

# ON ROUNDS AT CCHS

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A NEWSLETTER  
OF THE  
COLLEGE OF  
COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SCIENCES  
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

## Awards For

### Scholarly Activity Announced

The CCHS Research Committee has announced the re-establishment of the Resident Award for Scholarly Activity and the initiation of the Medical Student Award for Scholarly Activity. Each award carries with it a \$100 prize and will be presented annually if deserving applicants are available.

To be considered for an award, a resident or medical student may be nominated by a faculty member or may apply personally. The nomination/application should be received by Dr. James LEEPER, Chair of the Research Committee, by March 31 along with supporting evidence, which may consist of articles submitted to journals, copies of abstracts of presentations, or other material that reflects scholarly activity performed while affiliated with CCHS.

## The Dean's Corner

Research is a timely subject because of the heightened commitment to it at the University of Alabama under the leadership of President Joab Thomas and because we have recently established the Research Consulting Laboratory within the college. Research is a particularly sensitive issue in a college such as ours, which was established to meet a most pragmatic and obvious need in Alabama, more doctors and better health care in rural areas of the state. This is quite different from a mandate to do research on physician manpower, health needs, levels or areas of particular diseases, or effective and efficient methods of improving health in rural areas.

A second mandate was to emphasize the value of and need for primary care physicians and thus to influence and challenge medical students to choose the specialties to which people first turn for medical care. Possibly, behind the explicit mandates, there was the implicit assumption that these very applied and measurable outcomes were to be accomplished within the context of the usual academic expectations for research and scholarship.

One definition of research is "a diligent and systematic inquiry or investigation into a subject in order to discover or revise facts, theories, applications." The key words are "diligent," "systematic," and "discover." Above all, active curiosity, or the itch to inquire, is a necessary precursor to research.

Research activity is often categorized as fundamental or basic research and applied research. Supporters of research, including federal agencies, usually pay for basic research or applied research, rarely both.

An example of the difference between the two is the development of the Salk and Sabin vaccines for prevention of poliomyelitis. Dr. Salk's laboratory was dedicated to applied research and, focusing specifically on this outcome, succeeded in a relatively short period of time in producing a safe and effective vaccine that was rapidly administered to many children. Dr. Sabin's laboratory was engaged in more fundamental studies of the nature of viruses and their replication. The discovery of a safe and more effective live virus vaccine that could be given by mouth rather than injection and that provided higher

degrees of immunity for longer periods of time was a spin-off from the primary work of the laboratory. This, of course, does not prove that basic research is better than applied, but there is sometimes the risk in applied research that the problem will disappear before the solution is found.

The virtual eradication of smallpox worldwide is an example of the worth of applied research. An effective vaccine had been available for many decades, but smallpox continued to be a major cause of disease and death. Diligent and systematic worldwide epidemiologic studies led to the identification of the "hot spots" of smallpox where the disease remained endemic. These areas, although relatively few in number, encompassed thousands of square miles, principally in India and Africa. Localization of the problem areas was followed by an intense and persistent campaign extending over a decade to vaccinate every individual who had no pock marks. This required manipulation of ethnic, social, and political barriers to the procedure, including payoffs to tribal chieftains (community leaders). Initial strategies failed in many settings; but the World Health Organization teams did not quit, they just revised their strategies.

The point here is that, despite the snobbery of some basic researchers toward their colleagues in applied fields, one type of research is not inherently more valuable than the other. CCHS is configured to work principally in the applied area. The faculty has done this remarkably well considering its size, but we can do more. Peter Medawar, a British Nobel Prize winner in medicine, quotes William Blake in offering a more metaphysical definition of research with moral overtones. He says it is "doing good in minute particulars." If, in our inquiries, we do good in minute particulars, we will do well.

W.J.C.

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## Profile

William W. Dressler, Ph.D.

William W. Dressler, Ph.D., an Iowa native, received his doctoral degree in anthropology from the University of Connecticut in 1978 and joined the faculties of CCHS and the university's Department of Anthropology that same year. Now serving as associate professor of behavioral science and adjunct associate professor of anthropology, Dr. Dressler has distinguished himself as a leading researcher in the field of medical anthropology.

