Since coming to VCU in 1989, this year's WISDM Professional Achievement Awardee, Dr. Cheryl S. Al-Mateen, has embodied the concept of advocacy. Advocacy for patients and their families, especially patients with exceptional needs. Advocacy for providing better patient-centered clinical care in collaboration with her professional colleagues in all disciplines. Advocacy for women and minority faculty members. Advocacy for improved multicultural understanding among our entire University community.

Joel J. Silverman, M.D., James Asa Shield Jr. Professor and Chair of Psychiatry, has observed Dr. Al-Mateen's professional development over her 26 years at VCU. He recently appointed her Interim Medical Director of the Virginia Treatment Center for Children (VTCC) and in this role she has strengthened collaboration to support the clinical program. He states that she is "an exceptional teacher who has developed specific areas of competency in trauma informed care, cultural competency, and forensic psychiatry. These have translated into opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaborations that have resulted in her implementing a new concept for VCU, The Schwartz Compassionate Rounds, which brings together all members of our clinical teams to provide emotional support in the difficult task of patient care. Cheryl will soon expand this to include Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics." Dr. Al-Mateen has special expertise in providing care to hearing-impaired children and survivors of trauma.

Dr. Al-Mateen has been significantly involved in the development of the new medical school curriculum in her role as Psychiatry Clerkship Director (which she has held since 2004) as well as in developing new content as the Division Director, Health Disparities and Cultural Competency, and Introduction to Trauma subject areas for the Physician, Patient and Society (PPS) longitudinal curriculum SOM. She also models lifelong learning to develop skills she brings to her roles as clinician and educator, having completed the Stanford Faculty Development Course in 2012, a Master Educator program through the Association for Academic Psychiatry in 2011, and training to become a Qualified Administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory in 2010. Dr. Al-Mateen was a Harvard-Macy Scholar, Educators in the Health Professions Program, in 2005 and served as a Returning Scholar in 2006.

In addition to teaching mutual respect and interdisciplinary collaboration, Dr. Al-Mateen models these every day. "We work as a multi-disciplinary team at VTCC, and she was invaluable in role modeling the medical leadership responsibilities for the team, showing empathy and respecting the perspective of all members of the team," states Rosa Morales Theodore, M.D., Assistant Professor of Child/Adolescent Psychiatry.

Dr. Al-Mateen has a truly outstanding record of service to the SOM. She has served as Chair of the SOM Professionalism Committee since 2013. She serves on numerous curriculum committees to improve education for students, residents, and others, including serving as Chair of the Work Group to Develop Cultural Psychiatry Curriculum for the Psychiatry Residency Program since 2013. At the University level, she has served on the Medical Staff Health Committee since 2004, and the MCVP Compliance and Audit Advisory Committee since 2012. Dr. Al-Mateen served for three years on the VCU Faculty Senate, and from 2005-08 she was a member of the Steering Committee for the VCU Center on Health Disparities.
Dr. Al-Mateen has developed recognition that has led to service to her profession at the national level, including a 2012-2014 term on the USMLE Step I Behavioral Science/Behavioral Health Test Material Development Committee of the NBME. She served as the Representative from the SOM for the AAMC Group for Diversity and Inclusion from 2009-2014, and from 2008-2010 was Co-Chair of the Membership/Communications Task Force, Association for Directors of Medical Student Education in Psychiatry. Since 2007, she has served as a member of the Diversity and Culture Committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, serving as Co-Chair from 2011-15.

Dr. Al-Mateen has contributed scholarship to her profession through 34 publications, including peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and invited commentaries, as well as over 100 invited presentations at the regional, national and international level. A mentee, Sala S. Webb, M.D., FAPA, now Children’s Behavioral Medical Director at Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care, describes Dr. Al-Mateen's development of her scholarship abilities, "During fellowship, I was able to co-author the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) Practice Parameter for Cultural Competency. I became involved in this project as Dr. Al-Mateen encouraged me to apply for a trainee position on AACAP’s Diversity and Culture Committee . . . As young faculty, I co-authored with her a book chapter on predicting violence as it relates to school shootings. Just last month, I am proud to say that I have published my first chapter as sole author in Dr. Al-Mateen’s book (co-edited with Drs. Singh and Breeland-Noble) Handbook of Mental Health in African American Youth. It is the first such text to address this topic and it is no surprise that Dr. Al-Mateen was asked to spearhead this endeavor."

The many honors and recognitions Dr. Al-Mateen has received include the 2015 Bela Sood Service Award for outstanding service and dedication to trainees in the VTCC, the 2013 Jeanne Spurlock Minority Fellowship Achievement Award from the American Psychiatric Association, membership in the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society in 2013, the 2011 VCU Presidential Award for Multicultural Enrichment (PACME) Award, and the 2006 SOM Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award.

Leslie Kimball Franck, Ph.D., LCP, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Associate Director of Inpatient Clinical Services reflects, "Dr. Al-Mateen was able to see the potential for teaching and leadership skills in myself that I was unaware of, and has incessantly pushed me to stay on the growth edges of these skills. With her encouragement, I have become involved in teaching in the new medical school curriculum (and won a teaching award as a result), and have helped to launch the Schwartz Rounds in the Department of Psychiatry, to help make real my vision to incorporate more self-care into the challenging work we do in the Department . . . I would not have progressed in my career in the ways that I have were it not for her leadership and commitment to others' professional development."

Dr. Sala S. Webb agrees, "Even today, almost six years removed from training, she is never more than a phone call or email away - always readily available to lend a listening ear, a pearl of wisdom or unwavering encouragement."

For her constant and effective advocacy that has made the School of Medicine, VCU, and the profession of Psychiatry more inclusive and patient-centered, we honor Dr. Cheryl Al-Mateen today.