

matters

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At Your Service: the UAMS Physician Call Center

Lander Smith, M.D. '78, was on morning rounds at a Conway nursing home in February when he discovered that a 100-year-old patient needed hospitalization and multi-disciplinary geriatric care. The gentleman was suffering from several unresolved health problems. He was delusional, confrontational and refusing the medications that he desperately needed.

The day promised to be typically hectic for Dr. Smith. Fortunately, it took a single phone call to UAMS' Physician Call Center to start the process of admitting his patient to UAMS Medical Center. Within minutes, Dr. Smith was on the phone with Jeanne Wei, M.D., Ph.D., the executive director of the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging. She took care of the rest.

"As many people as we see in a day's time, it is vital that referring physicians have access to the people who can get the job done," Dr. Smith said. "Clearly, UAMS is working to be our partner.

The Physician Call Center has been very helpful."

The call center, launched last October, has substantially enhanced communication between referring physicians and College of Medicine faculty while streamlining consults and transfers. The center is staffed 24/7 by specially trained registered nurses. If a referring physician is seeking a consult, the nurse will connect the referring physician to the appropriate UAMS physician via conference call. The R.N. remains on the line with the referring physician to ensure that transfers and referral appointments are accomplished. Calls are monitored for quality control.

"We want our alumni to know that we are striving to respond to their needs as referring physicians," said **Debra H. Fiser, M.D. '77**, dean of the College of Medicine and vice chancellor of UAMS. "We know that time is precious for every referring physician and that effective communication and efficient

consults, transfers and appointments are critically important to them and to their patients."

The call center is one of several recent initiatives designed to enhance services for referring physicians. Other communication efforts include the Online Call Schedule, MD-Link, which provides referring physicians with online access to their patients' medical records, and a process to fax outpatient, inpatient, Emergency Department and discharge summaries to referring physicians.

UAMS also has established a Referring Physicians Advisory Board. Members, including Dr. Lander Smith, met for the first time in January to share concerns and provide feedback to Dr. Fiser and the UAMS Faculty Group Practice Board. "The meeting went very well and we received many constructive comments," Dr. Fiser said. "We are already working on additional initiatives that will help referring physicians."

The Physician Call Center can be reached at 501-686-8000 or 866-UAMS-DOC.



Lander Smith, M.D. '78, (left) appreciates the efficiency and effectiveness of the UAMS Physician Call Center. Susan Smith Dodson, R.N., (right) and other registered nurses in the center specialize in facilitating patient consults, transfers and other services for referring physicians.

A Note from the Dean, Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

Every time I drive onto campus, I'm amazed at the ever-changing UAMS skyline. It has evolved dramatically in recent years – and especially during the last several months.

The gleaming, new UAMS hospital opened in January and provides outstanding, state-of-the-art facilities for our patients. The adjacent Psychiatric Research Institute has been open since December, consolidating research, education and inpatient and outpatient psychiatric programs under one roof. The I. Dodd Wilson Education Building has been a thriving center for classes and events since opening last fall. And construction continues on the 12-story addition to the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute.

But new buildings are only part of our progress. As our cover story in this issue notes, we have launched several initiatives to enhance services for referring physicians. Patient-centered care and a culture of professionalism are major priorities. This is truly a landmark year in medical education in Arkansas as well, with preparations progressing on UAMS' satellite campus in Northwest Arkansas, which will welcome a pilot group of junior medical students for clinical rotations this fall.



The College of Medicine recently welcomed two new leaders. Department of Surgery Chairman Richard H. Turnage, M.D., led the Department of Surgery at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in Shreveport for seven years before joining our faculty in December. He brings a wealth of expertise, including experience with the startup and administration of a statewide trauma system and a research background in acute lung injury. Jeanne Y. Wei, M.D., Ph.D., is the new executive director of the Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging and chairman of the Department of Geriatrics. Dr. Wei has served as professor and executive vice chair of the department and as a staff physician in the Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System since 2002. She is an outstanding geriatrician, cardiologist, scientist, teacher and administrator.

I'd like to close by thanking you for your ongoing generosity and support. This annual Philanthropy issue of Alumni Matters highlights some of the many ways that our alumni contribute to the College of Medicine's success. We couldn't do it without you!

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

A Note from the Director, Judith McClain



Our "alumni family" includes physicians who trained here at UAMS as well as those who graduated from the College of Medicine (COM). Of course, many of you have ties to the campus both from your days as a medical student and from your years as a resident. So I'd like to tell you about an initiative that the Medical Alumni Association is working on with the COM's clinical departments.

