

## Ralph Horwitz '73g

When Ralph Horwitz was growing up in the north Philadelphia neighborhood where his father owned a small store, physicians were some of the most respected and revered members of the community. “Unfortunately, the confidence the American public once had in their physicians has eroded somewhat over the years,” he says, “because physicians don’t always appear to put people’s interests ahead of their own.” Horwitz believes physicians have the responsibility of ensuring that everyone has access to medical care and to avoid over-diagnosing and over-treating disease. One of his passions is restoring the “social contract between physicians and civic responsibility,” and one way to do that, he says, is to insulate the profession from conflicts—real or perceived—such as undue influence by pharmaceutical companies.



Fortunately for medicine and future doctors, Horwitz is in a position to exert considerable influence on this and other areas of the profession. Since April 2003, he’s been vice president for medical affairs and dean of the School of Medicine at Case Western Reserve University. He also serves as director of the Case Research Institute. Prior to assuming his post at Case Western, Horwitz was the Harold H. Hines, Jr., Professor of Medicine and Epidemiology and Chairman of the Department of Internal Medicine at the Yale University School of Medicine. He is the first Penn State College of Medicine alumnus to be named dean of an academic medical college.

After earning a B.S. from Albright College in Reading, Pa., Horwitz entered Penn State’s new College of Medicine in Hershey Pa. He graduated in 1973, in just the third class to receive medical degrees from the school. “We had tremendous opportunities because, as a new school of medicine, almost all of our classes were taught by senior faculty,” he says of his medical education. The only drawback he recalls was that the clinical experiences at the new Hershey Medical Center had not “matured” and they had to take some rotations at hospitals in Harrisburg Pa., away from the faculty. “That was the biggest challenge,” he says.

Horwitz continued his training with a residency at Royal Victoria Hospital, McGill University, in Montreal. He also served as senior assistant resident at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and as a Fellow with the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program at Yale University. He joined the Yale faculty as assistant professor of medicine in 1978. He was promoted to professor of medicine and epidemiology in 1988.

Horwitz’s research interests are varied. He has conducted clinical research on the link between aspirin and Reye’s syndrome in children; inhaler use and asthma; heart attacks; and most recently the effects of over-the-counter diet pills and cough and cold products containing phenylpropanolamine. He is also a pioneer in the field of clinical investigation and outcomes research—focusing on the methods used to study the relationships between diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and outcome. Horowitz is equally dedicated to improving medical education. At Yale, he established the nation’s first Ph.D. program in a clinical department for physicians devoted to careers in biomedical science. He’s published numerous scholarly works in *The New England Journal of Medicine* and *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, among others.

Horwitz is a fellow of the American College of Physicians and the American College of Epidemiology. He is an elected member of the American Society of Clinical Investigation, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, and the Association of American Physicians. In 2003, he served as chairman of the American Board of Internal Medicine.

Penn State has previously honored Horwitz as an Alumni Fellow (1989). Horwitz is married to Sarah McCue Horwitz, a professor of psychiatry at Case Western. They have one grown daughter and live in Shaker Heights, Ohio.

\*This career summary is excerpted from the 2005 Distinguished Alumni Awards Ceremony booklet (June 3, 2005, The Pennsylvania State University).