

Honouring a champion of complementary and naturopathic medicine

York Downs Chemists continues to uphold
the pioneering, familial, and innovative spirit of
its founder, the late David Garshowitz



A strong supporter of CCNM, York Downs Chemists has made significant contributions to the College leading to the establishment of the Patterson Institute for Integrative Cancer Research. Established in 2017, the Institute's mission includes developing a strong evidence base for integrative cancer therapies and whole-person models of health care.



“They are at the forefront of integrative cancer research,” says Fran Garshowitz, David’s daughter-in-law. “Their research program is driving the review of thousands of human studies in this area and will ultimately help guide clinical practice for all health-care providers involved in treating people with cancer.”

As a founding sponsor of the Patterson Institute, Fran believes that this support helps to cement David’s legacy and aligns with York Downs Chemists’ mission.

“This vitally important research helps guide nutritional supplementation, dietary and lifestyle recommendations, mind-body medicine, and retreat programming as well as excellence in health-care provision through person-centred clinical care at CCNM,” Fran explains.

“Supporting the Patterson Institute is also important to us to contribute to the education, training, and development of NDs who have a special interest in integrative cancer care to ultimately help support people living with cancer.”

David’s health-care vision

York Downs Chemists evolved from York Downs Pharmacy, a neighborhood pharmacy founded in 1955 on Bathurst Street in north Toronto. The pharmacy continues to operate for the community, while York Downs Chemists provides sterile compounding and injectables for complementary and alternative health-care practitioners.

David, a well-known figure in the Canadian pharmaceutical industry, took over York Downs Pharmacy on Bathurst Street in 1987 and continued to develop the business. Over 20 years ago, York Downs Chemists was established to prepare sterile compounded prescriptions.

He advocated for looking at medicine in a different way, believing that holistic approaches to wellness can be combined with scientifically validated treatments. Good health cannot be achieved with pharmaceutical drugs alone; overall wellness had to include changes to diet and exercise and the evaluation of one’s mental state.

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Fran Garshowitz (David’s daughter-in-law)





(l-r): Dr. Peter Papadogianis, ND, Fran Garshowitz, Boyana Djokic, Jared Garshowitz, Bob Bernhardt, Dr. Nick De Groot, ND



David Garshowitz

Hartley Garshowitz, David's son and Fran's husband, says he was a visionary in the health and pharmaceutical industry, from his early days in compounding right through to the twilight of his career.

"He removed the sale of cigarettes from his pharmacies several years ahead of government legislation, as he saw the conflict between the sale of health products and those detrimental to health," Hartley recalls. "He was also involved in the early concept of franchising, leading a public pharmacy chain, co-founding a pharmaceutical company, and innovating with custom medications."

David's mission was shared by York Downs Pharmacists' manager Boyana Djokic who joined the business at the inception of York Downs Chemists. They met at a conference and quickly discovered that they shared the same outlook.

Boyana's dedication and knowledge is a large reason why David's legacy continues to flourish.

"David and Boyana thought the same way about health care and worked in tandem for many years," says Fran. "Her participation was – and continues to be – instrumental in making York Downs Chemists a success and to achieve what we have now."

A family affair

David, Fran, and Boyana cultivated an environment in which loyalty, respect, and perseverance are a way of life. Fran is extremely proud that there are several long-term employees, in addition to the solid relationships they've developed with NDs across the country.

Seven years ago, Fran and Hartley's son Jared graduated from the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto and now works at York Downs Chemists as a pharmacist.

"Boyana and Jared, together with the excellent York Downs Chemists' team, represent the continuity of David's vision and legacy," Fran says.

A special connection

Class of 1996 graduate and director of the Patterson Institute, Dr. Peter Papadogianis, ND, remembers the first time he met David and Boyana some 20 years ago.

"I walked in with my 1-year-old in tow and first met Boyana who became fast friends with my baby girl. She would play with vitamin bottles as Boyana and I chatted," he says.

"Meeting David and the staff early in my career helped me to value pharmacists

as partners in health-care provision. They were able to provide expertise in the chemistry of both natural and synthetic compounds and we would often engage in robust discussions regarding which compounds provided the best fit for a given situation or a specific patient," he adds.

"Boyana continues to be a family friend and I continue to rely on both her and Jared to answer all pharmaceutical and IV related questions."

As for their support of the Patterson Institute and cancer research, Peter is thrilled that NDs will be able benefit from York Downs Chemists' generosity.

"The support that York Downs Chemists is providing integrative cancer research is a natural extension of the support they have provided individual NDs across Canada for the past decades," says Peter.

For more information about York Downs Chemists, visit: yorkdownschemists.com