The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded the Wayne State University School of Medicine a 10-year, multi-million dollar contract to house and support an intramural branch of NIH to conduct studies into maternal and infant health and disease.

The Perinatology Research Branch (PRB), part of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, is one of only a few NIH intramural branches located outside of its main campus in Maryland. This represents a unique partnership between the NIH and an academic medical center. The contract, with a potential estimated value of $125 million over its duration, is expected to have profound and far-reaching social and economic impact in Detroit and the surrounding community.

“We are honored to have been selected to receive the contract,” said WSU President Irvin Reid. “As a nationally ranked urban research university, Wayne State is uniquely positioned to commit our proven standards of excellence to this critical project. This is an opportunity that not only enables us to continue our leadership role in providing innovative health care, but also is of tremendous potential benefit to both the citizens and the economy of metropolitan Detroit.”

The PRB will be located at the WSU Mott Center for Human Growth and Development. Clinical services for the branch will be conducted at Hutzel Women’s Hospital in the Detroit Medical Center, where the WSU/DMC obstetrics and gynecology service is centered. The announcement affirms the excellence of the WSU/DMC department of obstetrics and gynecology, which is currently ranked sixth in the nation for NIH-funded research.

“This contract underscores both the importance of our work in the area of maternal-fetal medicine as well as the strength of our program,” said John Crissman, MD, dean of the School of Medicine. “Our faculty is uniquely qualified to contribute to the success of national research programs that will ultimately improve the health of women and infants across the country. Establishing the PRB here will help to ensure that we continue to recruit and retain the finest faculty physicians, who will be able to offer a superior level of care within the Detroit community.”

Dr. Roberto Romero has been chief of the PRB since 1992 and will continue to direct the branch’s activities. Dr. Romero is an obstetrician and gynecologist with a sub-specialty in maternal-fetal medicine. He spent 16 years at Yale University, completing his training and then serving as a member of the faculty and director of perinatal research. Dr. Romero is widely regarded as one of the most prominent intellectual leaders in modern obstetrics. See page 2 for more information.
The Perinatology Research Branch (PRB) was created by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to address the causes of high infant mortality in the United States, with a particular emphasis on premature birth and congenital anomalies. It will establish a multidisciplinary program combining the expertise of clinical and basic science to improve the understanding, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disorders responsible for infant mortality. Although the center is dedicated to clinical research, the ultimate goal is to improve pregnancy outcomes, especially for underserved, high-risk populations.

The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, part of the NIH, sought competitive proposals to establish a permanent site for the PRB in 2000. The new contract designates Wayne State University/Detroit Medical Center (DMC) as the branch’s long-term site and significantly increases support for its activities.

"Selection of WSU as the permanent site for the PRB demonstrates recognition that the university can bring together the vast resources necessary for this important endeavor," noted WSU Vice President for Research George Dambach, PhD. “WSU’s partnership in Michigan’s Life Sciences Corridor, the bipartisan support from local and state government, as well as our own history and expertise are indicators that WSU is in an excellent position to succeed in this essential initiative to improve pregnancy outcomes.”

Facilities and services at WSU’s Hutzel Hospital provide the highest quality care according to countless benchmarks and standards. Advanced research and technology like the 4D ultrasound provide the best diagnostic imaging available for patients in the community.

PRB Makes WSU Its Permanent Home

"Research advances care," said Gwen Mackenzie of the DMC. Dr. John Malone explains how the PRB attracts top researchers and physicians.
What is the Perinatology Research Branch?

The Perinatology Research Branch conducts research and training as part of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which is part of the National Institutes of Health.

What does the PRB do?

The Perinatology Research Branch conducts clinical and laboratory research in maternal and fetal diseases responsible for perinatal morbidity. The branch emphasizes a multi-disciplinary approach, using expertise from clinical sciences (maternal-fetal medicine, neonatology, and perinatal pathology), as well as basic sciences and epidemiology, to improve the etiologic understanding, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disorders related to infant mortality. The branch places emphasis on congenital anomalies and causes of prematurity. These two conditions are leading causes of perinatal morbidity worldwide and are major contributors to infant mortality.

Where will the PRB located?

The PRB has a clinical and a basic science component. The clinical unit will be housed at the Detroit Medical Center’s Hutzel Hospital, while the laboratory will be located at the Wayne State University Mott Center for Human Growth and Development. The NIH has no obstetrics facility on its Bethesda campus and the top-rate obstetrics program of WSU/DMC will meet the NIH needs and goals.

How did NIH select Wayne State University?

In 2001, NIH solicited proposals from university-based medical centers to house the PRB on more permanent basis, with an annually renewable 10-year contract. Wayne State University submitted a competitive proposal which was selected after peer review. With the selection of WSU’s proposal in September 2002, the new contract designates WSU/DMC as the branch’s permanent site and significantly increases support for its activities. The contract is expected to bring from $100 million to $150 million in additional funding to the university over the course of its duration.

What is the current research focus of the PRB?

The PRB conducts clinical and laboratory research on conditions responsible for morbidity and mortality around the time of birth, i.e., the major obstetrical diseases. The branch focuses on the study of human parturition (premature labor), intrauterine growth retardation, congenital anomalies, pre-eclampsia and cerebral palsy. With a strong interest in applied science, the branch aims to develop diagnostic and therapeutic strategies to solve clinical problems. Faculty members have conducted pioneering research in several areas of maternal-fetal medicine such as premature labor, perinatal infection, prenatal diagnosis, and endoscopic fetal surgery. The team emphasizes a multi-disciplinary approach and utilizes expertise in obstetrics, neonatology, diagnostic imaging, perinatal pathology, molecular and cellular biology, and clinical epidemiology. Clinical laboratory research is concerned with these topics: (1) prenatal diagnosis of congenital anomalies; (2) prevention of preterm labor; (3) diagnosis of intrauterine growth retardation; and (4) maturation and regulation of the cardiovascular, hematopoietic, and central nervous systems in the fetus and newborn.

Who runs and staffs the PRB?

Dr. Roberto Romero is the chief of the Perinatology Research Branch of NIH. Dr. Romero is an obstetrician and gynecologist who’s spent 36 years at Yale University, during which time he completed his training and joined the faculty. He has been chief of the PRB since 1992, and has made pioneering contributions to the prenatal diagnosis of congenital anomalies and the role of infection in premature labor and delivery.

Drs. Robert Sokol and Michael Diamond will serve as the project site managers for the PRB. Dr. Sokol is a distinguished professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of the WSU Mott Center for Human Growth and Development. Dr. Diamond is a WSU professor, chief of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and associate chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

WSU, General Motors Study Physiological Basis of Driver Distraction

General Motors (GM) and the Brain Imaging Research Division of the Wayne State University (WSU) School of Medicine have announced a major research partnership that ultimately could identify a physiological basis for driver distraction.

Research is already underway on several programs in the Transportation Imaging Division of the newly established Brain and Behavior Institute at WSU.

The programs will expand on the current joint effort to use real-time magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), a safe and passive brain imaging method, along with human performance data, virtual reality simulation and safety advances in transportation communications and telematics, to better understand driver performance and potential distractions by actually watching how the brain processes tasks.

An initial grant of $100,000 to the WSU School of Medicine, through the GM Foundation, will enable advanced brain imaging technology and software from leading researchers and institutions globally to be assembled for the completion of key experiments. The grant is in addition to significant scientific and engineering collaborations between the partners. The GM-WSU School of Medicine research will take place through 2005 and may define additional partnerships.

“This research will help us understand how drivers manage distractions and interact with vehicle telematics,” said Christopher Green, MD, PhD, executive director of emerging issues in the GM Public Policy Center. “Additionally, the research can help form the basis for developing future in-vehicle telematics technology, driver training aids and other safety advances.”

“The initial experiments will use functional magnetic resonance imaging during driver simulations that are real-world,” said Gregory Moore, PhD, who is co-directing the GM-WSU medical school research. “The imaging technique shows the actual portions of the brain while they are being used in processing sensory information during driving tasks. That information allows researchers to see if multiple sources of sensory information are being processed and, if so, how efficiently.”

Researchers also want to determine how other external factors, such as sleep deprivation, the use of caffeine, alcohol and over-the-counter medications; and even overall physical health impact a driver’s brain’s ability to process multiple tasks and interact with technology inside the vehicle, said Thomas Uhde, MD, director of WSU’s Brain and Behavior Institute and the medical school’s assistant dean for neuroscience.

General Motors leads the industry in the effort to better comprehend the distracted driving issue. GM’s award-winning “SenseAble driving” program is a multi-year, multi-million-dollar initiative that uses research, education and technology to address driver distraction.
Healthcare provider and researcher Dr. John Ruckdeschel has been named director and CEO of the Karmanos Cancer Institute, effective immediately. He was previously the CEO of the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute. The Karmanos Cancer Institute, which is one of the top ten cancer hospitals in the country by U.S. News & World Report, will now be led by Ruckdeschel, who is known for his comprehensive cancer center designation from the National Cancer Institute.

Dr. Ruckdeschel's selection was heralded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and others in the metropolitan Detroit area and international oncology community. "Jack Ruckdeschel is an extraordinary oncologist and cancer center administrator who is deeply committed to the welfare of cancer patients," said Andrew von Eschenbach, MD, director of the National Cancer Institute. "He will no doubt continue the great work conducted by the Karmanos Cancer Institute and help move us further toward our shared goal of eradicating this disease." Dr. Ruckdeschel completed his medical degree at the Albany Medical College in 1971. He served an internship at Johns Hopkins in 1972, a fellowship at the National Cancer Institute from 1972 to 1975 and his residency at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston in 1976. Dr. Ruckdeschel is board certified in internal medicine and medical oncology. His clinical and research interests focus on lung cancer and behavioral oncology and in particular patient-physician communication.
“Women On the Move” Encourages Physical Activity in New Ways

People are saturated with messages explaining the health benefits of exercise, yet most Americans admit they don’t exercise regularly. Dr. Cathy Simpson concludes that a behavioral bridge needs to be crossed if we are to combat sedentary lifestyles.

“Physical activity is a behavior. We should teach it as a behavior and not a cognitive skill,” she said. “Everybody knows exercise is good. We need to show people exactly how to be active, not just tell them why they ought to do it.”

With a grant from the Michigan Department of Community Health, Dr. Simpson is helping sedentary women lead more active lives through a program called Women on the Move. The program differs from other exercise regimens because it’s not about weight loss or medical rehabilitation. “It’s about meeting the surgeon general’s health and fitness recommendations, which urge people to be physically active every day,” said Dr. Simpson, assistant professor of occupational medicine.

Volunteers from the University Family Practice clinics in Detroit will be recruited for the program. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of two interventions: the first with one-on-one counseling and a program to follow, and the second with a hands-on activity coach. The coach demonstrates strength training side-by-side with participants. She also shows the physical differences between moderate activity and increased exertion, and measures changes in various categories including body weight and blood pressure. The coach’s goal is to help inactive women become adequately physically active to see health benefits.

As Dr. Simpson theorizes, “When you’re teaching somebody to change their behavior, asking someone to walk for 30 minutes every morning may not be the correct approach. Instead, you ask them to actually walk briskly enough for their heart rate to increase so that they understand what it feels like. You show them how to check their heart rate. You show them how the body responds to brisk exercise. You present a behavior to follow and then ask them to demonstrate the behavior.”

As noted in President George Bush’s health and fitness initiative, HealthierUS, inactivity is associated with such chronic conditions as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. Dr. Simpson echoes the message of national initiatives like this one: “You don’t have to become a marathon runner or be able to afford a gym or health club membership to improve personal fitness. The health of Americans would improve with modest but regular physical activity.”

Health benefits will be measured for at least 100 participants in Detroit’s Women on the Move program, which is funded through 2002.

