

# NICK BOBA

*Executive Director  
Center for Developmental Disabilities*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



Nick Boba says that during young adulthood he was a “student of life and human behavior” from an observer’s point-of-view. When observing behavior as a professional, he seeks to put the behavior in a bigger context, a developmental context — where did the behavior come from and where is it going. He adds that he was always fascinated, too, with people’s stories. “There’s a power in storytelling; it gives people context, and context is the essence of developmental psychology.”

Boba earned his Bachelor’s degree from Brandeis University, and received a Master’s in Developmental Psychology from Teacher’s College, Columbia University. Today, he commands recognition as a determined leader in serving people with developmental disabilities and has become a *voice of the voiceless* — most notably, for those diagnosed with Autism, a powerful communication disorder.

After working five years under the tutelage of Walter Stockton at Independent Group Home Living, Boba felt he had “a rich knowledge base” and wanted to “take that gift from Walter” and do some nice things on his own. Boba joined the staff at The Center for Developmental Disabilities as Assistant Director of Residence, then Director of Residence and Director of Adult Services. Since his appointment as Executive Director in 2002, Boba has given new life to an agency that, for 56 years, has had a rich tradition of bringing awareness and understanding of developmental disabilities, implementing cutting edge new therapies, and providing

services and opportunities to children and adults.

The Center is a unique agency that is known for serving people with challenging behaviors, but also can serve individuals in more independent settings such as supported employment. Its children’s program serves approximately 100 students, age 5-21, with 32 residential beds at its Woodbury campus. Its adult programs serve some 225 adults in its day program in Hicksville, as well as providing residential alternatives such as small apartments, and small and larger group homes in the community.

Looking back, Boba reveals another influential person who entered his life and presented a formidable challenge. Seated on The Center’s board of directors when Boba became Executive Director was Father Tom Hartman, who took aside the 42-year-old young man, pointed out that 40% of the people served by The Center are diagnosed with Autism, and asked him to take up the torch and become the *voice of the voiceless*.

With reverence and respect for a true legend, Boba recognized the high bar that Father Tom set. He recalls his reaction: “If that’s my destiny, so be it. I’ll overcome my shy side and learn how to be a strong leader, an advocate and become that voice.” He adds, “It’s been a very rich journey for me.”

#### **Advocacy and activism**

Taking the challenge to step outside the box, Boba accepted membership on the board of NYSACRA (New York State Association for Community and Residential Agencies), after serving on its Legislative Committee. During that time, he cre-

ated a legislative advocacy committee at The Center, consisting of administrators, parents, board members and consumers, the people they serve. The team called on and spoke to local legislators and traveled to Albany to advocate for the needs of The Center’s constituents, in general, and funding for programming. For their efforts, The Center received NYSACRA’s Legislative Award for Excellence in Grassroots Advocacy.

Additionally, to advocate for children, Boba served on the New York State Rehabilitation Advisory Council, affording him an opportunity to advocate among key people in state education. He was asked to join the board of directors of the Alliance of Long Island Agencies, founded by a group of executive directors to build a stronger voice for Long Island — giving Boba further opportunities to educate parents and The Center another advocacy platform.

As a player in the dialogue, Boba persevered within both organizations for the development of training programs for employees in point-of-service positions where the workforce meets middle management. Alliance partnered with Nassau and Suffolk community colleges to offer free continuing education classes for employees, paid for by grants provided by the State Legislature. NYSACRA worked toward the creation of legislation with a similar focus in mind.

Recognizing that service agencies are moving into the area of managed care, Boba supports the Alliance’s creation of a managed care network for Long Island. He notes that by working in partnership with government, “an intelligent, effective managed care system can be created that will take care of the people we serve, which is not an easy undertaking.”

As the only non-lawyer serving on the board of the Autism Legal Foundation, Boba offers the provider’s point-of-view, as the foundation seeks to assist families. He has been able to help connect the organization with government agencies and other organizations.

#### **Putting it together**

Holding fast to the tradition of innovation, Boba says The Center offers person-centered planning, an approach that customizes the program to the individual, allowing the agency to provide assistance to families who may not otherwise find placement for their child. In addition, recognizing that persons with Autism and related disabilities do better as visual learners, Boba established a partnership with the University of North Carolina, which has developed a program that provides individuals with strong visual cues in their environment, helping them organize their thoughts and be more productive.

“Agencies such as The Center all started in the not-for-profit world years ago as mom and pop shops,” states Boba, “but now we are partnering with managed care agencies and going toe-to-toe with corporate entities. The challenge for my staff and leadership team is to keep the heart of a mom and pop shop, but operate like a business, a top-flight corporation with all the compliance issues that go with it. We have to be able to do it all now.”

#### **Personal commitment**

Centerport residents, Boba and his wife Marianne have two sons, Justin and Jared. Together this foursome has been making a difference in people’s lives through participation in the Fresh Air Fund, hosting young people at their home. Most notably, through the inspiration of Marianne and their sons, the family started putting aside unused clothing and food they could share, storing it in their garage, and making deliveries in their minivan to people in need. The gesture blossomed into the Harborfields Alliance for Community Outreach, when Marianne was elected to the school board and merged the effort with the school district. A club was formed and has become the largest in the school system, with kids bagging donations and community volunteers making deliveries once a month and special deliveries at holiday times. The Health and Welfare Council of Long Island named the outreach a program of excellence, and it’s recognized as a model program statewide. ■

# HARRY CARSON

*New York Football Giants Linebacker (retired)  
Pro Football Hall of Fame Member*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



**H**aving been named to the National Football League (NFL) All-Rookie Team after his first season, Harry Carson completed a remarkable 13-year career with the New York Football Giants in 1988. Known for his "all-out" style of play, the former linebacker saw action in 173 games. He enjoyed many opportunities to play on the All-NFL Team; the All-National Football Conference (NFC) Team, twice being named NFC Linebacker of the Year; and was selected nine times to play in the NFC-American Football Conference Pro Bowl. His best single game performance came in 1985 when the Giants romped the Denver Broncos, 39-20, in Super Bowl XXI. Always leading by example, this 10-season team captain once made an extraordinary 25 tackles against the Green Bay Packers in a Monday Night Football Game.

