

# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS MEDICINE

The Magazine of the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

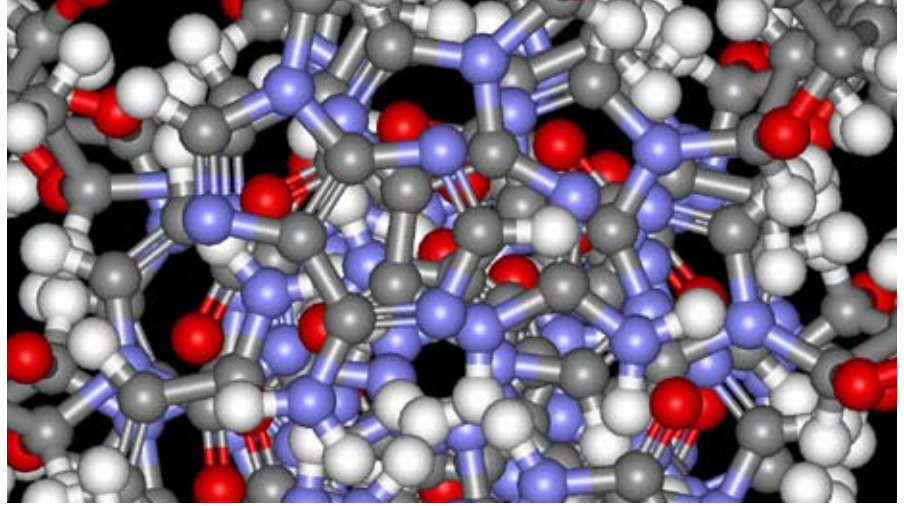
SPRING/SUMMER 2007



Where Science Meets

# BUSINESS

UAMS BioVentures turns 10



## Spring/Summer 2007

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**On the cover:** Michael Douglas, Ph.D., helps university researchers realize and protect the commercial potential of their discoveries. The kaleidoscope-like images in the background stem from a computer-generated model of a double strand of DNA, as viewed vertically down the helix axis.

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## From the Dean

# The COM's New Dean Looks Ahead

The College of Medicine (COM) is my alma mater, and I've spent 25 years – my entire post-fellowship career – here. Since becoming dean last September, I have seen an even broader picture of how dedicated our faculty are to preparing well-trained physicians and researchers.

Our core mission to train students not only to be skilled doctors, but also compassionate care givers, has never been more vital. Arkansas' and the nation's health care needs are growing as the population ages and obesity and other health problems abound. The physician work force also is aging, and the Association of American Medical Colleges has called for substantial increases in medical school enrollment.

UAMS and the COM are taking many steps to meet the challenge, including carefully planned enrollment increases, a major expansion of UAMS Medical Center and teaching facilities, and exploration of new clinical training sites.

One of my top priorities is to foster a culture that demands superior and compassionate patient-centered care. I also want to reach out more to our off-campus community of alumni, former residents and other Arkansas physicians.

The college and the community can, and do, work together beautifully. In this issue, you'll read how area gastroenterologists have partnered with our Division of Gastroenterology during a faculty shortage and how the program has been rewarding both for fellows and the community doctors. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has participated.

Our cover story highlights another exciting campus-community partnership, UAMS BioVentures. For 10 years, the biotechnology business incubator has helped our scientists realize and protect the commercial potential of their discoveries and steer them into the marketplace. Michael Douglas, Ph.D., has launched several promising initiatives since becoming director last summer.

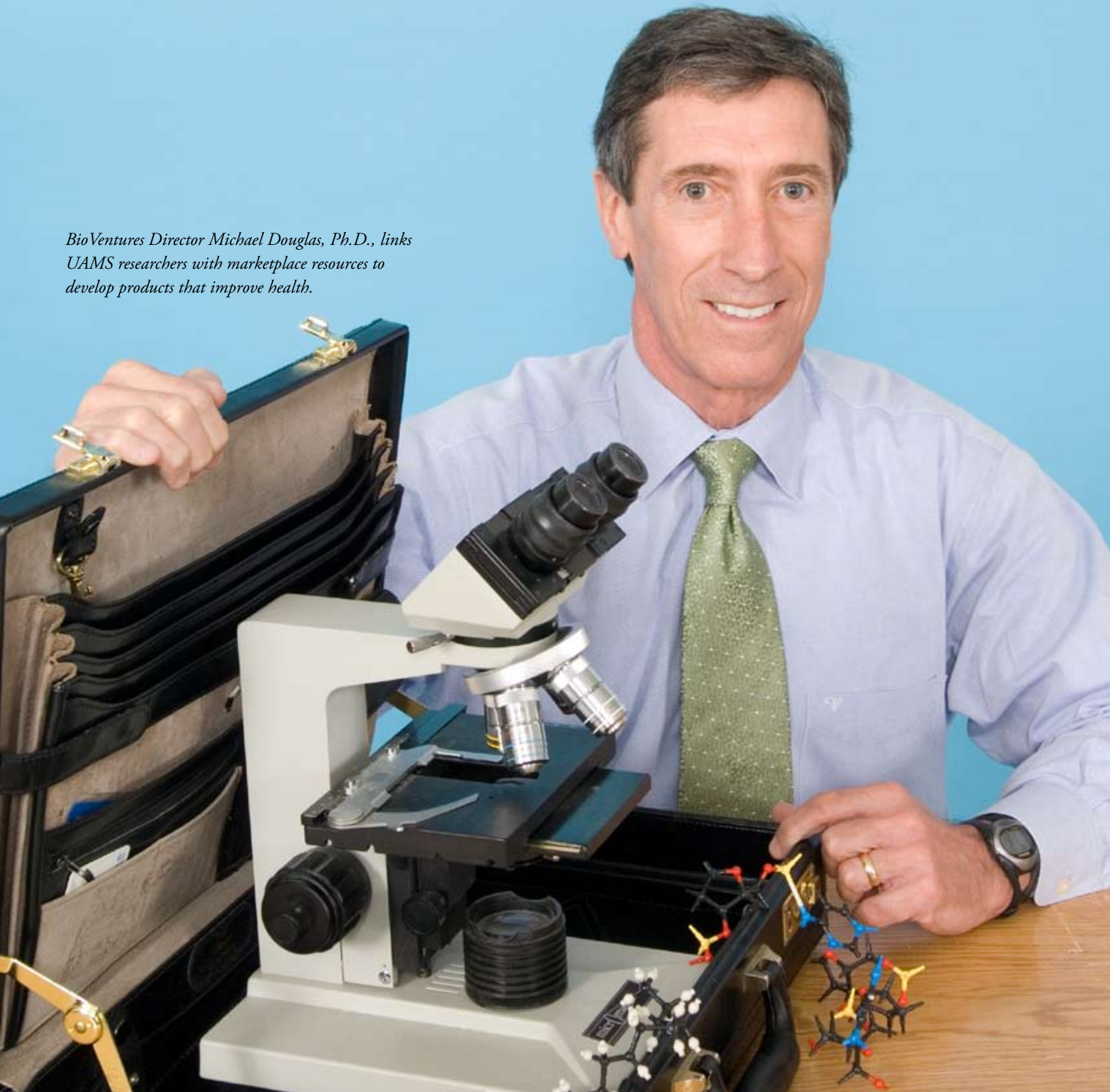
I welcome your ideas as we progress in the years ahead.