Testosterone Levels And Heart Function Studied by WSU Alum, Faculty Member

A man’s heart is different from a woman’s — and not just metaphorically. “Even after correcting for body weight, the male heart is larger than the female heart. Also, on average, there is a difference in regularization on the ECG between men and women, with women demonstrating QT prolongation relative to men,” said Kish Golden, PhD, assistant professor of physiology.

These dissimilarities have led the young researcher to consider how male sex hormones, particularly testosterone, may regulate the heart’s performance. The research is particularly important because so many men experience hypogonadism, or a decrease in testosterone, as a normal result of the aging process or as a side effect of treatment for prostate cancer. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recently awarded Dr. Golden a five-year, $620,000 grant to continue his studies.

He has narrowed his research focus to the steps in one of the primary pathways controlling cardiac contractility. “The ability of the heart to contract and perform properly is really dependent upon its ability to regulate calcium intracellularly,” he said. As the heart contracts and relaxes in its normal cycle, calcium levels rise and fall, respectively. Specific proteins oversee the amount of calcium inside the cell, and the body’s testosterone levels appear to have an effect on those proteins.

Already, Dr. Golden has shown in animal studies that reduced testosterone levels equate to a decline in heart function. Following a two-week reduction in testosterone, heart cells required considerably more time to relax than usual. “We also wanted to know whether that corresponded to slower calcium removal during relaxation, and it did,” he explained. Next, he tested whether a follow-up replacement of testosterone would restore normal cardiac homeostasis. “We were able to speed up the relaxation again,” he said, asserting that the experiments provided preliminary evidence that testosterone plays a vital part in heart function.

Now, he and his research group plan to expand their studies to learn the details of this cardiac pathway. “We are focusing on the influence of testosterone on the proteins that regulate calcium, because if there is alteration in the regulation of calcium, then cardiac performance is also going to be influenced. Overall, we are using biochemical and molecular approaches, as well as physiological approaches to measure the function of these proteins.” He added, “No one has ever done any of these studies. That’s why we’re excited about them.”

Dr. Golden is also enthusiastic about the opportunity to conduct the research at Wayne State, his alma mater. He earned his bachelor’s degree in biological sciences in 1990 and his doctoral degree from the physiology department in 1995, and credited his decision to return to WSU “specifically to Dr. Joseph Dunbar, who is the chair, and Dr. James Marsh, my mentor.” Upon graduation, he accepted a postdoctoral position at another university, but yearned for the atmosphere at Wayne State. “During my post-doc, we had labs right next to each other, but the people never talked to one another. It was so competitive that no one wanted to tell anyone else what they were working on,” he said.

Now back at Wayne State, Dr. Golden is the youngest faculty member in the department and splits his time between the lab, the classroom and duties as a mentor to minority undergraduate and high school students. The entire physiology department has been welcoming since he rejoined WSU in 1999, he said, and he is particularly pleased about his interactions with faculty members, James Billema, David Lawson, Stephen DiCarlo and Donal O’Leary. “At Wayne State, there’s so much interaction, so much collaboration — people want to help one another. I realized what I had once I was gone.”

Dr. Golden is working as a faculty member in the same WSU lab where he trained.
Nation Looks to Detroit for Details on MS in African Americans

W

hen talk show host Montel Williams was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999, many people were surprised. It also raised the awareness of multiple sclerosis occurring in African-Americans.

Williams went to the White House this summer to present a report on MS in African Americans. That report was based heavily on the research of Omar Khan, MD, associate professor of neurology and director of the MS clinic at WSU. The Detroit clinic treats approximately 400 African Americans with MS — the largest group in the country.

“Although overall MS is uncommon in African Americans, it appears to be clinically more aggressive and less responsive to therapy in this population. Up to now, there has been no report describing the possible reasons for this disparity,” Dr. Khan said. In fact, in his literature reviews, Dr. Khan notes that only two of nearly 14,000 published research articles on MS address the disease characteristics in African-American patients.

Over the past few years, Dr. Khan and his colleagues have established a database registry of these patients to look for demographic, genetic and clinical trends. Wayne State’s database and commitment to the minority population interested Montel Williams, who has established a foundation and positioned himself as a spokesperson to promote awareness and research for MS.

The U.S. secretary of health and human services invited both Williams and Dr. Khan to serve on an advisory council to advise the White House on minority health affairs. With a unique African-American patient population, current research underway, and several significant proposals in the works, Dr. Khan hopes to make Wayne State University the recognized leader in this important research niche.

Enzyme Provides Scientific Blueprints for Diabetes and Cancer Mechanisms

A single-copy gene in the human body makes a huge enzyme that plays key roles in cell division and differentiation, membrane trafficking, and osmoregulation. These qualities make it an ideal candidate for the study of such human illnesses as diabetes and cancer, according to Asiya Shisheva, WSU associate professor of physiology. Because the enzyme is also highly evolutionarily conserved, it takes on added importance as an essential molecule for life overall.

Dr. Shisheva has already cloned the enzyme, and the university immediately filed for two patents on the work. Now, she is learning about the intricate workings of this vital molecule. She has recently added a three-year, $300,000 award from the American Diabetes Association, and a five-year, $1.4 million award from the Department of Health and Human Services to the numerous grants she has received to continue the line of research.

Called PIKfyve, the enzyme is tied to diabetes by its importance in membrane trafficking, particularly as it relates to cellular machinery responsible for the uptake of glucose from the bloodstream. “In type-2, adult-onset diabetes, the problem in glucose transport comes from an inability of insulin to activate the signaling event that translocates the specific glucose transporter to the membrane,” said Dr. Shisheva, who is also an associate faculty member in WSU’s Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics. The transporter, called GLUT4, normally lies dormant in the interior of muscle and fat cells until it receives the appropriate signal to move to the cell membrane. Once at the membrane, it drives glucose out of the blood into the cell, where it is metabolized. In type-2 diabetes patients, the signal is disrupted, and sugar remains in the blood, ultimately resulting in the symptoms of diabetes.

Dr. Shisheva was able to pinpoint PIKfyve as the culprit in the communication break through a dominant-recessive mutant generated in her lab. “When we put this mutant into cells, we were able to see that some sort of trafficking imbalance was occurring. This allowed us to draw the conclusion that the function of PIKfyve is to maintain homeostasis of the endomembranes.” In other words, the enzyme preserves the proper balance of molecules entering and leaving the cell through its membrane — a function fundamental to the life of the cell. Her lab specifically found that the dominant-recessive mutant disturbed the normal effect of insulin, and cut off the signal for GLUT4 vesicles to move to the outer cell membrane, where they pick up glucose.

As the next step, she introduced different lipids to a cell that was expressing the dominant negative mutant. The only lipid that restored the cell’s normal morphology was a specific lipid product of PIKfyve, called 3,5-P2. Shisheva is still investigating the other PIKfyve lipid product, Ptfrn-5-P, to determine its function.

She is also learning more about the action of PIKfyve enzyme as a protein kinase. “We believe that its function is probably regulatory,” she said. “We have some information that it is a negative regulator of the lipid kinase activity in endomembrane homeostasis.”

In addition, PIKfyve appears to be very important for cell division and differentiation, she said. “When we put these dominant-negative mutants in the cell, we find that the DNA synthesis is inhibited completely.” This finding could have ramifications for cancer research and perhaps treatments as a potential avenue for stopping cancer’s uncontrolled cell growth.

“We are now in the process of seeing what life would be like without PIKfyve,” she said. “We have just begun trying to generate knock-out mice and transgenic animals which either don’t have PIKfyve or express the dominant-negative mutant. This research will help us to understand what would happen at the whole-animal level.”

Overall, she commented, “Our studies are expected to fundamentally advance the field of phospholipid intracellular signaling and to eventually provide new targets for preventive and therapeutic intervention, particularly to cancer and diabetic patients.”

Dr. Shisheva studies enzyme mechanisms that could be used for targeted therapies in cancer and diabetes.

Dr. Khan says although MS is uncommon in African Americans, it is clinically more aggressive and less responsive to therapy, and he wants to learn why.
Chris-Ellyn Johanson, PhD, has been elected president of the College on Problems of Drug Dependence (CPDD), a scientific organization that promotes substance abuse research broadly defined. Dr. Johanson is an expert on substance abuse disorders and a professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences at the Wayne State University School of Medicine.

Each year, the CPDD sponsors a national meeting that is considered to be the most important in the field and which attracts over 1000 substance abuse researchers ranging from medicinal chemists to public policy experts. The college also sponsors a national testing program for the evaluation of new curricula for the training of future professionals in the field and which attracts over 1000 substance abuse researchers ranging from medicinal chemists to public policy experts. The college also sponsors a national testing program for the evaluation of new medications development, ethical issues in human substance abuse research, and widening treatment availability.

“This ability to watch emotions register in the brain is a fundamental part of the limbic system in the brain, known to be involved in emotion. In humans, activation of this brain region can be imaged with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). Stefan Posse, PhD, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences, has shown that brain activation in this region related to a person’s level of sadness can be measured with a novel fMRI imaging technique in just 60 seconds scan time.

This ability to watch emotions register in the brain has profound impact for research. By directly comparing an experienced mood state and the brain circuits that are activated under this condition, researchers can better understand disorders like depression and anxiety, and target treatments to the regions of the brain that are most affected. Dr. Posse is presenting his research findings at the Society for Neuroscience meeting in Orlando this fall.

In a recent WSU study, healthy adults were asked to look at pictures showing either a sad or a neutral face, passed by professional actors and actresses. During the display of the sad face, subjects were asked to think of a sad event that happened in their own lives or to imagine a sad situation. In case of a neutral face they were asked to think of a situation associated with a neutral mood state. Subjects then rated the intensity of their sadness on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being the greatest level of sadness they have ever experienced. Then the experimenter informed them about the intensity of brain activation in the amygdala on a scale from 1 to 5.

Real-time fMRI showed activation of left amygdala-hippocampus during sad mood episodes, and the degree of brain activity was related to the reported intensity of emotion. Activation of this same region of the brain was achieved in all subjects who reported sadness. These results correspond to previous studies showing involvement of the amygdala in sad mood states.

“I think we were all a little surprised at how well people could describe their sadness,” Dr. Posse said. “We generally think of emotion as a subjective condition, but the link between intensity of emotion and intensity of brain activation was noticeable even in single trials.”

He will be following up on a related study that used fMRI to study sadness in people suffering from clinical depression. “Recent studies show that people who are depressed seem to have more difficulties switching off sad thoughts and we hope to obtain more insight into their state of mind using interactive experiments with immediate feedback. It will also be of interest to measure the strength of brain activation in these patients in relation to the intensity of their experienced feelings. This might help explain some of the problems reported by depressed people who say they can’t ‘shake things off’ the way others seem to.”

The technology being used at Wayne State is applicable to a wide range of neuroscience research and to other forms of psychiatric disorders, such as anxiety, social phobia, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.
Illness may be the same anywhere in the world, but the health care systems and treatments used to handle illness are very different, depending on the geographic location. Getting more involved in public and international health issues is a primary concern for Wayne State University medical students who recently formed the World Health Student Group and for Dr. J. Edson Pontes, assistant dean for international affairs. Together, they have offered global medical education opportunities for many physicians-in-training.

The World Health Student Group recently organized educational medical trips to Belize and rural Virginia, with support from Global Education, the Wayne State University School of Medicine and the Detroit Medical Center. Dr. Pontes organized trips to Turkey, Brazil, and India, with support from the Brit Foundation, which allowed more than 20 students to take part in summer exchange programs. Teaming up with visiting doctors, hospitals, and governmental agencies, medical students helped in makeshift clinics where they provided basic services to patients and learned a good deal about medicine.

“Sometimes it was as simple as showing people how to brush their teeth, or explaining the importance of condom use. Other times, we dealt with devastating diseases, rare conditions, malnutrition and mass infection rates,” said Brian Scallen, one of 20 students who spent the summer in an international exchange program.