In 2006, Carson was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Four years later, the New York Football Giants unveiled its Ring of Honor, selecting Carson as a member of the inaugural class. "As a player, I recognized the Giant's rich history and tradition, and hoped that I would be included in the organization's roster of great players," says Carson. "The Ring of Honor brings my aspiration to reality."

Carson attended Wilson Senior High and McClellan High Schools in South Carolina, where he served as Class President, co-chair of the Bi-Racial Committee and ROTC Commander. He notes, "The ROTC training served as the catalyst for much of

the leadership ability I developed."

Carson received a Bachelor's degree in Education from South Carolina State University, where he never missing a game in his four seasons as a defensive lineman for the Bulldogs. A two-time Bulldogs captain, Carson was a member of the All Division II College Football Team of the Quarter Century (1975-1999), was named to the Sheridan Broadcasting Network 100 Year Anniversary Black College All-American Team, was recognized as the South Carolina College Athlete of the Millennium, and inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2002. He excelled off the field as well, winning awards for the highest academic average among Black College All Americans. Recognizing the importance of education, he continued graduate studies at South Carolina State and Fairleigh Dickinson University.

This favorite son received The Order of the Palmetto, the highest civilian honor given to a South Carolina native; and was bestowed membership in The Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels by that state's governor—a recognition of strength of character, leadership and dedication to the welfare of others.

#### Post-football career

After he left the gridiron, Carson began an equally successful career in sports broadcasting. He co-hosted CNN's *NFL Preview*, appeared as a broadcast analyst on WCBS-TV and ABC *Sports College Football*, and as special correspondent for

playoffs and Super Bowl for ABC-TV's *Good Morning America*. Carson currently co-hosts the New York Giants game day magazine program, *Giants Opening Drive Live*.

Carson also wears the hat of a businessman, as President and CEO of Harry Carson Inc., a sports consulting company. In addition to providing expert television, radio, print media and Internet commentary on sports matters, the company provides former professional athletes to schools and corporations as motivational, sports themed speakers. As Executive Director of Fritz Pollard Alliance, Carson promotes a greater sense of racial and gender diversity among NFL minority coaches, coordinators, scouts, player personnel and game day officials.

#### Making a difference

Diagnosed with post-concussion syndrome two years after he retired, Carson has been an outspoken advocate for traumatic brain injury. Through self-education and personal experience, he established himself as an open, honest, knowledgeable, internationally recognized source on concussions in sports. He is credited with being one of the first former professional athletes to draw attention to the association of concussions and neurological abnormalities in those who have participated in contact sports or served in the military.

"My focus is primarily on those who have already sustained the injury," remarks Carson, saying he serves as listener and resource to brain injury victims.

Carson has served as spokesperson for the Meridian Health System to increase traumatic brain injury awareness in Ocean and Monmouth counties, NJ. Similarly, he volunteered his time to the Congress of Neurological Surgeons, the Brain Injury Association's Sports Injury Prevention Council and NJ Advisory Council on Traumatic Brain Injury.

Tirelessly, Carson has striven thought his life to make a difference in other's lives. He has served as spokesman for the Bergen County, NJ, Cancer Education and Early Detection Program and with the Professional Football Hall of Fame to increase awareness of prostate cancer. With Aplastic Anemia Foundation, he has worked to provide scholarships to young people who have battled rare blood disorders, much like his son Donald. He hosted golf outings supporting The School Foundation that provides educational programs in his hometown of Florence, South Carolina. Currently, he hosts the Rival Golf Challenge, benefiting the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation Scholarship Fund. Carson has also been a strong advocate for his NFL brethren, calling for adequate pensions and improved health benefits for retired players.

Carson is involved with numerous charities, such as the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, United Way and its Celebrity Read Program, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Boy Scouts of America, Young Father's Program, Literacy Council of New Jersey, Habitat for Humanity, Tomorrow's Children Fund, Minority Athletes Networking Etc. Inc., and Autism Coalition. Carson has worked with prominent government officials to promote anti-smoking campaigns, prevention of child abuse and a drug-free society.

A lecturer and motivational speaker, Carson has addressed diverse groups that range from juvenile and prison inmates to high school scholars, college athletes, corporate executives and political leaders. He is the author of two books, *"Point of Attack"* (1985) and *"Captain for Life"* (2011).

