Dr. Pieroni Honored by The University of Alabama

CCHS Internal Medicine Professor Wins Top Teaching Award

Robert Pieroni, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine, received the 2002 Outstanding Commitment to Teaching Award (OCTA) at The University of Alabama. He was one of four faculty members to receive the award, which is given by UA's National Alumni Association. OCTA is The University’s highest honor for excellence in teaching. He was nominated by John Burnum, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine at CCHS. Established in 1976, the award recognizes dedication to the teaching profession and the positive impact professors have on their students. Previous OCTA recipients of OCTA are: Elizabeth Cockrum, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics; James Leeper, PhD, Professor of Community & Rural Medicine and Chair of the Department of Behavioral & Community Medicine when its name changed to reflect its rural mission; William Winternitz, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics; and the late Elizabeth J. Martin, MD, Professor, Internal Medicine and former CCHS Dean, who presented the award.

Dr. Pieroni joined the faculty of the UA College of Community Health Sciences—the Tuscaloosa branch of the University of Alabama School of Medicine—in 1974 after completing his internal medicine residency at the Harvard-Affiliated Hospitals. He received his bachelor’s degree from Boston College. Before attending medical school at Penn State College of Medicine, he conducted research in microbiology that contributed to the development of the acellular pertussis vaccine and a novel test for bacterial endotoxin that bears his name.

Dr. Pieroni is a diplomat and fellow in five areas of medicine: internal medicine, family medicine, allergy and immunology, geriatrics and quality assurance. He has more than 300 publications in these disciplines and has been an editorial board member and reviewer of many journals. Pieroni was the first U.S. Visiting Professor at the Kyoto Medical Education Program in Community Medicine when its name changed to reflect its rural mission; William Winternitz, MD, Professor, Internal Medicine and former Community Medicine professor and UA Vice President, Harry Knopke, PhD.

Dr. Pieroni was the speaker. Dr. Martin, who was Chief Resident in 1983-84, shared his opinion, few students ever encountered.

27th Class of Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residents Graduate

Dr. William Owings, CCHS Interim Chair of Family Medicine, presided at the 27th annual graduation ceremony of the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency on June 20, 2002. DCH Healthcare Authority and DCH Regional Medical Center hosted dinner for the graduates and their families, followed by presentation of awards and special recognition.

Edward Martin, MD, Chairman of Family Medicine at LSU, was the speaker. Dr. Martin, who was Chief Resident in 1983-84, shared faculty photos from his CCHS days and today.

Dr. Pieroni is congratulated by Bobby Woodridge, President of the National Alumni Association, at the awards dinner at NorthRiver Country Club in Tuscaloosa in September.

Golden Eagle Humanitarian of the Year Award. A colleague said in a letter that his interests aid his effectiveness as a teacher: “His vast knowledge of medicine coupled with his perpetually inquisitive mind provide the background for a teaching experience that, in my opinion, few students ever encountered.”

Dr. Martin focused on the impact of CCHS graduates.

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Residency Director Sam Gaskins, MD, presented the William R. Willard Award to Thomas Carter, MD, the first year resident who most closely embodies the mission and goals of CCHS, and awards (in box at right) were presented. Chief Residents, Jennifer Burdette and Shane Phillips, received University of Alabama chairs in appreciation for their leadership. Dr. Bobbi Adcock, a residency graduate and former full-time CCHS family medicine faculty member, received special recognition from the graduating class and the Dept. of Family Medicine. (More pictures, p.4.)

Shane Phillips (right) receives the Pediatrics Award from Dr. Mike Taylor, Dept. Chair. Dr. Phillips, Chief Resident, also won Internal Medicine Award.
REFLECTIONS
by William A. Curry, MD, Dean

The CCHS Extended Family

Someone wise once said that the best advice to give a young person considering career choices is this: “Pick the job you would be willing to do for free.” An impressive discovery for me has been how many people assist this College long after anyone would expect it. Alumni, retired faculty and staff, and loyal supporters of our mission form a strong network that is critical to our progress.

On a walk through our hospital services and clinics in recent years, you could still encounter great names from the history of CCHS: Lumpkin, deShazo, Winternitz, Burnum. On a walk through Nott Hall, you might run into them again as members of a committee writing the history of CCHS, joined by former deans Will Coggins (general editor of the project) and Roland Ficken (chair of the committee), along with former residency director and preceptor Dick Rutland. At a CME Committee meeting, you might see Bill Winternitz again, as he continues to plan Grand Rounds speakers.