*Debra H. Fiser, M.D.*

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.  
Dean, College of Medicine  
Vice Chancellor, UAMS

*Editor's note: Fiser, a 1977 COM graduate, joined the faculty in 1981 and was chair of the Department of Pediatrics for 11 years before being appointed dean by UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson in 2006. A national leader in pediatrics, Fiser is a past president of the Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs.*

*BioVentures Director Michael Douglas, Ph.D., links UAMS researchers with marketplace resources to develop products that improve health.*



"Everything we do is focused on taking nascent ideas and bringing substance to them through entrepreneurial resources."

# The Business Link

## BioVentures helps steer UAMS research into the marketplace

BioVentures helps move UAMS research into the marketplace. Every medical researcher hopes to see his or her discoveries translated into new treatments and better medicine. But the laboratory is only the starting point.

For 10 years, UAMS BioVentures has helped scientists realize and protect the commercial potential of their discoveries and move them into the marketplace. The biotechnology business incubator links the research minds at UAMS to global markets to advance Arkansas' scientific and economic development.

"Everything we do is focused on taking nascent ideas and bringing substance to them through entrepreneurial resources," says Michael Douglas, Ph.D., who became director of BioVentures and the university's technology licensing office in July 2006.

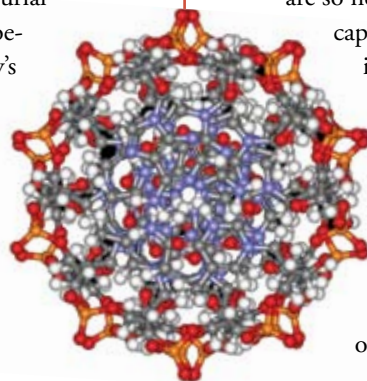
"If we are going to drive a knowledge-based economy in Arkansas," he says, "it has to come through the development of investment networks and business management resources that will help UAMS researchers move their technologies and ideas into better health care while creating wealth in the community."

Before coming to UAMS, Douglas was associate vice chancellor for research and director of the Office of Technology Management at Washington University in St. Louis. He also has been a chief science officer at biopharmaceutical companies as well as a professor and chairman of Biochemistry and Biophysics at the University of North Carolina. At UAMS, Douglas also is a professor of biochemistry and molecular biology.

Douglas credits BioVentures founder Tim O'Brien, Ph.D., for working with community leaders and the investment community over the past decade to establish and grow the business incubator. O'Brien, a professor in obstetrics and gynecology,

stepped down as director last summer to focus on his own research. UAMS' intellectual property portfolio has grown to include more than 350 invention disclosures, 175 patents and 52 license agreements. BioVentures has helped form seven graduate companies, 12 client companies and three pipeline companies. The result: more than 300 new high-tech jobs in Arkansas with an average salary of nearly \$50,000 and an annual payroll of \$15.7 million.

One of Douglas' strategies for helping UAMS researchers translate their discoveries into better medicine and the marketplace is to establish a "pre-seed" fund for projects that are so new they're "not ready for prime time venture capital funding." These would include promising ideas that grew out of federally funded research, but which still require additional research before company formation. "Gap funding becomes a big issue," Douglas explains, "and we're working with UAMS development officials and private investors to build these needed resources." Potentially, the fund could support up to five projects per year with one-year, \$20,000 to \$50,000 grants.



Douglas also is working to collaborate more with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's business and law schools. Aside from technology-based business development, he is working with faculty in UAMS colleges to find and develop opportunities for health care service-based companies, such as an evidence-based drug formulary service.

On still another front, Douglas has developed a graduate course that will start in the fall to teach the essentials of entrepreneurialism to researchers in training. "I think any scientist who is starting out today needs to understand about licensing and consulting agreements, the patent process and the basics of business formation," he says.

# Catch it Early

UAMS startup company is **creating tools for fighting** ovarian cancer



*Tim O'Brien, Ph.D., leads Stage I Diagnostics' efforts to develop life-saving, early-stage tests for ovarian cancer.*

Ovarian cancer has been called the “silent killer.” The vast majority of women who have it are diagnosed so late that their prognosis is dim. But that could change soon, thanks to the work of an Arkansas startup company born of research at UAMS and nurtured by UAMS BioVentures.

Stage I Diagnostics Inc. is working with partner companies to develop early-stage blood test systems that can detect ovarian cancer in its earliest, most curable stage. The first of the systems, for use in large-scale, automated diagnostic machines, could be on the market in 18 months. Three other products are in the works, including home test kits that could be marketed as early as 2010.

“Our challenge was to find a means for diagnosis at Stage 1, when the cancer is still inside the ovary and surgery is essentially capable of curing it,” says Tim J. O'Brien, Ph.D., a professor of obstetrics and gynecology who has been researching ovarian cancer for 30 years and who founded Stage I Diagnostics in 2005. “Women who are diagnosed at Stage 1 have a 90 percent survival rate at five years.”

O'Brien and his colleagues helped develop the marker that is primarily used today to monitor the progress of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer. But the marker, CA125, was not effective at diagnosing the disease. They pressed on for two decades, ultimately

identifying and patenting 14 other markers. Four of them, used along with CA125, have been shown in the laboratory to be very effective at recognizing early-stage cancer.

