Military Roots Run Deep in the School of Medicine

STRONG STAR: A Beacon of Hope for PTSD

Alan Peterson, PhD
Road to War a Path to Discovery

Ex-Military Take on Leadership Roles at the School: Page 10
Welcome to the School of Medicine’s FUTURE magazine. The theme of this issue is about an affiliation that has played a major role in our history as well as that of San Antonio: our military partnerships. San Antonio is known as "Military City USA" for good reasons. The first US Army presence in Texas was established in 1849; just four years after Texas became a state.

The presence grew and Brooke Army Medical Center opened in 1938 at Fort Sam Houston. Brigadier General Roger Brooke, MD, for whom it was named, graduated from medical school in 1900. His focus was infectious disease and tuberculosis, and his dedication to the community and its healthcare was the reason this distinctive name endured. Wilford Hall Medical Center is named for Major General Wilford F. Hall, MD, who pioneered aero-medical evacuation as a science and a strategy for saving lives. These organizations have been reorganized into combined Army and Air Force units with inpatient facilities in Fort Sam Houston, now called the San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC), which includes Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC), and the Wilford Hall outpatient facilities located at Lackland Air Force Base.

Our partnership with the military dates back to the beginning of the School of Medicine over 40 years ago and has grown each year since. To say our relationship is symbiotic is to understate the breadth of all that we do. The San Antonio Uniformed Services Health Education Consortium (SAUSHEC) is the San Antonio arm for military graduate medical education (GME). It serves as the organization for physician specialty training across all branches of the military. As part of the Consortium, the Health Science Center as a whole, and specifically the School of Medicine, are integrated at many levels that come together to achieve their goals and ours.

We have research grants and joint programs with the Department of Defense. There are physicians, students, and residents sharing or trading rotations at hospitals and clinics. We share teaching conferences, Grand Rounds and related training activities in many departments. Most importantly, we partner in patient care for complex and conventional cases not just at the Audie L. Murphy Veteran’s Hospital – but in nearly all clinical areas, on a physician-to-physician level, on a weekly, if not daily basis.

One of the most important aspects of this relationship is the large number of ex-military members we have on the full-time faculty and staff. Some are still in the reserves and may be called to serve or be deployed at any moment. Many have been deployed more than once to Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Vietnam, Bosnia, and Kuwait. As you will read, some, like Alan Peterson, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry, have come dangerously close to becoming patients.

On our faculty, we have retired Colonels, Captains, Majors, Sergeants and even veterans of the specials forces, including the Chair of Rehabilitation Medicine, Nicholas Walsh, MD, who served on SEAL Team 1. He is one of the few among our faculty who saw combat. Until we asked, we had no idea of the extent of their wonderful service in their military careers. Some who served in very high ranks chose not to identify themselves for our article, but their work and leadership is known and felt. These outstanding faculty and staff members humbly wear the same “uniform” at the School, whether it is a UT Medicine coat, a lab coat, hospital scrubs or a coat and tie. I apologize that we do not have room to include every single person with military service in this issue.

We salute our former and current military partners – on and off campus – for their service to our Country and to our School. And we also salute them for their service to our patients whom they treat or work for in some capacity every single day. In the same spirit of shared commitment – by Dr. Roger Brooke and Dr. Wilford Hall – whose dedication and work saved and changed so many lives, I say thank you to all our military partners.

Sincerely,

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Dean, School of Medicine
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Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) 10th Anniversary Celebration Event
Look for details on the School of Medicine website for the Regional Academic Health Center’s 10th Anniversary celebration on June 14, 2012.
The Military and the School of Medicine:

**Strong bonds lead to great outcomes for research, education, patient care.**

By Karen Kolivosky

San Antonio has long been known as “Military City, USA.” With the five-year expansion of the medical complex at Fort Sam Houston nearing completion, along with the growth of the medical center, our City is also becoming known as “Medical City, USA.” For the School of Medicine, which has forged strong ties with the military the past 40 years, the growth of the military’s medical presence here means even more opportunity for collaboration in research, patient care and education.

The proximity to a national military medical center offers a distinct advantage to the School’s faculty and students, says Martin Schwacha, PhD, a Professor in the School’s Department of Surgery.

“It is a unique opportunity that other universities would not have. We have something here that Duke University and Harvard do not have,” he says. “It is something the University is starting to take advantage of and build on.”

Partnerships and joint programs with the military already permeate nearly every department of the School. Together, the military medical community and the School create a brain trust that puts San Antonio at the forefront of healthcare innovation in many areas.

The extensive concentration of military medical assets at Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) includes the new San Antonio Military Medical Center (SAMMC). Once fully opened, this new hospital will be the largest inpatient facility within the Department of Defense. The complex also includes
a world-renowned Burn Center and Level 1 Trauma Center – the Defense Department’s only such facilities in the mainland U.S. The U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research (USAISR) is the only Defense Department research facility focused on traumatic injury, with laboratory, translational and clinical research capabilities.

In turn, the military benefits from the School and the entire UT Health Science Center’s breadth and depth of expertise in a variety of fields, as well as its significant research capabilities that include access to diverse patient populations.

**Patient Care Advances**

Collaboration between the School and the military has created a long and distinguished track record of medical innovation. The talent and resources that the two institutions share has put San Antonio at the forefront of advances in patient care.

The most famous example is the Palmaz flexible stent that transformed cardiac care in the 1990s and is now implanted in more than one million patients annually. It resulted from teamwork between Julio Palmaz, MD, former Chief of Angiography and Special Procedures in the School’s Department of Radiology, and Richard Schatz, MD, a cardiologist at BAMC.

Less well known is the fact that residents of Texas and soldiers fighting abroad both benefit first from the world-class trauma care and research that takes place here through both the School and the military.

Patients also benefit from academic/military collaboration by the relatively quick application of discoveries made in a laboratory to patient populations, Schwacha says.

“If there are advances made in military medicine which have applications in the civilian sector, the potential exists that we might be able to institute those changes more quickly because of our relationship than academic medicine as a whole,” Schwacha says. "By developing these close relationships, you are in a position to do clinical trials connected to military advances more quickly than other institutions would be able to.”

**Education: GME and More**

One of Schwacha’s educational duties at the School is leading the research resident’s program in the Department of Surgery. It is one of 54 accredited residency and fellowship programs offered here and another example of how the military and the School have partnered to give medical residents a complete training experience.

Residents from military medical schools come through the School for a variety of specialty rotations at University Hospital, the Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital and CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System. Some School residents rotate within the military facilities to get required experience as well.

This exchange, while in effect in various forms for years, became more structured around the mid-1990s, says Lois Bready, MD, Professor of Anesthesiology and Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education. At that time, the military and the School began to integrate some residency programs. The School’s Psychiatry program absorbed the Air Force’s Psychiatry program; a relationship that continues to this day. The nephrology fellowship and a residency in nuclear medicine are also joint ventures between the military and the School.

The partnership adds value to residency training by expanding the

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Back in San Antonio from his third deployment to Iraq with news that he would deploy to Afghanistan in 2011, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Sean Brack suddenly felt like his life was falling apart. He could only describe the feeling in metaphor. “I was standing at the top of a deep slope looking down, and I couldn’t see the bottom. I knew I was going to fall; I just didn’t know how far,” he said.

Living with traumatic memories from his first tour in 2003, he would cope by pushing those memories out of his mind and moving forward with his wife’s encouragement. However, like an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 veterans of our nation’s current wars, he soon found himself overwhelmed by symptoms of one of its signature wounds: posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. “I was angry about anything having to do with the Army,” Brack recalls. “I didn’t trust my chain of command or anyone around me. I started taking preventive measures for things that generally don’t happen in America, like watching out for IEDs (improvised explosive devices) while driving to work. Even at home, which I saw as my ‘safe place,’ I was withdrawn and didn’t talk much. I lost my motivation and energy, and I was miserable all the time. Finally, I started to entertain thoughts of suicide.”

Right help, right place, right time
Brack knew he needed to seek help, but it was not easy to find. The process was confusing and unproductive, until he walked into the Resiliency Campus at Fort Hood. There, Brack saw a behavioral health specialist who diagnosed him with PTSD and referred him to STRONG STAR.

STRONG STAR, or the South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma and Resilience, is a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional research consortium under the leadership of The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio. Funded by the Department of Defense through the Office of Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, it brings together the skills of civilian, military, and Veterans Administration (VA) experts at more than 20 collaborating institutions. All are working together to prevent PTSD from becoming a chronic problem for a new generation of war veterans.

In that effort, STRONG STAR is taking the leading, evidence-based PTSD therapies from the civilian world; tailoring them to meet the unique needs of the military, and evaluating their efficacy with combat-related PTSD and comorbid conditions, such as depression, insomnia, alcohol dependence, and chronic...
pain. Complementary biological and epidemiological studies are looking at the root physiological causes of PTSD—and even the biological effects of PTSD treatment—to enlighten new and improved ways of preventing and treating the disorder.

"Civilian studies have proven two PTSD treatments to be effective," said STRONG STAR Consortium Director Alan Peterson, PhD, a retired lieutenant colonel and psychologist with the U.S. Air Force who now serves as Professor and Chief of the Division of Behavioral Medicine in the School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry.

"Data from civilian studies shows that in 80 percent of cases, PTSD patients can be treated to the point of recovery with Prolonged Exposure (PE) or Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)," Dr. Peterson explained. "We believe these same therapies will be effective with combat-related PTSD. But the problem is that no one has ever studied them with the military before, and no one has looked at the best way to deliver them to make them most effective for active-duty service members. STRONG STAR is the first to do that."

Among STRONG STAR’s 14 research projects are several treatment studies that adapt and apply these two treatments to meet the needs of active-duty service members or recently discharged veterans.

These studies are evaluating:

- the delivery of individual versus group treatment
- traditional treatment over 10 weeks vs. condensing treatment into two weeks
- the delivery of therapy in a primary care setting, where there may be less fear of stigma
- combining PTSD treatment and couples therapy to help service members and their spouses
- combining psychological therapy with medication
- and delivery of psychological treatment in theater in Afghanistan.

Besides the study based in Afghanistan, all of these clinical trials are being conducted in South Texas, which has the largest concentration of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom veterans in the country. They are made possible by the collaboration of Darnall Army Hospital at Fort Hood; Brooke Army Medical Center and Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio; and the South and Central Texas VA hospitals in San Antonio and Waco. Study outcomes are expected to guide future DoD and VA treatment policies and practices.

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Road to War Also the Path to Recovery:
Faculty member’s tour of duty leads to help for service members with PTSD

By Julie Collins

On Sept. 11, 2004, at the start of his second deployment in support of our nation’s war on terror, Lt Col Alan Peterson, PhD, and his comrades were greeted with an unwanted 9/11 anniversary gift from the enemy: mortar and rocket attacks that caused many casualties, including Senior Airman Brian Kolfage, a young Air Force Security Forces member who was also on his second deployment.

“He had just stepped out of his tent, and a mortar landed right at his feet,” recalled Dr. Peterson, who had deployed with a group of medics from Wilford Hall Medical Center to establish the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad, Iraq. “The explosion almost severed both of his legs and one of his hands. Dozens of people came running out, providing first aid, pulling off boot laces and putting on tourniquets….

Within 15 minutes, he was being treated by some of the best surgeons in the world, who saved his life … but that was something that we all took very hard, and it left many of the first responders pretty traumatized.”

Dr. Peterson now serves as chief of the Division of Behavioral Medicine in the UT Health Science Center Psychiatry Department. The events that day and what happened to this young airman were indicative of how this tour would go and why posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has become a signature wound of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation New Dawn.

“[The forward operating base at] Balad was affectionately known as ‘Mortar-itaville,’” said Dr. Peterson. “It’s a large installation; it had about 30,000 people there at the time. Its size made it an easy target, so almost every day there were mortar attacks.”

Besides attacks on the installation itself, hundreds of convoys a day went out from this supply depot, subjecting themselves to ambushes and to attacks with improvised explosive devices, or IEDs. Home to an Air Force theater hospital and a staging area for aeromedical evacuations, the Balad base saw patients with the worst of injuries; service members in Iraq who needed extended treatment that could not be handled in theater were sent there for evaluation and evacuation. When mass casualties came in, particularly in November 2004, during the Battle of Fallujah, all hands were on

Alan L. Peterson, PhD, ABPP
Professor and Chief of the Division of Behavioral Medicine in the Department of Psychiatry
Deputy Chair for Military Collaborations
Director of the STRONG STAR Multidisciplinary PTSD Research Consortium.

Peterson in Iraq in 2004.
deck to help.

“When there was a mass casualty, anybody who wasn’t involved in emergency room or trauma work became manpower,” Dr. Peterson explained. “It became your job to head out to the helicopter landing pad and help move injured patients from the helicopters, transport them to the emergency department, and then stay there with them and help the team do whatever was needed while they were providing care for these patients. So everybody got exposed to patients with traumatic injuries, including burns, facial injuries, amputations and other severe injuries.”

Combat support hospitals also treat enemy fighters injured in battle in accordance with rules of the Geneva Convention, so some hospital workers found themselves caring for hostile insurgent patients.

For Dr. Peterson, a psychologist, and his team of six mental health care personnel assigned to the hospital, this deployment was one that called on every skill they had. They treated service members who came to the mental health clinic seeking care; made daily rounds to visit personally with each patient at the hospital; made daily rounds to check in with staff members at the hospital to see how people were holding up and “normalize” having a conversation with a mental health professional; provided unit consultation, or targeted outreach, to units on base that had the highest-stress jobs; and met with patients sent to Balad for psychiatric evaluation and potential aeromedical evacuation for psychiatric disorders.

To help prevent aeromedical evacuation of psychiatric patients suffering from combat stress but who wanted to remain in theater, Dr. Peterson utilized his training in a type of therapy called Prolonged Exposure. This treatment is known to be effective for various stress-related disorders in civilian patients, so Dr. Peterson quickly tried to adapt it to treat combat-related PTSD in a deployed setting. “To the best of my knowledge, this had never been done before, so I needed to figure out how many sessions would be needed, what length the sessions should be, how to compress the full treatment into a more limited number of sessions, and those sorts of things,” he recalled.

He had great success. “Basically, in almost every case, the outcomes were very good,” Dr. Peterson said. “Within two or three weeks, after three or four sessions, people were saying, ‘I’m good to go.’ It was remarkable.”

Dr. Peterson and one of his colleagues, Lt Col Jeffrey Cigrang, eventually published an article in a scientific journal about their success with Prolonged Exposure, but more evidence was needed to show other military psychologists that this treatment could be delivered safely and effectively in theater.

When Dr. Peterson retired from the Air Force and joined the Psychiatry Department faculty at the School of Medicine, he started submitting research grants to support PTSD research. Soon afterwards, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced a great new opportunity: Its Office of Congressionally Directed Research Programs, through a new Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury Research Program, was funding national consortia to advance prevention and treatment of combat-related PTSD and traumatic brain injury.

“So I took what I was used to doing in the military, which was finding a civilian expert to collaborate with the military on research important to the DoD, and I applied that on a much grander scale,” Dr. Peterson said.

Again, he was successful. In 2008, the DoD awarded approximately $35 million to STRONG STAR, the South Texas Research Organizational Network Guiding Studies on Trauma and Resilience, the country’s largest PTSD research consortium and the only one working with active-duty military. Today, its 14 separate research projects are run by an expert team of military, civilian, and Veterans Administration (VA) investigators who are developing and evaluating the most effective early interventions possible for combat-related PTSD. Studies are based in South Texas at Fort Hood, Brooke Army Medical Center, Wilford Hall Medical Center, and the South and Central Texas VA hospitals.

“We’re seeking to develop treatments that will allow us to treat combat-related PTSD to the point of remission, but many people believe that PTSD cannot be cured,” said Dr. Peterson. “But anything less would be a disservice to our troops. Just as a cancer researcher wants to cure cancer, not simply help with the symptoms, we want to treat PTSD to the point of recovery. And the reality is, we have a good chance of doing that.”