Down the street at the University Club, at a Lister Hill Society board meeting, former surgery chair Bill Shamblin would be pledging funds for student and resident computer labs, a project embraced by him and his family that culminated in state-of-the art facilities named for his father, Dr. Roscoe Shamblin. He is joined by many volunteers in the society such as Tommy Hester, Jim Fleming, Anne Monfore, Madeline Hill, Sammy Watson, and Alice Maxwell, as well as at the Campus Health Services Foundation board – stalwarts over the years like Sam Fouts, Gordon Rosen, Jim Merrell, and Ken DeWitt. Then there are those involved in fundraising projects surrounding our new building, most notably Anne Moman and the team involved in funding the Betty Shirley Clinic for Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine. Back at Nott, the Advancement Group might be meeting, including again Dean Emeritus Ficken, who has continued to contribute his time to fundraising and special events.

David Bahar was a longtime member of our clinical faculty. We lost David in the past year, but his contributions to student and resident education live on through the David and Natica Bahar Endowed Memorial Lecture, to be held this year on November 18. Another recently departed good friend is Alice McLean Stewart, memorialized in the annual lecture on alcoholism and substance abuse named in her honor. The College continues to receive memorial gifts in honor of both the Bahurs and Alice McLean, increasing the impact of their original donations. Victor Poole, who was instrumental in our founding, has added an endowment for the William Willard Awards for a graduating student and a graduating resident, ensuring those awards in Dr. Willard’s name in perpetuity. One problem with starting a list of names is realizing just how many there are. At the risk of further omission, let me offer these as examples. They are accompanied by many more friends, some yet to be met, who will support the mission of CCHS/UA School of Medicine – Tuscaloosa as we educate students in clinical medicine, train residents in family practice, and respond to the needs of rural Alabama. From all of us whose lives are richer and whose work is more effective because of your unselfish gifts of time, talent, and money: Thank you.

Doctors for Rural Alabama: 2002 RMS

The UA College of Community Health Sciences greeted the 2002 Rural Medical Scholars and their families as a picnic in Tuscaloosa on August 18 prior to fall semester RMS: (Front) David Corbett, Whitewell; Ashley Coleman, Jackson; Tatum McKeeth, Green Mike; Jamie Murphy, Tapp; Derrick Jones, Tuscaloosa; and Caris Freeman, Samantha; (Back) Brad Guy, Miyky, Ray Stewart, Phenix City; Michael Luther, Dawson; and Jon Binkerd, Shelby.

2002 RMS: (Front) David Corbett, Whitewell; Ashley Coleman, Jackson; Tatum McKeeth, Green Mike; Jamie Murphy, Tapp; Derrick Jones, Tuscaloosa; and Caris Freeman, Samantha; (Back) Brad Guy, Miyky, Ray Stewart, Phenix City; Michael Luther, Dawson; and Jon Binkerd, Shelby.

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The National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, a division of NIH, recently announced the award of over $7.5 million dollars to Tuskegee University and The University of Alabama through Project EXPORT (Excellence in Partnerships for Community Outreach, Research on Health Disparities and Training). This award will establish a Center of Excellence through facilities on both campuses. The Center will demonstrate the effectiveness of combining the methods of public health and bioresearch of research, education, and outreach to reduce disparities in disease and disabilities in Alabama’s Blackbelt region.

Over the next five years, Tuskegee University and The University of Alabama will expand, strengthen, integrate, and focus infrastructure and programs in public health and biostatistics, biomedicine, bioinformatics, and behavioral and social science research to maximize their impact on ameliorating disparities in diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, HIV/AIDS, and infant mortality. Activities will involve a broad array of faculty, students, staff, and community members at both universities and beyond. Dr. Benjamin F. Payton, President of Tuskegee University, will serve as Principal Investigator, with Dr. John C. Higginbotham serving as Principal Investigator for UA.

Dr. Higginbotham directs The University of Alabama Institute for Rural Health Research, which will provide administrative support. UA faculty who will be involved in Project EXPORT are: Rex E. Culp, PhD, JD (Professor, Endowed Chair, Human Evolution and Health); Carol J. McDonald, PhD (Associate Professor, Women’s Studies); Melissa C. Kuhajda, PhD (Assistant Professor, Community & Rural Medicine); Assistant Director of Research for the Institute for Rural Health Research); James D. Loper, PhD, MPH (Professor, Community & Rural Medicine); Sharrad J. Jacobson, RN, PhD (Professor, Associate Dean, Research and Practice, Capstone College of Nursing); Grant T. Savage, PhD (Professor, Endowed Chair, Management & Marketing); Jeri W. Dunkin, PhD, MPH, RN (Professor, College of Nursing); and John R. Wheet, MD, MPH (Professor, Community & Rural Medicine).

Project EXPORT will involve a broad array of activities in research, community outreach, and education and training. Thirteen activities will include the creation of formal academic degree programs linking the two universities, accompanied by the coordination and enhancement of efforts currently ongoing at each institution and at partner institutions such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of South Alabama. The joint funding will also enhance efforts at both schools to create integrative, multidisciplinary programs with a holistic orientation and an emphasis on bioethics.

