

On Rounds

The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences

Volume 8, Number 2

Spring, 1998

CCHS Aids Planning for Rural Health Access in Alabama Grants from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Target Eight Southern States

Representatives of the College of Community Health Sciences participated in a March 26 meeting of key stakeholders to discuss Alabama's application for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's "Southern Rural Access" program, an initiative to improve access to health care in the rural South. The organizational meeting/applicant workshop, held in Montgomery, included key players in Alabama's health care delivery system, health care advocates, and others interested in improving access to health care in rural areas.

The college's unique mission, "training medical students and primary care physicians with a special emphasis on rural areas," makes it a critical player in the state's organizational efforts to apply for RWJ funds. "CCHS will be working with all components of the health care delivery system to assure that Alabama benefits from the opportunity that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has offered us to improve health care in this state. We are committed to working with all our colleagues to achieve the best possible proposal," said **John Wheat**, M.D., CCHS Associate Professor of Community Medicine and Internal Medicine.

Invitees were identified by a steering committee made up of Dr. Wheat; **Sandra Hullett**, M.D., a graduate of the CCHS family practice residency program, member of federal health/medical advisory boards, and an influential national spokesperson for rural health care; and Dr. **Clyde Bargainer**, Director of the Alabama Office of Rural Health in the state health department and also President of the Alabama Rural Health Association.

CCHS Senior Associate Dean **William Curry**, M.D., who is also University of Alabama School of Medicine Assistant Dean for Rural Medicine, spoke at the meeting. He represented the perspective of academic medicine in Alabama and discussed "pipeline" efforts to recruit and train primary care physicians to practice in medically underserved rural areas. He cited the Rural Health Scholars and Rural Medical Scholars, CCHS programs to identify and encourage future rural practitioners that were initiated with funding from the Family Practice Rural Health Board.

Other speakers addressing access to health care in rural Alabama were **Kathy Vincent** speaking for **Don Williamson**, M.D., State Public Health Officer; **James Coleman**, CEO of West Alabama Health Services; and Dr. **Eli Capilouto**, Dean of the UAB School of Public Health.

The Southern Rural Access program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is designed to help improve access to basic health care in eight of the most rural, medically underserved states in the country, said Program Director **Michael Beachler**, who conducted the meeting on behalf of the RWJ Foundation.



Steering Committee members who assisted RWJ Foundation officials in planning the Alabama stakeholders meeting posed with the Southern Rural Access project leaders at the stakeholders meeting in Montgomery in March. (L-R) Clyde Bargainer of Montgomery; Isiah Lineberry, Deputy Director of the Southern Rural Access Program; Dr. John Wheat of CCHS; Michael Beachler, Director of the RWJ Southern Rural Access Program; and Dr. Sandra Hullett of Eutaw, Alabama.

A key factor for success, he said, is strong partnerships with underserved communities.

"The Foundation believes that combining promising interventions and working over a sustained period of time with a regional group of states will provide the best opportunity to improve access to care," according to the rationale in the application guidelines.

A key factor for success is strong partnerships with underserved communities.

-Michael Beachler, Director
Southern Rural Access Program

The program components cited as critical by the RWJ Foundation in its consideration of the Southern Rural Access proposals are:

Rural Leaders Pipeline Effort: "to establish a cadre of health professions students committed to becoming leaders in primary care in rural underserved areas" and "specifically to build or strengthen partnerships among rural communities, primary care health professional students from these communities, educational institutions, and state agencies."

Recruitment and Retention of Primary Care Providers: to develop an "effective recruitment and retention strategy" and promote "primary care-friendly policy changes."

Building Rural Health Networks: to help states develop rural health network policies and develop local networks. Rural health networks are formal organizational arrangements (including physicians, hospitals, community health and social service agencies, other providers, and possibly consumers) that "use the resources of multiple organizations and specify how collaborative functions will be achieved" to help rural providers enter into and administer risk contracts with payers, assess health needs using population-based approaches, involve local residents in the decision-making processes, and retain health care dollars in local communities.