We know that our former residents want to stay connected with UAMS and with one another. Our office is hearing more and more from past house staff, and many are strongly supportive of the COM. We're also happy that previous residents who weren't alumni are participating in our travel program.

Now, we're working to make it a little easier for COM departments and former house staff to stay connected.

I have been meeting with our clinical department chairs over the past few weeks to talk about their programs for communicating with their own alumni. Some departments already keep in touch through newsletters, Web pages and events. A number of departments are now planning to expand those communication efforts. Your Alumni Association will work with departments to update and maintain their mailing lists. We've got a great track record in that regard, as our own data base has a low 3-percent bad address return rate, compared with the national average of about 20 percent.

Our departments are working to deliver more news about the program where you got your start as a physician, more campus news that will be of interest to you, and in many cases more news about those who were in residency with you. These efforts may take time to develop, but we know that this will benefit our own recruiting efforts and referring physician relations. We want to stay connected too. Stay tuned!

Judith

Phonathon 2009



Freshman Class President **Hassan Rayaz** of Little Rock (front row, left) gives classmate **James Barnes** of Siloam Springs a “high five” during the first night of the Phonathon.

Judkins said a little friendly competition between classes spurs students to volunteer, but so does the importance of the scholarships. “In addition to easing students’ financial burden, scholarships motivate students to do even better in medical school – and that makes us better doctors,” he said.

Freshman Class President **Hassan Rayaz** said students were eager to help their classmates, whether or not they received scholarships themselves. “We realized that the Phonathon could make a big difference, if enough of us volunteered,” he said.

Almost 160 College of Medicine students raised \$55,825 for scholarships over four nights in March during the annual Phonathon. The total is expected to increase after follow-up mailings.

“The Phonathon is an important part of our effort to provide substantial scholarships to more students,” said Medical Alumni Association Director Judith McClain. “We’re proud of what these students accomplished, and we’re grateful to the many alumni and former residents who contributed.”

Freshmen alumni representatives **Daniel Judkins** of Monticello and **Hailey Wilbanks** of Russellville recruited classmates and secured prizes and meals from local businesses. Sophomores **Beth Shipman** of Little Rock and **Achal Patel** of Rogers recruited volunteers and secured prizes for their class. Alltel Wireless donated 70 cell phones and telephone service.

New Hospital Opens



The state-of-the-art UAMS hospital opened in January, ushering in a new era of medical care. Featuring all private rooms, the new hospital gives UAMS Medical Center 437 total patient beds – 333 adult beds and 64 newborn bassinets between the 540,000-square-foot new facility and the existing Harry P. Ward Patient Tower that opened in 1999, and 40 beds in the adjacent UAMS Psychiatric Research Institute that opened in December 2008. A new Emergency Department, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and additional surgery suites are just a few of the features of the new building, which replaces most of the patient care services of the hospital that opened in 1956. Learn more about this historic development on our new Web site, UAMSHealth.com.

Philanthropy is thriving in the College of Medicine! We'd like to thank all of you who have contributed to the COM this past year and through the years. Here is a small sample of some of your recent activities.

Class Scholarship Funds Are Growing!

As part of our ongoing campaign to offer larger scholarships for COM students, we issued a special challenge to alumni who reunited last fall (classes in years ending in 3 or 8). We'd like to thank all of you who met our challenge by making new donations to your class scholarship endowments.

Together, you gave \$86,000 in new gifts and pledges!

Thanks also to the class agents who spearheaded the drive in each class. Strong class endowment balances are vital to our effort to be able to provide more substantial scholarships. Larger scholarships (\$10,000 or more) help recruit the best and brightest students to UAMS while helping to reduce medical school debt for our graduates.

We'll focus next on the alumni who are reuniting this fall (classes in years ending in 4 or 9). But whether or not your class is reuniting, please consider making a new gift for scholarships.

Scholarship donors from the 2008 reuniting classes included:

1948

Harold W. Nolen, M.D.
John A. Pierce, M.D.
Guy T. Williams, M.D.

1953

Doug H. Lowrey, M.D.
Purcell Smith Jr., M.D.

1958

Frank S. Billingsley, M.D.
Richard B. Clark, M.D.
William R. Snow, M.D.

1963

Michael E. Barnett, M.D.
Phil Collins, M.D.
Lillian R. Blackmon
Crenshaw, M.D.
C. Allen McKnight, M.D.
J. Malcolm Moore Jr., M.D.
John I. Moose, M.D.