While Carson currently resides in Franklin Lakes, NJ, he considers the entire tri-state area as his home because of his connection with a variety of organizations through his professional and community involvement. He is married to Maribel and has three children: daughter Aja Gurley Carson, and sons, Dr. Donald Carson, and United States Marine Corps Lance Corporal Kip ("Lucky") Baker-Carson. In his spare time, he enjoys enhancing his own wellness and physical fitness, mentoring young people and current athletes, playing golf, fishing for bass, racing cars and target shooting. ■

# LAWRENCE C. LEVY

*Executive Dean  
National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



Lawrence Levy's 35-year career as an award-winning journalist and public television host made him an appealing new hire, as Hofstra President Stuart Rabinowitz continued to build the university's presence on the local and national stage. Levy had written and broadcast about everything from education and property taxes to presidential elections. While his obvious academic home would have been the School of Communication, Rabinowitz invited Levy in 2007 to work with Hofstra's academic community to shape a broad and innovative agenda for suburban study as head of a newly formed National Center for Suburban Studies (NCSS).

Levy was skeptical about his qualifications, having little or no administrative, supervisory or fundraising experience. But Rabinowitz told Levy he saw instead a person with knowledge of the national suburban landscape, and a reputation on Long Island and beyond as a conscientious, fair-minded fact gatherer and analyst. He saw someone with an engaging, upbeat personality that could attract individuals, foundations and academics to the center's mission.

"As much as I loved my work at *Newsday* and WLIW, I knew a unique opportunity like this wasn't likely to come along again," remarks Levy, who signed on to create the first and only nationally-oriented center of its kind. "It was a chance for Hofstra, Long Island and the suburbs at large to get some well-deserved attention and be part of generating it."

## Importance of suburbs

"Suburbs are not only the place where well more than half the people in the country live, but also where the most dynamic change and social, economic and other challenges are taking place," notes Levy. He explains: In suburbia, problems are coming at a rapid pace in communities that haven't experienced them. It's the place where the country's greatest challenges, like immigration, segregation, education and poverty, can be found. Unlike cities, however, money is not always available to small suburban communities.

Levy is most proud of NCSS's ability to focus attention on Long Island's need to confront its sustainability and embrace its growing diversity. Six years ago, originally as part of an international conference on suburban change, he organized the Celebration of Suburban Diversity, which this year attracted 550 people of different races, religions, ethnicities and backgrounds and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for diversity related research, scholarships and community engagement. "The Celebration of Suburban Diversity has become popular with a diverse audience and has attracted strong corporate community support," notes Levy. "I'd like to think it shows widening support for the notion that Long Island's diversity—not just accepting, but embracing it—is the key to our social and economic success."

In some ways, the NCSS could be called the

"International Center for Suburban Studies." In 2011, Hofstra and several other universities around the world won a grant from a London foundation to create an international network of scholars who study suburban culture. The group has held three conferences, the most recent in 2013 at the University of Exeter in London, where Levy and NCSS Academic Director Christopher Niedt presented. NCSS Sustainability Studies Director Robert Brinkmann has conducted research in partnership with a Chinese university and was involved in a UN project on climate control.

Levy established research alliances with academic institutions, including Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Boston College, Virginia Tech, and New York University, among others, as well as nonprofits, businesses and government agencies. He lectured at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and is scheduled to speak at the Harvard Medical School. He was asked by Brookings Institution to help inform their research for an initiative called "A Blueprint for American Prosperity." He was a keynote at the prestigious think tank's Washington conference, advised Brookings and its audience that any study of metropolitan areas must include discussion of the suburbs.

Additionally, under Levy's leadership, the Center partnered with Dr. Brinkmann to begin a four-year Sustainability Studies degree, granted through the College of Liberal Arts. Hofstra is on track to offer a Master's Degree in Sustainability Studies in September 2015.

Working collaboratively with experts across the region, Levy co-led the writing team that synthesized all the data and facts generated by working groups of the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council to produce the LIREDC's four annual strategic plans. Submitted to the state as part of an inter-regional competition, the reports helped Long Island secure \$250 million for development projects. Levy co-authored the LI2035 sustainability action plan and post-Sandy recovery plans for Suffolk County.

## Growing beyond baseball

Levy graduated with a Bachelor's in Communications from Boston University where he attended on a baseball scholarship. He had dreams of becoming a sportscaster, "the next tell-it-like-it-is Howard Cosell." But following the 1970 Kent State massacre, he realized, "As much as I loved sports, there was a bigger world, a lot more hurt and need that I could address as a non-sports journalist." After college, he freelanced for *The New York Times*, and was a scriptwriter at Twickenham Studios in London.

At *Newsday*, which he joined in 1977, Levy was known for his blending of national trends and local perspectives and covered six presidential campaigns and the controversial 2001 Israeli elections. He rose to Chief Political Columnist and Senior Editorial Writer. He was assigned to teams that reported and wrote many of the newspaper's big projects. While he didn't win a Pulitzer prize outright, he was named Finalist in 1999 for a series of editorials about Long Island's inequitable property tax system that, at the time, taxed the region's poorest homeowners proportionally far higher than its wealthiest.

Raised in suburban Valley Stream in "cocoon-like serenity" far from the stresses of urban life, Levy says he didn't meet his first "person of color" as a peer until he was a 14-year-old junior high school baseball player. Specializing mostly in politics and public policy, he is proud of his work in the area of race relations, chronicling abuses against minorities in housing, education and other facets of life. "It's not my parents' suburbs anymore," notes Levy, "I have been lucky to watch, and sometimes play a role in dealing with these great demographic, political and social challenges."

