developing the scientific and technical aspects of medicine and surgery for foot pathologies. Mr. Levine encouraged students and professionals from across the world to teach and do research at the NYCPM; thereby promoting a democratic mindset and scientific spirit in podiatrists globally. His legacy will shape the evolution of podiatry for generations.

Since I first met Mr. Levine 28



Mark H. Swartz, MD has been recognized nationally and internationally for his teaching ability. He has centered his medical education research on improving medical education and assessment of clinical competence. Dr.

Swartz is currently Professor of Medicine at the State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate College of Medicine, Professor of Medical Sciences at the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, Adjunct Clinical Professor at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Adjunct Professor of Medicine at New York Medical College, Visiting Professor of Medicine at Taipei Medical University in Taiwan, and First Lecture Professor at Xiangya Hospital Central South University in Changsha, China.

Author of five textbooks, Dr. Swartz's *Textbook of Physical Diagnosis: History and Examination*, now in its 8th Edition, is the most widely read textbook in this field and has been translated into 15 languages.