1968

Harold T. Baber Jr., M.D.
Jack L. Blackshear, M.D.
Michael Buffington, M.D.
Marion P. Hazzard, M.D.
Frederick E. Joyce, M.D.
Nancy F. Rector, M.D.
Michael C. Reese, M.D.
J. Wendell Tyson, M.D.
Carl C. Welch, M.D.

1973

Albert H. Rusher, M.D.
Dennis Schreffler, M.D.

1983

Jimmy D. Acklin, M.D.
Stephen L. Goss, M.D.
Rickey D. Medlock, M.D.
Andrew M. Monfee, M.D.

1988

Laura A. Merritt, M.D.

1998

Chadwick T. Rodgers, M.D.
Timothy M. Simon, M.D.
Jefferson R. Thurlby, M.D.

'57 Graduate Funds New Scholarship



Betty Jane McClellan, M.D.

'57, has established an endowed scholarship fund to recognize and provide financial assistance to medical students from Arkansas who demonstrate superior academic achievement. Preference will be given to female students. Dr. McClellan grew up in North Little Rock and was one of four women in her medical school class at UAMS. She was the first female pathologist in the Harvard Crime Lab while completing her residency at Massachusetts General Hospital. She completed a fellowship at Johns Hopkins University and

spent three years on the faculty there. In 1964 she joined the faculty of the Department of Pathology at the University of Oklahoma Medical School, where she served in numerous academic and clinical leadership posts on campus for 31 years. She is a member of Alpha Omega Alpha. Dr. McClellan hopes to inspire others to follow her example. Thank you, Dr. McClellan!

Founders Society Supports Genetics

Founders Society members approved a \$50,000 contribution for the new Division of Genetics during its annual dinner and meeting February 6. The guest speaker for the event, Division Director Brad Schaefer, M.D., shared information about the growing importance of genetics in medical education, research and clinical care.



Founders Society member Caroline Stevenson of Little Rock talks with guest speaker Brad Schaefer, M.D., while Founders Society President Rickey Medlock, M.D. '83, looks on.



Members Teresita Angtuaco, M.D. and John Pauly, Ph.D., both of Little Rock, visit during the reception before dinner.



Class of '60 Endowment Leaves Lasting Impression on Freshmen

Some 2,000 freshmen have learned the intricacies of the human body in the Gross Anatomy Lab since the Class of 1960 started allocating its endowment to the lab in 1995. Students have studied comprehensive photographic cross section images that the endowment helped make possible. They've benefited from anatomical models, an updated Web site server, software and other equipment.

And now, new gifts from the Class of 1960 and other generous contributors are making a much-needed expansion of the lab possible.

"I can't think of any other area that would make more of an impression on a freshman medical student than the Gross Anatomy Lab," said Class Agent **Doyle Dodd, M.D. '60**. "It is so important to their education."

Many members of the Class of 1960 have made new contributions since Dr. Dodd wrote to them last fall about the planned expansion of the lab, which is essential to the College of Medicine's ability to expand enrollment and produce the greater numbers of physicians that Arkansas will need in the years ahead. The \$2.3 million project will add 10 new dissection tables, remodel the space to make room for 40 more students, and add new computers, models and other equipment. The work is scheduled for April through mid-September.

"The Class of 1960 has made many important, high-impact gifts over the years, and we have big plans for putting this endowment to good use in the training of future Arkansas physicians," said Patrick Tank, Ph.D., a professor of neurobiology and developmental sciences and director of the Gross Anatomy Course and Lab.

Anyone can contribute to the Gross Anatomy Laboratory expansion. For more information, please contact Brooke Ivy at (501) 686-7203 or Ashley East at (501) 526-6144 in the COM Office of Development.



Gross Anatomy Lab Director Patrick Tank, Ph.D., (center) talks with freshmen Ashlie White of North Little Rock (left) and Hailey Wilbanks of Russellville in the lab, which will be expanded this year to accommodate more students.

Dean's Society Funds Help Informatics Initiative

The College of Medicine's biomedical informatics initiative is getting a boost from the Dean's Society.

"We are grateful to be able to use Dean's Society funds as seed money for our new Division of Biomedical Informatics," **Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. '77**, said at the group's annual luncheon October 24. "This division will provide the expertise and computer systems to help researchers and physicians manage the vast amount and different types of data that are being generated today and use it to improve medical care for Arkansans." A search is under way for an inaugural director.

