

PULSE



A PUBLICATION *for* ALUMNI & FRIENDS *of* TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER



22 Rotunda Rounds
TTUHSC Alumna Makes Statewide
Impact on Public Health Care

WINTER 2014 • DR. MCGOVERN 28 • DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI 32 • SCENE IT 34



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ROTUNDA ROUNDS

Jamie Dudensing, MPAff, BSN, (SON '00) credits a happenstance encounter for her job stint as the Capitol Nurse. This position launched her career in health care policy at the state level.

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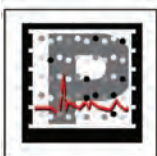
We honor Tom McGovern, MD, as he retires from the School of Medicine after years of dedication and service.

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Jennifer Hanners, MS, CCC-SLP, (SOAHS '96, '94) designs therapy products to preserve patient dignity.



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ALUMNI

CHAD GRAY, MD
ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES '97
Director of Urgent Care
Scott & White
Marble Falls, Texas



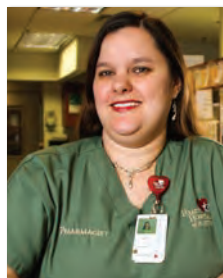
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Administrative Director for Nursing Operations
Las Palmas Medical Center
El Paso, Texas



KEEP UP WITH
alumni activities
BETWEEN ISSUES



{SCAN WITH YOUR SMART PHONE}

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and follow us on



(TTUHSC Alumni Association)

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snail mail!*

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with the email you'd like us to use.

(We promise not to flood your inbox.)

NOTE: Don't worry! You can still expect *PULSE* magazine to land in your mailbox twice a year.

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(AND WE MIGHT PUBLISH IT!)

IF YOU HAVE AN OPINION OF *PULSE* OR WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON ONE OF THE STORIES, SUBMIT YOUR COMMENTS TO KARA BISHOP AT KARA.BISHOP@TTUHSC.EDU AND IT MAY BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.



NEAL HINKLE

Winter 2013
Vol. 24, No. 1

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SOLUTIONS TO THE HEALTH CARE SHORTAGE

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, by 2020 the U.S. will face a shortage of almost 40,000 family physicians because the number of medical school graduates matching in family medicine and general internal medicine programs have decreased by almost 50 percent in the last 16 years. This probably comes as no surprise to those living in rural areas like the majority of West Texas where more than 30 counties do not have hospitals. In fact, there are at least a dozen counties in West Texas that have no primary care physicians, nurse practitioners or physician assistants.

This is indeed a daunting problem; however, our School of Medicine Dean Steven Berk, MD, saw an opportunity to develop a new strategy that would not only help address the shortage by getting more students into primary care and family medicine, but would also assist with the financial burden these students must bear. Because of this effort, May 2013 marked the inaugural graduation for students from the School of Medicine Family Medicine Accelerated Track, or FMAT program, which allows primary care students to complete their degree in three years and at about half the cost of the traditional four-year program.

And the nation is taking notice. TTUHSC has received national coverage of our FMAT program from the Associated Press, New York Times, USA Today and NBC Nightly News. Additionally, the Association of American Medical Colleges Southern Group on Educational Affairs presented the School of Medicine with its 2013 Innovations in Medical Education Award. With the impending shortfall facing our country's health care system, medical schools across the country are watching our FMAT program closely as a potential example to follow.

However, it is not just primary care physicians that will be in high demand as our health care system grows. Qualified physician assistants, advanced nurse practitioners, clinically trained pharmacists and numerous other professionals will all be needed. As evidenced by our FMAT program, we are committed to educating and training the health care professionals that will help meet these demands.

Please remember, the advancements in education and health care made here at TTUHSC do not happen without you. Your association with and contributions to our university help us meet our goals, which can significantly impact the health care system where it is most needed.

Tedd L. Mitchell, MD
President

TTUHSC Louise and Clay Wood Simulation Center Opens



Officials from the TTUHSC at the Permian Basin and Medical Center Hospital in Odessa along with representatives from the Wood Family Foundation hosted a grand opening ceremony in November for the TTUHSC Louise and Clay Wood Simulation Center.

A generous donation from the Wood Family Foundation helped equip the facility with state-of-the-art technology. The Woods are Texas Tech University alumni who established Western National Bank in the Permian Basin.

The new clinical simulation center is an interdisciplinary, multimodality facility that provides multiple realistic health care environments designed to assist learners in acquiring the competencies necessary to provide safe, culturally sensitive, quality patient care and transferring these competencies to actual care settings.

The hospital renovated the 13,252-square-foot unit for \$3.3 million to meet TTUHSC's specifications for the new simulation center.

Simulation instruction areas include:

- Authentic health care environments that include high-tech equipment, mannequins, simulators and supplies needed to facilitate learning experiences like an operating suite and scrub room
- Authentic simulated hospital patient and clinic examination rooms to represent the patient care environment of a surgical unit or long-term care facility
- Virtual reality and 3-D visualization that supports learning and competency evaluations
- Computerized digital audio-visual systems in all rooms

More than 200 medical, nursing and physician assistant students from TTUHSC at the Permian Basin will use the innovative simulation facility. Other community health care professionals will also utilize the center for training purposes.

SON Expands to Amarillo, Dallas/Fort Worth

The School of Nursing welcomed its first class of nursing students to Amarillo in September with the expansion of its Web-based Second Degree Baccalaureate Nursing Degree Program. The nursing school was one of several in the area last January to branch into this region.

The Second Degree Program is designed for students with a previous college degree. Students in the Amarillo program will gain on-site clinical experience at Northwest Texas Hospital, Baptist St. Anthony's Health System and the Amarillo Veterans Affairs Health Care System. The school had a charter enrollment of six students Fall 2013 and plans to increase to at least 30 within two years.

Students hoping to obtain licensure as a registered nurse now have the

opportunity to do so in the Metroplex, as well. The Board of Regents approved in late 2013 the Second Degree Program for students in Dallas/Fort Worth.

With support from Texas Health Resources, students in the program will gain on-site clinical experience at the organization's 25 local hospitals.

These accelerated programs offer the most efficient route to licensure as a registered nurse for people who have already completed a baccalaureate or graduate degree, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The School of Nursing now offers its accelerated program in the following communities: Abilene, Amarillo, Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, Lubbock and the Permian Basin.



Weitlauf honored posthumously as professor emeritus

The TTU System Board of Regents honored Harry M. Weitlauf, MD, with the posthumous professor emeritus title for his long and faithful service to TTUHSC and the School of Medicine.

TTUHSC President Tedd L. Mitchell, MD, said Weitlauf's contributions have impacted not only the university, but the community as well. Weitlauf was instrumental in bringing the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge to Lubbock, as he was passionate for those affected by cancer. He also was involved in the expansion of cancer research at the university and helped bring new researchers to West Texas. A committed educator and researcher, focusing on human embryology, developmental biology and histology, Weitlauf advocated for the integration of ultrasound teaching into the anatomy curriculum. He had a distinguished list of publications, extramural grants, scientific presentations, numerous awards and an outstanding record of administrative service to the university as well.

Weitlauf joined the School of Medicine in 1982 as a professor and chair of the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry where he served until his death in October 2012.



minutes with the faculty...

SERENDIPITY

EDWARD SALTZSTEIN, MD | From Yale to Paul L. Foster School of Medicine

Edward Saltzstein, MD, never gave much thought to teaching. After completing three years at Yale University, he went to Northwestern University Medical School, completing his surgical residency at Cook County Hospital in Chicago.

“After my residency, all I wanted to do was to take out colons, gallbladders, stomachs and fix hernias,” Saltzstein said. “After a while, I didn’t feel as fulfilled as I had originally thought I would and began to get involved in research. I think running a research program and a residency training program in Milwaukee (his hometown) enabled me to pursue an academic career.”

As luck would have it, one year the examiner for the residency review committee that evaluated Saltzstein’s residency program

happened to be a faculty member in the TTUHSC School of Medicine Department of Surgery. Saltzstein was then recruited to join the School of Medicine at El Paso as chairman of the Department of Surgery. He is now the medical director for the Sadie and Annabelle Garbar Breast Care Center in El Paso, recently renamed because of the Garbar family’s generous donation, as well as professor of surgery at the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine.

“The breast care center is a center of excellence (where we take) care of one-third of all breast cancer patients in the region,” Saltzstein said. “Thankfully, 90 percent of our patients have benign issues, so we are reassuring 90 percent of our patients that they don’t have cancer and providing the best treatment possible to the rest.”

Saltzstein did not enter the world of medicine with the intent of instructing others; in fact, he claims serendipity was the life force behind his career path. However, after more than three decades of providing medical students with academic instruction and his phenomenal work with the breast care center, TTUHSC is glad serendipity stepped in.

Saltzstein is active in several professional organizations including the American College of Surgeons, American Surgical Association, Society of Surgery for the Alimentary Tract, American Society of Breast Disease..

Saltzstein developed a plan for the creation of the Sadie and Annabelle Garbar Breast Cancer Center as a comprehensive care facility for patients with breast disease.

The Garbar Breast Care Center, formerly known as the University Breast Care Center, is accredited by the National Accreditation Program for Breast Cancer — the only program in the El Paso area to be so accredited.

He is the author of 65 articles published in professional surgical journals.

Saltzstein owns a terrier mix named Oscar and enjoys playing bridge, golf and reading.



JUST *the facts...*



182

CORNEAS HAVE BEEN DONATED FOR TRANSPLANTS THROUGH THE GREAT PLAINS LIONS EYE BANK.



20%

OF THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE'S STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE THEIR RESIDENCES AT TTUHSC AND MORE THAN HALF WILL COMPLETE THEIR RESIDENCIES IN TEXAS.



40%

OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED FROM TTUHSC'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, HAVE USED THEIR DEGREES TO PURSUE ACADEMIC CAREERS NATIONWIDE.



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NEW WORKSTATIONS WITH HOODS WERE ADDED TO A FORMER 2,000-SQUARE-FOOT CLASSROOM TURNED LABORATORY WHERE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY STUDENTS IN AMARILLO WILL LEARN HOW TO PROPERLY PERFORM STERILE COMPOUNDING. THE STERILE LABORATORY NOW OFFERS A SPECIALIZED TYPE OF TRAINING THAT NO OTHER U.S. PHARMACY SCHOOL CAN PROVIDE.



100TH

RESIDENT GRADUATED FROM THE OPHTHALMOLOGY DEPARTMENT JUNE 2013.