“The real challenge is how to translate them into effective tools for the clinic, and that is what Stage I Diagnostics is all about,” says O'Brien. Five people work with the company, and O'Brien says Stage I could grow to support 25 to 30 staff members. Stage I leases lab space in the BioVentures building but is expected to eventually move to a research park to be established in central Arkansas.

Long before forming the company, O'Brien led the effort in 1994 to create UAMS' Biomedical Biotechnology Center, designed to help researchers protect and manage the university's intellectual property. In 1997, he founded BioVentures, a business incubator that helps researchers launch startup companies. He stepped down as director last summer to concentrate on his own research but remains active in the organization.

“We have an opportunity to create and develop novel therapies and technologies right here in Arkansas,” says O'Brien. “BioVentures can help UAMS researchers translate their technology and their creativity into better patient care.”

# License to Heal

## License deals help turn discoveries into better medicine

Imagine a vaccine that protects against deadly, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections. Envision new treatments for bone-related cancers, rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis that could improve the quality of life for countless patients.

Those are just some of the potential outcomes of research discoveries at UAMS that have led to major license agreements with pharmaceutical and other companies. UAMS BioVentures has negotiated more than 50 license agreements on behalf of investigators as part of its mission to protect and manage the university's intellectual property.

In February, BioVentures announced that UAMS researcher Chia Lee, Ph.D., and the university had licensed the rights to a bacterial strain that could lead to a vaccine for certain deadly, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections. Lee, a professor in the College of Medicine's Department of Microbiology and Immunology, along with Thanh Luong, Ph.D., a research assistant professor, invented the strain that has been licensed through an exclusive agreement with Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines business of Sanofi-Aventis group.

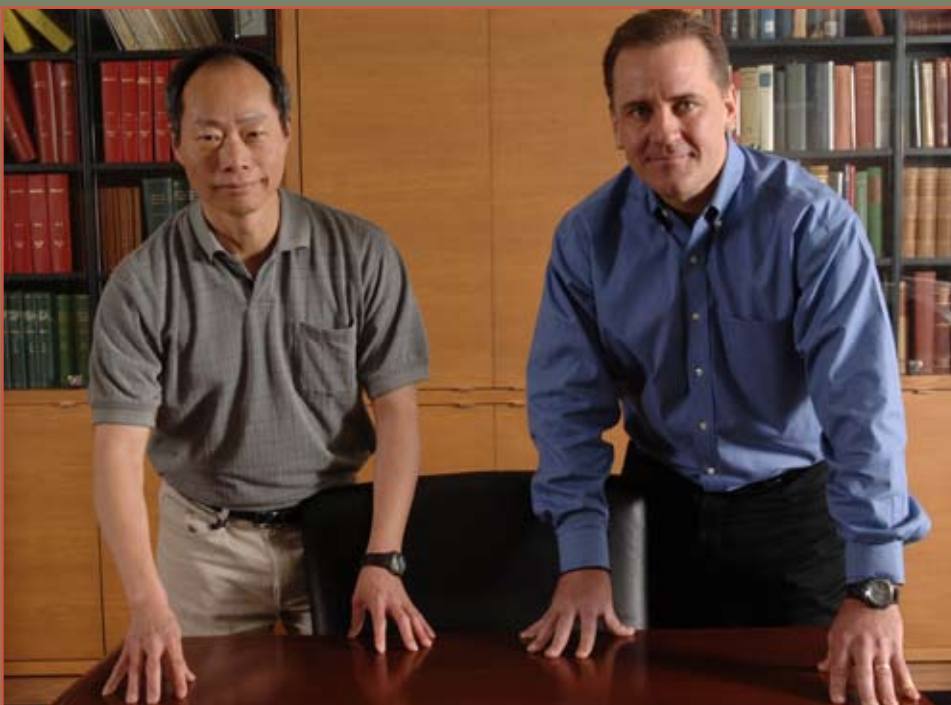
While specific terms remain confidential, as with virtually all license deals, the agreement provides UAMS an upfront payment and

milestone payments related to future product development and sales.

A license agreement with another pharmaceutical company and stemming from groundbreaking research into multiple myeloma will yield annual payments for UAMS until the first commercial sale and then a percentage of drug sales.

The research by John Shaughnessy, Ph.D., in the UAMS Myeloma Institute for Research and Therapy (MIRT), led to two patent applications related to a molecule found to be the key to bone destruction. Shaughnessy's research has shown promising lab results for blunting the molecule's ability to destroy bone and even to cause regression of tumors, as well as increasing bone density in bones without tumors. The findings could lead to new treatments for multiple myeloma, prostate and breast cancer, certain types of osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

"The discoveries of Dr. Lee, Dr. Shaughnessy and their colleagues are prime examples of how the value of the intellectual property from UAMS research ultimately can deliver better health care for everyone," says BioVentures Director Michael Douglas.



*Chia Lee, Ph.D., (left), and John Shaughnessy, Ph.D., are the research leaders behind two major licensing agreements between UAMS and pharmaceutical companies.*



*Leslie Fiskien credits Paul Wendel, M.D., with saving her life and bringing baby Allie safely into the world.*

“My pregnancy was a complete rollercoaster ride,” says Fiskien.  
“Dr. Wendel handled challenge after challenge not only with great skill as a physician, but also with compassion and understanding.”

# In Good Hands

Paul Wendel, M.D., brings expertise and compassion to high-risk obstetric care

No one knows what a rollercoaster ride a high-risk pregnancy can be better than Leslie Fisken.

Fourteen weeks into the Little Rock attorney's third pregnancy, an episode of bleeding led to a diagnosis of placenta previa. Later there were indications that the baby might have Down's syndrome. And the joy of her healthy daughter's birth one evening in September 2005 was quickly eclipsed when Fisken was rushed to the operating room for an emergency hysterectomy and efforts for many hours to save her life.

When Fisken awoke on a ventilator the next morning, she was reminded that she was in very good hands.

"Leslie Fisken, you scared us," were the first words she heard from her obstetrician, Paul Wendel, M.D. The maternal fetal medicine specialist had stayed close by Fisken and her family through the night in the Intensive Care Unit at UAMS.

"My pregnancy was a complete rollercoaster ride," says Fisken. "Dr. Wendel handled challenge after challenge not only with great skill as a physician, but also with compassion and understanding. He has a magical quality of making you feel that you are not only his most important patient, but his only patient."

