Dr. Roscoe Shamblin Computer Lab Makes Newest Technology Available to CCHS Medical Students

A new computer lab for medical students was dedicated April 26, 2000. The lab was given in memory of long-time Tuscaloosa physician Dr. Roscoe Shamblin. Funds for the new state-of-the-art center were provided by his son, Dr. Bill Shamblin, who organized the CCHS Department of Surgery and recruited volunteer faculty when the medical branch campus was established in Tuscaloosa.

Dr. Shamblin's gift to the University of Alabama School of Medicine-Tuscaloosa is part of his long association with the college and demonstrates his appreciation for what the medical school here has meant to the medical community, he said. Dr. Shamblin served for twelve years as Chair of the Department of Surgery and taught students and residents throughout his 27 years of private practice in Tuscaloosa.

The Roscoe Shamblin Computer Lab is housed on the fifth floor of the Educational Tower at DCH Regional Medical Center next to the Medical Student Lounge. The state of the art facility for medical students contains seven work stations. The room has been remodeled to accommodate the equipment, including a new air conditioning and heating system and an entry door with ACT card access for security.

"The computer is now an established tool in educating medical students. It is increasingly important to the way we take care of patients," said CCHS Dean William Curry, MD. "For many situations, it is the only way to obtain the most recent information on the best diagnostic or treatment choices. It is one way that a physician anywhere, even in the most distant rural setting, can have the same information as any other physician. This gift of a state-of-the-art computer lab for our fifty to sixty medical students here in Tuscaloosa is a guarantee that we can have them ready for this part of twenty-first century medical practice. It is really a gift to the physicians and patients of the future."

Cathy Gresham, MD, Director of the CCHS Office of Medical Student Affairs, expressed appreciation for Dr. Bill Shamblin's commitment to teaching-- both in his surgical practice and through his generosity in providing this facility. "This lab has been greatly needed to support the medical education process for our students and will facilitate the use of new developments in medical education in the areas of case studies, distance learning, and accessibility to a wide variety of medical resources," she said.

The University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences (CCHS) was established as a clinical branch campus of the University of Alabama School of Medicine (UASOM) in Tuscaloosa in 1974. After completion of the first two years of basic sciences in Birmingham, students may complete the last two years of clinical sciences in Birmingham, Huntsville or Tuscaloosa. After this class of 2000 graduates (May 19), 434 medical students will have completed their medical school education while based in Tuscaloosa. Our students have entered into prestigious and well-known residency programs across the country including the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency and programs at UAB Medical Center, Johns Hopkins, Emory, Mayo, Vanderbilt, Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Baylor, the University of North Carolina, the University of Texas/San Antonio, and others.

While our mission emphasizes primary care and rural health issues, students from this campus have entered a wide variety of disciplines. In the past two years, for example, students have gained residency positions in the disciplines of Anesthesiology, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal (Adult) Medicine, Medicine/Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology (ENT), Pathology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Surgery.

New Name for BCM

Community and Rural Medicine Better Signals Work of Former BCM

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees has approved a formal name change for the CCHS Department of Behavioral and Community Medicine. Dr. James Leeper, Chairman of the department since 1987, says the new name, "Department of Community and Rural Medicine," better communicates the medical education and research missions, especially to external audiences including granting agencies and foundations.

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SPECIAL 4-page SECTION on 1st Rural Health Conference

CCHS alumni, John Branden and Garry Maguire, at First Annual Alabama Rural Health Conference. See pages 3-6 for special report and photos.
REFLECTIONS
by William Curry, MD, Dean

TAKING ON THE TEN TON GORILLA

At the First Annual Alabama Rural Health Conference held in April, Wil Baker of the Robert Wood Johnson Southern Rural Access Project warned us about the ten-ton gorilla we would unleash if we undertake fundamental change in the rural health of this state. He told us the options are to continue to "nibble around the edges" or to take on the gorilla.

I have thought about the image of that ten ton gorilla ever since. Certainly, the gorilla is "out there": metropolitan interests and "special interests" that will get aroused and irritating by any rural gadflies buzzing about their heads. But I think the gorilla is not only "out there," but also "in here," even in our recent meeting devoted to rural health, and in our treasured rural communities. He is here in the conflicts of interests of physicians and nurses, of hospitals and public health departments, of local system versus local system, community versus community. He is fighting what our wise new friend John Hatch of the University of North Carolina calls "cohesive communities."