MATTERS of the HEART

By Holly Leger

Immediately after earning her doctorate degree, Lenora Sevcik, DNP, MSN, (SON '12, '02, '92) was given an opportunity to build a new program at Midland Memorial Hospital.

And in just four months time, she did. The Permian Basin now has its first organized Palliative Care Program, which launched October 2012.

Palliative care is similar to hospice care, with one distinct difference: Palliative services offer patients the choice to continue aggressive therapy or treatment; with hospice, such treatment is no longer implemented.

Though it took a lot of researching, developing and educating, Sevcik, who serves as the palliative care coordinator, said the work was worth it, because the new program has been well received. The program served 124 patients in the first six months, with three of those requesting to have the same palliative services after being re-hospitalized.

"We are very holistic at what we do," Sevcik said of her group, which consists of a physician, a full-time nurse practitioner, a chaplain, social workers, pharmacists and herself. "We have a multi-disciplinary team that looks at patients and helps identify how we can meet the needs of the patient and the families."

Sevcik said building relationships with those families and patients has been the most rewarding part of her job. She knows the struggles they are facing and helps them understand the needs, prognoses and treatment choices of the patients.

"We help them through a difficult time in their life," she said, "and literally help bring peace to that patient and their family."

Sevcik seems a natural at palliative care, but it might surprise some that this is her first time in that field.

Previously, she's championed women's health in the Permian Basin, working as chapter coordinator for the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, as well as serving as the director of the Women's and Children's Division at Midland Memorial Hospital.

She is also a member of numerous nursing organizations and committees.

Sevcik said being so active isn't about keeping busy, but keeping educated.

Nursing alumna focuses new beginning on end-of-life care



NEAL HINKLE

"Each degree that I've gotten has just increased my foundation to the point where I can look at the bigger picture," she said. "Being on all these committees, I've learned how to communicate, collaborate and negotiate. It takes everything to build a program, and I've been very pleased with how it has gone."

Matters of the Heart is a narrative in PULSE designed to highlight the passion for health, wellness and humanity shown through the work of our alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends. Story suggestions are welcomed.

CONN NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

P. Michael Conn, PhD, joined the TTUHSC Dec. 1 as the new senior vice president for research and associate provost. Conn will also serve as a professor in the School of Medicine's Department of Internal Medicine, with a joint appointment in the Department of Cell Biology and Biochemistry.

He comes to TTUHSC from the Oregon Health and Science University where he served as the director of research advocacy and professor of physiology and pharmacology, obstetrics and gynecology, and cell biology and development. Conn received his bachelor's degree and teaching certification from the University of Michigan, a master's degree from North Carolina State University and a PhD from Baylor College of Medicine. He completed a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health before joining the faculty at the Duke University, Medical Center Department of Pharmacology.

Conn is best known for his research on the cellular and molecular basis of action of gonadotropin releasing hormone and its receptor and therapeutic approaches that restore misfolded proteins to function. His work has led to the formulation of drugs benefitting both humans and animals. Conn has authored or co-authored 350 publications in this research area and written or edited more than 200 books, including texts in neurosciences, molecular biology and endocrinology.

He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Many of his students and fellows have gone on to become leaders in industry and academia.




Grant Awarded for Rural Health Information Workforce Program

Rural health employees will have access to financial support for educational training thanks to a \$900,000 Rural Health Information Technology (HIT) grant awarded to the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) of the Plains in Plainview, Texas.

The grant, funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, will provide tuition assistance for 120 students over a three-year period. Qualified candidates will have tuition, books and fees covered when

accepted into one of two approved online programs. Eligible students must live in one of 76 counties covered by the Rural HIT Workforce Program grant. Classes began in January.

The Rural HIT Workforce Program is a collaborative effort focused on developing future health care providers and supporting current health care professionals in West

Texas. AHEC of the Plains will work with the West Texas Health Information Technology Regional Extension Center (WTxHITREC) at TTUHSC at Lubbock and with Midland College in Midland.

Two online certificates — information technology interoperability liaison and data quality manager — will be offered with an apprenticeship component to assist rural health care providers and facilities in the implementation, maintenance and reporting of information as required for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services participation.

The goal of the program is to combine career development and provider needs in rural West Texas through recruitment, education, certified training, apprenticeship and employment in the rural workforce. The program will serve as a building block and model for helping sustain the implementation of electronic health records within rural West Texas by training and certifying people in the area to meet the HIT needs.

WTxHITREC, a program of the F. Marie Hall Institute for Rural and Community Health at TTUHSC, was selected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as the designated organization for West Texas to support primary health care providers on adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records.



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM CHANCELLOR KENT HANCE TO RETIRE

Texas Tech University System Chancellor Kent Hance announced his retirement to the TTU System Board of Regents in October. Hance, an alumnus of Texas Tech University, has been the chancellor since 2006. During this time, the TTU System grew with the addition of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso and Angelo State University.

“I am excited about the future of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Centers, both in Lubbock and El Paso. President Tedd Mitchell is a dynamic leader who has been a tremendous asset to TTUHSC. I look forward to seeing both campuses grow and develop outstanding health professionals in the future.”

Hance will continue serve as chancellor until the new chancellor, still to be selected by the Board of Regents, is in place. At that time he will become chancellor emeritus of the TTU System, while also serving in a teaching and advisory role.

Board of Regents Approve Nurse Anesthetist Program in Abilene

The Board of Regents approved in August the establishment of an advanced nursing degree at the School of Nursing in Abilene. The Doctor of Nursing Practice with a specialization in Nurse Anesthesia Program will prepare nursing professionals to earn board certification as a registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA).

The need for CRNAs will increase over the next decade; according to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, 20 percent of its CRNA members plan to retire in the next six years. The number of surgical cases performed each year is increasing, and the aging baby boomers are expected to add to that load. In addition, with the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, more people will have access to health care.

During medical procedures, CRNAs are trained to administer the prescribed anesthetic and to monitor the patient’s vital signs and communicate the information to the physicians. They also perform other tasks such as inserting artificial airways, administering oxygen and preventing surgical shock.

There are no nurse anesthesia programs in West Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Nevada or Oklahoma. This means nurses in Lubbock, Abilene and surrounding areas must leave the state to obtain this type of education. By starting a program in Abilene, West Texas nurses could attend a local program and then be recruited to work in local hospitals upon graduation, said School of Nursing Dean Michael L. Evans, PhD, RN.

The School of Nursing at Abilene has 160 students enrolled; by 2015, that number is expected to increase to 200. The school also offers bachelor and graduate nursing education for Abilene and area residents.



Professor to Lead Texas Alzheimer’s Research Effort

appointment, Grammas held the position of executive director of the TTUHSC Garrison Institute on Aging and the Mildred and Shirley L. Garrison Chair in Aging. She also was a professor in the School of Medicine’s Department of Neurology.

TTUHSC at Lubbock is one of the state’s six top medical research institutions that compose the TARCC. Others are Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth and Texas A&M Health Science Center in College Station. All TARCC institutions are collaborating on state-funded Alzheimer’s research and contributing genetic and blood biomarker data to a shared Texas Alzheimer’s DataBank.

As the consortium director, Grammas will manage the administrative functions of the consortium; provide oversight, scientific and management expertise; provide strategic direction and technical oversight of TARCC research; direct legislative reporting and TARCC communications; oversee fiscal management; lead TARCC in its collaborative research efforts; and manage technical and professional staff.

The Texas Council on Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders has recently announced the selection of Paula Grammas, PhD, as director of the Texas Alzheimer’s Research and Care Consortium (TARCC). Prior to this new



School of Nursing

Receives Endowed Professorship to Advance Nursing Studies

The School of Nursing received a generous gift from The CH Foundation, establishing The CH Foundation Endowed Professorship in Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Studies. This gift was combined with funds previously given by various School of Nursing donors to create this permanent endowment.

Emily Merrill, PhD, RN, professor and department chair for nurse practitioner and nurse midwifery studies, holds the professorship. In this role, Merrill provides much-needed leadership for the enhancement of advanced practice registered nursing education and practice on the South Plains and throughout the state.

A growing body of evidence suggests a strong, high-quality primary care system is directly related to positive health outcomes. Advanced practice registered nurses are registered nurses with master or doctoral degrees prepared to deliver high-quality, cost-effective primary and acute health care for adults and children in today's overloaded health care system.

Approximately 81 percent of all School of Nursing graduate students choose nurse practitioner or nurse midwifery tracks. From 1992-2011, 602 students graduated from the school's advanced practice registered nursing programs. The majority of graduates remain in Texas and a significant number continue to provide health care for Lubbock-area residents.

Siddiqui named as Grover E. Murray Professor

Afzal Siddiqui, PhD, has been named as a Grover E. Murray Professor, joining a distinct group of faculty recognized for attainment of outstanding national and international research and scholarly and creative achievements.

A tenured professor of immunology and molecular microbiology and director of the Center for Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease, Siddiqui is well-known for his research in parasite immunology and vaccine development. He holds several prestigious awards and appointments to local and national positions including a Fulbright Research and Teaching Scholarship for Southeast Asia; he is presently on a sabbatical to perform research and teaching under this scholarship. At TTUHSC, he has received the Dean's Research Award (2003), the President's Excellence in Research Award (2009), the Chancellor's Council Distinguished Research Award (2009) and the Dean's Basic Science Teaching Award (2010).

Siddiqui is funded as a principal investigator by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and has gained more than \$4 million in peer-reviewed funding in the past five years. He is the recipient of the highest amount of funding from the NIH for TTUHSC during the past three years.



Faculty previously named Grover E. Murray professors:

Neil Kurtzman, MD

John Orem, PhD

Gabor Racz, MD

Quentin Smith, PhD

Doug Stocco, PhD

Abraham Verghese, MD

DISCOVERIES

RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY



Breast cancer survivor joins study to aid researchers in learning more about how the disease affects Hispanic, Latina populations.



Rebecca Castillo is in remission from stage IIB breast cancer. She is participating in a research study conducted by Candy Arentz, MD.

Researchers seek to learn more about breast cancer among Hispanic, Latina populations

By Holly Leger
Photos by Neal Hinkle

On March 13, 2013, Rebecca Castillo received news from her doctor. She was cancer free. Again. For the third year in a row.

“It feels amazing,” she said, repeating it once more. “It feels amazing.”