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Leading by Example: Ex-military Take on Leadership Roles at the School of Medicine

By Karen Kolivosky

There is a common thread that connects several leaders within the School of Medicine: many of them started out as physicians in the military. While different paths have led them from the military to an academic setting, they all bring a unique combination of medical expertise and military-bred leadership skills to the School.

ROSENDE: NAVY CAPTAIN

At age 18, Carlos Rosende committed to a 26-year career in the military to pursue his dream of becoming a physician. He went into the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis right after high school. He was one of 16 students out of 960 who were permitted to take pre-med courses. Since they were also to be prepared to be commissioned as line officers, they took premed courses on top of all of the required military and engineering classes. Much of his training focused on leadership skills.

"Even as a midshipman at the Naval Academy, we not only took formal classes in leadership, but we were put in positions to assess situations, make decisions, move on and get critiqued on how we did it," he says. "As we went through the four years there, we took on more and more responsibility for junior people."

He went to medical school at the University of Miami on a Navy scholarship, which required him to be on active duty for his four years of medical school, followed by an internship at the Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, Virginia, then a year as a general medical officer on a warship, and then a three-year residency in ophthalmology at National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland. He returned to Portsmouth on three-year orders.

His career took a leap forward when the head of his department decided to leave the Navy. Rosende was only out of his residency a couple of years, but was still the next senior physician in the department, so he was appointed to acting head of the department. After improving the department, the commanding officer of the hospital kept him on. He spent 13 years total in Portsmouth, with 11 of those years as department head, and ultimately was promoted to Captain.

By then, he was in his mid-40s and wondering what to do with the rest of his life. In the Navy, his career would progress on to other executive leadership positions, but his real love then was clinical work. He decided to retire, figuring he would go into private practice in Virginia. A friend told him that the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the School of Medicine was looking for a physician to set up and run the eye clinic at the Texas Diabetes Institute in San Antonio. He came to visit and was hooked.

"I liked what I saw, and I was intrigued by the position he was offering. With all the eye complications that diabetics get, to have an opportunity to train residents and be involved in research, that sounded like more fun than just being in private practice," Rosende says.

He took the job, becoming the first director of the Ophthalmology Clinic at TDI. He began to take on additional roles, becoming Residency Director for the department. When the Chair of the department left, Rosende served as the Interim Chair for Ophthalmology for nine months, becoming permanent Chair of the Department in January 2007. In November 2010, he became Vice Dean of Clinical Affairs and
Executive Director of UT Medicine San Antonio. Rosende now oversees the entire clinical enterprise and all patient care delivered through the School of Medicine. It’s a role that Rosende has been preparing for throughout his career.

From day one in the military, you are taught formally or informally how to get people to do a task, how to create a team, how to identify a mission, how to accomplish a mission, how to determine whether you accomplished it or not,” he says. “Some call it management, some call it leadership. Both are components of the same job. Management is managing resources and assets. Leadership is when you inspire people, when you get people to do the job, and you are taught that early on.”

THOMPSON: REPORTING FOR DUTY

When Ian Thompson became the chair of the Department of Urology, he was wearing his Army uniform.

The Health Science Center sought Thompson out when the Department of Urology needed new leadership. The School asked the Surgeon General to assign Thompson to the Chair of Urology in October of 1998.

“So, wearing a uniform, I went to the Health Science Center and became Chair of Urology,” he says. “It was most unusual, you don’t see that very often. This would not have occurred if there had not been a close relationship between the University and the military.”

A little more than a year after reporting for duty at the Department of Urology, Thompson retired from the U.S. Army as a Colonel after 24 years.

Thompson stepped down as Chair to take on the directorship for the Cancer Therapy and Research Center. He is also a world-renowned cancer researcher who leads groundbreaking studies in the treatment of prostate cancer.

The West Point graduate went to medical school at Tulane University, and then headed to San Antonio for his residency. After a fellowship in urologic oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, he returned to San Antonio where he spent the rest of his military career, except for a deployment to Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

MAYES: SPECIALIST IN DEMAND

Thomas Mayes attended Baylor University on an Air Force ROTC scholarship. From there, he attended Georgetown University Medical School in
Leadership Continued...

Washington DC, on scholarship with the commitment to serve in the Air Force upon graduation. He estimates about 80 percent of his class paid for medical school the same way.

Mayes moved to San Antonio in 1984 for a three-year residency program in pediatrics at Wilford Hall Medical Center. At that time, the Air Force made Wilford Hall a global hub for pediatric care. "If a child had a complex illness and they were in Japan or Europe, that child would be flown to San Antonio," Mayes says. "It was a wonderful training experience. I got to see a lot of different things and also got to take care of regular healthy kids as part of the training program."

Mayes also experienced innovations in pediatrics that were taking place at Wilford Hall, such as the subspecialty of neonatology and the ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation) program, a heart/lung bypass for babies with critical illness. The first ECMO done west of the Mississippi was done at Wilford Hall in the mid-1980s, and Mayes, a young doctor at the time, was able to participate in it.

The experience sparked an interest in pediatric critical care medicine. Mayes received fellowship training in the subspecialty at Texas Children’s Hospital in Houston.

He then returned to Wilford Hall as a pediatric critical care specialist, a specialty so new that Mayes was the only one in the U.S. Air Force with the training and certification in the field. Mayes treated children across a spectrum of critical illnesses, from heart surgery, kidney failure, motor vehicle accidents, drowning and other traumatic illnesses and injuries.

As the lone specialist in his field, Mayes cared for children from all over the country, including local children who needed services that were not available anywhere else in town.

"That was really some of my first real connection with the civilian medical community and also UT and Santa Rosa’s Children’s Hospital," he says.

The School called him in March 1993 asking for help on an intensive care crisis at University Hospital. He became more involved with patient care at University Hospital, which led to his recruitment to the School. He retired from the Air Force as a Major.

“When my time was up in terms of obligation to the military, I just changed working addresses from Wilford Hall to the School of Medicine,” Mayes says.

Mayes began developing a pediatric critical care program at the Department of Pediatrics. After leading that effort for seven years, he went into the Dean’s Office as an Assistant/Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs from 2000-2004, then he oversaw UT Medicine from 2001-2002, and became Chair of Pediatrics in 2002. He also served as Interim Dean of the School in 2005-2006, and once again took on the
responsibility of running UT Medicine from 2009-2010.

Shortly after Mayes started at the School, he was asked to help change the model for intensive care at CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital and to plan an academic children’s hospital there, ultimately leading to a free-standing children’s hospital.

In addition to serving as the Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the School, Mayes is also Physician-In-Chief of CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital. He typically spends mornings there and afternoons at the School.

“The thing that I think was a tremendous benefit to me, and then ultimately, to what I’ve done at the School has been the leadership skills you pick up in the military,” Mayes says. “I will credit my military experience with the fact that if someone asks you to do something, you do it.”

Though some models have changed — for example, the Air Force no longer brings children here from around the world — the San Antonio community is still well-served by strong connections between the military and civilian medical communities, Mayes says. Often, military physicians work in civilian hospitals like CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Children’s Hospital to maintain their proficiency while providing a needed subspecialty to patients.

“I think that when you get right down to it, although we work in different systems, we provide healthcare. We’re physicians, so when a need arises, we figure out how to do it,” he says.

WALSH: SEAL TEAM ONE
Nicolas Walsh, MD, has a unique connection to his VA Hospital patients. “I understand people with traumatic brain injury. I understand people with loss. I understand people with massive injuries. I understand residual injuries, residual sequelae, residual limitations of severe injury,” he says. “That’s why I like working at the VA. It’s pretty easy to relate to veterans.”

Walsh is a veteran himself, a former Navy Seal who served two tours of duty in Vietnam.

He graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1969, taking a commission in the Navy, and soon began underwater demolition training. After that, he went to Navy SEAL Team One for training, a process he describes in the forward of the book Element of Surprise by Darryl Young, which Walsh says, is the first book about Vietnam written by a SEAL.

Within the year, he joined his platoon, trained and went to Vietnam. His job there was to lead commando operations. On his first year-long tour, Walsh was severely wounded during a raid on a weapons factory. A command-detoned 105mm howitzer exploded in a well 15 feet away, pummeling one side of his body with shrapnel and leaving lingering injuries ranging from hearing and vision loss to
future traumatic brain injury. Three months after he came home, he was sent back to lead his own platoon. On both tours, he received a Silver Star, a Bronze Star and other commendations. After his tours, he began pursuing a master’s degree in biology at Marquette University where he served as an ROTC instructor. One of his advisors encouraged him to pursue medical school. Before beginning medical school at the University of Colorado, he was medically retired from the Navy due to his blast injuries.

Walsh came to San Antonio for his residency in 1982 and joined the School as Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine in 1989. He is also a professor of Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Anesthesiology, as well as President of the Medical-Dental Staff and Associate Chief of Staff in Rehabilitation at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. While the military taught him about working with people and his training at the Air Force Academy instilled in him leadership skills that he brings to his current positions within the School, Walsh credits his injuries with making him a better physician who truly understands both sides of the equation in the exam room.

OSSWALD: LEANING FORWARD

The military made it possible for Sandra Osswald to attend medical school at Boston University. After finishing, she joined the Air Force as an internal medicine resident. After residency in Biloxi, she came to San Antonio and completed a dermatology residency at Wilford Hall and BAMC. She stayed on as faculty in the combined Army/Air Force Dermatology program in San Antonio, retiring in 2009 after 20 years. She was one of the teaching faculty in the military’s dermatology program here, which instilled an interest in academics. Fortunately, that aspect of it was very rewarding to me. I think that helped me make a decision to go into academia when I left the military,” she says.

Upon retiring, she joined the SOM faculty as Chief of the Division of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery. The transition to a leadership role in academics was a natural one, given her leadership roles in military.

“You are given responsibility, at a relatively early level and asked to take leadership positions,” she says.

“You aspire to always be better and because each individual works so hard, you want to lead by example. There is an interesting term we use called ‘leaning forward.’ Someone who is always looking toward the future, trying to make positive changes is someone who is leaning forward,” she says. “I find a lot of people like that in the military and here at UT as well. People who want to make a difference, people who are not satisfied with the status quo, people who are looking for ways to make improvements.”
Saluting Our Faculty & Staff

Our people are what make our School great. One of the things that make them great is that many received not just their medical training but also their leadership training in the military. This list is a snapshot of some of our faculty and staff with military experience. Most are retired but some are still in the reserves. We salute their service to our country and our School.

Pictured:

Deborah Baruch-Bienen, MD, Professor of Medicine, Acting Chief, Medical Service, South Texas Veterans Health Care Service, Major, US Air Force, Ret., (Pic. 1)

Anatolio Cruz, Jr., MD, Professor of Surgery, Captain US Naval Reserve, Ret., (Pic.2)

Brian Eastridge, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Colonel, US Army, Ret., (Pic.3)

Tony Yuen Lung Eng, Professor or Radiation Oncology, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret., (Pic.4)

Robert Gilson, MD, Professor of Dermatology, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret., (Pic.5)

Lowell Glassburn, MHA, CAAMA, Administrator, Radiology, Colonel, USAF, Ret., (Pic.6)

Ismail Jatoi, MD, PhD, Professor & Chief of Surgical Oncology, Colonel, US Army, Ret., (Pic.7)

Craig Manifold, DO, Assistant Professor/ Clinical of Surgery, EMS Medical Director, Colonel Air National Guard, Ret., (Pic.8)

Mike McCarthy, Interim Chair of Radiology, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret., (Pic.9)

Andrew Muck, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery/Emergency Medicine, US Air Force, Ret. (Pic.10)

Deborah Mueller, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Surgery, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret., Reserves, (Pic.11)

Sandra Osswald, MD, Professor and Division Chief, Dermatology, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret., (Pic.12)


Basil A. Pruitt, Jr., MD, Professor of Surgery, Colonel US Army, Ret. (Pic.14)

Carlos Rosende, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology, Executive Director, UT Medicine, Captain, US Navy, Ret., (Pic.15)

Kenneth Sirinek, MD, PhD, Professor of Surgery, Vice Chair/Academic Affairs & Professional Development, Major, US Army, Ret. (Pic.16)

Nicolas Walsh, MD, Professor and Chair, Rehabilitation Medicine, Lieutenant, SEAL Team One, US Navy, Ret., (Pic.17)

Wayne Wiatrowski, PhD, FACR, Professor of Radiology, Lt. Colonel, US Army, Ret., (Pic.18)

Not Pictured:

Steven Bailey, MD, Professor and Division Chief, Cardiology, Lt. Colonel, US Army, Ret.

Charles Bauer, MD, Adjunct Professor of Surgery, Colonel, US Air Force Ret., Texas State Guard Medical Reserves Corps

Robin Brey, MD, Professor and Chair, Neurology, Captain, US Air Force, Ret.

Dr. Steven Chalfin, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology, Captain, US Navy, Ret.

Steven Chalfin, MD, Professor of Ophthalmology, Captain, US Navy, Ret.

Dr. Robert Huff, MD, Professor and Chair of Reproductive Genetics, Ob/Gyn, Captain, US Air Force, Ret.

Thomas Mayes, MD, Professor and Chair, Pediatrics, US Air Force, Ret.

Mark T. Nadeau, MD, MBA, Professor/ Clinical and Residency Director, Family & Community Medicine, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret.

Boyce Oliver, MD, Professor of Surgery, Major, Texas National Guard, Ret.

Dennis Peppas, MD, Professor and Interim Chair, Urology, Colonel, US Air Force, Ret.

Jose M Pluguez PA-C, B-PAS, Faculty Associate, Surgery, Master Sergeant, US Army, Ret.

James N. Rogers, MD, Professor of Anesthesiology, Special Forces Staff Sergeant, US Army, Ret.

Ian Thompson, Jr., MD, Professor of Urology, Director CTRC – US Army, Colonel, Ret.
The story of Holocaust survivor and guest lecturer Eva Mozes Kor began in simple language through her thick Romanian accent. She starts at the day they arrived at the Auschwitz concentration camp. The story is simple, powerful and horrible.

Her mother held onto her and twin sister, Miriam, as they moved with the crowd from the train. Minutes later, she realized her father and two older sisters had disappeared into the crowd. She did not realize that would be the last time she ever saw them.

Not long after an officer from the German SS came running down alongside the crowd yelling “Zwillinge! Zwillinge! Twins! Twins!” He spotted Eva and Miriam, who were dressed alike and looked alike. He asked if they were twins.

“Is that good?” her mother asked the officer.

“Yes,” he replied.

“They are twins,” she said.

The girls were taken away screaming in protest. They did not know that would also be the last time they ever saw their mother.

“Miriam and I no longer had a family. We were ripped apart forever,” she says simply.

On the first day, they received tattoos, which Eva showed as she spoke. Eva was number A-603. Miriam was A-604. Eva, Miriam and more than 1,500 sets of twins were subjected to all means of medical experiments, starvation and torture. Eva has no idea exactly what was done but remembers the injections, weekly blood draws and humiliation of having to wait all day with no clothes on, standing...
for hours in a cold, bare room. She also recalls the bodies of the dead children that were stacked up in the latrine. She remembers deciding to do everything she could to make sure she and Miriam would not become one of those bodies.

Ms. Kor spoke on November, 8, 2011, as part of the Ethics in Medicine lecture series. The talk, titled "Lessons Learned from Dr. Mengele’s Lab," was presented by the Center for Medical Humanities & Ethics, the Office of the Vice President for Research at the Health Science Center, and the Physicians for Human Rights student organization.

Ms. Kor has traveled the world telling her story; sharing her personal lessons on medical ethics and forgiveness. She also sells her books, Surviving the Angel of Death; The Story of a Mengele Twin in Auschwitz, and Echoes of Auschwitz, to support her CANDLES Foundation, which houses her Holocaust museum in her hometown of Terre Haute, Indiana.

Ruth Berggren, MD, Director of the Center for Medical Humanities & Ethics, introduced Ms. Kor by highlighting the history of several key medical ethics doctrines.