Dr. Dressler's interest in cultural environments and their influence on health and disease first took him to the island of St. Lucia in the West Indies where, for over a year, he investigated the effects of rapid modernization on the nature and incidence of hypertension. In 1982, Dr. Dressler published his study titled Hyper-tension and Cultural Change: Acculturation and Disease in the West Indies, with a foreword by William R. Willard, M.D., Dean Emeritus of CCHS. This research won him the Stirling Award in Culture and Personality Studies from the American Anthropological Association.

Dr. Dressler is currently serving as technical advisor to the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization on a study of sociocultural factors in cardiovascular disease in Brazil, Jamaica, and Mexico.

In addition to his international work, his teaching, and his service responsibilities, Dr. Dressler has, for the past three years, been conducting research, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, on social support and mental health in a Southern black community.

Dr. Dressler, who is the acting chair of behavioral science, has published more than ten books and articles on medical anthropology and has three manuscripts in preparation. We acknowledge and applaud Dr. Dressler's contribution to the college, to the university, and to the academic community at large.

## WRAP: Westside Research Action Project

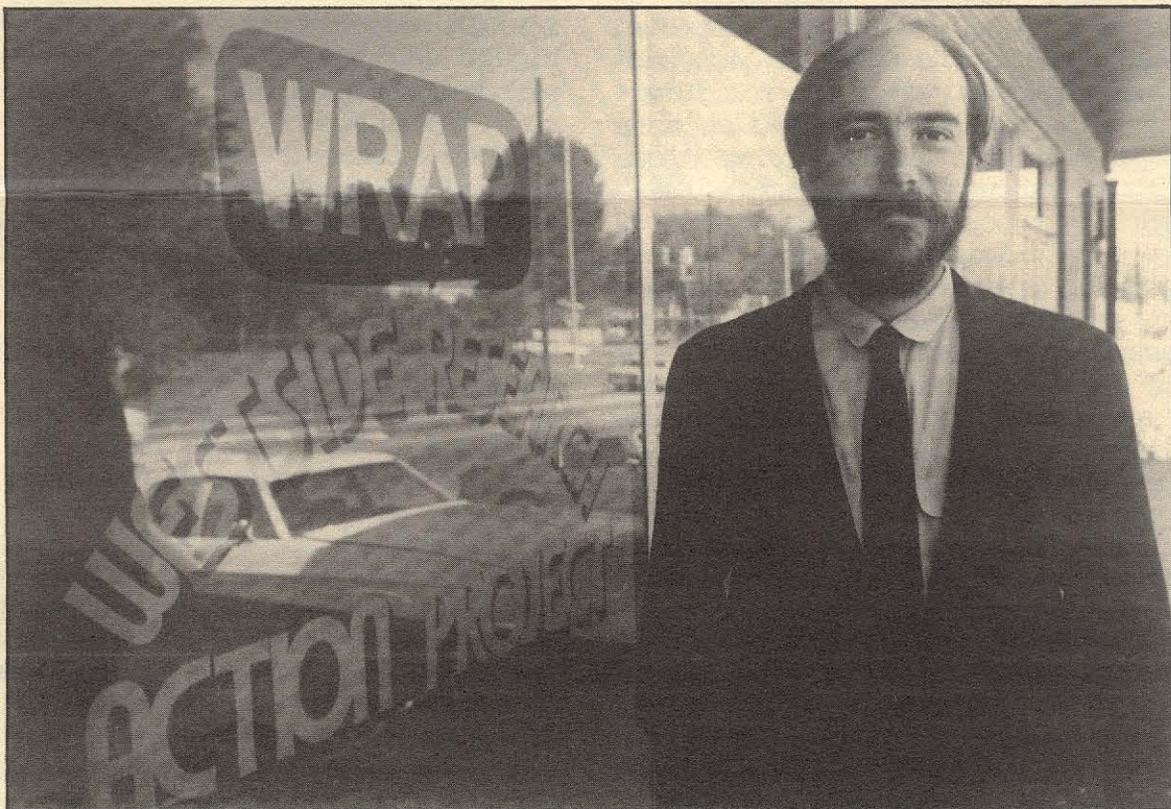
Dr. William Dressler's unique approach to the study of social support in a black community has won him over \$300,000 in funding support from the National Institute of Mental Health. The site for this important three-year study has been a predominantly black community of 20,000 situated in the western section of Tuscaloosa and called Westside. Rather than gather his data through the customary academic approach of brief, detached questionnaires and interviews, Dr. Dressler's entire research staff was chosen from the local community and directed by a volunteer advisory board of sixteen community leaders. The name WRAP, meaning Westside Research Action Project, was selected by the board.

