in practice

Third-Year Students in their Clerkships

ALSO FEATURED:

› Dr. Susan Wallace Studies DNA Damage & Repair
› Palliative Care in Focus

SPRING 2009
From the Dean

College News
Burlington’s health status, white coats for a new class, the return of the “Howard Marbles,” and more.

Hall A

President’s Corner

Class Notes

Development News

Obituaries

Damage Control

Cells are constantly under assault from a wide variety of toxic agents in the environment. Susan Wallace, Ph.D., professor and chair of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, has spent her career expanding our understanding of this constant process of damage and repair, and the ways it relates to cancer care and other therapies.

By Edward Neuert

In Practice

Vermont Medicine follows clerkship students through inpatient wards at Fletcher Allen and in private practices in Vermont as they polish their clinical skills under the guidance of faculty and preceptors.

By Sona Iyengar

Quality of Life, and Death

The College of Medicine takes an integrated approach to teaching medical students about palliative care, death, and dying — a critically important step on the path to becoming a competent, caring physician.

By Sona Iyengar


The UVM Medical Alumni Association invites you and your family to plan now to join your classmates for Reunion 2009 — June 12–14, 2009. Come back to Burlington and the UVM campus, your home during medical school. You may have lost contact with your classmates and former teachers, but reunion will give you the chance to reconnect, rekindle old friendships, check out favorite places, talk with faculty, meet the medical students of today, and experience first-hand the growth and evolution of your medical alma mater.

EVENTS INCLUDE: Medical Education Today Session • Tours of the College, including the Medical Education Center and new Courtyard Building • Alumni Awards and Reception • Medical Alumni Picnic • Nostalgia Hour • Class Receptions

Register today for your reunion! www.med.uvm.edu/alumni

SPRING 2009

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ON THE COVER: photograph of Justin Smith ‘11 by Raj Chawla/UMM Med Photo
It has been a season for rites of passage here at the College of Medicine. In February we gathered in the classical intent of Ira Allen Chapel as 113 members of the Class of 2012 participated in the 2009 White Coat Ceremony. A few weeks later, in Carpenter Auditorium, the Class of 2011 celebrated their entrance into clinical clerkships at the Student Clinician’s Ceremony. And, come mid-May, the Class of 2009 will enter Ira Allen Chapel to formally receive their medical degrees.

Recognizing important milestones by public ceremony is integral to our education of the next generation of physicians and scientists. It is appropriate that at meaningful moments we pause to recognize accomplishments, achievements, and the exciting challenges ahead. Along with the White Coat Ceremony of our first-year students, this issue of Vermont Medicine highlights our second-year students taking a moment at the end of the Foundations level of the curriculum to honor the educators and staff who have helped them along the way.

We hope you’ll also enjoy following some of our third-year students while we increase our efforts to rise to the challenges that lie ahead. But our key missions remain the same, and we are committed to the important work of preparing for the future. The discoveries in the laboratory today will become the therapies of tomorrow, and the physicians and scientists who are being educated here now will go on to serve our community long after the current crises have faded. This is our enduring legacy, and we are committed to seeing it continue.

Edward Neuret, M.D.
Editor

The health of people in Burlington was in the headlines across the nation in November, as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Selected Metropolitan/Micropolitan Area Risk Trends (SMART) database ranked the city as the “healthiest city in the nation.” Ninety-two percent of Burlington residents surveyed by the CDC stated that they were in good or great health. Vermont’s largest metropolitan area also registered some of the lowest levels of obesity and diabetes in the nation, and high levels of regular exercisers. Contrasting Burlington’s standing was Huntington, WV, which ranked lowest in the database.

College News

Class of 2012 Receives White Coats

There’s a single piece of clothing in a doctor’s life that not only symbolizes achievement and professionalism, but also the great responsibility a physician agrees to bear when he or she chooses to practice medicine. Wearing the white coat, a tradition adopted by physicians in the late 19th century, is a rite of passage that most U.S. medical schools have marked with the White Coat Ceremony for the past 15 years. Members of the University of Vermont College of Medicine Class of 2012 were “cloaked” for the first time at this ceremony in Ira Allen Chapel on February 20.

UVM’s current first-year medical class includes 113 students, four of whom are M.D.-Ph.D. students. Half of the students majored in the sciences and about 28 percent of the class are Vermonters.

One of the healthiest cities in the nation, according to recent Centers for Disease Control data, Burlington is seen here from the west with the College of Medicine at top. Safety and overall quality of life by Outside magazine, The New York Times, Arts & Entertainment, Traveler, and other national media.

Members of the Class of 2012 (at left) watch their classmates being cloaked; (at center) Michael Visker receives his coat from the ceremony speaker, Dr. Laura Hebert; (at right) Teresa Scribbes gets a post-ceremony hug.

UVM’s Home is the “Healthiest” City

The health of people in Burlington was in the headlines across the nation in November, as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Selected Metropolitan/Micropolitan Area Risk Trends (SMART) database ranked the city as the “healthiest city in the nation.” Ninety-two percent of Burlington residents surveyed by the CDC stated that they were in good or great health. Vermont’s largest metropolitan area also registered some of the lowest levels of obesity and diabetes in the nation, and high levels of regular exercisers. Contrasting Burlington’s standing was Huntington, WV, which ranked lowest in the database.

Another Vermont metro area, the Barre region, placed eighth on the CDC database. Burlington has also been named a top city for outdoor activities, the arts, and economic hardships that have come into acute focus in the last six months. Due to a significant decrease in funding, we will have to make some tough decisions while we increase our efforts to rise to the challenges that lie ahead. But our key missions remain the same, and we are committed to the important work of preparing for the future. The discoveries in the laboratory today will become the therapies of tomorrow, and the physicians and scientists who are being educated here now will go on to serve our community long after the current crises have faded. This is our enduring legacy, and we are committed to seeing it continue.

Edward Neuret, M.D.
Editor
Research Milestones

Tracy Co-authors JAMA Ginkgo Memory Study

An article in the November 19 Journal of the American Medical Association co-authored by University of Vermont Professor of Pathology and Biochemistry Russell Tracy, Ph.D., reported that the herb Ginkgo biloba was not effective in reducing the rate of dementia or Alzheimer’s disease after several years’ use jointly sponsored by the National Center on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), the National Institute on Aging and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the clinical trial sought to examine whether taking Ginkgo biloba had beneficial effects on memory and cognition in more than 3,500 elderly study participants.

“This was the flagship trial for NCCAM,” said Tracy, who was a member of the study’s steering committee, as well as leader of the core data analysis for the trial. “I'm very excited that this carefully done study came out as cleanly and with such clear results as it did. The committee is enormously happy to have information on this widely used over-the-counter supplement.”

Franklyn and Minajigi Partner on PNAS Study

Professor of Biochemistry Christopher Franklyn, Ph.D., and Anand Minajigi, a graduate student in biochemistry, published a paper titled “RNA-assisted catalysis in a protein enzyme,” in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS). The paper focused on using E. coli threonyl-tRNA synthetase (ThrRS) to closely examine the mechanism of aminoacyl transfer.

Newhouse Research Examines Potential Alzheimer’s Disease Treatments

Paul Newhouse, M.D., professor of psychiatry and director of the Clinical Neuroscience Research Unit, is currently the site leader for several clinical research trials related to Alzheimer’s Disease. The sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) destroys nerve cells in the brain, causing such hallmark symptoms as problems with memory, learning, reasoning or judgment, loss of the ability to speak or understand someone else speaking, disorientation and a decline in the ability to perform everyday tasks. One study Newhouse leads is evaluating the effectiveness of an investigational medication hoped to improve memory and other cognitive functions of people with AD. Patients between the ages of 50 and 90 years old who are currently taking donepezil (also known as Acenta, a popular AD treatment) may be eligible to participate. Other AD trials run by Newhouse include a national study using Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) imaging to understand the disease process and an examination of whether short-term estrogen use will enhance the effects of donepezil in women with early AD.

Hughes Nicotine Paper is Highest-Cited in Field

A paper authored by John Hughes, M.D., professor of psychiatry and psychology, was recently identified by Essential Science Indicators as the highest-cited paper in the research area of Nicotine Replacement Therapy. Titled ‘A meta-analysis of the efficacy of over-the-counter nicotine replacement,’” the paper was originally published in the journal Tobacco Control in March 2003. Peter Callas, Ph.D., research associate professor of mathematics and statistics, is a co-author on the paper.

Colchester Research Facility Completed

The final phase of renovation in the new section of the College’s Research Facility is now complete, with new space that includes offices and labs, as well as three conference rooms, lobby and lab areas, and a lunch room and kitchen for staff.

