

matters

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Ties that bind: COM Alumni, Professor Reconnect

Many College of Medicine freshmen in the 1960s approached Dr. Howard Suzuki's Gross Anatomy class with trepidation. But the professor won the deep respect of his students – and developed bonds that led to a heartfelt reunion more than 35 years later.

“Dr. Suzuki liked to come across as hard as nails, but he really has a heart of gold,” says Dick Ahrens, M.D. '69, of Yellville, who hosted the reunion in April. Joining them were Jim Beckman, M.D. '70, of Springdale and David Sward, M.D. '69, of Little Rock. “We got out the big pot and cooked a good Cajun meal and reminisced,” says Dr. Ahrens.

“Dr. Suzuki liked to come across as hard as nails, but he really has a heart of gold.”

On many Sundays all those years ago, Dr. Suzuki and his wife hosted gatherings with students in their home. “I felt it was important for physicians to be more than medical technocrats,” says Dr. Suzuki. The group discussed Ayn Rand's “Atlas Shrugged” and listened to guest speakers. Less studious outings included hunting and fishing in northern Arkansas.

“He always motivated us to delve deeper,” Dr. Beckman recalls. “The attention to detail that Dr. Suzuki instilled became critical in my practice of plastic surgery. I've often thought of him while studying cases late at night.”

In 1970, Dr. Suzuki left for the University of Florida College of Health Related Professions. In time, Dr. Ahrens opened a general practice clinic with his brother in Yellville. Dr. Sward joined

the UAMS faculty and later practiced orthopaedics in Mountain Home. He rejoined the faculty in 2000 and serves as chief of orthopaedics for the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Dr. Beckman practiced in Mountain Home for three years and for many years in Fayetteville before founding Therapon Inc., a medical-grade skin care products company.

Dr. Suzuki retired from medical teaching several years ago to concentrate on another passion. Now living in Highlands, N.C., he is renowned for his aquatic life wood sculptures and has written books about carving.

While fishing in Argentina in March, Dr. Suzuki met a traveler from Nashville, Tenn., who proposed a fishing trip near Mountain Home. The reference to familiar terrain brought back a flood of memories, and Dr. Suzuki contacted his former students.

“I was very flattered and overwhelmed to find out that I was such a positive influence on my students' lives,” says Dr. Suzuki. “I will never forget this memorable trip or our emotionally charged reunion.”



From left: David Sward, M.D.; Richard Ahrens, M.D.; Howard Suzuki, Ph.D.; and James S. Beckman, M.D., reunited near Mountain Home.

COM Alumna Debra Fiser, M.D. Appointed Dean

Debra Fiser, M.D. '77, chair of the Department of Pediatrics for the past 11 years and a faculty member since 1981, has been named dean of the College of Medicine. The appointment by UAMS Chancellor I. Dodd Wilson, M.D., was effective Sept. 1.

"Dr. Fiser has devoted her entire career to UAMS and the College of Medicine and has done an incredible job leading the largest academic department on campus and one of the nation's largest pediatric departments," says Dr. Wilson, who appointed Dr. Fiser as chair while he was dean in 1995. "She sets the bar high, is always optimistic, and motivates faculty to work as a team. Dr. Fiser is the perfect choice to lead the college's 1,060 faculty and 2,700 staff members."

"I've seen over the years how dedicated our faculty and staff are to fulfilling our mission of preparing well-trained physicians for careers in medicine," says Dr. Fiser. "Our alumni also have been critical to our success as a world-class medical school. I am very excited about working with my fellow alumni in the future."

After graduating, Dr. Fiser completed an internship and residency in pediatrics at the University of Kentucky and a



fellowship in critical care medicine in anesthesiology at the University of Florida. One of her earliest achievements after joining the College of Medicine faculty in 1981 was to start UAMS' Pediatric Critical Care Medicine Section and the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital. The Department of Pediatrics grew tremendously during her tenure as chair and currently has almost 200 faculty members.

In 2002, Dr. Fiser was awarded the Caduceus Club's Distinguished Faculty Award. A national leader in pediatrics, Dr. Fiser recently served as president of the Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs.

Alumnus Dr. Richard Jacobs Named Interim Chair

Richard F. Jacobs, M.D. '77, a professor of pediatrics and president of the Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI), has been named interim chairman of the Department of Pediatrics while a national search is conducted for a permanent chair.