“It is important to realize how far we have come in medical research ethics,” Berggren said. “The regulatory requirements of today’s Institutional Review Boards have their roots in the Nuremberg Code of 1947. This code was drafted as a set of standards for judging physicians and scientists who had conducted experiments on concentration camp prisoners during World War II.”

The Nuremberg Code was developed as a result of the Nuremberg Trials, Berggren pointed out, noting that the three major doctrines used to guide medical and research ethics throughout the world – the Belmont Report, the Declaration of Helsinki, and the Nuremberg Code – are all part of the School’s ethics course: “On Becoming a Doctor.”

The Nuremberg Code’s first tenet, “The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential,” is the prototype for many codes designed to assure a high standard of ethics in research on humans.

“Eva Kor’s appearance at our University has brought medical history vividly to life through her personal narrative of Nazi experimentation on human subjects,” Berggren said. “In bearing witness to her story, we not only learn from the past, we gain deeper understanding of the tremendous importance of teaching ethical reasoning as a tool for the healers of tomorrow.”

Of the 3,000 children who were imprisoned and experimented on at Auschwitz, approximately 200 were still alive when the camp was liberated in January 1945. The Kor girls returned to live in Romania with a distant aunt and continued to suffer persecution under the communist regime. They eventually moved to Israel where both married, and eventually, moved to the United States.

Nazi physician Dr. Josef Mengele, also known as “The Angel of Death” was a principal doctor at Auschwitz and infamous for his callous nature and heinous experiments on people. He oversaw the medical experiments on the twins and others. After the war, he fled to South America where he successfully eluded war-crime investigators until his death in 1979.

In the 1990s, Miriam Kor developed kidney problems, and Eva donated her kidney to save her sister. Doctor’s found Miriam’s kidneys had not grown beyond the size of a ten year old child’s. The girls were ten when they entered Auschwitz. Doctors suspect a substance injected into Miriam stunted the organs’ growth. The girls were routinely injected with things that made them weak and sick. Many children died after the injections. Miriam passed away in 1993 of her kidney complications.

1993 was also the year Eva met Hans Münch, a Nazi doctor whose job was to check the vital signs of prisoners killed in the gas chambers at Auschwitz. He was also the only SS Physician acquitted in the Nuremberg Trials. Ms. Kor and Münch met at Auschwitz in 1995, the 50th Anniversary of the liberation of the camp. Ms. Kor marked the occasion by publicly forgiving Dr. Mengele, Dr. Münch and the Nazis for their crimes. She was highly criticized by many, including Jews, for this act.

Ms. Kor does not give much time to her critics, noting that forgiving is not forgetting, nor is it absolving the criminals of guilt. Ms. Kor’s message is one of forgiveness as an act of helping one’s self deal with the trauma. It took Ms. Kor nearly 50 years to forgive Dr. Mengele, whom she vividly remembers joking about her impending death when she nearly died from an infection. When asked how she can justify forgiveness of such horrible crimes, Ms. Kor says she asked herself, “Do I deserve to live without the pain someone else inflicted on me?” Forgiving eased the pain and allowed her to focus on other things; mostly helping other Holocaust survivors and the 122 other living Auschwitz twins she located around the world.

Ms. Kor’s story is also told in a documentary film, “Forgiving Dr. Mengele” which details her visit to Auschwitz and her decision to forgive Dr. Mengele and the Nazis. After her talk at the School, Ms. Kor attended a screening of the film at San Antonio’s Santikos Bijou Theater.

Ms. Kor’s foundation is called CANDLES. The word is also an acronym for Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors.

“I like the name ‘CANDLES,’” she said, “because candles are used as a memorial, and candles are used to illuminate.” Ms. Kor extends the metaphor by noting, “We wanted to shed some light on this darkest chapter of the Holocaust.”

Speaking to the School of Medicine audience, Ms. Kor says that the act of forgiveness can be a path to peace and relief for people who have suffered at the hands of another. As chilling as it is to hear her firsthand account of torture and abuse by the Nazis, she inspires and illuminates. Her sense of humor also comes through, helping to break the sadness, which is probably one reason she was able to survive her Holocaust experiences.

“For our patients of today, we hope that her message lights a path to a resilient future,” Berggren added, on the illumination theme. “For our profession, we hope that her message offers a strong reminder of our duty to protect the vulnerable and the voiceless members of our society.”
Holly Professorship was born out of a physician’s heart of gratitude

James L. Holly, MD, of Beaumont, Texas, feels a deep sense of gratitude and humility for the honor of being a physician. In a 2004 essay, Dr. Holly reflected upon the climax of the movie “Saving Private Ryan”:

_Tremulously, Private James Ryan, now in his seventies, approached the headstone of Captain John Miller, who gave his life that Ryan might live. In perhaps the most poignant moment in a great film, tears streamed down his face, as Ryan plaintively said to his wife, “Tell me that I have lived a good life; tell me that I have been a good man.” The sacrifice of others imposed upon Private Ryan a debt only a noble and honorable life could repay._

Dr. Holly works and lives with a similar passion and a purpose — to uphold the sacred trust of caring for others. He credits his medical career to the providence of God, his parents, his devoted wife of 47 years, Carolyn, and the School of Medicine at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio. His professors, mentors, classmates and colleagues shaped the physician he would become; he also credits public support of medical education. As a 1973 graduate of the School of Medicine, Dr. Holly was honored to serve as President of the School’s Alumni Association from 2006 to 2010 because of his love and appreciation for the educational experience he received.

This year a $250,000 gift from Dr. and Mrs. Holly and the Southeast Texas Medical Associates (SETMA) established the Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Distinguished Professorship. The endowment supports the work of Carlos R. Jaén, M.D., Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine, who is leading a model of patient-centered primary care and education through UT Medicine San Antonio, the clinical practice of the School of Medicine.

The Holly Professorship also promotes interdepartmental and interdisciplinary education, collaboration and practice-model development between the Departments of Medicine, Family and Community Medicine, and Pediatrics, and the School of Nursing’s advanced practice programs. Dr. Holly is a founding partner of SETMA, an organization dedicated to providing quality and cost-effective health care to patients in Southeast Texas through multispecialty, patient-centered clinics. The Holly fund is fostering the patient “medical home” concept in today’s students.

Dr. Holly’s care of a patient, Wayne A. Reaud, chairman and founder of the Beaumont Foundation of America, inspired Mr. Reaud to make a generous gift to update the Health Science Center Auditorium in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Holly. The traditional site for White Coat Ceremonies and other events will be named the Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Auditorium.

Dr. Holly received his Medical degree when the School of Medicine was very young. “The School has seen 43 years of incredible progress,” he said. “Dr. F. Carter Pannill was my dean when I started. When Dr. Henrich [William L. Henrich, MD, MACP, now president] came in as Dean in 2006, I got involved. I am totally sold on our School — the quality of the students is amazing.”

“The legacy of the Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Distinguished Professorship, and the inspiration of this outstanding alumnus and his honorable and noble life of service to his patients, will influence the students and faculty of the School of Medicine for generations to come and will carry forward the promise of the UT Health Science Center to make lives better,” President Henrich said.
Announcing the Colonel H. William Card, Jr. Endowed Professorship

Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC)

Born July 3rd, Colonel H. William “Bill” Card, Jr. described himself as “a firecracker that couldn’t wait”. As citizens of South Texas soon discovered, that statement was not far from the truth. During his 12 years as Mayor of Harlingen, Colonel Card took up the cause of bringing a medical school to Harlingen. His persistence, along with that of other champions, paid off and the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) officially opened its doors June 29, 2002.

Today, with the RAHC’s 10th Anniversary approaching, its Regional Dean, Dr. Vela thought it a wonderful time to pay tribute to Colonel Card and permanently recognize his role in the establishment of the RAHC. With permission from the Card family, Dr. Vela is leading a fundraising campaign to create the RAHC’s very first academic endowment and to name it after Colonel Card. The Colonel H. William Card, Jr. Endowed Professorship will ensure his legacy of advocacy for education and healthcare for citizens in the Rio Grande Valley lives on in perpetuity.

Mrs. Garrison Card shared, “There are no adequate words to express how much it means to have Bill honored by the RAHC in this way.”

To initiate the campaign, Dr. Vela and his wife, Alicia, are making a personal, leadership gift and challenging RAHC faculty to match it. Members of the greater Harlingen community and friends of Colonel Card will also be invited to participate.

Thank-A-Thon Makes More Than 450 Calls

Medical scholarship recipients showed their appreciation on September 7th and 8th by calling more than 450 donors to the School of Medicine.

“I was able to make a personal connection with many donors who support our school and students. I am grateful for their gifts, which make a great difference in my education,” said Lisa Vogel, a second year medical student.

Fourth year student Kimberly Onyirioha said, “I spoke with some amazing donors! It’s good to know they are aware that their good deeds don’t go unnoticed. I look forward to being in their shoes in the near future and hearing from students who will benefit the way I have.”
Dr. Ken and Peg Sirinek Endowed Scholarship Makes First Award

Teaching was always a passion for Dr. Bradley Aust. Over his 30-year tenure as Chair of the Department of Surgery, Dr. Aust touched the lives of more than 4,500 medical students. Dr. Kenneth Sirinek, recruited as part of the second generation of academic general surgeons by Dr. Aust, shares Dr. Aust’s passion for teaching. “Clinicians who teach have the unique ability to bring up-to-date information and technology to the healing of their patients, and at the same time, are passing on their knowledge and clinical skills to the next generation of physicians – a chance to have an impact beyond the finite limits of their own careers.”

When Dr. Sirinek was appointed as holder of the J.B. Aust, M.D., Ph.D. Endowed Chair in Surgery and promoted to Vice Chair of Academic Affairs and Professional Development in 2010, he vowed to extend himself personally to honor the late Dr. Aust and his legacy. “It served as a wake-up call to financially support the institution where I have been a faculty member for over three decades.

After careful consideration, Dr. Sirinek and his wife, Peg, chose to establish a namesake endowed scholarship. Their awareness of the debt students incur during their medical school training, and learning of a recent tuition hike, made their decision an easy one. The Dr. Ken and Peg Sirinek Endowed Scholarship was established in Spring, 2011, and their first scholarship was awarded shortly afterwards to Dr. Katie Wiggins-Dolvik.

While initially Dr. and Mrs. Sirinek intended to keep their philanthropy a private matter between them, the School and their recipients, they changed their minds when approached about serving as possible catalysts for other faculty and similar gifts. Dr. Sirinek agreed to spearhead a campaign to encourage and recruit fellow faculty members to consider establishing their own endowed namesake scholarships.

Dr. Sirinek hopes his long career at the School of Medicine will help open doors with other faculty. "Investing personally in the institution where we have chosen to spend our professional careers and reinforcing the value of teaching and education for medical students in perpetuity is very rewarding.”

For more information about endowed scholarships, contact Kim Warshauer at (210) 567-0242 or Warshauer@uthscsa.edu.

Class of 2011 Creates Student Service Learning Endowment

Special kudos to the Class of 2011 which has distinguished itself in many ways. Through the leadership of their class officers, they have closed their chapter as students and transitioned to exemplar alumni! Before leaving campus to begin their residencies, the class decided to use the remaining monies from their class fundraising efforts to establish the School of Medicine Class of 2011 Student Service Learning Endowment. The purpose of this special endowment is to provide perpetual support to the medical service learning programs organized through the Center of Medical Humanities and Ethics, which meant much to the class. They also chose to specifically honor faculty member Richard P. Usatine, MD, for his inspirational leadership in these efforts.

“These experiences have positively influenced the way we will practice medicine and our class wanted to leave a legacy demonstrating that the lessons and values we learned during these experiences are important to us and improved our medical education”, said Class President Kyle Kalkwarf, MD, who also distinguished our University in his role as UT System Student Regent. “Our education at the UT Health Science Center has equipped us to be leaders in our community, and we want to show this appreciation by giving back this year, and every year, to our School. We are very proud to be our School’s newest alumni!”

“The Class of 2011 inspires us all, and we are deeply grateful for their gift and the example it sets,” said Francisco González-Scarano, MD, School of Medicine Dean.

The class credits its experiences in the outreach clinics with an enrichment of their education that will influence their future practice in many meaningful and lasting ways. This included the enhanced learning environments which encouraged teamwork in patient care and through interdisciplinary training opportunities with other students across the UT Health Science Center.

Through this tribute endowment, they wish to ensure programs led and inspired by caring faculty be a perpetual part of the School of Medicine and medical education programs at the UT Health Science Center.
Choose life over cancer.

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At CTRC, we work hard every day to help you and your family choose life over cancer.

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Sembradores – Sharing Our Vision

The Sembradores of San Antonio and UT Health Science Center School of Medicine share the same vision, to make lives better in San Antonio, South Texas and the world. The Sembradores, who are celebrating 50 years of service to the greater San Antonio community, established an endowed scholarship for medical students in 1997. Their efforts to “promote and fund higher education for deserving students in the San Antonio metropolitan area” have benefited nearly two dozen medical students—13 of whom have already graduated and are out working in our communities. The Sembradores’ impact is real:

- Manual Ybarra, Class of 2002, Internal Medicine
- Ana P. Trevino, Class of 2002, Internal Medicine
- Angela Akonye, Class of 2002, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Aime Garza, Class of 2002, Neurology
- Sarah E. Trampota, Class of 2005, Anesthesiology
- Aracely Cadena-Garza, Class of 2006, Family Medicine
- Candice N. Dubose, Class of 2008, Orthopaedics
- Elizabeth Ventura, Class of 2008, Pathology
- John Martin, Class of 2009, Dermatology
- Jorge Antonio Montes, Class of 2009, Ophthalmology
- Michelle M. Hagopian, Class of 2009, Surgery
- Crystal E. Alex, Class of 2011, Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Lynn K. Nguyen, Class of 2011, Psychiatry

You can get involved in Sembradores and affect the lives of future physicians by visiting: www.sembradoresofsanantonio.org

The Sembradores celebrated 50 years of service at their annual gala on December 3, 2011. Left to right: Mr. Robert Castorena, Mr. Alex Bernal, Mayor Julian Castro, Mrs. Divina Alvarez, Mrs. Isabel Bernal, and Mr. Joe Nick Garza.
Six Faculty Win AACR Cancer Research Awards

Six investigators from the School of Medicine received awards from the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) at its annual meeting in April. The five faculty honorees are studying the initiation and progression of prostate, breast and pancreatic cancers.

These scientists will receive AACR Minority-Serving Institution Faculty Scholar in Cancer Research Awards:

The AACR awards are sponsored by a grant from the National Cancer Institute’s Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities.

Ibtissam Echchgadda, PhD, Instructor of Molecular Medicine

Addanki Pratap Kumar, PhD, Associate Professor of Urology

Pothana Saikumar, PhD, Associate Professor of Pathology

Chung-Seog Song, PhD, Assistant Professor/Research of Molecular Medicine

Ratna Vadlamudi, PhD, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Valerie Cortez, BS, a PhD student in Cellular and Structural Biology, is one of 50 students nationwide to be selected for the AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award. Her faculty mentor is Dr. Vadlamudi.

The AACR is a partner with the CTRC and Baylor College of Medicine in the annual CTRC-AACR San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, an international scientific symposium for interaction and exchange among scientists and clinicians in breast cancer held each December.

Folli: Diabetes, Alpha Cells Help Kill Beta Cells

Franco Folli, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine/Diabetes, coauthored a study that found alpha cells contributed to the death of beta cells (insulin producing cells) in diabetes. The study was published in February in the Journal of Biological Chemistry. “Our study shows that neighboring cells called alpha cells can behave like adversaries for beta cells,” he said. “This was an unexpected finding.”

Gould: Serotonin Plays Role in Many Autism Cases

Georgianna Gould, PhD, Research Assistant Professor of Physiology, looked at the role that serotonin plays in autism spectrum disorders – a study she explained in a recent paper in the Journal of Neurochemistry. Thirty percent of autism cases may have a serotonin component that is tied to social behavior, she said. Gould and colleagues showed that a medication called buspirone improved the social behaviors of mice. Gould now plans to study the impact of a diet rich in the amino acid, tryptophan, on the social behavior of the mice.