In preparing for this conference, I read an eight-year-old review article in the Policy Studies Journal entitled "Why is there no coherent U.S. Rural Policy?" Now that's a very pointed and a very pointed question. With all deference to our guest Dr. Wayne Myers, the Director of the Federal Office of Rural Policy, it's a question that deserves an answer. Why is there no coherent rural policy for this nation? What about this state? I think it takes us back to the gorilla. It's "out there," its "in here," and it's "in us." The gorilla is within us... in our own fears and self-imposed limitations, our zones of safety and comfort.

At the opening of the conference, Dr. Doris Holeman of Tuskegee University gave us some statistics which indicate startling and sometimes discouraging health outcomes in rural Alabama. We were urged to read "between the lines" of these numbers, looking at educational, economic, and health system issues that underlie those statistics. Think of them as the "baby gorillas" that the ten-ton gorilla sends out to do gorilla work—"gorilla extenders," if you will.

What I heard about all those baby gorillas at the recent conference is that when it comes to education, it's not just facilities, not just teacher salaries. Those are "out there," important maybe, but not the whole story. It is the questions: "Are we educating our children for the demanding jobs of the twenty-first century? Are we continuing our own education and the education of our communities for healthy lives and healthy communities?" In other words, "Are we contributing to a community voice on education?"

In rural economics, I hear from you that it's not just tax reform, health insurance, or even rural transportation. Those are out there. It's also in here. It's looking into ways to encourage healthy entrepreneurship, adding value to our pine trees and chickens to make better jobs, promoting partnerships in our communities and with others to discover the new rural economy. That new rural economy is likely to be entrepreneurial, digital, and community-driven. But the gorilla is also in us. We need to be asking ourselves daily: "What am I doing in my job that can connect to other people in my community to expand opportunity for our children and families?" If you are in a university, an agency, or a company that works in rural issues, where can you connect—the way, for example, Blue Cross/Blue Shield has in their Child Caring Initiative— to energized rural people like Alesa Judd of Bibb County? Again, all of this to me says, "How do we contribute to an effective community voice?"

In health system issues, clearly I hear that it is not just a matter of access to health providers, or E-911 systems, important as they are. It is not just a matter of fighting the effects of hospitals of the ABA Balanced Budget Act, or the decimating effects of home health care cuts, threatening as they are and essential as fighting them may be. Those are out there. It's also in here. We must change the way we teach and train physicians, nurses, other health care providers. We must do that if we are serious about what Dr. Hatch said about the critical difference between disease and illness, and what you have said repeatedly during this conference about communication.

John Wheat, MD, MPH, Associate Professor of Community and Rural Medicine and Internal Medicine, was honored by the Alabama Public Health Association at the APHA Annual Meeting April 26. He received the Ira L. Myers Award for Excellence. The Myers Award was established by the Alabama Public Health Association in 1986 in honor of Dr. Myers for his dedicated service during twenty-three years as State Health Officer in Alabama.

Will Denton, Area II Administrator, Alabama Department of Public Health, nominated Wheat, citing his tireless efforts to recruit and train rural students for medical and support called Wheat a "coalition builder" and commented that "he has a positive impact on health care in rural Alabama. Letters of recommendation and support called Wheat a "coalition builder" and commented that "he has worked with numerous individuals and organizations to bring about improvements in the health care of the citizens of Alabama."

His emphasis on community and his successful efforts to bring together multiple groups to work toward common goals for healthy lives and healthy communities repeatedly nominated by his nominators. "Dr. Wheat is making a great difference in the lives of many people through his efforts," said one.

Dr. Sam Gaskins, Family Practice Residency Director, and residents Shane Phillips, MD, and Minerva Pineiro, MD, attended the LSU Residency Fair in May to provide information on the program and recruit medical students interested in family practice. Twelve CCHS residents graduate June 20, and 13 first year resident start July 1.
Rural Health Conference Succeeds in Bringing Many Voices to Deliberation of Rural Health Issues in Alabama

A Special Section on the First Annual Conference

The First Annual Alabama Rural Health Conference on April 27-28 at The University of Alabama’s Bryant Conference Center brought together nearly 300 people from rural communities, health agencies, and education to discuss rural health issues in this state. But the conference was more than just information-sharing. Representatives of the various sectors which can impact health care discussed problems from their perspectives and began deliberation about how community leaders, doctors and other health professionals, public and private organizations, and education officials can work together to improve healthcare services in rural areas.