With the purchase of the entire building and renovation of the new space, the College now has a total of 72,000 square feet of research space in Colchester, just three miles and a few minutes’ drive from main campus.

Student Projects Put Science into Practice

If you don’t own a car or live near a bus route, getting to the doctor or dentist can be an enormous challenge, even if that care is free. Recognition of that barrier led Burlington’s Safe Harbor Clinic and Committee on Temporary Shelter to partner with a group of second-year University of Vermont medical students who undertook the challenge to determine solutions to the problem as part of their public health training.

Transportation and health access was the focus of one of 16 UVM public health projects performed in collaboration with the United Way of Chittenden County during the fall 2008 semester and highlighted during a January 21 Poster Presentation and Celebration event at the College of Medicine. Implemented in 2004, the Public Health Projects are the primary focus of the Medical Student Leadership Group (MSLG) II course in the Vermont Integrated Curriculum. The course is led by Associate Dean for Public Health Jan Carney, M.D., who developed this innovative approach to teaching public health with the United Way Volunteer Center. Students partner with faculty mentors to apply the principles and science of public health while working to both meet the needs and improve the health of the community.

The program is gaining national, regional and statewide recognition. Carney and RuthAnn Hackett from the United Way Volunteer Center published a paper on their “Community-First” model in the journal Education for Health last April and several groups’ projects have been presented nationally at the American Public Health Association meeting. In January, Vermont legislators had an opportunity to learn about a project conducted with the Peace and Justice Center of Vermont to define the public health impact of varying employer sick day policies at a luncheon in Montpelier. Yet another project addressed a regional challenge — recruiting and retaining American Red Cross blood donors in New England.

“Building on skills learned in their first-year leadership groups, and using practical research methods, students have worked with medical school faculty and community agencies to find creative ways to put science into practice,” said Carney. “We know that our students will become better physicians by understanding public health and the challenges of improving it, and we are proud of their accomplishments.”

with new space that includes offices and labs, as well as three conference rooms, lobby and lab areas, and a lunch room and kitchen for staff.

Built originally in the 1980s as the home of Aquatech, a manufacturer of industrial water and wastewater treatment systems, the Starbuck Family Wing (dedicated in 2006) has been home to College of Medicine researchers and other groups, and using practical research methods, students have worked with medical school faculty and community agencies to find creative ways to put science into practice,” said Carney. “We know that our students will become better physicians by understanding public health and the challenges of improving it, and we are proud of their accomplishments.”

Staff Photo: John Laycock
Looking Back: The Return of the Howard Marbles

There are probably no other historical artifacts at the College of Medicine that have had as peripatetic an existence as the "Howard Marbles." These two four-foot high tablets of Vermont stone have hung on walls, and gathered dust in storage rooms, in every home the College has occupied since the 1880s.

Apprently commissioned by the College’s seven faculty members in 1884, the tablets honor John Purple Howard, then Burlington’s most prominent philanthropist. Howard was retired from his successful career as a hotel owner when he was approached in 1883 by the school, which had outgrown its cramped quarters in Pomeroy Hall. Howard bought and renovated the Underwood house across from the northwest corner of the University Green.

Within a year the College had moved in. A Latin inscription on one tablet translates as: "If you seek his monument, look around you.”

It is assumed that tables hung in this building for the next 20 years, until the disastrous fire of December 2, 1903 that consumed the College. Saved by an enterprising brigade of students, along with books, specimens, and cadavers, the tablets spent the next six decades in storage. They were rehung in the old Soule Medical Alumni Building in the 1960s. The tablets had been in storage since the Soule Building was demolished in 2002 to make room for the Medical Education Center. Now, 125 years after they were carved to honor the College’s bond with cadavers, the tablets spent the next six decades in storage. The tablets (top) honor philanthropist John Purple Howard, a bust of whom (above left) has adorned Old Mill. Above right is the College’s round home, donated by Howard in 1884.

3 Questions for Naomi Fukagawa, M.D., Ph.D.

Naomi K. Fukagawa, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Medicine and Associate Program Director of the Clinical Research Center, was appointed this past fall by the US Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services to serve on the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. The members of this committee are prominent researchers from institutions across America, selected for their expertise in dietary intake, human metabolism, behavioral change, and health. Dr. Fukagawa is a board-certified pediatrician and an expert in nutritional biochemistry and metabolism.

Q: You are one of 13 national experts appointed last October to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. What will your role be on this committee and how will your recommendations be utilized?
A: The Committee’s charge is to review new data and determine whether changes in the recommendations should be made. Obesity and chronic diseases significantly influence the health of Americans; one of the important issues is whether nutritional recommendations could be made for healthy Americans to help avoid the development of these problems. I serve as liaison for three subcommittees and am a member of the Nutrient Adequacy and Science Subcommittees. The report, to be completed by 2010, will be given to the USDA and HHS, who will then implement the recommendations. The Committee is quite aware that the public has been confused by the Dietary Guidelines Pyramid and that very few individuals actually adhere to the recommendations. We hope that we will be able to develop recommendations that are more user-friendly and hence easier to implement.

Q: You've served in leadership roles for several national associations. What have you and other scientists in your field learned in the past 20 years that has affected nutritional policy and practice at the national level, as well as in primary care practices?
A: In the past 20 years, we’ve learned a lot about specific issues such as obesity, age-related changes in body composition and physical activity. What we haven’t successfully done is to integrate the findings. So we can make one little recommendation in one area, but then we have to face the impact that has on other areas. Often times we haven’t done a good job about melding things and bringing it together so that it’s not confusing for people. In general, basic needs for good health have not changed; it’s the specific needs of an individual and under specific conditions that have been fine-tuned. The challenge we face is to have health policy and recommendations based on integration of the knowledge we’ve gained about specific nutrients and conditions. The importance of balanced meal plans, access to fresh foods, and daily physical activity have been emphasized across all age groups but the general principles really have not changed over the decades.

Q: What’s going on in your field currently and which studies do you find most exciting and why?
A: Integration of data from seemingly disparate fields is key. I see food and nutrients as environmental factors that influence health just as pollution, water quality, and industrial processing do. The interaction between environmental factors to influence disease development or progression is one of my current interests. For example, are people with diabetes more susceptible to the health effects of air pollution? Does combustion of biodiesel vs. petrodist fuel differ in their effects on lung or cardiovascular health? Is one better, worse or the same as the other? Should food crops be diverted to fuel production? These are all really interesting and important questions.

Players and Fans Sport Pink for VCC

Once again this year, before “March Madness” began, the UVM Men and Women’s basketball teams took part in the WBCA (Women's Basketball Coaches Association) Pink Zone™ Initiative. The campaign, formerly known as WBCA Think Pink, is a global unified effort to raise breast cancer awareness on the court, across campuses, and in communities.

The event, organized by Vermont Athletics, is meant to help raise breast cancer awareness, with proceeds from t-shirt sales, raffles and more going directly to support breast cancer research at the Vermont Cancer Center.

On February 14, the UVM women’s team faced Albany at UVM’s Patrick Gym, where they used a superior defense effort to beat Albany 48–32. The women’s team sported pink uniforms at this game. The next afternoon, the UVM men’s team took on SUNY Stony Brook in the same venue, and scored an overtime 69–64 victory. Fans were encouraged to wear pink at both games and, indeed, the stands at Patrick were filled with people clad in pink.

“The public has been confused by the Dietary Guidelines Pyramid... we hope that we will be able to develop recommendations that are more user-friendly.”
—Naomi Fukagawa, M.D., Ph.D.
Spine Researcher Earns Kudos from Two Presidents

Americans spend more than $50 billion each year seeking relief from lower back pain. Unfortunately, there are few easy or early treatments. But Assistant Professor of Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation and Associate Professor of Engineering James Iatridis, Ph.D., is on a mission to find them.

Iatridis’s work to understand lower back pain and develop prevention strategies recently received the highest award given by the U.S. government to young scientists. In December, President George W. Bush recognized Iatridis and 66 other winners of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers in the Grand Foyer of the White House.

In an on-campus recognition ceremony on Jan. 15, UVM president Daniel Mark Fogel also honored Iatridis and thanked him for his award, congratulating him for his award, and noting his “exceptional work both as an engineer and as a bioscientist, to help millions — indeed perhaps billions — of people with back pain, neck pain, and spinal degeneration — so that they can live better lives.”

Iatridis is the first researcher at UVM ever to receive the PECASE award, which provides $1.5 million in research funds over the next five years.

Second only to headaches, lower back pain sends millions of people to the doctor and is a leading contributor to workplace absenteeism. In the U.S., lower back pain is the most common cause of disability and a frequent contributor to lost workdays.