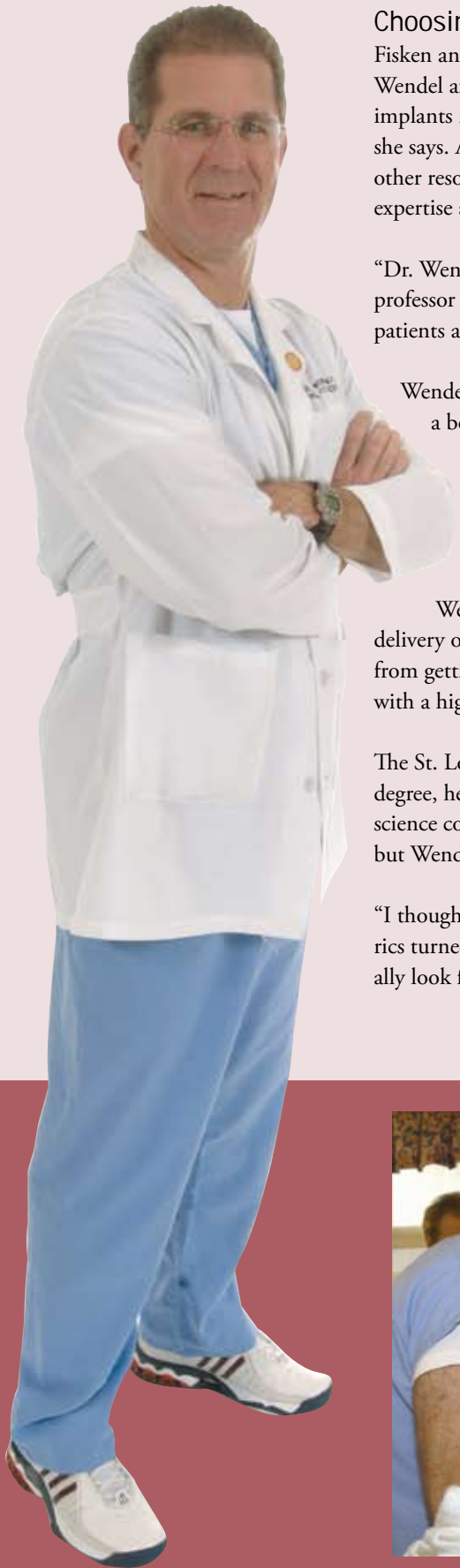
## Patients Say Thanks with Endowment Effort

Fisken and six other former patients have joined forces with UAMS development officials to establish and begin raising money for an endowment for the Maternal Fetal Medicine (MFM) program in Wendel's name.

The MFM program, a division of the College of Medicine's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, focuses on high-risk pregnancies. Specially trained obstetrician-gynecologists and other professionals manage the most complex pregnancies in Arkansas. The division is home to the ANGELS program, the Antenatal and Neonatal Guidelines, Education and Learning System, which uses telemedicine and other resources to extend the division's expertise throughout the state.

The endowment will be used at Wendel's discretion for research, conferences, special educational programs, equipment or other needs. By supporting the MFM program, the proceeds will enhance training for Arkansas' future obstetricians.

"These are the people who will be delivering my sons' and daughters' children," says Wendel, a father of six. "I want to train residents who will provide for my kids what I hopefully have provided for my patients. I am humbled by this endowment effort and grateful for the opportunities it will provide to enhance our program." ▶



## Choosing UAMS

Fisken and her husband Nik, an investment banker, decided to come to UAMS and see Wendel after she was diagnosed with placenta previa, a condition in which the placenta implants in the cervical area in the uterus. “We kept hearing about this great doctor at UAMS,” she says. After meeting Wendel, they learned about the expertise in the MFM program and other resources at UAMS. As it turns out, those resources, including exceptional anesthesia expertise and blood supplies, saved her life.

“Dr. Wendel loves clinical work, and he is a very good teacher,” says Curtis Lowery, M.D., professor and director of Maternal Fetal Medicine. “He spends a lot of time both with his patients and with residents and relates to them very well.”

Wendel has special expertise in multiple gestation pregnancies, Lowery adds, and as a board examiner for the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology, he is recognized as a national expert in obstetrics and gynecology. He joined the UAMS faculty in 1994 after completing his fellowship at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

## “It Just Lights you Up”

Wendel is passionate about his work, but he says it isn't the intensity of a high-risk delivery or even the miracle of childbirth itself that motivates him. It's the “energy” he derives from getting to know so many of his patients and their families. “Even when a patient is dealing with a high-risk pregnancy, they bring such hope and happiness to our practice,” he says.

The St. Louis native didn't originally plan on going into medicine. But after getting a liberal arts degree, he couldn't envision himself as a history teacher and returned to school to pick up the science courses he would need for medical school. His brother is a MFM specialist in Dallas, but Wendel still didn't plan on going into obstetrics and gynecology.

“I thought I'd go into pediatrics or family practice,” Wendel says. “But my rotation for obstetrics turned out to be so much fun. There's really no other field of medicine where people actually look forward to going to the doctor. It just lights you up. I was hooked.”



*For information on the Paul J. Wendel, M.D., Maternal Fetal Medicine Endowment, please contact Mike Houston, director of development, at 501-526-6144 or via e-mail at [mhouston@uams.edu](mailto:mhouston@uams.edu).*



## Physician Becomes Grateful Mom

Dichelle George, M.D., has long referred high-risk obstetric patients to UAMS and maternal fetal medicine specialist Paul Wendel, M.D. In 2003, the family practice physician from Warren became a grateful patient herself.

“I have two wonderful, healthy kids because of Dr. Wendel and the outstanding professionals at UAMS,” the 1997 College of Medicine graduate says, also noting the special care provided by physicians and nurses in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Unexpected problems in her first pregnancy landed George at UAMS and in Wendel’s care for the emergency delivery of her daughter 10 weeks early. She returned to him for his expert care throughout her second pregnancy. Her son was born, also 10 weeks early, in December 2005.

“I tell my patients that if their baby is premature, UAMS is the place to be,” George says. “I can’t say enough about Dr. Wendel. He’s an outstanding, compassionate doctor who devotes himself to his patients.”

