

PITT Pharmacy

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

SPRING 2006



Dear Friends,
The other morning, I woke to the voices on the *Morning Edition* of National Public Radio reporting that the use of weakened vaccine and Tamiflu could decrease the number of people affected by the avian flu by two thirds. As I listened on in my dreamy state, I heard words that snapped me to a full level of alertness—



words such as administering vaccines, readiness, locations, and distributing products. My imagination took over as I pictured the citizens of our communities visiting their friendly neighborhood pharmacies to receive the medications that would truly save their lives. This may be a pipe dream in the form I stated, but maybe it isn't far from a reality that could be ours. Can and will pharmacists meet the challenge to be part of the solution in an infectious crisis?

Life offers us many choices of how to spend our time, energy, and talents. Some of our faculty and alums are actively working on emergency preparedness. But that isn't the only way we can make an impact. I find it continually refreshing to see our community of students, alums, faculty, and friends seeking ways to spend their time, energy, and talents so that they have the greatest possible impact on human health and well-being. Some of us focus our efforts on caring for patients. Pharmacists everywhere faced the hurdles presented to them and their patients by Medicare Part D. Other faculty and students choose to focus on discovering better ways of treating diseases through their research. Still others choose to develop innovative ways for students to learn. In this issue of *PITPharmacy*, you will find stories about how our alumni, our faculty, and our students have chosen to focus their time to make a difference.

We know we make a difference. The question we all have to ask ourselves is, "Could I make a bigger difference if I were to focus my time, energy, and talents in a slightly different way?" The answer may help us separate what is important from what is merely urgent.

Sincerely,

Patricia D. Kroboth, PhD



SCHOOL OF PHARMACY
LEADERSHIP

Dean

Patricia D. Kroboth, PhD

Senior Associate Dean

Randall B. Smith, PhD

Associate Dean

for Assessment and Curricular Outcomes

Gary P. Stoehr, PharmD

Assistant Dean of Students

Sharon E. Corey, PhD

Assistant Dean for Business and Finance

Gary Haberle, BAS

Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs

Denise L. Howrie, PharmD

Assistant Dean for Special Projects

Dennis P. Swanson, MS

Associate Dean for Business Innovation

Gordon J. Vanscoy, PharmD, MBA

Chair

Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Barry Gold, PhD

Chair

Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics

Robert J. Weber, MS

Director

Student Services

Marcia L. Borrelli

Director

Center for Pharmacoinformatics

and Outcomes Research

Kim C. Coley, PharmD

Director of Finance

Kellie A. Mitchell, MBA

Director of Development

Lawton Snyder, MS, MBA

Director of Center for Education

and Drug Abuse Research

Ralph E. Tarter, PhD

Director of Information

and Communication Services

Thomas Waters, BS

Interim Director of

Center for Pharmacogenetics

Wen Xie, MD, PhD

Managing Editor

Thomas Waters

Contributing Editors

Barbara Belardi

Laraine Kuchma

Lawton Snyder

Graphic Designer

Erik Rueter

Writing, editing,

Department of

and production

University Marketing

services:

Communications

PITPharmacy is published twice a year by the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy.



Laura Lenart (PharmD '06), right, discusses medication options with "patient" Erin Kinney, PharmD, during a training session.

Dean's Message	2
Features:	
Life on the Front Lines	4
Under the Influence	7
When Duty Calls	12
Keeping It Real	13
Picture Perfect	14
News:	
Our School	16
Our Faculty	18
Our Students	20
Our Alumni	21
Philanthropy for Pharmacy	24
Snapshot from Pharmacy's Past	26
Contact Us	27

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint/grievance procedures, please contact the University of Pittsburgh, Office of Affirmative Action, William A. Savage, Assistant to the Chancellor and Director of Affirmative Action (and Title IX and 504, ADA Coordinator), 901 William Pitt Union, Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

Published in cooperation with the Department of University Marketing Communications. UMC21187-0606

Life on the front lines

Pharmacy grads guide the way as Medicare Part D takes effect



A pharmacist counsels an older patient on medication usage.