Revolving Loan Fund: to enable grant recipients to help rural communities improve their health infrastructure, using foundation funds to leverage state, federal, and private capital funds.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has made available \$13.8 million over three years for the first phase of an effort to improve access to care in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, East Texas, and West Virginia. A broad consortium of stakeholders in each state must designate and support a single organization to lead activities under this program. Between \$800,000 and \$2.2 million per state will be available for the initial phase of the project. Additional funding from the Foundation's 21st Century Challenge Fund (continued on page 2)

RWJ Rural Access Grant

(continued from page 1)

will be available later to support demonstration projects, analysis of specific problems, and projects to build capacity.

Matching funds for these grants must come from new monies provided by the consortium partners and public and private sources.

In addition to Drs. Wheat and Curry, CCHS participants at the planning meeting were staff and students from rural health projects in the college: Rural Medical Scholars, Rural Health Scholars, Environmental/Occupational Health Research Project, Child Caring Initiative, and West Alabama AHEC.

Dr. Shenkenburg to Represent Family Medicine at Conference in Peru



Amy Schenkenburg, M.D.

Dr. Amy Schenkenburg, Chief Resident in the family practice program here, has been chosen by the University of Alabama School of Medicine to represent family medicine for a CME course in Peru in May. The course, "Controversial Issues in Women's Health," is jointly sponsored by the UAB Division of Continuing Medical Education and International Expeditions and is scheduled for May 9-17 in the Peruvian Andes-Cusco and Macho Picchu.

Dr. Michael Harrington, professor and chairman of the Department of Family Medicine in Birmingham, notified CCHS Residency Director **Marc Armstrong**, M.D., of Dr. Shenkenburg's selection in February, calling her "an outstanding young resident physician." Dr. Armstrong concurred and said he was very pleased that she had been recognized for this honor.

Residency Grads Fulfill Rural Mission of CCHS

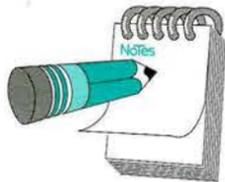
The Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency, created in 1972 by the Alabama legislature, filled thirteen first year slots during the national match (of medical students to residencies) this spring. **Marc Armstrong**, M.D., now CCHS Residency Director, was the first resident recruited to the program in 1973-74, and he reflected on the success the program has had in meeting the hopes of its creators.

"As of March, 1998 we have had 234 graduates of the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency," said Dr. Armstrong. "They have come from twenty-three states and the District of Columbia. Over fifty percent of our graduates practice in Alabama (in 35 counties) and fifty percent practice in towns of fewer than 25,000."

Dr. Armstrong, who came to CCHS to head the residency program in 1995, credited **Sam Gaskins**, M.D., Associate Professor of Family Medicine, for excellent records and keeping in touch with former residents, which both allow for citing statistics and assessing the results of the program.

Dr. Armstrong also said that "in the last five years, 94% of our graduates entered private practice, 3% went into government service, and 3% teaching." He added that 75% are practicing in Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana. 68% are in solo practice or groups of fewer than five physicians; and 90% have an active hospital practice. 29% offer maternity services, 26% perform colposcopy, and 30% perform stress ECGs.

Almost all former residents (90%) rated their residency training as very good to excellent, he said.



Faculty Notes

Send faculty news items to
Linda Jackson, Editor
Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487.
Room 372 Nott Hall 348-1302
Fax 348-9417 (Dean's office)

Dr. Wheat Attends Rural Medicine Conferences

John Wheat, M.D., Associate Professor of Behavioral and Community Medicine and Internal Medicine, participated in a strategic planning meeting for rural health and safety held in Nashville on March 5-6. The Southern Extension/Research Activity Information Exchange Group sponsored the meeting, which was organized by the Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University. Dr. Wheat was leader of the discussion to assign timelines and designate responsibilities for addressing health issues in the rural South over the next three years.

Dr. Wheat will also attend the spring conference (May 27-29 in Kansas City) of the North American Consortium on Agromedicine. He is President-Elect of this organization. Conferees will visit agromedicine work sites to focus on building partnerships for health and safety in agricultural work and communities.

