

THE JOAN & JOEL ROSENBLOOM CENTER for FIBROTIC DISEASES

Like cancer, fibrotic diseases are the result of complex biological processes that are similar in their final outcome, but diverse in the molecular mechanisms underlying those processes. Thus, identifying treatment targets and developing effective therapies is extremely difficult. It requires a continuous dialogue between basic scientists, translational researchers and clinical investigators across a range of disciplines.

The Joan & Joel Rosenbloom Center for Fibrotic Diseases, established in 2013, is an interdepartmental research program focusing on diagnosis, disease mechanisms, prevention and treatment of fibrotic diseases. It acts as a bridge: both to translate basic findings into drug therapies and to bring basic and clinical researchers together in novel studies that often cross fields and diseases.

Joel Rosenbloom, MD, PhD, professor of dermatology and cutaneous medicine, who directs the center, is a globally respected biomedical scientist. Now in his early 80s—with more than 50 years of research and nearly 400 peer-reviewed scientific publications under his belt—his active research program focuses on pulmonary fibrosis and abdominal adhesions.

He and his wife, Joan, founded the Center with a philanthropic gift soon after she was diagnosed with inoperable lung cancer in 2012. He credits several of his research breakthroughs to Joan, who worked as his lab manager for many years (after her pursuit of a PhD in physics was derailed by parenthood).

Today, he is frequently asked, “Why are you working so hard? Why aren’t you retired?” Dr. Rosenbloom’s response: “I think Joan would want me to be doing this. These are cruel, terrible diseases, about which we know too little to really help many patients. But by bringing smart researchers together from many parts of the institution—from cardiology, cancer biology, dermatology, nephrology, ophthalmology, pulmonology, radiation oncology and surgery—we are speeding progress in the search for common pathways that would allow us to finally understand and treat the full range of fibrotic diseases.” ■