Iatridis’s research explores the intervertebral disc, the fibrous flexible pads between the 26 vertebrae in the human spine. “In prevention of intervertebral disc degeneration, my work has focused on biomechanical factors, including defining healthy and damaging loads on the spine,” said Iatridis. “The goal is, quite simply, avoiding damaging loads and promoting healthy loads.”

“There are now relatively few clinical treatments for intervertebral disc degeneration that involve early or minimally invasive interventions,” he says, which is why he and his team of graduate students have several projects looking for better treatments by studying intervertebral discs in animal models and human tissue.

In one promising line of investigation with collaborators across UVM and around the world, Iatridis aims to find cell therapy techniques that will allow adult spine cells to act like young cells do during growth, letting damaged discs heal.

The program began in 1996, when the National Science and Technology Council was commissioned by President Clinton to create a program to support and honor outstanding scientists and engineers early in their research careers. Nine federal departments annually nominate candidates for the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers. Iatridis was one of 12 nominees presented by the National Institutes of Health for the most recent round of awards.

AAMC Recognizes Med Student Marathoners

Prize-Winning Project Continues

The Association of American Medical Colleges Group on Institutional Advancement (AAMC GIA) has given its Award of Excellence to the College of Medicine’s Class of 2011 and the Medical Development & Alumni Relations Office for their project that combined endurance-level running with leading-edge science to better the lives of young patients.

The Award of Excellence recognized the student-initiated fundraising project, supported by the Development & Alumni office, through which more than 40 class members, joined by staff members, trained for the Memorial Day KeyBank Vermont City Marathon. The effort was driven by Matthew Meyer and David Diller from the class of ’11 and their desire to promote wellness and unity in their class by engaging their classmates in a community service activity. The student team used their run and a related silent auction to raise nearly $13,000 to fund the work of pediatric oncologist Giselle Sholler, M.D., assistant professor of pediatrics, through the Penelope & Sam Fund. Sholler’s research at the Vermont Cancer Center is focused on helping patients with neuroblastoma, an often-fatal cancer that afflicts very young children.

The effort continues with a new team that will run in the May 24, 2009 marathon.

Transitions

MacLean Named Interim Associate Dean for Primary Care

Dean Morin announced in September the appointment of Charles MacLean, M.D., associate professor of medicine, as interim associate dean for primary care. MacLean will maintain his faculty appointment and role as research director for the Office of Primary Care, and continue his teaching, research and clinical practice within the Primary Care Internal Medicine division.

Low Named Interim Head of Medical Education

Robert Low, Ph.D., professor of molecular physiology and biophysics, began serving as Interim Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education on December 3, 2008. A national search is underway to replace Lewis First, M.D., who stepped down as senior associate dean in order to assume the editorship of the journal Pediatrics and continues as professor and chair of pediatrics.

Branda Named Interim Director of VCC

Richard Branda, M.D., professor emeritus of medicine and pharmacology, was named interim director of the Vermont Cancer Center in December by Dean Morin and Melinda L. Estes, M.D., president and CEO of Fletcher Allen Health Care. He replaced Bernard Levin, M.D., who served as interim director since May 2008.

Tracy to Step Down

Russell Tracy, Ph.D., has announced he will be stepping down as Senior Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs, and returning to his role as principal investigator, professor of pathology and biochemistry, and director of the Laboratory for Clinical Biochemistry Research. Tracy became Interim Dean for Research in 2000, and was appointed Senior Associate Dean in 2003. Following a national search a new SeniorAssoc. Dean will be named.
Second-Year Students Celebrate Foundations

Completing the challenging 18-month-long Foundations level of the Vermont Integrated Curriculum (VIC), calls for celebration. On January 29, the Class of 2011 did just that, holding a celebration and awards ceremony that recognized the accomplishments of exceptional teachers, courses, and supporters.

Speaking to the class at the celebration, Associate Dean for Student Affairs Scott Waterman, M.D., noted, “You’ve completed 542 days, 11 courses, and 38 exams.”

The Foundations level of the VIC is designed to provide students with a fundamental understanding of health and illness, integrating basic science and clinical skills, and prepare for the clerkship level, where patient care immersion begins.

AWARDS PRESENTED BY THE CLASS OF 2011 AT THE FOUNDATIONS CELEBRATION EVENT WERE:

- Outstanding Foundations Course: Cardiac, Respiratory and Renal Systems
- Foundations Course Director Award: William Hopkins, M.D.
- Foundations Teaching Award: William Rasksa, M.D.
- The Dean Warshaw Integration Award: Richard Salerno, M.D.
- The Silver Stethoscope Award (a.k.a. “Inspirational Cameo of the Year”): Jean Salva, M.D.
- Above and Beyond Award: Ellen Corinbrooks, Ph.D.
- Best Support Staff (non-teaching): Sarah Keblin
- American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) Gender Equity Award: Pamela Gibson, M.D.
- Wellness Committee Peer Recognition Award:
  - Presented jointly to second-year medical students Matthew Meyer and David Diller “for their ability to create a team atmosphere and community of inclusion” in organizing and leading the UVM College of Medicine Marathon Team.

Alumni’s Book Offers Lessons from War

It is not often that a medical textbook makes national headlines, but the book that alumnus Dave Lounsbury, M.D. ’79, co-edited received prominent media coverage when it was published this past summer. Lounsbury is a retired U.S. Army colonel and was director of the Borden Institute and editor-in-chief for the textbook of military medicine at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

War Surgery in Afghanistan and Iraq: A Series of Cases appeared in August, and stories in the New York Times and on National Public Radio detailed some of the struggles Lounsbury and his colleagues went through to get the book published, after meeting resistance from within the Army.

The 83 cases reviewed in the book are shockingly gruesome. But, Lounsbury says, seeing them and learning the new techniques Army surgeons have developed to deal with the results of improvised Explosive Devices and other new tactics is important to the surgeons’ development and diversity.

Lounsbury told the Times, “And they need to see this on the plane before they get there, because there’s a learning curve to this.”

As of this spring, the book was part of the collections of most U.S. medical school libraries. A Journal of the American Medical Association reviewer commented that “The book becomes almost a tutorial essay of what can and should be done when delivering trauma care on the battlefield. To my knowledge, no similar book has ever been put together.”

Outstanding Foundations Course:

- Cardiac, Respiratory and Renal Systems

Awards presented by the Class of 2011 at the Foundations celebration event were:

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Notables

A University of Vermont faculty member since 1984, Paula Duncan, M.D., professor of pediatrics, has been a quiet, collaborative and diligent force in her field for decades. The impact of her years of contributions resulted in a windfall of recognition in 2008, as Duncan received four national awards, a statewide award and a UVM College of Medicine student award. Duncan was co-recipient of a U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration Medical Student Health Bureau Director’s award. She also received three American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) awards — the Oral Health Service Award, Job Lewis Smith Award and Clifford Cruise Award. Vermont AAP members unanimously voted to jointly award Duncan and her UVM colleagues Joseph Hagan, M.D., clinical professor of pediatrics, and Judith Shaw, Ed.D., M.P.H., R.N., research associate professor of pediatrics and executive director of the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, with the 2008 Green Mountain Pediatrician award. The three also shared the Hrsa MCHB Director’s award. Traditionally, the Green Mountain award goes to an individual chapter member who has shown outstanding service and dedication to the care of children. Duncan, Hagan, and Shaw were honored for their vision, work, and leadership as editors of the third edition of Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children and Adolescents, which was published in 2008.

Rogier C. Young, M.D., Ph.D., professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive sciences at the College of Medicine, was elected to the national Board of Trustees of the March of Dimes Foundation, the leading nonprofit organization for pregnancy and baby health.

Karen Richardson-Nasif, Ph.D., associate dean for faculty and staff development and diversity, and colleagues received the Best Paper Award for 2007 from the Research in Medical Education Committee of the Association of American Medical Colleges at the organization’s annual meeting in San Antonio in November. The paper, titled “Crafting Successful Relationships with the IRB,” was published in a special supplement to the October 2007 issue of the Journal of Academic Medicine.

The Multidisciplinary Stroke Center at Fletcher Allen Health Care (whose staff members, Christopher Commichau, M.D., and Mark Gorman, M.D., Melissa Lowrey, and Joan Blondin, appear at left, clockwise from upper left) recently received a Certificate of Distinction for Primary Stroke Centers from the Joint Commission, an independent, non-profit organization that accredits and certifies more than 15,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States.