Castillo, who said she is an avid proponent of self-breast exams, noticed a lump on her breast in fall 2009. Her friend, Lezli Harper, RN, was worried about the lump but was more concerned about another lump under Castillo’s armpit. When pathology reports from the biopsy came back, Castillo, at age 38, was told she had stage IIB breast cancer.

Castillo had a lymphadenectomy, began chemotherapy, and after that, radiation. Through it all she continued her job as the health unit coordinator at UMC Health System, never taking leave.

“I had myriad people praying for me, and I absolutely think that’s how I got my strength,” she said. “I honestly believe that if my family and friends weren’t there, then the situation could have become catastrophic for me.”

Now Castillo wants to return the favor by setting an example and educating her family and friends. The same day Castillo’s doctor, Candy Arentz, MD, assistant professor of surgery in the School of Medicine, emailed her with the good news of another cancer-free anniversary, Arentz also asked Castillo to participate in a new study in which she and fellow researchers in the School of Medicine and at the UMC Breast Care Center at the Southwest Cancer Treatment and Research Center are participating.

The study, in collaboration with National Cancer Institute Senior Investigator Michael Dean, MD, focuses on breast cancer in Hispanic and Latina women. Any Hispanic or Latina woman older than 18 who has been diagnosed in the past, or who currently has cancer, can participate in the research.

Participants are asked to fill out a questionnaire and have a saliva sample taken for genetic information. The study’s objective aims at broadening the data used to determine a woman’s risk of getting breast cancer.

“In most studies of breast cancer, all the information has been collected on Caucasian women, and this is the data used often to determine a woman’s risk,” Dean said. “We don’t know how well this information applies to Hispanic populations.”

Since the study opened two years ago, Dean said recruitment has been a challenge. There were some women who participated in the Washington and Baltimore area. He also traveled to Oklahoma, to enroll others in the study. Dean said there have been a handful of women who, after finding the clinical trial online, contacted him directly.

Still, he needed more.

When the study opened in Lubbock last December, recruitment really began to pick up. Arentz, the principal investigator in the study, said because West Texas has such a high prevalence of Hispanic patients, they were able to double the research numbers in four months.

“Our initial approval was to do 50 (saliva samples), but we got it extended to 100 and have collected 75 so far (as of press time),” Arentz said.

Dean said he is grateful for the higher numbers, and he hopes for even more recruitment soon.

“It’s been extremely helpful to have the (TTUHSC) Lubbock site,” he said. “Their colleagues in El Paso are getting approval to sign on as well.”

Along with the obvious goal of getting more data to represent the Hispanic population, Dean said the genetic material they gain could help lead researchers to some exciting new therapies.

The saliva samples from the women are studied for BRCA1 and BRCA2 gene mutations, which predispose

those who have them to breast and ovarian cancer. According to Dean's study, common recurrent mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 exist in the Hispanic and Latina communities. In addition, he said new therapies, such as poly ADP-ribose polymerase (PARP) inhibitors, might be particularly effective in BRCA mutation carriers. PARP is an enzyme that repairs damaged DNA.

"That is one of the types of studies we would like to do in the future," Dean said, "to use the genetics to identify a subset of women who could benefit from a specific therapy."

Such therapies could prove to be very helpful, Arentz said, because although Hispanic women do have a lower breast cancer incidence rate, they have a higher mortality rate. Late detection could account for the mortality rate, but Hispanic women usually get a more aggressive form of breast cancer, which can be a result of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations. That is why it is so important to recruit women for the study, Arentz said, so that researchers can gain the data needed for learning more about cancer risks and therapies for the Hispanic and Latina populations.

Even though recruitment for the study has improved, Arentz said her medical students are doing research of their own, trying to figure out why Hispanic women are underrepresented, and why it is challenging to find those who want to participate in the study.


There is a possibility of socio-economic barriers, but another possibility Arentz said, is the general misconception about what a clinical study actually entails.

"I think there's just a stigma about research," she said. "The more we can get the word out that research is just part of contributing to the medical knowledge, and not probing and prodding people, the better."

Castillo said she hopes women are not intimidated by words like medical research and clinical studies; instead, she wants to encourage them to get involved in such events.

"Because once you get involved," she said, "you get informed. And you may not know it, but down the line, you may be assisting or helping out a distant relative. You may be helping out your grandchildren, your children. Getting involved is an absolute necessity in order to assist not only yourself but others."

Information and awareness of her body was what helped Castillo catch her cancer at stage IIB. Now, as she celebrates living her third year of being cancer free, she encourages her friends and family to become aware and stay educated, as well.

"If any type of studies ask for your help, make sure to participate in them so that you can be ahead," Castillo said. "Unless you participate, there's no way you can help others, help your culture and your family." 

Participant Eligibility Criteria

Ages Eligible for Study:	18 Years and older
Genders Eligible for Study:	Female
Accepts Healthy Volunteers:	Yes

INCLUSION CRITERIA //

- Patient must be self-identified of Hispanic/Latina origin.
- Patients must have histologically or cytologically confirmed diagnosis of breast cancer.
- Ability to understand and the willingness to sign a written informed consent document.
- Must be willing and able to provide a saliva sample, answer questionnaire data online, and request a copy of their pathology report.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA //

- Males and subjects under age 18.

LOCATION //

Southwest Cancer Treatment and Research Center,
Lubbock; Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

CONTACT //

Candy Arentz, MD
(806) 775-8600 ext 31886
or candy.arentz@ttuhsc.edu



Rebecca Castillo's doctor, Candy Arentz, MD, is conducting a study focusing on breast cancer in Hispanic and Latina women. Castillo is a participant in the study.



“Because once you get involved, you get informed. And you may not know it, but down the line, you may be assisting or helping out a distant relative. You may be helping out your grandchildren, your children. Getting involved is an absolute necessity in order to assist not only yourself but others.”

POSTPARTUM SLEEP DEFICITS POSSIBLY LINKED TO OBESITY

Research has shown that a lack of sleep can trigger weight retention. Mary Rogge, PhD, and Bibha Gautam, PhD, are taking this realization to a new level by determining if a relationship exists in women between postpartum sleep and depression, fatigue and weight retention.

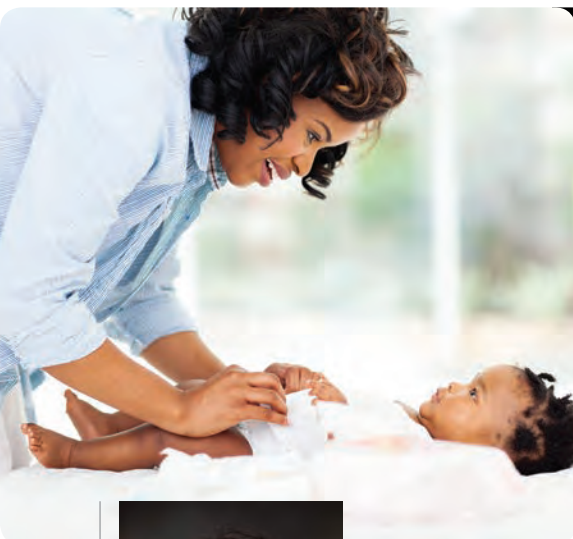
“We are looking at mothers’ sleep patterns starting at the third trimester of pregnancy and going through the first postnatal year,” Rogge said. “We want to see what the effect of a mother’s sleep pattern does to her weight and the baby’s weight. We know that with some moms, there is a vulnerable period for becoming obese, so we want to see if sleep deficits are one of the causes.”

Once the relationship between postpartum sleep and weight gain is determined, then Rogge and Gautam will begin to study the contributing factors to deficient sleep. These may include poor sleep habits or an interruption in normal schedules because of caregiver responsibilities.

Researchers will collect sleep diaries and questionnaires four times a year from the study’s participants. They will be collected in the third trimester, the first month after delivery, at six months and at one year.



Mary Rogge, PhD, associate professor, and Bibha Gautam, PhD, assistant professor in the School of Nursing, received a grant from the Beverly Hall Foundation to fund their study.



A MOTHER’S WORDS ARE JUST WHAT HER BABY NEEDS TO HEAR

Those high-pitched sing-song words spoken by many a mother to her baby may prove more important than just as a way to illicit a melt-your-heart toothless grin.

Phonology — the sounds and intonations used — when speaking with infants and toddlers may in fact have significant consequences in speech development, said Sue Ann Lee, PhD.

Lee’s research reveals that mothers use fewer fricatives, the hard, breathy sounds made from words such as those with “sh,” “f,” ending in “s,” or beginning with “th,” and liquids, the smooth sounds from words ending in “r” or beginning with “l,” in conversations with their 3-year-olds than in conversations with other adults. Likewise, mothers produce more glide sounds, words ending in “w” or beginning with “j.”

This speech pattern was consistent with Lee’s previous study of mothers’ speech to their 12-month-olds, supporting her theory that mothers produce fewer later developing sounds (fricatives and liquids) based on their children’s actual capacities during this formative period of language acquisition.

With internal funding from the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women’s Health, Lee is now studying the difference in mothers’ speech in conversations with their children at 6 months, 18 months and at age 3 to identify any difference in use of these later developing sounds. Lee believes that mothers unintentionally, but intuitively, adjust their speech to the understanding capabilities of their babies based on development of emotional relationships.

“It’s important to fully understand the characteristics of healthy mothers’ speech input because the research indicates mothers with postpartum depression and other health issues are less responsive to their children,” Lee said.

The findings should also be of value to speech therapists and rehabilitation professionals in understanding the role of speech in children during intervention activities and how to provide the appropriate speech based on the child’s developmental level.



Sue Ann Lee, PhD, is an assistant professor in speech, language and hearing research in the School of Allied Health Sciences.

A NEW MECHANISM OF ALCOHOL-INDUCED BRAIN DAMAGE

Despite the widespread use of alcohol, the mechanisms of alcohol-induced brain damage remain poorly understood as nearly 100 million people worldwide have alcohol-use disorders. This underlying chronic ethanol-related brain damage is one of the main factors of cognitive impairment and structural damage to the brain that 50 percent to 75 percent of long-term alcoholics exhibit.

Research by Inna Kruman, PhD, however, reveals a newly established mechanism of chronic alcohol-induced brain damage. This will help to develop new therapies for treatment of this damage.