Levy lives in Rockville Centre with his wife Freda Wagner, a court mediator and attorney who practiced in Florida for many years. He has two sons, David and Sam. And he continues to love, and up until a couple of years ago, play baseball in Long Island's Men's Senior and Adult Baseball League. ■

# ANDREW MITCHELL

*President & CEO  
PBMC Health and Peconic Bay Medical Center*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



In the shadows of Long Island's bucolic East End with its farms, vineyards and fishing docks, a small local hospital experienced huge growth with limited resources, at a time of great change in healthcare. In the last dozen years, the institution was restructured from a community hospital whose viability was in question to a strong health system, Peconic Bay Medical Center (PBMC Health), which includes a vital medical center, skilled nursing and rehabilitation center, the region's largest home healthcare agency, numerous physician practices and several major ambulatory sites that serve the nearly 200,000 residents living in central and eastern Suffolk County. The transformation was orchestrated by Andrew Mitchell—whose Long Island roots and intrinsic enthusiasm that motivates people made him the right man for the job.

Mitchell came to the Riverhead hospital in May 2001. During his first two years, he faced significant challenges, most notably to stabilize the hospital financially, rebuild staff morale and set a vision. He and his staff developed a strategic plan that focused on the need for quality, comprehensive healthcare.

Building on a population demographic that showed the East End was becoming a destination for retirees, the first medical area to receive a makeover was orthopedic joint replacement. "This is now our largest program, a standout in its quality of care and the surgeons that perform the procedures," notes Mitchell. The specialty has been certified by the Joint Commission for Accreditation as a national symbol of quality—one of the few programs on Long Island to receive that distinction. Additionally, the program has been named a Blue Cross Blue Shield Blue Dis-

tinction Plus Center for Hip and Knee Replacement and an Aetna Institute of Quality. "PBMC may be the largest hospital performing joint replacements on Long Island," remarks Mitchell. "In the summer of 2014, the hospital held its tenth reunion for patients who had successful replacement surgeries and welcomed over 600 guests."

PBMC Health continued to concentrate on surgical services, strengthening general surgery, urology, digestive health, colorectal surgery, and vascular surgery to name a few specialties. The medical center introduced gynecologic oncology robotic surgery and the da Vinci surgical system, which delivers less invasive surgery with faster recovery and fewer complications, giving it the capability to perform increasingly complex surgeries. Mitchell says, "In an era when hospitals were just beginning to employ doctors, Peconic Bay Medical Center was leading the way by recruiting high quality surgeons from some of the most elite higher education and medical schools in the country. Now some of the best surgeons in the region practice daily out of the Medical Center site."

Under Mitchell's leadership, PBMC Health opened the renowned Kanas Center for Advanced Surgery, the Pegasus House Palliative Care Center, the state-of-the-art Cary Grossman Physical Therapy Center, The Gertrude and Louis Feil Campus for Ambulatory Care in Manorville (another urgent care site is to open soon in Riverhead), and assembled a sophisticated electronic medical record keeping system that networks the main campus with all the doctors' offices the health system oversees and operates. The Palliative Care Center and Skilled Nursing Facility

received a Five-Star Quality Rating from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Skilled Nursing Facility earned a Five-Star Rating from *U.S. News and World Report*.

"In healthcare, you have to be progressive and embrace change," states Mitchell. At a glance, the hospital system grew from a 30-million-dollar-a-year organization to nearly \$200 million, from 15,000-patients visits in the ER to close to 40,000, and from virtually employing no physicians on staff to directly employing somewhere between 35-40 physicians in both primary care and surgical specialties. The hospital's significant investment in capital improvements and technology upgrades was in the 40-to-50 million-dollar range, by Mitchell's estimate.

Mitchell notes that "key" to the success of PBMC Health was the establishment of the PBMC Foundation in 2004 with a mission to underwrite capital projects and program advances at the Medical Center and Health System through philanthropy. The Foundation forged relationships with influential Long Islanders, who are motivated to impact their communities. "Our supporters realize that our vision makes sense and that we are actually executing and carrying out a significant transformation of healthcare in the region," Mitchell remarks.

In 2009, the institution added a teaching component. Through its relationship with NYITCOM (NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine), the medical center trains the next generation of family primary care practitioners and operates a surgical residency program. In addition, through its relationship with Stony Brook University School of Medicine, PBMC serves as a teaching site for some of the school's programs, including general surgery.

In 2013, PBMC Health received The Advisory Board Company, Southwind Division's Transformation Award in Cost-Effective Community Care. The Advisory Board Company is a global healthcare and education think-tank based in Washington, D.C. Mitchell says, "This remarkable accomplishment was achieved through strong management and leadership, community involvement and philanthropy, the efforts of outstanding physicians, and a hospital and health system staff that is truly committed to taking care of their friends and neighbors who live here."

#### **A man of purpose**

Mitchell earned a Master's in Public Health from Yale University and a BA in Sociology from Union College in Schenectady, NY. After an administrative residency at Southside Hospital in Bay Shore, he worked at Brooklyn Hospital Center, and in 1984, participated in the opening of the first New York State, HMO-sponsored hospital, Syosset Community Hospital. He served as Executive Director of North Shore University Hospital at Forest Hills before coming to PBMC. He received the American College of Healthcare Executives' Regent's Award, conferred by his peers and colleagues, and he was named 2003 Business Man of the Year by the *Riverhead News Review*.

Mitchell grew up in Bay Shore. He and his wife Mary are currently Riverhead residents, and have three grown children. They enjoy boating and sailing; he dabbles in photography and has been called an avid tekki. "Living and working here, I have been able to achieve my personal vision to help a community have better access to health care services. It's everything I learned through my education in public health school. It's been very rewarding," says Mitchell.

