

# Jerold B. Katz

On a summer day in 2005, a *New York Times* article came across the desk of **Jerold B. Katz**. The story featured Weill Cornell doctors Nicholas Schiff, M.D. '92, and Joseph Fins, M.D. '86, and detailed their game-changing work in the science and ethical issues behind treating brain-injured patients.

A successful business leader and well-known philanthropist, Mr. Katz's life changed in 1988 when his 22-year-old son Lenny sustained a serious brain injury in a car accident while returning home from college. Subsequently, Mr. Katz developed an intellectual curiosity in neurology research and minimally-conscious states, which was directly related to his interest in both Lenny's condition and in the kinds of brain injuries and closed head trauma afflicting soldiers in times of war.

Deeply committed to improving care for brain-injured patients, Mr. Katz found the work of Drs. Schiff and Fins fascinating and immediately reached out to set up a meeting. He was incredibly impressed by the doctors' compassion and expertise. Now, nearly seven years later, Jerold and Lenny Katz are among the most ardent supporters of Drs. Schiff and Fins's research program, known as the **Consortium for the Advanced Study of Brain Injury**, or CASBI. Over the past several years, the Katzes have made substantial gifts in support of CASBI, including a recent \$2 million gift to endow the **Jerold B. Katz Professorship in Neurology and Neuroscience**. Dr. Schiff is the first to hold the professorship, which supports his work in the Laboratory of Cognitive Neuromodulation at Weill Cornell.



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"This research is making tangible differences in the lives of our patients," says Dr. Schiff. "Whether it's being able to feed yourself again, to stand and walk, or to not have to live in a skilled nursing facility – every step is hugely important." The CASBI program is unique because Drs. Schiff, Fins, and colleagues collaborate to understand not only the neuroscience of brain trauma, but also the social and moral implications for brain-injured patients and their families.

"**Their research is truly revolutionary,**" says Mr. Katz. "It's very satisfying to know that the gifts that Lenny and I are making support breakthrough research at the Medical College and the work of dedicated, innovative physicians, such as Dr. Schiff and Dr. Fins."

"This is an extremely intricate field, from both a scientific and an ethical perspective," says Dr. Fins, the E. William Davis, M.D., Jr. Professor of Medical Ethics and Chief of the Division of Medical Ethics, whose work Mr. Katz also supports. "The collaborative approach I've been able to take with Dr. Schiff and our many colleagues here at Weill Cornell has made it possible to untangle the complicated issues involved in brain injuries, and it's helped us engage this area of research for a population of patients who are often marginalized and neglected. **Our efforts have begun to bring the fruits of neuroscience advances to patients and their families, who also need our support.**"