This poisonous impact of chronic alcohol abuse on the brain is a result of DNA damage mediated by oxyradicals, generated by alcohol consumption. Although DNA damage happens on a daily basis under normal conditions, it is repaired by special mechanisms called DNA repair. If not repaired, DNA damage leads to mutations and cancer and/or brain damage that are observed in hereditary diseases associated with defects in DNA repair. Folic acid metabolism, critical for DNA repair, is affected by alcohol exposure.

Hereditary factors that associate with the improper function of folic acid metabolism such as mutation of methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase (MTHFR), may significantly exaggerate alcohol toxicity to the brain, increasing sensitivity of individuals with MTHFR mutation more sensitive to alcohol toxicity.



Inna Kruman, PhD, associate professor of cell biology in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Department of Pharmacology and Neurosciences, leads research funded by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and the South Plains Alcohol and Addiction Research Center (SPAARC).



NEW DIET POSSIBLE TREATMENT FOR OVARIAN DISORDER

Five million women in the United States suffer from polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). It is the most common endocrine disorder in reproductive-aged women and increases their risk of obesity, heart disease, cancer and infertility. Jennifer Phy, DO, along with her research team, have identified a new diet to treat PCOS.

“One of the main problems with PCOS is insulin production,” Phy said. “The pancreas makes too much insulin and the woman’s abnormally slow metabolism does not push the glucose into the muscles where it can then be burned off as energy, storing it as fat instead. A woman with PCOS has triple the response to food intake as normal people do. If a woman with PCOS eats one bowl of oatmeal, it’s like she ate three, which is why women suffering from PCOS tend to be overweight.”

During a two-year period, 28 participants enrolled in the study. Each were asked over the course of eight weeks to cut dairy products and grains from their diets, but were allowed to consume as much as they wanted of lean meats, non-starchy vegetables and fruits. Of the participants, 24 completed the program and on average lost 18.9 pounds.

“It’s been a rewarding experience,” Phy said. “These women feel that their lives have been changed. Of the participants, 15 were able to conceive, which is what most of them wanted in the first place. We hope to continue to secure funds to expand our research and treatment of patients with PCOS.”

Jennifer Phy, DO, is an assistant professor in the School of Medicine Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. The results of the study were presented at the Gender-Specific Medicine & Women’s Health Symposium.



A NEW LOOK AT TOMMY

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE SETS THE BAR IN BASIC SCIENCE COURSEWORK BY IMPLEMENTING ULTRASOUND INTO FIRST, SECOND YEARS OF CURRICULUM

BY DANETTE BAKER
PHOTOS BY NEAL HINKLE

In his second year of medical school, Jason Chandrapal had one of those “light bulb” moments as he saw in real time the mitral valve open allowing blood to rush into the left ventricle.

“It was like, ‘Wow!’ what I had learned in the books just came to life,” said Chandrapal, who is now a third-year medical student. “In that moment, I got to personally witness the beauty of the human body in motion.”

Chandrapal’s experience came via ultrasound on a standardized patient, part of a new learning modality implemented into the School of Medicine’s curriculum. The school became the first in Texas to use ultrasound as part of the first two years of medical education.

Although use of ultrasound is common in clinical rotations, only in the last few years has there begun a trend to implement it into the basic sciences coursework, said Jongyeol Kim, MD, associate professor of neurology and faculty coordinator in the School of Medicine and medical director for the F. Marie Hall SimLife Center. Last fall, the school began with its first- and second-year students to implement a curriculum change that would fully integrate ultrasound throughout the four-year curriculum.

“This ultrasound experience really consolidates what you want the student to learn during anatomy and physiology,” Kim said. “It provides an opportunity for the student to pull everything together that they have learned -- using their own hands, eyes and brain -- to treat the patient.”

For Chandrapal, “It’s like having an extra cup holder in the car.”

HISTORY OF ULTRASOUND IN MEDICAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM

In 2010, Kim proposed the idea for adding ultrasonography to the medical school curriculum based on an appeal by TTUHSC Executive Vice President and Provost and School of Medicine Dean Steven L. Berk, MD, for the faculty to emphasize new types of educational activities. Kim, a vascular neurologist, had used the carotid and transcranial Doppler in his work and lectured on its uses to medical students. However, a key element to implementing it for educational purposes remained a mystery: how to evaluate and assess students.

The first attempts at studying the anatomy in a live state was conducted at the Faculty of Medicine in Hanover in the 1990s, according to a 2012 article in *Medical Ultrasonography*. Before then, the article notes, ultrasound had been used primarily in the clinical setting. In 2003, the Faculty of Medicine at Vienna implemented use of ultrasound to counter student complaints that “anatomy classes had no relation with practical real life.” With the real-time visualizations offered by ultrasound technology, the Vienna anatomy course approval rating increased to 93 percent. Additionally, 96 percent of the students wanted the technology available for other courses in medical school.

However, the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and its dean, Richard A. Höppmann, are credited as the national and international leader in ultrasound education. In 2006, the medical school became the first in the country to have a fully integrated ultrasound curriculum.



Vaughan Lee, PhD, professor of Cell Biology and Biochemistry and director of the anatomy lab, helped integrate the use of ultrasound into the anatomy rotation for first-year medical students.

“MEDICAL EDUCATION IN THE NEXT DECADE WILL LIKELY UNDERGO A TRUE PARADIGM SHIFT BASED ON THE APPLICATION OF **ULTRASOUND TECHNOLOGY**. THIS SHIFT WILL FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE HOW MEDICINE IS TAUGHT AND PRACTICED.” *

** An Integrated Ultrasound Curriculum (iUSC) for Medical Students: 4-year Experience, by Richard A. Hoppmann, et al., published in the Vol. 3 2011 issue of Critical Ultrasound Journal.*





Kim visited Hoppmann in the summer of 2010 to see the program, which is the prototype for TTUHSC School of Medicine. In 2012, Kim secured funding from the president's office to purchase 20 high-end laptop ultrasound units from GE Healthcare and a team from TTUHSC (including the late Harry Weitlauf, MD, and Vaughan Lee, PhD) traveled to South Carolina to learn the intricacies of not only the technology itself, but also implementation into the medical school curriculum. They returned to share what they had learned with graduate anatomy students Amanda Murray, Ryan Baxter and Michael de Leon, who would be teaching the incoming medical students.

Beginning in anatomy was a logical first step, said Lee, professor of Cell Biology and Biochemistry and director of the anatomy lab. "Anatomy is the basic building block for the four-year medical school experience. For most students, this is the last time in their career that they will be able to take their patient apart to examine them, so learning to visualize the underlying anatomy is key to their success as a physician.

"The beauty of ultrasound is that now, literally at their fingertips, they can have a very non-invasive easy way to help them do that," Lee said.

For Baxter, who is now a first-year medical student in the School of Medicine, understanding the three-dimensional complexity of the human anatomy was somewhat perplexing. "In anatomy, you can take the liver out and study it, but with the aid of ultrasound, you can look at it in relation to all the other moving parts."

One of the initial lessons Murray, Baxter and de Leon led medical students through was a standard dissection of the liver on a cadaver. To that, they also cut sections of the liver as the ultrasound would image it. Then working in teams, they led medical students to take ultrasound images of the liver on standardized patients.

"Being able to show the students what they were seeing in the patient and how it correlates with the anatomy they were seeing in the cadaver makes a huge difference," said Baxter.

Second-year medical student Robert Conrad said he definitely knows his anatomy better after having the experience of using ultrasound during anatomy rotation. He explained the difference using ultrasound when setting a central line. "The older physicians learned (placement) through anatomical landmarks; that's still important to learn, but now with the ultrasound you can actually see where you are going in.

"The ultrasound brings in an element that you just don't get otherwise."

SIDEKICK TO THE STETHOSCOPE

As with most electronic technologies, the ultrasound units also will continue to evolve. While first- and second-year students at the School of Medicine will train on the laptop-type models, Kim says it will become commonplace in clinical rotations for them to use the smaller, handheld devices. In theory, they could eventually become a tandem of the stethoscope, he said.

"Why then would we not want to offer our students this opportunity to learn this technology?" Kim said.

In addition to a more advanced understanding of the anatomy, Chandrapal already sees an advantage of the expanded curriculum.

"I definitely see it having benefits as I'm preparing for my residency," said Chandrapal. "If you've been using the technology all through medical school, then you can hit the ground running. This is the new wave of medical education and it is nice to be one of the pioneers."



rotunda rounds

CAPITOL NURSE POSITION PLAYS KEY ROLE IN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT HEALTH POLICY
BY HOLLY LEGER

For Dudensing, her past nursing experience

AFTER GRADUATING WITH HER NURSING DEGREE, JAMIE DUDENSING, MPAFF, BSN, (SON '00) DID WHAT MOST STUDENTS DO: SHE FOUND A JOB. For Dudensing, that meant working in Labor and Delivery at Covenant Women's and Children's Hospital in Lubbock.

"I've always been interested in health care," Dudensing said. "My mother, grandmother and aunt are all nurses, so being surrounded by the profession I knew I wanted to help individuals and be a part of the health care system."

While enrolled in the TTUHSC School of Nursing, Dudensing was active in the Texas Nursing Students' Association and was encouraged by her professors to remain involved and educated in the activities of health care politics and legislation after graduating. This interest and passion fueled her acceptance of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity from then Texas Speaker of the House Pete Laney. The chance encounter between Laney and Dudensing at Covenant spurred her to choose a career path a bit unorthodox to the nursing field.

"It was one of those things that happen in your life that you didn't plan," she said. "I didn't even quite realize he was the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives upon introduction."

Dudensing had met Laney briefly the week before at a Texas Tech function where he explained he worked in the Texas Legislature, she said. Their conversation at the hospital moved quickly from small talk to politics, and Dudensing explained to Laney that she was interested in health care policy. He then mentioned an opening at the Texas Capitol, as the registered nurse was on leave to train as a nurse practitioner.

"One thing led to another," Dudensing said, "and before I knew it, I was interviewing to become the Capitol nurse."

Dudensing got the job for the 2001 session. The position dates back to 1971 when a state representative experienced chest pains, and the Family Physicians Association suggested the Capitol start a "Doctor of the Day" program, where a different family physician comes in daily when Congress is in session. A part-time nursing position was then added in 1992 and expanded to full time the following year. The Capitol nurse position serves in a capacity similar to an in-house clinic for a business office.

It was quite the experience, Dudensing said. Treating squirrel bites was not uncommon, and there were more serious cases such as dehydration and injuries from falling down stairs, which proved the Capitol clinic was definitely necessary not only for legislators, but also Capitol visitors.