*Dichelle George, M.D., refers high-risk obstetric patients to UAMS – and she chose UAMS for the deliveries of both of her children.*



*Second-year fellow Paul Svoboda, M.D., (left), enjoys learning from community gastroenterologists such as Alonzo Williams, M.D.*

"I was happy to do what I could to help the division, and it has turned out to be a lot of fun. I didn't realize I would enjoy the teaching environment as much as I have."

# Esprit de Corps

## Area docs team with UAMS to support the COM's gastroenterology program

Alonzo Williams, M.D., has run a busy gastroenterology practice in Little Rock since finishing his fellowship at UAMS 23 years ago. But for the past 10 months, he has carved out a couple of mornings a week to teach gastroenterology (GI) fellows and care for patients on campus. And he's enjoying every minute of it.

Williams is one of more than 20 area gastroenterologists who have pitched in to help during a faculty shortage in the Division of Gastroenterology. While the Department of Internal Medicine and college leaders worked to recruit a new director and faculty members, they looked to the community and found many who were eager to help.

"This is where I got my start," says Williams, a 1979 College of Medicine graduate. "I was happy to do what I could to help the division, and it has turned out to be a lot of fun. I didn't realize I would enjoy the teaching environment as much as I have."

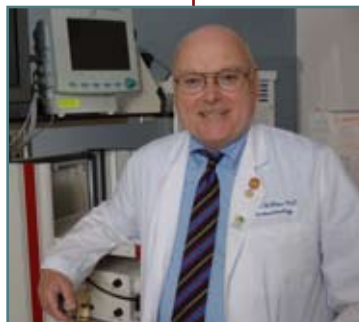
"This has turned into a great model of how a university medical center can work productively with physicians in the community for everyone's benefit," says Internal Medicine Chairman James Marsh, M.D. He notes that his department faced a challenging time, particularly before the new division director, Kevin Olden, M.D., started last July.

"The community physicians really stepped up to the plate," says Olden. "I was amazed at the lack of barrier between the private-practice physicians and the academic hospital. That old town-gown friction that goes on almost everywhere was absent."

Paul Svoboda, M.D., a second-year fellow, values working with the area's GI doctors. "In a fellowship, it is very helpful

to see how different physicians manage the same patients. It's as if I've had 20-plus attending physicians, and I have learned something from every one of them, whether they were here twice or are still coming here every week."

Several group practices and individual doctors have participated. The physicians serve as adjunct faculty members. Three additional full-time faculty members have come on board since last summer and two more will start in July.



*Gastroenterology Director  
Kevin Olden, M.D.*

Ron Hardin, M.D., a 1974 graduate who completed his training at UAMS, worked with other private-practice doctors to rally local GI physicians. "I think essentially everybody in private practice in central Arkansas helped out in some manner," he says, noting the special efforts of the physicians at the largest group, Gastroenterology Associates, and its administrator, Jim Dunlap. "Everyone was on board."

A tour of the campus cemented Hardin's commitment to help the GI program. "I was reminded of how important UAMS is to so many Arkansans," he says. "Then I visited with the GI fellows and was utterly impressed with their caliber and commitment."

Another GI specialist who continues to serve at least one afternoon each week is Meenakshi Budhraj, M.D., who taught at the University of Nevada before coming to Little Rock and entering private practice 20 years ago. "We learn from the fellows, too," she says. "It's not a one-way street. We're learning just by being in a teaching environment."

*Visit [www.uams.edu/gastroenterology](http://www.uams.edu/gastroenterology) for a special note of appreciation and a list of the community physicians and practices who have participated in this program.*



*Philip Kern, M.D., and Neda Rasouli, M.D., conduct fat and muscle biopsies to better understand insulin resistance. Rasouli says Kern has been an encouraging mentor who teaches by posing thought-provoking questions.*

# Man of Many Hats

## Philip Kern, M.D., balances a major planning initiative, research and more

Philip Kern, M.D., hears it everywhere he goes: “Hey, Dr. Kern – 81 pounds and counting!” A middle-aged man has poked his head from a doorway near Kern’s office in the McClellan Veteran’s Medical Center and noticed the UAMS College of Medicine professor walking by.

“Where are you putting it all?” Kern responds, congratulating the VA employee for losing weight. The man credits the UAMS Weight Control Program, which Kern, a nationally known expert in obesity and insulin resistance, founded in 1996.

Although he’s widely known for that program, colleagues point out that Kern also will make a difference in the lives of Arkansans and others through other endeavors.

“Phil Kern has an uncanny ability to keep major research projects, clinical duties, teaching and mentoring balls all in the air at the same time – and he does them all incredibly well,” says Bobby McGehee, Ph.D., a professor of pediatrics and dean of the UAMS Graduate School.

### Re-thinking the Research Enterprise

Kern is at the helm of a campus-wide, multi-institution effort that will transform how clinical and translational research is conducted in Arkansas. He will be the principal investigator and founding director of a comprehensive new research center at UAMS.

The center will work to speed the translation of basic scientific discoveries into better medicine and health care practices through collaboration, better information technology and other strategies.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has awarded UAMS a planning grant to redesign its clinical research program and prepare an application for a major new Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA).

“One of the overriding themes of our center and our grant proposal is that translational research will result in better medical care for Arkansans, and I really believe that,” says Kern.

### Uncovering the Links Between Obesity and Diabetes

“I see obesity front and center as one of the major diseases that we will need to tackle in the decades to come,” says Kern. “The obesity epidemic is worsening, and that will lead to a much greater incidence of devastating diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer. It will lead to more joint and bone abnormalities, pulmonary conditions and many other problems.”

Kern and his colleagues at UAMS have explored many aspects of fat and muscle metabolism. They have published fundamental studies showing that lipotoxicity, the accumulation of fat in muscles, plays an important role in insulin resistance. Better understanding of this mechanism could lead to better treatments for diabetes.

Kern has been continuously grant funded throughout his career. In 2006 he received a highly selective award from the National Institutes of Health that will provide up to \$2.79 million over 10 years. Researchers cannot apply for the long-term Method to Extend Research in Time (MERIT) award; they are selected based on their contributions to science.

### Program Builder

Kern came to UAMS in 1995 after spending 11 years on the faculty at the University of California in Los Angeles, where he directed a successful weight control program at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. As an endocrinologist, he could have devoted his clinical time to seeing patients in the diabetes clinic at UAMS. He decided instead to build a weight control program to help Arkansans.