Boyer, Xu: Key Player in Alzheimer’s Process Identified

Thomas Boyer, PhD, Professor of Molecular Medicine, and PhD student Xuan Xu have identified a protein molecule they believe plays a key role in the Alzheimer’s process. “We discovered a protein molecule that communicates with amyloid precursor protein intracellular domain (AICD) to turn on target genes,” he said. “We hope to exploit this knowledge to identify compounds or drugs that can disrupt these signals, leading to a novel and effective treatment for this disease.” The research was published in February in EMBO Reports, the journal of the European Molecular Biology Organization.

Nathanielsz: Losing Weight May Break Cycle of Obesity, Low Birth Weight Linked to Diabetes

Co-Director for the Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Research Peter Nathanielsz, MD, PhD, was coauthor of a study on rats that demonstrates how losing weight prior to pregnancy can have a positive effect on the weight and health of the baby. The study is in the March 2011 issue of the Journal of Physiology.

“It is of interest that offspring of the obese mothers also showed high levels of leptin, a hormone that signals the brain to decrease appetite,” said Nathanielsz, Professor of Ob/Gyn. “This may mean they have developed a brain that is resistant to the signals that tell them they are getting fat, and they just go on eating and thus get fat as their mothers were. That is what we mean when we say that the effects are transgenerational. Leptin levels were normal in the offspring of the intervention group, showing that we can break this cycle.”

Nathanielsz is also senior author on a study published in June in the online edition of the American Journal of Physiology—Regulatory, Integrative and Comparative Physiology. This study on baboons suggests a link between low birth weight and diabetes. The study, “Emergence of insulin resistance in juvenile baboon offspring of mothers exposed to moderate maternal nutrient reduction,” was conducted by Department of Ob/Gyn researchers Nathanielsz and Jaehyek Choi, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Cun Li, MD, Assistant Professor, and Thomas J. McDonald, PhD, Associate Professor, as well as Texas Biomedical Research Institute in San Antonio researchers Anthony Comuzzie, PhD, and Vicki Mattern.
DeFronzo in NEJM: Insulin Sensitizer Can Prevent Onset of Diabetes

Ralph DeFronzo, MD, Professor and Chief of the Diabetes Division in the Department of Medicine, coauthored a study that found a diabetes drug can help prevent the transition from prediabetes to actual type 2 diabetes. The study was published in the March 2011 New England Journal of Medicine. Pioglitazone is widely used as an insulin sensitizer in patients with type 2 diabetes. In the ACT Now study, participants were chosen because of their high risk for diabetes, including obesity, family history and impaired glucose tolerance as demonstrated by a glucose test.

“It’s a blockbuster study,” DeFronzo said. “The 72 percent reduction is the largest decrease in the conversion rate of prediabetes to diabetes that has ever been demonstrated by any intervention, be it diet, exercise or medication.”

Myatt: Preterm Birth Research Receives March of Dimes Funding

Leslie Myatt, Ph.D, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Co-Director of the Center for Pregnancy and Newborn Research, received $400,000 to further his study of uterine environments and pregnancy. His study investigates how environments within and outside the uterus turn genes on and off and influence pregnancy length and the timing of uterine contractions. Myatt is one of five scientists nationwide whose work will be supported by the March of Dimes Prematurity Research Initiative grants announced in March of 2011.

“We realize that not just genes alone, but their interaction and regulation by environmental factors such as pollutants, lifestyle, stress, maternal obesity or infection, may control the length of gestation and cause preterm birth,” Myatt said.

Tiwari, Herman, Lopez-Cruzan: Some Neurons May be Protected from Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, ALS

New research suggests that neurons lacking a substance called caspase-2 were better able to withstand pesticide-induced damage to energy centers known as mitochondria. “This research shows, for the first time, that in the absence of caspase-2, neurons increase autophagy to survive,” said study co-author Marisa Lopez-Cruzan, PhD, Investigator and Research Instructor in the Department of Cellular and Structural Biology. Evidence suggests that mitochondrial dysfunction plays an important role in neuronal death in conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease) and Huntington’s disease.

“Identifying initiators in the cell death process is important for determining therapeutic approaches to provide the maximum protection of neurons during neurodegenerative conditions,” said senior author Brian Herman, PhD, Professor of Cellular and Structural Biology, and Special Assistant to the President, UT Health Science Center San Antonio.

Lopez-Cruzan, Director of Herman’s laboratory, came up with the idea that caspase-2 protects cells from mitochondrial stress. Meenakshi Tiwari, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, expanded upon the initial work and is first author of the article, published in the March 11 issue of the Journal of Biological Chemistry.

Nelson, Liao: Food Restriction Not Always Life Extender

James Nelson, Ph.D., Professor of Physiology and researcher at the Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies, and postdoctoral fellow Chen-Yu Liao, PhD candidate, are coauthors on a study that contradicts the long-held belief that food restrictions typically contribute to life extension in mice. The article was published in the August 2011 issue of Aging Cell. Liao cautioned that the new findings cannot be directly applied to people until similar studies are done in humans.

Aging, Obsolete Cells Increase Pneumonia Risk

A group of School of Medicine researchers published an article in the May 2011 issue of the journal Aging Cell explaining how lung cells that were supposed to die due to DNA damage, but did not die, were 5 to 15 times more susceptible to invasion by pneumonia-causing bacteria. These cells also increased the susceptibility of normal cells around them. “Senescent cells prime the lungs for infection,” explains Pooja Shivshankar, PhD, Research Scientist in the Division of Cardiology. Authors on the study are: Carlos Orihuela, PhD, Assistant Professor of Microbiology and Immunology; I-Tien Yeh, Professor of Pathology; Pooja Shivshankar, PhD, Research Scientist, Department of Microbiology and Immunology; and Claude J. Le Saux, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine-Cardiology.
Turner: Study Reveals Racial Differences, Poor Care

Barbara J. Turner, MD, MSED, MA, is lead author of a study published in the May 2011 Annals of Family Medicine showing that black patients were significantly more likely than white patients to be monitored while being prescribed long-term pain medications. The study began at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine where Turner was previously appointed. Turner is a Professor of Medicine and Director of the Research to Advance Community Health (REACH) Center, a joint venture of the School of Medicine, the UT School of Public Health and the University Health System.

Three Named Fellows of American College of Radiology

Rebecca Loredo-Hernandez, MD, Chief of the Musculoskeletal Section, Pamela Otto, MD, Chief of Breast Imaging and Intervention and Director of UHS Radiology, and Adam Ratner, MD, Clinical Professor of Radiology, have each been named to the prestigious group. ACR Fellows demonstrate a history of service to the College in organized radiology, teaching, or research. Only about 12% of ACR members achieve this distinction. The three doctors were honored at the American College of Radiology Annual Meeting and Chapter Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, in May.

Diabetes Presentations: The San Antonio Longitudinal Study of Aging, Aspartame

School of Medicine researchers presented two studies at the American Diabetes Association’s Scientific Sessions in June suggesting artificial sweeteners may be part of a self-defeating behavior. The San Antonio Longitudinal Study of Aging, or SALSA, is a large, population-based study of the disablement process in elderly Mexican Americans and European Americans being conducted through the Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies.

As SALSA’s principal investigator, Helen Hazuda, PhD, was senior author of the presentation. Hazuda, Professor and Director, Center for Health Services Research and Chief, Division of Clinical Epidemiology, has led the study for two decades. The presentation focused on the relationship between diet soft-drink consumption and long-term change in waist circumference. It showed that two or more diet drinks a day was associated with a significant increase in waist size, compared to the group that did not drink sodas. The SALSA presentation coauthors include Sharon P. Fowler, MPH, Faculty Associate, and Ken Williams, MS, PStat, Adjunct Assistant Professor and Biostatistician in the Division of Clinical Epidemiology.

The other study, presented by Fowler, Ganesh Halade, PhD, a post-doctoral fellow at the Barshop Institute, and Gabriel Fernandes, PhD, the senior author and Professor of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology, studied the relationship between oral exposure to aspartame and fasting glucose and insulin levels in 40 diabetes-prone mice. Aspartame is an artificial sweetener widely used in diet sodas and other products. The mice with aspartame showed an increase in fasting blood glucose levels. There was no significant change in insulin levels.

Masters: Enzyme Key to Deformities

Bettie Sue Masters, PhD, DSc, MD (Hon.), Professor of Biochemistry and the Robert A. Welch Foundation Distinguished Professor in Chemistry, is coauthor of a paper detailing the molecular structural basis for severe head deformities and ambiguous sex organs in babies born with Antley-Bixler syndrome accompanied by an enzyme deficiency. The paper was published in the August 4 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“The two mutations that we characterized are responsible for severe craniofacial and steroid-production defects in humans, the latter leading to sexual ambiguities,” according to Masters. Antley-Bixler syndrome is a rare genetic disorder characterized by a prominent forehead, underdeveloped regions in the mid-face, protruding eyes and other abnormalities. Masters and her colleagues are studying the origins of these bone development defects.

Rao, Baek, Kim: Tracking the End of a Protein

School of Medicine researchers have discovered how one type of used-up protein is shuttled to the protein garbage disposer in our cells. The discovery involves several proteins including ubiquitin, Rad23 and Cdc48. Hai Rao, PhD, Associate Professor of Molecular Medicine, is senior author on the study, published in the August issue of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. “In this paper, we uncovered a protein-protein interaction involved in shuttling damaged proteins from the site of ubiquitin tagging to their final destination, the proteasome,” Rao said. The paper’s first author is Guem Hee Baek, PhD, and second author is Ikjin Kim, PhD. Both scientists are from the Department of Molecular Medicine.

The School of Medicine offers Grand Rounds and other courses on a daily basis.

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CTRC Updates

Thompson: PSA “Velocity” a Poor Predictor of Prostate Cancer, Enlarged Prostate Not A Risk Factor

Ian M. Thompson, Jr., MD, Professor of Urology and Director of the Cancer Therapy & Research Center, is principal investigator on a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, the data suggest that an enlarged prostate does not mean an increase in prostate cancer risk. The new data suggest that men and their physicians should instead look to a combination of PSA levels and other factors when assessing prostate cancer risk. The data is from the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial, a decade-long study of almost 19,000 men. “Many organizations that speak to ‘cancer-related symptoms’ suggest that men with problems related to urination should be checked for prostate cancer,” Thompson said. “What we demonstrated is that prostate enlargement symptoms are absolutely unassociated with risk of cancer. This means that you cannot rely on symptoms, but if you want to find prostate cancer early, you must examine the patient and measure PSA levels.”

Other factors besides PSA velocity should be taken into account when determining a man’s risk of prostate cancer and whether he should have a biopsy,” Thompson said. The paper concludes: “We found no evidence to support the recommendation that men with high PSA velocity should be biopsied in the absence of other indications; this measure should not be included in practice guidelines.”

In a related study lead by Thompson and published online in the American Journal of Epidemiology, the data suggest that an enlarged prostate does not mean an increase in prostate cancer risk. The new data suggest that men and their physicians should instead look to a combination of PSA levels and other factors when assessing prostate cancer risk. The data is from the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial, a decade-long study of almost 19,000 men. “Many organizations that speak to ‘cancer-related symptoms’ suggest that men with problems related to urination should be checked for prostate cancer,” Thompson said. “What we demonstrated is that prostate enlargement symptoms are absolutely unassociated with risk of cancer. This means that you cannot rely on symptoms, but if you want to find prostate cancer early, you must examine the patient and measure PSA levels.”

Li Awarded Grant for Breast Tissue Study

Rong Li, PhD, a Professor of Molecular Medicine and researcher at the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC), was awarded $741,446 by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas for his work in understanding how the dense tissue in breast tumors contributes to estrogen production and tumor growth. For several years, Li has been investigating how the dense tissue in breast tumors, traditionally thought of as a scaffolding matrix of proteins that support the tumor, can promote cancer progression. He has found that the matrix also performs the job of potent stimulant of aromatase production. The aromatase, an enzyme, in turn produces more estrogen, feeding certain types of breast tumors. “We have data that show these two different factors can act synergistically to stimulate aromatase production,” Li said. The CPRIT grant will allow Li to investigate the signaling process between the matrix proteins and the aromatase. In the next step, he will measure tissue stiffness and aromatase production in healthy breast tissue to gauge the relationship between the two substances in that setting. “It has long been known that higher density in breast tissue means a higher risk of developing breast cancer,” Li said. “We think part of the reason could be that local matrix proteins put pressure on breast tissue and elevate estrogen production.”

Hinck: Mapping Proteins to Fight Cancer

Andrew Hinck, PhD, a cross-appointed Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine, published his findings on the TGF-beta (transforming growth factor beta) in The EMBO Journal in March 2011. Understanding exactly how TGF-beta interacts with cells may enable cancer-fighting drugs to be designed to stop tumor-promoting activity while preserving TGF-beta’s critical role in healthy cells. Hinck is pinpointing exactly how the protein interacts with receptors on cells to do its work. The research is taking place through the Experimental and Developmental Therapeutics (EDT) program at the Cancer Therapy & Research Center (CTRC). The goal, Hinck said, is to create “small molecule mimics” that can bind and block activity, especially in the presence of cancer and other diseases where TGF-beta is harnessed to drive tumor growth.

Jatoi: Breast Cancer Treatments Lose Effectiveness Over Time

Ismail Jatoi, MD, PhD, Professor of Surgical Oncology and researcher at the Cancer Therapy & Research Center, is lead author on a study that indicates some breast cancer treatments designed to reduce the risk of a recurrence may lose their effectiveness once the patient survives the first three-year period. The study was published online in the May 2011 Journal of Clinical Oncology. “The current paradigm that we have is that these drugs, over the lifetime of the patient, have a constant effect. What we have suggested in this paper is that is not really the case,” he said. “What we are seeing is that some drugs have an initial effect. The effect of the drug diminishes after about three years.”

There is also some suggestion that immunotherapy, which has not yet been developed for breast cancer treatment, could have a delayed effect, with the benefits not evident for several years. Jatoi said it would make sense to design trials to follow patients for eight or nine years or possibly begin studies with patients who are five- or seven-year breast cancer survivors.

“This is important because we’re seeing more and more long-term breast cancer survivors,” Jatoi said.
Tomlinson in JAMA: Standardizing Family History Collection Integral to Cancer Prevention

Gail Tomlinson, MD, PhD, a CTRC researcher and interim Director of the Greehey Children’s Cancer Research Institute, is one of the authors of a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). The authors recommend updating a person’s family history of cancer every five to 10 years between ages 30 and 60. The study reports on the changes in the family history of cancer when collected over a 10-year period, said Tomlinson, a member of the CTRC. “Clinically Relevant Changes in Family History of Cancer Over Time,” appeared in the July 13, 2011 issue.

Researcher Awarded Cancer Prevention Grant to Partner with YMCA

The Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) awarded $265,000 to a researcher from the School of Medicine who is working with the YMCA of Greater San Antonio to encourage healthy living and cancer prevention.

Deborah Parra-Medina, PhD, MPH, Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the Health Science Center’s Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR), is co-directing “Y Living,” a lifestyle program for cancer prevention and risk reduction.

“This collaborative project uses a community-based, family-focused approach. We’ll work with families to promote physical activity, a balanced diet and increased awareness of the impact of a healthy lifestyle on cancer risk reduction,” Parra-Medina said. “We’ll provide health education and use text messages to enroll and motivate them.”

IHPR Director Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.PH, who is also Associate Director of Health Disparities at the Health Science Center’s Cancer Therapy & Research Center, stressed the importance of finding new ways to educate people about their cancer risk and how they might lower it.

“We’re really interested in reaching out to our community through new technologies to provide them with the latest information that they can use to reduce risk factors that might predispose them to cancer,” Ramirez said.

Texas voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2007 establishing CPRIT and authorizing the state to issue $3 billion in bonds to fund groundbreaking cancer research and prevention programs and services in Texas.

