

On Rounds

The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences

Volume 14, Number 2

Featuring the Family Practice Residency Program

Summer, Early Fall 2004

Dr. Marsh to Lead CCHS

Dr. E. Eugene Marsh III, neurologist and medical educator, was named interim dean of The University of Alabama's College of Community Health Sciences, effective July 1. He is also serving as interim associate dean of the UA School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa. The appointments were announced by Dr. Judy Bonner, University of Alabama Provost, and Dr. William Deal, dean of the UA School of Medicine.



E. Eugene Marsh, MD

Since 2001, Marsh has served as associate professor in the department of internal medicine and as associate dean for academic affairs in the college. Dr. Marsh has maintained a private practice in Tuscaloosa since 1990 and has instructed UA School of Medicine students and residents for more than 10 years. He is also the medical director of the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation.

"Dr. Marsh has a strong track record in medical teaching and practice, and we look forward to the contributions he will make as he leads the College of Community Health Sciences in serving the rural and other under-served areas of the state," Bonner said.

"The School of Medicine is delighted to have someone of Dr. Marsh's caliber to lead our program in Tuscaloosa as we begin the search for a permanent dean," Deal added.

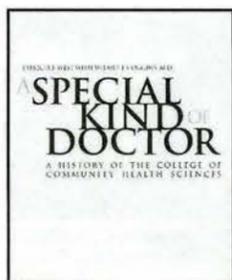
Marsh will head CCHS, a clinical branch campus of the UA School of Medicine, which is headquartered in Birmingham. CCHS provides the last two years of clinical training for a portion of the medical students enrolled at the UA School of Medicine, and it operates a three-year family practice residency program. The College also provides training sites and internships for students in clinical dietetics, health education, healthcare management, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, and social work. The mission of CCHS's educational programs is improving healthcare in Alabama, emphasizing small towns and rural areas. The College's programs are designed to increase the accessibility and availability of healthcare and to improve its quality through research, education, and service.

Marsh is a native of South Carolina and received his bachelor's degree cum laude from UA in 1975. He received his M.D. from the University of South Alabama in 1979. After an internship in family medicine, he completed a neurology residency at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., in 1983. He also served as a teaching fellow at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences from 1981-83.

When he completed his military obligation, Marsh had two additional years of training at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics as a fellow associate in cerebrovascular diseases.

He is the author of numerous publications and presentations, most of which deal with cerebrovascular disease. Marsh has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching from both medical students and residents, and he most recently was awarded the Leonard Tow 2003 Humanism in Medicine Award by the Arnold F. Gold Foundation.

Marsh has three children. His oldest daughter, a recent graduate of Davidson College and a newlywed, lives and works in North Carolina. Dr. Marsh and his wife, Kim, live in Northport with their two children.



History of the College Published

A Special Kind of Doctor, by Patricia West with Dr. Wilmer Coggins, tells the history of the college. Information for the book was compiled from interviews with founders of CCHS and archived documents. See page 7 for more details.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED: Family Practice Residency Succeeds

by Chelley Alexander, MD, Assistant Residency Director

Measuring the impact that the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency Program at CCHS has had on the state over the past thirty years is difficult, but in reviewing its accomplishments as we enter our 32nd year, we can see it has been tremendous.

With 315 graduates of the program, one in seven family physicians in Alabama is a graduate of the Tuscaloosa program. This puts us in the top 5th percentile in the United States for total number of family practice graduates. Our residents have practices in 41 Alabama counties, and over half practice in rural areas of the state. Graduates practicing obstetrics (OB) have contributed to dramatic decreases in infant mortality in the State. In addition to providing quality medical care in their communities, our graduates have served as volunteer firemen, Sunday school teachers, team physicians, and community leaders.

Dr. Chelley Alexander will assume the responsibilities of Residency Director effective Oct. 1. Dr. Sam Gaskins will continue to be closely involved in the program, and has agreed to serve as Assistant Residency Director until his retirement early next year. Please join me in thanking Dr. Gaskins for his many years of outstanding service as Residency Director, and in welcoming Dr. Alexander to her new position. -E. Eugene Marsh, MD, Interim Dean

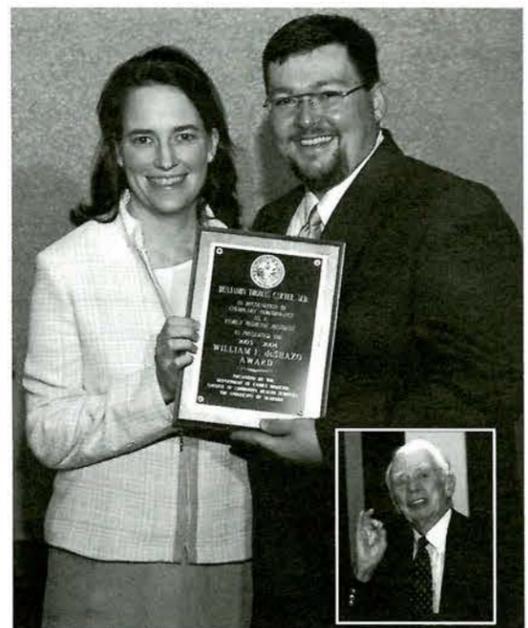
Our residents have been well trained over the past thirty years, and our graduates have proven their excellence by consistently scoring better than at least half of the family practice graduates in the country on national board exams. CCHS has 25 full time faculty in six departments, all dedicated to teaching (Continued, page 6.)

29th Class of CCHS Residents Graduate

(See pages 4-5)

Chelley Alexander, MD, (left) presented the William F. DeShazo Family Practice Award to Dr. Thomas Carter at the June 15 Residency graduation.

Inset: Dr. DeShazo, the first residency director, for whom the award is named.



Higginbotham to Guide Research Mission



Dr. Higginbotham

Dr. John C. Higginbotham, Associate Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Community and Rural Medicine in the College of Community Health Sciences, has been named Associate Dean for Research and Health Policy for The University of Alabama School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa. Higginbotham is also Director of UA's Institute for Rural Health Research and Principal Investigator of UA's portion of a \$7.5 million Project EXPORT grant titled "Reducing Health Disparities in Alabama's Black Belt."

