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.

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 Humankind in Medicine Award by the Arnold P. 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.

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 5% 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 firefighters, 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.

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 (See page 3).

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. 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 UAS’s Institute for Rural Health Research and Principal Investigator of UAS’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 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 health care personnel involved in the management and coordination of clinical research. Speakers included top FDA officials Dr. Lester Crawford, Acting Commissioner; Dr. Dianne Murphy, Acting Director, Pediatric Therapeutics.

The University Division of Clinical Investigations belongs to the Mayo Alliance for Clinical Trials. Membership in the Mayo Alliance is open to clinical sites where at least three of UMCG's investigators have completed or are currently completing 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 Mayo Alliance program, a series of sessions 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.

The Mayo Alliance provides a newsletter on issues in clinical trials underway at University Medical Center. -Kay Fendley

Note: For more information about clinical trials or the Mayo Alliance for Clinical Trials, contact the Mayo Clinic or one of the presenters from clinical trials underway at University Medical Center.

CCHS Faculty Named to Black Belt Commission

Two CCHS faculty members, Dr. John C. Higginbotham and John R. Wheat, both rural health care professionals and rural medical leaders, have been named to Governor Bob Riley’s Black Belt Action Commission.

Dr. Higginbotham is CCHS Associate Dean for Research and Health Policy and Internal Medicine faculty member at the University of Alabama 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 Co-Director of Community Health Services at University Hospital and the UAB Medical Center.

"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," said Dr. Higginbotham.

Dr. Wheat says, "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."

The commission aims to develop a comprehensive plan of action 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 community health. 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.

Dr. Higginbotham notes that large rural counties stretching 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. Alan Butler, 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 Legislators (NCSL) held 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 and retain 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 NCSL conference presenter and NRHA President-Elect Eлица 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 primary care physicians (current Rural Medical Scholar pre-med class pictured) and how the support of State Legislators 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 Scholars have completed residency training and 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 28-30, 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 28-29, 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 System." The event was hosted by the University’s Institute for Rural Health Research, the College of Community Health Sciences, and APhA (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, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

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.

In addition, 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.

"The Theme for Action: Building Connections to Improve Rural Economies and Health," the 2002 conference built upon work done in previous years through sessions on "Rural Health Solutions: Building, Breathing, 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 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, Community, 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 community members and institutions; increasing use of available resources to address problems and needs of community members; the recruitment and retention of health care professionals; and rural Alabamians’ needs including food, clothing, shelter, education, transportation, and recreation."

The 2004 conference, "Solutions for a Healthy Alabama: Where Are We Now, and How Do We Get There?" included top FDA officials Dr. Lester Crawford, Acting Commissioner, and promoting holistic, collaborative, long-term strategies," said Dr. John C. Higginbotham, Director of the Institute for Rural Health Research (IRHR). IRIR 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: zganjar@crchs.uab.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 Lecture to honor the late Dr. Matthew Carter, a 1986 graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine and a driving force behind the development of a primary 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 define their careers to helping families and communities in both local and world settings.

"It is imperative that we give our students a glimpse of the magnitude of the task we face as a profession and the multitude of responsibilities involved in attending to the health of the world, and in doing so, uphold the true value of human life," said Blum.

2004 Rural Medical Scholars: (Front) Larena Smith, Baldwin County; Bert Henderson, Escambia County; Josh Bell, DeKalb County; Gabe Hester, Fayette County (Middle) Daniel York, Jackson County; Randi Micaugian, Dale County; Rocky Lynde—no is for far sight, Marengo County; (back) Brandon Sligeris, Butler County; David Thorton, Lee County, Tuscaloosa County, Elmore County. After a year of rural studies at UA, RM’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

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

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

Peds Nurse Joanne Malone with Dr. Feroz Asanyane, R2.

Chief Resident Julia Boothe, MD

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

Anne Witt, Vicki Johnson, and Betty Shirley

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

Children greet Alabama’s mascot, Big Al, entomology major Jeremy Bellinger, who was clearly the most popular guest at Open House.

3rd year resident Dr. Asha Solhanebi & guest

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

WORKING WITH ALABAMA FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

3 • OnRounds • Summer 2004
Twenty-ninth Class Graduates from Family Practice Residency

The 29th Annual Graduation ceremony for the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency Program at the UAB 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.

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 (Society of Teachers in Family Medicine)
Jonathan Southworth

William F. DeShazo III Family Practice Award
Thomas Carter

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.

Graduates posed for a class picture after graduation ceremonies. Front row: David Habbis, Diep Nguyen, Stacy Horvitz, 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)
Carter (r) receives Conference Presentation award from Dr. Alan Blum, Gerald Wallace Professor of Family Medicine. Leave the stage after she gave him the departmental award.

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

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 Rount (2nd from right), chair of the department, to Stephanie Morgan (l), Drake Lavender, and Jonathan Southworth (r).

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

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

Graduates bid farewell to staff and directors of the program, L-R: Melissa 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 "unapolooped" 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. CCIS alumni 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 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 TPR 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 has moved 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 3% of family medicine residents 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 spots were unfilled during 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 interest in the specialty for the past two decades. As a result, interest is growing. This year, 48 residents (16 more than last year) will begin residency training. This is the highest number of residents to enter our program in 10 years. Of the 48 residents,20 are Alabama natives, 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 specialty is everywhere," Family Practice Management (May, 2003), making family physicians the most flexible to fill needs in a variety of settings. 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 makes clear the importance of family medicine 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 of medical care. They emphasized the importance of community. 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 uploading 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.

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 am sure just can stay away from the never ending excitement, that and the eagerness of a brand new batch of interns, fresh out of Velker Hall.
Notes from Alums

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 Montgomery, Alabama. 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 Addiction 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 24, 2004, at their home in Conroe, Texas. Services were held at First Methodist Church on September 24. Family Medicine Professor Emeritus Dr. Bill DeCherly, Nursing Supervisor Dianne Ker, 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 jackson@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 continue 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 DelShan 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. 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. In 2000 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 Hobbs 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. Hobbs attended Medical School at Saint George’s University in Grenada. David has participated in two mission trips to Brazil while in residence. His wife, Leslie, is in nursing school. He plans to begin OB fellowship here post graduation.

Dr. Dr. Deanne Avila is from Estevan, Alabama. He received his BS in Microbiology from The University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. Deanne 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. Dr. Avila was recognized by the Medical Students for excellence in teaching. He and his wife, Nao, have a son, Luke, a daughter, Ashley, and are expecting a baby in the fall. He will be joining Dr. John Brandom in his practice in Gordo, Alabama.

Dr. David Moore was born and raised in Fort Lee, Virginia. He received his Associates Degree in nursing from a local community college and his Bachelor’s 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. They 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 the summer as a teaching assistant. Frank went to medical school at the American University of the Caribbean in Montserrat.

Dr. S. Randall Easterling, installed as 56th president of the Mississippi Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP), at the organization’s 2004 Annual Meeting in Montgomery, Alabama.

Jace BrooksonceivedhisB.S. inBiologyin2002fromTheUniversityofAlabama.Heenjoysallsportsandworkingout.


EricCroweisfromJacksonville,Alabama.HereceivedhisB.A.inHistory There he was a part of the Student Government Association,StudentRepresentatives totheAuburnCity Council,andtheAuburnAthleticBoostersProgram.


Kentucky'sAppalachianMountains.

MelissaC.Grayoftuscaloosacountygraduatedfrom theUniversityofAlabamain1989withaB.A.inJournalism.She receivedherdegreeinhispanishwithaminorminbiology.

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