Study Evaluates Yoga’s Benefits for Breast Cancer Survivors

A new study is testing how different types of exercise, such as yoga, improve breast cancer survivors’ fitness, quality of life and molecular indicators of future risk. The study features a team of translational researchers at the CTRC, some of whom are also testing exercise’s impact on survivors at the molecular level.

Molecular researchers Rong Li, PhD, Professor of Molecular Medicine, and Nicolas Musi, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine-Diabetes, are looking into how different types of exercise impact participants’ levels of adipose stromal cells (ASCs), which have been linked with a variety of cancer-promoting factors. Obese people might have increased numbers of ASCs.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) in the School of Medicine developed the project, called Improving Mind and Physical Activity (IMPACT), in light of staggering obesity and breast cancer mortality rates. The study is funded by Susan G. Komen for the Cure and led by IHPR Director Amelie G. Ramirez, DrPH.

“We expect comprehensive and yoga-focused participants to have better fitness outcomes, less stress and improved biological indicators of future risk of secondary cancers,” said study co-principal investigator Daniel Hughes, PhD, Assistant Professor at the IHPR.

Over the yearlong study, 90 survivors will participate at least three times a week in one of three forms of exercise to which participants are randomly assigned for the study: 1) a comprehensive exercise “prescription” featuring individualized aerobics, strength-training and flexibility; 2) a yoga exercise program; or 3) general exercise chosen at will.

Free Exercise Center for Cancer Survivors Launched

It is no surprise that regular exercise brings enormous benefits to cancer survivors. The trick is putting that knowledge into widespread practice. That is the goal of a new fitness center for cancer survivors at the CTRC at The University Health Science Center at San Antonio.

The fitness center opened in September 2011, and is free and available to all cancer patients in the area, regardless of where they sought treatment. An added bonus for patients: they can bring close family members.

Survivors get complete physical assessments from the fitness center staff, who design individualized fitness programs for participants to practice either at the facility or in their homes. They are asked to come in for further assessments to make sure they are doing well and to give feedback to the staff -- feedback that could provide additional data and insight into the link between cancer prevention and physical fitness. The study is funded primarily through a grant from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, with support from the School of Nursing and the Division of Behavioral Medicine at the Health Science Center.

Prof. Stacey Young-McCaughan, RN, PhD, AOCN, of the Psychiatry Department of the School of Medicine at the Health Science Center, crafted the program based on her 12 years of work with hundreds of cancer survivors at Brooke Army Medical Center.

“It is so rewarding to see cancer survivors take back control of their lives with exercise, whether they are beginning again or just starting out,” Young-McCaughan said.
Argiris New Chief of Medical Oncology/Hematology

In July, Athanassios (Ethan) Argiris, MD, FACP, was appointed Chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology within CTRC and the Department of Medicine. In addition, Argiris will serve as an Associate Director of our NCI-designated Cancer Center.

Argiris is a nationally and internationally recognized medical oncologist and clinical researcher with expertise in the evaluation and treatment of patients with malignancies of the head and neck and lung. Prior to his appointment he was a Professor of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine with a secondary appointment in the Department of Otolaryngology and served as co-Leader of the Head and Neck Cancer Program of the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute (UPCI). He was also Medical Director of the Aerodigestive Cancers Program, in the Division of Hematology-Oncology and held leadership roles in the Head and Neck Cancer and Lung Cancer Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) of UPCI. His research is focused on the development of novel therapeutics in early stage and advanced head and neck and thoracic malignancies, including combined modality regimens, that incorporate molecularly targeted agents, such as inhibitors of angiogenesis, epidermal growth factor receptor, PARP, Src, proteasome, mTOR, and histone deacetylases.

Argiris earned his medical degree at the Medical School of Athens, Greece and completed his Medical Oncology training at Yale University where he participated in the development of novel chemotherapy regimens. In 2000, he received a Young Investigator Scholar Award for Clinical/Translational Research by the American Association for Cancer Research. From 2000-2005, Argiris was an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine of Northwestern University in Chicago, IL, where he led the clinical research efforts in aerodigestive malignancies. Argiris has authored more than 200 articles, abstracts and book chapters, is an Associate Editor for Head and Neck and has served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Clinical Oncology, the International Journal of Cancer Research, Forum of Clinical Oncology and the Open Lung Cancer Journal, and an elected Fellow of the American College of Physicians. Argiris will maintain an office and see patients at the CTRC.

South Texas Research Facility Opens Its Doors

On October 13, 2011, the Health Science Center officially dedicated the South Texas Research Facility (STRF), a $150 million center of discovery, scientific collaboration and translational medicine. Translational medicine is the core concept of the STRF. Teams of clinicians and PhD scientists will generate research breakthroughs to be tested clinically with the goal of increasing the value of standard care. The core research programs include: Cancer, Neuroscience, Regenerative Medicine, Center for Healthy Aging, Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science (IIMS).

Economically, the STRF brings a sizable benefit to San Antonio. It enables the Health Science Center to begin recruiting 15 to 20 new laboratory teams of eight individuals each. “I fully expect the STRF to become one of our city’s great economic engines as well as a source of curative discoveries,” Dr. Henrich said. “These are well-paying, professional jobs for the city.”

Funds to build the STRF included $60 million in tuition revenue bonds approved by the Texas Legislature in 2006, $40 million from the Permanent University Fund, $40.7 million in grants and gifts, and $3.3 million from the city of San Antonio.

At 1,100 feet, the STRF stretches longer than some aircraft carriers. This photo was taken from southwest and shows UT Medicine’s Clinical home, the Medical Arts & Research (MARC), in the background and the Greehey Children’s Cancer Research Institute (GCCRI), in the lower right foreground.
Eddins-Folensbee New Vice Dean for Education
Florence Eddins-Folensbee, MD, received her MD from Baylor College of Medicine where she also did her General Psychiatry Residency as well as a Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency. She served as Director of Residency Training for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and is board certified in both General Psychiatry and in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. She was serving as the Senior Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs at Baylor College of Medicine and had also served as Associate Dean for Student Affairs for five years prior. She has been recognized in numerous ways for her dedication and teaching and has been the recipient of several awards for her work.

Shireman Named Executive Academic Leadership Fellow
Paula K. Shireman, MD, Professor of Vascular Surgery and Vice Dean for Clinical and Translational Research, was selected as one of 54 women in the U.S. to participate in the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine Program (ELAM) at Drexel University College of Medicine. To be accepted into the program, each fellow must be nominated by the Dean or another senior official of her institution. As part of the year-long fellowship, the women must identify and work on a project that will address an institutional need. Shireman will be interviewing various leaders to identify a project and already works with some of those leaders, she said.

Williams New Associate Dean for Faculty & Diversity
Janet F. Williams, MD, was appointed to the position of Associate Dean for Faculty and Diversity in the School of Medicine. In this position, she will develop an infrastructure to enhance the academic and behavioral environment supporting our faculty, and by extension, other members of the academic community. In addition, she will promote procedures to optimize the diversity of our faculty and will develop new programs supporting faculty development and professionalism. Williams, a Professor of Pediatrics, received her MD from Southern Illinois University and completed her Pediatrics Residency there as well. She has completed leadership fellowship training through the Boston University School of Public Health, was a Robert Wood Johnson Academic General Pediatrics Fellow at the Stanford University School of Medicine, and a DHHS Faculty Fellow in Substance Abuse Education here in San Antonio. She has been a member of the School of Medicine at San Antonio faculty since 1986.

Dr. Williams has also been recognized in numerous ways for her dedication and teaching. She was honored as a UT Distinguished Teaching Professor in 2010 and received the UT System Academy of Health Science Education Medallion to commemorate her 2008 induction into that prestigious Academy, as well as many other awards and honors.

Stewart Named Surgery Chair
Ronald Stewart, MD, was appointed Chair of the Department of Surgery. Stewart is a Professor of Surgery and Anesthesia and had served Interim Chair for Surgery since October of 2008. He received his MD from our School of Medicine and completed his residency in surgery in San Antonio, followed by fellowships in Trauma and Surgical Critical Care at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis. Stewart was recruited back to San Antonio where he has served as the Fellowship Program Director for Surgical Critical Care, the Trauma Medical Director for University Health System and the Trauma Division Chief for the Department of Surgery. He currently holds the Jocelyn and Joe Straus Endowed Chair in Trauma Research. In addition to his board certification, Stewart has added qualification in Surgical Critical Care. In 2007, Stewart was also given the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award.

Quinn Named Orthopaedics Chair
Robert Quinn, MD, has been appointed Chair of the Department of Orthopaedics. Currently Professor and Vice Chair in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of New Mexico, Quinn was selected after an extensive national search. Quinn obtained his MD degree at Hahnemann University School of Medicine in Philadelphia and orthopaedic residency at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, followed by a fellowship in orthopaedic oncology at Massachusetts General Hospital/Harvard Medical School. An internationally renowned musculoskeletal tumor specialist, he is a member of several multidisciplinary research groups, including the Children's Oncology Group, Southwest Oncology Group, Radiation Oncology Group, American College of Surgeons Oncology Group and International Ewing’s Sarcoma Research Forum. He will begin his new position April 2, 2012.
have an important effect on the physician shortage in Texas.”

Students will study at UTSA for three years to earn credits toward their Bachelor of Science degree in biology then begin studies at the Health Science Center in their fourth year. To matriculate to the Health Science Center, students must take the MCAT and earn a minimum score of 27. UTSA will award the students their Bachelor of Science degree in biology after they complete their fourth year in the program. For more information visit the website at http://som.uthscsa.edu/FAME or contact David Henzi, EdD, Director of Academic Enhancement: (210) 567-4469 or Henzi@uthscsa.edu.

ACP to Honor Diehl, Turner with Masterships

The American College of Physicians (ACP) will honor two School of Medicine faculty members, Andrew K. Diehl, MD, MSc, and Barbara J. Turner, MD, MSEd, MA, with advancement to mastership during its annual convocation ceremony April 19, 2012, in New Orleans, La. Election to mastership recognizes outstanding and extraordinary career accomplishments.

Diehl has been a faculty member since 1977. He currently is Professor and Chief of the Division of General Medicine in the Department of Medicine, and holds the O. Roger Hollan, MD, Professorship in Internal Medicine. Diehl is an expert in gallbladder diseases and evidence-based recommendations for screening, counseling and chemoprophylaxis of chronic diseases in adults.

Turner is professor of medicine and director of the Research to Advance Community Health (ReACH) Center, a multidisciplinary collaboration of researchers and clinicians from the Health Science Center, University Health System (UHS) and the University of Texas School of Public Health. She also serves as director of Health Outcomes Improvement at UHS. Before joining the Health Science Center in 2010, Dr. Turner was executive deputy editor of the Annals of Internal Medicine and professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She practices general internal medicine and is a health services researcher with more than 140 peer-reviewed publications primarily addressing health care for vulnerable populations and to reduce health disparities.

Faculty Participate in National Long-term Childhood Health Study

A new study has begun enrolling local patients in what will likely be the nation’s largest long-term study on childhood and pregnancy. The National Children’s Study is a federally funded survey that will examine the effects of the environment — including such factors as air, water, diet, noise, family dynamics, genetics, and community and cultural influences — on 100,000 children across the United States. The study recruits pregnant women and follows the growth, development, and health of their children until age 21.

“There is so much to learn about the conditions in a child’s
world that influence that child’s lifelong health,” said Daniel E. Hale, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Principal Investigator for the Bexar County area. “The National Children’s Study will help us understand the many ways environmental factors interact with a child’s genetic inheritance.” Hale was also named the Interim Director of the Clinical Research Center being developed at the School’s Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen, Texas.

The local site is one of the first ones up and running in the national study, which will have 105 sites across the country. It is a logical choice, said Co-Principal Investigator Donald J. Dudley, MD, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, noting, “We are a good example of where population trends are headed in the United States.”

Dudley is particularly interested in the outcomes the study will reveal. Researchers hope to learn about contributing factors of autism, asthma, childhood obesity and many other issues.

School of Medicine’s Diversity Makes National List

Each fall the School makes Hispanic Business magazine’s list of the Best Medical Schools for Hispanics. In the new list, announced in September 2011, the School of Medicine is ranked fifth best among the 133 accredited U.S. medical schools. This is based on the number and percentage of Hispanic enrollment, medical degrees earned by Hispanics, number of full-time Hispanic faculty, and participation in programs that recruit, support and mentor Hispanic medical students.

Entering medical school was a scary proposition for Alfredo Camero Jr., born and raised in Laredo on the South Texas border and the first in his family to go into medicine. Yet he found many avenues of support and a welcoming environment in the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, which consistently makes the Hispanic Business Magazine’s list of the Best Medical Schools for Hispanics.

The School of Medicine has a 96 percent retention rate. It also graduates a higher percentage of Hispanic students at 16.9 percent, and has a higher percentage of minority faculty members (Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Black or African American) at 18.6 percent, than 90 percent of North American medical schools do, Association of American Medical Colleges statistics show.

Hispanic students here can plug into a number of support structures, including the Latino Medical Student Association, an organization sponsored by a faculty mentor, Manuel Ángel Oscós-Sánchez, MD, Associate Professor of Family and Community Medicine.

Camero, who is president of the association and now in his fourth year in the School of Medicine, says, “Our institution is special, and I know that part of my success is owed to the great mentoring I received during medical school.”

First MD/MPH Graduates

More than a dozen School of Medicine graduates achieved dual distinction — degrees in medicine and public health in May 2011. This was the first class to complete the four-year MD/MPH degree program offered jointly by the School of Medicine and the UT School of Public Health in Houston.

The program is the first in Texas — and one of the first in the country — to enable students to finish both degrees in four years. These new physicians have a heightened awareness of the diverse issues that affect the health of populations, such as the environment, insurance and health care policy.

“Many of these students learned about public health challenges at the U.S.-Mexico border in the Laredo and Harlingen areas,” said Claudia Miller, MD, MS, Assistant Dean for the MD/MPH, Program in the School of Medicine and professor and vice chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine. “Most of our MD/MPH, graduates completed the South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER) four-week course elective, which introduces students to air and water concerns, health department strategies, daily life in colonias and more.”

The number of MD/MPH students in each class has grown steadily over the past five years and now numbers total more than 100. For more information, visit the School of Medicine website and click on the education link. A list of 2012 graduates can be found on page 34 of this magazine.

Alan Peterson, PhD: Continued from page 9

A sample of journal articles on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder


From despair to hope: A wounded warrior begins to heal

STRONG STAR's two major treatment studies at Fort Hood were preparing to launch when Brack came looking for help. Each of these studies is led by the renowned psychologists who developed the two evidence-based therapies for PTSD:

- Edna Foa, PhD, of the University of Pennsylvania, developer of PE
- Patricia Resick, PhD, of the National Center for PTSD, VA Boston Healthcare System, developer of CPT.

Brack voluntarily sought treatment as a STRONG STAR clinical case and was assigned to group Cognitive Processing Therapy, but he had some hesitations.

“I wasn’t sure about group therapy,” he said. “It was difficult even to have to think about the events that caused my PTSD. So I was uncomfortable having to talk with other soldiers about them and how I was feeling. I thought they might think I was nuts.” His attitude soon changed.

“By the second or third session, it already felt like a big weight had been lifted off of me,” he said. “It felt good to get these things off my chest, and it was helpful to see that other soldiers were thinking and reacting the same way I was. I knew I wasn’t going crazy. I was having a normal reaction to bad things that happen during war.”

Understanding trauma, key to recovery

A fellow group member identified a key “trigger” for Brack’s symptoms.

“One of the things that hit me hard during my first deployment happened on Thanksgiving night,” he said. “A couple of young girls were caught in the crossfire of a fight that erupted when we were on patrol. It became my job to bag the bodies, and when I looked at the face of this 12-year-old girl, I saw my own daughter. That was an ugly night.”

Once home, he found himself getting depressed more as the holidays approached.

“Now it seems logical that it was because Thanksgiving reminded me of that night in Iraq, but I’d never made the connection before because I didn’t want to think about it. It was someone in my group who pointed that out to me. He identified one of my triggers.”