In between routine check-ups and giving flu shots to the governor, representatives and senators, Dudensing also had the opportunity to observe governmental proceedings in the House and Senate, as well as meet the members.

"It was a great way to get my feet wet and watch the policy process," she said. "I fell in love with it and decided to stay."

Dudensing used her time between sessions during the next year and a half to attend the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin where she earned a master's degree in public affairs. When Dudensing returned to the Capitol, she got a job with the House Appropriations Committee, helping develop and write Article 2 of the state budget, which

because she said she understands what kinds of disincentives and

experience gives her a better perspective,



and incentives actually work from the care provider's standpoint.

funds health and human services programs.

In December 2005, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst hired Dudensing as his senior advisor for budget and policy. She served four sessions before being promoted in June 2013 to policy director and now oversees the entire policy agenda and its respective senior advisors.

“It’s been a really great opportunity to work for him,” Dudensing said. “He’s actually had a really strong emphasis on health care.”

Upon Dudensing’s most recent promotion, Dewhurst made the following statement:

“I respect the fact that Jamie hasn’t just learned policy, she’s lived it. She’s had the respect of the budget and policy team as well as the members of the Senate because of her honesty, insight and unstoppable work ethic. Her expanded role will make our team even better as they work to keep Texas strong for years to come.”

When the Legislature is in session, Dudensing works with representatives and senators to develop and draft priority bills for Dewhurst. She also monitors all health and human services legislation, listens to and works with stakeholders, and assists Dewhurst and senators with writing the state budget.

“Jamie is one of the most intelligent people on my staff, and I highly value her counsel,” said Dewhurst. “Her dedication to creating a better Texas through sensible health care legislation is making a genuine difference in the future of our state.”

Dudensing said the two priority bills she researched and developed for Dewhurst (SB 7 in the 82nd and 83rd Legislatures) have an overall goal of increasing efficiency and improving quality of care.

John Opperman, Dewhurst’s budget director, said Dudensing brings a knowledge and passion about health care policy to the table that makes a difference.

“When it comes to crafting policy, you can’t overestimate the importance of on-the-job experience,” Opperman said. “Concepts that might be abstract to people whose perspectives are shaped only by study are concrete to Jamie because she’s done the job on health care’s front lines. She helps us make policy decisions in a real-world context that improve health care in Texas.”

For Dudensing, her past nursing experience gives her a better perspective, because she said



So many decisions are made by individuals who have never worked or been in the health care system. It's sometimes shocking how little involvement health care professionals have in health care policy.

she understands what kinds of disincentives and incentives actually work from the care provider's standpoint.

"It's very helpful to understand the difficulty in implementing these types of policies in reality," she said, "and also what it takes to make implementation successful."

Dudensing supplements her prior medical knowledge with in-depth research, including meetings with nursing and hospital associations and other stakeholder groups.

Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner Kyle Janek, MD, said Dudensing is willing to go the extra mile to hear the concerns of stakeholders. Janek recalled a night when Dudensing took time out of her schedule after work to meet at a local elementary school in order to hear from individuals who had strong feelings concerning the treatment of their loved ones in the disability community.

"She meets with policymakers at the top level, but she's also willing to reach out to folks that actually receive the services," Janek said. "It's remarkable."

When the Legislature is not in session, Dudensing continues to work with the stakeholders and constituents by monitoring implementation of the services they receive, as well as assists those who need help accessing services.

Dudensing said there is much she misses about providing direct patient care, but the changes she sees across the state are highly encouraging.

"Here, I can come up with policies and educate on a global level and actually see this type of improvement in the system on a larger scale."

TTUHSC School of Nursing Professor and Dean Emeritus Alexia Green, PhD, RN, worked with Dudensing on health care policies in the past, and said she knows for a fact that Dudensing is making a positive impact on the state.

"As we move into health care reform," Green said, "having someone with a health care background and an understanding of the health care system really benefits all Texans."


Dudensing speaks well for the college, too, Green said. "She's a real star for TTUHSC, especially for our School of Nursing. She exemplifies the intellect, the leadership and the connectedness that we have through some of our graduates across the state."

Dudensing had some advice for School of Nursing alumni and current students: actively contribute to the policy process by participating in professional associations such as the Texas Nurses Association, the Texas Nurse Practitioner Association and the Texas Medical Association.

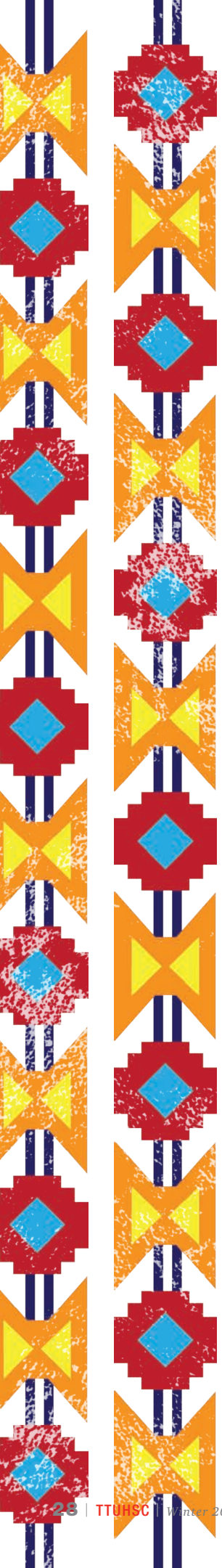
"We lean on associations to help us find health care professionals that take an interest in policies being developed on the state level," she said. "So many decisions are made by individuals who have never worked or been in the health care system. It's sometimes shocking how little involvement health care professionals have in health care policy. Our staff here leans on professionals in those areas, but it's hard to find volunteers to testify at hearings and be involved because everyone is so busy."

"We also lean on schools for help, such as the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center for expertise when making these decisions. The schools can help us find alumni and faculty who wish to be involved, so it is imperative that alumni stay associated and affiliated with their alma maters."

Thirteen years ago, when Dudensing began her first job at Covenant, her career took a quick shift to the Capitol; although she realizes another one of those shifts could happen in the future, the path in life is clear to her for now.

"As they say, the only constant in politics is change, so you can learn to stay focused on the long-term implications on the state while keeping your feet planted firmly in the present. I really enjoy having a global impact on health care, so my goal is to continue working in the health policy arena." 

[Pulse Senior Editor Kara Bishop contributed to this article.]



WALKING

the journey and showing others

THE WAY

The peace pipe, an expression of individual and community healing, embodies spirituality and is widely respected by Native Americans. As the School of Medicine was set to honor Tom McGovern, MD, a certificate or plaque did not seem fitting for a man so unique in his spiritual and educational contributions. Instead, he was presented with a peace pipe as a tribute to honor the impact he has had on so many individuals at the TTUHSC. McGovern retired in August.

“He is our medicine man, spiritual director, shaman for the School of Medicine, conscience of the school and spiritual healer,” said Terry McMahan, MD, chairman of the Department of Psychiatry. “When things hit or tragedy occurs, Tom has always been there — leading discussions, worrying about everyone and pulling everyone together.”

In his life, McGovern has experienced the early death of his father and two young sisters. He spent a year in recovery from tuberculosis and also in his 40s began a journey of recovery from alcohol dependence.

“Grief, loss, isolation and the brokenness that one experiences with them is a journey where people of like experiences are an invaluable help,” said McGovern, an Irishman. “In my journey, I have been restored through the love and compassion of others, experiencing forgiveness, a sense of being alive with an ability to live life one day at a time. Wounded healers continue to inspire and enrich my life.”

McGovern’s interest in people especially for those struggling with loss and drug dependency led him to a career as a counselor, teacher and mentor. McGovern came to Lubbock in the early 1960s and served for many years as a priest in various church communities including Christ the King Cathedral, St. Theresa’s Catholic Church, St. Francis Catholic Church in Wolfforth, Texas, and San Ramon Catholic Church in Woodrow. Most of his energy was devoted to teaching and healing ministries to the overall service of the larger community.

By Suzanna Cisneros

“I found my fountain of youth in teaching and service,” McGovern said recalling the old Irish folklore of the perennial quest for youth. “It keeps me forever young, especially in the interaction with young people of all ages. I have a life-long commitment to the common good and the well being of communities. In a special way, I have espoused fairness and justice, a quality which I inherited from my parents. We were a family of modest means and learned the importance of sharing at an early age.”

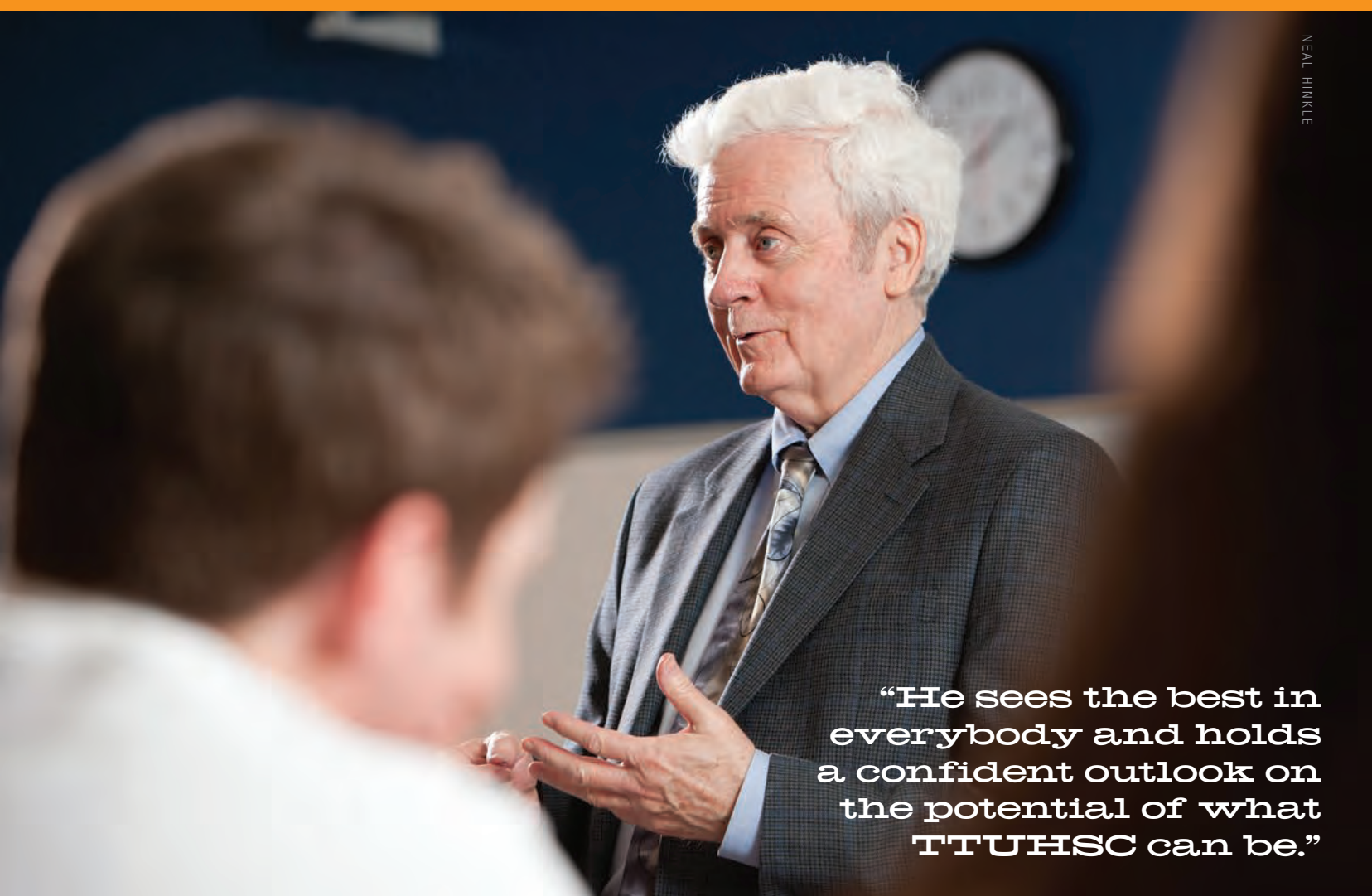
McGovern joined the School of Medicine in 1978 to help patients dealing with substance abuse in inpatient and outpatient settings at St. Mary’s Hospital and the Department of Psychiatry.

