

# Outlook

SUMMER 2005

 Washington  
University in St. Louis  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

RESIDENT RESEARCH

ICU INTENSIVISTS

EXAMINING ETHICS

## Tiny technology

Nanomedicine holds  
big potential



 Washington  
University in St. Louis  
Physicians



C. Robert Cloninger, MD, Anthony F. Sansone III, Carrie Sansone, Christine Sansone, Deby Sansone and Anthony F. Sansone Jr. dedicate the Peggy Sansone Memorial Lecture series and Sansone Family Center for Well-Being. Not pictured: Michael, Nikki and Lilly Sansone.

## Caring resource

Sansone family strives to ease the struggle of depression

**M**OST PEOPLE WITH CONDITIONS such as diabetes or heart problems don't hesitate to see a physician for treatment. But when a person has depression, he or she often suffers alone, leaving family and friends feeling helpless as they watch a loved one struggle. One St. Louis family's tragedy inspired them to help others suffering with depression, a debilitating and sometimes fatal disease. In 2002, Anthony F. Sansone Jr. and his seven children established the Peggy Sansone Special Angel Foundation to offer people with depression and their families a place to turn for support and answers. Improving treatment options to include an examination of how spirituality can become a component of care is one of its many goals.

**The family's motivation is personal.** Peggy Sansone, Tony Sansone's wife and the mother of their children, took her own life in 2001.

"Peggy was undiagnosed for the most part and didn't receive proper treatment," says Sansone, a principal with the Sansone Group in Clayton MO. "We feel that the system is flawed, and we want to figure out how to help people talk about this disease openly, in addition to developing more effective and compassionate ways of evaluating and treating people with depression."

The Sansones also wish to honor C. Robert Cloninger, MD, the Wallace Renard Professor of Psychiatry, for the support he gave the family in their darkest hours following Peggy's death. In gratitude, they have established the Peggy Sansone Memorial Lecture series and the Sansone Family Center for Well-Being at Washington University School of Medicine.

"I think Tony and his family realized that turning inward wouldn't be helpful for them or for the community," Cloninger says. "They have courageously and generously decided to come forward and raise awareness of depression, in addition to providing a resource for people struggling with this disease."

Peggy Sansone visited numerous therapists but was not diagnosed with depression and referred to a psychiatrist until she was severely depressed. And even when she was hospitalized, her family didn't feel as if her physicians were well prepared to treat her. They saw Peggy become even more hopeless in the hospital environment where she received treatment.

"The facility had bars and wasn't conducive to feeling good or productive," says Anthony F. Sansone III, the couple's eldest son. "It made her feel worse."

Before turning to Washington University, Sansone and his family spent nearly two years desperately trying to obtain effective treatment for Peggy's illness. He was referred to Cloninger by a national expert on depression, who told him: "You don't need to see me; the leading depression specialist is right there in St. Louis." Cloninger responded immediately to Sansone's call for help, telling him he could see Peggy within the hour. Unfortunately, she got only as far as Cloninger's door, then turned back.

"He's a man of compassion and a wonderful human being," Sansone says of Cloninger, who is now director

of the Sansone Center for Well-Being. "I've talked to many of his colleagues, and they have unanimously praised his talent, his heart, his faith and his practices. We're as lucky to have him as Washington University is."

The Peggy Sansone Memorial Lecture series addresses topics associated with the treatment, cure and prevention of depression and also examines the role of spirituality in personality development. According to Sansone, the purpose of the lecture series is to inform clinicians of different approaches and of the importance of the physician's role as therapist.



**Peggy Sansone**

August 20, 1959 – May 2, 2001

*May the spirit of a dear wife, mother and friend help illuminate a path that will save others in the future from ever feeling they are hopeless and alone.*

**The Center for Well-Being**, now housed in the Department of Psychiatry, currently studies the development of positive emotions and life satisfaction using a combination of approaches, including molecular genetics, brain imaging and longitudinal studies.

The Sansones hope that the Center for Well-Being someday will be a separate facility, with a warm and compassionate environment. They envision it as a place of respite and comfort where patients will get better and be able to resume their lives.

The Sansones have received plenty of support from their own extended family — more than 60 members faithful and strong. And they hope their efforts will encourage people with depression to seek help early — to give interventions time to work — and remember that they're not alone. They also want to spare another family the loss and pain they've experienced.

"There are so many people who are suffering and going untreated just as Peggy did," Sansone says. "We want to make getting help easier. It's our challenge to make a difference."