CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Two very long-time NKI employees are newly retired, and two current ones have stepped into new roles. We bid Bill Alexander and Art Fleischer farewell, and congratulate Des Moloney and Kathleen Shannon on their new positions.

Bill Alexander, NKI’s Director of Technology since 1988, has retired after 37 years at NKI. “I’ve worked under four directors, survived two (or it is three?) attempted closings by the State, and witnessed the birth of the Internet and the death of the small mainframe,” he recalled. “That’s enough for any career.” The author of three critically-acclaimed books, including the national bestseller The $64 Tomato, Bill plans to continue writing and travelling.

Bill’s successor will be a familiar face to many. Des Moloney graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas College in 1992 with a BA in History and obtained his MS in Secondary Education in 1998. Des joined
NKI in late 2001 as a desktop support specialist and steadily took on more responsibility, becoming the Network Administrator, then Senior Systems Administrator, and now Director of Information Technology. In addition to these responsibilities, Des is NKI’s technical liaison to the New York State Office of Information Technology Services, the Office of Mental Health, and the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, as well as the Institute’s Information Security Officer.

Art Fleischer, Manager of the Laboratory Animal Resource facility, sent these kind words:

“After 49 years working here at NKI, I have decided to retire effective June 27th. It has been a long, wonderful trip.

“I couldn’t leave without thanking some of the people who have made my stay here quite memorable. Some are still here at NKI and some are no longer with us. First, I must thank Dr. William Sacks who had the foresight to see my potential and hire me fresh out of college. Of course, I must also thank Dr. Nathan S. Kline whose kindness and generosity helped me through some very tough times in my life. Dr. Abel Lajtha and Dr. Miki Kohn have been mentors and friends of mine for my entire tenure at NKI. George Nagle, too, deserves a hearty thank you for all he did for me. Thanks also to Dr. Henry Sershen and Tom O’Hara who have traveled this winding road with me for many years and of course, to Dr. Mark Klinger and Ms. Kathleen Shannon for putting up with me.

“To my many co-workers over these past years, thank you all for making this trip through life so interesting. May you all live long and prosper.”

Taking up the reins as animal facilities manager is Kathleen Shannon. After a previous career in finance and accounting, Kathleen returned to school and became a Licenced Veterinary Technician. She came to NKI in October, 2015 after working for three years at NYU as a Research Animal Technician.

In keeping with the summer growing season, NKI recently welcomed a number of new employees. Some of these are featured below.
New IRB Director

NKI’s new Institutional Review Board (IRB) Director, Ms. Vanessa Smith, joins us after serving for three years as co-manager of the IRB at Rockefeller University. Prior to that, she worked as an IRB Specialist at Columbia University Medical Center. Vanessa is a graduate of the University of Maryland College Park (UMD) with a master’s degree in Clinical Psychology and a bachelor’s degree in Psychology, with a minor in Human Development. While at Rockefeller, she obtained a Certificate in Clinical and Translational Research, and she earned her Certified IRB Professional (CIP) credential in 2015. Vanessa’s educational background and IRB experience, as well as her experience working as a Research Coordinator in the Decision, Attention, and Memory Lab at UMD will serve her well as she joins the NKI team.

EBI Welcomes New Postdoc

Brett East, PhD is a new postdoctoral researcher in Don Wilson’s lab. He shared a bit about himself for The Informer.

While pursuing my BS in Biochemistry at LSU, I took a basic neuroscience course and fell in love with the material. In learning more about the field, I became particularly interested in the mechanisms underlying learning and memory. My graduate work at Tulane University focused on interactions of multiple memory systems (such as the hippocampus, striatum, and amygdala) and how different types of learning could affect the way in which memory is stored (or not stored). My dissertation work focused on contributions of the lateral vs medial entorhinal cortex to the acquisition and expression of fear memory and the different roles these subregions play depending whether the animal is learning trace, delay, or contextual fear.

My graduate work provided me with a strong background in animal behavior and some basic techniques like lesions and temporary inactivations, but I wanted to be able to dive deeper into the psychological mechanisms underpinning these interactions through use of more advanced techniques such as electrophysiology and optogenetics. As such, my research has now led me to NKI and the Emotional Brain Institute as not only a way to learn these techniques, but also surround myself with people interested in similar questions and leaders in the field. In Don Wilson’s lab, I recently received an NIH F32 grant to support my research currently focusing on how interactions between the piriform cortex and amygdala change odor coding during learning and recall of an odor fear task using a combination of single unit recordings and optogenetic manipulations. When not at NKI, I’m an avid theater fan and as much of a home baker as one can be in a Manhattan studio apartment.
New Research Assistants Join Clinical Research Department

Julia Ermel graduated in May from Washington University in St. Louis with an A.B. in Cognitive Neuroscience. There, she worked as an undergraduate R.A. in the Cognitive Control and Psychopathology Lab under Dr. Deanna Barch for three years. In the Barch lab, Julia studied cognition, insight into one’s disorder, effort-based decision-making, reward responsivity, and psychotic-like experiences both in people with schizophrenia and in the undergraduate population. At NKI, she is working under the supervision of Dr. Pamela Butler.

