

# A 90th birthday surprise at Cohen Children's honors a loyal patron and expands his legacy



By Carol Cool

At Cohen Children's Medical Center, no birthday goes uncelebrated — birthdays are markers of life and health, of living joyfully and fully.

The surprise birthday party held on August 16 celebrated all these things, but with a twist — the crowd was gathered to honor not a ninth birthday, but a 90th.

Thomas “Tom” Gambino has never been a patient at Cohen Children's. Yet, he's been a loyal patron. Since 1990, the Gambino Medical & Science Foundation he and his wife Frances established has raised millions of dollars to support vital clinical programs at Cohen Children's.

The Gambino Foundation's long-term generosity has helped create the region's first pediatric bone marrow transplant unit, a stem cell transplant unit, and a trauma and imaging center and has supported important research projects and child life programs. “Our foundation is committed to supporting the superior care of children provided at Cohen Children's,” says Tom.

In an effort to further Cohen Children's national leadership in pediatric cancer, Tom and Frances's children recently announced that the foundation would establish an endowed professorship in pediatric hematology and oncology, ensuring our physician scientists can continue their groundbreaking research.

Northwell Health thought it only fitting to announce the inaugural Frances and Thomas Gambino Professor of Hematology/Oncology at a celebration honoring Tom's 90th birthday.

Jeffrey M. Lipton, MD, PhD, chief of the division of pediatric hematology/oncology and stem cell transplantation — an area close to Tom's heart — was named the recipient.

“This is a great personal honor,” says Dr. Lipton, “which enables me to create a culture of inquiry that solves problems at the highest level. The Gambinos' endowment supports fundamental discoveries that impact the lives of

children now but also children not yet born, as future occupants of this chair make their own discoveries.”

Cohen Children's patients shared their own well wishes with Tom through birthday cards they created just for him. He also received a special birthday gift — a white coat

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with his name on it bearing the Northwell Health and Cohen Children's logos, linking him to the hospital he has generously ensured will be a leader in pediatric cancer research and care in perpetuity.