He has been a life-long advocate for the needs of people and families struggling with substance abuse disorders throughout his lifetime and has served on numerous boards and committees at local, state and national levels. He speaks with great affection of his time with the local National Alliance on Mental Illness Chapter and also of his many years of service on the Lubbock Regional Mental Health and Mental Retardation board.

“It is a passion of mine, a dedication to people in recovery and families who struggle with it,” McGovern said. “Being in recovery myself, I am passionately dedicated to people with these issues.”

McGovern arrived at the School of Medicine 35 years ago when Thompson Hall was the home location for the school.

“I worked at Thompson Hall, looking out my back window to the Texas Tech academic campus, listening to the click of the bats from the baseball



“He sees the best in everybody and holds a confident outlook on the potential of what TTUHSC can be.”

field,” McGovern said “Moving here to the new building, which was a shell to begin with, and watching it grow to the full-fledged health sciences center community it is, has been a great memory. However, my favorite memories are with the individuals and families in their recovery from substance use disorders. To witness their recovery has been an amazing experience. Other treasured memories include life long friendships with good friends throughout the TTUHSC community, and with generations of medical students and residents who continue to promote the healing mission of our community.”

Other memories stand out as McGovern recalls his more than 50 years in Lubbock. An avid Red Raider, he has been a faithful fan with special devotion to the football team and women’s basketball team. He recalls he helped introduce soccer to Lubbock, being coach and player with the Texas Tech soccer team.

Thomas E. Tenner Jr., PhD, associate dean for Faculty Affairs and Development and a professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Neurosciences, who has known him for more than 35 years, said McGovern has served as the peacemaker at TTUHSC.

“He sees the best in everybody and holds a confident outlook on the potential of what TTUHSC can be. There was one time when this institution was facing possible budget cuts where faculty and staff positions might be eliminated and Tom stepped up and proposed the senior faculty take a 10-percent salary pay cut to lessen the impact,” Tenner said. “He is that person who is not afraid to be in intense meetings and make humble suggestions. He is the only person who has the conviction to say it.”

Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD, (SOM ’77) executive director of the TTUHSC Clinical Research Institute, said McGovern has served as the voice of faculty and students.



The Thomas McGovern Endowment for Spirituality in Health Care

For 35 years, Tom McGovern, MD, has been a dedicated servant of the TTUHSC. His tireless efforts have addressed the needs of individuals and families as well as health care professionals, sharing with them the importance of a sense of meaning during illness and the healing process. To honor the legacy established by him, readers can contribute to the endowment established in his honor.

For more information, please contact Cyndy Morris: 806.743.2786 or cyndy.morris@ttuhsc.edu



“He has been the person to fight for faculty and students when changes were needed,” Lutherer said. “He is open to others ideas and respectful to every individual’s beliefs. He expects all to have an open conversation.”

McGovern’s ability to advocate for fairness signifies why he was the Giles McCrary/Tom McGovern Endowed Chair in Ethics/Humanities and served as the director of the Center for Ethics, Humanities and Spirituality, Lutherer said. The center addresses the overall needs of patients and families and the communities that provide health care.

The center’s outreach embraces TTUHSC and UMC Health System and communities of faith, other hospitals and nursing homes. McGovern pioneered the establishment of an interdisciplinary faculty that teaches future health care professionals about the ethical, humane and spiritual dimensions of healing.

“He realizes a person’s differences and hones in on the good,” Lutherer said. “He has a subtlety about him, where people listen and act. Not many people have that quality.”

“Addressing basic human needs, especially as one struggles with illness, disease and suffering is essential in healing,” McGovern said. “Ethics, especially clinical ethics, looks to the best interest of patients and families and guides practitioners, as well. Connecting to one’s spirituality opens a pathway to meaning, which in turn connects one with the divine. Prayer, meditation and reflection are important in the lives of many patients, and should be respected in the overall care of patients and their families.”

Eduardo Sandoval, a third-year medical student, said McGovern inspired him to become a better physician through his teaching of spirituality and ethics.

“You have the faculty who teach you the scientific side, but Dr. McGovern taught me the spiritual side of medicine — the guidance of healing the soul,” Sandoval said. “Even his mannerisms are calming and you instantly feel at peace when speaking with him. Learning from him was about principles, discipline, good habits to help heal the spirit through compassion, understanding, patience and cultural awareness. I am thankful to him for setting the example and not just teaching it.”

Honored with many awards throughout his career, McGovern was recently presented the Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Award. The statewide award honors

professors each academic year for their dedication to the teaching profession and for their outstanding academic, scientific and scholarly achievement. This award is considered one of the most prestigious awards bestowed upon faculty in Texas. Only 10 professors receive this award each year among a pool of approximately 10,000 educators.

“He knows all the students and they respect him,” McMahan said. “Tom has a valued opinion of the students and views them as colleagues. He has done so much for this institution. If anyone ever needed his expertise or help, he would always step up.”


Many may remember McGovern as the person who led memorials honoring faculty who passed away, as well as leading invocations and benedictions at events.

“He used his experiences to help others,” Tenner said. “He has helped so many turn negatives into positives. His strength — his spiritual contribution — is defined as inclusiveness of all people, all faiths, and all cultures. When we see him at a memorial or an event such as commencement, you look around and everyone is part of it.”

Upon his retirement, McGovern had plans to move to California. He hopes to have more time with his wife, Toni; daughter, Elexia; and granddaughter, Mariluna. He also hopes to continue working in many capacities including maintaining relationships with the TTUHSC and Lubbock communities that he loves so deeply.

“Hopefully, I have contributed to the well-being of our community, and yet I have received far more in return,” McGovern said. “Compassion is an essential quality of the human experience and I have tried to practice this virtue in all aspects of my life. To be compassionate is to be with another person in their journey, to stand with them in times of trouble and need; to a special degree it defines who we are.”

As a founding member of the hospice movement in Lubbock, he recalls with gratitude this special ministry to the dying and their families. On a lighter note, he delights in remembering his role as fear an tige (a man of the house-emece) for the Celtic Christmas where he reveled in the ancient Irish art of story telling.

Tenner said the memories of McGovern reciting an Irish blessing at commencements and memorials will be difficult to replace. 

May the road

rise up to meet you

May the wind be

always at your back,

May the sun shine

warm upon your face,

And the rains fall

soft upon your fields

And until we meet again,

May God hold you

in the palm of His hand.

-Irish blessing

Distinguishing career

Hanners designs therapy products to preserve patient dignity | By Bailey Grasmick

Growing up around her dad's radio station in Dimmitt, Texas, Jennifer Hanners, MS, CCC-SLP, (SOAHS '96 '94) found her love for communication and music at a young age. She later ventured to Fort Worth and Texas Christian University to pursue a career as a television news anchor, but it wasn't long before she returned home.

"There was something missing. It was disheartening because, ultimately, I just wasn't fulfilled. I was intrigued by mass communications, but I began to desire something different," said Hanners.

A high school mentor led Hanners into speech pathology and back to West Texas.

"I knew that speech pathology was a way for me to use my love of communication to help others," she said.

Hanners began in 1996 as a speech pathologist at UMC Health System. She had to prove the impact speech pathology has on patients, as health professionals at the hospital had little familiarity with her field of study.

"For a while, it was just me, which was a significant challenge and quite scary for a new graduate. The physicians didn't know much about it, and didn't have much faith in, medical speech pathology," said Hanners, describing her beginning.

"I would hold intense discussions with medical personnel and bargain with doctors, guaranteeing improvement in their patients' swallow or cognitive function, just to prove I was worth something."

She did just that, by expanding UMC Health System from one speech pathologist to a staff of nine. Hanners also started a program at the hospital to address the complex needs of patients diagnosed with head

continued on page 32...

Distinguished Alumni Recipients Named SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES



BONNELL RAEDER-ALECK, MRC/CRC, ('03, Rehabilitation Counseling) is certified rehabilitation counselor. She works for Northeastern Mental Health Center as a mental health therapist in Day County, S.D. She is a past president of the Webster Area Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the South Dakota RehabAC-

Tion, a network of people working together to positively affect the public vocational rehabilitation program. Additionally, Raeder-Aleck is a volunteer on-call for Day County Emergency Management and the Day County Sheriff's Office, assisting during times of personal or community disasters and offering immediate counseling to those affected.