The Dean's Society, created in late 2007, has more than 90 members who are providing annual unrestricted gifts to the College of Medicine. For more information or to join, please call Judith McClain at (501) 526-4330.



Dean's Society members received an update on the COM from Dean Fiser at the annual luncheon in October. Pictured from left are Stephen Greer, M.D. '81, Dr. Fiser, Dola Thompson Pauly, M.D. '49, and Whit Hall, M.D. '73.



Dean's Society members Betty Lowe, M.D. '56, Richard Clark, M.D. '58, and Dola Thompson Pauly, M.D. '49, talk in the lobby area of the new I. Dodd Wilson Education Building.

'39 Graduate Made Mark in WWII

Some of you might remember the war novel, film and television series called “Twelve O’Clock High” about the story and missions of the United States Army’s Eighth Air Force during World War II. You might not know that the group surgeon in the movie is based on the experiences of **Thurman Shuller, M.D. '39**.

The 306th Bomb Group Association honored Dr. Shuller, who now lives in McAlester, Oklahoma, at its annual reunion last fall. He also was presented with a certificate from the College of Medicine congratulating him on his 60 years in medicine.

After graduating from the COM and completing a two-year internship in New Orleans, Dr. Shuller began his active duty career as a medical officer in the U.S. Army Air Corp in 1941 and the following year, received his first combat assignment to the 306th Bombardment Group as the 369th Squadron Flight Surgeon. Based in Thurleigh, England, the 306th was the longest continuously-serving bomb group of the Eighth Air Force during World War II and led the first mission against a target in Germany.



As Group Flight Surgeon, he managed the daily activities and prepared the crew for combat medically. Dr. Shuller was influential in establishing high standards for medical care for the command and was proactive in developing policies for preventive care. He returned to the United States in December 1945 and was discharged with the rank of Colonel.

Thurman Shuller, M.D. '39, visits with a patient in March 1943 at Thurleigh, England, the home base of the 306th Bomb Group during World War II. (Photo courtesy of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Collection, East Anglia Air War Archives, Abilene, Texas.)

Making a Difference: Buck Rusher, M.D. '73

A.H. “Buck” Rusher, M.D. '73, has received three medals of honor for helping bring surgical standards up in the country of Mongolia. His efforts brought Mongol surgeons to the United States, which led them to become the first to be trained and able to perform laparoscopic surgery in their country.

Dr. Rusher and his wife, Pam, have served with the Baptist International Mission Board as volunteers on several occasions to countries such as Gaza, Nigeria, Ghana, and Zimbabwe. The Rushers spent five of the past seven years living and working at the University Hospital in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, where Dr. Rusher was a staff surgeon. After learning sufficient language skills, the Rushers also traveled most of the country to work in the smaller rural hospitals teaching and helping with surgical cases. He also taught medical students, surgery residents and surgery staff.

They are now living in Jonesboro, but Dr. Rusher won't forget his experience overseas. “Most of the cases I was assigned were of the more complicated variety or were something the local staff was not accustomed to handling,” he said. “It was a surgeon’s dream. I am grateful for spending the time studying general, vascular, chest, endocrine, plastic and some orthopedic techniques. It all came in handy during those years in Asia.”



Buck Rusher, M.D. '73, (left) handled complex surgical cases and helped surgeons throughout Mongolia.

On the Road: R. Duane Hopson, M.D. '85

The thrill of adventure, new cultural experiences and schedule flexibility sold **Duane Hopson, M.D. '85**, on locum tenens work. As a former medical director in Anchorage, Alaska, he never had the opportunity to work part-time assignments, but he transitioned to being a full-time locum tenens psychiatrist last fall.

"I'm enjoying being able to travel while working and treating patients around the country," he said.

After a psychiatry residency and child and adolescent fellowship in Dallas, Dr. Hopson was in private practice there until 2000. In 2001 he was recruited to Fairbanks, Alaska, to serve as medical director of Mental Health at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital. In 2003 he became medical director of both the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, located in Anchorage, and the Division of Behavioral Health for the State of Alaska. "It was an adventure to go to Alaska and have the opportunity to experience things you never could in Texas and Arkansas where I grew up – and now I'm on to the next adventure," he said.

While his locum tenens home base is in Casa Grande, Ariz., Dr. Hopson travels full time in a motor home. His first work site was in Show Low, Ariz., a small community in the White Mountains. Currently, he is providing services to a forensic Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team in Phoenix. Dr. Hopson said, "My clinical and administrative experiences have really helped me to appreciate and adapt to the ever changing environments that a locum tenens physician faces." Dr. Hopson shares his travels with his partner Mark, who manages his practice and their dog Chena.