The Multidisciplinary Stroke Center, now the only Joint Commission-certified stroke center in Vermont, offers comprehensive care including acute stroke care, post-stroke care, and stroke education and prevention. “We are very pleased that the joint commission, the nation’s premier health care accreditation and certification organization, has recognized our Stroke Center’s commitment to high quality academic health care service to the community,” said Commichau, associate professor of neurology and neurosurgery. Commichau co-leads the Stroke Center along with Dr. Mark Gorman, associate professor of neurology, and directs the Neurology Residency Program.

Two College of Medicine faculty members were appointed to the Fletcher Allen Health Care Board of Trustees on December 9: Russell Tracy, Ph.D., professor of pathology and biochemistry and senior associate dean of research and academic affairs; and Ruth Uphold, M.D., professor of surgery emerita and attending physician and medical director of Fletcher Allen’s Emergency Department, will each serve four-year terms.

Odu “Laurie” Amburgey, M.D., a maternal-fetal medicine fellow at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, was selected as one of four recipients of a 2008 Vision Grant from the Preeclampsia Foundation for her study of brain vessel function in preeclamptic women.

Christopher French, ’09 received a 2008 Student Scholarship in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke from the Scientific Councils of the American Heart Association. This award supports French’s work exploring the effect of erythropoietin on myocardial infarction in the laboratory of Burton Sobel, M.D., professor of medicine and biochemistry. French gave an oral presentation on his work at the American Heart Association meeting in New Orleans in November, for which he won a travel grant from the AHA.
Damage Control

Cells are constantly under assault from toxic agents in the environment. Chair of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics Susan Wallace, Ph.D., has spent her career understanding how a cell can recover from 10,000 “hits” a day, and how that process shed light on cancer care and other therapies.

by Edward Neuert | photography by Mario Murgado

“...we don’t deal with very extraordinary damage, really — we’re focused on the kind you get just because you live and breathe,” says Susan Wallace, Ph.D., gesturing toward her door and the laboratory beyond as she sits in her Stafford Hall office, a white-walled rectangle filled with the accoutrements of a successful, busy career. Though she may feel the subject is not extraordinary, to a casual listener her work sounds very important indeed — a career spent in basic research of the very blueprint of biological systems, DNA, and the agents that can and will repeatedly tear apart the fabric of life in all our cells and, often, knit it back together in less than the blink of an eye.

On her desk and on her office table sit piles of publications, her own and others, and reams of grant material she’s working through on a sunny January morning as she prepares her most recent National Cancer Institute program project grant submission. Just around the corner, in her lab, researchers, graduate students, and post-doctoral associates work away at their benches and computer screens. As founding chair of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, which she has led for 21 years, her responsibilities lie not only within these lab walls, but also with the dozens of other faculty members and their labs up and down the halls of Stafford, a structure she took some knocks for, literally, in the days before its construction.

Her career spans both the genetic revolution, and the sea change in women’s roles in scientific research. She has, through insight, hard work, and ceaseless mentoring, built a body of over 120 published articles, and helped form the careers of other scientists and physicians across the nation. “Susan has shown herself to be extraordinary in both the actual practice of science itself, and in the development of young scientists,” says Senior Associate Dean for Research and Academic Affairs Russell Tracy, Ph.D. “Both of which, I think, have played critical roles in shaping research at the College of Medicine and throughout the University. She’s been consistently funded by the NCI, even when they were funding only ten percent of their applications. She’s played a mentoring role with faculty around the country, and, if that wasn’t enough, she’s one of the top ten people in the world in her field.”
The NIH person said to me ‘Susan, you know, we’ve never given a grant to a woman with children before, and we’re not sure we should.’ Well, they gave that grant to me, and it’s the one that earned MERIT status twice.”

Within cells, a wide variety of toxic agents cause these assaults. Ionizing radiation, several different chemicals, and the normal oxidative metabolism that has governed our cells since oxygen became a major component of our atmosphere eons ago all combine to produce a welter of free radicals — atoms or molecules within the cell that have an electron knocked away, and now have a single unpaired electron circulating their outer shell. This free electron provides a sort of homestead, an opportunity for these molecules to combine and react with others, and these reactions increase the possibilities of DNA damage. Six to ten thousand of these types of damage take place in each cell every day, and they must be repaired, or the cell could die. If this repair system did not exist, we humans would not be around to study it — mice who have had this cellular repair system removed cannot survive the embryo stage. Besides cellular death, damage can lead to mutation and unregulated cell division — the formation of cancerous tumors.

Early in her career, Wallace focused on identifying enzymes that could recognize and repair damage to DNA caused by free radicals. She identified the first enzyme known to be involved in the recognition of free radical damage. Though her work involved studying this reaction within the *E. coli* bacteria, the reactions were so fundamental that they are identical to those that occur today within human cells. “This was something that was selected for back in the primordial soup,” says Wallace. She performed years of work to determine what would happen to cells that did not have this enzyme. “When it is missing, you get a lot of mutations, and when you get a lot of mutations, of course, you get cancer. So that’s why our efforts have been supported by the NCI.” Wallace has been continuously funded by the NCI since 1971, and one of her grants has been honored twice by the prestigious MERIT award. She is currently the principal investigator on two NCI RO1 grants, and a project program grant. She is director of the Vermont Cancer Center’s Genome Stability and Expression Program. At the national level, she has served on the NCI’s Radiation Study Section, the National Academy of Sciences Board on Radiation Effects Research, and many other groups.

Over the course of her career, Wallace has collaborated with many of her colleagues. When Sylvie Doublet, Ph.D., came to UVM in 1998, with a specialty in x-ray crystallography, the two scientists began working together on solving the actual structures of DNA glycosylases, the family of enzymes at work in DNA repair. Together they are trying to figure out how damage is identified and where the specificity of certain glycosylases for repairing certain damages comes from. “For more than 20 years I’ve been interested in what happens to the DNA damages that don’t get repaired before the DNA replicates,” Wallace says. These replications can lead to mutation and cancer development. Working with Doublet, Wallace has been able to tell, among other things, why certain damages cause mutation.

A new program project grant Wallace has recently applied for will hopefully fund a new translational research effort with adjunct professor Joann Sweasy, Ph.D., of Yale University. This project will explore how certain protein variants in the human population influence mutation frequency and other factors to see if this in fact increases the risk for those individuals to certain types of cancer.

For Wallace, the path to a career in science began along a stream in New York’s rural Putnam County when she was eight years old. She was a city girl — her family lived in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn — but often visited her grandmother’s summer house upstate, and there she would accompany a family friend, a member of the clergy who taught biology at New York’s Cardinal Hayes High School, on his trips into the woods to collect specimens of salamanders and crayfish from the local streams and ponds. “From that point on,” she says, “I organized my life and my curriculum around the fact that I was going to be a scientist.”

That determination served her well through high school and her chemistry major at Marymount College, then on through graduate work at Berkeley and Cornell School of Medical Sciences, where she transferred after getting married. She received her first faculty position at City University of New York/Hunter College, and moved to New York Medical College in 1976, all while also raising three children in suburban Croton-on-Hudson, Life for a female scientist in those days required an extra dose of determination. “I’ll never forget interviewing for my first post-doc position, when everything seemed to be going so well until the chair of the department saw my eight-months-pregnant belly,” she remembers. “I got my rejection letter the very next day, explaining that they wouldn’t support a woman who had children.” Also particularly memorable was the site visit paid to her lab as part of her first NIH grant submission. “The NIH person said to me ‘Susan, you know, we’ve never given a grant to a woman with children before, and we’re not sure we should.’ Well, they gave that grant to me, and it’s the one that earned MERIT status twice. I still have it.”

In 1988, the late Norman Alpert, Ph.D., chair of physiology at UVM from 1966 to 1999, and then-dean of the College of Medicine William Lagadinoh, M.D., lured Wallace northward to found the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (MMG). One important initial task was to build the department’s home, Stafford Hall. Federal funding helped pay for the building, but a deep distrust among certain members of the public of anything with the word “genetics” connected to it led to four years of legal and procedural delays. At the 1992 Stafford groundbreaking, protesters disrupted the ceremony and knocked Wallace to the ground. She got up unscathed, and a year later the department moved into its new home, where MMG labs flourish on four floors. Today, in addition to her research, Wallace values the many opportunities she has to foster future generations of scientists. She not only mentor graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, but also inspires many students who pursue her department’s undergraduate major and rotate through its labs. And every year she contributes to the molding of new physicians through her teaching of the first-year med students in the Foundations level of the Vermont Integrated Curriculum (VIC). “I hope that, in the time I have with each class, I’ve taught them the basics of molecular biology, and where to go to find out more, she says: “So much of what they’re going to use — drugs, individualized cancer therapies — will be based in some way on molecular biology. A big focus of the VIC is to make them lifelong learners. I give them, I hope, a feeling for all the time — and will be — to learn in the years ahead.”