Since January 1, changes to the prescription drug benefits offered by Medicare are taking the nation by storm—and pharmacists are mobilizing to bail them out.

Known informally as “Medicare Part D,” the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 and the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D), officially took effect in 2006, giving millions of Americans an unprecedented array of choices in how they pay for prescriptions.

Yet putting theory into practice has been challenging, to say the least. Glitches in the enrollment process have led some patients to forgo their medications, while others were confused by the details of competing plans and had difficulty deciding which to choose.

At the forefront of the effort to smooth out these problems is the pharmacist. Considered by many to be the most accessible of health-care professionals, pharmacists are easier to get on the phone and don’t require appointments or multiple layers of bureaucracy as a prerequisite to answering patient questions. With

the onset of Medicare Part D, their role has become pivotal in helping people realize the benefits the legislation intended.

Reaching out

In anticipation of the changes Part D would bring, many major pharmacy chains began preparing for the current wave of questions months ago. Part of that proactive approach was driven by the philosophy that pharmacists dispense information, not just medication, particularly in a world of increasingly complex drug therapies.

“It’s going to heighten the role that pharmacists play in the community—not just providing medication, but also the information and assurance of quality care.”

—Larry Merlo



Larry Merlo (BS '78)

“We think we need to be a leading information resource in the communities we serve,” says Larry Merlo (BS '78), who now serves as executive vice president of stores for CVS pharmacy. “So one of the things we first needed to do was educate our pharmacy

teams on the key issues of the program.”

In the months leading up to the plan’s rollout, approximately 16,000 CVS pharmacists completed training programs approved by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education.

The newly trained pharmacists then participated in more than 1,500 community outreach events, offering customers detailed information about the factors they should consider in selecting a prescription drug program. CVS scheduled another 1,000 workshops in January and February.

Information kiosks at the front of each store and “decision guides” are also part of the campaign, as are Medicare Tuesdays, during which patients can stop by the store for one-on-one consultations with trained advisers.

Other major pharmacy chains are offering similar outreach programs. At Brooks and Eckerd pharmacies, the education campaign began in the summer of 2005 with weekly circulars, eventually ramping up to a blitz of looping in-store videos, pharmacy technician greetings, and outreach visits to senior centers, nursing homes, American Legions, and other sites.

In addition to providing information to the patients themselves, the chain also sponsored several caregiver weekends, which targeted people who work weekdays but may still

bear responsibility for a person affected by Medicare Part D.

“We looked at this thing as an opportunity,” says Enzo Cerra (BS '73), Brooks and Eckerd’s executive vice president of marketing and merchandising. “If you’re a company that operates drugstores where the majority of the business is on the pharmacy side, and there’s a new activity that addresses an important consumer segment like senior citizens, you certainly have to take it seriously.”

At Giant Eagle, the regional supermarket chain took advantage of its dual status as a pharmacist and grocer by offering nutritionist-led store tours for people with specific health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease. By gearing specific advice—and cooking demonstrations, in some cases—to an older demographic, the pharmacies hope to engage more customers who might be affected by the change.

Randy Heiser (BS '83), Giant Eagle’s vice president of pharmacy, says the chain encouraged its customers to stop in and get a Medicare Part D worksheet. The customers handwrite personal information and list the drugs they’re taking, and a pharmacy employee enters it into the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Web site, retrieving a list of plans from which the customers may choose.

Although people also could access the same CMS information from a home computer, “We thought a majority of the senior population would not have ready access to the Internet, so we provided that service to them,” Heiser says.

Sage advice

For some retailers, the changes

elicited by Medicare Part D are creating new opportunities for pharmacists to assume a greater role in patient counseling. In partnership with the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, Rite Aid has piloted a medication therapy management service.

CMS will reimburse pharmacists for medication therapy management offered to patients with chronic diseases who are taking five or more medications, or who are taking expensive medications.