Scallen spent time in Brazil and Belize. He worked in hospitals and laboratories, visited medical schools, met other students, shadowed physicians, and assisted with patient care at various clinics. “We are providing service and learning at the same time,” he said.

Anupama (Anu) Shivaraju, who went to India, was astounded at the differences between the modern private hospitals and the rural camps where limited care was provided without universal provisions or technological assistance. “I was impressed to see the physicians in India sharpening their skills and making diagnoses without relying on high-tech equipment or diagnostic tests. But in addition to the clinical education, my eyes were opened to various issues related to health care policy, access, governmental regulations and ways to practice medicine,” Shivaraju said.

Dr. Edson Pontes, who leads the medical school’s international affairs initiatives, believes these exposures make doctors better at their profession. “The World Health Organization defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is wonderful for students to learn more about the diversity of cultures and regions so that they can be more attentive to the overall well-being of all people. We all have much to learn from other nations, health systems and communities, no matter how close or far away they may be,” he said.

Graduate Student Research Day

The 6th annual Graduate Student Research Day was held at the WSU School of Medicine in September. With more than 64 oral and poster presentations, it was among the most successful to date. Awards were given for outstanding 1st, 2nd and 3rd place presentations in both categories. The winners are:

**Oral Presentation:**
1st place
Prachi Trivedi
Immunology/Microbiology

2nd place
Hai Hao Sun
Cancer Biology

3rd place
Edith Mensah-Osman
Cancer Biology

**Poster Presentation:**
1st place
Suparna Nanua
Immunology/Microbiology

2nd place
Michelle Castelli
Cancer Biology

3rd place
Aleric Soans
Molecular Biology and Genetics

The first place winners in each category received $100 cash from the Detroit Physiological Society (DPS), $100 cash from Graduate Programs and a $1,200 travel award to a scientific meeting of their choice. Second place winners each received $100 from Graduate Programs and $50 cash from the DPS. Third place received $100 from Graduate Programs
Supporting Minority Students to Excel

Wayne State University’s mission to educate minority students has gained renewed momentum and allowed disadvantaged individuals to complete advanced degrees and succeed in professional careers. Through a number of programs, old and new, the WSU School of Medicine has stepped up its minority training activities at the high school, undergraduate and graduate level. While many students spent the summer vacationing, others took advantage of faculty mentors and training programs to learn more about research, science and biomedical fields. Following are some of the educational programs underway.

**High School Students Get Experience in Health Care Centers**

Twenty-one Detroit public high-school students spent eight weeks in hospitals and other health care facilities as part of the OHEP Scholars Program which is a joint effort of the OHEP Center for Medical Education, the Wayne State University School of Medicine and the Detroit Public Schools. The funding for the program was provided mainly by Wayne State University, Detroit Public Schools and the hospitals where the students rotated. They include the Detroit Medical Center hospitals, Karmanos Cancer Institute, St. John Health System and Henry Ford Hospital. The students spent four days per week in the hospital and one day per week in joint didactic sessions at the School of Medicine.

All students gave a presentation on their experiences at the end of the summer. High-school senior Jazmine Parker said her chemistry teacher recommended the OHEP Scholars program to her and it cemented her decision to go to college and become a doctor. While doing rounds at Henry Ford Hospital, Parker got to visit with patients, watch surgeries, learn about lab tests, and even assist in a staple removal procedure. “Before this, the only experience I really had in a hospital was when I would visit somebody sick; then I would be nosy and look around. This summer I really learned a lot about vascular surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics — and I loved them all. Now I’m just not sure what kind of doctor I’ll be.”

David Peper, PhD, assistant dean for continuing medical education, said it is important that students interested in health care careers have first-hand experiences with physicians and other health care workers in order to cement their interest, provide exposure to strong role models and enhance the chances that they will successfully complete the courses and training to become health care providers.

**Community College Attendees Step Up Commitment**

Making the leap from a community college to a university requires students to make additional academic preparations and accept a higher level of commitment. Wayne State University counselors and mentors are making the transition easier for students by offering step-by-step assistance.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded more than $600,000 to WSU to participate in its Bridges to the Baccalaureate Degree program. The money provides support to minority students who are interested in a four-year degree and are currently enrolled at Wayne County Community College or Henry Ford Community College, WSU’s partner institutions. Through tutorial support, brown-bag meetings, academic counseling, and financial aid assistance, the NIH and WSU hope to identify candidates who are interested in advanced degrees and could have successful life science careers.

According to Dan Walz, PhD, program director, the goal is to bring diversity to scientific fields. “Participation in the Bridges to Baccalaureate program doesn’t even require admission to WSU. Students are encouraged to choose any four-year college or university. The end result is better science and more skilled researchers, so everybody benefits.” Dr. Walz said.

Community college students who are interested in the program must have a minimum 3.0 grade point average, demonstrate academic success, and have an interest in a scientific field. The participants are offered the following opportunities: counseling and mentoring with a team of coordinators at the community college and university; a summer research program that gives students hands-on experience in a research laboratory; special introductory biology courses; workshops in mathematics and chemistry; and access to WSU’s related programs including the Initiative for Minority Student Development.

The Bridges to Baccalaureate grant began in 2001 and has seen its first two students complete summer research programs this year. “Along with our partner institutions, we are committed to the success of minority students in biomedical careers,” Dr. Walz said.

**Initiative for Minority Student Development Facilitates Training**

Since the 1970s, the WSU School of Medicine has been encouraging minority enrollment in biomedical research through its Initiative for Minority Student Development (IMSD) formerly known as Minority Biomedical Research Support Program. The IMSD program, funded by the National Institutes of Health, gets students right into research laboratories to help them learn about experimental methods, scientific analysis, and basic principles of biology, physics, math and chemistry. Undergraduates earn a stipend up to $7,134 for 10-20 hours of work per week, and graduate students earn up to $17,000 a year in wages, plus tuition support. Program Director Dr. Joseph Dunbar and Program Coordinator Dr. Rasheeda Zafar have achieved amazing success rates. Since 1978, the IMSD program has supported a total of 513 undergraduate and graduate students. Of those, 216 undergraduates completed bachelor’s degrees, 44 obtained master’s degrees and 44 continued training for doctoral degrees.

Associate Dean for Research Dr. Dan Walz admits the only penalty for this amazing success is that these well-prepared students are heavily recruited around the country. “Because of the strong training program at WSU, these students complete their degrees and obtain a high level of maturity, comfort in academia, and great research success. Of course, other universities and industries seek candidates like ours,” Dr. Walz said. “We are proud to be the training ground for such outstanding biomedical professionals and have been able to keep many of them here to serve our state and community.”

**Wayne State University ranks second in African-American enrollment among the Carnegie Research Institutions, trailing only Howard University.**

Wayne State University has stepped up its minority undergraduate students who have benefited from the IMSD program.

One important IMSD program is the annual Minority Programs Research Day, which allows students to present original findings among their mentors and peers. Pictured are this year’s winners.

**Undergraduate Winners**

First Place - Felicita Gonzales 
Second Place - Tiara Brown and Alexandra Conley 
Graduate Winners 
First Place - Marianne Evola 
Second Place - Desma Cooley 
Certificate of Excellence - Leonard Lamsen

**Mental Health Research Training**

Mental illness is a serious problem for the nation and minority populations, in particular. The National Institutes of Health has become serious about recruiting new research trainees in this field. The National Institute of Mental Health Career Opportunities in Research (COR) program began in 1985 to stimulate an interest of minority students in psychosocial, behavioral, and neuroscience areas of mental health.

With a strong multidisciplinary focus, the COR program allows under-represented students to perform research in pharmacy and allied health, nursing, science, social work, basic sciences, and other applicable areas. Directed by Dr. Joseph Dunbar, Wayne State’s COR program has a high school component and an undergraduate component.

Since its inception in 1985, the NIMH COR undergraduate program has supported 75 WSU students, many of whom have completed medical and doctoral degrees. COR trainees undergo a two-year research training curriculum with faculty mentors in mental health fields. Through special courses, seminars, a summer research program, and a thesis project, undergraduate students get a comprehensive understanding of experimental methods and contemporary research issues. They receive a fellowship stipend for their work, get free tuition, and travel fees to attend professional research meetings.

The high school component, coordinated by Dr. Edna Grey, gives students a summer research experience where they work in the laboratories of WSU research faculty. "WSU and the NIH are essentially investing in the future," said Dr. Dunbar. "Scientific study is enriched through constant growth, and we need to pass knowledge to future generations of scientists. We hope that future includes scientists who are talented, diverse and well-trained."
Fast Facts

Number of Applicants: 2,419
Number of Matriculants: 256
Average MCAT: 9.44
Average GPA: 3.55
51% male - 49% female
95.6% residents - 9.5% nonresidents

Most common undergraduate majors are as follows:

Biology: 91
Biochemistry: 36
Chemistry: 92
Biomedical Science: 19
Microbiology: 5

Physiology: 7
Psychology: 6

The most highly represented undergraduate universities are the University of Michigan (62 students), Wayne State University (28 students) and Michigan State University (25).
Wayne State Doctors Earn Honors and Recognition From Patients and Peers

There are many versions and listings of top doctors in national surveys and local publications—and Wayne State University faculty members are well represented in all of them. Here is just a sampling of recent listings that honor the most respected physicians around the country and metropolitan Detroit.

• One in every three physicians included in metropolitan Detroit’s The Best Doctors in America is a Wayne State faculty member. WSU doctors comprise 34 percent of all area doctors named to the 2001-2002 list, which can be found at www.bestdoctors.com.

• 330 WSU alumni are included in The Best Doctors in America. Drs. Marjorie Treadwell and Esteban Abella are just two of several WSU faculty members who are named to all three of the above-mentioned top doctors lists.

• “America’s Top Doctors,” published by Castle Connolly in 2002, includes 21 full-time faculty members from Wayne State University and the Detroit Medical Center.

• Hour Detroit magazine’s September issue lists 653 of Metro Detroit’s Best Doctors, as excerpted from The Best Doctors in America. Thirty-two percent of the physicians listed are WSU faculty members.

• Jeanne Lusher, MD, was singled out for outstanding physician achievement in a special “Health Care Heroes” issue of Crain’s Detroit Business. Dr. Lusher, a distinguished professor who has been on the WSU faculty since 1967 and on staff at Children’s Hospital of Michigan since 1966, was honored for her research that has identified clotting treatments for hemophiliacs and for describing circulation in the spleen.

Two Graduate Students Earn American Heart Association Fellowships

Graduate students Bin Fan and Michelle Milstein have been awarded predoctoral fellowship grants for nearly $50,000 each from the American Heart Association. Bin Fan, who works in Dr. Barry Rosen’s laboratory, is studying the structure and mechanism of CopA, a protein that works as a pump to rid the cells of excess copper. Since CopA is related to metal pumps commonly found in many organisms, the research will provide valuable insight into a large group of proteins that offer protection from cytotoxicity. The project is titled “Biochemical and Functional Characterization of CopA: a Cu(I)-translocating P-type ATPase from Escherichia coli.”

Michelle Milstein, who works in Dr. James Marsh’s lab, is studying L-type calcium channels that play a critical role in regulating excitation-contraction coupling in cardiac and smooth muscle. The title of her project is “Calcium Channels in Vascular Smooth Muscle.”

“We are proud that WSU students are already attracting research funding as they build strong careers in scientific discovery. Awards like this provide recognition of our students’ talents and special research interests, which are important to others as well,” said Kenneth Palmer, PhD, assistant dean for graduate programs.
NAACP Honors Warren Lockette’s Commitment to Equality

Warren Lockette, MD, is a naval special warfare medical officer, WSU faculty member, and the 2002 recipient of the Roy Wilkins Service Award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The award is presented annually to a member from each branch of the armed services who has best demonstrated accomplishments that support the NAACP’s principal goal of ensuring political, educational, social and economic equality for minorities in America.