Dr. Jacobs is the Horace C. Cabe Professor of Pediatrics and a nationally known researcher and specialist in infectious diseases. He received his undergraduate degree from Henderson State University in his native Arkadelphia in 1973. After graduating from the UAMS College of Medicine, Dr. Jacobs completed his internship and residency in pediatrics at UAMS and Arkansas Children's Hospital and a fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases at University of Washington and Children's Hospital Medical Center in Seattle. He joined the College of Medicine faculty in 1982. Dr. Jacobs is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, past president of the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society, and a member of the board of directors of the Infectious Disease Society of America.

A Note from the Director, Judith McClain



It was wonderful meeting or reconnecting with so many of you during Alumni Weekend last month. One of my favorite moments was meeting Frank G. Robertson, M.D., the sole attendee from the Class of 1941. Dr. Robertson was an obstetrician/gynecologist in Searcy and says he probably delivered 10,000 babies. One time he ran into a mother many years after delivering her baby. Although the woman's name escaped him, he told her he

certainly remembered her 11½ pound baby!

Special events included the Golden Graduate Reception honoring our 50-year (Class of '56), 55-year (Class of '51), 60-year (Class of '46) and 65-year (Class of '41) graduates. The Alumni Banquet featured the Distinguished Alumni and Distinguished Faculty awards and a presentation by UAMS Chancellor I.

Dodd Wilson, M.D., to honor former COM Dean E. Albert Reece, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., who left to accept a post at the University of Maryland on Sept. 1. Our new dean, Debra Fiser, M.D. '77, also spoke during the dinner. We've included a handful of snapshots from Alumni Weekend inside this issue of Alumni Matters, and you'll find many more in our gallery on the College of Medicine Alumni Web page at: www.uams.edu/com/alumni.

You've probably noticed the change in our newsletter name, formerly *Medicine Matters*. We hope you'll indulge us the slight grammatical license we used with our double entendre. Our alumni do, indeed, matter a great deal! We've also redesigned and added more pages to keep you better informed about your fellow alumni.

My best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judith".

Class Notes

Serving with Distinction: Maj. Gen. Elder Granger



Elder Granger, M.D. '80, was finishing high school in West Memphis and serving as a medic in the Arkansas National Guard when he knew that he wanted to become a doctor and serve his country.

Last November, Maj. Gen. Granger became deputy director of TRICARE Management Activity in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs). He oversees the Department of Defense's managed health care program, directing a staff of 615 and a program budget of \$11 billion. His job is to ensure high-quality health care for 9.2 million members of the military, their families, retirees and others.

"I can't think of a higher calling for me than to be a doctor, working to provide the world's best health care to the men and women of the armed forces and their families," says Dr. Granger. "I am honored and humbled that I was selected to do this."

A Distinguished Military Graduate at Arkansas State University, Dr. Granger was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps. While attending the UAMS College of Medicine he was motivated by mentors such as Dr. Raymond Miller and many others. "I am truly proud to be a UAMS alumnus," he says.

Maj. Gen. Granger completed a residency in internal medicine at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center and a fellowship in hematology-oncology. He rose through military ranks and served in many posts, including commander of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany and as commander of the 44th Medical Command, when he was in charge of all medical units in Iraq. Maj. Gen. Granger received his second star in June 2005. He has received many other awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Bronze Star and the Legion of Merit with four oak leaf clusters.

Class Notes is for news about you. If you have information to share with fellow alumni, please e-mail it to riceginny@uams.edu, or mail it to:

*Alumni Affairs
4301 W. Markham St., #642
Little Rock, AR 72205*

Please include your name, address, e-mail, phone number and class year.

Upcoming Events

Tulsa Alumni Reception – Sept. 27

Alumni Reception at American Academy of Pediatrics, Ark. Chapter, Branson – Sept. 29

Alumni Reception at American College of Surgeons, Chicago – Oct. 10

Founders Society Dinner, Little Rock – Oct. 27

Alumni Reception at Arkansas Urologic Society, Hot Springs – Nov. 3

Alumni on Campus

■ **Ruth Thomas, M.D.** '84, a professor of orthopaedics in the College of Medicine, recently returned from two weeks of operating on Vietnamese children and adults as part of the American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society's Outreach & Education Foundation Vietnam project. The trip was Dr. Thomas' third time to work with the society's surgeons, Vietnamese surgeons and orthopaedic residents.

■ **Jerry Jones, M.D.** '63, a professor of pediatrics in the College of Medicine, was presented with the annual Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award at the semi-annual faculty meeting in June. The award, sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, honors faculty who demonstrate outstanding compassion in the delivery of care, respect for patients, their families and health care colleagues, as well as clinical excellence.