From their WRAP office, situated in the middle of the community, two research assistants and the research director, Ms. Barbara Pitts, visited 285 randomly selected households to conduct extensive interviews about social support and kin networks. Their findings are intriguing. For example, the commonly accepted perception that black families are matriarchal is challenged by Dr. Dressler's findings,

which suggest that this appears only at the household level; the larger family network, an important source of social support, is frequently headed by a male.

Furthermore, the typically large size of the extended black family, previously believed to produce individual stress, actually contributes significantly to improved mental health among its members. The stresses of everyday life, which in this community, according to Dr. Dressler's findings, are related predominantly to economics and racism, are "buffered" by support from the extended black family. According to Dr. Dressler, "We found it essential that the support come from members of the extended family, not just a member of the immediate family or a close friend."

Dr. Dressler has an application currently under review by the National Institute of Mental Health to study the prevention of depression on the Westside and has recently been awarded a Biomedical Research Support Grant by the university to investigate sociocultural factors and elevated blood pressure in this same community.



## Patient Education Initiative at Capstone Medical Center

With a commitment to practicing preventive medicine, the Capstone Medical Center (CMC) nursing staff has mounted an internal campaign to promote patient education. Patients needing or seeking information on a variety of health concerns find CMC nurses eager to provide written information, one-on-one instruction, or visual aids to help them.

Pat Northcutt-Stephens, R.N., Director of Nursing, met with her staff of five L.P.N.s and ten medical assistants earlier this year to review the major health concerns and illnesses seen in all clinical areas. Some educational materials were ordered accordingly, and other information sheets were prepared internally. In selecting printed material, the nurses knew that they must prepare for a variety of educational levels. Ms. Northcutt-Stephens reports, "We have something for everyone. All information is not geared to someone with a college degree. Some materials are elementary with illustrated instructions, others provide pertinent information in laymen's terms, and still others are technical and complex."

Special care was taken in planning the two new family medicine supersuites to provide for patient education. Special wallbrackets were constructed in each exam room. "Some patients won't ask for information, but if pamphlets are available in the room they don't mind helping themselves," Ms. Northcutt-Stephens explains.

The specific types of available information vary from clinic to clinic. Packets of information have been prepared for new obstetrics patients and a similar packet on infant care compiled for new mothers. The topics of greatest interest in internal medicine and family medicine are hypertension, diabetes, and related concerns. Other popular pamphlets and booklets in these areas include those on birth control, venereal disease, low sodium diets, cholesterol, urinary tract infections, and self breast exams.

Among pediatric patients and their families, the information in high demand includes fever management and infant feeding recommendations. More handouts are available on otitis media, allergies, and immunizations. Special emphasis is given

to accident prevention, including the use of car seats and Poison Control Center information.

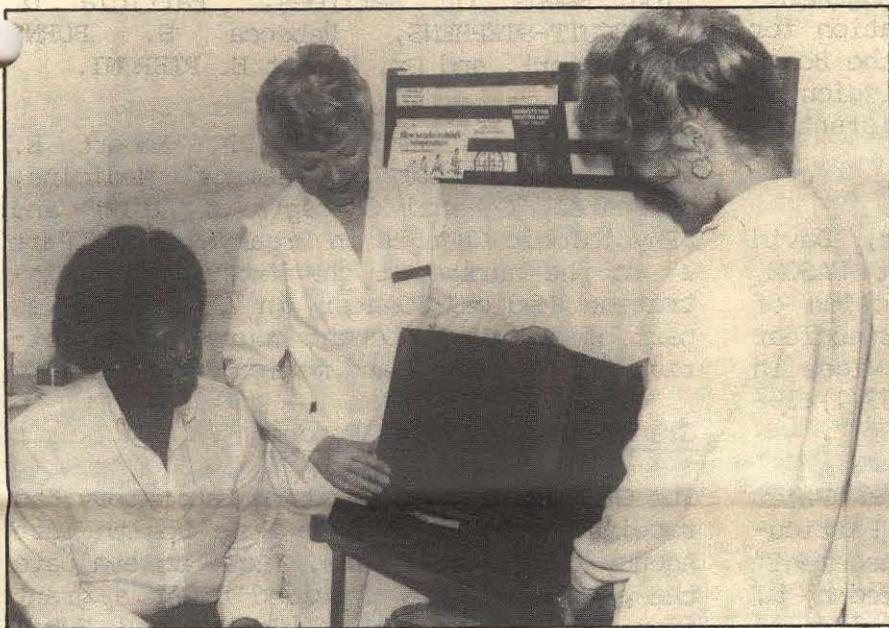
For less common health disorders, material is centrally stored at CMC on topics ranging from AIDS and congenital birth defects to hyperthyroidism and behavior problems.