Tomislav (Tom) Gajic, MD, PhD, graduated from the University of Belgrade Medical School with a MD and MSc and received a PhD from the University of Kragujevac Medical School. After completing his psychiatry residency training at the Institute of Psychiatry Clinical Center in Serbia, he worked as a psychiatrist and served as Head of the Department of Psychiatry General Hospital in Valjevo, Serbia. In addition to his clinical practice, Dr. Gajic did research on biopsychosocial models of personality and the impact of personality and personality disorders on clinical syndromes, especially mood disorders. He joined Dr. Pamela Butler’s group in July.

Jessica Harte graduated from the College of New Rochelle in 2012 with a BS in biology. After graduating she worked at Mount Sinai Hospital doing research on Alzheimer’s and Huntington disease. In the lab, Jessica performed behavior testing on various transgenic mouse models and prepared tissue samples for sectioning and cultures. Jessica is currently working for Dr. Jim Clelland on a patient research study performing psychiatric and cognitive assessments and examining the role of vitamin D in psychiatric disorders. She is also performing recruitment and assessments for a study of the connection between negative symptoms of schizophrenia with COMT genotype and proline.

Erin McDonald graduated from Barnard College in 2017 with a BA in psychology. At Barnard, she worked as a student researcher at the Center for Toddler Development. Her senior research project examined familial influence on the development of self through parental regulation of play. Off campus, Erin volunteered at a developmental psychobiology lab, coding videos of toddlers with autism and observing clinical assessments. In addition to research, she worked as a psychosocial intern, assisting children with mood and anxiety disorders, and as a behavioral interventionist, assisting children with cerebral palsy. At NKI, Erin is a clinical research coordinator for Dr. Iosifescu’s studies.

Jacob Merrin graduated from Tufts University in 2016 with a BS in Psychology. While in college, he worked at the Tufts Social Cognition lab, studying creativity in multiracial, biracial, and monoracial children, and the Tufts Emotion, Brain, and Behavior Laboratory (EBBL), studying emotion regulation. He completed his senior honors thesis at EBBL looking at the effects of cognitive reappraisal on interview situations. After college, Jacob worked as a management consultant at Deloitte. He came to NKI in May and is working for Drs. Matthew Hoptman and Pamela Butler.

Danielle Rette graduated in May from Haverford College with a BS in Psychology. At Haverford, she worked as a research assistant in a Cognitive Neuroscience lab studying alpha wave suppression and mind wandering. In addition to her research experience, she worked in two different clinical programs focused on promoting life skills in children and young adults with autism. Danielle’s thesis examined the effect of positive partner illusions in relationships on the actor’s depression and social anxiety over time. She is currently working on Dr. Iosifescu’s depression studies.

(Photo on next page.)
Pictured from left to right: Jessica Harte, Danielle Rette, Jacob Merrin, Julia Ermel, Rebbia Shahab (left NKI), Jamie Glass (left NKI), Erin McDonald, Tomislav (Tom) Gajic

GRANTS RECEIVED

Dr. Robert Sears (Emotional Brain Institute) received a 2-year R21 for the grant titled “Neural substrates of orexin-dependent coping behaviors.”

Dr. Daniel Javitt (Schizophrenia Research) received the transfer of the remaining years on an R01 grant titled “Temporal Dynamics of Neurophysiological Patterns as Treatment Targets in Schizophrenia.”

Drs. Paul Mathews and Stephen Ginsberg (Center for Dementia Research) were awarded an R56 for their project titled “Pathogenic consequences of altered insulin signaling in the diabetic brain.”

Dr. Peter Lakatos (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) received a 5-year renewal of his grant titled “Cortical and thalamic mechanisms of selective auditory attention.”

Dr. Brett East (Emotional Brain Institute) received a Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service postdoctoral fellowship award for his grant titled “Olfactory circuit changes underlying odor memory.”
Revisionist History is a podcast from Malcolm Gladwell and Panoply. Each episode “reinterprets something from the past: an event, a person, an idea. Something overlooked. Something misunderstood.” Episode 4 of season 3 (titled “Free Brian Williams”), which looks at the fallibility and changeability of memory, refers prominently to the research of William Hirst and Elizabeth Phelps on long-term memory for the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Dr. Lloyd Sederer, Chief Medical Officer for OMH, recently appeared on The Brian Lehrer Show to talk about his new book, The Addiction Solution: Treating Our Dependence on Opioids and Other Drugs. Listen to the interview.

