

The 2014 Claflin Distinguished Scholar Awards

by Ann Skoczenski, PhD, Program Manager, Center for Faculty Development

In June the Office for Women's Careers (OWC) sponsored a celebration of the newest winners of the Claflin Distinguished Scholar Awards. Inspired and supported by Jane Claflin, former member of the MGH Board of Trustees and devoted supporter of women at MGH, each Claflin Award supports a female faculty member who is a parent with \$50K per year for two years. The awards are earmarked to fund the hiring of research staff or other resources that help keep the faculty member's research program active during challenging years when childrearing responsibilities compete with career advancement. 2014 marks the 18th year that the Claflin Awards have supported women faculty at MGH, and the OWC was thrilled to welcome the following women into the Claflin community:

- Sharon Dekel, PhD
- Sarina B. Elmariah, MD, PhD
- Daphne J. Holt, MD, PhD
- Lynn T. Matthews, MD
- Elaine W. Yu, MD

(see <http://www2.massgeneral.org/facultydevelopment/owc/claflin.html> for previous awardee names)

The 2014 awardees join 97 previous Claflin Scholars in what has become a vibrant community of successful women in academic medicine. Each year the new awardees are celebrated with a luncheon to which all former awardees are invited. This event has become a very special occasion during which the Claflin Scholars hear talks by some of the new winners, meet Mrs. Claflin, and network to expand their community. One tradition at the Claflin lunch is for previous winners to welcome the new awardees by sharing what the award has meant to them. Some of their comments included:

“It has been a great privilege to meet Mrs. Claflin every year, over the past 17 years. This award really launched my career. It has also helped me recruit highly successful female scientists who felt confident that they would be well accepted at an institution that initiated such a supportive award.” – *Sylvie Breton, PhD, Professor of Medicine, 1997 Claflin Awardee*

“I got the Claflin Award after I had my first child and needed to learn how to best balance my work commitments with my family life. I used the grant to hire a post-doc. She ultimately helped me with several NIH grant submissions. She went on to get several papers out of our collaboration too, and recently got promoted to full professor.” – *Sabine Wilhelm, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, 2002 Claflin Awardee*

“The Claflin Award came at the critical time when I was juggling the responsibilities of new motherhood while establishing my own independent laboratory. It enabled me to hire additional personnel to help generate the data that supported my first R01 application. I am extremely grateful for the award and the community support that comes with it.” – *Jodie Babitt, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine, 2008 Claflin Awardee*

“The Claflin Award was critical in supporting my research infrastructure in South Africa while I was writing my R01. I had a 3 year old when I received the Claflin, and it helped make the K to R funding transition possible by ensuring that I had continuous support for the research staff on the ground during the time when it was challenging for me to travel.” – *Ingrid Bassett, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Medicine, 2009 Claflin Awardee*

“Beyond the monetary benefit (which is significant!), I was surprised at how much benefit I derived from becoming a part of the Claflin community. Hearing the comments and stories of each of the Claflin winners really provided me with a sense of strength and support during a difficult time.” – *Recent Claflin Awardee*

The OWC has multiple resources available for women who are considering applying for the 2015 Claflin Distinguished Scholar Awards. The call for applications is expected to open in late January. Feel free to take advantage of one or more of these resources:

- **January 15, 2015:** Claflin Awards Panel Discussion (a program offering application tips from Claflin winners and the review committee)
- **January – March, 2015:** Claflin Consultation Initiative (individualized advice from a previous Claflin winner)
- **Ongoing:** OWC individual career advice meetings (speak with OWC director Nancy Rigotti, MD about your career plans and get advice for your Claflin application)

We look forward to welcoming future Scholars into the Claflin community and hope that prospective applicants will use some of these resources from the OWC.