Wheat Addresses Economic Development at Auburn Seek Community Partners for Rural Medical Pipeline

On September 19, Dr. John Wheat, Professor of Community & Rural Medicine and Director of UA Rural Scholars Programs, presented “Health Care and Economic Development: Rural Scholars Programs as Partners with Rural Communities” at the Alabama Cooperative Extension System 2002 Intensive Economic Development Training Course. Speaking to the statewide audience that attended, he discussed the role of physicians and health care facilities in the economic development of rural communities. He highlighted the Rural Scholars Program at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of South Alabama. The joint funding will also enhance efforts at both schools to create integrative, multidisciplinary programs with a holistic orientation and an emphasis on bioethics.

Office of Clinical Research Reports Studies at CMC

The Office of Clinical Research at Capstone Medical Center has a number of projects underway. Associate Dean E. Eugene Marsh, MD, and Kathy Hendley, CCHS Coordinator of Sponsored Programs, provide direction for the Office of Clinical Research and assist faculty and staff conducting studies. The Asthma Study directed by Dr. Elizabeth Cockeram and Karen Burgess has 16 patients and plans follow-up of those patients for one full year. The HERIS study, directed by Dr. McKnight, has processed more than 1900 participant forms. CMR lab personnel are drawing and testing all blood samples for the project. The CMV Study, a vaccine study being conducted by Dr. Ashley Evans, has started enrollment of study participants, screening new mothers at the DCH Women’s Center. Mothers who are seronegative are invited to enter the study.

The Rural Medical Pipeline includes the Rural Health Scholars Program for high school students; the Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program, which students enter after graduation from high school; and the Rural Medical Scholars Program.

For information and applications for all the rural scholars programs, contact: Rural Scholars Program Office • Department of Community & Rural Medicine • University of Alabama • Box 870326 • Tuscaloosa AL 35487-0326 • (205) 348-9802

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Front Row: Beverly Jordan, MD; Krishna Doniparthi, MD; David Le, MD; Michele Julia Butson, MD; Larrie Bradford, MD; Abe Sahawane, MD; J. D. Snipes, MD; Top Row: Michael Strickland, MD; Nikki Christensen, MD; Tanya Reynolds, MD; Brian Andrus, MD; Jill Wiggins, MD; and Haskenoy Program Director Sam Galskin, MD. 8 Left to Right: Wanda Rosett, MD.

New Meet the Residents
Stelian Andreca grew up in Bucharest, Romania. His father, a retired assistant professor of Medicine, persuaded him to become a physician. Dr. Andreca earned his medical degree from Carol Davila University of Medicine and Pharmacy in 1988 and has worked in New York City and in Meade, Kansas, a town of 2,000, where his wife, Daniela, is an ultrasound technician. They have a 6-year-old son.

Julia Lett Boothe is from Buhl and graduated from Tuscaloosa County High School. She earned her degree in Biology from The University of Alabama in 1997 and has worked in New York City and in Meade, Kansas, a town of 2,000, where his wife, Daniela, is an ultrasound technician. They have a 6-year-old son.

Larisa Bradford, a native of Belarus, is the daughter of Olga and Victor Rashkevitch. She earned her MD from Minsk State Medical Institute in Minsk, Belarus in 1993. She was admitted to medical school at UASOM and completed coursework for an MPH. She is a Rural Medical Scholar and graduated from UASOM in 2002. She was president of the Tuscaloosa campus senior medical student class and won the Family Medicine Award at Honors Convocation in May 2002. She was a coordinator with the Student Coalition for Community Health at UA and became aware of the need for physicians in rural areas. She and her husband, Andrey, have a daughter, Laura Adelynne, born a month before Boothe received her MD.

Nikki Christensen, a 2002 graduate of UASOM, completed her clinical training in School in Birmingham. She and her husband, Dale, are parents to Luke Scholarship and completed Officer School at the U.S. Navy Health Professional Scholarship and completed Officer School at the U.S. Naval Base in Newport, Rhode Island. He was influenced by his father Sam, a biology teacher, in his decision to pursue medicine by setting the example of hard work, perseverance, and commitment.

Nikki Christensen, 2002 graduate of UASOM, completed her clinical training in Birmingham and graduated from Ramsey High School in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She was a He enjoys travel and soccer. He says his father influenced his decision to pursue medicine by setting the example of hard work, perseverance, and commitment.

Pharmacy Services Offered at Rural Clinic
Pharmacy services are available at a rural clinic operated by the Capstone College of Nursing because of Dr. Miranda Andrus, and her students. Capstone Rural Health Center opened in Parrish on June 4, 2001, said Dr. Andrea. "Parrish is a small town with a population of approximately 1,200 and had been without a primary care facility for more than a year. The clinic is operated by The University of Alabama Capstone College of Nursing and staffed by two nurse practitioners. It is funded through the Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professionals, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). The clinic, whose patient loads is approximately 40% uninsured, provides primary health care, health promotion, home visits, and community-based programs.