“I am extremely proud and honored to be receiving this award,” Dr. Lockette said. “It is especially gratifying for me to help people achieve their goals in life.”

Although his primary role at the Naval Special Warfare headquarters in San Diego is as a medical officer, Dr. Lockette earned this prestigious award thanks in large part to his ground-breaking work in assisting the Navy SEALs in their diversity and recruiting programs.

According to the Navy’s top SEAL, Dr. Lockette’s talents extend well beyond the field of science. “When I assumed command in 1999, I learned of Dr. Lockette’s many important medical research projects,” said Rear Adm. Eric Olson, commander of Naval Special Warfare Command. “And I was very impressed by his volunteer work in recruiting underrepresented minorities into the medical field. It was clear that he could help us in our goal of increasing diversity and understanding within the ranks of Naval Special Warfare.”

After discussing the issue further, Olson asked Lockette to spearhead diversity initiatives within Naval Special Warfare. Dr. Lockette immediately embarked on a campaign to increase minority awareness of career opportunities in the SEALs through outreach to areas where there has traditionally been little contact. As he had done in the past in the medical field, Dr. Lockette personally promoted the recruitment of underrepresented minorities into the Naval Special Warfare community through guest lecturing for colleges and universities whose student populations are comprised of individuals from traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups.

“By applying the concepts he first developed in academia, Warren has helped develop a pool of SEAL applicants who might not have considered us an option before,” said Olson.

Additionally, Dr. Lockette also serves on the evaluation and selection boards for officer candidates applying for Naval Special Warfare training and is currently assisting in the creation of a professional development program for junior officers to address issues of diversity within special operations.

These efforts are already paying dividends for the Naval Special Warfare community, as evidenced by the fact that the number of minority candidates beginning SEAL training has more than doubled in the last three years.

In addition to his work with Naval Special Warfare, Dr. Lockette maintains his appointments as professor of neurosurgery at Wayne State University School of Medicine; adjunct associate professor of physiology at the University of Michigan; and clinical professor of medicine at the University of California San Diego.

As a scientist, Dr. Lockette has gained international recognition for his groundbreaking studies on the effect of the environment on genes that predispose individuals to high blood pressure and diabetes mellitus, two diseases most prevalent among minority populations. For example, he has identified a gene that is associated with hypertension in blacks, and found out why many African Americans are less likely to suffer from osteoporosis.

In conjunction with his research, Dr. Lockette has trained underrepresented students in cardiovascular disease and also used his research projects to recruit minority students into colleges through his long-standing partnership with the Minority Access to Research Careers program. The award is named in honor of Roy Wilkins who served the NAACP and the civil rights movement for 46 years. As head of the NAACP from 1955 to 1977, he helped bring about many important civil rights gains of the 20th century. Wilkins’ work also earned him the Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor.

As a medical officer for the U.S. Navy SEALs, Dr. Lockette has helped recruit record numbers of minority applicants for the Naval Special Warfare command.
Dr. Mathog Celebrates Silver Anniversary As Chair

This year marks 25 years that Robert Mathog, MD, has been chair of the Wayne State University Department of Otolaryngology. Under his leadership:

- The department developed comprehensive otolaryngology subspecialties.
- More than 100 residents were trained in the department, and 30 percent have gone on to academic careers.
- The department has achieved national ranking (as high as no. 4) for its National Institutes of Health research funding.
- Several faculty members have been named Best Doctors for excellence in clinical care.

In honor of his 25th anniversary, Dr. Mathog was honored at a special dinner at the Academy of Otolaryngology national meeting in San Diego in September. He was greeted by colleagues, friends and former residents, who presented a memory album with more than 50 letters thanking him for his leadership, mentorship and guidance.

In addition, an endowed research fund has been established in his name. More than $39,000 has been raised for the Robert H. Mathog, MD, Endowed Research Fund, which will provide incentive for residents and junior faculty to engage in research projects.

Three generations of otorhino-laryngologists unite at Dr. Mathog’s 25th anniversary celebration. Pictured from left: Drs. Jesus Medina, Robert Mathog and William Hudson. Dr. Medina is professor and chair of otorhinolaryngology at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. Dr. Hudson is former chair of otolaryngology at Duke University Medical Center.

Dr. Sloane Receives $5.8 Million Breast Cancer Center of Excellence Award

The U.S. Department of Defense awarded a $5.8 million Breast Cancer Center of Excellence grant to Bonnie Sloane, PhD, chair of the Wayne State University School of Medicine’s Department of Pharmacology, to study innovative ways to detect breast cancer and monitor its treatment. Dr. Sloane, who also is leader of the proteases and cancer program at the Karmanos Cancer Institute, was one of only five in the country to receive this award.

Dr. Sloane’s research will focus on proteases, enzymes in the body that play a key role in cellular function by breaking down proteins. When these proteases malfunction, they are thought to promote breast cancer. Dr. Sloane will work to first determine which of hundreds of proteases may be linked to the growth and spread of breast cancer and then to develop non-invasive imaging techniques that would allow monitoring of treatments that target proteases.

“If we know which proteases increase growth of breast cancers and we know how to stop them, we can tailor patients’ treatment very early on,” Dr. Sloane said. “For example, if we are able to see through imaging that activity of one protease is causing a problem, we can use a drug therapy designed to reduce the activity of that protease. We should also be able to image the reduction in activity and thus assess the effectiveness of the drug therapy.”

The ability to monitor treatment by non-invasive means will allow us to change therapies to ones found to be more effective,” she said. “Ultimately and perhaps even more importantly, we can use this new technology to develop screening techniques to allow even earlier detection.”

Dr. Sloane is the principal investigator for this multi-institutional, multidisciplinary study. Other participating institutions are Massachusetts General, University of California-San Francisco; Northwestern University; the Burnham Institute, of La Jolla, Calif.; the University of California-Davis, Celera Genomics, of Rockville, Md.; and National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, which is part of the National Institutes of Health.

This grant, while it may lead to major advances in the treatment of women who suffer breast cancer, will fund a pre-clinical study that will use mouse models and breast tumor specimens to test these new methods.

“Great medical discoveries begin in the laboratory,” said Dr. John Crissman, dean of the WSU School of Medicine. “We, at the School of Medicine, pride ourselves on having a strong commitment to basic, transitional and clinical research, all of which are imperative in developing safe and effective technologies that advance the field of medicine and help people be healthy.”

“Dr. Sloane’s research represents the very best of what a cancer center is all about: bringing together basic and clinical researchers in ways that will ultimately solve the problems of cancer,” said Dr. John Ruckdeschel, president of the Karmanos Cancer Institute and WSU associate dean for cancer affairs.

Dr. Sloane, an internationally recognized scientist in the fields of proteases and cancer biology and past-president of the International Proteolysis Society, joined WSU in 1980 after serving on the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania and Michigan State University. She was appointed chair in 1994.

Dr. Mathog Honored by Residents and Colleagues

“Your achievements in the pursuit of medical knowledge, your clinical acumen and your surgical skills will always be the benchmarks by which I gauge my own professional accomplishments.”

A. James Potter, MD, 1986 resident

“The chairman who I initially feared, I later discovered to be an insightful clinician, committed researcher and, most importantly, a caring mentor.”

Timothy Doerr, MD, 1998 resident

“You once shared a perspective on life which has stuck with me ever since. You said one should develop his career in three stages. In the first stage, you work hard while others support you. In the second, you break even. And in the third, you support others.”

James Kaltenbach, PhD, WSU professor of otorhino-laryngology

Dr. Bonnie Sloane is principal investigator for an important national breast cancer trial.
Ronela Cordreanu, Kevin Gostenik and Nitinath Vangala, all WSU medical students, were awarded summer research scholarships from the American Academy of Neurology Student Interest Group in Neurology. William Coplin MD, associate professor of neurology and neurosurgery, served as course director and presenter for a session on “Neurotrauma” at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology. He was also a speaker for the following sessions: “Case Studies in Critical Care,” “Spectrum of Traumatic Brain Injury,” and “Controversies in Critical Care.”

Michael Diamond, MD, professor and associate chair of obstetrics and gynecology, has been appointed to the scientific advisory board of ABC Pharmaceuticals Inc. He also directed the Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility Fellows retreat held in August. The course titled “Your Career in Reproductive Endocrinology: Balancing the Priorities,” brought together 45 fellows from institutions across the U.S.

Paula Dore-Duffy, PhD, professor of neurology and director of the division of neuroimmunology, served in a poster competition and presented meeting highlights at the XIX Winter Conference of the Swiss Society of Neuropathology in Switzerland in March. She also lead a discussion panel on “The Role of Inflammation in Trauma to the Central Nervous System” at the meeting of the Society of Critical Care Medicine; was an invited speaker at the Winter Conference for Brain Research and spoke on the “Role of Cytokines in Prostaglandins in the CNS Pericyte Response to Hypoxia.” She will be chairing a session at the upcoming Gordon Conference on “Blood-Brain Barriers, CNS Homeostasis and Drug Delivery to the Brain” and her group will also be presenting a paper on “CNS Pericyte Response to Stress.”

Richard Gallagher, PhD, professor of family medicine, participated in a National Cancer Institute Initial Review Group (Subcommittee G: Education) and a National Cancer Institute Special Emphasis Panel for R25 and K12 grant applications in June 2002.

James Garbern, MD, PhD, assistant professor in neurology and the Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics (CMMG); and Michael Shy, MD, professor in neurology and CMMG, did case discussions on neuromuscular and neurogenic diseases at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology.

Mark Gorman, MD, assistant professor of neurology, spoke at a neurology skills workshop at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology.

Alan Gruskin, MD, professor of pediatrics, presented the following lectures:

1. “The Urimalysis - Gruskin’s Axioms – The Practitioner’s Penultimate Outpatient Test” at the 16th annual Pediatric/ Pediadic Surgery Symposium: Current Concepts in Pediatric Renal Disease

2. The 3rd C. Everett Koop Distinguished Lecture on June 13 hosted by the Uniform Services University Medical School in Bethesda, Md.

3. “The Future of Pediatric Education is Backward Planning: One Chairs Personal Perspective” at the annual meeting of the Association of Pediatric Program Directors on May 1 in Baltimore.

Peter Karpawich, MD, professor of pediatrics, was an invited guest speaker at the 12th annual Genasis Cardiovascular Symposium, sponsored by the Iowa Medical Society and Genesis Medical Center. His presentation dealt with sudden death in children and young adults.

Omar Khan, MD, associate professor of neurology, was a permanent member of the European Charcot Foundation, which is dedicated to fostering and disseminating research and educational programs in multiple sclerosis.

At the 12th meeting of the European Neurological Society in Berlin this summer, Dr. Khan had the following activities:

- co-chaired a session on “Multiple Sclerosis/Basic Research”

Karen Krajewski, assistant professor of neurology, presented “Early Statistics From the CMT North American Database” at the 10th International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases in Vancouver. Co-investigators include: Foroud, T, Gray, J, Martin, R, and Shy, M.

Richard Lewis, MD, professor and associate chair of neurology, was elected to membership on the Medical/Scientific Advisory Board of the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America. Dr. Lewis is director of the Holder Clinical Neurophysiology Laboratory and co-director of the Neuromuscular Program. In addition, Dr. Lewis:

- and Karen Krajewski, assistant professor of neurology, presented a case of HINNP and myopathy at an interactive session at the 10th International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases in Vancouver.
- and Michael Shy co-chaired a platform session on amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease) and at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology.

- and Omar Khan co-chaired a platform session on “Multiple Sclerosis Therapeutic Trials” at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology.