Patient education does not stop with handouts, however. Ms. Northcutt-Stephens says, "Some people learn by reading, some by observing, and others by a combination of both." The CMC nurses are prepared to do one-on-one instruction for patients with special health concerns. In the occupational health and minor surgery clinics, health problems include chronic lung disease and back injuries. The medical assistants in these clinics instruct patients in special breathing exercises and back-strengthening exercises.

The latest emphasis in family medicine and internal medicine is home glucose monitoring. Nurses teach diabetic patients how to stick their own fingers, draw blood samples, use a specially designed paper to check glucose levels, and keep a flow chart of daily readings. The information helps the physician make a determination about insulin requirements. The program has been highly successful: "This test has to be performed just right to be accurate. We show the patients how to do it and then have them demonstrate the technique back to us. We've been very pleased with the results," Ms. Northcutt-Stephens says.

In the future, CMC nurses would like to expand their collection of health education film cassettes and replace the center's well-used viewers and some broken films. Some of the ten-minute films presently used by patients include titles on infant care, vasectomy, self breast exam, as well as others. The nurses believe it is helpful to have films to reinforce what the doctors and nurses tell patients.

According to Ms. Northcutt-Stephens, patient education is a vital part of patient care: "Some patients don't know what questions to ask. We want them to get involved in their care so that they are participants, not victims. And when they are involved, we see better compliance with physician's instructions."



Patricia Northcutt-Stephens, Director of Nursing, and Diane Kerr, LPN, view an educational videotape on hypertension with a CMC patient.

### News Briefs

On February 1, Dr. R. Joe BURLESON, recently retired Associate Professor of Surgery, was honored for his years of valuable service to the college at a reception hosted by Dr. William R. SHAMBLIN, Associate Professor and Chief of Surgery, his wife, Sandra, Dr. Wilmer J. COGGINS, Dean, and Dr. Deborah COGGINS, Associate Professor of Psychiatry.

Mary J. CHAMBERS, Secretary to the Administrator, Capstone Medical Center, was recently selected for "Outstanding Young Women of America." In addition to holding the rank of sergeant in the Alabama National Guard, Ms. Chambers is heavily involved in church and community activities.

Jackie CLARK has been promoted to Insurance and Collections Supervisor in the Business Office at the Capstone Medical Center.

Jan E. COBB has been appointed Patient Financial Aid Counselor at the Capstone Medical Center.

Sarah DEMELLIER, Coordinator of Contracts and Grants, has been named chair for the university's 1984 United Way Campaign.

Brent B. GOODWIN, Coordinator of Educational Programs, received a direct commission as second lieutenant as a medical service

officer in the 75th Field Hospital, a Tuscaloosa-based medical reserve unit. Dr. Robert E. PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine and a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve, has been named chief of professional services for the field hospital.

Dr. James LEEPER, Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Director of the Research Consulting Laboratory (RCL), announced that the following have been appointed research consultants for the RCL: Lee BADGER, Coordinator of Research, Department of Psychiatry; Sarah DEMELLIER, Coordinator of Contracts and Grants; Dr. William DRESSLER, Associate Professor and Acting Chief of Behavioral Science; Dr. Roland FICKEN, Associate Professor of Behavioral Science and Acting Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Dr. Robert GLOOR, Associate Professor of Community Medicine; Dr. Harry KNOPKE, Associate Professor of Behavioral Science; Dr. Harriet MYERS, Assistant Professor, Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science; Dr. Robert NORTHRUP, Professor and Chief of Community Medicine; Dr. Michael O'REAR, Fellow, Department of Community Medicine; Dr. Robert PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine; and Dr. William WINTERNITZ, Professor and Chief of Internal Medicine.

In January, Dr. David LEWIS, Assistant Dean for Financial Planning and Management, received a certificate of appreciation for dedicated service as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Commission on the Certification of Physician Assistants.