Topics include: agromedicine poison control, disaster interventions, family stress, violence, waste and pollutant management, pollutants and lung disease, agricultural chemicals and cancer, neurological diseases, and health and safety for the rural elderly. The topics are closely related to the research Dr. Wheat is conducting in his NIH-funded study on occupational and environmental health hazards in rural areas. The research will lead to development of curriculum materials for family physicians in training on medical care related to environment in rural Alabama.

Melissa Hutchens, a research associate for the NIH study, will prepare a poster presentation for display at the conference. It will include information on the goals of the study and excerpts of interviews with farmers, physicians, foresters, extension agents, community leaders and other rural Alabamians on the needs in occupational and environmental health.

Hutchens, who has a master's degree in rural sociology, has conducted interviews with rural residents and service providers across the state. She said poster excerpts include physicians' horror stories of ingested pesticides, farmers' concerns about immunizing animals, and reports of homes which run sewage onto the ground outside.

Dr. Gresham Helps with Premed Advising and Selection Process

Dr. Cathy Gresham, CCHS Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of Medical Student Affairs, is visiting colleges and universities across the state this spring to assist the University of Alabama School of Medicine



Cathy Gresham, M.D.

(UASOM) with premed student counseling. She is working with Dr. **George Hand**, UASOM Assistant Dean for Admissions, and Dr. **Bobby Moore**, Assistant Dean, UASOM Huntsville program. They are advising pre-medical students at Samford, Birmingham Southern, Auburn University, The University of Alabama, University of South Alabama, Springhill College, University of North Alabama, UAH, and UAB. Their efforts complement those of pre-health advisors on each campus and provide both campus advisors and students with information on UASOM.

Dr. Marsh Discusses Stroke Care at National Conference

Dr. E. Eugene Marsh, neurologist and Assistant Professor in the CCHS Dept. of Psychiatry and Neurology, presented information at a session of the 50th Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Neurology on April 29 in Minneapolis.



Eugene Marsh, M.D.

His topic, "Opportunities for Improvement of Care of Medicare Beneficiaries with Acute Ischemic Stroke," summarized results to date of a study he is conducting for the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation (AQAF) on effective care of stroke patients.

Dr. Marsh chairs the Stroke Project Committee convened and funded by the AQAF, a state agency designated as Alabama's peer review organization by HCFA (Health Care Financing Administration). The Committee is comprised of specialists in areas related to stroke who advise AQAF on the agency's quality improvement project on the care of hospital patients admitted with acute ischemic stroke. Also on the committee are neurologist Frank Gilliam, M.D., internist Laurie Hall, M.D., and epidemiologist John Waterbor, M.D., all of UAB.

Dr. Marsh serves as the Stroke Project Director. He completed a cerebral vascular fellowship at the University of Iowa and serves on the American Heart Association Southeast Affiliate Stroke Task Force.

His presentation included a summary and analysis of data gathered by AQAF from hospital records of 11 volunteer Alabama hospitals regarding: time elapsed from arrival in the ER to brain imaging study; treatment of hypertension during the first 24 hours after admission; measures to prevent deep venous thrombosis (DVT); and use of aspirin, ticlopidine, or warfarin for secondary stroke prevention at time of discharge. Data suggest significant opportunities exist to improve the care of stroke patients in Alabama, he said.

Dr. Rand Elected to AOA

Elizabeth Rand, M.D., Chair of Psychiatry at CCHS, was elected in March to membership in Alpha Omega Alpha, the national medical honor society. She will be inducted on May 6, 1998, along with twenty-seven third- and fourth-year medical students and three UAB faculty members who were also chosen for membership.

Dr. Gresham has just completed her third year of service on the UA School of Medicine Admissions Committee, and for the past two years she has served on the nine-member Selection Committee which interviews medical school candidates. She also serves on the Early Medical School Acceptance Program Selections Committee for UAB. This committee interviews high school seniors who plan to attend UAB and who are competing for the ten early admission (to UASOM) spaces available each year. She will also help with the interviews in June for next year's Rural Medical Scholars, a CCHS-based program for outstanding rural students who plan primary care practice in rural areas.