- presented “The electrophysiological differences Between HNNP and IgM-Kappa Associated Neuropathy” at the 10th International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases in Vancouver with co-investigators: Krajewski, KM, Shy, ME, and Li, J.
- presented “A Phenotypic Study of Hereditary Neuropathy With Liability to Pressure Palsies” at the 10th International Congress on Neuromuscular Diseases in Vancouver with co-investigators: Li, J, Krajewski, KM, and Shy ME.

- presented “Clinical Neuroimmunology” at the 12th meeting of the European Neurological Society, and presented “Results of the Long-Term (8 Year) Prospective, Open Label-Trial of Glatiramer Acetate for Relapsing Multiple Sclerosis” with co-investigators: Johnson, KP, Brooks, BB, Ford, CC, Godson, C, Guerrini, R, Myers, LW, Panitch, HS, Kachuck, N, and Wolinsky, JS.

- and chaired a platform session on “Peripheral Neuropathies/ Miscellaneous” and presented “Peripheral Nerve Vasculitis” and “Inhibition of Cyclic Amp (cAMP) Induced Swann Cell (SC) Differentiation In Vitro by Cytokines: Effect of Pretreatment of SC with Cytokines” at the 10th International Congress of Neuromuscular Diseases.


Samia Ragheb, PhD, assistant professor of neurology, and Dr. Robert Lisak presented “Binding of Glatiramer Acetate to Antibodies Presenting Molecules: Effect of Blocking Antibodies” at the 12th meeting of the European Neurological Society.

Rounds

Retinal Implants Being Developed at Kresge Eye Institute

Neurotransmitters could take the place of electrical signals for retinal implant designs, said Dr. Raymond Iezzi, assistant professor of ophthalmology and director of the Retinal Implant Project for the Liggin Research Center of Vision. Recently, Dr. Iezzi spoke to science writers at a Research to Prevent Blindness conference in Washington D.C. about experimental implants that may respond to images by releasing nerve-stimulating chemicals. Dr. Iezzi has been working on implants to restore sight along with Drs. Gary Abrams, Greg Auner and Pat McAllister.

Most current models use electrical signals to prompt the nerves to send information to the brain to allow sight. In an Associated Press story, Dr. Iezzi said his research is focusing on an implant that can deliver "an array of 'chemical pixels' through tiny holes, somewhat like a very small, gentle, inkjet printer or shower head, stimulating nerves to relay an image to the brain." Although there are several neurochemicals that can be used in this work, Dr. Iezzi is currently testing glutamate.

The feasibility of this idea is still being tested, but Dr. Iezzi's ultimate goal is to test this approach in humans as part of an FDA approval process. His colleague, Dr. Harvey Fishman from Stanford University, is concurrently developing an "artificial synapse chip" that could deliver chemical transmitters and actually grow nerve cells into the chip. Together, they may find new hope for those who are blind because of retinal damage.

Two WSU Faculty Get Funding from Michigan Life Sciences Corridor

Wayne State faculty members James Granneman, PhD, and Gregory Auner, PhD, received more than $6 million from the Michigan Life Sciences Corridor in the latest round of funding. Dr. Granneman, professor of psychiatry and behavioral neurosciences, received the highest rating of all proposals submitted in the basic-life-sciences research category. His project, the Michigan Diabetes Research Consortium, was awarded $3,539,557 over the life of the grant. The consortium will include many Michigan researchers and institutions who will work on basic research, drug discovery and validation, and technology development. According to Dr. Granneman, the long-term goal is to elucidate the causes of diabetes and discover potential mechanisms for therapeutic intervention.

Dr. Auner, professor of electrical and computer engineering, received very high ratings in the applied research and development category. His grant, "Functionally Active Biocompatible Encapsulation," was awarded $2,635,119. This research will develop new materials for encapsulation – the outer cover of implants or biosensor devices. These covers become a functional part of the device as it interfaces with the body tissue. Such technologies could produce prototype devices for many diseases and disorders.

In the last round of funding, the Michigan Economic Development Corp. awarded $45 million to 18 Michigan Life Sciences Corridor projects. The feasibility of this idea is still being tested, but Dr. Iezzi's ultimate goal is to test this approach in humans as part of an FDA approval process. His colleague, Dr. Harvey Fishman from Stanford University, is concurrently developing an "artificial synapse chip" that could deliver chemical transmitters and actually grow nerve cells into the chip. Together, they may find new hope for those who are blind because of retinal damage.

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Three percent reported that the "majority" of patients saw a neurologist after surgery, while 66 percent reported that "some" or "few" patients saw neurologists.

Furthermore, the study found that it was difficult for individual neurologists to determine how well their carotid artery surgery programs compared with national averages because of a lack of data available on death rates of patients treated within the hospitals or by particular surgeons. This is particularly important for borderline patients who may or may not see a benefit from this particular procedure.

Furthermore, the study found that only 18 percent of the neurology departments surveyed were involved in multidisciplinary audits. Ninety-six percent of those surveyed believed that neurologists should be involved.

"This fact hinders determination of accurate local complication rates and raises questions about the real world effectiveness of carotid endarterectomy," Dr. Chaturvedi said.
Medical alumni and students made phone calls in October and November asking for gifts to the Medical Alumni Association’s Annual Fund. Contributions support a variety of programs for students including Match Day, Career Day, the Welcoming Ceremony and the Honors Program. The Medical Alumni Association designates a portion of the Annual Fund for scholarships and loans, summer research fellowships and student research projects.

Thank you to all of the alumni who have already generously contributed to the Alumni Annual Fund. If you have not already done so, please consider making a gift that strengthens your connection to the School, its history and its future.

B
laine White, MD, has been honored with the Hal Jayne Academic Excellence Award from the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine. The award recognizes Dr. White for outstanding teaching contributions and scholarly accomplishments in the field of brain resuscitation and cerebral reperfusion injury. The honor was presented at the society’s annual meeting in St. Louis.

“He is the personification of the ‘triple threat’ of teaching, research and service,” said colleague Dr. Gary Krause. “Those of us who have had the distinct privilege of working with Blaine know him as a kind and generous person who places the highest priority on the welfare of those around him. Although well known for his storytelling, he nonetheless has set the bar high for the rest of us to better the care of patients and enrich society.”

Throughout his career, Dr. White has been at the forefront of basic science research related to post-ischemic reperfusion injuries in the brain. His research is critically important in emergency medicine since only 3 percent of the 70,000 patients who are resuscitated from cardiac arrest each year regain full cognitive capabilities.

Except for a four-year stint at Michigan State University, Dr. White has spent his entire career at the Wayne State University School of Medicine. He earned a medical degree from WSU in 1972, completed training, was appointed to the faculty in 1976, and now serves as professor of emergency medicine and physiology. As such, he directs the emergency medicine research fellowship program, has been an advisor for many successful doctoral students, and continues to attract substantial research funding for his important work.

Dr. White was a practicing emergency physician from 1974 to 1995. He spent 17 years on the emergency department staff of Detroit Receiving Hospital, treating critically ill and injured patients and providing emergency care. He has published more than 70 papers, 9 reviews and 17 book chapters; has served as principal investigator on 11 grants; and has attracted nearly $6 million in research funds. In addition to a long list of research awards and honors, Dr. White was elected to membership in the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Sciences last year.

Dr. White represents the "triple threat" of research, teaching and service at WSU.
Greetings on behalf of the Wayne State University School of Medicine Alumni Association Board of Governors.

The Alumni Association looks forward to another productive year of improving our students’ educational experience and strengthening the school’s alumni network. In fact, we are already off to a great start. On August 6, 2002, I welcomed the class of 2006 to our school by presenting them with honorary white coat ceremonies and led the class of 2006 in the Hippocratic Oath.

The Alumni Board of Governors is already making plans for the 2003 Medical Alumni Reunion Day. Last year, we condensed the reunion weekend program into a one-day event, which was held on Saturday, May 11, 2002. We are proud to announce that we had record attendance. We plan to have the CME program at Scott Hall and the special receptions and dinner at the Somerset Inn again next spring. So, please mark your calendar for the 2003 Medical Alumni Reunion Day, which will take place on Saturday, May 10, 2003.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the Alumni Annual Telefund is currently underway. We are counting on your support (as donors and volunteers.) Please contact Ginger Hrtanek, associate director of Development and Alumni Affairs, at (313) 577-5230 if you would like to volunteer to make calls or make a donation.

Michael Sandler, MD, ‘71
President
Wayne State University Medical Alumni Association

Family Practice Pioneer Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

After being in private practice as a family physician for more than 40 years in Michigan, it would seem that Dr. George Dean could begin thinking about his retirement. This, however, is not the case. After tirelessly striving to make family practice a recognized field, he still works to ensure the continuation of this important aspect of modern medicine.

Born, raised, and educated in Michigan, Dr. Dean attended the WSU School of Medicine and graduated in 1956. After finishing his residency with the United States Navy, he returned to Michigan and established a family practice office in northwestern Detroit.

“It was the most logical and beneficial service I could provide to the community,” he said of his motivation in choosing a career.

Dr. Dean was recently honored by the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians, with the prestigious lifetime achievement award. He is among only four doctors to receive this award during the 55-year history of the organization. During his time working with the American Board of Family Physicians, Dr. Dean has traveled around the nation and the world helping establish successful family practices and continues to work for his cause.

Dr. Dean has continued his passion for the specialty of family medicine.

“Dr. Dean was on the leading edge of physicians who recognized the importance of family practice,” said Dr. Maryjean Schenk, chair of family medicine at WSU.

Would you like advance notice of alumni events?

If you would like to receive advance notice of upcoming alumni events, please send an email note containing your name, graduating class, and email address to:

Lori Robitaille
Manager, Alumni Affairs
WSU, School of Medicine
EMAIL: lrobitail@med.wayne.edu

Please type “Events Notification” as the subject of your note.

Thank you!
Wayne State University Medical Alumni Association Officers

President
Michael Sandler, MD, ’71

Dr. Michael Sandler is a native of Detroit and attended the University of Michigan for his undergraduate education, graduated from Wayne State University School of Medicine, and did his residency in Diagnostic Radiology at the University of Michigan. He is currently a practicing radiologist at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Dr. Sandler is past president of the Wayne County Medical Society and the Michigan Radiological Society. He is currently Vice-Chair of the board of directors of the Michigan State Medical Society and chair of Michigan Doctors Political Action Committee.

Dr. Sandler is married with two children.

President-Elect
William O’Neill, MD, ’77

Dr. William O’Neill attended Wayne State University School of Medicine and completed his cardiology fellowship at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. From 1982-1983, he was an instructor in internal medicine at the University of Michigan and an attending cardiologist at the Veterans Hospital in Ann Arbor. From 1984 to 1987, he was director of the Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory at the University of Michigan Medical Center and an associate professor of medicine at the University of Michigan School of Medicine.

Dr. O’Neill is corporate chief of cardiology at William Beaumont Hospital and has been director of the Division of Cardiology in Royal Oak, Mich., since 1987. He is also co-director of the Schlafer Cardiology Center located on the Beaumont Hospital campus. Under his leadership, William Beaumont Hospital has become one of the largest interventional centers in the country with a particularly active cardiovascular research program. U.S. News and World Report has recognized the division as one of the top 15 cardiology programs in the country.

Dr. O’Neill is vigorously involved in and has participated in numerous multicenter research studies. He is a specialist in the use of the IVI, TEE and Rotahlator atherectomy devices and research in balloon valvuloplasty. He pioneered many new and innovative techniques in interventional cardiology and is also known as one of the first cardiologists to study the use of intracoronary streptokinase and angioplasty during acute myocardial infarction. He is recognized both nationally and internationally for his research in primary angioplasty and cardiogenic shock.

Honorary President
Thomas, Ditkoff, MD, ’71

Dr. Thomas Ditkoff was born and raised in Detroit. He attended Mumford High School, received an undergraduate degree from WSU, and a medical degree from WSU School of Medicine in 1971. He completed his orthopaedic residency training at William Beaumont Hospital and did a fellowship in pediatric orthopaedics at the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas. He is on staff at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak where he practices general and pediatric orthopaedic surgery with the group of Weissman, Gitlin and Herkowitz.