Miranda Andrus, PharmD, is a faculty member at Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy and holds a joint appointment on the UA faculty as Assistant Professor of Community and Rural Medicine, began offering clinical pharmacy services at the clinic in July of 2001. Dr. Andrus teaches primary care rotation for fourth year Doctor of Pharmacy students from UASOM.

Dr. Andrus provides services at the clinic two days per week along with pharmacy students from Auburn and Edward Via DCH. The arrangement provides a unique learning environment for students to practice patient assessment, develop interpersonal communication skills, and learn about working in a rural area. It also provides a unique interdisciplinary environment in which they work closely with nurse practitioners, nutrition students, and pharmacy students. Dr. Andrus is currently collecting outcome data on the pharmacy services provided and hopes to publish it to demonstrate the need for clinical pharmacy services in rural areas.

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Meet the New Residents
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Faculty Appointments at CCHS

Christopher K. Finch, Pharm.D., Assistant Clinical Professor (joint appointment of Auburn University Harrison School of Pharmacy and University of Alabama School of Medicine) was born in Memphis, TN. Dr. Finch joined the Internal Medicine faculty in August 2001. He received a Bachelor’s degree in Chemistry from Lambuth University and the Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Tennessee. He completed a specialized residency in Internal medicine of the University of Tennessee. Dr. Finch precepts fourth year pharmacy students on an internal medicine rotation as well as fourth year medical students and family medicine residents on an applied pharmacotherapy rotation. His clinical interests include calcium, drug interactions, and significant adverse drug events.

Dr. Finch presented his research on peak flow meters at the World Asthma Conference in Chicago in 2001 and presented the presentation at the American College of Clinical Pharmacy meeting in April 2002. He is currently working in collaboration with members of Internal Medicine Department on several manuscripts for publication.

Brendan Lichtenstein, Ph.D., is a medical sociologist and has recently been appointed as Associate Research Scientist with the Institute for Rural Health Research based at CCHS. Dr. Lichtenstein came to The University from UAB, where she has been an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, an Affiliate Research Fellow in the Center for AIDS Research, the Lung Health Centers and the Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Clinical Research Center, and Associate Director of the Center for Social Medicine and STDs. The numerous articles, presentations, and technical reports authored or co-authored by Dr. Lichtenstein have largely addressed HIV/AIDS and other STDs, morbidity and sexual behaviors among drug users, and the social policies of health. Among her many publications are "How AIDS became a social issue: The Case of Alabama": "Secret Encounters: Black Men, Bisexuality and AIDS in Alabama"; "HIV Risk and Health Care Attitudes Among Detained Adolescents in Rural Alabama"; and "Women and Crack-Cocaine Use: A Study of Social Networks and HIV Risk in an Alabama Jail Sample." Dr. Lichtenstein reviews funding applications for the Health Research Council (formerly New Zealand’s equivalent to the National Institute of Health) addressing aspects of HIV/AIDS, women’s health, illicit drug use, and the social history of epidemics. She is Principal Investigator of a study funded through the University of Alabama at Birmingham, titled "Stigma as a Barrier to Treatment and Screening of STDs in the South, Eastern States." In addition, she was an investigator for a 1995-1996 study funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, titled "Epidemiological Research Studies of AIDS and HIV Infection!" Prior to becoming a sociologist, Dr. Lichtenstein enjoyed considerable success as a fiction writer, winning twelve literary awards for stories she published in Australian journals, magazines, and anthologies.

Dr. Brendan Lichtenstein

A Study of Social Networks and HIV Risk in an Alabama Jail Sample. Dr. Lichtenstein reviews funding applications for the Health Research Council (formerly New Zealand’s equivalent to the National Institute of Health) addressing aspects of HIV/AIDS, women’s health, illicit drug use, and the social history of epidemics. She is Principal Investigator of a study funded through the University of Alabama at Birmingham, titled "Stigma as a Barrier to Treatment and Screening of STDs in the South, Eastern States." In addition, she was an investigator for a 1995-1996 study funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, titled "Epidemiological Research Studies of AIDS and HIV Infection!" Prior to becoming a sociologist, Dr. Lichtenstein enjoyed considerable success as a fiction writer, winning twelve literary awards for stories she published in Australian journals, magazines, and anthologies.

… About the Lister Hill Society...

The Lister Hill Society, named in honor of the late U.S. Senator from Alabama who worked for better health care for all citizens, is the annual fund for CCHS, the College of Community Health Sciences. The focus of this branch of the University of Alabama School of Medicine is community medicine and primary care, especially in the preparation of family physicians to care for patients in rural areas.

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