In the newly created position, Dr. Higginbotham will be responsible for facilitating research and other activities that inform public health policy, particularly as it relates to the focus of the School of Medicine/College of Community Health Sciences – the health of rural Alabama. He will work closely with the Dean in strategic planning. (See p. 3.)



Burgess Attends Clinical Research Conference at Mayo

Dr. **Karen Burgess**, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, attended the fifth annual "Current Issues in Clinical Research" conference at the Mayo Clinic. The conference format was designed to provide general and breakout sessions focusing on clinical research in a local practice and national issues. The event provides a review for principal investigators, study coordinators, and other research personnel involved in the management and coordination of clinical

research. Speakers included top FDA officials Dr. Lester Crawford, Acting Commissioner, and Dr. Dianne Murphy, Acting Director, Pediatric Therapeutics.

The UA Division of Clinical Investigations belongs to the Mayo Alliance for Clinical Trials. Membership in the Mayo Alliance is open to clinical sites where alumni are practicing, and three of UMC's faculty members completed their residency training at the Mayo Clinic - Dr. Timothy Winkler, Co-Chair of Surgery, and Dr. John Wheat and Dr. Amit Shah of Internal Medicine. In addition to the annual conference, the Mayo Alliance provides a newsletter on issues in clinical trials, internet training, interactive satellite programs, and multicenter projects.

"It was a great experience and learning opportunity. I know that it will impact my participation in future clinical trials. I think this course, or a course like this one, would be of benefit to anyone who has a role in clinical trials," said Dr. Burgess. Dr. Elizabeth Cockrum, associate professor of pediatrics and a clinical trials principal investigator (P.I.) and Clinical Research Coordinator Kay Fendley have previously attended this conference.

CCHS has been involved in clinical research since 1998. Twelve faculty members have completed fifteen clinical trials, and there are presently five clinical trials underway at University Medical Center. **-Kay Fendley**

Note: For more information about clinical trials or the Mayo Alliance for Clinical Trials, including ways in which you can participate in their programs, contact Kay Fendley, kfendley@cchs.ua.edu or (205) 348-1344.

CCHS Faculty Named to Black Belt Commission

Two CCHS faculty members, Drs. **John C. Higginbotham** and **John R. Wheat**, both in the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, have been named to Governor Bob Riley's Black Belt Action Commission.

Dr. Higginbotham is CCHS Associate Dean for Research and Health Policy and Interim Chair of the college's Dept. of Community and Rural Medicine. He is also Director of the University's Institute for Rural Health Research, which works to reduce health disparities in the Black Belt through research, education, and outreach. Dr. Wheat is Professor of Community and Rural Medicine and Internal Medicine. He is founder and director of UA's Rural Health Scholars Program, Minority Rural Health Pipeline, and Rural Medical Scholars Program.

Governor Riley created the Black Belt Action Commission on August 11 through an executive order. State Senator Hank Sanders, D-Selma, and state Treasurer Kay Ivey, a Republican from the Black Belt county of Wilcox, co-chair the commission. The commission's work will be done largely by subcommittees on manufacturing, education, health care, skills training, and infrastructure.

Dr. Higginbotham is on the Community Development Subcommittee, and Dr. Wheat will serve on the Health Care Subcommittee.

"While there has been much talk about the Black Belt in various circles, this commission seeks to bring together the various groups that are already working in this region so that we can collaborate and be more action-oriented," Dr. Higginbotham says.

Adds Dr. Wheat: "I am excited about the opportunity to work with communities in the Black Belt and supportive agencies in this broad community health effort, which will raise the fortunes of the entire state with its success."

Gov. Riley says the purpose of the commission is to propose and work toward substantive solutions to improve the quality of life in the Black Belt.

"I am not appointing this commission so we can have yet another report on conditions in the Black Belt. The Black Belt has been studied and studied. The problems there have already been identified. It's time to take action..." the governor says. Proposed solutions are expected by the end of the year.

The Black Belt is a band of largely rural counties stretching across south-central Alabama. The region has long been characterized by high rates of poverty, economic stagnation, and inadequate health care. **-Leslie Zganjar**

Rural Scholars Programs Featured at National Conference of State Legislators

Dr. **John Wheat**, Co-chair of the Rural Medical Education Group in NRHA, represented the National Rural Health Association (NRHA) in educating state legislators from all over the country about rural health workforce issues at the 2004 Annual Meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July. NCSL and NRHA planned the rural healthcare session. Experts from across the country discussed rural health issues, such as uneven health care workforce distribution, with many rural areas struggling to recruit needed health professionals. For example, despite the fact that about a quarter of Americans live in rural areas, only 10% of U.S. physicians practice there. In 1999, 87% of the mental health professional shortages were in rural areas; 20% of rural counties lack mental health care compared to 5% of metropolitan counties.

"It's vitally important that legislators have accurate information about what they can do to address health care workforce shortages in rural health care," said conference presenter and NRHA President-Elect Hilda Heady, of Morgantown, W. VA. Dr. Wheat shared information on the success of the Rural Scholars programs at CCHS in recruiting and nurturing rural students who want to become rural primary care physicians [current Rural Medical Scholar pre-med class pictured] and how the support of State Legislature in Alabama was fundamental to initiating the programs, which together form a "pipeline" of rural students from high school through medical training and back to rural communities.

Legislators were particularly impressed that five out of eight of the first class of Rural Medical Scholars to finish residency training have entered rural practice and that 45% of Rural Medical Scholars have chosen Family Practice residencies. Wheat said that efforts at CCHS to recruit and assist minority premed students through the Minority Rural Health Pipeline Program (MRHPP) drew special attention from attendees.

Sixth Annual Rural Health Conference Set for 2005

The 6th Annual Rural Health Conference will be held April 20-22, 2005. The theme of the conference will be "Community Partnerships: Navigating the Course for a Healthy Alabama" and the deliberations at the conference will build on the work of previous conferences.

Nearly 400 people attended the Fifth Annual Rural Health Conference held April 28-30, 2004, at the Bryant Conference Center on The University of Alabama campus. The conference also included two pre-conference workshops: "Grant Writing for Community-Based Organizations" and "Rural Alabama Faith-Based Initiatives: Solutions for the Health Care Crisis."

The event was hosted by the University's Institute for Rural Health Research, the College of Community Health Sciences, and AIPHA (the Alabama Public Health Association). The conference was supported in part by a grant to the Institute for Rural Health Research from the National Institutes of Health's National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The keynote speaker was Claude A. Allen, deputy secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services.