Dr. Ditkoff has been married to Linda for 33 years, and they are the proud parents of two children: Howard, a WSU School of Medicine 2000 graduate, and Jeffrey, WSU School of Medicine class of 2004.

Dr. Ditkoff has continued his connections with the medical school by serving as class agent for the class of 1971, as well as being past-president of the Alumni Board of Governors. His other interests include music and sports.

Treasurer
Donald Muenk, MD, ’68

Dr. Donald Muenk is an ophthalmologist in private practice and a clinical assistant professor of ophthalmology at Wayne State University. He is a past-president of the Wayne State University Medical Alumni Association. He now serves as chief of ophthalmology at St. John Macomb Hospital.

Dr. Muenk is a member of the board of directors of the Michigan State Medical Society, chairing the Health Care Delivery Committee and the Third Party Committee. He also serves on the board of directors of the Macomb County Medical Society.

Actively involved in his community, Dr. Muenk has served on the investment committee for Christ Church Cranbrook for many years and has also served as chairman of the beach and swim committee at Pine Lake Country Club. He enjoys tennis, golf and skiing.

Secretary
Patrick Verb, MD, ’73

Dr. Patrick M. Verb received his undergraduate degree from WSU in 1969, and a medical degree from the WSU School of Medicine in 1973. He did a medicine internship at Grace Hospital and an ophthalmology residency along with a cornea and anterior segment fellowship at Kresge Eye Institute. He is an ophthalmologist practicing in Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich.

Dr. Verb is on staff at St. John Hospital, the Detroit Medical Center, St. John Macomb Center, and Cottage Hospital. In addition, he is a fellow of the American Board of Ophthalmology and holds memberships in the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery to name a few. Dr. Verb is married with 3 children.

Wayne State University Medical Alumni Association Board of Governors:

Term Ending 2003
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Carol Clark, MD, ’85
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Hilary Timmis, MD, ’56

Term Ending 2004
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Perry Greene, MD, ’55
Mark Sheldon, MD, ’78

Massachusetts (East Coast)
John Briggs, MD, ’48

Traverse City
Clark Phelps, MD, ’62

Would you like to receive your membership renewal via email?
If you would like to receive future membership renewal notices via email, please send an email note containing your name, graduating class, and email address to:
Lisa Ramos
Alumni Officer
WSU, School of Medicine
EMAIL: lramos@med.wayne.edu
Please type “Membership Renewal” as the subject of your note.

Thank You!
Student Profile: Rusty Oshita Lives His Dream

Upon meeting Rusty Oshita in the Scott Hall cafeteria, it was instantly clear that he feels comfortable at the School of Medicine. As we walked to a table to sit down to talk, we passed by several people who offered greetings and other small talk. Everyone knew his name; he definitely displays the aura of an individual who feels at home.

A California native, second-year student Masaru Oshita, or Rusty as he is called, has taken the long route to get here. His goal of becoming a doctor cemented itself while working for the neurology department at University of California-Irvine where he had some very demanding responsibilities. “I was on-call 24 hours a day,” he explained. “It was my job to drive to the location of deceased Alzheimer’s victims throughout the Los Angeles area and literally remove their brains for study. ”

Rusty actually enjoyed what may sound like some completely horri- fying working conditions to some. “It was one of the best jobs of my life,” he admitted. The Alzheimer’s patients who had donated their organs were involved in research done by UCI and were closely monitored. Upon their passing, Rusty was then dispatched to the site to quickly remove their brains for study. “Over the course of working for the organization I was able to develop relationships with the families of the Alzheimer’s patients and the doctors involved in the study,” said Rusty. “This was the most rewarding aspect of the job and made me realize that I wanted to pursue a career in medicine.”

Rusty applied to Wayne State University after learning of its reputation. “I had met people who graduated from the school when I was working with the Alzheimer’s study and I learned of the strength of the clinical programs.” Before being accepted, however, Rusty enrolled in a medical post-baccaulaureate program in Kansas. “I was living in a dorm room with a bunch of 18 year-olds. I was alone, hundreds of miles away from my wife in California and then I heard of my acceptance at the School of Medicine.”

Rusty and his wife packed their things and moved to Michigan. “I was surprised at how warm the environment is here,” he said of his new home. “My wife and I spend a lot of time in the city and we are really enjoying the area.”

Students at the school may have had a role in shaping the Oshitatas’ positive view of their new home. “The students here have been very friendly,” he explained. “I’ve quickly made many new friends. My wife is having a baby soon and I just found out that some of my fellow second-year students are already planning a baby shower!”

Rusty is happy with his decision to come to Detroit. “Every day I wake up and I am thankful that I am finally getting to do what I wanted to do with my life.”

Team Physician Keeps Skaters Healthy

Dr. Bruce Deschere’s daughter has skated on synchronized skating teams for the past five years, and has won four national team medals (2 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze). He became involved with the sport by regularly traveling with the team and eventually became the physician for Team Elan out of the Detroit Skate Club in Bloomfield Hills.

He was directing medical services for the national championships in 2000, which were held in metro Detroit, when he was asked to be one of the international physicians for the U.S. Figure Skating Association. Since then, he has been the Team USA physician for two international events (including the 2002 World Championships in France). Dr. Deschere will be directing the medical services for the North American International Synchronized Skating Competition to be held January 8-10, 2003, at the Great Lakes Arena in Fraser. Twenty-four elite teams from North America and Europe will compete.
Congratulations!

The following WSU alumni were named to The Best Doctors in America, 2001–2002. Full listings can be found at www.bestdoctors.com.

Gerald I. Ahen, MD
Dennis J. Ahnen, MD
Joseph Aisner, MD
Randall C. Alexander, MD
Donald W. Ames, MD
Michael T. Andary, MD
Robert L. Anderson, MD
Robert W. Andonian, MD
Elizabeth B. Arroll, MD
John D. Baker, MD
Mark R. Balle, MD
Barbara L. Bane, MD
Muni M. Barash, MD
David M. Barrett, MD
Joseph S. Basset, MD
Stephen F. Beals, MD
Jon M. Betwee, MD
Larossa T. Bielanski, MD
Diane F. Birk, MD
David E. Blair, MD
Marshall J. Blinody, MD
John D. Bonema, MD
Marshall J. Blondy, MD
Larissa T. Bilaniuk, MD
Muni M. Barash, MD
Kimberly A. Brown, MD
John D. Bonema, MD
Marshall J. Blondy, MD
Larissa T. Bilaniuk, MD

Ronald D. Holmene, MD
Thomas E. Hoyt, MD
Russell G. Hug, MD
Kristina L. Hyde, MD
Robert G. Hylleland, MD
Kent Imai, MD
Murray L. Janower, MD
Paul S. Jellinger, MD
Russel D. Jelsena, MD
Reene R. Jenkins-Woodard, MD
David K. Jenkins, MD
John K. Johnson, MD
Richard A. Kahn, MD
Lester Kalisher, MD
Kastyris C. Karvelis, MD
Clintred E. Kastan, MD
Robert W. Katz, MD
Marshall P. Keys, MD
Gary T. Kinasewitz, MD
Julie A. Kish, MD
Steven N. Klein, MD
Norman K. Komar, MD
Richard P. Kosinski, MD
Thomas M. Kovaleski, MD
Michael J. Kraut, MD
Henry Kyrala, MD
Paul H. Kurfth, MD
David W. Lammers, MD
Carl B. Lauter, MD
Gary E. Leach, MD
Jacqueline A. Leavitt, MD
Marc L. Lee, MD
Cynthia G. Leichman, MD
Lawrence F. Leichman, MD
David G. Lerner, MD
Ruth H. Lerman, MD
Donald F. Levine, MD
Martin F. Levinson, MD
Scott G. Lewis, MD
Donald L. Lisi, MD
James P. Little, MD
Terrence R. Luck, MD
Joan L. Luby, MD
Charles E. Lucas, MD
Lawrence J. Lutz, MD
Michael E. Maddens, MD
Charles A. Main, Jr., MD
Nicholas G. Makris, MD
John M. Malone, Jr., MD
Lawrence J. Marenctstle, MD
Marvin O. Marginis, MD
Edward J. Marnouxe, MD
Jeffrey W. Maas, MD
Alexander Maximosic, MD
Dr. William McAllister
Jay M. McDonald, MD
Edward J. Mcguire, MD
Kenneth E. McIntyre, Jr., MD
Milton I. H. Miller, MD
T. Harrop Miller, MD
Michael L. Mintz, MD
Karen B. Mithill, MD
Mark C. Montone, MD
G. Thomas Morgan, MD
Carl Morton, MD
Craig H. Moskowit, MD
Ronald B. Natalie, MD

Devent W. Nelson, MD
Robert E. Nessie, MD
Nicholas H. Neumann, MD
John W. Newman, MD
Mark A. Nichter, MD
Bruce A. Nolan, MD
Douglas D. Notman, MD, FACP
Gordon W. Nuber, MD
Kevin J. Nurm, MD
F. R. Nuss, MD
John M. O'Brien, Jr., MD
William W. O'Neill, MD
David E. Obudzinski, MD
Richard J. Oldenski, MD
Elisa A. Ostafin, MD
Larry M. Ostendorf, MD
Michael D. Palestein, MD
John E. Parker, MD
Katrina L. Parker, MD
Michael T. Parsons, MD
James F. Peggs, MD
Michael C. Perry, MD
Martin M. Pezvner, MD
Brian V. Phillips, MD
Wayne N. Pieronantni, MD
Julie F. Poirier, MD
Lawrence D. Platt, MD
Gregg Poldor, MD
Bruce W. Polsky, MD
Douglas M. Portz, MD
Ashok R. Prasad, MD
Robert M. Prast, MD
J. Patrick Quigley, MD
Paul A. Ragatzki, MD
Geoffrey W. Roer, MD
Douglas J. Rausch, MD
Randall S. Riggs, MD
Ernest I. Ring, MD
John D. Roarty, MD
Alvin R. Robinson, MD
Patricia L. Robertson, MD
Robert S. Robertson, MD
Gerard S. Rodziewicz, MD
Herschel D. Rosenzweig, MD
Indufula K. Roghani, MD
Scott S. Russo, Jr., MD
James R. Ryan, MD
Joseph A. Salisz, MD
Stephen E. Sallan, MD
Dominic I. Sarafipillo, II, MD
Bruce J. Sangeozrazn, MD
Jon A. Sangeszran, MD
William S. Sarnat, MD
Thomas E. Sarosi, MD
Harold I. Saur, MD
Maryjean Schenkl, MD
Courtland M. Schmidt, Jr., MD
Donald J. Scholten, MD
Howard W. Schuhinner, MD
Thomas G. Schwadrowder, MD
Gary R. Seabrook, MD
Donald N. Serafam, MD
Ronda J. Shaw, MD
Dr. James J. Shields
Roger Shiffman, MD
Sandor H. Shoichet, MD
Les I. Siegel, MD
Michael J. Silka, MD

David G. Silver, MD
Larry J. Silverman, MD
Frederick S. Simonie, MD
Richard M. Singer, MD
Stanford A. Singer, MD
Lawrence J. Singerman, MD, FACS
Thomas E. Smith, MD
Edward J. Snell, MD
Janet G. Snider, MD
Kamilia E. Snyder, MD
Robert W. Snyder, MD, Ph.D.
Ronald Socecak, MD
Alan W. Solway, MD
John P. Speck, MD
Lisa B. Speck, MD
Sheldon L. Spector, MD
David B. Sperry, MD
Don A. Spivak, MD
Dennis J. Stapleton, MD
Randolph M. Steinhagen, MD
Russell T. Steinman, MD
Linda Stodulski, MD
Sheldon Stoffer, MD
Mary Subrin, MD
Edward S. Suchyta, MD
Christopher D. Sweeney, MD
Andreas A. Theodorou, MD
Maria S. Theodorou, MD
Susan S. Thomas, MD
James A. Thorp, MD
Gerald C. Timms, MD
Gary A. Tipton, MD
Richard R. Townley, MD
Jeffery A. Trunzky, MD
Catherine A. Upjohn, MD
Vance V. Van Drake, Jr., MD
David M. Vandenbrug, MD
James W. VanLooy, MD
Randall M. Vanover, MD
Timothy L. Vanhoock, MD
A. Robert VanUiten, MD
Marshall G. Vary, MD
Frank A. Vicini, MD
Sophia Vinogradov, MD
John J. Wald, MD
James R. Wallace, MD
Norman E. Walter, MD
Neal R. Weinberg, MD
Shelden A. Weiner, MD
William F. Weston, MD
Louis I. White, MD
Ross M. Winkins, MD
I. Kell Williams, MD
Kathy C. Williams, MD
Samardis H., MD
Sherry A. Wissman-Devereaux, MD
Ted H. Wojno, MD
Ursula M. Wolcholelager, MD
David D. Wright, MD
Jean A. Wright, MD
Gregory A. Yanik, MD
Steven A. Yarows, MD
Ernest L. Yoder, MD, Ph.D.
Les R. Zarbasky, MD
Robert B. Zanz, MD
Stephen E. Zucker, MD
Laura J. Zuidema, MD
Robert G. Zwerfrling, MD
Dr. Robert Lisak was honored June 12 as the first recipient of the Parker-Webber Endowed Chair in Neuroscience. His efforts and support along with the contributions of others helped make this chair a reality. In addition, it adds one of the highest possible honors to his medical career.