#### Presentations and Publications

As a first-year medical student, David BOLUS (now in his third year at UASOM, Tuscaloosa) published "The Interaction of Substituted Catechols With Some Binuclear Copper (II) Compounds" with G. S. Vigee in Inorganica Chimica Acta (1982; 67(1):19-25).

Dr. Wilmer J. COGGINS, Dean, and Peter Graham have published "Patients in Particular: Three Cases in Clinical Management" in The Culture of Biomedicine, edited by D. Heyward Brock, which is the first volume in the series Studies in Science and Culture (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1984, pp. 138-144).

Dr. William DRESSLER, Associate Professor and Acting Chief of Behavioral Science, has published "Blood Pressure, Relative Weight, and Psychosocial Resources" in Psychosomatic Medicine 1983; 45:527-536.

On February 2, Margaret GARNER, Assistant Professor and Clinical Nutritionist, Department of Family Medicine, spoke to the Tuscaloosa Medical Women's Auxiliary on "Controversies in Nutrition and Health."

Dr. Robert E. PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine; Brent B. GOODWIN, Coordinator of Educational Programs; Rebecca S. BURNS, Director of Medical Records; and Gaye B. HARBIN, Medical Assistant in the Internal Medicine Suite, attended an international conference on "Transitions to Leisure: Impact of Technology, Work, Play, and Retirement" on January 26-28 in St. Petersburg, Florida, and presented the following papers: "Retired Victims: Medical Quackery and Flimflam Operations Involving the Elderly," Dr. Robert E. PIERONI and Dr. Lorin A. Baumhover, Director, Center for the Study of Aging, UA; "The Health Status of Military Retirees," Brent B. GOODWIN and Dr. Robert E. PIERONI; "Large Scale Implementation of the 'Vial of Life' Program Among Retirees at an Ambulatory Clinic," Gaye B. HARBIN, Patricia D. NORTHCUTT-STEPHENS, Director of Nursing,

and Dr. Robert E. PIERONI; and "Immunization Needs of Retirees," Patricia D. NORTHCUTT-STEPHENS, Rebecca S. BURNS (presenter), and Dr. Robert E. PIERONI.

On January 10 and 24, Dr. Robert E. PIERONI, Professor of Internal Medicine, presented "General Concepts of Aging" and "Physiologic Changes in Organ Systems, Part I" to the nurses at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Tuscaloosa as part of a four-component course in geriatrics for VA nurses and medical personnel.

#### Grants and Contracts Funded

The CCHS Research Consulting Laboratory has received a contract from Home Health Care Agency of North Alabama, Inc., to evaluate the services being provided under a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Department of Psychiatry has signed a contract with Bryce Hospital for Dr. Nicholas A. GREEN, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, to consult on the adolescent unit.

#### Gifts Received

Merck Sharp & Dohme donated 200 doses of M-M-R II, Measles, Mumps, and Rubella Vaccine for fourth-year medical students Tim KELLY and Brian GLEASON to take with them on their community medicine clerkship at the Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia. The value of this donation to the Colombian medical school was \$1,698.

#### Meetings, Workshops, and Consultations

CMC department supervisors Rebecca BURNS, William KRAUSE, Joe MALONE, Patricia NORTHCUTT-STEPHENS, and Barbara SELF recently participated in a six-week course on "Essentials in Hospital and Health Care Management" at Druid City Hospital.

From January 24 to February 2, Dr. William DRESSLER, Associate Professor and Acting Chief of Behavioral Science, was in Brazil consulting with faculty of the Department of Medicine, University of Sao Paulo School of Medicine Campus at Rebeirao Preto, on hypertension research; they also initiated a joint project on obesity. While there, Dr. Dressler presented a colloquium in the

Department of Medicine on "Stress and Hypertension."

Margaret GARNER, Assistant Professor and Clinical Nutritionist, Department of Family Medicine, made a site visit to the California State University at Los Angeles on January 15-18 for the Commission on Accreditation of the American Dietetic Association.

Dr. L. Ralph JONES, Professor and Chief of Psychiatry, attended a workshop titled "Family Therapy for the Mental Health Professional," sponsored by the Boston University School of Medicine, in Orlando, Florida, on December 27-30, 1983.