The first conference, held in April 2000, was titled "A Day in the Life of Rural Alabama: Making it Better." Participants addressed Alabama's lack of a coherent rural policy and sought to contrast the way professionals see rural health with how community residents do. Rural Health Scholars and Rural Medical Scholars brought their findings from rural community needs assessments to group discussions, and a video of students' photos of rural Alabama was debuted.

The 2001 conference, "Alabama's Rural Health Dilemma: Getting Focus," emphasized greater participation by community residents, government and the business sector. Speakers addressed federal programs and resources, outlined disparities between rural and urban areas in health care and health status, and emphasized connections between rural health and economic development.

Titled "The Time For Action: Building Connections to Improve Rural Economies and Health," the **2002 conference** built upon work done in previous years through sessions on "Resources for Rural Health," "Barriers to Rural Health," and "Notes from the Field." While highlighting the interplay between community economics and community health, the conference also addressed health disparities (i.e., the uneven distribution of disease and medical care among rural citizens); the recruitment and retention of health care professionals; and rural Alabamians' needs including food, clothing, shelter, education, transportation, and recreation.

The 2003 conference, "Culturally Competent Health Care in Rural Alabama: Overcoming Invisible Barriers," approached the topic of barriers from four perspectives (each of which was addressed by a group discussion)--Values and Attitudes; Communication; Community/Consumer Participation; and Resources.

Each conference has drawn two to three hundred participants from among health care professionals, community leaders, government officials, academic researchers, representatives of faith-based organizations, state and federal workers, and others interested in rural health.

"The nature and the scope of the conferences' impact are, in some respects, hard to measure, as our long-term focus discourages quick-fix solutions. The results we have seen and expect to continue to have include: building and strengthening relationships between individuals and institutions; increasing use of available resources; identifying obstacles to progress and models for emulation; and promoting holistic, collaborative, long-term strategies," said Dr. John C. Higginbotham, Director of the Institute for Rural Health Research (IRHR). IRHR has assumed the leadership role in planning the annual conference. For more information, contact **Leslie Zganjar**, IRHR Assistant Director, Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0326. (205) 348-3079 or e-mail: lzganjar@cchs.ua.edu

Blum Speaks to Baylor Students

Dr. **Alan Blum**, who holds the the Gerald Wallace Chair of Family Medicine at CCHS, presented the Matthew A. Carter Memorial Lecture at Baylor University on Friday, September 3. Baylor College of Medicine's Class of 2004 instituted the Annual Matthew Carter Memorial Lectureship in honor of a deceased medical student "to promote, to inspire, and to equip individuals with the spirit of compassion, service and volunteerism, all of which are values that were central to Matthew's life. The annual lecture features individuals in the health care field who dedicate their careers to helping the less fortunate citizens of the world, and in doing so, uphold the true value of human life."



2004 Rural Medical Scholars: (front) Lance Smith, Baldwin County; Bret Henderson, Escambia County; Josh Bell, DeKalb County; Gabe Hester, Fayette County. (middle) Daniel York, Jackson County; Rane McLaughlin, Dale County; Rocky Lyons--who is on far right, Marengo County. (back) Brandon Slagley, Butler County; Brett Thornton, Pickens County; Chuck Dennison, Elmore County. After a year of rural studies at UA, RMS's enter medical school in Birmingham and return to CCHS in their 3rd year for clinicals.

Higginbotham Named Associate Dean

(continued from page 1)

He will collaborate with College administrators and faculty and UA's research administration to implement the mission of the School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Higginbotham will partner with and provide assistance to state and national policy makers, decision makers, and funding agencies.

Dr. Eugene Marsh, Interim Dean of CCHS/the University of Alabama School of Medicine, says Dr. Higginbotham is a key part of the new research infrastructure being created in the College. "Dr. Higginbotham is an outstanding researcher and administrator. His experience as Director of the Institute for Rural Health Research, his excellent record in research and health policy, his connections locally and nationally, and his personal qualities make him an excellent choice for this new

position," Dr. Marsh says. "Through Dr. Higginbotham's leadership, we are creating a new research infrastructure within the College of Community Health Sciences that will position us for continued growth and expansion over the next few years."

Prior to coming to UA, Dr. Higginbotham was a faculty member in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He continues to hold an adjunct faculty appointment in the UTMB Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, as well as adjunct appointments in UA's Capstone College of Nursing and UAB's Center for Health Promotion. He teaches epidemiology, statistics, evaluation, and research design to both medical and non-medical graduate students. His most recent presentations and publications have focused on racial and ethnic disparities in rates of cancer and other health issues that have particular impact in rural areas.

CCHS Hosts Open House at New Medical School Building

August 23, 2004



E. Eugene Marsh, MD, in his first official appearance as interim dean at the Open House on August 23.



Blue Suite Nurse Joanne Malone with Dr. Fawad Aryanpure, R2.



Dr. Marsh welcomes guests for the building dedication prior to the clinic Open House.



Chief Resident Julia Boothe, MD



Peds Nurse Robin Wood's daughter Brittany in clown costume.



Anne Witt, Vicki Johnson, and Betty Shirley



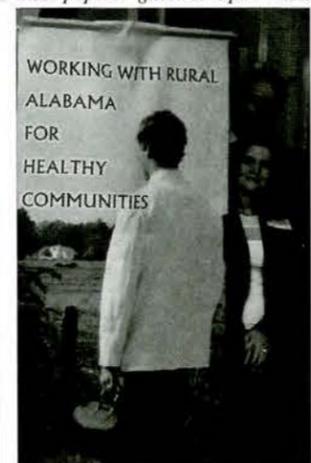
Dr. Bill Owings shows off surgical equipment in procedures room.



Children greet Alabama's mascot, Big Al, (microbiology major Jeremy Behling) who was clearly the most popular guest at Open House.



3rd year resident Dr. Ala Sahawneh & guest



Dr. Melissa Kuhadja and her husband beside banner featuring CCHS alum Dr. Sage Smith.