Dr. Lisak received his medical degree from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, went on to do his post-graduate work at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, and completed his neurology residency at the University of Pennsylvania. He joined the Pennsylvania School of Medicine, where he was a professor and vice-chairman of neurology, as well as the director of the Multiple Sclerosis Center Clinic. He came to Wayne State University in 1987 and was elected chair of the Department of Neurology. He is a co-author of 187 original articles, 109 books, and 391 published abstracts focusing on research or clinical aspects of neuro-immunological disorders including multiple sclerosis and myasthenia gravis. He is also a former Fulbright Scholar.

“I believe that a nationally and internationally renowned department needs endowed chairs as well as other endowments and philanthropic gifts, particularly in this era of tight money for research,” explained Dr. Lisak who has been working for many years on fund raising for this first chair for neurology. This chair could not have been possible if not for the generous contributions of Mrs. Mary Parker, a long-time contributor to the Detroit Medical Center and the WSU School of Medicine. Mrs. Parker’s extremely important gifts were then matched with funds from the Mary Webber fund at Harper University Hospital and the Detroit Medical Center. The Webber name is synonymous with community service and philanthropy in health care in the Detroit area.

According to Dr. Lisak, the funds will be used to support and supplement research dollars for the department. Various neuro-immunological disorders including demyelinating diseases of the central nervous system, such as multiple sclerosis, demyelinating diseases of the peripheral nervous system, such as Guillain-Barre syndrome and chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, and myasthenia gravis, a disease of the neuromuscular junction, will be given special attention. “This chair will hopefully help us get recognition in the local philanthropic community and lead to additional gifts including other endowed chairs, professorships and programs,” Dr. Lisak said.

In Memoriam Memorial Lectureship and Tribute for Dr. Shin

A memorial lectureship and tribute to Dong Shin, MD, PhD, titled Challenges in Glaucoma: Update in Current Clinical Practice was held on September 21 at the Townsend Hotel in Birmingham, Mich. Dr. Shin, the past director of glaucoma services for the Kresge Eye Institute, was recognized internationally for his expertise and research in glaucoma.

Speakers at the symposium consisted of past glaucoma fellows, residents and colleagues of Dr. Shin. Among them were Dr. George Spaeth of Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia and Dr. David Dueker of Cole Eye Institute in Cleveland. This well-attended event was truly a testament to Dr. Shin’s leadership, kindness and compassion.

For more information concerning contributions to the Doug H. Shin Endowed Lectureship, please contact Phyllis Bakar at (313) 577-7623 or phbakar@med.wayne.edu
Surgery Department Looks to Revolutionize Teaching

Dr. David Fromm and his colleagues in the Department of Surgery would like to improve the educational experience for surgeons at the Wayne State School of Medicine. He hopes that, with philanthropic support from the Alexander J. Walt Endowed Chair in Surgery, the traditional surgery training program will be transformed into a model for other medical schools throughout the country.

Most surgical residency training programs are basically the same. While programs may differ in teaching styles, there are few substantive differences. Some issues have arisen in recent years involving the vast amount of information surgical residents must learn. According to Dr. Fromm, “Surgical training is becoming more complex because of the increasing amount of information that trainees must assimilate without prolonging the five years of training.”

A few years ago, the Department of Surgery made the commitment to establish innovative educational programs, but the faculty soon realized that they had neither the time nor expertise to evaluate such programs in a meaningful way beyond standard test taking and subjective evaluations. “In addition to establishing more objective methods for evaluating a trainee’s capabilities, we need to develop new methods for stimulating trainees to excel intellectually,” Dr. Fromm explained.

The department is raising final funds for an endowed chair named in honor of Dr. Alexander Walt, the former chair of the department. The goal is to grant the chair to someone with a PhD in education who is willing to establish novel methods of resident training beyond that required by regulatory bodies such as the Residency Review Committee for Surgery and the American Board of Surgery. Endowed chairs provide the funds necessary to operate successful medical programs and departments. They are often considered the backbone of academic institutions.

Endowed chairs are vital to the strength and long-term growth of medical research and education. They give the school the ability to recruit the very best researchers and enable faculty to focus on their work rather than constantly searching for funding. The Alexander J. Walt Endowed Chair in Surgery will work to improve not only the department, but will focus on surgery, as a course of study, is taught.

To date, $1.3 of the necessary $1.5 million has been raised to endow this important position. If you are interested in supporting this education-focused chair, please contact Peter Schaber in the development office at (313) 993-4179 or by e-mail at pschaber@med.wayne.edu.

SAVE THE DATE

Fourth Annual Pathfinders in Medicine Awards
Saturday, May 17, 2003

Honorees: Peter Karmanos M.D.
Mark A. Kelley, M.D.
Walter Douglas M.D.
Altha Stewart M.D.
Ethelene Jones Crockett, M.D.

Wayne State University School of Medicine Upcoming Alumni Events and Meetings

Sunday, November 17, 2002
Alumni Event
Detroit Lions vs. New York Jets
4:15 p.m.
Ford Field, Detroit, MI

Wednesday, December 4, 2002
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

Tuesday, December 31, 2002
Alumni Event
Detroit Red Wings vs. St. Louis Blues
7:00 p.m.
Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, MI

Wednesday, January 8, 2003
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

Wednesday, January 8, 2003
5th Annual Alumni Student Career Event
Scott Hall, Detroit, MI

Wednesday, February 5, 2003
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

Sunday, February 23, 2003
Fashion Show
Neiman Marcus
Somerset Collection, Troy, MI

Wednesday, March 5, 2003
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

March 21-26, 2003
Alumni Department of Dermatology Reception
San Francisco, CA

Wednesday, April 2, 2003
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

Monday, April 28, 2003
Alumni Department of Ob/Gyn Reception
New Orleans, LA

Saturday, May 10, 2003
Medical Alumni Reunion Day
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.
Downtown Detroit, MI

May, 2003
Alumni Department of Pediatrics TBD

Wednesday, June 4, 2003
Alumni Board of Governors Meeting
Noon
1328 Scott Hall

June, 2003
Medical School Graduation
Hotel Pontchartrain, Detroit, MI

September, 2003
Alumni Department of Internal Medicine Reception
 Traverse City, MI

September, 2003
Alumni Department of Otolaryngology Reception TBD

September, 2003
Alumni Department of Urology Reception TBD

Medical Alumni Reunion Day: Save the Date

Don’t miss an opportunity to catch up with your former classmates and current colleagues. On May 10, 2003, you can keep in touch with your fellow physicians, take a walk downtown and even earn CME credits. In fact, last year’s CME session was so successful that we plan to use the same format, which focuses on cutting edge medicine. Therefore, next year’s CME session will again be entitled “You Heard it Here First: Experts Discuss the Latest Advances in Their Fields” with new topics forthcoming. In addition, there will be special events for those classes celebrating benchmark reunions (1943, 1948, 1953, 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1983, 1998, 1999, and 2000).

We hope you will join us in May for the festivities! Further details will follow.

Looking for Nominations

Are you aware of individuals worthy of consideration for either the Distinguished Alumni, Lawrence M. Weiner, or the newly established Recent Alumni Awards? These awards will be presented on Medical Alumni Reunion Day, Saturday, May 10, 2003. We will also be considering any previously submitted nominees.

The criteria for the three awards is as follows:

• The Distinguished Alumni Award is presented to alumni who have made outstanding contributions to humanitarian causes, whose contributions to the health field in the broader sense is outstanding and for service to the School of Medicine.

• The Lawrence M. Weiner Award, established in 1979, honors outstanding contributions of non-alumni to the School of Medicine through the exceptional performance of their teaching, research and/or administrative duties.

• The Recent Alumni Award, established this year, is presented to alumni who received a medical degree from WSU School of Medicine within the last 10 years and have demonstrated outstanding professional achievement, community contributions or service to WSU School of Medicine.

Please submit a cover letter of explanation along with your nominee’s CV to the Medical Alumni Association, c/o E. E. Alexander, Detroit, MI 48201 by November 30, 2002.
On August 10, 2002, the Medical Alumni Association participated in Family Day for the class of 2006. Nearly 1,000 students, parents, relatives, and staff attended this noteworthy event symbolizing the beginning of a challenging and enriching journey through medical school. Dr. William O’Neill, president-elect of the Alumni Board of Governors, welcomed students and their families to medical school and lead them in the Hippocratic Oath.

The Medical Alumni Association also hosted a table at the Welcome Ceremony, where students, parents, and relatives learned more about the alumni association’s fundraising efforts. Parents and relatives were also offered associate memberships in the Medical Alumni Association. Everyone who came to the table was offered the opportunity to win a small School of Medicine door prize, which included key chains, travel mugs, and sweatshirts. In addition, “Proud Parent” and “Proud Grandparent” t-shirts were sold. If you would like to purchase a t-shirt or become an associate member of the Medical Alumni Association, please contact Lori Robitaille, manager of Medical Alumni Affairs, at (313) 993-4070.

Nearly 1,000 students, parents, relatives, and staff attended this noteworthy event symbolizing the beginning of a challenging and enriching journey through medical school.

PROUD PARENT/PROUD GRANDPARENT T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

T-shirts are $25 including shipping and handling

Name

Address

Phone

Circle style

PROUD PARENT  PROUD GRANDPARENT  PLAIN
WSU/SOM LOGO ONLY

Circle size and enter quantity

M  L  XL  XXL

Total amount due

Circle method of payment

VISA  MASTER CHARGE  CHECK

Name as it appears on card

Charge number

Expiration date

Make checks payable to WSU Medical Alumni Association

Return order form and payment to
WSU Medical Alumni Association
101 E. Alexandrine
Detroit, MI 48201
1963 and 1999
Helen Winkler Minichelli, MD, (1963) reports that her daughter, Dr. Tanya M. Powell (1999), is in her radiation oncology residency at the Detroit Medical Center and will be married on October 19, 2002 to Mr. Vincent Wilk. Her son, Michael R. Powell, is an architect in Cambridge, Mass. She is still working in substance abuse.

1965
Sheldon Stoffer, MD, is currently serving as state chapter chair of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. He was recently elected to the Board of Directors of AACE.