Mitchell recalls that in the 1970s, his father, Sidney Mitchell, a Suffolk County attorney, along with then-Suffolk County Executive John V. N. Klein had a vision to preserve the farmland of the East End. Together, they developed the farmland preservation program and the voluntary purchase of development rights. "My father's legacy was land preservation," says Mitchell, "and I would like my legacy to be that I have given the people on the East End access to high quality, comprehensive healthcare. In combination, that makes for a very special place in which people can live and work." ■

# JOHN J. MOLLOY

*Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,  
H2M Architects + Engineers (retired)*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



John Molloy's 40-year career with H2M saw him move up from a staff engineer working with one client on an air pollution project to President, Chief Executive and Chairman of a widely recognized and multi-faceted architectural and engineering firm that mainly operates in the New York-New Jersey marketplace. Molloy retired from the grouping of H2M Companies in 2013, the year that coincided with the company's 80th anniversary.

Founded by Henry Holzmacher, the company started as a civil engineering and land surveying practice. Henry's son Bob joined the company, soon followed by his college classmate, Norman Murrell, and Bob's former boss at Long Island Water Corporation, Samuel McLendon. While the firm long went by the name Holzmacher, McLendon & Murrell, it was shortened several decades ago to H2M. Today, H2M Companies goes by the corporate name H2M Architects and Engineers. It's headquartered in Melville, Long Island, and has offices in White Plains, Albany, New York City, and in Parsippany and Howell, New Jersey.

Born and raised in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Molloy attended Bishop Loughlin Memorial High School, graduated from Manhattan College with a B.E. (Chemical Engineering) degree, and is a licensed Professional Engineer (New York). He says he was influenced to pursue engineering as a career because he grew up in the era of Sputnik, the first artificial earth satellite launched into orbit by the

Soviet Union in 1957, which hailed the beginning of the space age. "The world of engineering was exploding," says Molloy, "and it seemed to be a good fit for me."

After a stint at Celanese, a chemical company in New Jersey, Molloy came to work for the City of New York. He recalls that his boss gave him interesting assignments, particularly in the area of air pollution study and control, and one day, put him in touch with a small company in Melville, named Holzmacher, McLendon & Murrell. Counter to everyone's advice at the time, which was to stay with the predictable civil service career, he took the new job.

"They assigned me to do air pollution work," since that is where my experience was, says Molloy. "But when I realized that they only had one client in that field," he adds, "I began to develop skills in tune with the company's strengths in water supply and treatment." After getting a foothold in the company, he quickly moved to on-site industrial water and potable treatment work. In the early 1980s, Molloy designed a system for treating drinking water, the first such system in New York State. The approach is still a standard today.

In his professional capacity, Molloy directed all phases of project engineering and management for a wide array of the firm's clients, including feasibility studies, pilot studies, planning studies,

cost estimating, design services, and construction management. He has provided professional services to government and industrial clients covering most spheres of environmental engineering, air pollution control; water and wastewater; and solid and hazardous waste management.

In 1995, Molloy was elected President and Chief Executive Officer by the Board of Directors. His new responsibilities encompassed administration, finance, staffing, budgeting, planning and development, and marketing.

With an employee count of over 230, H2M Companies consists of its Architects and Engineering firm and its New Jersey division, H2M Associates. H2M also included H2M Labs, Inc., an independent environmental testing laboratory, with over 50 employees. Molloy served as President, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the three companies.

Following his retirement, Molloy retained the position of chairman at H2M Labs until the corporation was sold to a national firm in Minnesota at the end of 2013. "I was able to facilitate the connection between these two companies because of my association with the national trade organization, American Council of Independent Labs (ACIL), a professional group that enhances public health and safety through quality testing and engineering in a broad range of areas." Molloy had served as a member and chairman of the Board (2008-2010) and developed strong relationships with other members.

#### **Involvement in community**

Molloy was appointed to the Farmingdale State College Foundation in December 2009, and was elected First Vice President in February 2013. He has served on the Investment Committee since its inception, currently chairs the Finance and Investment Committees, and is a member of the Executive Committee. Both H2M and Molloy were active with Farmingdale State by supporting scholarships and advising on special projects.

Nominated by Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano and appointed by Governor Andrew Cuomo in June 2013, Molloy is a voting board member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. He also chairs the Diversity Committee, and is a member of several other committees, including, Capital Program Oversight, Corporate Governance, Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, and New York City Transit and Bus. Molloy says that during his tenure with the MTA, he has participated in discussions about future rate hikes, salary adjustments, and the agency's five-year capital plan that will stretch out to 2020.

Through his business involvement, Molloy has been a long-standing member of the Melville Rotary Club for over 30 years. He served as Board member and President, supported Rotary's food and school supply drives, and its Gift of Life and Gift of Sight programs. He is well known for his contribution of many years of "Service above Self" to the organization. At H2M, he supported the company's engagement in pro bono work by its architects in support of the community, and its summer internship program for engineering and architectural students. He also served on the Executive Committee of Advancement for Commerce, Industry and Technology (ACIT), one of Long Island's largest business networking organizations.

Molloy continues to provide financial support to his college alma mater, Manhattan College, as well as his high school alma mater, Bishop Loughlin, and will join its Board its 2015. He has been a longtime supporter of the Interfaith Nutrition Network, The Outreach Project and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation.