#### Visitors and Special Events

On February 8, Dr. R. Donald Gambrell, Jr., Associate Clinical Professor in the Departments of Endocrinology and Obstetrics/Gynecology at the Medical College of Georgia, presented conferences on "Menopause," "Osteoporosis," and "The Emotional and Social Aspects of Menopause." The author of over a dozen journal articles and papers on endometrial carcinoma and estrogen therapy for postmenopausal women, Dr. Gambrell has several ongoing research projects in his specialty.

Bette Ruth Ferguson, a student in the Graduate School of Library Service, took an internship in medical librarianship from February 1 through February 17 at the Health Sciences Library under the supervision of Lisa RAINS, Chief Medical Librarian.

#### Newcomers

Julie BELL and Pat ROBERTS are part-time staff members in the Health Sciences Library. They will be assisting patrons at the circulation desk.

Shirley FLORENCE is the new staff assistant and registrar in the Office of Education; she was previously a staff assistant in the university's Office of Admission Services.

Dr. Harriet Hoehne MYERS has joined the faculty as assistant professor of clinical psychology, with a joint appointment in the Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Science.

#### Departures

Dr. Howard B. MCNEELEY completed his residency training here on December 31, 1983, and is now practicing in Norris, Tennessee.

Teresa TAYLOR, Faculty Secretary, Department of Family Medicine, has accepted a position teaching computer science at Hillcrest High School in Tuscaloosa County.

#### Vital Statistics

Matthew David Calderwood was born to Julie and DAVID CALDERWOOD, third-year resident, on December 19, 1983. His birth weight was 8 pounds, 1 ounce.

Connie Chen Leeper, birth weight 9 lbs., 5 oz., was born to Catherine and JAMES LEEPER, Associate Professor of Community Medicine, on December 28, 1983, at Druid City Hospital.

Our sympathy is extended to Bobby SELWYN, Audiovisual Circulation Manager, whose father died on December 30, 1983.

Luke Daniel Smith was born on December 16, 1983, to Becky and GREG SMITH, a 1983 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa. Dr. Smith is in the Air Force and is in a surgery residency at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Marlee Melton Smith was born to Ree and SAGE SMITH, third-year resident, on December 28, 1983. Her birth weight was 8 pounds, 14 ounces.

Lee Herren Walker, an 8 pound boy, was born to Jerri and ROBERT WALKER, a second-year resident, on February 10, 1984.

On February 4, William WINTERNITZ, Professor and Chief of Internal Medicine, married Madeleine Hill, Executive Director of Hospice of West Alabama, at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa.

#### Miscellaneous

The residency program has had its strongest recruiting year ever, interviewing 63 applicants, a 50 percent increase over previous years. There were significantly more candidates from in-state schools than

in the past. The program ranked 55 candidates for the upcoming National Resident Match Program.

Dr. Stephen WADE, a 1981 graduate of UASOM, Tuscaloosa, is completing his pediatric residency at the University of Tennessee, Memphis. He will open his practice in Winfield, Alabama, on July 1.

In order to increase his accessibility to faculty, staff, residents, and students Dr. James LEEPER, Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Director of the Research Consulting Laboratory, is available in an office in the workroom of the Health Sciences Library on Monday afternoons and in room 179 of the Capstone Medical Center on Wednesday afternoons.

### College Calendar

#### March 2

First Friday Letters, Science, and Medicine Conference, 12:30 p.m., 101 Educational Tower, Druid City Hospital. Dr. Marshall Winokur, Associate Professor of Russian, on "Moscow's Vanishing Churches."

#### March 7-9

Alabama Gerontological Society Third Annual Conference, Hyatt House, Birmingham, Alabama. Representatives of CCHS will be presenting papers or poster sessions.

#### March 14-17

Alabama Academy of Science Sixty-first Annual Meeting, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama. Representatives of the college will be presenting papers or poster sessions.

#### March 21

General Faculty Meeting, 12 noon, Carrel Room, Capstone Medical Center.

#### March 30

Formal deadline for the submission of applications to the CCHS Small Grants Program. For further information contact Dr. James Leeper, Chair of the Research Committee.

#### April 6

First Friday Letters, Science, and Medicine Conference, 12:30 p.m., 101 Educational Tower, Druid City Hospital. Pianist Natalie Hinderas, Professor of Music at Temple University and holder of the University of Alabama's Endowed Chair of Music.

#### April 11

General Faculty Meeting, 12 noon, Carrel Room, Capstone Medical Center.

#### April 26-29

American College of Physicians Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Contact Jane Ayers (215) 243-1200 or (800) 523-1546.

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