JASON P. COOPER, MPAS, PA-C ('06, Physician Assistant Studies) joined the School of Allied Health Sciences Physician Assistant Studies faculty in 2011 and was appointed coordinator of clinical education in 2013. As a student, he had the highest score in class and ranked in the top 2 percent of the country's more than 5,000 graduates on the national certification exam. Cooper previously had a 20-year career in emergency management services during which time he was a flight paramedic and system administrator. He is a volunteer in the Commemorative Air Force and enjoys working with World War II era aircraft.



DEE ANN LAFAVE, MS, CCC-A ('88, Audiology; '85, Speech and Hearing Sciences) For 17 years, LaFave worked in Lubbock as a certified audiologist for an otolaryngologist and supervised School of Allied Health Sciences students. In 2005, she joined the school as clinical instructor for the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences. LaFave is a member of the Audiology Clinical Services Committee, which makes recommendations regarding the school's audiology clinic and clinical grading. Throughout the years, students have praised her ability to help them meet their potential.



JULIE J. BRUCE, ScD, MAT, ('08, Doctorate, Physical Therapy; '02, Athletic Training; '95, Physical Therapy) began working for UMC Health System in Lubbock upon graduating with an emphasis on out-patient physical therapy. She is a certified athletic trainer and certified orthopedic manual therapist through the International Academy of Orthopedic Medicine. In addition to providing patient care and management, Bruce is involved as a clinical mentor to physical therapy and athletic training students. She participates and leads various UMC committees and projects including developing and speaking at an annual sports medicine conference hosted by UMC in conjunction with TTUHSC.



Distinguishing career

...continued from page 31

and neck cancer and undergoing chemotherapy and radiation; a clinic to assist patients diagnosed with HIV or AIDS; and she assisted in aligning the UMC Cleft Palate and Craniofacial Anomaly Clinic with the West Texas Craniofacial Center of Excellence. In October 2012, Hanners founded the nation's first speech pathology program within an emergency center.

Hanners has used her ingenuity to make significant contributions in therapeutic treatments and has developed three patented products. She discovered a unique way to improve the sensory aspect of swallowing for critical-care patients. Patients who could not follow commands and could not participate in historical dysphagia therapy would respond to the touch of a finger of a latex glove filled with ice. Knowing this was effective, yet embarrassing for the patient, Hanners developed the Ice Finger, a gel-filled freezable stick, used to rehabilitate a patient's ability to safely swallow following neurological trauma. AliMed produces Hanners' product that is now used in hospitals and rehabilitation centers internationally to restore a

SCHOOL OF NURSING



Excellence in Leadership
JOYCE A. BATCHELLER, DNP, NEA-BC, ('10, Doctorate in Nursing Practice) joined the Seton Healthcare Family in 1994 as chief nursing officer, making her one of the longest-serving CNOs at one institution in the nation. She oversees 3,700 nurses in the largest health care system in Central Texas.

She also serves as dean of the Seton Academy for Clinical Education and Research and will play a role in the medical school and new teaching hospital that Seton is partnering to build with the University of Texas at Austin and the local health care district. Batcheller has led development and implementation of career programs at Seton and implemented a nurse residency program. She is a sought-after speaker and has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals.



Clinical Excellence Award
TERESA L. CALLAHAN, FNP-BC, ('02, MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner) is CEO at Iraan General Hospital. During the past two years, she also has been attaining prominence through her efforts in providing clinical care at Iraan Medical Clinic. In 2002, Callahan and her team were instrumental in transitioning Pecos County General Hospital into Iraan General Hospital District. She is president of the THINK board associated with the Texas Hospital Association; a member on the Texas Organization of Rural and Community Hospitals; and serves on the board of the Area Health Education Centers of the Permian Basin.

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functional swallow or to improve facial and oral motor tone in children diagnosed with cerebral palsy.

"I want my patients to have preservation of dignity," Hanners said, describing her second invention. The SafeStraw, manufactured by Bionix Medical Corporation, attaches to the bottom of a straw and is engineered to control the amount of fluid a patient receives per suck. The design produces effective volume control without having to thicken the liquid or "pinch off" the end of the straw. The SafeStraw is discreet and can be used in any drink container.

Her latest invention, Hanners said, "has been the hardest and most challenging so far." It is a complex device that combines biofeedback and gaming technology to offer unique therapy for injured individuals. Already patented, the device is in the process of being developed.

"When I see something that was once a product of my imagination help heal another, I feel at peace. Something inside of me that was once unsettled becomes resolved as I see true pur-

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY



Excellence in Practice Award

BRANDON SUCHER, PharmD, ('01, Doctorate of Pharmacy Practice) is an associate professor of pharmacy practice at Regis University School of Pharmacy in Denver. He is a Board Certified Ambulatory Care Pharmacist and holds certifications as a diabetes and asthma educator. Sucher's peer-reviewed publications have appeared in such journals as the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, The Annals of Pharmacotherapy, U.S. Pharmacist Health Systems Edition and the American Journal of Hypertension. His scholarship interests include the impact of supplemental instruction on student progression and evidence-based medicine for the treatment of dyslipidemia, hypertension, diabetes and asthma.

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Excellence in Practice Award

BRIAN K. IRONS, PharmD, ('99, Ambulatory/Managed Care Residency) has been with the School of Pharmacy since 1999 and is an associate professor in Lubbock specializing in ambulatory care. He is head of the Ambulatory Care Division within the Department of Pharmacy Practice mentoring fellow division members on four TTUHSC campuses in their teaching, practice, scholarship and service responsibilities. Irons is certified by the Board of Pharmacy Specialties in ambulatory care and pharmacotherapy and is also board certified in advanced diabetes management. In 2011, Irons was named a fellow by the American College of Clinical Pharmacy.


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pose in my creativity. My most memorable, happy moments are the ones in which I witness improvement in the life of a patient from something I developed."

TTUHSC has recognized Hanners' accomplishments, naming her a Distinguished Alumni in 2012. The School of Allied Health Sciences also inducted her into its Hall of Fame in 2008.

"I feel blessed and honored that a great institution notices me and what I'm doing. It makes me proud," Hanners said.

The move back home turned out to be life-changing for Hanners, but she also took those musical roots and made a significant impression on another group of people very near and dear to her. While a TCU Chi Omega sorority member, Hanners wrote "Chi Omega Doesn't End" and dedicated it to her mother, an alumna of the sorority's Texas Tech chapter. The song is now the sorority's established theme song and is sung on college campuses nationwide during recruitment.

"I love where I am in life. I would like to be doing what I am doing," Hanners said, describing her future plans. 



1 Alumni receptions (Amarillo, Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Lubbock) | The Office of Alumni Relations hit the road Summer 2013 to host alumni receptions. **2** Bike/Run to Benefit Burn Patients | Students host in the PT Classic established by the Student Physical Therapy Association, in collaboration with the West Texas Cycling Club and Texas Physical Therapy Association, to support the Harnar Burn Care Center in funding compression garments for their patients. **3** Homecoming Tailgate | TTUHSC alumni and their families enjoy tailgating before the TTU vs. Iowa State homecoming game. **4** SOM Donor Appreciation Luncheon | Faculty, administrators, staff and students joined together to thank School of Medicine supporters for their continued generosity at the School of Medicine Donor Appreciation Luncheon.



REMEMBERING SHIRLEY GARRISON

Shirley L. Garrison, the namesake for TTUHSC's Garrison Institute on Aging, died Dec. 13, 2013.

He was a strong supporter of Alzheimer's research, establishing a chair position at TTUHSC and a brain bank at accessible by researchers nationwide. His wife Mildred's diagnosis inspired a lead gift to the Sears Methodist Foundation to build the Mildred & Shirley L. Garrison Geriatric Education and Care Center. Mildred resided there until her death in 2006.

Garrison was a World War II veteran and taught vocational agriculture. He also was involved in the ranching and banking industries. He graduated from Texas Tech in 1940.

Garrison is survived by his second wife, Lucille Simons Garrison. Their family has established the Garrison Family Foundation to carry on his philanthropic endeavors.



REMEMBERING JOHN AURE BUESSELER

John Aure Buessler, MD, emeritus founding dean of the School of Medicine and emeritus founding vice president for Health Affairs and Health Sciences of TTUHSC died March 7, 2013.

Following a stellar military career, Buessler joined the School of Medicine in 1970 as its founding dean. During his tenure, he also served as professor of ophthalmology; his work was later recognized with the eye clinic named in his honor.

Buesseler also made numerous contributions to the TTU System including serving as founding chair for the Health Organization Management program, a joint program between the School of Medicine and the Texas Tech University Rawls College of Business Administration. He and his wife, Cathryn, have also provided significant financial support through The John Aure Buessler & Cathryn Anne Hansen Buessler Foundation.

Royal Benson, MD ('85), died Feb. 26, 2013.

Amy Lynn Garcia, RN ('11, '04), died Jan. 12, 2013.

Julie Ann Renner, MD ('87), died May 27, 2012.

Joseph Eltidge Thigpen, M.D., passed away April 16, 2013. He was the father of Texas' First Lady Anita Thigpen Perry, for whom the School of Nursing was named in 2008.

Patrick Everling, FNP (SON '11), died Oct. 20, 2013

William Michael "Mike" Capt, MD ('08), died Nov. 11, 2013.

Gifts in memory of or in honor of are routed to the desired location of the donor through the TTUHSC Office of Institutional Advancement, 3601 Fourth Street, Stop 6238, Lubbock, Texas 79430.

friends we'll miss



Chad Gray, MD

Director of Urgent Care for Scott & White

Marble Falls, Texas

Graduate: 1997, Clinical Lab Sciences

His inspiration: "My aunt was a nurse at our local hospital when I grew up and that inspired me to pursue a medical career." Gray explained that his upbringing in a small town helps him serve the many patients he sees each day.

His life outside of medicine: He, his wife and their two children enjoy family activities including mountain biking, kayaking and skiing. He misses the comfort of the West Texas area, but said it's exciting to live near the hustle and bustle of a metropolitan area such as Austin.

What he draws on the most from TTUHSC: Gray sees a variety of patients with different needs. He cites his experiences in the hospital emergency room and in urgent care as preparing him for his current career. "There is a lot of variety, which is one of the reasons I chose medicine. I have a hand in everything from treating injuries to treating babies." Gray recounts his experience with fondness: "I grew up professionally in this school, all the clinic rotations and the variety helped prepare me for the career I currently enjoy now."

What is on his wall: "A little girl drew a picture for me after I had treated her. It is a great reminder of why I enjoy medicine and caring for people."