Crystal-Clear Insight at the Atomic Level

In order to use x-ray crystallography, a pure crystal of a protein has to be grown. The liquid-filled baths (above left) are part of this task. Once a crystal has been isolated, an x-ray beam directed through it will bounce off the electrons and protons in its molecules. The pattern of this diffraction can be collected, processed through computer programs, and yield a visual image (above right) of the protein’s structure.
Spring brings many signs of new beginnings to Vermont. On the medical campus, March marks the beginning of the doctor–patient experience in the lives of medical students: the clinical clerkship. In the Vermont Integrated Curriculum (VIC), students complete the 18-month Foundations level in February of their second year, and take step 1 of their USMLE boards. Then it's time to don the white coat and head out to practices across Vermont and Maine for the next twelve months in Level 2 of the VIC.

"The clinical clerkship is designed to expose students to a whole range of clinical settings and disciplines, and to allow them to develop their decision-making skills and apply what they’ve learned in Foundations," says Tania Bertsch, M.D., the Clinical Clerkship director. Bertsch works with eight individual clerkship directors to direct the activities of more than 100 second- and third-year students as they work through cases in Surgery, OB/GYN, Psychiatry, Inpatient Internal Medicine, Neurology, Pediatrics, Outpatient Internal Medicine, and Family Medicine. Three “Core Bridges” within the level foster a multidisciplinary look at the experiences of students.

It is a level of learning no physician ever forgets, a time when a career aspiration starts to feel like an actual career. "This is probably one of the two times in your medical education — the other is the first year of residency — when you feel like you’re integrating knowledge at the fastest pace you can, on your feet," says family medicine clerkship director David Little, M.D.’75. "You’re really at last acting like a physician.”
In one clerkship block, students rotate among pediatrics, outpatient internal medicine, and family medicine experiences. Adetola Fadeyibi spent a week in early February working at Colchester Family Practice. “It’s important for the student to have time with just the patient and themselves,” explains Family Medicine clerkship director David Little, M.D.’75. At top and right, Fadeyibi interviews and examines; above, she compares notes with Associate Professor Candace Fraser, M.D.

Clerkship students experience the practice of neurology in a variety of settings around the main and UHC campuses at Fletcher Allen. At left, prior to meeting with a sleep-disordered patient, Nicholas Weinberg reviews his case file with Hrayr Attarian, M.D., associate professor of neurology and medicine and the director of the Vermont Regional Sleep Center. Below and bottom right, Shams Helminski works with Assistant Professor of Neurology James Boyd, M.D. and a patient. Bottom left, Professor of Neurology Rip Tandan, M.C.R.P., explains an examination detail to Alia Whitehead. The 15-week clerkship integrates blocks of psychiatry, inpatient internal medicine, and neurology, are followed by a one-week interdisciplinary “cognitive bridge.”

**FAMILY MEDICINE**

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Core Bridge 1
- Patient & Student roles/Responsibilities
- Nutritional needs
- Infection control
- Interpreter services
- Information access

Surgery

Core Bridge 2
- Gene-environment interactions
- Addiction
- Substance abuse
- Sleep disorders
- Cognition/Deficit

Psychiatry

Core Bridge 3
- Health care/Financing
- Palliative care
- End-of-life care
- Complementary medicine

Pediatrics

Peds/Int Med/Fam Med Bridge
- Chronic disabilities
- Risk detection/prevention
- Domestic violence
- Advanced interview skills

Family Medicine

The surgery clerkship begins well before a scalpel is ever taken in hand. Maggie Holmes, below left and right with Associate Professor of Surgery Laurence McCaill, M.D., experienced the full scope of pre-operative consultation with members of the Department of Surgery working in the Vermont Cancer Center at Fletcher Allen. McCaill led a multidisciplinary treatment team that examines patients and plans their surgical options. Holmes would later continue into surgery with McCaill. Above and right) Justin Smith observes a surgery and works with Clinical Instructor of Anesthesiology Anthony Fritzler, M.D., Mark Healy, M.D. and Brenda Healy, M.D. performed the surgery.

Part of the clerkship experience is the classic clinical teaching situation, morning rounds at the Vermont Children’s Hospital. Below: Kelly Abbot, Abigail Woodhead, Whitney Bankhurst, and Hijab Zubairi greet a young patient with Clinical Associate Professor Christa Zehle, M.D. and pediatrician Aimee Pollack, M.D. At left, Terry Stein, M.D., visits a young patient and her family with medical student Lyle Genny. Above, Genny spends that afternoon in pediatric radiology session with Associate Professor of Radiology and Pediatrics Jan M. Gallant, M.D.’89.
The UVM College of Medicine takes an integrated approach to teaching medical students about palliative care, death, and dying — a critically important step on the path to becoming a competent, caring physician.

Virginia Fry held up a half-inch cube of bright pink clay and rubbed it back and forth in her hands. In the audience, 75 medical and nursing students played with similarly sized cubes of all colors — green, blue, yellow, white, magenta, and fluorescent orange. “I’m going to demonstrate making worms, so you all leave here with a competency in clay-worm making,” Fry said, drawing smiles and laughs from the crowd. Fry, a Vermont artist, bereavement counselor, and hospice worker, uses clay and many other art supplies when she cares for children who are dying. “When we’ve got so much feeling about what’s going on, it’s very important to use a feeling medium,” she said.

Her presentation, and her approach to offering concrete advice for working with patients, came as part of a series of lunchtime lectures and panel discussions offered for students during Palliative Care Week, an annual event organized by the Palliative Care student interest group at the College of Medicine. This year the series ran through the second full week of January. Students Alycia Horn ’11 and Abby Gross ’11 coordinated this year’s activities with support from the Madison-Deane Initiative — a program of the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties that promotes quality end-of-life care — the Vermont Palliative Care Collaborative and the College’s Department of Family Medicine, the Palliative Care Service at Fletcher Allen Health Care, and the American Medical Student Association. For medical students, the program offered a look at issues they will face throughout their medical education, and throughout their careers.

Palliative care programs focus on relieving pain and other symptoms and improving quality of life in patients with serious or life-threatening illness. Their numbers are increasing in hospitals throughout the country. Palliative care differs from hospice care in that it can be offered at any time during a person’s illness alongside curative therapy, while hospice care is usually offered to terminally ill patients at the last stage of their illness when treatment is no longer an option.
“Our culture still thinks of death and dying as unacceptable,” says Brooks Cowan, Ph.D., M.S.W., a clinical associate professor of medicine, medical sociologist and gerontologist. Although palliative and hospice care programs are on the rise at hospitals and medical schools throughout the country, Cowan says this type of care continues to be underutilized by patients and families. “The greatest barrier to hospice utilization in the U.S. is physician reluctance to refer,” Cowan told the students. “You all play a pivotal role in changing the culture of the next generation of care for people.”

Alicya Horn and Abby Gross’ involvement in the effort stems from their mutual interest in palliative care. They both see a need to raise awareness of end-of-life issues among medical students. “To be a well-rounded doctor is really important,” Gross said. “No matter what you go into, you’re going to come across a situation where you’re going to need to educate yourself or your patients about palliative care. It’s inevitable.”

Added Horn: “Whether I go into Family Medicine or Internal Medicine, I’m going to have to tell people they’re going to die and I want to be able to give them options. I want to be more in touch with what they’re going through.”

Vermont Earns High Marks

Ten years ago, there were almost no palliative care programs in U.S. hospitals, according to a recent report by the Center to Advance Palliative Care, a national organization based at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. Today, 53 percent of hospitals with 50 or more beds have a program. Vermont offers palliative care at all of its acute care hospitals, and was ranked the highest in the nation for access to palliative care programs in the Center’s report.

Fletcher Allen Health Care began its Palliative Care service in 1998 and today performs approximately 700 palliative care consultations in the hospital, said Allan Ramsay, M.D., UVM associate chair and professor of Family Medicine and medical director of Palliative Care. “The more consultations we do, the more exposure students have to palliative care in the hospital,” he said.

As more hospitals offer palliative care services, medical schools and hospitals in end-of-life care, and support for VNA’s next generation of care for people.”

Ramsay’s own involvement with palliative care has grown and evolved as the discipline gained momentum in schools and hospitals. He joined the palliative care service in 2005 when he was tapped to be its leader, after practicing family medicine for more than 25 years. Although Ramsay didn’t originally plan a career in palliative medicine, it was a natural progression after serving as a hospice medical director. “I have always wanted close relationships with my patients, and palliative care provides very intense relationships over a short period of time,” he said.