Twenty-ninth Class Graduates from Family Practice Residency



The 29th Annual Graduation ceremony for the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency Program at the UA College of Community Health Sciences, the University of Alabama School of Medicine--Tuscaloosa was held June 15, 2004, at the Four Points Sheraton. The DCH Healthcare Authority and DCH Regional Medical Center hosted a dinner for graduates and their families, faculty and officials of CCHS, and special guests. The guest speaker for the graduation was CCHS alumna Melissa Behringer, MD, President of the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians. Awards and recognition of graduates followed.

Dr. Behringer is Assistant Dean for Outreach and Rural Programs and Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Alabama School of

Medicine at Huntsville, where she served as Medical Director of the Family Practice Center from 2001 until 2003. She earned her B.S. and M.D. degrees at The University of Alabama and completed her family practice residency here in 1994. Dr. Behringer completed the OB Fellowship at CCHS and practiced in Bibb County for four years before joining the faculty at UASOM at Huntsville.

The *William R. Willard* Award, presented annually by the faculty to the first year resident who most closely embodies the mission and goals of CCHS, went to **Tim Viator, MD**. Departmental awards, noted below, and special recognition were highlights of the program. Chief Residents, Drs. **Drake Lavender** and **Brian Woods**, received University of Alabama chairs in appreciation for their leadership, and the class recognized Residency Director Sam Gaskins, MD, and the staff of the residency program, Katrina Stakem and Malissa Ligon, with gifts. Dr. Sam Gaskins, Residency Director, introduced the graduates; and Bill Cassels of DCH presented graduation certificates and gifts to each new family physician.



First year resident Dr. Tim Viator (right) receives the *William R. Willard* Award from Residency Director, Sam Gaskins. The prestigious Willard Award, named for the founding dean of CCHS, recognizes the honoree for representing the mission and goals of the college.

Internal Medicine	Drake Lavender, MD
Obstetrics/Gynecology	Thomas Carter, MD
Pediatrics	Jonathan Southworth, D.O.
Psychiatry	Drake Lavender, Stephanie Morgan, MD, and Jonathan Southworth
R3 Conference Presentation Award	Thomas Carter
Resident Teaching Award (<i>Society of Teachers in Family Medicine</i>)	Jonathan Southworth
<i>William F. DeShazo III</i> Family Practice Award	Thomas Carter



Dr. Southworth (r) receives the *Society of Teachers of Family Medicine* Resident Teaching award from Dr. Bob Ireland, Associate Professor, Family Medicine.



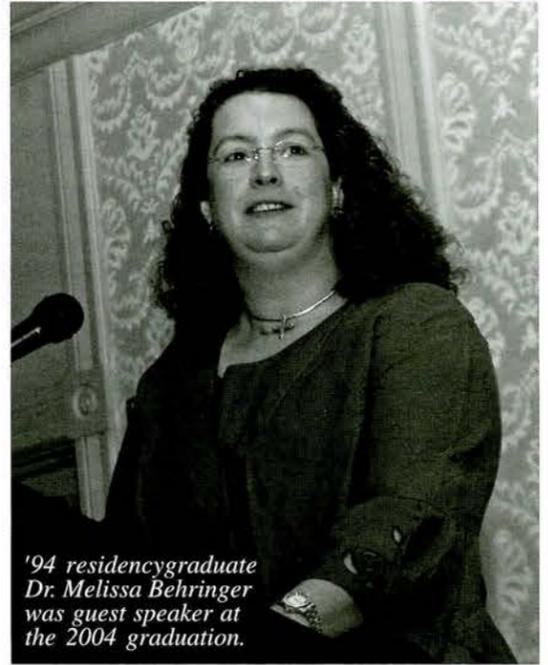
Graduates posed for a class picture after graduation ceremonies. Front row: David Hubbs, Diep Nguyen, Stacy Horsley, Stephanie Morgan, Valerie Sloan, and Frank Lo. Back row: Jonathan Southworth, Brian Wood (Chief), Thomas Carter, Drake Lavender (Chief), Anthony Sloan, and David Moore. (More on each graduate, bottom of page 7)



Dr. Carter (r) receives Conference Presentation award from Dr. Alan Blum, Gerald Wallace Professor of Family Medicine.



Dr. Lavender and Internal Medicine Chair Vijaya Sundar leave the stage after she gave him the departmental award.



'94 residency graduate Dr. Melissa Behringer was guest speaker at the 2004 graduation.



Dr. Karen Burgess, Assistant Professor, and Pediatrics award winner, Dr. Southworth.



Dr. Carter (center), who received the OB/GYN award is congratulated by faculty in the department, Dr. Dan Avery and Dr. Dwight Hooper, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology.



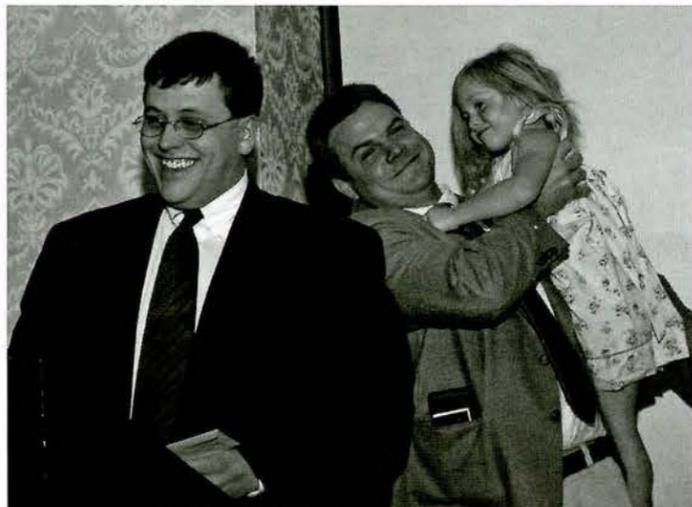
Dr. Ireland poured tea for graduates.



The Psychiatry Award was presented by Dr. Elizabeth Rand (2nd from right), chair of the department, to Stephanie Morgan (l), Drake Lavender, and Jonathan Southworth (r).



Dr. Tony Sloan (r) receives the Research Award from Associate Professor Dr. Nancy Rubin, who chairs the CCHS Research Committee.



Chief Residents Drake Lavender (l) and Brian Wood (holding his daughter) were recognized for their leadership with University of Alabama arm chairs.



Graduates bid farewell to staff and directors of the program, L-R: Malissa Ligon, Chelley Alexander, MD, Assistant Director; Katrina Stakem; Sam Gaskins, MD, Director.