In the case of Rite Aid, pharmacists interview patients and provide individualized education, therapeutic advice, and follow-up services in private rooms within the store.

“It’s been absolutely fantastic,” says Jim Mastrian (BS '65), Rite Aid’s chief operating officer. “There are a lot of people talking about medication therapy management, but we’re actually doing it. If pharmacists can be compensated for that care, we’re in a position to make it happen.”

The uncertainty of reimbursement has given pause to other

“There are a lot of people talking about [medication therapy management], but we’re actually doing it.”

—Jim Mastrian

retailers, many of whom are adopting a wait-and-see approach to such counseling. Heiser says Giant Eagle has built private consultation rooms in a few stores to prepare for the possibility, but is waiting to see how many patients meet the requirements for reimbursement before deciding on what scale to offer the management service.

Merlo says the implementation of Medicare Part D is in too early a

stage to predict how far medication therapy management will spread.

“I think everybody’s focused right now on just the prescription benefits side to this and recognizing some of the start-up issues,” he says. “A lot of folks are saying, ‘First things first, let’s get this up and running, and then we’ll move to the disease management side.’”

Rite Aid is currently developing software to expand its program to more sites, Mastrian says.

Pharmacy’s changing face



Jim Mastrian (BS '65)

The plan’s implementation is certain to impact pharmacy financially—although to what extent, nobody knows.

Mastrian says he believes lower reimbursement will be offset by a higher volume of prescriptions from patients who were previously leaving prescriptions unfilled due to cost.

Heiser says stores also will have to work harder to win cus-

Life on the front lines

Pharmacy grads guide the way as Medicare Part D takes effect



Enzo Cerra (BS '73)

"It's an excellent example of how the community pharmacist has a vital role in helping individual human beings maximize their healthcare coverage."

—Enzo Cerra

tomers who might otherwise turn to mail-order outlets. But that's where the pharmacist's role as a counselor will come into play, he adds. Merlo concurs that pharmacists can be irreplaceable when they answer questions and take the time to help patients who are flummoxed by their choices.

"I think about my mother. She doesn't know where to start," he says. CVS pharmacy teams "get a great deal of satisfaction when that senior says, 'I knew you could answer that question for me—thank God I took the time to come and see you today.'"

Despite the complications that accompanied Part D's rollout, and

the uncertainty of the future, most believe the plan will help the pharmacist regain a stronger identity as part of a patient's healthcare team.

"It's going to heighten the role that pharmacists play in the community—not just providing medication, but also the information and assurance of quality care," Merlo says.

As he points out, in a time-starved healthcare environment, pharmacists are perhaps best positioned to monitor a patient's conditions and ensure compliance, which will go a long way toward improving health outcomes.

Already, pharmacists have been key in filling gaps left by the

government, Cerra says, because they are willing to help people fill out forms, compare plans, and help with enrollment. In some cases, pharmacies have helped people get holdover medications while they wait for their membership to take effect.

"With older consumers, this stuff is so challenging. It's certainly daunting for them to understand," Cerra says. "It's an excellent example of how the community pharmacist has a vital role in helping individual human beings maximize their healthcare coverage."

Without the help of pharmacists, "this program, candidly, would be a big dud," he adds. ∞



Randy Heiser (BS '83)

"We thought a majority of the senior population would not have ready access to the Internet, so we provided that service to them."

—Randy Heiser



Under the influence

Research seeks to discover how genes affect drug therapy

This feature is part of an ongoing series covering research within the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. As a leader in research, the School of Pharmacy is not only able to advance pharmaceutical care but also can enhance its educational programs by providing students with access to up-to-the minute information. In each article, we showcase the work of a single faculty member. Additionally, we will highlight other projects of interest of our faculty.

Feeling a bit blue, a woman stops by her local drugstore and buys St. John's wort, a popular over-the-counter herbal remedy for depression. Shortly thereafter—although she's also taking oral contraceptives—she becomes pregnant.