Triggers are events and situations that remind you of a traumatic event you experienced and bring on PTSD symptoms.

“In therapy, they taught us to recognize triggers before they happen so we can see them coming and step over them,” Brack explained.

Another aspect of his therapy helped him with his anger and mistrust of Army leadership. He saw that it stemmed from a disagreement with his commander on how to respond to a family that had been attacked and appeared at the gate of their forward operating base seeking help.

“One of the things I really like about the STRONG STAR program is that my therapist didn’t try to make me change my mind and agree with my commander’s decision,” Brack said. But he learned to react differently.

“I no longer blame myself for things over which I have no control,” he said; “and I don’t fault my commander for a difficult decision that had to be made in a split second, especially when I don’t know
everything that he had to consider.

"Also, this is war. It’s impossible to plan and prepare for every eventuality, but you can know that bad things will happen. Mistakes will be made. There will be some failures. Afterwards, you can’t change it; you can only learn from it and have some control over how it affects you."

Brack has done just that. Since his treatment, he no longer has PTSD, and he’s not the same person he was before – he’s stronger. “I feel so much better now, and I know that my family is so much happier with my being a more engaged part of it,” he said. “Now, I’m more fun and spontaneous. I’ll tell my son, ‘Let’s go play catch,’ or my wife, ‘Let’s meet for lunch,’ or ‘Let’s grab the kids and take them to Enchanted Rock.’ This year, she even talked me into taking our first family vacation. We never had since we were married on September 12, 2001. I never wanted to before; I preferred to be at home in my comfort zone. This year, we traveled to Colorado and had a great time, and now I’m looking forward to more family vacations.”

He believes the insight he’s gained from his experiences has made him a better platoon leader and better at training young soldiers.

“Work is still work, but I take a lot more satisfaction in what I do,” he said.

In June 2011, as he prepared to leave for Afghanistan, he was glad to have renewed confidence in his chain of command. “I’m not excited about leaving my family for a year, but if I have to, the idea of spending a year in a combat zone with folks I trust is a universe better than the alternative,” he said. “And I know I can trust my commanders. They’re smart guys. They’ve gotten to where they are through ability. I can depend on them, and I’m proud to serve with them. Ours is a hard job, but I’ll do the hard job, and I’ll go through the hard experiences so that other Americans don’t have to.”

Could wounded warriors become our strongest warriors?

Dr. Peterson believes that, with access to the right treatment, other service members affected by the psychological wounds of war can gain the same new lease on life that Brack has, not only recovering from PTSD but emerging even more resilient than before.

“They have learned and grown and become stronger through their experience, and as a result, they may now be some of our best service members and leaders,” Dr. Peterson said. “That is a primary goal of STRONG STAR -- to help our psychologically wounded warriors heal and strengthen and be able to continue and excel in their military careers, or if they separate from the military, to live happy, productive civilian lives.”

School of Medicine Faculty Advancing STRONG STAR’s Mission

Fourteen principal investigators from eight separate military, civilian, and Veteran’s Administration institutions are working with more than 100 collaborators to carry out STRONG STAR’s important mission. Below is a list of STRONG STAR leaders from the UT Health Science Center and the School of Medicine, along with a description of their research efforts:

• Peter Fox, MD, Director of the Research Imaging Institute Department of Radiology; Director of the STRONG STAR Neuroimaging Core; principal investigator of a research study applying neuroimaging methods to study PTSD in the context of treatment to learn more about the pathophysiology of PTSD and the neurobiological changes associated with treatment.

• Stacey Young-McCaughan, RN, PhD, Department of Psychiatry: STRONG STAR Consortium Coordinator; principal investigator of an epidemiological study investigating how PTSD treatment impacts comorbid insomnia; principal investigator of an affiliated study evaluating the benefits of exercise on PTSD treatment.

• Jim Mintz, PhD, Department of Psychiatry: Director of the STRONG STAR Biostatistics, Data, and Computing Services Core; principal investigator for the STRONG STAR Data Repository, which will help address STRONG STAR research questions for years to come.

• Alan Peterson, PhD, Department of Psychiatry: STRONG STAR Consortium Director; STRONG STAR Administrative Core Director; principal investigator of a pilot study evaluating the delivery of evidence-based psychotherapies in theater in Afghanistan.

• John Roache, PhD, Department of Psychiatry: STRONG STAR Deputy Director; principal investigator of a clinical trial with the VA evaluating the combined use of psychotherapy and medication to treat comorbid PTSD and alcohol dependence and looking for ways to predict who will respond well to medication and who will be neutrally or negatively affected by it.

• J. Randy Strong, PhD, Department of Pharmacology, principal investigator of a preclinical study looking at the role of early life stressors in PTSD susceptibility.

• Douglas Williamson, PhD, Department of Psychiatry: Director of the STRONG STAR Genomics and Basic Science Core; principal investigator of a research study examining the interaction of genes and the environment on susceptibility to, and resilience against, PTSD.
breadth and depth of experiences and exposure to diverse patient populations for residents, Bready says. Typical military patients include active-duty military, who tend to be younger and very fit, along with retirees and elderly patients. On the civilian side, University Hospital and CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System hospitals have a different kind of patient population and more cases such as trauma, transplants and morbid obesity, which are not nearly as common in the military population.

“Each side serves a slightly different patient population and that makes great teaching opportunities for both sides,” Bready says. “The patients that residents and fellows learn with are really important, and if you have different kinds of populations, it is a richer and more broadly based clinical training experience for them. It is a great combination of training for both sides.”

The Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital is another example of the intertwining between the School and military. Across the country, VA hospitals are designated teaching hospitals attached to academic health centers. The VA system funds more than 200 of the nearly 750 residents enrolled here, Bready says.

“It is a cost-effective way of delivering health care to the veteran population,” Bready says. “That population tends to be a little sicker than just the standard community hospital type of patient. They also find it a great recruiting tool. As they are looking for physicians to practice within the VA system, they find that those folks who did some part of their GME training within a VA facility are very frequently interested in VA employment. It is a win-win for them.”

Even where no formal personnel exchanges are in place, there are efforts to share knowledge between the institutions through joint educational opportunities. Some departments, including neurology, ophthalmology and dermatology, have joint Grand Rounds every week. Faculty and residents from both the School and the military gather to present interesting and unusual cases for discussion. The two also team up for joint conferences with presentations by faculty and guest lecturers.

Research for Both

The combination of military resources and research opportunities drew Schwacha to the School’s Department of Surgery from the University of Alabama at Birmingham nearly four years ago. He wanted to continue his academic career while following a strong interest in burn research, which made San Antonio a natural choice because of the USAISR Burn Center located here.

Today, Schwacha is a full-time researcher who divides his time between the two institutions. He spends approximately a quarter of his time working on research with the military through a personnel exchange agreement. The rest of his time is devoted to research and educational commitments within the Department of Surgery.

From a research standpoint, the military and the School are natural partners, Schwacha says. The School offers a breadth and depth of academic capabilities, including basic science expertise, whereas military research is more clinically oriented. If faculty members at the School are conducting research that focuses on treating burn patients, investigators can work with the Burn Center at BAMC; if military researchers are investigating issues relating to trauma patients, they can work with the patient population at University Hospital, home to a Level 1 Trauma Center that serves as the lead trauma facility for a 22-county area.

Sharing Expertise

Air Force Lieutenant Colonel . Jeffrey McNeil, MD, is another example of sharing people and resources for the mutual benefit of the military and the School. McNeil recently returned to his role as a military surgeon at SAMMC after six years as a full-time faculty member in the School’s Depart of Cardiothoracic Surgery.

As military medical operations in San Antonio began to consolidate, McNeil found that he was one of seven cardiothoracic surgeons at one hospital, with not enough patients for all of them to maintain their proficiency.

McNeil, who did his general surgery training at the School, looked to his contacts here for the next stage in his career. He arranged to teach within the residency training program for Cardiothoracic Surgery at the School, a role that entailed some didactics but mostly experience in the operating room and at the bedside, taking care of patients and supervising residents.

Under this arrangement, the School gained a valuable faculty member, and McNeil was able to fulfill his obligations to the Air Force.

The Air Force benefited from having a qualified, proficient surgeon standing by if needed, as happened – twice. McNeil went to Iraq on two separate deployments in 2005 and again in 2007. Both deployments put McNeil in the Air Force Theater Hospital in Balad, where he operated on a total of nearly 1,000 wounded.

Following both deployments, he resumed his faculty position then returned to SAMMC this year, when his skills were needed there full-time.

Strong relationships with the military create a steady flow of talent to the School of Medicine. Many retired or former military physicians have joined the School’s faculty over the years. Having ex-military faculty on staff not only provides additional expertise but also broadens the specialty talent pool, says Iam Thompson, Jr, MD.

For example, through existing relationships with the military, the School was able to recruit Dennis Peppas, MD, a pediatric urologist and Interim chair of the Department of Urology who retired in 2004 from his role as Chair of Urology at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Now, the School is home to one of the city’s few pediatric urologists, a hard-to-come-by subspecialty.

“The relationship expands the talent that you can bring to the city,” Thompson says, adding, “Building on a history of successful collaborations, the partnerships between the military and School will continue to evolve, as a team approach to science and medicine becomes increasingly important.”
School of Medicine
2011 Graduating Class

Aamir Ali Abbass, MD
Gabriela Aguayo Arias, MD, MPH
Jenny Aguilar, MD
Javier Antonio Aguirre, MD
Jawad Tahir Ali, MD
Wesley Lloyd Allen, MD
Obianuju Angelica Aluka, MD
Crystal Alex Alvarez, MD
Eric James Andrews, MD
Trisha Danielle Anest, MD, MPH
Katherine Cox Ansley, MD
Elizabeth Arno Shivone, MD
Cecivon Arreola-Garcia, MD
Elizabeth Hamilton Arrington, MD
Shari Michelle Barnett, MD
Philip James Benavides, MD
Daniel Gregory Benson, MD
James Calvin Black III, MD
Jennifer Michelle Bliss, MD
Brandon Wayne Bonds, MD
Alan Frederick Brown, MD
Christopher Marcus Brown, MD
Meredith Anne Bryan, MD
Lauren Reagan Burge, MD
Scott Daniel Burge, MD
Elizabeth Bendig Burgener, MD
Jessica Gray Burney, MD
Molly Virginia Burns, MD
Noelia Cabrera, MD
Daniel Lee Callaway, MD
Richard Bigelow Cannon, MD
Amy Thuy Cao, MD
Colin M. Carpenter, MD
Charles Leonard Cecil IV, MD
Janet Chen, MD
Jehee Choi, MD
Erik Lynn Cicalese, MD
Catherine Cody Larson, MD
Leah Allison Cohen, MD
Ashley Schrewyer Cooley, MD
Ashley Elizabeth Corley, MD
Danielle Kay Coulter, MD
Naomi Ruth Courtright, MD
Cameron Blake Culver, MD, MPH
Joseph Henry Dannenbaum IV, MD
Tiffany Marie Davis, MD, MPH
Daniel De Los Santos, MD
Lauren Elizabeth Dies, MD
Roger George Dickman, MD
Julia Anne Donelson, MD
Sarah Elizabeth Duong, MD, MPH
Christopher Ryan Dwyer, MD
Austin Tanner Eagleton, MD
Marcus E. Embeo, MD, MPH
Stephanie Anne Ericson, MD
Lauren Deaneam Evans, MD
Kelly Marie Fegan, MD, MPH
Jamie Lynn Felton, MD
Elva Elizabeth Fernandez, MD
James Austin Follett, MD
Marcus Christopher Ford, MD
Sarah Fortner Birdsall, MD
Bryce Chatham Foster, MD
Ben Scott Francisco, MD
Alaric Donham Frazier, MD
Andrea Garcia, MD
Ashley Lynnett Garcia-Everett, MD
Kelly Ann Gardner, MD
Parul Garg, MD
Katherine Yoon Mee Garvey, MD
Gabriel Gomez, MD
Ana Maria Gonzalez, MD
Michael J. Gradas, MD
Megan Jane Gray, MD, MPH
Richard Scott Groat, MD
Delisa Eva Guadarrama, MD
Kelly M. Guido, MD
Irfanullah Haider, MD
Stephen James Halliday, MD
Robert Kee Hang, MD
Oscar Hernandez, MD
William Andrew Heymann, MD, MPH
Russell Mark Hill, MD
Adam Christopher Hines, MD
Joshua Donald Hollinger, MD
Jonathan Scott Holloway, MD
Evan Alexander Howard, MD
Albert Yung-Hsiang Huang, MD
Christina Tram Huynh, MD
Mary Kathryn Hyland, MD
Nnaemeka Chukwuka Idigo, MD
Cristina Ippolito, MD
Pooya Iranpour, MD
Neal Morris Jackson, MD
Brian Edward Jameson, MD
Krystal Lynn Jerry, MD
Rachel Ellen Jones, MD
Michael Broughton Jordan, MD
Christine Elizabeth Joy, MD
Kye Jeffrey Kalkwarf, MD
Daniel Sebom Kim, MD
Gina J. Kim, MD, MPH
Codi Richardson Kingman, MD
Chase Alan Kissling, MD
Melissa Hor-Yee Kwan, MD
John Austin Lahourcade, MD
Jennifer Art-Lang Lai, MD
Ha Lam, MD
Jacquelyn Rae Lange, MD
Avanti Bharat Latthe, MD
Christopher I. Lee, MD
Michelle Lee, MD
James Cong Li, MD
Robert W. Loar, MD
Cherie Lynne Long, MD
Bernard Andrew Lynch, MD
Mandeep Singh Mangat, MD
Jesse Carrillo Martinez Jr., MD
Marissa Nicole Martinez, MD
James Christopher McCulloch, MD
Michelle Leigh McDonald, MD
Michael James McGinity, MD
Matthew Arthur Meissner, MD
Elizabeth Diltz Menking, MD
Ian Ross Miller, MD
Matthew Christopher Miller, MD
Bryan Charles Monier, MD
Catherine Maree Montenegro, MD
Jorge Montes IV, MD
Jennifer R. Nelson, MD
John Thomas Nelson, MD
Lynn Kim Nguyen, MD
Vinh Quoc Nguyen, MD
Jaclyn Ann Niederstadt, MD
Omid Nooromohammadi, MD
Aliza Steinberg Norwood, MD
Florence Adaku Nwagwu, MD
Michael Ryan Odom, MD
Nathan Michael Oehrlein, MD
Nancy C. Okechukwu, MD, MPH
Christina Sevilla Ortega, MD
Shirley Nneka Osadebe, MD
Nicolas Lawrence Palaskas, MD
David V. Paolino, MD
Shweta Sandeep Parmekar, MD
Alberto Parra, MD
Arielle Jaclyn Perez, MD, MPH
Leonel Perez Jr., MD
Marcella Denise Perez, MD
Matthew Thomas Perry, MD
Kim Pham, MD
Robert D. Phan, MD
Chuck Plumlee, MD
Kristi Renea Pogue, MD
Mariano Porto, MD
Laura Anna Probst, MD
Nitin Uddarju Raju, MD
Emma Holliday Ramahi, MD
Amy Elizabeth Rapp, MD
Robin Leigh Reister, MD
Stephen Dale Reillas, MD
Meghan Claye Riddle, MD
Alejandro Javier Rios Tovar, MD
Katherine Marie Robert Mackey, MD
Allison Rebecca Roland, MD
Jessica Eve Rosales, MD
Mark Brady Rowan, MD
Adria Claudia Savino, MD
Gabriel Jesus Salinas Jr., MD
Anna Kathleen Schlechter, MD
Robert Asa Scranton, MD
Jeffrey Thomas Sewell, MD
Dave Naresh Shahani, MD
Johnny Shen, MD
Kao-swi Karina Shih, MD
Courtney Michelle Shockley, MD
Walter James Shuham, MD
Maram Aysha Siddiqui, MD
Feroze Yazdi Sidiwva, MD
Sarah Megan Smith, MD
Eugene Lee Son, MD
Jose Raul Soto, MD, MPH
Elizabeth Maddox Spencer, MD
Joshua James Stagg, MD
Stephen Lynn Steele, MD
Samuel Houston Stevens, MD
Kristi Kim Stone-Garza, MD, MPH
Jessica Brittain Sulser, MD
Andrew Bernard Theilen, MD
Lauren Holguin Theilen, MD
Clinton Michael Thome, MD
Jantzen D. Thorns, MD, MPH
Pablo Tovar, MD
David Michael Tremblay, MD
Danilo Marques Volpini, MD
Meeta Ravidra Wagle, MD
Yao Yao Angela Wang, MD
Brian David Welsh, MD
Ryan Kennard White, MD
Philip Blaine Whiting, MD
Julia Berry Wisbokov Guerin, MD
Katie Christine Wiggins-Dohliv, MD
Ryan Anthony Williams, MD
Benjamin Alan Wilson, MD
Patrice Suzanne Wilson, MD
Rebekkah Liana Wilson, MD
Patrice Suzanne Wilson, MD
Ashley Renee Wolozdko, MD
Geoffrey George Wood, MD
Brandon Thomas Woods, MD
Joy Marissa Wortham, MD
Mi Mickey Yang, MD
Simon Way-Kung Yow, MD
Katherine Elaine Yee, MD
Emily Nicole Yee, MD
Beverly Yee-Whipple, MD
Alissa D. Zastrow, MD
The Alumni Association honored Founding Faculty at an event in May at the San Antonio Country Club. For more events, go to page 42.