■ **Anne Mancino, M.D.** '84, an associate professor of surgery, recently shared her experiences from the months she spent as a surgeon in Iraq. Dr. Mancino, who also is chief of general surgery in the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, discussed the effects of war on soldiers and their families with a standing-room-only audience of teachers and mental health professionals at a conference at UAMS in July. A colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve, Dr. Mancino served six months in Iraq in 2005.

Announcements

■ **Philip Ferguson, M.D.** '00, has begun a fellowship in pathology at the University of North Carolina Medical School. You can reach Dr. Ferguson and his wife, Amy, by phone at (919) 260-4131, or by writing them at 101-C Kildaire Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27516.

“The Family Practice”

A career in medicine is often more than a personal passion – it’s a reflection of a commitment to healing and service that is passed down through the generations.

The Scurlocks

Outgoing Caduceus Club President Bill Scurlock, M.D. '60, once envisioned a career as a coach. But while at Hendrix College, the Waldo native felt a sudden “calling” to medicine as he was returning from a basketball trip. He and his wife, Barbara, a registered nurse, raised two sons and a daughter while he was a general surgeon for more than 30 years in El Dorado.

Even though Dr. Scurlock says the whole family endured the long hours that came with him being a surgeon, his two sons followed him to UAMS and careers as physicians. David Scurlock, M.D. '90, is a family practice physician in Atlanta. John Scurlock, M.D. '97, is a radiologist in Little Rock. While attending the College of Medicine, John met and married Amy Martin, M.D. '98, who now practices pediatrics at Arkansas Children’s Hospital and is on the COM faculty.

“I certainly didn’t encourage my boys to follow in my footsteps, but I couldn’t be more proud of them,” says Dr. Bill Scurlock.

The Bells

Matt Bell was born while his father, Keith Bell, M.D. '82, was in his third year of medical school at UAMS. His sister, Lindsey, was born during their father’s first year of residency. Today, Dr. Keith Bell practices interventional radiology in Conway. Matt is a fourth-year medical student in the College of Medicine, and Lindsey is a second-year student.

“While my dad never pushed medicine as a career – in fact he did just the opposite – he pushed us academically and stressed the fact that it was never

acceptable to settle for ‘good enough,’” says Matt. “For me, any other career would have been settling for ‘good enough.’ From a young age, I saw medicine as the ultimate calling.”

Lindsey says her father’s work ethic and dedication to medicine are constant inspiration. But, she says, her experiences as a patient during two knee surgeries and severe allergy problems piqued her interest in medicine. “My doctors in Conway really made me feel special, like I was important to them,” she says. “I want to make patients feel like that someday.”

To share your multi-generational medical family story, please e-mail riceginny@uams.edu, or mail it to: Alumni Affairs, 4301 West Markham, #642, Little Rock, AR 72205.



Matt and Lindsey Bell

More than 300 of you joined us for Alumni Weekend festivities Aug. 25-26 at the Peabody Hotel in Little Rock and on the UAMS campus. Visit the COM Alumni page at www.uams.edu/com/alumni for more information – and many more pictures!



Sharing photos is part of the fun at the Golden Graduate Reception for Class of '56 alumni (from left) **James Pappas, M.D.**; **Georgia Schratz**, wife of Class Agent **Bruce Schratz, M.D.**; **William Haynie, M.D.**; and **Betty Lowe, M.D.** All are Little Rock residents except for Dr. Haynie, who lives in Shreveport, La.



T.A. Morrison, M.D. '56, of Aurora, Mo., pores over memorabilia at the Golden Graduate Reception. More than 50 attended the event honoring our 50-year (Class of '56), 55-year (Class of '51), 60-year (Class of '46) and 65-year (Class of '41) graduates.



Enjoying Saturday night festivities are (from left) **Robert Brown, M.D.** '96, and his wife, **Melissa Morrison Brown, UAMS Pharm.D.** '97, of Bentonville; along with **Dawn Blake** and **Todd Blake, M.D.** '96, of Jackson, Miss.



Former UAMS Vice Chancellor and Anatomy Chairman **John Pauly, M.D.**, (left) visits with **Jonnie Westbrook** (center) and Pauly’s wife, **Dola Thompson, M.D.** '49, before Dr. Thompson’s induction into the Hall of Fame during the Alumni Banquet.



Frank G. Robertson, M.D. '41, of Searcy looks at the certificate he received from College of Medicine Dean **E. Albert Reece, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A.**, commemorating the 65th anniversary of Dr. Robertson’s graduation.

Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony

Fourteen alumni were inducted into the College of Medicine Hall of Fame during the Alumni Banquet. The honorees included the 13 nominees for 2005, who were announced at last year’s banquet, and the 2006 nominee, **Charlotte Edwards Maguire, M.D.** '44. The 2005 nominees include: **Dr. Willis Brown, A.J. Thompson, Thomas Wortham, Robert Abernathy, Tom Jansen, Dola Thompson, Carl Nelson, Jack Page Whisnant, Raymond Read, Fred Henker, William J. “Pat” Flanigan, Kingsley W. Cosgrove Sr.** and **Carl Rosenbaum.**

Caduceus Club Honors Alumnus, Faculty



Rex Amonette, M.D. '66, (seated, right) received the 2006 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Pictured with Dr. Amonette at the Alumni Banquet are his wife, **Johnnie** (seated, left), and Alumni Affairs Executive Director **Judith McClain** (standing). Dr. Amonette was honored for making remarkable contributions to the field of dermatology and serving as an exemplary role model for all physicians. He is a clinical professor in the division of dermatology at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, where he leads one of the country’s premier dermatology practices.



Galen Wenger, Ph.D., (right) receives the 2006 Distinguished Faculty Award from **Bill Scurlock, M.D.**, president of the Caduceus Club. Dr. Wenger is a professor, vice chairman and director of education for the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. He has worked passionately to enhance medical and graduate education for 28 years in the College of Medicine. He is internationally known for his research on the effect of drugs of abuse on cognitive function in some species.

In Memoriam

William Martin Dickerson, M.D. '45, of Monticello, Ind., died May 27, 2006. He was 84. Dr. Dickerson practiced surgery and emergency medicine for 55 years.

A.G. "Sully" Sullenberger, M.D. '51, died June 20, 2006. He was 83. Dr. Sullenberger trained in general and thoracic surgery. In 1956 he opened a practice in Pine Bluff, where he worked for 31 years.

Norbert J. Becquet, M.D. '57, died June 22, 2006. He was 94. Dr. Becquet lived in North Little Rock and practiced locally for many decades.

Edward Stewert Allen, M.D. '58, died July 25, 2006. He was 73. Dr. Allen practiced obstetrics and gynecology in Little Rock from 1964 to 1996.

John W. King, M.D. '65, of Russellville, died Aug. 24, 2006. He was 67. Dr. King practiced radiology in Russellville and many other communities for more than 30 years.

Thomas Adrian Formby, M.D. '50, of Searcy, died Aug. 25, 2006. He was 85. Dr. Formby was a family practitioner for 35 years.

John W. Balay, M.D. '57, of Arkadelphia, died Aug. 28, 2006. He was 75. Dr. Balay served as the Ouachita Baptist University football team physician for three decades and practiced medicine for 45 years.

James William Headstream, M.D. '39, of Little Rock, died Sept. 3, 2006. He was 93. A former faculty member and head of the Department of Urology, Dr. Headstream was inducted into the College of Medicine Hall of Fame in 2004.

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Philanthropy

Annual Gifts to Family Can Lower Taxes

With the estate tax in the news recently, it's a good time to brush up on how you may be able to reduce your tax burden should the federal estate tax persist after December 2010. You can always reduce your exposure to the estate tax by making a tax-deductible gift to your favorite charity (e.g. the UAMS College of Medicine). Other options require only thoughtful advance planning.

One is to start making annual gifts to family members, which will reduce the value of your taxable estate and hence lower your exposure to the estate tax. For 2006 there is no applicable gift tax if an individual gives up to \$12,000 to each child or other person during the year. This amount, which sometimes changes and is inflation-adjusted, is known as the "annual exclusion." It is the amount you can give "per donor per donee" in a year. Thus, a husband and wife can give a total of \$24,000 to each of their children (or another individual) per year. If a couple has two children, they can give \$24,000 to each child, lowering their estate by \$48,000 that year. They also can make similar gifts to their grandchildren without filing a gift tax return, further reducing their potentially taxable estate.

For other helpful estate planning ideas, contact John Coffin or Bob Kinzel in the UAMS Office of Planned Giving at (501) 526-7197 or (501) 686-7894.



White Coat Ceremony

Members of the Class of 2010 recite the Medical Student Oath during the White Coat Ceremony Aug. 3. The annual ritual, co-sponsored by the Class of 1951, helps impress upon incoming freshmen the critical importance of professionalism and the symbolic role of the white coat in physician-patient interactions.



Want More News and Resources?

Visit our new and expanding Web site. We are continually adding new information and links to provide information to our alumni. Help us stay up to date and connected with you by visiting the COM Alumni Web site at www.uams.edu/com/alumni and completing the online change of address form as needed or by e-mailing Ginny Rice at riceginny@uams.edu.

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