To the untrained eye, the woman is carrying a miracle baby, conceived despite the pill's much-publicized, nearly foolproof efficacy rate.

But to Wen Xie, the "miracle" is a simple case of cause and effect: St. John's wort interacts with the hormones contained in contraceptives to prevent pregnancy, deactivating them and rendering the medication useless.

Discovering such interactions and finding ways to make drugs more effective is all in a day's work for Xie, the interim director of the School of Pharmacy's Center for Pharmacogenetics, where he has worked since 2002, taking over as interim director in 2005.

The center focuses on unlocking the function of human genes. The potential is staggering. Of the 30,000 genes in the human genome, science really understands only 2,000, Xie says. As a specialist in the genetic regulation of drug metabolism enzymes, Xie studies methods for influencing enzyme transporters through nuclear receptors, which are protein molecules that sit on the cell surface. The transporters affect how well a body handles medications, as well as its

own naturally produced chemicals, such as hormones and bioacids.

"It is known that people of different races and genders have different capabilities in terms of how the body handles chemicals, including drugs," explains Xie, who holds both an MD and a PhD.

(continued p. 8)



Under the influence

Research seeks to discover how genes affect drug therapy

“We will keep the tradition of the center, which is excellence. That’s our signature.”

—Wen Xie

(continued from p. 7)

By better understanding the enzyme transporters, “you can evaluate whether the drug is more effective or not; you can sort of predict that,” he says.

Traditionally, researchers study how enzyme transporters affect a body’s response to drugs. But when Xie’s studies demonstrated that the transporters are also critical in handling the body’s own substances, he took the field one step further. By better controlling the transporters, scientists can greatly refine the tools already used to combat devastating diseases.

Of mice and men

Among the most exciting research currently under way by Xie’s group is its foray into the fight against breast cancer.

Using mice that are genetically altered to mimic human biological responses, Xie has shown that a certain enzyme can deactivate estrogen, the hormone closely associated with the development of some forms of breast cancer.

“If you can deactivate estrogen, you can prevent or trick breast cancer,” Xie says.

By blocking estrogen through the receptors, Xie believes he can refine existing cancer treatments. Furthermore, if scientists can show that a particular receptor helps in the prevention or treatment of breast cancer, they might be able to detect genetic defects or a mutation in the receptor to create a biomarker predicting a person’s predisposition to breast cancer.

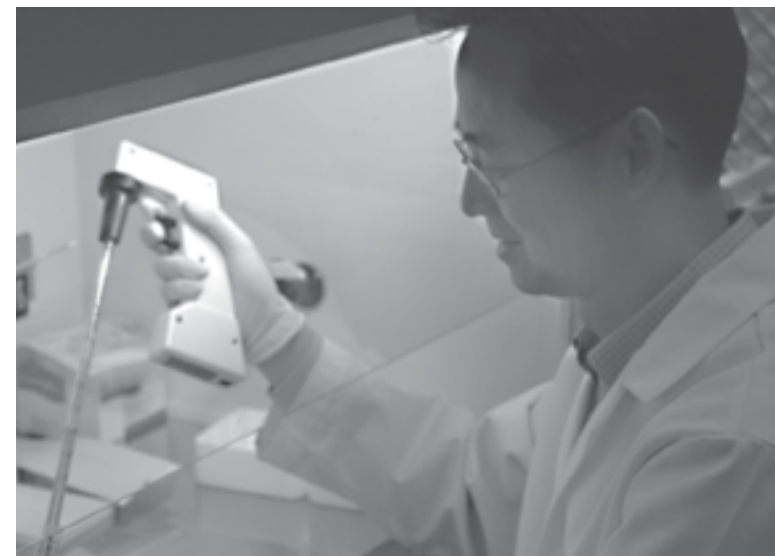
“All therapeutics is based on manipulation,” he says. “If you sim-

ply know the enzyme is important, that’s valuable, but if you want to apply it to therapeutics, you have to be able to control the process.”