The advancement of palliative care efforts in the Green Mountain State has been aided since 2007 by the work of the Vermont Palliative Care Collaborative. Funded by more than $325,000 in gifts by an anonymous donor, the group is a cooperative venture by the College of Medicine and UVM’s College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Fletcher Allen Health Care, and the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, as well as individual community members. The group has overseen distribution of funds to support medical student events such as Palliative Care Week, a physician fellowship program at UVM/Fletcher Allen, enhancements in UVM’s nursing programs in end-of-life care, and support for VNA’s community outreach through its Madison-Deane Initiative.

An Integrated Approach

As more hospitals offer palliative care services, medical schools are expanding and increasing instruction in end-of-life care.

“I decided then that even if I didn’t specifically become a palliative care doctor, I wanted to learn more about helping people cope with dying so that I can be there for my patients when the time comes.” —Alicya Horn ’11

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“There’s an understanding in these upcoming generations — curative treatment. Illness regardless of prognosis and with or without making treatment available to patients with serious illness. This approach aims to ensure the highest Care describes palliative care as the medical subspecialty on the October 2008 Journal of Palliative Medicine. The Palliative Care Research Center, which was published the Center to Advance Palliative Care and the National programs in all of its hospitals, according to a report by the VNA, with help from the Vermont Palliative Care Collaborative. MDI’s cooperative efforts have produced teaching and resource materials including, annual conferences and lectures as well as the Guide to Palliative Care in Vermont.

Our medical school has enthusiasm from the students and that’s what drives change,” Ramsay said. “There’s an understanding in these upcoming generations — whether it’s at the fellowship, resident or student level — that this is really important stuff.” Alica Horn’s knowledge of and interest in palliative care stemmed in part from her experience working as a home health aide the summer before she started medical school. She spent time with people who were elderly and found their views on dying to be vastly different from those of her peers. “In many cases, the older individuals just wanted to be comfortable and surrounded by friends and family. They were OK with the fact that eventually they would die, and they just wanted it to be as painless as possible. It made me deal with my own mortality, and I started seeing death as something that could be comfortable, not just sad.”

Horn’s experience as a first-year medical student during the 2008 Palliative Care Week — specifically the panel discussion with family members — also had a big impact. “I decided then that even if I didn’t specifically become a palliative care doctor, I wanted to learn more about helping people cope with dying so that I can be there for my patients when the time comes.”

Lessons Learned
Horn and other students packed into the Case Method Classroom in the Medical Education Center — with standing room only at times — to hear the presentations during the 2009 Palliative Care Week. From learning that people from all walks of life and all socio-economic strata can be underserved when it comes to palliative care, to hearing first-hand accounts from family members who had lost a loved one, to watching a film about the founders of the hospice movement, to finding out how to talk to kids about death, students were exposed to a broad range of topics and perspectives to augment their formal education.

The week also featured a panel of five physicians who shared advice on a subject that often worries students: breaking bad news to patients and families. “Prepare yourselves before you go into the room,” said Zail Berry, M.D., Ph.D., a palliative medicine specialist and UVM clinical associate professor of Medicine. “You want to help ease them into it. I make sure the look on my face matches how serious or sad this is.” Students also heard important perspective from family members. “Telling us what’s going on is really important because we can see it in your face anyway,” said Bob Pasco, whose wife died six months after being diagnosed with esophageal cancer in 2002. “Give it to us straight.”

Rebecca Brooks, a panel member who cared for her late husband before his death from lymphoma, said they received good care at the end of his life but could have used hospice care earlier on. “The doctors were very direct and clear,” she said, further noting, “Another plus, the doctors were able to be genuinely sad when the news was bad.”

Melissa Marotta ’12 was especially interested in the panel discussion about how to deliver bad news. “When I started medical school, they asked you about your greatest fear,” Marotta said. “Giving bad news — that was mine.”

While delivering bad news may never be easy, with guidance and advice from their teachers Marotta and her classmates know they’ll be prepared when the time comes.

Vermont received the highest grade available—an A with 100% compliance — for having palliative care programs in all of its hospitals, according to a report by the Center to Advance Palliative Care and the National Palliative Care Research Center, which was published in the October 2008 Journal of Palliative Medicine. The report’s scores were based on data from the American Hospital Association. The Center to Advance Palliative Care describes palliative care as the medical subspecialty focused on relief of the pain, symptoms, and stress of serious illness. This approach aims to ensure the highest quality of life possible for patients and their families, making treatment available to patients with serious illness regardless of prognosis and with or without curative treatment.

In 1905, when the College of Medicine completed its third home at the corner of Prospect and Pearl streets in Burlington, the main lecture room was named Hall A. For the next 63 years, students such as the members of the Class of 1955 (shown above listening to the legendary Prof. Ellsworth Amidon, M.D.) spent much of their time in the hall. Today’s students take in lectures in a very different facility across campus in the Medical Education Center, but the College’s educational mission of inspiring a lifetime of learning in the service of the patient remains the same. The Hall A magazine section is a meeting place in print for all former students of the College of Medicine.
Recently I received a note from the UVM medical student who is this year’s recipient of the scholarship I endowed a couple of years ago and the first line of the note reads as follows: “As the first in my family to graduate college, I never imagined that I would accomplish so much, but it is only with your help.”

This and the rest of the student’s heartfelt letter evoked many emotions, but the primary one that sticks with me as I make my way around a cold, windy Chicago city is the sense of being a helpful part of something much larger than myself. This letter is my annual membership card to the continuum of medical education at the University of Vermont College of Medicine.

Reading student letters inevitably draws one back to one’s own time in medical school and to thoughts of what it would be like to be in the short white coat today. I believe that the classmates of my generation aren’t test enough of one’s various kinds of intelligence, we now live in an era of combination — economic, interpersonal, political, and social pressures that I would accomplish so much, but it is only with your help.”
Development News

The UVM COM Fund: Strong Support from Alumni, Parents and Friends

Alumni pledged over $114,000 this past semester through the College’s most recent annual fall phonathon, and more alumni, friends, and parents made end-of-calendar year pledges in 2008, bringing the total raised, as we passed the halfway mark for this fiscal year (July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009), to over $350,000 toward a goal of $725,000.

Online giving gave a boost to donations this December, as did gifts made in honor and in memory of loved ones. Young alumni, who are most recently recipients of financial assistance and programming funded through the College of Medicine, make up a significant percentage of donors to the COM Fund—over 10%—an impressive number for graduates who are out of medical school for less than ten years.

Larner Scholars Gather in Thanks

In 1995, Helen and Robert Larner, M.D. ’42, established the Larner Endowment Fund at the College of Medicine. They were guided by a small set of clear goals: to provide significant support for financially needy and meritorious students at the College of Medicine’s alma mater; to help as many medical students as possible, and to create a culture of “giving back.” Today, the Larner Fund is well into its third decade, and the fund has changed to help students even more, by providing loan deferments through residency years, and extended repayment periods. Some of the latest Larner Scholars gathered in mid-January for a group photo to honor the Larner’s efforts.

The Babbott Legacy

The estate of Frank L. Babbott Jr., M.D., M.P.H., a longtime faculty member of the College who died in March of 2008, today, has a sizeable bequest to the College. Dr. Babbott was an emeritus clinical professor of medicine at the College of Medicine at the time of his death. He joined the faculty in 1963, after having practiced in Rochester, N.Y., receiving an M.P.H. degree from the Harvard School of Public Health, and directing field studies in Alaska, Finland, and Greenland. The Babbott Family has a name that is well known to members of the College community. Frank Babbott’s brother, David Babbott, M.D., is an emeritus professor of medicine. News about the bequest’s use will appear in a future Vermont Medicine issue.
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Vermont Geriatrics Conference
April 7, 2009
Capital Plaza
Montpelier, VT

Northeastern Genitourinary Oncology Symposium (Previously the Regional Urologic Cancer Update Symposium) April 17−18, 2009
Hilton Conference Center Burlington, VT

Women’s Health Issues Conference May 6−8, 2009
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center South Burlington, VT

35th Annual Family Medicine Review Course June 9−12, 2009
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center South Burlington, VT

Vermont Summer Pediatric Seminar June 18−21, 2009
The Equinox Manchester, VT

Primary Care Sports Medicine September 23–25, 2009
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center South Burlington, VT

For Information Contact:
University of Vermont Continuing Medical Education 128 Lakeside Avenue Suite 100 Burlington, VT 05405 (802) 655−2292 burlingtoncme@uvm.edu

College of Medicine alumni receive a special 10% discount on all UVM Continuing Medical Education conferences.

