

# The University of Toronto Lupus Clinic Turns 50

By Dafna D. Gladman, MD, FRCPC

The University of Toronto Lupus Clinic was started in July 1970, under the leadership of Dr. Murray Urowitz. At the time, it was a novel approach to study the correlation between clinical and laboratory manifestations of lupus. Dr. Urowitz developed a standardized data retrieval protocol, which was completed at each patient visit by trainees who spent 6-12 months in the Lupus Clinic. In 1995, the Lupus Clinic moved from the Wellesley Hospital to the Toronto Western Hospital and has been there ever since.

Since its inception, the Lupus Clinic has provided exemplary patient care to more than 2,100 patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), while making important contributions to lupus research. This research has resulted in 521 peer-reviewed publications. During this period, the Clinic provided a venue for the education of 241 clinical and research fellows, 10 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, 27 medical residents, and 51 summer students.

Seminal publications include the recognition of early atherosclerotic complications in lupus, serologically active clinically quiescent disease, and studies of pregnancy, mortality, and individual organ disease in SLE, to name a few.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned 50th-anniversary commemoration was postponed from the original date in 2020 (the actual 50-year mark) to December 1st, 2022. By that time, Murray Urowitz, who had remained the Director of the Clinic since its inception, had retired. Thus, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Lupus Clinic was also an opportunity to recognize Murray's achievements on the occasion of his retirement.

The event included a symposium that featured presentations by several physicians who had trained in the Lupus Clinic, with a plenary lecture by Professor David Isenberg of London, England. Because of the pandemic, only 50 people could attend in person, while the remainder attended virtually. It was a very informative symposium.

The celebration continued at a dinner with many of Dr. Urowitz's colleagues, friends, and family attending. Dr. Gillian Hawker, Chair, Department of Medicine, University of Toronto, highlighted Dr. Urowitz's contributions to the Department of Medicine and to the Uni-



The Scientific Symposium celebrating 50 years of the Toronto Western Lupus Program and the contributions of Dr. Murray Urowitz took place in Toronto on December 1st, 2022.

versity of Toronto. Drs. Nigil Haroon and Robert Inman commented on Dr. Urowitz's contributions to the Division of Rheumatology and the Schroeder Arthritis Institute, and one patient provided a testimonial on behalf of the patients attending the Clinic. Professor David Isenberg of London, England, who gave the keynote address at the symposium, had written a song to celebrate the Clinic and Murray, and the song was performed at the end of the symposium and at the closing of the evening celebration.

The Murray Urowitz Chair for Lupus Research will be established at the Toronto Western Hospital, to be held by the Director of the Lupus Clinic. Close to one million dollars have been raised so far, but the overall amount needed to support the Chair is much higher. Donations to support the Chair may be sent through the link available by scanning the QR code on this page or by visiting [uhnfoundation.ca/](http://uhnfoundation.ca/)

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