“If you can help people to lose weight and cure their diabetes, it’s better than having to prescribe insulin and other medications,” Kern says. With the support of UAMS leaders, Kern’s program grew quickly and now sees about 450 clients a week. He still sees some patients in the clinic, but he stepped down as medical director in 2006 to focus on other projects.

Kern was associate chief of staff for research for the Central Arkansas Veterans HealthCare System until late 2006, when work on the CTSA grant accelerated. He oversaw considerable growth of research at the VA, where his lab is still located.

### Grooming Young Scientists

“Dr. Kern is an outstanding scientist,” says Aubrey Hough, M.D., a professor of pathology, associate dean for translational research and special projects, and Kern’s co-leader on the effort to secure the CTSA grant. “But he also is excellent at spotting scientific talent in young people, and that is at the heart of our effort to enhance translational research in Arkansas.”

“I really enjoy sitting down with junior colleagues, looking at their data and talking about where we could go with it,” says Kern. “There’s nothing more gratifying than when one of them teaches me something. Mentoring really is a two-way street.”

Kern’s own mentor during his fellowship in endocrinology at the University of Colorado was Bob Eckel, M.D., a past president of the American Heart Association. “Phil Kern is intelligent, intuitive, informed and an incredibly creative physician scientist,” says Eckel, adding that Kern’s leadership skills were long evident. “He is among my proudest accomplishments as a mentor.”



*Pursuing a career as both a physician and researcher, Jim Cassat, Ph.D., is winding down his junior year of medical school rotations.*

# Doubly Determined

M.D./Ph.D. student feels called to high-caliber career as physician researcher

While growing up, Jim Cassat, Ph.D., loved to visit the state environmental laboratory headed by his father. On other occasions he happily shadowed his mother in her job as a registered nurse in the labor and delivery unit of a local hospital.

So maybe it's not so surprising that he is pursuing a career as a physician and scientist. Cassat, 28, is completing his seventh year in the College of Medicine's rigorous M.D./Ph.D. program, a joint degree track that prepares students for careers as both highly-trained researchers and physicians.

Cassat completed the first two years of medical school and, when his original classmates moved on to their junior year, he embarked on four years of graduate school. After earning his doctoral degree in microbiology and immunology, he returned to medical school as a junior last fall. He will graduate in 2008. It's a long haul, but Cassat says he felt "called" to research as well as to clinical medicine, and the M.D./Ph.D. program has provided the comprehensive training he was looking for.

"Neither of my parents held back on technical jargon when I was younger," Cassat recalls. "When they helped me with my homework, they always explained things in the most scientific manner possible. It got me interested in science early on."

Today's challenging medical problems will require specially trained researchers who can translate laboratory discoveries into new medical treatments, explains M.D./Ph.D. Program Director Lee Soderberg, Ph.D. "Students who come through this program are in an ideal position to be able to pull this all together."

The program currently has 18 students and takes six to eight years to complete. "It is extremely rigorous," notes Soderberg, a professor of microbiology and immunology. "These students must have an active interest in research as well as a clinical career. They often go into academic medicine, where they'll be expected to do clinical work, research and teaching."

Cassat's pre-doctoral years were focused in the laboratory of Mark Smeltzer, Ph.D., a professor of microbiology and immunology and a nationally recognized expert in staphylococcus, the primary bacterium involved in hospital-acquired infections. Cassat received a prestigious pre-doctoral fellowship from the American Heart Association, which funded his stipend in exchange for conducting research into staphylococcus' role in endocarditis, an infection common in patients who have undergone open heart surgery.

Cassat and others in Smeltzer's lab discovered that the laboratory strains of staphylococcus commonly studied by researchers aren't really representative of the virulent strains that often attack patients undergoing hip replacements and other surgeries.

"It is a very challenging field," says Cassat. "Problems with this type of infection are getting worse with the development of antibiotic-resistant strains. I can see this as a lifelong pursuit for me."

Today's challenging medical problems will require specially trained researchers who can translate laboratory discoveries into new medical treatments



## UAMS Partners with ACH on Pediatric Clinics

Families around the state will have closer-to-home access to pediatric subspecialty care thanks to a new working collaborative between UAMS and Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH).

The collaborative, approved by the University of Arkansas Board of Trustees and the ACH Board of Directors in January, includes the newly opened UAMS/ACH Center for Children in Lowell (Benton County) and 24 existing clinics throughout the state.

"In addition to improving access for children who need developmental and subspecialty pediatric care, our partnership with ACH will support education and training of UAMS students and residents," says College of Medicine (COM) Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

The new center in Lowell, a 40,000-square-foot facility, houses the Schmieding Developmental Center, the Schmieding Kids First program and various subspecialty clinics previously located in Fayetteville and Springdale. Kids First is a comprehensive early-intervention program for infants and young children with medical conditions and developmental delays.

## Cancer Center Director, Funding Announced

Peter D. Emanuel, M.D., has been named executive director of the Arkansas Cancer Research Center (ACRC) at UAMS. The announcement coincided with a \$1 million private pledge for a planned expansion of the center and measures in the Arkansas General Assembly to provide up to \$46 million in state matching funds.

Emanuel starts on July 1, replacing James Y. Suen, M.D., who has served as the ACRC executive director since 2001. Suen was a co-founder of the ACRC in 1989. He is stepping down to devote more time to his post as chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery and to his world-renowned surgical practice.

Emanuel was acting director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) from 2004 to 2006. He is a professor of medicine, genetics and biochemistry at UAB. "Dr. Emanuel has the strong leadership experience needed to lead the ACRC through this critical period of growth," UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., said at a March 1 news conference at the state Capitol.

A 288,000-square-foot expansion to the ACRC is expected to begin this year and is part of UAMS' comprehensive development campaign. At the news conference, Joe Ford, the chairman of the board of Alltel Corp. and a former state senator, said he and his wife, Jo Ellen, would donate \$1 million to the expansion.

On April 3, Gov. Mike Beebe signed into law a plan to provide up to \$46 million to match private donations going to the expansion and endowments at the ACRC. UAMS will allocate an additional \$4 million from other projects as matching funds.



