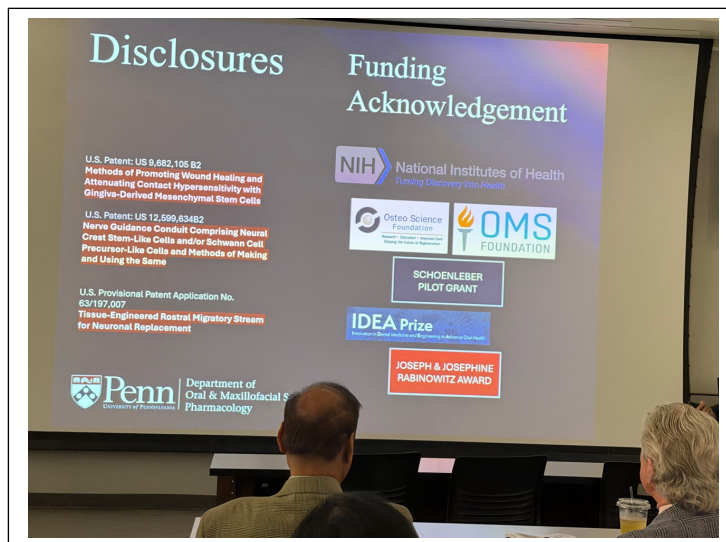


Reflections on Research Day 2026

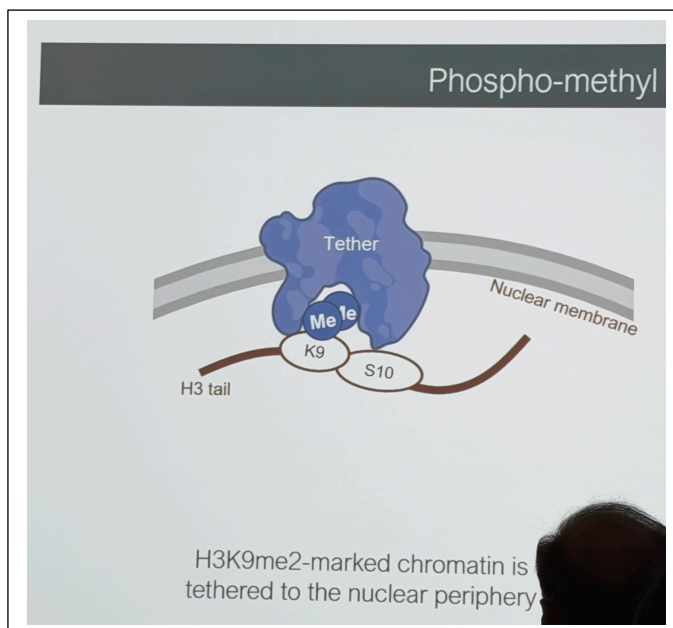
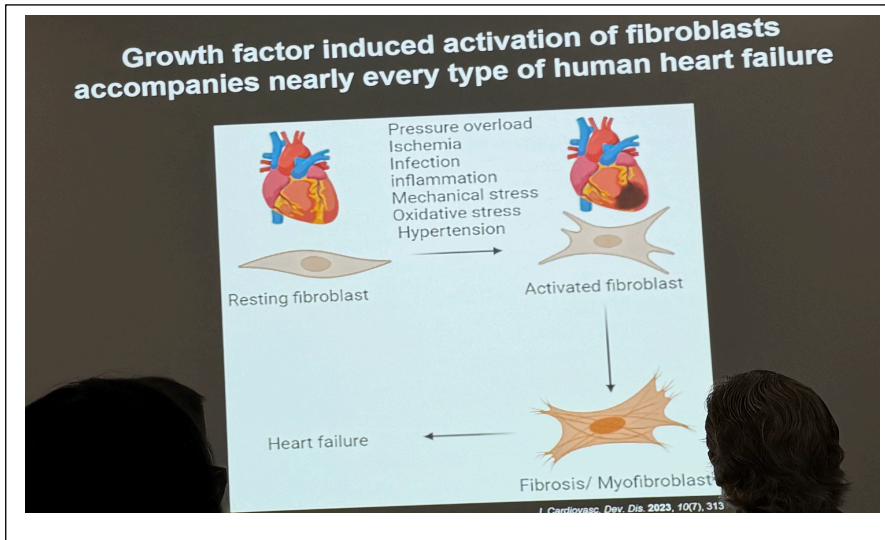
Lois Rabinowitz Lamond

The Rabinowitz Memorial Lecture was set to begin at 11:00 AM, several hours earlier than in previous years. Traffic was especially heavy and parking was a challenge, so I found myself racing into the Research Day activities, running to the Corby Auditorium and pushing my way through a crowded hallway to enter the lecture hall in time to hear the introduction to the presentation. This would be the part where Dad would be honored, when they explained why the lecture was named for him. As it turned out, the previous lecture was running late, the last slide of the program was still displayed while the speaker answered questions. I held up my phone's camera to get a sense of the view I would have for the next presentation. The displayed slide was a list of Disclosures and Funding Acknowledgements that included a reference to the Joseph and Josephine Rabinowitz Award.



I checked the program for the name of the presenter; it was not familiar to me. I would need to do some investigation later in the day.