1972
Classmates David Blum, Michael Eidelman, H. Jay Zeskind, Tom Auer, Manuel Brown, Yale Fallick, Douglas Jackson, and Mervin Goldstein had a wonderful time at their 30th Reunion on May 31, 2002.

Rollin Bearss, MD, is medical director of N.E. Florida Bladder and Pelvic Treatment Center (his full-time job). He is back in the Navy as reservist, flight surgeon and urologist at NAS Jacksonville. Terry Drake, where are you?! (started out in Navy Reserves during medical school)

1976
Kenneth Ong, MD, received the 2002 Award for Achievement in the field of applied medical informatics by the Association of Medical Directors of Information Systems.

1977
Bruce Deschere, MD, is team physician for the Haydennes, who took 4th place out of 24 teams at the April World Synchronized Skating Championships in Rouen, France. (See photo on page 16)

1980
Joanne Waeltermann, MD, recently completed the chairmanship of Baltimore County Medical Association. She is now working part-time as a pediatric ophthalmologist in the University of Maryland Eye Association.

1985
Pamela Marcovitz, MD, was appointed director of Ministrelli Women’s Heart Center at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich. The center opened in July 2002 and is dedicated to earlier detection and seeking new treatments for women with known or suspected heart disease.

1986
Richard Kurnot, MD, is a urologist and member of the medical staff at Montgomery General Hospital. He completed residency in urology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He is a board-certified urologist and member of several organizations, such as the American Medical Association, Washington Urologic Society and the Society of Army Flight Surgeons. Dr. Kurnot was chief of urology at Kimbrough Army Community Hospital at Ft. Meade and currently owns his own practice in Olney.

1988
Karen Mitchell, MD, was appointed to the American Board of Family Practice in April 2002 for a five-year term. See www.abfp.org (ABFP News and Board of Directors) for details.

1992
Dan Hartman, MD, has received an Inventor of the Year award from the Intellectual Property Owners Association. Dr. Hartman and nine other scientists were cited for developing a drug called Xigris, which is used to stop clotting in blood vessels for persons suffering from sepsis. Dr. Hartman began his research on the drug at Eli Lilly and Company. He works at Pfizer Global Research and Development in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Dr. Richard Isaacs and Debbie Karling are married and live in northern California. They have two daughters (Dayna, 6, and Rachel, 9). Debbie practices internal medicine part-time in Roseville, Calif. Rich trained in otolaryngology at Cornell University at Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital, and did a head and neck oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and University of California at Davis. Rich is the director of head and neck oncology surgery for Kaiser-Permanente and chairs the otolaryngology service in northern California. Rich was honored with the Top Doctor Award in Otolaryngology chosen by physicians in the Sacramento area.

1998
Richard_G. Hartman, MD, PhD, is a radiation oncologist at St. John Health System. He is married with one daughter (9) and is a member of the WSU School of Medicine Alumni Board of Governors.

1999
Paul Chuba, MD, PhD, is a radiation oncologist at St. John Health System. He is married with one daughter (9) and is a member of the WSU School of Medicine Alumni Board of Governors.

1997 and 1998
Drs. Barbara (Herzing) and Howard Belkin are thrilled to announce the birth of their daughter (9). Debbie practices internal medicine part-time in Roseville, Calif. Rich trained in otolaryngology at Cornell University at Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital, and did a head and neck oncology fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and University of California at Davis. Rich is the director of head and neck oncology surgery for Kaiser-Permanente and chairs the otolaryngology service in northern California. Rich was honored with the Top Doctor Award in Otolaryngology chosen by physicians in the Sacramento area.

2000
Ivy Y. Smith, MD, is currently serving as co-chief resident for the Family Practice Residency Program at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, Mich.

2002
Tiffany Farchione, MD, is the primary author of the article titled “Proton Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopic Imaging in Pediatric Major Depression.” She earned a master’s degree in psychiatry while in medical school and is now a first-year resident in child and adolescent psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh. Co-authors of the article were WSU researchers Drs. Gregory Moore and David Rosenberg.
Dear WSU School of Medicine Graduate Program Alumni:

Welcome to the premier issue of Graduate Alumni Notes, which I hope will begin to foster a lasting relationship between Wayne State University School of Medicine and our graduate programs. As the school’s assistant dean for graduate programs, I’ve been working to establish communications with our graduate alumni in order to stay apprised of the work you are doing and perhaps to involve you once again in the life of the school and its graduate programs.

This inaugural issue is a result of the wonderful feedback that I received from you several months ago when I sent a letter introducing myself and asking you to complete a graduate alumni survey. I was pleased to receive so many responses and hope that you will continue to send me regular updates regarding the exciting work that you are doing. If you have not received my letter and survey, please contact Lori Robitaille, manager of alumni affairs, at (313) 993-4070 or via email at lrobitai@med.wayne.edu.

I hope you will enjoy Graduate Alumni Notes. Our plans are to include at least one graduate alumni profile in each issue along with graduate program news and updates, and your class notes. Please feel free to contact me directly if you have comments, suggestions, or questions. I can be reached at (313) 577-1455 or via email at kpalmer@med.wayne.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kenneth C. Palmer, PhD
Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs

Dr. Silletti credits his former mentor Dr. Avi Raz for helping to guide his education and career.

Graduate Alumni Profile: Steven Silletti On The Trail

The John Muir Trail is 212 miles that extend from the Yosemite Valley, through the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range to the summit of Mt. Whitney, the highest point in the continental United States. To make this journey, for many, is a lifelong goal and accomplishment. For Steven Silletti, a PhD graduate of the School of Medicine’s cancer biology program, the trip was all that he had heard it to be. He completed the 212-mile trek through mountain passes in only 17 days.

At times, he felt as if he were the only living person on Earth, having his solitude broken only by passing an occasional hiker along the trail. Dr. Silletti, originally from Livonia, Mich., attended Michigan State University where he first learned of Wayne State’s cancer biology program. “I had become frustrated with the singular nature of other graduate school curricula I had investigated. I was impressed with the research credentials of WSU and the prospect of a multidisciplinary approach to my graduate education,” he said.

His time spent at the School of Medicine was invaluable to him. “The stimulating and demanding rigors of the program fostered my development of initiative and self-confidence that have been truly tested in the subsequent years of post-doctoral study and the initial development of my independent career.”

It was these skills that provided some of the confidence necessary to complete his recent trip. As the trail climbs into the heights of the Sierra Nevada, other hikers aren’t the only travelers a person can expect to find. “In the middle of the night a bear ripped open the backpack of the guy at the camp next to me to get at his food,” Dr. Silletti said. And in a second bear encounter, “I met up with a textbook-looking black bear, but he ran off before I could get a picture.”

Through the course of the trip, hikers must be prepared for any possible scenario. They have to factor in weather, including freak hail storms, wild animals and fatigue, all while carrying approximately 50 pounds of equipment.

In his professional life, his career has already taken several turns. After graduating from the School of Medicine, Dr. Silletti began work at The Scripps Research Institute investigating cellular processes involved in angiogenesis and cellular invasion. He later joined the Department of Pediatrics at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). While there, he continued to focus on the interactions of integrins and cell adhesion molecules in the processes of adhesion, migration and invasion. He has recently accepted a position at the Rebecca and John Moores UCSD Comprehensive Cancer Center, with the intent of continuing his investigations into the role of cell surface and signaling molecules in the processes of adhesion, migration and invasion, and, ultimately, metastasis.

Dr. Silletti’s degree and experiences from Wayne State helped shape his career and personality. He says he now has the confidence and skills necessary for his career and travels. “The School of Medicine cancer biology program was a new, multidisciplinary venture and it was critical in my development as an independent thinker.”
Notes

1974
Edward Kerfoot, PhD, received the 2001 WSU Distinguished Corporate Leader Award.

1976
William Hanson, PhD, started Pine Grove Family Practice in 1984, and in 2002, expanded to two clinics in Eau Claire, Wis.

1978
Mark Peeples, PhD, is a professor in the department of immunology/microbiology at Rush Medical College in Chicago, Ill.

David Pieper, PhD, is the assistant dean for continuing medical education at the WSU School of Medicine.

1979
Kenneth Kohn, PhD, JD, graduated from law school in 1982. He partnered in 1981 and formed his own firm, Kohn & Associated, in 1996.

Gerald Shulman, MD, PhD, is an investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He is also a professor of internal medicine and cellular & molecular physiology and director of the General Clinical Research Center at Yale University School of Medicine. Dr. Shulman returned to WSU to give the Foa Lecture in Physiology in 2001.

1985
Dennis Bozimowski, PhD, is a program manager for development for Abbott Laboratories’ integrated immunoassay(clinical chemistry system and is responsible for clinical chemistry.

1990
Hyoseok Kim, PhD, is the president of Detroit & D (website www.detroitrandd.com) and is an assistant professor at the Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at WSU.

Raymond Salah, MD, PhD, is married to Marie and has one daughter, Helena. He is board certified in psychiatry.

1991
Michael Emmert-Buck, MD, PhD, is chief of the pathogenetics unit at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. He is married to Leslie Emmert-Buck, MD, PhD, and they have one child, Nathaniel.

Gerald Nabozy, PhD, is the associate director of pharmacology with a research focus on autoimmune arthritis at Behringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals Inc. He is married to Cynthia and they have two children: Brendan, 9, and Justin, 5.

1994
Manoun Ahram, PhD, received the AACR scholar in training award for 2002.

Mary Jo Pilat, MS, PhD, received a master’s degree in physician assistant studies from WSU. Dr. Pilat provides head and neck oncology services at Karmanos.

1995
William Paradee, PhD, joined Lexicon Genetics in 2001 after doing post-doctorate research in the lab of Dr. Steve Warren. They defined gene function for drug discovery. Dr. Paradee has one son, Jack, who was born in 1998 and is expecting another son in October 2002.

1996
Isabelle Berquin, PhD, is assistant professor at Wake Forest University in the department of pathology. Her research interests are breast cancer, cell signaling and proliferation.

Ignacio Camarillo, PhD, was a postdoctoral fellow at University of California in Santa Cruz from 1996-2001. He is currently an assistant professor of biological sciences at Purdue University.

1997
Chengjun (Jon) Mo, MD, PhD, worked as a fellow from 1997-2001 at Stanford University School of Medicine and since 2001, has been a staff research scientist at Med Immune Vaccine, Inc.

Marie Piechocki, PhD, is assistant professor in the department of otorhinolaryngology at Wayne State University/

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Let your classmates know what you’ve been doing.

Last name ___________________________ First name ___________________________ Year __________

Street Address ___________________________ City ___________________________ State ___________ Zip __________

Phone ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________

My news for class notes: ________________________________________________________________

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Or email news to alumni@med.wayne.edu and type Graduate Alumni Class Notes in subject line.

1998
Wen-Hui Cai, PhD, did a residency in psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis and is an assistant professor on tenure track in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Texas-Southwestern in Dallas.

Louis Caragine, MD, PhD, finished his residency in neurosurgery in 2000 and an endovascular neurosurgery/interventional neuroradiology fellowship at UCSF in 2002. He was appointed director of vascular and endovascular neurosurgery at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa.

Feiteng Su, MD, PhD, began practicing as an attending psychiatrist in July, 2002.

2001
Steven Landy, PhD, is continuing the work he did at Wayne State on the role of balls in controlling inflammation caused by allergens and sepsis.

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Please return this form to the Alum Notes Office located at 101 E. Alexandrine Detroit, MI 48201 (313) 577-1495

Visit the Medical Alumni Association Web Site located at: http://www.med.wayne.edu/Alumni/

You can access the alumni web site via the above address or through a link from the school’s homepage located at: http://www.med.wayne.edu/
Send us your news

Let your classmates know what you’ve been doing.

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Do you know an alum whose accomplishments should be highlighted in Alum Notes? If so, please provide us with their contact information.

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