—Allison Wood

Amanda McDaniel, MS

Freelance Subcontractor Medical Writer for Medical Communication Consultants

Burleson, Texas

Graduate: 2001, Physiology

How it all began: Amanda McDaniel found her natural abilities for medical writing while working in the lab of Lorenz Lutherer, MD, PhD, (SOM '77) as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Undergraduate Research Fellow. Lutherer asked her to read a paragraph in a paper that he was peer reviewing. Identifying multiple grammar mistakes made McDaniel realize there might be a market for someone with strong grammar skills and a solid science background. McDaniel continued working in the lab while earning her master's degree. Directly after graduating she landed a job at a pharmaceutical company to write for their nonclinical research division.

The Reward: After 11 years on the job, McDaniel is now her own boss. She sets her own hours and decides which work topics she is best suited for. However, unlike most freelance writers, as a subcontractor, she doesn't have to spend time hunting for jobs. "The medical writing and editing firm I work for gives me my choice of jobs, cutting down on the job hunt that I used to engage in as a strictly freelance writer. I love that I get to take complex scientific concepts and make them understandable to lay people," said McDaniel. She takes pride in seeing her work published in a respected journal and when a drug that she believes will make a difference is approved for sale due to the help of her medical writing skills.

The Greatest Challenge: Rarely ever meeting with clients in person, McDaniel realizes she goes days without adult face-to-face interaction, yet the self-described introvert says even she needs social interaction.

Day-to-Day: McDaniel has gone back to school pursuing a bachelor's degree in nursing. She attends UT Arlington, with future plans to work as a registered nurse while continuing her freelance business. "As much as I love writing about the research aspect of medicine, I am ready to be a part of the hands-on side as well," McDaniel said. With a husband and two daughters, she puts writing and studying aside on occasion to enjoy reading with the girls, taking family bike rides and swimming at the local indoor pool.

"The wonderful thing about being a medical writer and editor is that there is such a broad range to the field. Some are journalists and marketers. Some write clinical study protocols and reports. Some write regulatory documents. Others work as writers or editors of textbooks. Most of us are jacks-of-all-trades. The field is constantly expanding."

— Bailey Grasmick



Anthony Lucci, MD

Surgical oncologist, professor

MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston

Graduate: 1991, Medicine

All in the Family: The medical profession is nothing new in Anthony Lucci's family. Not only is his father a doctor, but so is his uncle, brother and cousin. His relatives' influence, along with the education he received at TTUHSC, helped Lucci continue that family tradition.

A Passion: Lucci said he enjoys surgery, but he especially enjoys working in oncology. "I chose the cancer field because of the patients," Lucci said. "I like that you can provide an improvement in their outcomes in a significant number of cases, because if you can operate on them usually they are in a position where you can still render a cure." Lucci's passion for cancer patients extends beyond the operating room, though. He studies the mechanisms of breast cancer metastasis and, last year, published research that showed cancer cells can be found in a patient's blood and bone marrow well before a metastasis diagnosis is made.

Passing It On: Lucci also is a professor in the Department of Surgical Oncology at MD Anderson. His students range from post-graduates to residents and fellows. Lucci said teaching has been a very rewarding experience. "The best thing is when students get to formulate an idea and test it. If it works, you witness how they feel like they are really part of the team and did something really great. I think it makes them want to go on and do that in their future."

— Holly Leger



Laurie Wheeler, PharmD

Computerized Provider Order Entry Pharmacist Lead/Staff Pharmacist

Heart Hospital of Austin, Austin, Texas

Graduate: 2002, Pharmacy

Playing the pharmacy field: Prior to pharmacy school, Laurie Wheeler, PharmD, worked as a hospital pharmacy technician. She worked briefly in retail pharmacy with Albertson's in the Midland/Odessa area after graduation but learned she missed working in a hospital setting.

Finding a niche: After three years as pharmacy director for a couple of Midland/Odessa health care facilities, Wheeler accepted an opportunity in 2005 to work as a Computerized Provider Order Entry (CPOE) pharmacist at Midland Memorial Hospital. The position introduced her to clinical informatics, which combines technology and evidence-based medicine to create an electronic health record.

"I've always been the super user for many of the pharmacy technology systems, such as automated dispensing machines and barcoded medication administration records. The Heart Hospital of Austin was the first opportunity for me to be involved from the beginning and to be responsible for the pharmacy setup."

Making the job her own: Wheeler covers staffing in the hospital's main pharmacy, builds the pharmacy content found in the hospital's evidence-based order set, checks the electronic system for correct medication choices and order properties, ensures all medications have the correct dosing information attached to them for a la carte electronic ordering and maintains the electronic pharmacy dictionary. She also participates in Quality Rounds, a multidisciplinary process where pharmacists and nurses review every patient looking for core measures or special needs that might need to be addressed.

"I enjoy finding solutions to problems. Finding solutions that the provider can use and that address patient care needs is truly rewarding. The TTUHSC pharmacy program encompasses many pharmacy specialties, which gave me the confidence to try several different career opportunities from retail to management to informatics."

Bringing it all home: Wheeler spends her free time reading fiction of all genres, baking recipes she finds on Pinterest and hanging out with her daughter, Brittney. She also enjoys helping her husband, Dan, with his home-brewing hobby.

— Mark Hendricks





Manny Santa Cruz Jr. NE-BC, DNP

Administrative Director for Nursing Operations for Las Palmas Medical Center
El Paso, Texas

Graduate: 2012, Doctor of Nursing Practice

His time at TTUHSC: “I think the best thing I remember and that I miss about my time at (TTUHSC) is the dynamic leadership in the nursing program. I strive to emulate all they taught me, especially from the point of giving back to my community.”

Paying it forward: As a nurse for 28 years, Santa Cruz says it is his turn to give back. He serves as the president of the National Association of Hispanic Nurses El Paso Chapter, which has 70 members. Each year the group hosts a community health care outreach that draws 350 attendees.

His early inspiration to pursue nursing: “I come from an extremely close family of eight. We were all about our family, very strong and centered. I remember picking up my mom from the hospital, as she would finish her shift as a medical technician. At the age of 16, I got a job in medical records at the hospital. One of my sisters was pursuing a nursing degree, and becoming a nurse was embedded in us very early.”

His challenges: “Thirty plus years ago, there weren’t too many males, especially Hispanic males in the nursing program. It was hard. I dropped out of the program three times, but with the support of my family, I finished. I can now use my story to encourage others.”

Hometown support: A native El Pasoan, Santa Cruz stands as a role model for his students. “I understand the unique challenges of our community. In addition, as a Hispanic male, they are able to relate to my story.”

What he knows about himself: “I only wish that I had started the program sooner. I had previously thought that I was not worthy of graduate school, yet being surrounded by wonderful instructors and colleagues, they made me proud of being myself again. I can do anything with the assurance that I am where I should be in my life.”

— Allison Wood

Sharing a Wealth of Perspective

BY JULIE C. WEITLAUF, PhD



NOBERT VON DER GROEVEN

The untimely passing of my father, Harry M. Weitlauf, MD, in October 2012 brought great sadness to our family. The sobering realization that my daughter, Sofia, will grow up not knowing her grandfather was particularly painful. In many ways, however, we still feel his presence in our lives. For example, the recorded library of children's books my father carefully narrated for Sofia is a treasure, serving as a great memento of their time together. However, my greatest comfort comes in knowing that, through his philanthropic legacy, she will come to hear his truest voice.

In my perspective, the decision of my father and his late wife, Kayla Weitlauf, MD (SOM '89), to bequeath part of their estate to the development of an endowed chair and research fund reflects a deeply cultivated perspective of gratitude for the privilege of a life in science, a keen awareness of the need for scientific philanthropy, and a recognition that planned giving is a powerful mechanism for sharing the wealth of perspective gleaned from a lifetime at the bench.

I look forward to the day my daughter is old enough to understand this perspective on family giving and philanthropy. When that day comes, I will describe her grandfather's deeply held belief that his life in science was a privilege. In his mind, academic freedom was the ultimate of luxuries. The opportunities to cultivate one's mind, receive mentorship, teach others, and contribute to the creation of new knowledge afforded by a life in science were, to him, priceless.


I will also tell her that her grandfather was a practical man — keenly aware of the necessity of philanthropy in sustaining the future of science. Believing that appreciation of this reality was the personal responsibility of all scientists, he ultimately arrived at the inevitable conclusion that personal engagement in scientific philanthropy was the only appropriate conclusion to his career.

Finally, I will tell her that her grandfather was a wise man — and this wisdom is reflected in the development of funding streams explicitly

dedicated to cancer research and the study of women's health, particularly women's cancers, at TTUHSC. Their gifts established The Harry and Kayla Weitlauf Chair for Cancer Research and the Kayla Weitlauf, MD, Memorial Research Endowment in Women's Health.

These gifts bespeak his gratitude for a life in science at the university he loved and memorialize his life and that of his beloved late wife, Kayla. However, they also provide deep insight to his awareness that women's limited representation in the basic sciences, both as scientists and subjects, may be well recognized but often are without a champion.

These gifts also provide the action step behind a very powerful statement regarding the need to bring women to the bench. The wealth of perspective behind this statement reflects not only his life in science but also personal lessons gleaned from the loss of a spouse to cancer and an extended family life where he was surrounded with women, including a daughter, a granddaughter and a niece.

I hope by the time I am explaining these sentiments to my daughter, her impressions will be "Grandpa was so old fashioned!" Perhaps, by then, well-rounded representation of women at the scientific bench, both as scientists and subjects, will be a given. If so, I will be so proud to tell her that her grandfather, together with his wife, Kayla, contributed toward the achievement of that goal. 



Julie C. Weitlauf, PhD, is a clinical psychologist at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System and clinical associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Stanford University School of Medicine. She is the daughter of the late Harry M. Weitlauf, MD, emeritus professor of cellular biology and biochemistry at TTUHSC.



Rx

For the last 15 years, Larry and Elaine McNeeley have taken a keen interest in a handful of students who, like their own daughter, have a passion for helping others.

Within days after Tammy McNeeley (SOAHS '97) received her diploma, she lost a year-long battle to melanoma. Her 11 classmates immediately pooled their money, and worked with the local chapter of the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association to establish an endowed scholarship. Each year, the couple adds to this scholarship and gets to know the recipients, a special group of students, who, through pursuit of their own dreams, are also making Tammy's come true.

READ THEIR STORY

[AND LEARN HOW YOUR GIFT CAN IMPACT TTUHSC]

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