Dr. Gresham is a member of the UASOM Clinical Sciences Subcommittee, and she attends the tri-campus Clerkship Directors meetings in her role as CCHS Director of Medical Student Affairs. In April, she attended a meeting in Chicago of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Group on Student Affairs.

Tuscaloosa Seniors: National Residency Match, 1998

NAME	SPECIALTY	PROGRAM
Roderick Adams	Internal Medicine	University of Cincinnati Hospital Cincinnati, Ohio
Sami Ali	Emergency Medicine	Earl K. Long Memorial Hospital Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Wade Alverson	OB/GYN	Orlando Regional Medical Center Orlando, Florida
Karen Burgess	Pediatrics	Univ. of Alabama Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama
Miranda Edwards	Family Medicine	Medical College of Georgia Augusta, Georgia
Jeremy Franklin	Pediatrics	Texas Tech Univ. Affil. Hospitals Lubbock, Texas
Kevin Giadrosich	Pathology	Baptist Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama
Rebecca Giadrosich	Pediatrics	Univ. of Alabama Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama
Dan Guralnick	Internal Medicine	Virginia Mason Hospital Seattle, Washington
Tara Haynes	Family Medicine	Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Latonya James	Family Medicine	LSU School of Medicine New Orleans, Louisiana
Dennis Jones	Family Medicine	Carraway Methodist Med. Center Birmingham, Alabama
Patrick Lowe	OB/GYN	University of Iowa Hospitals Iowa City, Iowa
Colin Marino	Emergency Medicine	Yale-New Haven Hospital New Haven, Connecticut
Tamela Miles	Internal Medicine	Univ. of Alabama Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama
Matti Palo	Orthopedics	Alton Oschner Medical Foundation New Orleans, Louisiana
David Smith	Prelim. Medicine Diag. Radiology	Baptist Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama Univ. of Miss. Medical Cntr. Jackson, Mississippi
Sid Smith	OB/GYN	University of South Alabama Mobile, Alabama
Denise Stripling	Surgery	Carraway Methodist Medical Cntr. Birmingham, Alabama
Stewart Tankersley	OB/GYN	Alton Oschner Medical Foundation New Orleans, Louisiana
Jason Thurman	Emergency Medicine	University of Cincinnati Cincinnati, Ohio
Brian Wade	Urology	Univ. of Alabama Medical Center Birmingham, Alabama
Jim Wallace	Family Medicine	Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Tuscaloosa, Alabama
Bart Wood	Surgery	University of South Alabama Mobile, Alabama

Match Day Reveals Next Step for Medical Students

CCHS senior medical students learned their residency training assignments on March 18, which was national "Match Day." Medical students across the country were computer-matched to residency programs based on their choices and input from the programs after the application/interview process.

Five Tuscaloosa seniors chose family medicine for specialty training, and two -- **Tara Haynes** and **Jim Wallace** -- will remain here to enter the three-year Family Practice Residency. Three CCHS seniors will enter internal medicine residencies, three are enrolling in pediatrics training, and four are headed to OB/GYN residencies. Three students chose emergency medicine training, and two will train in surgery. Other specialties chosen by CCHS seniors are urology, radiology, orthopedics, and pathology.

Dr. **Wilmer Coggins**, CCHS Dean Emeritus, who attended the Match Day luncheon with students and faculty in Tuscaloosa, said he was proud of the match results. "Our students matched to some prestigious residency programs," he said, "and I think that speaks well of the preparation and training they receive at CCHS."

UASOM Medical Students Choose CCHS Training

As "Match Day" passes and senior medical students look forward their residency training programs, CCHS prepares to welcome rising third year medical students from the Birmingham campus of UASOM who will receive clinical training here during their last two years of medical school.

"Twenty-three students have chosen CCHS as their home base for clinical clerkships," said Dr. **Cathy Gresham**, CCHS Director of Medical Student Affairs. "In addition, a number of Birmingham-based students will do one or more clerkships here, predominantly in surgery and a few in family/rural medicine, psychiatry/neurology, and OB/GYN. I think they choose to train here because they know they get more "hands on" experience and one-to-one time with faculty."