The idea is to create both prevention and treatment strategies. Although it’s hard to say with any certainty when health care could broadly apply the fruits of Xie’s research, he believes the process is efficient enough that it will be soon.

“It’s a novel strategy. It’s very effective, and we have a lot of experimental data to support it,” he says. “In theory, another potential advantage is you can combine multiple strategies to make the treatment much more comprehensive.”

Another strategy could combat liver disease. Researchers chemically activated a receptor in jaundiced mice that allowed the liver to clear bilirubin more efficiently. Xie believes the study will allow for future discovery of new drugs that will treat or prevent jaundice in humans.



Wen Xie, interim director of the Center for Pharmacogenetics, works in his laboratory.

Drugs already exist to treat the condition, but Xie says the reason why such therapies work is not well understood. By better understanding the mechanism for an established treatment, scientists can improve its potency.

“Once we know our receptor is the therapeutic target, we can develop more efficient activators,” he says.

A two-pronged approach

For Xie, the search to treat cancer at the molecular level dates back to his earliest days as a graduate student at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. It was there that he first began using mice to study the genes involved in cancer formation. He later applied similar strategies during his post-doctoral work in San Diego, Calif.

What excited him about the University of Pittsburgh was the way faculty in the Schools of Pharmacy and Medicine collaborated in their research, instead of operating in separate spheres.

Although many pharmacy schools study pharmacogenetics,

Pitt’s approach is unique because it marries medicine to pharmacy at every step of the research process. For example, Xie is seeking grant funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for a joint project with a professor of surgery to study the molecules and genes responsible for gallstone disease. Very little is known about hereditary factors in the development of gallstone disorders, but Xie believes Pitt has “a pretty clear clue” and hopes to expand the research to a human study.

Another recently published work outlines the potential danger of combining Chinese herbal medicine with the blood-thinning drug warfarin. Although this is a typical pharmacy topic, Xie’s lab extends such issues to medicine by expanding his focus from drug metabolism to include chemicals naturally produced by the body, which affects physiology as well as disease.

Xie, who earned his medical degree from Peking University Health Science Center, says he thinks the combination of medicine and pharmacy could be used to greater effect than either discipline on its own.

“I recognized the combination would be perfect,” he says. “We think it’s an advantage for our research.”

The approach has won impressive levels of NIH funding for the Center for Pharmacogenetics, which first opened in 1999. That funding, in part, has helped the school’s national reputation skyrocket in recent years.

“We are proud of who we are. We are not large in terms of size—we only have three principal investigators for now—but we are in the process of expanding,” Xie explains. “We will keep the tradition of the center, which is excellence. That’s our signature.” ∞

Seen in the Laboratory



Janet A. Amico, MD

Janet Amico’s research focuses on the physiology of the hormone oxytocin, which is released not only into the peripheral circulation but also within the brain, where it is believed to influence stress, anxiety, affiliation, and eating behaviors. She is exploring the hormone’s role in these conditions using a genetically engineered mouse, which she helped to develop, that is deficient in oxytocin. These animal studies have direct clinical relevance to disorders in humans, including stress, anxiety, mother-infant attachment, social affiliation, and eating disorders. Amico also has developed and utilized a radioimmunoassay for measuring oxytocin in mammalian body fluids (including human) during physiological and pathophysiological states.



Blair Capitano, PharmD

Blair Capitano seeks to clinically optimize antimicrobial therapy using pharmacokinetic/ pharmacodynamic principles. She is particularly interested in identifying clinical tools to improve outcomes of antifungal therapy in hosts with immunodeficiencies. Capitano’s recent work characterized the pharmacokinetics of the antifungal medication voriconazole in lung transplant patients, and determined drug penetration to the site of infection. She seeks to gain insight into antifungal pharmacodynamics within the lung to help identify clinically relevant targets.