Residency Program's Success (from page 1)

our family practice residents as rigorously as they would residents in their own specialties. In the Southeast, only Huntsville and Tuscaloosa provide both an "unopposed" residency program (that is, one which competes with no other residents in its training location) and a full-time faculty in all specialty areas.

A dedicated group of volunteer faculty make their impact as well, teaching our residents the intricate details of private practice and giving them one-on-one, individualized teaching. Our emergency room (DCH Reg. Medical Center), one of the busiest in the state, provides exposure to a variety of clinical problems from across West Alabama. This combination results in graduates who are well trained to handle anything they encounter in practice. They have also proven their dedication to serving others by their accomplishments in their communities.

Our graduates have also distinguished themselves as leaders in the medical community as well. Five former residents have served as presidents of the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians -- prior to Dr. **Melissa Behringer**, president this year, and President Elect Dr. **Jimmie Clark**, who will be president next year. CCHS alums have also served as state presidents elsewhere: one as president of the Georgia Academy, two as president of the Louisiana Academy, and one is now president of the Mississippi Academy. In addition, nine of our former graduates are now on faculty at the medical schools in Alabama or Louisiana.

Our alumni were and are key leaders of the Rural Alabama Health Alliance, recognized across the state as a voice for rural communities in matters of health services and physician training and recruitment. They have also served on state boards, MASA task forces, medical school admissions and curriculum committees, and been advisors to legislative and government decision-makers.

As the TFPR enters its 32nd year, much is changing. The biggest change may be that **Sam Gaskins** is stepping down as residency director after nearly 25 years at its helm. Since most residency directors only last five years, this is quite an accomplishment. This time of change has given us a chance to reflect on the successes of this residency from training good physicians, to providing physicians to underserved areas, to providing leadership for the state. It has also given us cause to look ahead with enthusiasm and optimism.

The Challenges

As we move forward, there is no doubt that we face challenges. One challenge is to fill our program with qualified residents interested in staying in Alabama. As the specialty of family medicine moves into its fifth decade, we are facing one of the most difficult recruiting years in history. Over the last six years, the number of medical students across the country going into family medicine has dropped by half. In 1996, approximately 73% of family medicine positions offered to medical students were accepted. In 2003, that number had shrunk to only 42%. (source: *Fam Med* 2003; 35(8):564-572) As a result, almost half of family medicine residency slots were unfilled directly after the match last year. Of the total slots that were eventually filled, only a third were filled with U.S. seniors. (from *Family Practice Management*, May 2003).

This drop in student interest has sent residency directors and advocates for rural Alabama scrambling to promote the specialty. Thankfully, our department of rural and community medicine has been promoting primary care and nurturing budding physicians from rural areas of our state since founding Dean William Willard made community medicine a department of the medical school in 1972. Over the past three years, the success of the Rural Medical Scholars Program has made a tremendous impact on our recruiting. Two rural medical scholars graduated from the program last year, one of whom served as chief resident. Currently, one chief resident, and nearly a third of our residents are rural medical scholars. In our intern class alone, of eight UAB graduates that joined the program, six are rural medical scholars (including one RMS who joins the class in January).

Convincing Students

It will be a continuing challenge to convince students to consider family medicine as a specialty. Students are worried that there is no way to know everything, and are concerned that they cannot provide the best care for patients. However, over 90% of patient visits in family medicine are for 25-30 diagnoses. In addition, "Care by generalists uses few resources while producing similar health outcomes for patients with chronic disease" (Future of Family Medicine Report**). So while family physicians cannot know everything, we can provide excellent care to the vast majority of our patients, in the context of family and community, over the lifetime of an individual.

Students are concerned about limiting their options, of being "stuck" with one specialty without the possibility of sub-specialization. Although family physicians are trained in a broad spectrum of disease and procedures, we are perhaps the most flexible specialty there is. While a neurosurgeon may be limited to a certain few cities that need that particular specialty, family physicians can go anywhere, from rural towns to cruise ships, to mission work, or to administrative jobs. Each family physician chooses for him or herself what to refer and what to

treat, where to practice, and how many hours to work. We have tremendous freedom to fit the specialty to our personality and practice style, and to do so in any setting we desire.

Convincing Patients and Communities

Our challenge, therefore, is to resolve this area of confusion in a way that clarifies the identity of family medicine and makes clear the need for the specialty to the general public. The "Future of Family Medicine" project published what it called a compass and a call to action citing the benefits of family medicine. They concluded that it provides a *personal medical home* which serves as the foundation or focal point through which all individuals receive services. We provide customized care in a personal medical home for patients where they are recognized as family, for better or worse.

Increasingly, patients find themselves with the fragmented impersonal care of diseases provided by a cadre of specialists. While specialists may dictate the perfect medication for a condition, they may not have the time or the long term relationship needed to understand the effect of cost, side effects, and preconceived notions about treatment upon the patient's likelihood of compliance. Family physicians explain medications, become intimately familiar with a patient's family, income level, insurance status, and sensitivity to medications in order to provide the best care for that patient. Family practice physicians provide the basic foundation for good health care, developing and managing a personalized plan for improving their patients' health. Without that foundation, the fragmented care provided by multiple specialists will collapse. Like the foundation of any building, the work of family physicians may not be flashy, and at times may go unrecognized. Nonetheless the comprehensive care given by family physicians is critical to the health of Alabama's citizens.

Convincing our Colleagues in other Specialties

Finally, we must convince our colleagues that family medicine is critical to the State. One reason specialists need family physicians is that there simply aren't enough specialists to see every patient with a complaint that falls under their jurisdiction. In fact, "the latest nationally representative data confirm that family medicine continues to be the medical specialty providing more office visits (199 million) than any other specialty" (FFMR**). In addition, much of that care is in underserved areas.

Many counties would become shortage areas without their family physicians (FFMR). "Because family physicians provide the vast majority of patient care in rural areas of the nation, the decline in U.S. graduates choosing family medicine may have the most dramatic impact in our nation's greatest area of need," according to the American Academy of Family Practice (aafp.nrmp.org). Finally, family physicians coordinate the care of complex patients with multiple medical problems and specialists and offer preventive care on the front lines in a way that many specialists would not want to do themselves.