*Peter D. Emanuel, M.D., will become ACRC executive director July 1.*

## Geriatrics, Family Medicine Graduate Programs Rank Among Top in Nation

Two UAMS College of Medicine programs are featured in the latest U.S. News & World Report “America’s Best Graduate Schools,” which hit newsstands April 2. The UAMS Donald W. Reynolds Department of Geriatrics placed in the top 10 geriatric programs in the nation for the fifth year in a row. The program ranked 10th, as it did last year. The College of Medicine’s primary care program, which includes family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics, ranked 45th among top medical schools in the nation.

## COM Reaccredited through 2015

The Licensing Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has reaccredited the College of Medicine (COM) for the maximum, eight-year cycle. The reaccreditation process included a nearly year-long, comprehensive self-study and data reporting by COM faculty, a student survey and a site visit by LCME representatives in November 2006. “The reaccreditation confirms that we are succeeding in our mission to provide superior medical education and training for our students – Arkansas’ future physicians,” notes Richard P. Wheeler, M.D., executive associate dean for academic affairs.



## Longtime Faculty Member Oversees Curriculum

Bruce Newton, Ph.D., has been named associate dean for undergraduate medical education in the College of Medicine. He replaces Jay Menna, Ph.D., who retired but continues to work part time on curriculum projects. An associate professor of anatomy, Newton joined the UAMS faculty in 1988 after obtaining his doctorate from the University of Kentucky and completing postdoctoral work at the University of Rochester. Newton has directed the Medical Neuroscience Course and won numerous teaching awards at UAMS. He has served on the Curriculum and Academic Standards committees and chaired the Admissions Committee.



## Minority Student Recruitment Director Appointed

Vivian LaVeda Flowers has been named director of recruitment for diversity at UAMS. Flowers coordinates efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented minority students for the College of Medicine and UAMS’ other colleges. She serves on the Arkansas Minority Health Commission and the boards of Common Cause/Arkansas and the Women’s Foundation of Arkansas. She previously was executive director of the Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus. Flowers is an inaugural graduate of the Clinton School of Public Service with a master’s degree in public service. She obtained undergraduate degrees in political science and rhetoric and writing at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.



## Endowed Chairs

The endowed chair is the highest academic honor that a university can bestow on its faculty. Those named to a chair are among the most highly regarded scientists, physicians and educators. The endowed chair also recognizes the honoree or the generosity of the person who made the chair possible.



Cornelia Beck, Ph.D., R.N., was invested Oct. 31, 2006, as the inaugural recipient of the Louise Hearn Chair in Dementia and Long-term Care at the UAMS Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging. The endowment will help Beck continue her award-winning research on behalf of the elderly, especially those with dementia and in long-term care facilities. Beck is director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center and a professor in the Department of Geriatrics. She is an adjunct professor in the Department of Psychiatry and the College of Nursing. Arkansas native Hearn, a longtime Houston resident, received care at the institute. The chair was funded by matching gifts from her estate and the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation.



Laura Hutchins, M.D., was invested March 14, 2007, as the first recipient of the Virginia Clinton Kelley Chair in Clinical Breast Cancer Research. Hutchins is a professor, director of the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Internal Medicine and director of clinical research at the Arkansas Cancer Research Center (ACRC). The chair will help Hutchins continue her breast cancer-related research. Kelley, the mother of former President Bill Clinton, died of complications from breast cancer in 1994. Hutchins was a member of Kelley's treatment team at UAMS. The chair was established with donations from combined sources, including the Barbra Streisand Foundation, numerous friends of Virginia Clinton Kelley and the Arkansas Breast Cancer Act of 1997.

## In Memoriam

Jerome (Jerry) Rosenfeld, Ph.D., a faculty member for 30 years, died Oct. 27, 2006, in Collingswood, N.J. He was 91. When he retired in 1985, Rosenfeld was an assistant professor of clinical pathology and medicine.

Christopher J. Winters, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine and 1985 College of Medicine graduate, died Nov. 11, 2006. He was 51. Board certified in nephrology, he was internationally known for research into cystic fibrosis and the function of the chloride channel in the kidney.

Shirley McCluer, M.D., a founding faculty member of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in 1984, died Dec. 3, 2006. She was 79. McCluer was a professor and the residency program director until she retired in 1991. She also was medical director of the Arkansas State Spinal Cord Commission from 1985 to 1998.

# We Can't Imagine the Future of Medicine Without You ...

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has launched "Campaign Imagine," an effort to raise \$325 million by 2010, the first comprehensive fundraising drive for the campus in more than a decade.

"In the College of Medicine (COM), we can't imagine the future of health care without our students, faculty and alumni," says Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. "Our priorities for this campaign center around those groups because they are critical to our vision to improve the health of Arkansans and others for generations to come."

The COM hopes to raise \$10 million for full-tuition scholarships that will help attract and train the very best students. "Unfortunately, many other medical schools are able to offer very large scholarships," says Fiser. "We need to be competitive."

Another priority is to raise \$15 million for endowed chairs and professorships. "These endowments help attract and retain the highest caliber of faculty," Fiser says. "No matter how far technology advances, the future of medical care will always depend on our teachers, researchers and clinicians."

A new center for students, faculty and alumni also is on the COM's campaign list. "Students desperately need study and relaxation space, and faculty need space as well," Fiser explains. "At the same time, our alumni have so much to offer students. This project would help draw all of these groups together."

Other COM goals include funds to improve research facilities and clinical programs. Campus-wide, the campaign will help fund the state-of-the-art hospital addition now under construction, renovation of existing facilities, research, outreach and other programs.



The image shows a dark-themed graphic for the "Campaign Imagine" at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. The word "imagine" is written in a large, light-colored serif font at the top. Below it, the words "THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE" are stacked in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The UAMS logo, consisting of the letters "UAMS" in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a red dot above the "A", is positioned to the right. Below the logo, the full name "UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, the website address "www.uams.edu/imagine" is displayed in a white, sans-serif font. The background features faint, overlapping geometric shapes and lines.



*Joseph Bates, M.D., says the new state-of-the-art Arkansas Public Health Laboratory is crucial to the health of Arkansans. Bates helped lead efforts to build the 80,000-square-foot facility, which opened in 2006.*

# Arkansas' Doctor

## Joe Bates, M.D., is passionate about improving the health of Arkansans

At 73, Joseph Bates, M.D., can look back on a phenomenal career. He is internationally known for breakthroughs in diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis that originated from discoveries in his laboratory. He drew accolades for advances in clinical care and teaching during 30 years as a UAMS professor and chief of the medical service at the McClellan Veterans Medical Center in Little Rock.