"Health care providers and patients and between providers and community residents see problems and how they relate to one another in engaging issues, but I doubt that they do not agree on any critical factors. A healthy rural Alabama requires the capacity of rural residents and the professionals who seek to assist them to work together positively." 

"How refreshing! A wide variety of citizens, gathered together with one goal—the improvement of health in rural Alabama. Eggs were left outside the door. We came to find answers and we did!" - Dennis A. Miles, LRSW Hospice of the Shoals, Inc., Florence, AL

The conference was the first of a series to join persons of rural Alabama, health care providers, state and private agencies, education, and others concerned about health care in rural Alabama in partnerships to improve rural health and services. The conference planners hope that this ongoing dialog becomes the basis for creating partnerships to solve issues of common concern by building on the strengths of all partners. Though the conference was initiated and hosted by The University of Alabama, the Cooperative Extension Service, Kettering Foundation, and Dr. Robert McKenzie of the Kettering Foundation, who helped plan the small group sessions facilitated by Extension Service County Agents. "How community residents see problems and how they relate to one another in engaging issues is a matter of how they relate to the other issues. They do not agree on any critical factors. A healthy rural Alabama requires the capacity of rural residents and the professionals who seek to assist them to work together positively." 

In our hectic high-tech system, the communication between health care providers and patients and between providers and communities is so poor that it amounts to an invisible barrier to access. Those are gaps that we with educational responsibility must attack, gorillas we must face. But again, the gorilla is also within us. Each of us must insist, persistently, for community voice in the planning and operation of health systems. Finally, you have raised the issue of leadership. You are saying that it is not a matter of insisting on competent, honest leadership in Montgomery or Washington, or as you said in discussion groups, even on better coordination among state, local, and federal stakeholders. Those are out there. The gorilla “in here” would keep us from encouraging and supporting community leaders and community groups that have the promise of bridging geographic lines, economic lines, social lines, racial lines that divide our communities and divide us one from another. Dr. Hatch spoke eloquently of the effectiveness and promise of church-based partnerships with the healthcare system. Many of you are eager to pursue that model here in Alabama, and so am I.

"When we face the issues—by helping us to continue the quest to find the voices of our own communities and those of all of rural Alabama, Here is how we anticipate our work, your work, will continue. We will publish the proceedings of this conference, with the kind of this nation? What about this state? I think it is our work, your work, will continue. We will publish the proceedings of this conference, with the kind of this nation? What about this state? I think it is our work, your work, will continue.

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Ultimately, such partnerships may be a metaphor for so much of what we have been discussing. They could bring us together around community needs and talents that are so easily overlooked. They will bring us face to face with our own gorillas. We can continue to nibble around the edges or we can face the gorilla. It’s up to us.
The conference brought in nationally known speakers in the field of rural health. John W. Hatch, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Chapel Hill School of Public Health, was keynote speaker at a luncheon session. Dr. Hatch focused on "community" and recommended working through churches to influence health behaviors. He emphasized the importance of trusted sources for effective health education. He described his experiences in rural Mississippi—how infant mortality was reduced by targeting older women instead of young women about the importance of prenatal care. The younger women listened to the senior women in their families and communities, he explained, where they ignored health professionals.

Wayne Myers, MD, Director of the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, was keynote speaker for the concluding session, providing a summary of the common themes throughout conference sessions.

The opening session, "Current Status of Rural Health in Alabama: Reading Between the Lines," presented statistical data and information on health status from surveys, town meetings, and interviews. Doris Holeman, PhD, Associate Dean and Director, Nursing and Allied Health, Tuskegee University, moderated. Panel members were Martha Johnson, PhD, Assistant Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University; Will Baker, EdD, State Director, Robert Wood Johnson Southern Rural Access Project; Sherea Bowden, a Graduate Research Assistant at UA's College of Community Health Sciences; and Martha Johnson, PhD, (right) Assistant Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University. The panel provided statistics and results from surveys, local interviews, and community meetings to provide a foundation for discussion in breakout groups.

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Dean William Curry (center) consults with Dr. Wayne Myers and Dr. John Wheat (right) as conference progresses.