Molloy is married to Janet, his wife of 42 years, and the couple has lived in Wantagh since 1983. He has two married daughters — Jennifer (husband, Peter), a nurse, who also has two daughters, Emma (9) and Sara (7); and Noreen (husband, Shawn), a teacher, who has a two-year-old daughter, Abigail. ■

# DAVID M. OKORN

*Executive Director  
Long Island Community Foundation*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



Fifteen years ago, David Okorn experienced a transition in his career, from corporate business planner and strategist to a position he felt much more passionate about—philanthropist. He says he was in the right place at the right time, and was given the opportunity to create a foundation from a germ of an idea and develop it into the charitable arm of a large utility.

Born in Queens and raised in Commack, Okorn graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Science and a Master's of Science in Energy Management from New York Institute of Technology. "I thought energy was going to be the next big boom. I would be on the cutting edge in dealing with future energy needs and policy," says Okorn, who began his career at Grumman. When Grumman's future became uncertain, he didn't stray far from the energy arena, and joined LILCO (the Long Island Lighting Company), working on planning and budgets for the Vice President of Administration. In the mid-1990s, LILCO and Brooklyn Union Gas announced a merger, and Okorn was among 50 people selected for the Merger-Integration Team.

Okorn spent the next two-years analyzing the best practices of the two companies, in order to help find the savings that were required to meet cost projections outlined to ratepayers. He says the team studied everything from cubicle size to leased space, from fleet size to equipment maintenance. Recommendations to senior management would affect the policies and programs of the new company to be formed, KeySpan Corporation, which

would become the fifth largest distributor of natural gas in the United States.

"Working on the transition team was gratifying, interesting and fun," remarks Okorn. "It was one of those mergers that worked!"

#### **Getting a foothold in philanthropy**

Along the way, Okorn caught the eye of then Brooklyn Union top executive, Bob Catell, who had a vision of his own. While Brooklyn Union was a great community partner, Catell envisioned creating a corporate foundation that would make grants to organizations to further their causes. The merger gave Catell an opportunity to present his idea to the Board.

Okorn was selected to manage the new foundation, and was responsible for formulating effective policies and procedures and overseeing daily operations. He was hired as the foundation's first Executive Director—an opportunity that allowed him to follow his passion for giving back, a quality instilled by his parents. In addition, he was named Director of Community Relations, developing and implementing a regional corporate strategy. "From then on, I never looked back. I stayed in that non-profit role," he declares.

Okorn later moved to the funding side of the nonprofit world, as Vice President of Corporate Relations and Senior VP, Development and External Relations, at Abilities! which is now The Viscardi Center.

In 2008, the Long Island Community Foundation appointed him Director, Advancement and Donor

Relations, and he rose to his current position of Executive Director in January, 2010, where he oversees charitable giving on many levels to a wide range of recipients.

Okorn sees his role as "a matchmaker, working with donors who want to grant money to organizations and nonprofits that are actually doing the work to make lives better for people in the community." The LI Community Foundation has just over 200 funds created by families, individuals and businesses that either direct their charitable giving by choosing an amount and recipient, or select an area of interest, like breast cancer or ground and surface water protection, and work with the Foundation to direct them to an organization. At times, the Foundation works with the fund creators to explore their desires and then carries out the donor's wishes. On average, upwards of \$10 million is granted from the Foundation yearly.

The LI Community Foundation is an operating division of New York Community Trust, one of the oldest and largest of the over 700 community foundations in the country. The Long Island and Westchester foundations, working with the NY Community Trust, have in excess of 2,200 donor-advised funds with assets in excess of \$2.5 billion. Okorn remarks, "We're stewards of this money. It's a big responsibility, and we must do all we can to carry out the wishes of our donors to help them achieve their philanthropic goals."

Okorn says that the Foundation and its newly assembled board are striving to build a large endowment by launching a legacy program and partnering with businesses to address the future needs of Long Island. "We want to create a strong safety net here," he notes, "so when the next crisis, issue or emergency arises, we have funds available to give to nonprofit organizations on the front lines."

Okorn also sees himself as a convener. For example, since the many scattered and diverse entities on Long Island have been grappling with the issue of affordable housing, two years ago the Community Foundation brought together government officials, nonprofits, individuals, for-profit businesses and developers, and groups like AARP and Catholic Charities, to talk about people's needs and achievable solutions.

#### **Personal involvement**

A member of the Energeia Partnership Class of 2012, Okorn believes Energeia and the Foundation share community building functions. Energeia's goal is to bring together Long Island leaders from various sectors to address the region's most complex issues. As an Energeia "graduate," Okorn is involved in its ground water protection initiative. The group is preparing promotional materials that will offer a consistent, fact-based message that will be adaptable for dissemination by Long Island leaders—a message that can be easily placed below an electronic email signature, on a utility bill, or a rolling scroll on a website.

As a board member of the Long Island Volunteer Center, Okorn strives to promote volunteerism and engage individuals, workplace teams, businesses, college students, teenagers and all ages in making a difference in the lives of others. He reminds potential volunteers that they "can actually have fun and feel good about what they are doing."

Noting that the Better Business Bureau has 20 different areas where charities can become BBB certified, if they meet fiscal, governance and best practice requirements, Okorn joined the board of the Better Business Bureau Foundation. His goal is to bring some of its programming to Long Island and support local charities by getting them involved and certified, and making them aware of BBB services.

As member of the Leadership Huntington President's Council, Okorn speaking to Huntington residents about philanthropy, in general, corporate giving, charitable giving, the Community Foundation, and supporting nonprofits.