But fifty years after graduating from UAMS, Bates is not ready to retire.

“I certainly enjoy my work,” says the deputy state health officer and chief science officer at the Arkansas Division of Health, “but there is a lot more to do.”

Bates calls public health and preventive medicine “our best hope” for a healthier state. “Arkansas faces major challenges such as the rise of obesity and diabetes and lingering issues such as the lack of fluoridated drinking water in many areas,” Bates says. “Chronic disease has replaced infectious disease as our leading cause of morbidity and mortality. To combat chronic disease we must change our health care model.”

Reflecting on the direction his career has taken over the past decade, he notes: “In the first part of my career I took care of patients one at a time. Now I think of all Arkansans as my patients.”

“Joe could well be the best rounded physician in Arkansas today,” says Tom Bruce, M.D., the College of Medicine dean from 1974 to 1985 who later worked with Bates and others to establish the UAMS College of Public Health. Bruce, now an associate dean at the Clinton School of Public Service, cites Bates’ diverse achievements in academic medicine and public health leadership.

Bates was recognized as a potential academician and leader by his faculty mentors, Richard Ebert, M.D., chairman of the Department of Medicine from 1954 to 1966, and the succeeding chairman, Robert Abernathy, M.D., Ph.D., who appointed Bates chief of the medical service at the VA in 1968. “Joe was an outstanding teacher, researcher and physician,” Abernathy says. “He always showed a lot of compassion for his patients.”

Bates was elected president of the American Thoracic Society in 1988 and president of the American Lung Association in 1994. In 1998, he joined the Department of Health to direct the Arkansas Tuberculosis Control Program.

Around that time, Bates worked with G. Richard Smith, M.D., now chair of the Department of Psychiatry at UAMS, and others to establish the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI). The center linked the resources of UAMS with the Department of Health to develop health policy and advocacy. An early ACHI project was the tobacco settlement initiative that succeeded in committing 100 percent of Arkansas’ multi-million dollar share of the national tobacco settlement for health improvement. The UAMS College of Public Health, where Bates is now a professor of epidemiology and the associate dean, was an early product of Bates’ vision.

Bates and other colleagues campaigned for the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act of 2006 that banned smoking in workplaces and public areas. He says the law “will do more to improve the health of Arkansans than anything we have done in the last 50 years.”

Bates has earned the deep respect of colleagues and former residents. “A generation of medical students remember him for his zealous commitment to good judgment and superior care of patients,” says Bruce.

Jim Wellons, a Little Rock nephrologist and 1970 graduate, remembers morning report at the VA, when Bates would quiz residents in depth. “I loved it,” Wellons recalls. “I’d stay up all night preparing, determined that he wouldn’t ask me anything I didn’t know.”

“The great thing about Dr. Bates has always been his passion and intensity for doing the job right,” Wellons says. “He was the Vince Lombardi of the old VA. He expected you to give it your all. But he expected no less of himself.”

**“In the first part of my career I took care of patients one at a time. Now I think of all Arkansans as my patients.”**

# Philanthropy

Our faculty and staff are only part of the “village” that our students need to succeed. College of Medicine (COM) alumni share their time, wisdom and resources. We are grateful for their many contributions.

## Founders Society

*Members of the Founders Society have pledged or given at least \$10,000 to various College of Medicine endowments. Established in 1994 as the COM's first endowment, the Founders Society now has nearly 300 contributing members and over \$32 million in assets.*

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## Dean's Society

*Members of the Dean's Society have pledged to make annual unrestricted gifts to the COM. Unrestricted gifts provide the Office of the Dean with ready funds for scholarships, faculty recruitment, special programming and other projects within the COM. The society was established in 2006. Minimum annual giving levels are \$1,000 for individuals; \$1,500 for couples who are both alumni; \$500 for recent graduates (past 10 years); and \$750 for couples who are both recent COM graduates.*

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*This listing includes Founders Society and Dean's Society members as of April 20, 2007.*

## Remember your freshman year?



*Freshmen and future class of 1972 members (from left) Sandra Young, Mary Louise Powell Corbitt and Mary Ann Williams Morris were pictured in a newspaper article about their freshman class. The original photo caption noted how they found laboratory work “a fascinating part of medical studies.”*



**“I always wanted to be a doctor, so starting medical school was a dream come true. I’ve enjoyed every minute of being a physician.”**

Mary Louise Powell Corbitt, M.D.

Sandra Young, Mary Louise Powell and Mary Ann Williams attended Hendrix College together and then were three of the 11 women who started their freshman year in the College of Medicine in 1968. That was up from classes of the prior decade, but still only 10 percent of the class of 110 students.

Sixty-six of this year’s 157 freshmen are women, or 42 percent. Among them is Heather Young – Sandra Young’s daughter.

Today, Sandra Young is in family practice at the Boston Mountain Rural Health Center in Fairfield Bay, after many years in emergency medicine. Mary Louise Powell Corbitt is a neurologist and co-founder of the Arkansas Headache Clinic in North Little Rock. Mary Ann Williams Morris is a pediatric endocrinologist and faculty member at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, after serving two decades at Duke University.



**University of Arkansas Medicine**

The magazine of the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

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**We welcome your comments**

Send us your thoughts, story ideas and concerns. Contact Tamara Robinson at 501-526-5163; by e-mail: [trobenson@uams.edu](mailto:trobenson@uams.edu); or mail to: College of Medicine, 4301 W. Markham St., #550-1, Little Rock, AR 72205-7199.



Since 1879, the College of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) has had a progressive history of teaching, service and research. As Arkansas' only medical school, we educate and train outstanding physicians and scientists who are committed to high ethical and professional standards and lifelong learning. The College of Medicine is one of six aca-

demical units at UAMS. The campus includes centers of excellence that are recognized as among the best in the nation and world. They include the Arkansas Cancer Research Center, the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, the Jackson T. Stephens Spine and Neurosciences Institute, the Myeloma Institute for Research and Therapy, the Donald W. Reynolds Center on Aging and

the UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute. As a teaching institution, UAMS Medical Center remains on the forefront of new medical procedures and technologies. UAMS also is the state's principal biomedical research center, conducting pioneering research that leads to new knowledge and advances in medical care in Arkansas and beyond.

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