Dr. Nancy Barrett, UA Provost, waits to address the conference as Dr. John Wheat, program committee chair, takes notes. Information from the conference on rural health issues and alternatives for addressing these concerns will be included in an issue book this fall.

Information was recorded to help guide continuing deliberations in communities. Far left: Rural scholars Sherry Bowden and RaSheda McAlpine enjoy a laugh with Dr. John Brandon (center), Brewton pediatrician Martha Raulerson, and Cary Kuhlman, MASA Executive Director. Left: Al Fox, Exec. Director, Alabama Primary Health Care Assoc.

Community leaders shared their experiences forming local health initiatives. L-R: Tracy Palmer, UA, moderator; Erin Smith, Rural Alabama Health Alliance; Pickens County Alesa Judd, Bibb County Child Caring Initiative; Debbie Yerby, Fayette County KID’s Net; Marty Pettman, Caring for Coosa’s Children.

Representing Pickens County Medical Center were Rita McCafferty, Social Work; Sharon Hamlin, RN, Home Health Director; and Jo York, RD, Dietetics.

Bob McKenzie and Dr. Warren McCord, Auburn University Cooperative Extension System, take a break. Dr. McCord said the conference demonstrated AU-UA cooperation.

Debbie Yerby (r), a panel member, and others from Fayette County, were among those representing rural communities at the conference.
The first annual Rural Health Conference, at The University of Alabama, April 27-28, 2000, provided an interdisciplinary setting for health professionals, community leaders, and educators to share expertise and begin formulating a common vision for advancing rural health initiatives in Alabama. The conference theme was “A Day in the Life of Rural Alabama: Making It Better.” Post-conference discussions in rural communities will build the agenda for the 2nd annual rural health conference in 2001. A video created for the conference from photographs made by the 1999 UA Rural Health Scholars (eleventh graders from across the state) provides a visual collage of a day in the life of rural Alabama from their perspective.

If you would like to show this video at meetings or events, contact: Linda Jackson, Communications Specialist UA Rural Health Projects, College of Community Health Sciences, Box 870326 Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0326. (205) 348-1302 ljackson@cchs.ua.edu

FMI on becoming a Rural Health Scholar, contact: RHSP (205) 348-5892, hjnall@cchs.ua.edu (Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0326) or Cynthia Moore, Director, cemoore@oa.ua.edu

About the Photographers
Alabama is a largely rural state. Most of our counties are “health professional shortage areas.” To address this shortage of doctors and other health providers in rural areas, the Rural Health Scholars Program for high school students from rural Alabama was established at The University of Alabama in 1993. It introduces eleventh graders to college life and classes and gives them an orientation to the rewards and realities of practicing medicine and pursuing health care careers in rural settings. One hundred ninety-seven rural Alabama high school students have attended the program (1993-99), and the photographs for this video production were made by the 1999 class to show a day in the life of rural Alabama as they see it.

SECOND ANNUAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE APRIL 26-27, 2001

A major objective of the Rural Health Conference was to begin framing rural health concerns into an instrument for community and organizational decision-making. Communities and organizations have to make hard choices about directions they will take to address their concerns.

We cannot have all that we wish. We must choose. And to choose wisely, we must carefully consider the strengths and weaknesses of each course of action we could pursue. In the small group work sessions conducted by Auburn University extension agents, participants discussed their concerns and what they held valuable in holding those concerns.

Those comments were recorded, and that information will be formed into an “issue book” with potential strategies for communities and organizations to use in thinking through hard choices and taking more effective action. The Cooperative Extension System has agreed to make this issue book a part of their work with local communities. The issue book should be available by early fall.

Presented at the First Annual Rural Health Conference Bryant Conference Center April 27-28, 2000

“A Day in the Life of Rural Alabama”

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Dr. Bob McKenzie
Kettering Foundation

Conference Gets High Praise from Attendees
(Excerpts from Conference Evaluations)

“Excellent conference. It was a wonderful chance to exchange information, ideas and resources. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to learn how to improve health and health care in their community!” Lynne B. Moxer, RN Mountain View Hospital Jacksonville, AL

“A conference such as this gives me hope that the state of Alabama is ready and willing to move into the 21st Century as a leader in tackling the multi-faceted problems of providing for our rural population.” Roseanne Cook, MD, PhD Staff Physician Rural Health Medical Program, Inc. Pine Apple, AL

“This conference demonstrated the willingness of Auburn University and The University of Alabama to collaborate to further public involvement in Rural Health.” R. Warren McCord Extension State Program Leader Alabama Cooperative Extension System Auburn University

“I feel this is a real ‘start’ for the ‘betterment’ of our lives and communities all evolve around healthcare. We need and deserve the best possible care available. I look forward to the next conference.” Delaine Breaver, Clinical Coordinator Alabama Community Healthcare Network, Inc., Montgomery, AL

“Our lives and communities all evolve around healthcare. We need and deserve the best possible care available. I look forward to the next conference.”