How We can Help

We can support the specialty of family medicine in general, and the residency program in particular, by precepting students and residents in our offices, and joining in their enthusiasm rather than unloading our complaints about medicine in general or our specialty in particular. We can be supportive of family medicine, regardless of our specialty. In addition, we can support the Rural Medical Scholars Program.

Finally, considering that we are in the bottom half of medical schools in terms of the number of students that choose family medicine, we can encourage the admission of students to medical school who are from rural areas and/or interested in primary care.

With your help, we can continue to build on our thirty years, continue to improve our program, and try to provide more of rural Alabama with excellent family physicians -- to be your colleagues, partners, and successors.

Looking Ahead

Despite the challenges, I can't imagine that there has been a more exciting time for the residency program. We have a beautiful new building to attract students and residents and an Electronic Medical Record system that truly puts us on the cutting edge. More students than ever are training on the Tuscaloosa Campus, and in the face of proration and budget cuts, the Rural Medical Scholars Program has won the continued support it requires to remain strong.

Despite the excitement, Sam Gaskins is retiring. He has for nearly twenty five years done a job that few can do for five, and his leadership has made a tremendous impact on the state; for this we owe him our thanks. Sam will be missed, although I doubt he will be far away. I'm just sure he can't stay away from the never ending excitement, that and the eagerness of a brand new batch of interns, fresh out of Volker Hall.



2004 New Residents

Front: Zynia Pua-Vines*, Jennifer White, Matthew Freeman*, Ananda Chunduri, Alan Pernick, Gita Agarwal, Frannie Sides*

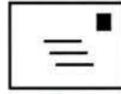
Back: Lee Armistead*, Andy White*, Shanon Jernigan, Archie Hooper, Tomas Vegas...and Dr. Gaskins

(* Denotes Rural Medical Scholar status)

**The Future of Family Medicine Project, which issued the Future of Family Medicine Report (FFMR), is sponsored by American Academy of Family Physicians, AAFP Foundation, American Board of Family Practice, Association of Departments of Family Medicine, Association of Family Practice Residency Directors, North American Primary Care Research Group, and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.



Notes from Alums



Please send a favorite memory of **Sam Gaskins** to include in one of the next issues, in which we feature his time at CCHS as he retires. Be sure to include your phone number or e-mail in case I need to ask you a follow-up question.

Dr. **S. Randall Easterling** of River Region Health System has been installed as 56th president of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) at the organization's 2004 Annual Meeting in Destin, Florida.

Easterling was installed by Dr. Michael Fleming of Shreveport, Louisiana president of The American Academy of Family Physicians.

The 900 plus member Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), one of the largest national medical organizations representing more than 93,500 family physicians, residents and medical students. The AAFP was founded in 1947 to promote and maintain high quality standards for family doctors who are providing continuing comprehensive health care to the public.

To be certified as a specialist in family medicine a family doctor must pass a certifying examination given by the American Board of Family Practice (ABFP), and complete an accredited family practice residency. The ABFP also requires re-certification by examination every six years. The organization also requires that members complete a minimum of 150 hours of approved continuing education every three years.

Easterling has served as president-elect, vice president and secretary.

He received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Mississippi College and has a master's degree in psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi. He received his medical degree from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and completed his family medicine residency at the University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He is board certified by the American Board of Family Practice and is certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Easterling is a member of First Baptist Church and the Vicksburg Rotary Club. He is a member of several medical organizations, including the American Society of Addictive Medicine, the West Mississippi Medical Society, for which he served as president in 1992; the American Medical Association and the Mississippi State Medical Association.

In Memoriam

*Kathryn Parker Martin, wife of 1979 residency graduate **Randall Martin, MD**, died September 20, 2004, at their home in Conroe, Texas. Services were held at First Methodist Church on September 24. Family Medicine Professor Emeritus Dr. Bill DeShazo, Nursing Supervisor Dianne Kerr, and all of the CCHS family extend deepest sympathy to Dr. Martin and his family.*

A Special Kind of Doctor...

The history of CCHS has been completed and published. It includes a detailed account of the development of the residency program, including mention of many of the early residents. The book also candidly describes the differences in philosophy that led to many of the political disagreements over the establishment of the college as a branch campus of the University of Alabama School of Medicine.

Appendices provide lists of Chief Residents, faculty and departmental award recipients, leadership positions held by alumni, and preceptors for rural rotations. A photo collection and a map of alumni practicing in Alabama is included in the book.

Copies may be purchased for \$25.00 from the CCHS Office of Advancement. Make your check payable to the Lister Hill Society and mail it to Vicki Johnson, Director of Advancement, CCHS Dean's Office, Box 870326, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0326.

Please send news of yourself or your classmates to Linda Jackson, Editor, *OnRounds*, at ljackson@cchs.ua.edu Phone: (205) 348-1302

Newest CCHS Alumni Leave the College to Establish Family Practices of Their Own

Residency Director Sam Gaskins' always entertaining introductions of his residents at graduation continued this year and are reprinted here for his final class of CCHS.

Dr. **Thomas Carter** is from Kosciusko, Mississippi. He attended Mississippi State University where he graduated *cum laude* with a BS in Biological Sciences. Dr. Carter concentrated his medical studies at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Thomas and his wife, Sharon, are the proud parents of William Thomas Carter born May 17, 2004. He received the Willard Award as an intern, the DeShazo Award as a third year resident, and the OB Award this year as well. Thomas will join Kosciusko Medical Clinic after graduation. [Thomas arrived in camouflage, causing Dr. Gaskins to remark on dress code violations. He did change into a dark coat for the ceremony.]



Dr. Gaskins with Thomas Carter

Dr. **Stacy Horsley** is from Jasper, Alabama. She graduated *cum laude* with a BS in Education, Sports Medicine from Samford University. While in high school, Stacy volunteered in her local hospital. For Medical School she attended the University of South Alabama Medical School. Stacy and her husband Rick have a one-and-a-half-year-old daughter named Lauren. Upon graduation, she is returning to Jasper, Alabama to join a group of Family Practice Physicians.

Dr. **David Hubbs** is all the way from Montreal, Canada. He received a BA in Philosophy from Trent University in Ontario, Canada. David taught English as a second language to children and adults in Egypt for two years post-graduation. He also worked as a consultant in a firm which represented many healthcare organizations in Canada. Dr. Hubbs attended Medical School at Saint George's University in Grenada. David has participated in two mission trips to Brazil while in residency. His wife, Leslie, is in nursing school. He plans to begin OB fellowship here post graduation.