Dr. Jonathan Epstein, Dean of the Raymond and Ruth Perelman School of Medicine and Executive Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania for the Health System, was the Keynote Speaker. His topic was "Treating Fibrosis with mRNA and Car T cells." He referenced the appropriateness of being a cardiologist providing this lecture, in honor of the research done by Dad. I took notes that included terms like MSK2, EGF with added phosphogentic..., FAP cells, protein fibroblast activation. He explained that this research was proving to be useful to patients with fibrosis and he noted that AbbVie's Capstan Therapeutics was developing new drugs and procedures based on his work. Here are a few photos of slides which are way beyond my ability to comprehend.







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Original Article

FAP-CAR-T cells reduce dystrophic muscle fibrosis, improving adeno-associated virus gene transfer efficacy

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Anne Galv^{1,2,6,7,8}  

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Summary

- LADs may define cellular identity and competence
- Signal transduction cascades may converge on LAD tethers to unleash gene programs (e.g. the “phospho-methyl switch”)
- Implications for laminopathies, cancer, epigenetic memory and competence

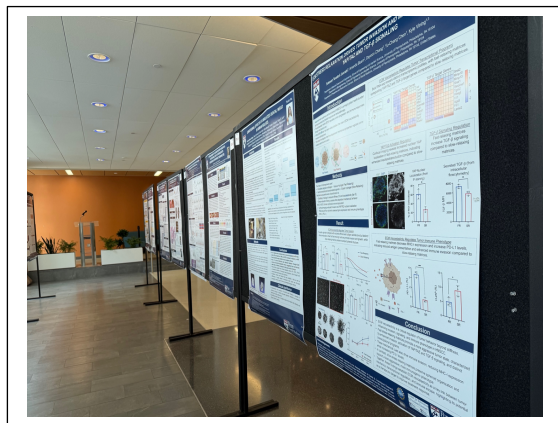
I had my photo op with Dr. Epstein and then Marco Tizzano, (2025 Rabinowitz Award winner) asked me to join him for lunch to talk about his research.



We sat with Flavia Teles (2022 winner), Claire Mitchell (2014 winner), Cagla Akay-Espinoza (2020 winner) and Henry Daniell, Vice Chair of the Department of Basic and Translational Sciences. This was not a planned meeting; we added chairs to an uncrowded table.

Marco began by sharing that the research he had recently submitted to the National Institute of Health had received the score of 1%, the top designation from NIH for grant funding in the country. That designation indicates that reviewers found his work to be “Exceptionally strong, essentially no weaknesses.” Others shared that receiving this grade was “unheard of” and “amazing.” His research focuses on bitter foods that have healing properties for gum disease.

This scoring makes his research very likely to receive additional major funding. He felt that the Rabinowitz Award and its flexibility had a significant impact on his success. He planned to approach the Dean to discuss how the Dental School could encourage other donors to structure their gifts in ways that would specifically target research. Dr. Daniell said that in his 40+ years of work in research, he had never seen another grant like this one. Each of the people at the table spoke about the design and the wording of the grant; they asked for copies of the language used. Dr. Mitchell and Dr. Tizzano were planning a retreat for faculty to discuss research topics and funding possibilities. They talked about appeals to alumni and small donors using the framework of the Rabinowitz Award to create new opportunities for researchers. They wanted to know if I would be willing to speak about my involvement in the Rabinowitz Award and how it has impacted me. I made it clear that the Award was the work of Jose and Josy and that I was initially a reluctant participant in the conversations about this donation; I had had no interest in discussing what would be done with my parents' money after they passed. The folks at the table found that to be compelling, something that other donors might relate to. They also felt it was important to share that a small donation could have a major impact.



In past years, I spent time hearing stories about Dad, shaking hands with honorees and representing the family at the events of the day. This year I was sought out by people who had directly benefitted from receiving the honor and financial benefits it bestowed. I was wandering around looking at the poster presentations when they approached me.

I inquired about the slide in the lecture preceding the Rabinowitz Memorial Lecture, why it included a citation of the Joseph and Josephine Rabinowitz Award. I learned that there have been structural changes to many aspects of the University. As people have left the Dental School, many had not been replaced. The individual science departments (Biochemistry, Anatomy, Microbiology...) have been combined into the Department of Basic and Translational Sciences. That change has had implications in the distribution of funding and resources. Moneys that had previously been designated to a specific department or area of expertise were reallocated. The

impact of the current American political climate has directly resulted in a loss of funding for science and medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

While waiting for the awards ceremony, I had the chance to meet Dr. Anh D. Le, the presenter whose slide I had seen earlier in the day. She was never a Rabinowitz Award winner, but she shares laboratory space with several researchers who were. It turns out that there is a collateral benefit to being the colleague of a Rabinowitz Award winner. Her students were also doing research with these winners, and the students' salaries may have been shared, so she wanted to acknowledge all levels of support.



One of the 2026 winners of the Rabinowitz Award for Excellence in Research, Wenjing Yu, approached me to chat while we waited for the ceremony to begin. Monica Li joined us to explain about the shared laboratories. They thanked me and hugged me, saying how much they appreciated the award. I clarified that I was representing our family and that the honor belongs with our parents.



Above is a picture of the 2026 Rabinowitz Award Winners, Lauren C. Yap and Wenjing Yu, along with Esra Sahingur and Dana T. Graves from the Dean's office. Both winners promised to share their research findings with me next year.