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Spring 2009
2009 MAA Awards Announced

At Medical Reunion 2009 in June, ten graduates of the College of Medicine will be honored for their achievements in the clinic, in research, and in life. More detailed information about each of these recipients will appear in future issues of Vermont Medicine.

A. BRADLEY SOULE AWARD

Jacqueline A. Noonan, M.D.’54
Emeritus Professor and former Chair of Pediatrics, University of Kentucky College of Medicine.

DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Cheryl M. Coffin, M.D., M.S.
Professor of Pathology, Vice-Chair for Anatomic Pathology, Emory Georgia Pathology Professor of Investigative Translational Pathology-Translational Research, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

M. D. CLASS NOTES

H. James Wallace III
312 North Lime
St. George, VT 05495
(802) 863-5741
Patricia Ann King, M.D., Ph.D.
1988
Professor of Pathology; Vice-Chair for Anatomic Pathology; Ernest W. Goodpasture Professor of Investigative Translational Pathology-Translational Research; Vanderbilt University School of Medicine

Mary Cushman, M.D.’89
Director; Thrombosis and Hemostasis Program, Fletcher Allen Health Care. Professor of Medicine (Hematology/Oncology) and Pathology, University of Vermont College of Medicine.

Jonathan D. Glass, M.D.’84
Director, MD/ALS Center; Director, MD4Clinic; Director of the Neuromuscular Division of the Department of Neurology, Professor of Neurology & Pathology, Emory University School of Medicine.

SERVICE TO MEDICINE & COMMUNITY AWARD

Michael W. Abdalla, M.D., M.S.
Director of the Prosthetics/Amputee Clinic and Critical Care Neurology, UC Irvine School of Medicine. Orthopedic Surgeon, Orange Orthopedic Medical Group.

Avram R. Kraft, M.D., M.S.
Clinical Associate Professor of Gastrointestinal and Endocrine Surgery, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Director, Center for Compassion in Medical Care at Evanston Northwestern Healthcare.

Burnett S. Rawson, M.D.’79
Urologist (retired) formerly of Pearl River, NY. Former Chief of Surgery, Nyack Hospital in Nyack, New York

RECENT ALUMNI AWARD

Darren Bruce Bean, M.D.’99
Dr. Bean was an emergency medicine physician in Madison, Wisconsin. He was killed on May 10, 2008 in the crash of a Med Flight helicopter that was making a return trip after safely delivering a patient to a hospital in Madison.

Ian Greenwald, M.D.’99
Medical Director, Rural Metro Ambulance North Georgia Operations; Sandy Springs, Ga., and other local fire and rescue departments. Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Emory University School of Medicine.

Eva H. Lathrop, M.D.’99
Family Planning Fellow & Associate Professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Emory University School of Medicine. Clinicalan, Feminist Women’s Health Center, Atlanta, Georgia.

Awardees are honored on the MAA display in Given.

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2000
Jay Edmund Allard
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PCL 475 Box 1757
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Michael Jim Lee
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Naomi R. Leeds
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ntereds@yahoo.org
Malcolm Schilistine writes: “My wife, Lisa, daughter Toshi, and I have been living on the Big Island of Hawaii for over a year now. I am the medical director of the Hospital at Eilo Medical Center. Lisa has become an avid paddler, but I have yet to take advantage of living in paradise. Some of the Class of 2000 have visited and all are welcome!”

2001
Ladan Farhoosmand
341 Biggs Road
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(858) 203-1998
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Joel W. Keenan
Greenwich Hospital
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Joan Louise Monaco
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jonmonaco@aol.com
Anna Murchison writes: “My husband, Jurij, and I welcomed a new member into our family this spring, Alexandra.”

Jennifer Juhl Majersik reports: “Loren, and our two boys (Max, 3, Enmore, 1) and I have moved from Ann Arbor, Mich., to Salt Lake City, Utah. I’ve accepted a position as an assistant professor in neurology and will be researching stroke genetics. Loren will be telecommuting to Michigan for General Motors. Come V’nt! djy@alumni.umich.edu.”

Christina Manning (Scully) and Peter Manning (2003) report: “We are living in Kennebunk with our two kids (Noah, 4, and Kashyn, 21 months) and enjoying life by the sea. We miss the mountains of Vermont, though, and come back to lake and ski when we can.”

Paul Jones writes: “After finishing training in child psychiatry at NYU in 2007 I was hoping to return to Vermont (and even bought a new Subaru Outback to prove it) but alas, the downside of urbanization is urban living. I can’t complain though — 1 index protonol: consultation liaison psychiatry at the University of Chicago’s Comer Children’s Hospital and I am absolutely loving it. I do miss the Green Mountains. If anyone’s visiting Chicago please get in touch paulmcm@uic.edu.”

2002
Jonathan Vihl Mai
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Kerry Lee Landry
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Maureen C. Sarle
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58471225@gmail.com
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Julia L Alosi
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Richard J. Parent
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William C. Eaward
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Deborah Rabenowitz
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Scott Millay
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Ashley Zucker
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azzucker@uvm.edu

Two Lectureships Inaugurated
Honing the Memory of a Neurological Pioneer
Faculty, friends, students, and alumni of the College gathered on November 13, 2008 to honor the memory of the founding chairman of the Department of Neurology with the inaugural George A. Schumacher Lectureship. Dr. Schumacher became the first professor of neurology at the College in 1950, and chaired the Department of Neurology from 1969 to his retirement in 1978. The focus of his academic and clinical scholarship was multiple sclerosis, and the Schumacher Center is still widely used in establishing diagnosis.
Fred D. Lubin, M.D., professor of neurology at New York’s Mount Sinai School of Medicine gave the inaugural lecture on “New Horizons in Treating MS: A Different Take on Holism.” The event was made possible by a gift from the Schumacher family. Dr. Schumacher’s son and daughter-in-law, Jeff Schumacher, M.D., and Caja Schumacher, M.D., are both members of the College’s class of 1974, and his granddaughters Erika and Heidi are members of the classes of 2008 and 2010, respectively.

Wernan Endows Examination of Medical Professionalism
A combination of current and estate gifts totaling more than $2,500,000 from Martin Wernan, M.D., retired St. Albans surgeon and clinical associate professor of surgery at the College, supports the annual Martin H. Wennar, M.D. Lectureship in Professionalism at UVM, as well as related educational activities that encourage professionalism among physicians and other health professionals. The inaugural Martin H. Wernan, M.D. Lectureship in Professionalism was held Thursday, January 8 in the Davis Auditorium in the Medical Education Center at the University of Vermont/ Fletcher Allen Health Care. Featured speaker Mark Ferguson, M.D., Professor of Thoracic Surgery at the University of Chicago, discussed “Surgical Professionalism: Unmasking the Hidden Curriculum through Improved Clinical Decisions.”

Dr. Wernan, who practiced general surgery in St. Albans from 1976 until his retirement in 2002, received his medical degree from Albany Medical College. A champion of formalized quality improvement initiatives in the community hospital setting, Dr. Wernan was responsible for introducing gastrointestinal endoscopy and minimally invasive surgery to Northwestern Medical Center in St. Albans. Dr. Wernan served as President of the Franklin County Medical Society and served on the Board of Governors of the American College of Surgeons. He founded and currently chairs the Martin H. Wernan, M.D. Health Education Scholarship Fund, which, since 1980, has provided scholarship aid to Franklin County, WT area students entering health-related fields. He has participated in teaching medical students at UVM since 1996.

(Upper, left) Fred D. Lubin, M.D. gave the first Schumacher lecture. (Upper, right) Schumacher family members Heidi, Caja, and Jeff with Duan Minish and Chair of Neurology Robert Hamill, M.D.

(Upper, left) David McDaid, M.D., Mark Ferguson, M.D., Martin Wernan, M.D., and Carol Innoviss at the inaugural Wennar Lecture. (Upper, right) Dr. Ferguson spoke on surgical professionalism.

(Upper, left) Fred D. Lubin, M.D. gave the first Schumacher lecture. (Upper, right) Schumacher family members Heidi, Caja, and Jeff with Duan Minish and Chair of Neurology Robert Hamill, M.D.

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Obituaries

Nathaniel Gould, M.D., M’57
Dr. Gould, an internationally renowned orthopaedic surgeon, died in Birmingham, Ala., on November 1, 2008. He was 95. Dr. Gould had been a resident of Brookside Place in Homewood for the past three years. A native of Barre, Vermont, he entered general practice in the farming community of Barnet, from his graduation from the College of Medicine in 1937 until May, 1941. After enlistment in the U.S. Army prior to Pearl Harbor, he was initially stationed in Iceland with the occupation force of the shipping lanes of the Lend-Lease program to England. In 1943, he was reassigned to the chief medical officer at Manchester Orthopaedics at the 168th Station Hospital. He returned to the United States in 1945 and resumed his practice to St. Johnsbury, Vermont until 1950, when he obtained his formal residency training in New York and Boston. After practicing at the Massachusetts General, he became the Chief of Orthopaedics at the Brockton Veterans Administration Hospital in Massachusetts, until 1952, at which time he returned to Michigan to pick his practice.