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Don’t Procrastinate… Nominate!

To nominate a fellow alumnus/a to serve on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, email us at medalumni@uthscsa.edu or call us at 210-567-0614.

We’ll send you the nomination form. Self nominations are welcome. The nomination deadline is November 15, 2012.
Dear School of Medicine Alumni:

I would like to welcome the Class of 2011 to the Alumni Association! On May 21, 2011 our newest class of graduates joined thousands of proud alumni who are forever grateful for the outstanding medical education we received, which allows us to pursue the noble profession of making lives better as competent and compassionate physicians and medical educators.

Drawing upon our fond memories and warm affection for our alma mater, the Alumni Association is committed to nurturing the friendships we formed in school while supporting the School’s leadership and enhancing the educational experience of our current and future medical students. Our Alumni Relations staff, David Perryman and Sonia Rogers, have done an outstanding job of working with the Alumni Board to develop new initiatives that will enable us to stay informed, get involved, and become invested in the School of Medicine.

To help us stay informed, we launched a quarterly electronic newsletter this spring called Alumni Today, which provides up-to-date information about Alumni Association programs and events as well as news about fellow alumni. We have also worked closely with the Office of Development to launch a new online community for the Health Science Center called HSConnect. Please take a moment to register on HSConnect so that you can update your profile page, search for classmates, post class notes, and make secure online gifts. I also encourage you to become a fan of our alumni Facebook page to make real-time fun connections with former classmates and other alumni. You can access all of these resources from our website at www.SAmedAlum.com.

We currently offer a number of programs and activities designed to help more of our alumni get involved. In the past 18 months, for example, we have launched alumni chapters in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) and Dallas to help our graduates in those areas make valuable professional contacts as well as personal friendships. Special thanks go to Drs. Maria Dill ’86 (Alumni Board member), Alberto Pena ’02, Nolan Perez ’98, and Javier Saenz ’82 (Alumni Board member) in the RGV, along with Drs. Bill ’90 and Chialiang Hwang ’92 and Barry Wilcox ’92 in Big D. We have also started hosting an alumni reception each summer in the Raleigh-Durham area with the help of Dr. Mike Brennan ’78, Alumni Board member. In the coming year, I will strive to initiate a New England alumni chapter. In addition, Alumni Board members, Drs. Payal Patel ’10 and Rob Mohr ’10, have launched a Young Alumni Chapter focused on hosting special events and delivering unique resources to alumni who have graduated since 2000. We continue to host our quarterly “Connect the Docs” receptions for our San Antonio-area alumni. Beyond alumni chapters, we encourage alumni around the country to participate in our HOST (Help Our Students Travel) Program to support fourth-year students interviewing for residency programs. With the leadership of Dr. Pam Camosy ’80, Alumni Board member, we also have developed some unique opportunities for alumni to mentor students in community service programs as well as allow students to visit in their clinics.

I also hope you will join us in becoming invested in our alma mater. The Alumni Association’s fund raising efforts directly support the educational experience of our medical students. The Student Education Enhancement Fund supports students’ community service learning, medical outreach trips, tutoring services, summer research projects, and clinical skills training. The Alumni Class Endowed Scholarship Program recognizes and rewards outstanding students with scholarships. Our goal is for all of our alumni to give every year to one of these programs at a level that is comfortable for you and your families. Every gift matters, and all gifts are 100 percent tax deductible. The Alumni Association recognizes all donors with engraved nameplates on plaques in the Alumni Association Student Lounge. We also list donors on our website and in FUTURE magazine. Please visit our website to make your secure online donation today. If you have made a donation to one of these funds in the past, please know that your gift has already made a positive impact on the educational experience of our students. We will start posting stories on the website this winter that illustrate how alumni giving has impacted students.

With heartfelt gratitude, we continue to celebrate the many contributions of our Founding Faculty, whose vision and hard work have made all our dreams as physicians possible. At our May alumni dinner honoring our Founding Faculty, the Alumni Association presented Dean Francisco González-Scarano, M.D. with a $10,000 check to support the Student Education Enhancement Fund. We made this gift in honor of these early professors who helped establish and grow our School. To preserve their inspirational stories, we have worked in collaboration with Health Science Center Libraries, the School of Medicine, and the Office of Development to create and post video interviews of Drs. Marvin Forland, Carlos Pestana, Arthur McFee, and other Founding Faculty on our website. Special thanks go to Kim Warshauer, Director of Development, for spearheading this important tribute.

Having completed my first year as your President, I continue to be humbled by the large cowboy boots into which I’ve stepped. I wish to express heartfelt appreciation for the inspirational leadership of Dr. Larry Holly ’73, our immediate Past-President of the Alumni Association. With genuine love and deep commitment, Larry led our Alumni Association to new heights while epitomizing what it means to be an engaged alumnus. He has given generously of his time by presenting CME courses at Reunion Weekends and serving on the selection committee that confirmed Dr. William Henrich as President of the UT Health Science Center. In addition, Larry has built an exemplary medical practice in Beaumont, Texas, and has been a leading figure in the effort to revolutionize the way medicine is practiced in our country. So it gives me great joy to inform our alumni that a gift had been made to the Health Science Center in Larry and Carolyn’s honor that will fund renovations to the new Dr. and Mrs. James L. Holly Auditorium. It is both appropriate and wonderful that many of the events of greatest significance to medical students, parents, grandparents, friends, and alumni will take place in a facility bearing his name. I hope you will visit campus soon, visit the new Holly Auditorium, and reflect on how this School has changed your life and what we can do together to support the outstanding visionary leadership of President Henrich and Dean González-Scarano.

Carpe Diem!

Valerie Pronio-Stelluto, M.D., F.A.C.P. ’90
President, Alumni Association
valerie_pronio-stelluto@hms.harvard.edu

In Memoriam

Dr. Warren P. Bagley ’79 (59 years old)
Dr. Bert L. Chauveaux ’75 (61 years old)
Hinchey ’78 Receives Honors from Texas Society of Pathologists, TMA

In January, Dr. William W. Hinchey ’78 received the George T. Caldwell Award from the Texas Society of Pathologists at the society’s 90th annual meeting in San Antonio. The award was established in 1954 to recognize distinguished service and teaching excellence among pathologists. It is the organization’s most prestigious award and represents the highest ideals in service to medicine, community, and humanity as exemplified by the late pathologist, Dr. George T. Caldwell (1882 – 1947).

In May, the Young Physician Section of the Texas Medical Association (TMA) presented Hinchey with its “Young at Heart Award” during TexMed 2011, TMA’s annual conference. The section chose Hinchey to receive the award for his commitment to organized medicine and his willingness and openness to bring young physicians up the association’s ranks.

Throughout his medical career, Hinchey has been actively involved with professional medical organizations in Texas. Early on, he was an active member of the Bexar County Medical Society, the Texas Society of Pathologists (TSP), and the TMA. He was appointed to the TMA’s Council on Socioeconomics and the Patient-Physician Advocacy Committee and also serves as Chair of the Bexar County Delegation. In 2007, he became the 142nd President of the TMA and a recipient of the C. Frank Weber Award.

Palmer ’73 Joins Health Science Center Faculty

Dr. Patrick M. Palmer ’73 joined the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the UT Health Science Center in July following 27 years of private practice in San Antonio. Since graduating from the School of Medicine 38 years ago, Palmer has been actively engaged in the Alumni Association. He served as President from 1989 to 1992 and has been serving on the Board of Directors since 2007.

In addition to distinguishing himself as a private practitioner and alumnus, Palmer served in the U.S. Air Force Reserve, Medical Corps, from 1969 to 2008, retiring as a Colonel. In 1989, he was named the U.S. Air Force Medical Individual Mobilization Augmentee of the Year. During Operation Desert Storm, he was called to Active Duty and was stationed at Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio.

A Fellow in both the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons, Palmer has also been active in a number of professional medical associations. He has served on the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons’ Board of Councilors since 2009. In addition, he is currently Second Vice-President of the Texas Orthopaedic Association and will serve as President for 2013-2014.

McKelvey ’93 Becomes OMA President

In May, Dr. Carla McKelvey ’93 became the 137th president of the Oregon Medical Association (OMA). McKelvey started her medical studies in 1989 at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio where she also completed her residency in pediatrics. She moved to Oregon in 1996 and has been in private practice at North Bend Medical Center in Coos Bay ever since.

McKelvey became a member of the OMA Executive Committee in 2007 and Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates. The following year, she became Speaker of the House and was elected Vice President in 2009 and President-Elect in 2010. She has been physician editor of the OMA publication, Medicine in Oregon, since its launch in 2008.

Teuscher ’84 Elected Chair of Academy Board of Councilors

Dr. David Teuscher ’84 of Beaumont, Texas, was announced as Chair of the Board of Councilors (BOC) of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) at its 2011 Annual Meeting in San Diego. BOC members represent orthopaedists in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, the U.S. Military, Puerto Rico, Canada, and four of the regional orthopaedic societies.

“Physicians are rightfully uncertain of how the changes in healthcare will affect their patients and their practices,” Teuscher said. “We must educate our fellowship, the public, and elected leaders on the proper manner to truly reform our healthcare system. This should be done in a positive way that delivers value in the form of improved quality, better outcomes, and cost-effective care for patients.”

Teuscher practices orthopaedic surgery in a full-time private practice and specializes in sports medicine at the Beaumont Bone and Joint Institute (BBJI) in southeast Texas. He is also
Perez ’98 Founds RGV Mentors

Last year, Dr. Nolan Perez ’98 founded RGV Mentors, an organization that matches successful community professionals in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) with aspiring high school students to ensure that the students graduate from high school and are focused on completing college and starting a professional career. The mentors follow an established curriculum to help students obtain the tools required to succeed in post-secondary education, identify career goals, and ultimately build the lives they desire to have. Perez attributes much of his success to the mentorship he received from Dr. Mario Ramirez, a legendary family physician from Roma, Texas, who formerly served on the Board of Regents for the University of Texas System. Through the RGV Mentors program, Perez is “paying forward” the impact of the mentoring relationship he was blessed with years ago to help lead young RGV students toward higher education to help them realize their illuminated futures.

After growing up in the Rio Grande Valley and graduating from Port Isabel High School in 1989, Perez received his bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993 and his M.D. from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio in 1998. He then served as a Medical Corps Officer in the U.S. Navy, where he received the Navy Commendation and Navy Achievement Medals. He went on to complete his internal medicine residency at the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) in Harlingen along with a gastroenterology fellowship at Wayne State University in Detroit.

In addition to founding RGV Mentors, Perez is a Trustee for the South Texas Medical Foundation and serves on the Chancellor’s Council for the University of Texas System, the Senate Advisory Committee for the Creation of UTHSC South Texas, and the Development Boards for the University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas at Brownsville-TSC. For his service, he was awarded the RAHC Community Service Leadership Award in 2010. He currently runs his own private practice in gastroenterology in Harlingen.

Pronio-Stelluto ’90 Receives Mentoring Award

Dr. Valerie Pronio-Stelluto ’90 recently received the 2010-2011 A. Clifford Barger Excellence in Mentoring Award presented by the Office of Diversity and Community Partnership at Harvard Medical School (HMS). Pronio-Stelluto is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and the Director of Medical Student Education at Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is the recipient of several HMS and MIT teaching and mentoring awards, including the 2010 Arnold P. Gold Foundation Leonard Tow “Humanism in Medicine” Award and the 2009 Herbert S. Waxman Award for Outstanding Medical Student Educator Award presented by the American College of Physicians. She has been an active member of the School of Medicine Alumni Board since 2006 and currently serves as President.

Founding Faculty Video Interviews, Yearbooks Posted on Alumni Website

Thanks to a collaborative effort between the UT Health Science Center Libraries, the School of Medicine, the Alumni Association, and the Office of Development, you can now watch video interviews of Dr. Carlos Pestana and other members of the founding faculty. Kim Warshauer, Director of Development, spearheaded this important effort to preserve our history. Alumni may also access digital copies of School of Medicine yearbooks (Aesculapius, Caduceus) through the alumni website. To view founding faculty videos and yearbooks, go to www.SAmedAlum.com.
You are a member of the Alumni Association if:

• You earned your MD from the School of Medicine and/or
• You completed a residency or fellowship program at the School of Medicine.

Enjoy all the benefits of membership with no annual fees or membership dues!

www.SAmedAlum.com

Beamer '92 Wins AMA App Challenge

After receiving hundreds of medical app ideas from physicians, residents, and medical students during the AMA App Challenge, the AMA announced in November the names of the two winners: Michael Ray Bykhovsky, a third-year medical student in Georgia, and Dr. Cynthia Beamer '92, a pediatric emergency physician practicing in San Antonio and El Paso. The two winners were honored at a reception during the Interim Meeting of the AMA House of Delegates. Beamer won the category for physicians with her “Rounder” app, which provides a means for physicians to capture data on hospital patients and easily track their patients’ progress. During her time as a hospitalist, she found that overseeing residents and taking care of patients left little time to supervise hand-offs. Beamer hopes that the app will both streamline the process and make it more methodical. She believes the new app could replace handwritten notes, which can be illegible and even lead to privacy violations. The app would be a “much safer and better way to trade data,” she said.

“Dr. Peter W. Carmel, President of the AMA, congratulates Dr. Cynthia Beamer ’92 at the AMA App Challenge awards ceremony.

“The 2011 AMA App Challenge was hugely successful,” said AMA Board Chair-elect Steven J. Stack, M.D. “Apps are among the many ways physicians and future physicians learn, stay connected and juggle busy schedules, and we congratulate Dr. Beamer and Mr. Bykhovsky for their innovative and winning ideas.”
Dr. Everardo Cobos ’81
Grateful for the Privilege of Caring for the Sick

Dr. Everardo Cobos ’81 grew up in El Paso, where he and his family regularly took grandparents and other relatives into their home to care for them when they were sick. This practice reinforced Cobos’ early interest in helping other people and later fueled his desire to go to medical school.

As he neared his graduation from the University of Texas at El Paso, Cobos interviewed at a number of medical schools, including the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. “When I visited San Antonio, my father went with me,” Cobos recalled. “He tagged along on a campus tour and was made to feel very welcome by the staff at the School of Medicine. My father was very impressed with the School and staff, and he believed I should strongly consider going there. I trusted his intuition and I, too, felt the Health Science Center was the place for me. We also fell in love with the city of San Antonio on that trip.”

Cobos’s favorite memories from his four years in medical school are the camaraderie and strong ties that developed among his classmates. “We were a diverse group of students from all walks of life, but over the period of four years, we became very close. All these years later, we still share that bond.”