Vilma Gabbay (Clinical Research) is the corresponding author of this paper in Journal of Clinical Psychiatry.

Charles Schroeder (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) coauthored this paper published in the July issue of Nature Neuroscience.

A new paper by Helen Maria Lekas (Social Solutions & Services) and colleagues appears online in Culture, Health & Sexuality.


Dr. Gabbay also recently published a paper on inflammation and anhedonia in adolescents.

Earlier this year, a paper coauthored by Brian Russ (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) was published in Neuron.


Lila Davachi (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) is the corresponding author of a new PNAS paper.


Also out with a new publication in PNAS are Peter Lakatos, Annie Barczak, and the entire Dynamical Cognitive Neuroscience Lab (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation).


Ricardo Osorio (Clinical Research) is the senior author of a paper on sleep apnea and Alzheimer’s disease that was invited for inclusion in a supplement issue of Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease.


Pearl Lie and Ralph Nixon (Center for Dementia Research) recently published this review in Neurobiology of Disease.


Elizabeth Phelps (Emotional Brain Institute) has a new paper online in Journal of Experimental Psychology: General.

Ümit Tural (Clinical Research) is the lead author of this open access PLoS One article.


Jean-Pierre Lindenmayer and colleagues from NKI, Manhattan Psychiatric Center, and elsewhere published a new paper on cognitive remediation in Schizophrenia Research.


This 14-minute video – “My NCBI: Updates to grant applications and reporting” – provides an update and overview of using My NCBI, SciENcv, and Biosketch to manage grant applications, public access compliance, and reporting.

INFO UPDATE

If you are new to PubMed or you want a refresher, this online, self-paced class might be helpful. PubMed Essentials is an on-demand class made up of 12 very short video-modules (2-3 minutes each) with interactive exercises built into each module so you can explore PubMed at your own pace. After the necessary registrations, the course is available on demand 24/7 via Moodle. It is designed to take about one hour to complete.

Two new textbook editions are now available on PsychiatryOnline.org:


Thoroughly revised and restructured, this edition offers a modern reconsideration of the core concepts, conditions, and approaches in neuropsychiatry, providing clinicians with the knowledge and tools they need to practice in this demanding field.


Updated to reflect the rapidly expanding evidence base in the field, this textbook addresses general principles in evaluation and management (including legal and ethical issues); psychiatric symptoms and disorders in the medically ill; psychological and social aspects of diseases affecting the various organ systems; and psychiatric interventions for this patient population.

NKI’s PsychiatryOnline license provides full text access to the DSM library, a variety of textbooks, and several journals published by the American Psychiatric Association.
My MedlinePlus is a new weekly newsletter launched by MedlinePlus, the National Institutes of Health’s website for patients and their families and friends. My MedlinePlus includes information on diseases and conditions, health and wellness tips, and more. To sign up for this free weekly newsletter, click here.

DEPARTMENT OF WONDER

You may think of microfilm machines as relics of the 20th century, outmoded and no longer useful in the age of the World Wide Web. If so, this article – “Microfilm Lasts Half a Millennium” – from Object Lessons via The Atlantic might change your mind. In any case, it provides an interesting history of microfilm technology, and includes lots of fun links.

Qawi Telesford (Biomedical Imaging & Neuromodulation) attended NetSci, a conference on complex networks, which was held in Paris in June. He served as co-organizer and section chair for the satellite Network Neuroscience conference.

The New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) regularly hosts an interactive video broadcast covering the latest research, technology, and treatment implementation in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. These programs are recorded, and the archived Statewide Grand Rounds programs can be viewed on the OMH website.

The NKI librarian is always available to assist with literature searching, citation searching (Web of Science, Scopus), bibliographic reference management, and the like. When you have any information needs, or questions about available resources, don’t hesitate to turn to us.

The library offers a comfortable, quiet space for reading, work, and small meetings. To use the library’s Wi-Fi network, ask the library staff for the password.

You can link to the NKI Library’s website from myNKI. The Library site includes quick links to the NYU Health Sciences Library and to the New York State Library, as well as links to NKI’s own library resources (journal finder, online catalog, PsychiatryOnline, etc.). Remote access is available using NKI’s VPN.
Below is a list of references that have been added to the NKI publications database since the previous update. The full database contains over 5,800 items dating back to 1995 and can be searched from the myNKI website.


Basavarajappa BS, Subbanna S, Shivakumar M, Joshi V. CB1R mediated CDK5 and rac1 signaling control neurobehavioral abnormalities in postnatal ethanol exposed mice. Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research 42[Suppl. 1], 165A. 2018. [Abstract]


Kamarajan C, Ardekani BA, Pandey AK, Porjesz B. Default mode network alterations in alcoholism: Functional connectivity of resting EEG and FMRI. Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research 42[Suppl. 1], 300A. 2018. [Abstract]


