David Oshinsky to Present "Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital"

Tuesday, April 24, 2018 - 5:00pm to 7:00pm
CHC Events Hall

David Oshinsky, professor of history at NYU and Director of the Division of Medical Humanities at NYU Langone Health, will present the 2018 Kathryn and Paul Williamson Lecture on April 24. His talk, which is free and open to the public, is entitled "Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital."

Oshinsky explains: Bellevue is deeply ingrained in our popular culture as a warren of mangled crime victims, lunatics, and derelicts, along with celebrity patients such as John Lennon's killer, Mark David Chapman. It also is a place of stunning medical innovation. Bellevue created the first civilian ambulance corps, the first professional nursing school, the first outpatient clinics, as well as the first departments of psychiatry, pediatrics, and forensic medicine. Its doctors developed life-saving vaccines and pioneering surgeries, undertook daring and controversial human experiments, and won Nobel Prizes. Virtually every disease and malady, from yellow fever in the eighteenth century, cholera and tuberculosis in the nineteenth, AIDS in the twentieth, and Ebola in the twenty-first, has passed through its doors. Above all, however,
Bellevue has been the hospital for the poor and the underserved, especially immigrants. Its ethos over three centuries remains unchanged: No one is turned away.

David Oshinsky is a Professor of History at NYU and Director of the Division of Medical Humanities at NYU Langone Health. His many books include, "A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy," which was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year; "Worse Than Slavery," which won the Robert F. Kennedy Award for its distinguished contribution to human rights; "Polio: An American Story," which won the Pulitzer Prize for History, among other awards, and influenced Bill Gates to make polio eradication the top priority of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and "Bellevue: Three Centuries of Medicine and Mayhem at America's Most Storied Hospital," which was named the "Best Book about New York City, 2016," and was a PBS "Best Book of the Year." His reviews and articles appear regularly in the New York Times and other international publications.

Established in 2000 by alumni Karthryn and Paul Williamson, the UMass lecture series brings distinguished visitors to the university to interact with Commonwealth College students and give public talks. This year's lecture is co-sponsored by Commonwealth Honors College, School of Public Health and Health Sciences, Department of History, and College of Humanities and Fine Arts at UMass Amherst.

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