Duane Hopson, M.D. '85, enjoys traveling as a locum-tenens psychiatrist.



Jerry G. Jones, M.D. '63, was invested October 9, 2008, as the inaugural recipient of the Arkansas Children's Hospital Auxiliary – Jerry G. Jones, M.D., Chair in Child Maltreatment at ACH. Jones, who joined the faculty in 1978, is a professor of pediatrics, chief of the Children at Risk Section and director of the Center for Children at Risk. The ACH Auxiliary funded the chair in recognition and support of Jones' leadership in providing comprehensive, compassionate care for abused children and their families.



Gregory B. Sharp, M.D. '84, was invested as the John H. Bornhofen, M.D., Chair in Child Neurology at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) on January 14, 2009. Dr. Sharp serves as a professor and chief of the Pediatric Neurology Section in the College of Medicine and is medical director of the Neurophysiology Lab at ACH. The chair's namesake, Dr. Bornhofen, is an associate professor of neurology who has worked at ACH for more than 40 years.

Share Your News!

E-mail: riceginny@uams.edu, or mail to UAMS Medical Alumni Association, 4301 W Markham ST, #642, Little Rock, AR 72205.

Class Rosters are available online!
Visit www.uams.edu/com/alumni.

In Memoriam

1940s

Norman Keith Smith, M.D. '44, of Little Rock, died December 28, 2008.

Richard Reed Nolan, M.D. '48, of Roland, died September 13, 2008.

Robert V. Magee, M.D. '48, of Dallas, died September 17, 2008.

1950s

Dorwyn Wayne Croom, M.D. '51, of Oberlin, Ohio, died August 21, 2008.

Major E. Smith, M.D. '52, of Dermott, died December 1, 2008.

D. Bluford "Blu" Stough III, M.D. '53, of Hot Springs, died October 7, 2008.

Carl L. Williams, M.D. '54, of Fayetteville, died September 11, 2008.

John C. Gunn, M.D. '54, of Perry Park, Kan., died September 30, 2008.

Ben O. Price Sr., M.D. '55, of Little Rock, died January 14, 2009.

John William Hollis, M.D. '56, of Atlantic Beach, Fla., died October 20, 2008.

Gil Buchanan, M.D. '59, of Little Rock, died December 6, 2008.

1960s

Philip Ross Choate, M.D. '60, of Richmond, Ky., died March 13, 2009.

W. L. Winters, M.D. '62, of Conway, died February 7, 2009.

Durward Brooks "D.B." Allen, M.D. '65, of Little Rock, died December 1, 2008.

John Grobmyer Tedford, M.D. '66, of Little Rock, died January 31, 2009.

Raymond V. Biondo, M.D. '67, of Sherwood, died December 7, 2008.

G. Edward Cook, M.D. '67, of Wichita, Kan., died February 20, 2009.

1970s

Russell P. Webster, M.D. '79, of Batesville, died October 6, 2008.

2000s

Barrett Lewis, M.D. 2000, of Springfield, Mo., died November 17, 2008.

Mark Your Calendar: Alumni Weekend 2009

New events and new locales promise to make Alumni Weekend 2009 more fun than ever! It will be held in Little Rock August 28-29 for alumni who graduated in years ending in "4" and "9." This year's Golden Graduates are the Class of 1959, and the Class of 1999 will reunite for the first time. Reuniting alumni will enjoy a tour of the new hospital and a luncheon in the new I. Dodd

Wilson Education Building, a reception and dance with a jazz combo at the Arkansas Art Center, and other activities planned by specific classes. Watch your mail for more information in the months ahead.



Pack Your Bags!

Rickey O. Ryals, M.D., shares the sandy beaches and sun-drenched climate of the Riviera on an Alumni Association-sponsored trip last fall with his wife Melanie (right) and her sister Jackie Martin (left). "We had a great time on our trip," said Dr. Ryals, who trained in the Department of Pathology from 1982 to 1986. "The Go Next travel company and personnel were excellent, and the people with us on the tour were fabulous."



Experience some of the most lively and beautiful destinations in the world with the company of fellow alumni and friends. Join us in the fall for our tour of the **Italian Favorites – Rome & Florence**, November 7-15, 2009. For more information, visit www.uams.edu/com/alumni.



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