Dr. **Drake Lavender** is from Eutaw, Alabama. He received his BS in Microbiology from The University of Alabama. Drake graduated from the University of Alabama School of Medicine and spent his last two years here in Tuscaloosa. He was a member of the first class of Rural Medical Scholars and has served as Chief Resident this year. Drake was recognized by the Medical Students for excellence in teaching. He and his wife, JoAnn, have a son, Lane, a daughter, Ashley, and are expecting a baby in the fall. He will be joining Dr. John Brandon in his practice in Gordo, Alabama.

Dr. **David Moore** was born and raised in Fort Lee, Virginia. He received an Associates Degree in Nursing and a Bachelors Degree in Science from Columbus State University. Dr. Moore attended Medical School at American University of the Caribbean. David and his wife, Pam, have a son named Joel, who is ten years old. He worked five years as a registered nurse prior to entering medical school. David has his pilot's license and was an officer in the Army. He will be joining the Air Force as a physician after graduation.

Dr. **Franklin Log** was born in Hong Kong and moved to San Diego, California, at age five. He received his undergraduate degree, a BS in Biology, from the University of California, San Diego, where he worked for a short time as a teaching assistant. Frank went to medical school at the American University of the Caribbean in Montserrat.

Dr. **Stephanie Morgan** is from Cedar Bluff, Alabama. She holds a BS in Biology from Jacksonville State University and a Masters in Public Health from UAB. Stephanie attended medical school at UASOM. Stephanie is a Rural Medical Scholar and has an impressive volunteer background. Included in this list are AMA Fund raising committee, AAFP Leadership Tract Participant, and Hospice Care Team. Her husband, Todd, is a member of the National Guard and is currently deployed in Afghanistan. Post graduation, Stephanie is returning to Cherokee County, her home county, to enter private practice in Centre, Alabama.

Dr. **Diep Nguyen** was born in Vietnam and then he moved to Atlanta at age six. Dr. Nguyen received a BA in Biology from Emory University, and she attended Medical School at Emory University School of Medicine. Diep has six other siblings and all have pursued careers in medicine. One sister is still in medical school and the remaining five are either in residency or practicing physicians. She plans to join her brother in Atlanta where they will establish a family practice office.

Dr. **Valerie Sloan** is from Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. She received a BS in Biological Sciences from Arkansas State University and attended medical school at the University of Arkansas College of Medicine. Valerie received numerous honors in medical school. She is also an accomplished classical pianist. Her great-grandfather was a physician in rural Arkansas. She will return to Arkansas after graduation to practice emergency medicine.

Dr. **Anthony Sloan** was born and raised in Indiana. He holds a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree in Math from Arkansas State University, as well as a Masters in Chemistry. He worked as a science instructor prior to entering medical school. Tony is married to Valerie, who is also a graduating resident. They have a son, Jackson, who is a year old and they are expecting a daughter in July. Tony was recognized by the medical students here for excellence in teaching. He plans to move to Arkansas to practice emergency medicine.

Dr. **Jonathan Southworth** is from Birmingham, Alabama. He has a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in Biology from UAB. Jonathan graduated from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. He and his wife, Jolinda, have two daughters, Jessica, age 4, and Samantha, who turns two in August. Dr. Southworth held several positions at UAB including graduate teaching assistant. Jonathan volunteered in the Emergency Room at Children's Hospital as well. After graduation, Jonathan and his family will be moving to Brewton, Alabama, where he will assume the practice of a retiring family physician.

Dr. **Brian Wood** is from Franklin, Tennessee. Brian received his undergraduate degree, a BS in Biology, from Birmingham Southern University. He attended Medical School at the University of South Alabama School of Medicine. He was a chief resident this year. Brian is married to Jina, who recently graduated from law school. They are parents of a four-year-old daughter named Devin. Brian and his family will be relocating to Vermont where he will practice Family Medicine.

Third Year Medical Students CCHS, 2004

Christina Bemrich graduated from UAB where she earned her B.A. in Political Science with a Minor in Chemistry. Her husband, Michael Stolz, is a plumber. Christina is in the Honors Program, and the Student Leadership Program. She worked at Hospice, Americorps Vista, and Camp Newsong.

Jacel Brooks is a native Alabamian and he received his B.S. of Biology in 2002 from The University of Alabama. He enjoys all sports and working out.

Clay Campbell, a Rural Medical Scholar from Marshall County, graduated from Birmingham Southern College and earned his BA in Sociology in 2001. He worked at Capstone during his first year in the Rural Medical Scholars program. Clay enjoys the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing.

Abbey McGough Carroll, a 2002 graduate of Samford University, earned her B.S. in Biology. She ran cross-country and track at the University and was in the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority. She was also a camp counselor and hospital volunteer. Her husband, Warren, is an Air Force pilot.

Lee R. Carter, a Rural Medical Scholar from Autaugaville, was a Varsity Football player at UAB, where in 1999 he received his B.S. in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. He was nominated for and won the highly competitive NCAA post graduate scholarship in 2000. Colbi, Lee's wife, is busy at home with their 2-year-old son, Ford Carter. Lee was a part of UAB's R.O.A.R. (Reaching Out As Role Models) mentoring program.

Anne-Laura Cook attended high school in Tuscaloosa as well as college at The University of Alabama. She received her Premedical degree in 2001. Anne-Laura worked at the Alabama Grill, and she enjoys hiking, biking, and traveling. Anne-Laura said that she decided to become a physician after shadowing Ashley Evans at a High Risk clinic.

Stevenson Craig graduated from UAB in 1993 with a major in Biology and minor in Chemistry. Stevenson is married to Nice Shindo, a researcher, and they have an 8-year-old son, Stevenson Craig II. Stevenson has experience as a tree surgeon, a lab tech, and a soldier.

Eric Crowe is from Jacksonville, Alabama. Hereceived his B.A. in Psychology from the University of Georgia in 2002.

Amanda E. Dailey graduated from Auburn University in 2002 with a major in Zoology. Amanda is from Decatur, AL.