Hauppauge residents, Okorn and his wife Martina have two children—Tyler, a third-year student in the NYIT architecture program, and Kristen, a freshman at Stevens Institute of Technology, studying environmental engineering. ■

# DR. CHRISTOPHER PENDERGAST

*Founder and President  
ALS Ride For Life, Inc.*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



In 1993 at age 44, elementary school teacher Christopher Pendergast was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Remarkably, he's now in his 22nd year battling the disease. He says, "I've taken it one day at a time, and those days have led me on an amazing journey."

Pendergast's hardscrabble upbringing in rural Mount Sinai amid large potato farms and expansive woods left an intense appreciation and curiosity of nature. He notes, "I'm also a product of the turbulent 60s—the civil rights and environmental movements, political activism and the Kent State massacre. "I learned to be passionate and involved about issues that were important. ALS proved to be no different."

Pendergast attended Suffolk Community College and graduated in 1970 from SUNY Fredonia with a teaching license in secondary social studies. Ironically, he was hired by the Northport School District to teach elementary school children, and later selected to work on the specialized program for gifted children. He earned a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from SUNY Stony Brook in 1976.

"I was able to teach my gifted students extraordinarily interesting units infused with amazing field trips, such as, visiting the Kennedy Space Center, sailing out in the ocean to study oceanography, circling Manhattan to study bridge architecture, and camping to learn about the environment," says Pendergast. "I taught all my students about life and modeled interest in learning. They simply followed."

A strong proponent for gifted education, he was

on the executive board and then served as President of the Long Island Educator's Council for Gifted and Talented. He authored a regional intellectual competition for elementary gifted children, called TRIPS, Taking Risks in Problem Solving. The competition presented a simple but challenging project, like building structures out of straw, flying paper planes, and making vehicles, to students who competed within their own building. He was active in the New York State Outdoor Education Association and the New York State Marine Educators Association, where he often presented his innovative lessons.

Pendergast brought authentic science, technology and mathematics to the classroom—long before educators and the scientific community adopted the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education and development model. His most noted achievement: creating a living biology laboratory, Habitat House. For this initiative, The New York State Department of Education selected him for inclusion in the Academy of Peer Review of Exemplary Lessons in 2002.

Every one of Pendergast's fourth graders had to memorize this quote from President John F. Kennedy referring to the manned lunar landing: "We do these things not because they're easy, we do them because they're hard." Pendergast says, "My students and I often would recite this in unison when we were engaged in an arduous task."

Throughout the course of the disease, Pendergast continued his commitment to his students

and his passion to teach. He says, "When I was no longer able to drive to work, the District organized a car pool. When I was no longer able to walk, I used a powered scooter. When I was no longer able to write, I relied on computers." Despite his condition, he remained a commanding presence in the classroom, and enjoyed a 33-year career, retiring in 2003. Without a doubt, Northport Schools valued his leadership and contributions to students and the profession.

One of Pendergast's most cherished recognitions is the pioneering, barrier free Chris Pendergast playground, was built to ADA standards by the Town of Huntington, where disabled children play alongside the able-bodied. Designed and built with funds raised by his students, the playground. It features many adaptive apparatuses, such as the one that allows a wheelchair bound youngster to roll onto a swinging device and enjoy the back and forth swinging sensation, similar to a glider.

#### Public advocacy

Following his devastating ALS diagnosis, Chris started a new and more profound level of teaching, becoming, first, an advocate for himself by learning his rights as a person with a disability, and then an ardent advocate for ALS and its victims. He appeared on the Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy Association Telethon, testified before a Congressional subcommittee for FDA approval of a drug for ALS treatment, and spearheaded the Strike Out Lou Gehrig's Disease Baseball World Series fundraiser, enlisting Perfect Game pitcher, David Cone as the ALS Association's new Greater New York Chapter spokesperson.

In 1998, Pendergast founded Ride for Life and struck out on an amazing 350-mile power wheelchair ride from Yankee Stadium to Washington, D.C. to coincide with National Advocacy Day. He brought "The Ride" to Long Island in 2001, making the trek from Montauk to Manhattan. His Ride for Life organization has raised over \$5 million for ALS research, patient services and educational programs. And under his leadership, the charity has instituted novel programs to support ALS patients and families, including nursing respite grants and scholarships for high school seniors. Pendergast has attended research conferences, toured medical labs, followed clinical trials and promising research. He remains President of the Ride for Life Board of Directors and administers the charity from donated office space in the Health Science Center at Stony Brook University.

Acknowledging Pendergast as a major force behind the opening of its ALS clinic, Stony Brook University Medical Center renamed and dedicated the clinic as the Christopher Pendergast ALS Center of Excellence, the only ALS clinic on Long Island and one of only 34 certified by the ALS Association nationwide. Pendergast's charity has donated more than \$600,000 to the clinic for its wide-ranging services, from respiratory, physical, occupational and speech therapies to psychological and nutritional services. In 2007, SBU's School of Medicine awarded him an honorary doctoral degree, after he delivered the commencement address to the graduating physicians.

Pendergast has been granted awards and citations by education and government leaders on the State and Suffolk County level. In 2006, News 12 earned an Emmy Award for its documentary on "The Ride." "Many ALS patients have died to enable me to be a statistical survivor," Pendergast notes. "People sacrificed enormous time and energy so I may achieve. Any accolades or awards I may receive help me to believe I have worked to earn their sacrifice."