Medical students entering their fourth year are using a new tri-campus computer program to schedule courses. They have 16 weeks of required coursework and 16 weeks of electives to complete. With the help of volunteer faculty advisors, students choose the courses that they need and enter their choices on FYSH (Fourth Year Scheduling Helper). Students choose their own advisors from faculty who consent to serve in this capacity, said Dr. Gresham.

Honors Convocation

May 15, 1998

6:00 p.m.

Four Points Hotel
Tuscaloosa

Guest Speaker

James A. Pittman, Jr.,
M.D.

Dean Emeritus and
Distinguished Professor
University of Alabama
School of Medicine

CCHS Family Practice Residency Fills

CCHS reviewed close to 200 applications and interviewed 66 medical students for positions in the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency. "We had our busiest recruiting year in recent memory," said Residency Director **Marc Armstrong**, M.D., "and we look forward to having thirteen excellent first year residents join the program on July 1."

Incoming residents are Ashley Keir Burchfield, University of Alabama-Huntsville; James Kris City, University of Arkansas; Brad Joseph Gaspard, LSU-New Orleans; Sharon Denise Gray, University of South Alabama; Natasha Michelle Harder, University of Tennessee-Memphis; Tara Haynes, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa; Bennett Pate Hogan, Mercer University; Bobby Gene Jones, Jr., University Health Sciences, Kansas City, Mo.; Michael Allen Kelley, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa; Gloria Morgan, Ponce School of Medicine, Puerto Rico; Stephan Alan Roberts, University Health Sciences, Kansas City, Mo.; Gerard Szyber, American University of the Caribbean; and James E. Wallace, Jr., University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa.

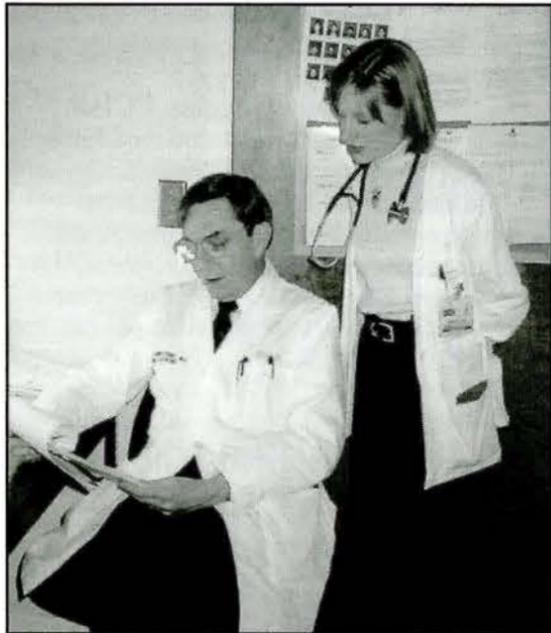
Medical Students See Their Own Patients in "We Care" at Capstone

Medical students get a chance to take care of their own patients during their first year at CCHS. "We Care" at Capstone Medical Center is a continuity clinic in which third year medical students follow their patients and have regularly assigned clinic times, one half day every 7-8 days. The students also learn about patients besides their own when they and their classmates share case presentations at monthly meetings, said Dr. **Bobbi Adcock**, Director of Predoctoral Education in Family Medicine.

Dr. Adcock and other Family Medicine faculty rotate in the role of attending physician for the clinic, which operates each weekday afternoon. "It gives the Family Medicine faculty a chance to get to know and interact with the medical students in their first year here," she said.

MS III's Get Unique Hands On Experience

Dr. **Robert Centor**, Interim Dean, initiated the idea for the continuity clinic when he came to CCHS and envisioned the clinic here as a pilot for the other two UASOM campuses, said Dr. Adcock. She volunteered to direct the clinic because she enjoys working with students. "Medical students are eager to learn, and it is stimulating to share in their first exposure to family medicine," she said.



Medical student Cheryl Hill and attending physician Marc Armstrong review a chart on her patient at "We Care," a continuity clinic conducted by third year students at CMC. Students get to follow their own family practice patients.

"Sometimes students get to follow patients they meet at the ER or in labor and delivery. For example, **Tammy Watkins**, one of our students, is now following a baby she delivered on her OB rotation. The family did not have its own physician, and she could offer follow-up care here."