Lindsay Evans, a Rural Medical Scholar from Boaz, is a University of Alabama graduate. She earned her degree in Spanish with a minor in Biology in 2002. Lindsay enjoys running, fly fishing, and reading.

Miranda Gillespie is from Mobile, Alabama, and graduated from UAB where she majored in Anthropology and minored in Chemistry. She is a part of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), Family Medicine Interest Group, and Med students for Choice. Miranda served as a midwife in Canada for one year. Miranda decided to go to Med School after working one summer with rural health care in Kentucky's Appalachian Mountains.

Melissa C. Gray of Tuscaloosa County graduated from the University of Alabama in 1989 with a B.A. in Journalism. She worked as an editor/reporter for the *Tuscaloosa News* before she became a Rural Medical Scholar and entered medical school. She has two daughters Lauren, 11, and Amanda 10.

Megan Grilliot is from Greenville, OH, and attended Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, where she majored in Biology.

William R. Gwin III attended Auburn University in 2002 and graduated with a major in Microbiology and a minor in History. There he was a part of the Student Government Association, Student Representatives to the Auburn City Council, and Cancer Research. William enjoys volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

Anne D. Halli, from Tuscaloosa, graduated from Boston College, with an AB in English. She was in the Presidential Scholars Program, a member of the novice women's/men's Varsity Crew team, and a "4 Boston volunteer." Anne volunteered and shadowed at the Mary Starke Harper Center at Bryce and did volunteer work with the St. Francis House homeless shelter and Project Bread Food Source hotline in Boston. She was also team leader on a UA Museum of Natural History Archaeological Expedition.



Front: Bryan Jones, Melissa Gray, Abbey Carroll, Anne-Laura Cook, Amanda Johnson, Amanda Dailey, Brooke Shepard Orr, Anne Halli, Emily Natarella, Shakira Thoms, Miranda Gillespie, Adrienne Robertson, Lindsay Evans.

Back: Lee Carter, Jacel Brooks, Spencer Romine, Christy Bemrich, Stephen Sanders, Steven Craig, Quinton Matthews, Eric Crowe, Neil Yeager, Joseph Walker, Terry James, Megan Grilliot, Clay Campbell, Josh Wharton, Will Gwin, Ty Warren, Hayden Long.

Terry James, a Rural Medical Scholar from Winston County, went to the University of North Alabama and earned his degree in Chemistry in 2001. He played football for UNA, was in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, and active in the Baptist Campus Ministries. He was awarded the first Alfa Rural Medical Scholarship in 2002.

Amanda Johnson, from Birmingham, graduated from Rhodes College where she received her BS in Biology. Amanda loves the outdoors where she enjoys backpacking, traveling, and white-water rafting.

Bryan Jones attended the University of North Alabama where he earned his degree in Chemistry in 2000. Bryan enjoys hunting, fishing, exercising, and water sports.

Hayden C. Long double majored in Neuroscience and Psychology at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he also volunteered at Tour Medical Center. Hayden is from Fairhope, Alabama.

Quinton Matthews, from Analusia Alabama, attended the University of Alabama where he majored in Chemistry and Minored in Business. He was a part of the Pathways program where he worked with rural family practitioners, and he worked in the CCHS Dean's office while in college. Quinton enjoys fishing, hunting, reading, being with his family, attending church, and playing sports.

Emily Natarella graduated from The University of Alabama in 2000 with a B.A. in Anthropology. She also earned her M.A. in German Literature at UA. Emily's husband Mike is a teacher at The Capitol School. She was a manager at the Independent Living Aids of Alabama. Emily decided to become a physician while on a trip to Austria where she realized that "Restoring a person's health and functional capabilities helps a person to help themselves."

Adrienne C. Robertson, from New Orleans, graduated from Auburn University in Montgomery in 2000 with a major in Biology and minor in Chemistry. At AUM, she was in the Alpha Epsilon-Delta Sorority. She has worked as a Missionary at Forest Park Baptist Church in the summer, and she also worked for the Alabama Agricultural Statistics where she conducted an agricultural census.

Spencer E. Romine, of Cullman, attended Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where he majored in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy and Minored in Psychology. He was on Duke's Varsity Football team.

Stephen Sanders went to The University of Alabama where he majored in History and minored in Chemistry and graduated in 2001. He has been a Hospice volunteer, and he was also a part of the Juvenile Judicial Program. Stephen's wife, Alison, is a 4th grade teacher at Verner Elementary.

Brooke Shepard Orr majored in Biology and minored in English at UA, where she was in the Honors Program and a member of Crew Team. She was inducted into Alpha Epsilon Delta (the premed honor society) and did research for Dr. Sloan in the Microbiology Department. A former Rural Health Scholar in high school, she served as a summer counselor in the UA Rural Science Scholars Program. Her husband, Lance, is a Journalism Graduate student at UA.

Shakira Nicola Thomas, a Rural Medical Scholar from Evergreen, Alabama, and a 2002 graduate of The University of Alabama, where she majored in Chemistry and minored in Biology. Shakira enjoys sports and reading.

Joseph Walker, a Rural Medical Scholar from Brilliant, Alabama, graduated from The University of Alabama in 2002 with a major in Biology. As an undergrad Joseph worked as a student assistant in the CCHS Department of Community & Rural Medicine. Joseph enjoys spending time with family, running, and playing with his dog.

Ty Warren, from West Plains, Missouri, played football at the University of North Alabama, where he earned his degree in Biology in 2001.

Josh Wharton, a graduate of Arab High School, graduated from UA with a major in Biology and minor in Management. In college Josh enjoyed playing basketball, softball, and flag football. He also was a lifeguard. His wife, Natalie, is a counselor at Alberta Elementary School.

Neil Cameron Yeager, a Rural Medical Scholar from Holly Pond, Alabama, graduated *Phi Beta Kappa* from The University of Alabama with a BS in Biology in 1999 and earned an M.A. in Health Studies during his first year of the Rural Medical Scholars Program. At UA, he was named to the National Dean's List and Who's Who among College Students and inducted into Golden Key National Honor Society. He volunteered at Cullman Regional Medical Center, and he coached a 3rd grade basketball team.

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.

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E. Eugene Marsh, MD, Interim Dean

Linda Jackson, Editor

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA
HEALTH SCIENCES

The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences
Box 870326
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Dr. Stephen L. Weinrib
1400 Meriwether Rd
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