Ethan V. Howard Jr., M.D., M’64
Dr. Howard died on October 8, 2008, in his home in Bow, N.H. He was born Jan. 12, 1921, in Burlington, Vt., and graduated from Burlington High School, Class of 1939. He earned his bachelor’s science degree from the University of Vermont in 1941 and his M.D. from the University of Vermont, College of Medicine, in 1944. He served his internship at the Bishop DuboisGoodstrud Hospital in Burlington. After his military service, he served a year residency at Elliot Hospital and went on to establish a private practice in Manchester, N.H. He closed his practice in 1971 and served at the VA Hospital until retirement. Dr. Howard was a member of Manchester and Hillsborough County Medical Societies, the Manchester Board of Health and served on the board of directors for the Salvation Army. He was a past president of Elliot Hospital Staff in the 1960s, and was a former trustee of the Manchester Visiting Nurse Association.

George Stedman Haard M.D., M’64
Dr. Haard died on November 30, 2008, at Eisenhower Memorial Hospital in Rancho Mirage, Calif. He was born on August 30, 1922 in Wasington, Vt. After graduating from the College of Medicine in 1946, he was drafted into the Army and served as a flight surgeon in West Point. Following his discharge, he completed an internship at the Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, Calif. He practiced medicine for 62 years, attending to patients in Pasadena, Beverly Hills, and ultimately Palm Springs. He retired from practice at age 85.

Anthony L. Danza, M.D., M’49
Dr. Danza, a longtime resident of New Rochelle, N.Y. died on November 2, 2008. He was a retired general and thoracic surgeon.

Louis Fishman, M.D., M’50
Dr. Fishman died Oct. 6, 2008, at his home in Auburn, Maine. He was born in Detroit, Mich., on March 24, 1922. In the 1930s, he moved with his family to Burlington, Vt. Educated in Burlington schools, he graduated from Burlington High School, Class of 1941, and the University of Vermont, College of Medicine in 1944. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy as a communications officer, and was discharged in 1946. In 1950, he graduated from the University of Vermont College of Medicine, and after his internships and surgical residencies opened a solo practice in thoracic surgery in Lewiston. Board certified in both general and thoracic surgery, he was on the staff of Central Maine Medical Center and the courtesy staff at St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center. He eventually served as both the president of the medical staff and as director of surgery at CMCMC, retiring in 1986.

Norman D. Gauvreau, M.D., M’50
Dr. Gauvreau died on Sept. 22, 2008 in Portland, Maine, where he had recently moved. He was born on Jan. 16, 1921, in Lewiston, Maine. During his military service, he served in World War II, he flew over 100 combat missions in the Solomon Islands and Philippine Islands, flying F4U Corsairs with his flight squadron. After the war, he returned to Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida, where he served as a flight instructor. From 1946 to 1950, he flew P-47 fighter aircraft with the Vermont Air National Guard in Burlington. He was later utilized the distinction of serving as a commissioned officer in all four branches of the Armed Services: Marine, Air Force, Army, and Air Force Reserve. He served as a fighter pilot, Air Force Reserve fighter pilot, Air Force reserve fighter pilot, Navy, and as a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

He graduated from Bowdoin College and entered the University of Vermont School of Medicine. From 1956 to 1958, he interrupted his general medical practice in Lewiston, Maine to fellowship in obstetrics and gynecology at Cambridge City Hospital in Cambridge, Mass. He returned to Lewiston and reestablished his medical practice with a specialty in obstetrics and gynecology. During his practice, he served as chief of obstetrics and gynecology at St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston, was on the courtesy staff at Central Maine Medical Center, and was designated the Maine Section Chairman of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. He retired from medical practice in 1990.

A. Frederick Friedman, M.D., M’73
Dr. Friedman died at his home in Norwell, Mass., on November 21, 2008. He was 91. Dr. Friedman was a retired internal medicine physician.

David W. Faggell, M.D., M’58
Dr. Faggell died on October 23, 2008 after a lengthy illness. He was 76. Dr. Faggell lived in Lynnfield and Chelmsford, Mass., and practiced surgery for many years.

Artemas J.W. Packard, M.D., M’60
Dr. Packard, known as “Jim” to his friends and family, died at his home in Plaistow, N.H. on Oct. 31, 2008. He was 75. Born in Hanover, N.H., Dr. Packard received his R.S. from the University of Vermont in 1956, and his M.D. from the College of Medicine in 1960. He served in the U.S. Army as a Lieutenant Colonel and Flight Surgeon during World War II. He started Packard’s career focused on practicing family medicine, concluding with a private practice in Plaistow, with additional endeavors in forensic as well as aviation medicine.

Otis P. Tibbetts, M.D., M’67
Dr. Tibbetts died suddenly on September 3, 2008 at his home in Auburn, Maine. He was 72. Dr. Tibbetts was graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1955. That year, a small group of cadets sought commissions in the Marine Corps. Dr. Tibbetts joined in this manner since 1914. He was one of seven marine officers commissioned June 3, 1956, after graduating from the U.S. Marine Corps, he decided to pursue a career in medicine. He graduated from the University of Vermont College of Medicine, and interned at Maine Medical Center in Portland the following year. Deciding to go into anesthesiology, he completed his residency at the University of North Carolina in 1967, and completed his board certification in anesthesiology.

Dr. Halpern was appointed a professor of the new medical school at the University of Vermont in 1990, founded Living Systems Instrumentation, where he continued to work until only a few weeks before his death. As a person, he was a gentle, thoughtful man with a unique sense of humor and an observant eye. He revered his wife’s listlessness and ironies, loved to dance, and was a good friend to many. With his passing, the world has lost an original thinker, an outstanding scientist, and a fine man.

— Prof. George Codd, Ph.D.

Peter A. Felder, M.D., M’59
Dr. Felder died in early November, 2008. He practiced radiology for many years in Waukegan, Ill.

Timothy J. Warga, M.D., M’74
Dr. Warga died on Sept. 1, 2008, the day before his 61st birthday, at the Waukegan OUTPAC Center. As a long time Eyoton, Ill., resident, he will be remembered as a dedicated physician and healer, pioneer in integrative medicine, spiritual leader, storyteller, gamer, and paddling enthusiast, and a resonant voice for the environment. He died as he sailed finished his residency in medicine at the Illinois College of Medicine, continuing his practice for anesthesiology.

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Raymond F. Kuhlmann, M.D.
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Faculty

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January 20, 2009
12:07 p.m.

Medical students and their family members gather in the student lounge to watch the swearing-in of the nation’s 44th president.

photograph by Raj Chawla

Your Generosity Makes a Real Difference

Though the thank-you notes are addressed to Ruth Seeler, M.D.’62 in her role as Medical Alumni Association president, the many cards that arrive each semester from grateful students are really written to the hundreds of alumni and friends who have supported the College of Medicine Fund. These students have just begun the long, hard journey to becoming a physician. They’re grateful, not only for the chance to attend medical school, but also for all the acts of generosity every year that help provide them with financial help along the way.

As Dr. Seeler notes, it is this important assistance that, in a very real way, helps transform the desire to care into the ability to care for many graduates.

For more information on how you can support scholarships through the UVM College of Medicine Fund, contact Sarah Keblin:
(802) 656-0802 | sarah.keblin@uvm.edu

University of Vermont College of Medicine
Medical Development & Alumni Relations Office
(802) 656-6014 | medical.giving@uvm.edu
www.med.uvm.edu/giving
In the five decades since he received his medical degree, Richard G. Caldwell, M.D. ’60 has helped countless patients in need of the healing hands of a skilled surgeon. As a family, the Caldwells have offered a helping hand to many others through their philanthropy.

That commitment to service led them to fund the Richard G. and Carol Caldwell Breast Center in Park Ridge, Ill. It has also led the Caldwells to be consistent donors to the College of Medicine, in recognition of the important role education played in Dr. Caldwell’s successful career. The Richard G. Caldwell, M.D. Family Scholarship is an endowed fund that will assist medical students in perpetuity on their paths to becoming physicians.

For more information about how you can support the College of Medicine please contact the Medical Development and Alumni Relations Office.

University of Vermont College of Medicine
Medical Development & Alumni Relations Office
(802) 656-4014 | medical.giving@uvm.edu
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