“Valuable conference for healthcare educators to hear first hand the problems and success stories associated with rural healthcare.” Rebekah McClurmy, LBSW Department of Public Health Samford and Hale Counties

“It was encouraging to see a large number of rural citizens coming together to evaluate, network, and recommend changes to improve rural healthcare.”

Garry Maguire, RHAH Berry, AL

“This was very refreshing. It's helpful to know that problems that are being addressed in rural communities.”

POLYAMON Salon Hospice of the Shoals Inc. Florence, AL

“A must attend for those desiring to link community health needs with health professional resources.”

Charles Leil, Alabama Office of Primary Care and Rural Health Development Montgomery, AL

Compiled by Nova D. Hodo Professional and Management Development Programs, College of Continuing Studies The University of Alabama

6 • OnRounds • Spring 2000
Lampoon Events Added

Lampoon 2000 was held Saturday, May 6, and the agenda was expanded this year to include breakfast and CME lectures followed by a Family Picnic on the Quad. The Pharmacotherapy Update, sponsored by the Department of Family Medicine and Roche Pharmaceuticals for three hours of Category 1 credit, was presented by David Mauritson, MD, (Diastolic Dysfunction) ; Michael Taylor, MD, (Asthma in Children); William Curry, MD, (Adult-Onset Diabetes Mellitus); and Sylvia Colon, MD, (Depression in the Elderly).

Carletta Collins

Carletta Collins, a graduate student and CCCHS Research Assistant, who was recently accepted to the University of Alabama School of Medicine for Fall of 2000, has joined this year's class of Rural Medical Scholars.

In a letter inviting her to join the program, Dean William Curry, MD, and John Wheat, RMS Director, said, "You have earned our respect through strong academic performance and good character as a student and research assistant on this campus."

Miss Collins was enrolled in and completed the same coursework as this year's RMS class, but she was admitted to USOM through the regular application process. She did not gain admission to medical school through the Rural Medical Scholars Program application process, which sets aside USOM spaces for ten qualified rural students each year.

In accepting the offer to join the Rural Medical Scholars Program, Carletta signifies her intent to become a primary care physician for rural Alabama. Following two years of basic science classes at the medical school in Birmingham, she will return to the USOM Tuscaloosa campus for clinical training.

Robinson Is Olympic Team Dr.

Jimmy Robinson, 1988 CCCHS Family Practice Residency grad, has been named one of the Team Physicians for the U.S. Olympic Team at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, this coming Fall. Dr. Robinson has been team physician for University of Alabama athletic teams since 1989. He followed Dr. Bill DeShazo as team physician after he completed a fellowship in Primary Care Sports Medicine at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Ohio. He is also CCCHS Clinical Assistant Professor in Family Medicine and Sports Medicine. He has promised us an inside look at the Olympics when he returns!

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History Committee To Record CCHS Founding and Progress Toward Goals

Dean Curry has appointed a CCHS History Committee to compile information about the establishment and development of the college. The committee held an organizational meeting on March 1, 2000. Attending were: former Dean Roland Ficken (Chairman), Dr. John Burum, former Dean Wilmer Coggins, Dr. Riley Lumpkin, Dr. Richard Rutland, Dr. William Winternitz, and Ms. Lisa Russell.

Committee members discussed purpose in writing the history, determined general areas to be included, designated resource people to interview, and created a plan for information-gathering.

The Committee agreed that documenting the establishment of CCHS should include development activities, philosophy of medical education here, difficulties and distractions, funding, and accomplishments. Dr. Burum and Rutland took responsibility for describing the development phase during 1968-72.

Suggestions of people who could provide facts related to the history of CCHS resulted in a preliminary list of resource persons to be interviewed. If you have knowledge, news clippings, or documents that could be helpful or suggestions of others who may, please contact the History Committee, c/o the Dean's Office, Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0326. (205) 348-1288.