Among the many professors who made a lasting impact on Cobos were Dr. Anatolio Cruz, Dr. Leonard Lawrence, and Dr. Carlos Pestana, whose medical knowledge and anatomical drawings were “simply amazing.” “All our faculty members were compassionate physicians who served as excellent role models, cared passionately about students, and instilled the proper values in all of us,” he said.

As for the most important skill or lesson he learned as a medical student, Cobos noted several: “The love of learning everything I could about medicine; the value of reading every day; and the special privilege we are given by our patients who allow us to take care of them.”

As a medical student at the Health Science Center, Cobos initially thought he would pursue obstetrics and gynecology as his specialty, but after completing a transitional internship at Texas Tech University Health Science Center in 1982, he changed his mind. He subsequently served as a General Medical Officer in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, 2nd Infantry Division, in the Republic of Korea before completing an internship in internal medicine and a fellowship in hematology/oncology at Letterman Army Medical Center in San Francisco. “After starting my internal medicine residency, I rotated through oncology and immediately fell in love with the specialty,” he noted. “It had everything I was looking for: complicated medical cases, rapidly developing new medical breakthroughs and the privilege to care for sick patients and their families while forming close relationships with them as well.” From 1988 to 1991, he served as Staff Hematologist/Oncologist and later Chief of Hematology at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Washington.

In 1991, when Texas Tech Health Science Center posted an opening for an academic oncologist, Cobos jumped at the opportunity to pursue his academic passion and move closer to his family, who still resided in El Paso. Some two decades after his return to West Texas, Cobos has established himself as a stellar teacher and a nationally renowned researcher and clinician. He has won numerous awards as an outstanding teacher, physician-mentor, and clinician at Texas Tech, where he currently serves as Associate Dean of Oncology Programs and Professor of Internal Medicine. In addition, he is the Director of the Southwest Cancer Treatment and Research Center, where he leads the Center’s Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplantation Program.
“I love watching students absorb the vast volume of information, dissect it, process it, and ultimately grow as they make sense of it all,” he said. “The most amazing experience for me as an academic physician is when I see my students complete their residencies. Some of them have become physicians in my community, and others are now faculty colleagues of mine who teach me new things about medicine.”

The School of Medicine Alumni Association recognized Cobos’ myriad accomplishments by selecting him as the recipient of the 2010 Distinguished Alumni Award. Upon receiving this honor, Cobos responded in a self-deprecating manner true to his West Texas upbringing and family values: “I felt so honored and humbled to receive the award,” he noted. “This School gave me an opportunity, allowed me to accomplish my goal, set the standard of how to fulfill my role as a physician. As I look around the state and the country, the Health Science Center at San Antonio has so many talented alumni who are much more deserving of this award. This realization drives me to continue to make as many contributions to my field and to strive every day to maintain the high standards of our medical school, so I can help enhance its stellar reputation.”

As for career advice he would offer medical students and young physicians, Cobos commented on the importance of taking it one day at a time: “You get up in the morning and try to be the best you can be that day. Try to learn something new and live up to the high standards of our profession every day. Treat your patients with humility and compassion. Seek advice and treat others with respect each day. Before you know it, several years have gone by, and you have a body of work that you can be proud of.”

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Nominate a Classmate for the 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award

The Alumni Relations Office is calling for nominations for the 2012 Distinguished Alumni Award. To nominate someone, go to www.SAmedAlum.com and follow the Awards and Scholarships link to the Distinguished Alumni Award page. You can also contact the Alumni Relations Office at medalumni@uthscsa.edu or 210-567-0614. The deadline for nominations is May 31, 2012.

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Isn’t it about time you got engaged?

- Host fourth-year students when they travel for their residency interviews.
- Mentor medical students or let them shadow you in your clinic.
- Work side-by-side with students on community service projects.
- Host an alumni gathering in your city.
- Serve as a class agent for Reunion Weekend.

To find out more, go to www.SAmedAlum.com.

Alumni Association Events Span the Nation in 2011

1Q Connect the Docs in San Antonio
In February, the Alumni Association hosted its 1Q Connect the Docs reception for local alumni and fourth-year medical students. The event featured delicious food, great conversation, gift bags for attendees, and a drawing for fabulous prizes.

March 2011 Rio Grande Valley Alumni Chapter Reception
In March, the Rio Grande Valley Alumni Chapter hosted an event for alumni, medical students, and FASTS students (UT Pan Am) at the RAHC in Harlingen, Texas. Attendees enjoyed food, drink, and an informative panel discussion with Drs. Dora Martinez ’07, Alberto Pena ’02, and Todd Schenkenberg (Residency alumnus).

Women in Medicine and Law Dinner
The Alumni Association sponsored a table in April at the Sixth Annual Women in Medicine & Law For the Cure® Dinner, benefiting the Susan G. Komen Foundation. A number of medical students sat at the alumni table with Dr. Deborah Stedman ’07 and Alumni Board members, Drs. Pam Camosy ’80, Brook Jimma ’90, and Payal Patel ’10.

Dallas Alumni Chapter Reception
The Dallas Alumni Chapter officially opened for business with a reception at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Barry Wilcox ’92. In May Alumni and guests enjoyed scrumptious food catered by Nick and Sam’s, as well as an informative legal presentation by Jeff Ryan, a partner at Chamblee, Ryan, Kershaw & Anderson, P.C. Special thanks to Barry and Shana Wilcox as well as Drs. Bill ’90 and Chiufang ’92 Hwang for organizing and hosting the event. The chapter held a second event in November at the Wilcox home which resulted in even greater attendance by members.
2Q Connect the Docs Honoring Founding Faculty
In May, local alumni turned out in droves to honor Founding Faculty at a dinner at the San Antonio Country Club. The Alumni Association presented a $10,000 check to Dean Francisco González-Scarano, M.D. in honor of the Founding Faculty. The gift will support educational enrichment for students in the areas of summer research, clinical training and community service.

North Carolina Alumni Reception
In June, David Perryman, Director of Alumni Relations, and Dr. Mike Brennan ’78, Alumni Board member, hosted an alumni event at the renowned Top of the Hill Restaurant in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The alumni Association plans to make this an annual event in “The Triangle,” so mark your calendars for next June!

Rio Grande Valley Alumni Chapter Barbeque
On July 21, the Rio Grande Valley Alumni Chapter hosted its second annual summer barbecue event for alumni, medical students, RAHC employees, and FASTS students.

Annual White Coat Reception
The Alumni Association hosted the annual White Coat Reception in July. More than 200 first-year students and alumni mixed and mingled over delicious Tex-Med food at Cha-Cha’s.
Growing up in Corpus Christi with a father and an uncle who served in the U.S. Navy, it is not surprising that Rear Admiral Jerry R. Kelley, MD, ’76, dreamed of sailing as a child. But even as the young boy imagined himself at the helm of a large naval vessel, he was also developing a keen interest in taking care of people. Many years later, Kelley—who serves as Deputy Commander, Navy Medicine Support Command—has built a successful career that continues to feed both of his childhood passions.

In the early 1960s, Kelley’s family moved to San Antonio, where he attended John Marshall High School. After graduating “number one in the bottom fourth” of his class, he began his college studies at San Antonio Community College (SACC) while working part time as a surgical orderly at Methodist Hospital. “At that time, there was not much developed in that part of San Antonio other than the hospital,” he recounted. “I was content to mop the floors, set schedules, and perform any of the other jobs that needed doing. I remember taking home the catalogue of surgical instruments, which I memorized in short order.”

During his stint at Methodist, Kelley convinced the nurses to let him scrub for several minor surgeries. Thus was born his love for surgery.

When technicians at Robert B. Green Hospital went on strike in the mid-1960s, Kelley seized an opportunity to advance his medical career. “I called the operating room supervisor to apply for a scrub technician position,” he said. “I told her I had extensive operating experience, which was stretching the truth a little bit. I got hired sight unseen and was only able to pull it off thanks to the help of a nurse named Mamie O’Mara. She saw through me right away, but supported my efforts because she thought I had moxie.”

Around this time, the original surgery faculty at the School of Medicine began to arrive in town, including such legendary figures as Jim Story, Anatolio Cruz, J. Bradley Aust, Arthur McFee, and Leo Cuello. Kelley got to know many of them by working as a scrub technician for their surgical procedures. “When Dr. Cuello performed his first aortic valve replacement, assisted by Dr. Cruz, I scrubbed the case,” he noted.

These experiences stoked Kelley’s desire to become a surgeon, so he transferred from SACC to Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) and got “serious” about his studies. “I was fortunate to study under Dr. Sidney Edwards at Southwest Texas,” he said. “Dr. Edwards was a former enlisted Marine who had gone back to school and earned his Ph.D. in anatomy. He taught comparative anatomy and could lecture while drawing with both hands the most amazing anatomical sketches on the chalkboard.” (Years later, Edwards would pay Kelley the highest compliment a mentor can give to a former student when he allowed the surgery resident to operate on him.)

Upon earning his bachelor’s degree in 1971, Kelley applied and was accepted to the Health Science Center’s School of Medicine. During medical school, he began to develop a special interest in cardiothoracic surgery, thanks to the influence of professors J. Kent Trinkle, Waid Rogers, David Root, and Kenneth Sirinek. “At that time, cardiothoracic surgery was relatively new,” Kelley said. “It was a challenging field that was witnessing exciting breakthroughs such as coronary bypasses and valve repairs.”

What was the single most important thing he learned in medical school? “How to find the right answer,” he said without hesitation. “The School of Medicine gave me good basic knowledge of medicine. But more importantly, it taught me to recognize everything I didn’t know as well as how to go out and find answers to those questions.”

After earning his medical degree in 1976, Kelley completed his general and cardiothoracic surgery training at Bexar County Hospital and Audie L. Murphy Veterans Administration Hospital in 1983. He then embarked on a career in private practice as a cardiothoracic surgeon.

Eight years later, his childhood dream of going to sea, coupled with a desire to serve his country, led Kelley to enter the U.S. Navy as a direct commissioned lieutenant commander in 1991. Thus began a medical career of service to his nation that has spanned two decades and taken him around the world.
One of the highlights from Kelley’s naval career involved a trip on board an aircraft carrier with his father. “We were returning from a mission in Australia, and I had the privilege of taking my father on a ‘Tiger Cruise’ from Pearl Harbor to San Diego on the USS Ranger. That is a portion of a trip where family members and dependents are allowed to travel on board. During World War II, my father was a low-ranking enlisted sailor in the Navy. He served in the Pacific on an LSM, which is basically a floating bathtub. He always wanted to sail on a big ship. I was a Commander at the time, so I was able to take him up to the officer’s brow, where he’d never dreamed of standing. I will never forget the look in his eyes as we set sail.”

After being promoted to Captain in 1998, Kelley experienced his most rewarding military assignment in 2003. As Commanding Officer of the 500-bed Fleet Hospital Dallas, he led the first humanitarian aid mission in Africa ever conducted by a U.S. Naval Reserve unit. The four-week assignment presented Kelley with significant leadership challenges, from managing the logistics of transporting equipment and troops halfway around the world, to keeping the unit focused on its core objectives.

Kelley has also had the opportunity to work with the U.S. Marine Corps, with assignments that have included Battalion Surgeon 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, Assistant Division Surgeon 4th Marine Division, and Liaison Officer for Reserve Affairs to The Medical Officer of the Marine Corps. “Serving with a RECON unit was like being in a candy store for grown-ups,” he said. “Those are the guys who eat bugs and snakes, whatever it takes to stay alive. I learned water skills as well as how to blow things up using weapons like C4 plastic explosives.” In addition to his current position in the U.S. Navy, he serves as the Deputy Medical Officer of The Marine Corps-Reserve.

When asked about the future of medicine in the military, Kelley notes several critical challenges facing the U.S. Armed Services. “We need to answer the fundamental question of how we will take care of our severely wounded men and women as well as their families,” he said. “With the advent of body armor, our soldiers are surviving injuries that, in the past, would have killed them. As a result, military physicians are treating injuries we have not seen before, including more instances of severe head trauma and multiple limb amputations. In addition to keeping soldiers alive immediately following their injuries, we have to figure out how to provide them with the long-term care they deserve as they deal with post-traumatic stress and brain injuries while transitioning back to their civilian lives.”

Kelley stated that the Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital is one of the model centers that will play a key role in this effort. “They will soon be getting a polytrauma unit that will be unsurpassed in the country,” he said.

He also noted that suicide prevention is another critical issue facing the military that must be addressed more effectively and proactively. “We are dedicating tremendous resources to solve this issue, trying to figure out how we can better monitor and recognize psychological injuries before they result in a soldier taking his own life.” (Professors at the Health Science Center, including Alan Peterson, PhD and Craig Bryan, PsyD, are collaborating with the Department of Defense, the Army, and the Marine Corps on a number of related studies designed to more effectively treat posttraumatic stress disorder and prevent suicides through early interventions.)

Kelley believes his experiences in the military have ultimately made him a better doctor. “I have operated on aircraft carriers and in a variety of other settings,” he noted. “Many times, you have fewer resources at your disposal than you would find in a civilian operating room. So, I have learned to be more resourceful. You learn to figure out how to make do with what you have and still deliver the highest quality of care. The military has also given me organizational and leadership skills that enabled me to start several heart surgery programs in San Antonio.”

When asked about the future of San Antonio’s military medical operations, Kelley remarked on the potential for unprecedented collaboration with the Health Science Center. “The U.S. Armed Services will continue to rely heavily upon civilian training to develop its medical expertise. The efficiencies and expertise of civilian medical personnel in town will combine with those of the military to produce the very best physicians and healthcare professionals in the world. And the Health Science Center will play a vital role in all this.”
The Alumni Association is committed to enriching the educational experience of our current and future medical students. One of the best ways we can accomplish this is by providing students with shadowing opportunities. That is what Dr. Michael McAdam ’99 did last summer when he allowed two first-year medical students to work with him for a week.

After earning his medical degree from the Health Science Center, McAdam completed his residency in orthopaedics and sports medicine at the University of Washington followed by a fellowship in sports medicine at Palo Alto Medical Clinic. Today, he is team orthopaedic surgeon for the NFL’s Seattle Seahawks and a consultant to the U.S. Men’s National Rugby Team, specializing in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery of the shoulder, elbow, knee, and ankle.

In May, Todd Walker ’14 shadowed McAdam for a week. Among the many things McAdam taught Walker was the importance of the physical exam. “As Dr. McAdam went through physical exams with his patients, you could tell he was actively thinking about all the possible causes and outcomes at the same time,” Walker said. “He drew upon an impressive amount of anatomy, which made me feel good about all the hours I’ve spent studying that subject.”

For Walker, who played wide receiver at Texas Tech University, working with elite athletes and being part of a professional sports team for a week was a dream come true. “That week of shadowing was probably the best experience I’ve had in medical school so far,” he noted. “It gave me the motivation and encouragement I really needed after my first year. The experience helped shape my vision that hard work is the most important factor in succeeding in medical school, and it was really nice to see someone who truly loves his job and goes above and beyond in caring for his patients. I would love someday to be in a position like Dr. McAdam is.”

In June, Nick Saenz ’14, an Academic All-State football player in high school, also had the opportunity to shadow McAdam in his Seattle clinic and help out with some of the hands-on clinical exams. “I was able to apply the anterior and posterior drawer test when patients appeared to have an anterior or posterior cruciate ligament tear,” Saenz said. “Dr. McAdam taught me countless other techniques on how to test nervous and musculoskeletal function of the upper and lower extremities.”

During the weeklong experience, Saenz felt a strong sense of camaraderie as he kept pace with McAdam and his staff. “It was great to feel like I was an important part of the team and to be able to contribute in such a unique way,” he noted. “Also, being able to work with elite athletes in such an exciting environment is the ultimate adrenaline rush.”

The Alumni Association sincerely appreciates Dr. McAdam’s efforts to advance the educational mission of the School of Medicine! If you are interested in letting a medical student shadow you in your clinic, please e-mail us at medalumni@uthscsa.edu.
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