Tonya Bradley, MS III, says the best thing about We Care is "having patients that are ours." She likes getting to know the patient and family, she said. She also appreciates the chance to be with the Family Medicine faculty and see "different ways they practice."

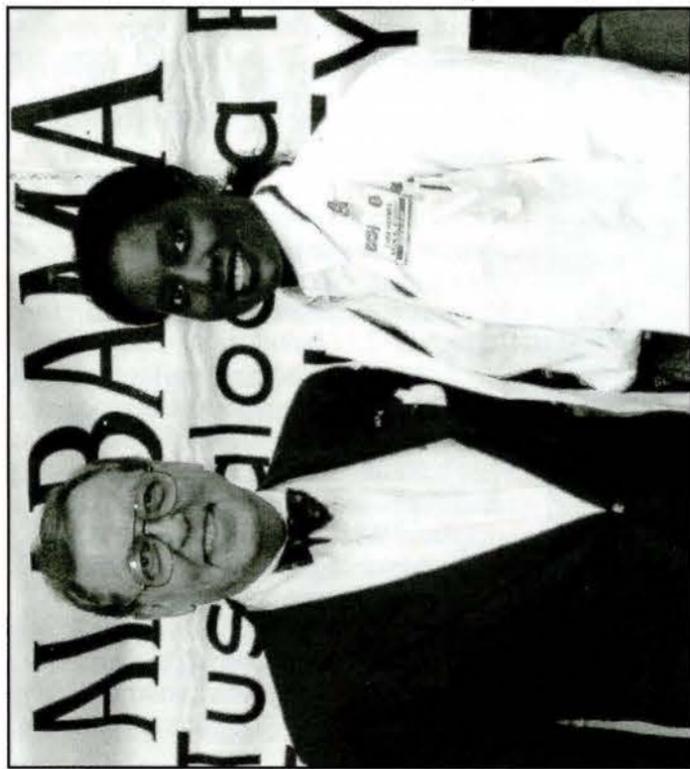
Many of the We Care patients are peds patients, said Dr. Adcock, and it gives our students good experience in providing well baby care and treating early childhood illnesses. Students also get to see patients of all ages and illnesses when they work in Family Medicine.



Medical student Grant Eudy examines We Care patient Shannon Snell. He said he had talked to students who had enjoyed their We Care experience last year and that having an opportunity to see patients in this clinic was one of the reasons he chose the Tuscaloosa campus for his third and fourth years of medical school.

Students can also join the Family Medicine Interest Group, organized by Dr. Adcock in 1995, which meets quarterly. Past programs include presentations by practicing family physicians, a suturing workshop, and interviewing for a residency program, with "how-to" and "how-not-to," demonstrations by Dr. **Angela Powell** and Dr. **Davis Woodward**.

For more information on We Care or the Family Medicine Interest Group at CCHS, call Dr. Adcock at Capstone Medical Center, 205/348-2880.



UA President Andrew Sorensen greets CCHS medical student Tara Haynes last fall at Homecoming. Tara, who plans to enter the Tuscaloosa Family Medicine Residency, and members of her graduating class learned where their residency training will take place at Match Day on March 18. See page 3.

OnRounds
The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences

The College of Community Health Sciences is a clinical branch campus of the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Established in 1972, CCHS emphasizes family practice and the other primary care disciplines and provides a sound basic medical education for all medical students assigned to this campus. CCHS also trains family doctors through a three-year family practice residency program to meet the urgent need for family physicians. A primary focus of the CCHS mission is seeking solutions for rural health care problems in Alabama.

OnRounds is published quarterly by The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences to keep alumni and friends informed of CCHS news and issues which affect this medical school and its graduates. Please send address changes and information to **OnRounds**, College of Community Health Sciences, Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0326. Contributions are welcomed and will be included as space permits. Contact the editor at (205) 348-1302.

William A. Curry
Senior Associate Dean

Linda Jackson
Editor

The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences
P.O. Box 870326
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0326

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 16
Tuscaloosa, AL