A Miller Place resident, Pendergast is married to his childhood sweetheart, Christine, for 41 years. The couple has two grown children, Buddy and Melissa (son-in-law, Rich), and a grandson, Patrick. He continues his advocacy and speaks extensively about his message of hope and perseverance. His longevity with ALS is defined, he says, by his faith, which has been enormously comforting; optimism, which enables him to look forward every day; perseverance, which has propelled him to adapt and adjust to his deteriorating physical condition; and humor, which has kept him balanced. ■

# DANIEL SEROTA

*Mayor, Village of Brookville;  
Principal & President, Serota Development LLC*

BY MAUREEN TRAXLER



When Dan Serota speaks, he unwittingly reveals his love of life. For instance, he says he truly loves living in the home he built for himself and his wife in the Village of Brookville. From the time he took down the first tree to the day they moved in was only 10 months. He enjoys the trees and the wildlife, and the beautiful surroundings.

Serota loves building, the construction trade, and “tooling around the house.” And, he loves politics. He says that’s why he went to George Washington University in our nation’s capital. While there, he interned with New York Senator Alfonso D’Amato. Most of all, he loves his wife of 24 years, Cherie.

Serota was born in Plainview, not too far from his current home, but at a young age his parents moved to Manhattan. He attended The Birch Wathen Lenox School (the same grade school as Brooke Shields!) and Dwight High School on the Upper East Side. And in storybook fashion, he met his wife at a party in Manhattan given for recent graduates of George Washington and University of Michigan (her alma mater). He was taken with her at first sight.

#### **Finding a career**

When Serota graduated from college with a Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration, he thought he’d join his father’s business, Serota Properties, but instead, his dad told him “to go do something else for a while.” And so, he studied and applied for a real estate sales license and went to work for Manheim Real

Estate. After he sold buildings and rented stores for a few years, he took his savings, bought property and began to build homes on his own, under the name Park Lane Estates located in North Woodmere. After the recession of the 1990s, he repaid his bank loans, but had nothing much else to show for his time. But his dad came through and invited him to join the family business he founded in 1952. He recalls his dad saying that now that Serota knew something about construction, he could be a superintendent.

Dan’s father, Nathan Serota was working for the Pennsylvania Railroad when he and his brother started building homes on the side on weekends in the early 1950s. Nathan went on to build strip centers and shopping malls, then department stores and office buildings. Dan Serota says his dad’s business built many of the Waldbaums and King Kullen grocery stores on Long Island.

Based in Valley Stream and employing a staff of 17, Serota Properties continues as a full service real estate company that specializes in the management and development of a complete commercial property portfolio that runs across multiple property types. The company developed 4 million square feet of commercial space on Long Island.

Serota, who has now been with the business for 24 years, serves as Principal and President of his own development business, Serota Development LLC, within the company. Some years ago, he bought 60 acres of property from the New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury and built Dupont Estates Residential Community, a cluster of seven homes, each on five-to-six-acre lots, and he completed development of a second community, Brookville Estates.

#### **Dabbling in politics**

During the construction of Dupont Estates, Serota was required to present his plans and models before the Brookville Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The process took four years. Afterward, the Brookville mayor at the time approached Serota, and asked, “Now that you know how our village works, I’d like to appoint you to the Architects Review Board.” Serota’s reply? “I accept,” which put him in the throes of Village government.

After serving on the Architects Review Board, Serota went on to become a member of the Planning Board, then Village Trustee, Deputy Mayor, and in March 2013, he was elected Mayor of the Incorporated Village of Brookville, a position he calls, “more work than the construction business.” Upon taking office, he outlined his three priorities as: rebuilding the Village following the severe storms that felled many trees and recovering from the recession that lowered property values; safety; and fiscal responsibility.

In addition, Serota continues to hold the position of Brookville Police Commissioner. In that capacity, he serves with his counterparts in the Incorporated Villages of Cove Neck, Upper Brookville, Old Brookville, Mill Neck and Matinecock on the Board of Police Commissioners for the Old Brookville Police Department. In 2011 when the Village of Muttontown left the police consortium, Serota was serving as chair and dealt directly with the legal, economic and union related impacts on the six villages that remained.

#### **Dedicated volunteer and father**

Serota has been a supporter of AHRC and its programs serving the developmentally disabled, and served on its Rose Ball corporate committee. At the Foundation’s 63rd Annual Rose Ball in 2013, Serota received the Foundation’s Leadership Award.

As a lead supporter of the New York Institute of Technology’s School of Osteopathic Medicine (NYITCOM), the main building was named in honor of Nathan’s parents, Charles and Hanna Serota. He also generously supported the medical school’s scholarship program.

Serota continues to financially support George Washington University, its students and alumni as a member of its Real Estate and Finance Alliance and Luther Rice Society, and he participates in providing “send-off” events for New York City and Long Island freshmen heading to D.C. He is a past supporter of the Interfaith Nutrition Network and Daytop Village.

Serota and Cherie have three sons—Stephen (a senior at George Washington University), Jonathan (a freshman at University of Pennsylvania), and Chase (a sophomore at Jericho High School). During the fall semester 2014, the family participated in the Jericho High School Foreign Exchange Student Program and welcomed a Spanish student into their home, where they also hosted a gathering for 20 local exchange students and their host families.

Sports were big with his boys as they grew up, and Serota coached several teams, going from one field to another. He is an avid wine collector and has a small wine cellar in his home. Cherie established her own line of maternity clothes, Belly Basics, selling what was essentially “four basic maternity outfits in a box” at Bloomingdale’s and Nordstrom’s for years before going international. She sold the company in 2005, and is now an adjunct professor teaching fashion merchandising at Long Island University’s C.W. Post campus. ■