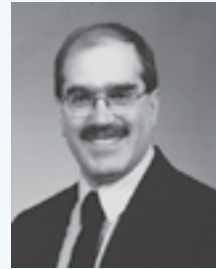


(continued p. 10)

Seen in the Laboratory

(continued from p. 9)**Billy W. Day, PhD**

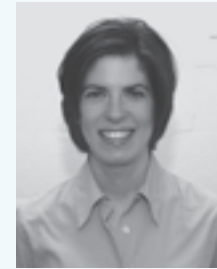
A major focus of the Billy Day lab is the synthesis of potential antitumor and hemorrhagic shock-preventive agents. The lab prepares libraries of agents, also examining their biological properties, and performs collaborative testing of libraries prepared by several Pitt colleagues as well. The Day lab also performs a variety of high throughput biochemical and cell-based assays for endpoints. These data are used to develop computational models used in drug design. Day directs the University's Proteomics Core Lab, which provides analyses of the protein complement of cells, tissues, and organisms. The resulting information is used in disease detection, prevention, control, and treatment. The lab uses sophisticated experimental design, instrumentation, and data analysis tools to evaluate the proteome, and collaborates extensively with many groups across the University.

**Robert B. Gibbs, PhD**

Robert Gibbs studies mechanisms that contribute to brain aging and cognitive decline. His recent studies have looked at the effects of gonadal hormones, and the extent to which hormone therapy can be used to enhance and maintain function in specific neural systems in the adult and aging brain. He has shown that estradiol treatment positively affects brain function, can improve cognitive performance, and can even prevent or slow age-related cognitive decline. However, research suggests that these effects are task specific, and depend on the dose, regimen, and timing of treatment relative to age and ovarian function. Recent work stems from the theory that many of these effects are mediated by estradiol's ability to enhance projections within the brain, enabling structural changes to occur and enhancing cognitive performance and resilience. Current studies seek to identify circuits by which hormones affect performance within specific cognitive domains. Other studies will evaluate the effects of drugs such as raloxifene (used to prevent and treat osteoporosis), and aromatase inhibitors (used to prevent and treat breast cancer), as well as the development of tools for targeted gene delivery to basal forebrain cholinergic neurons.

**Dexi Liu, PhD**

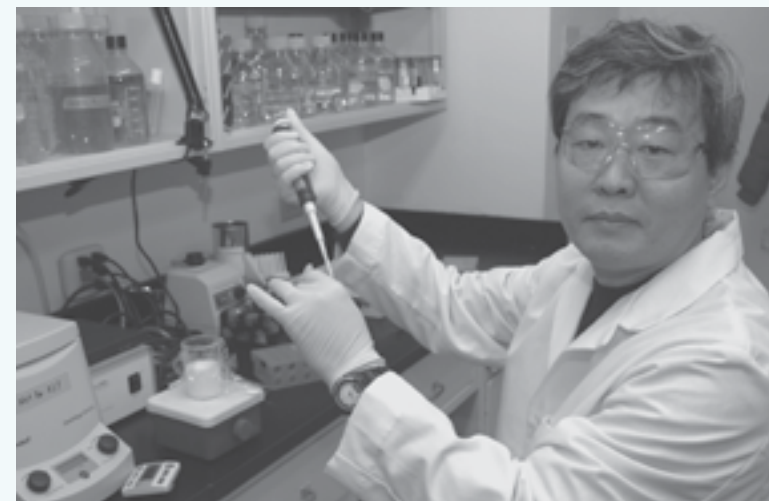
Gene therapy is considered one of the most promising approaches to the treatment of genetic disease. Work in Dexi Liu's laboratory focuses on the development of new devices and synthetic compounds to achieve targeted gene delivery. His research involves a substantial amount of chemical synthesis, formulation development, engineering, molecular biology, cell biology, and animal work. Current projects include the development of a clinically applicable procedure for hydrodynamic gene delivery, the synthesis of sugar-based bifunctional compounds for gene delivery to the liver, the development of polymer-based carriers for pulmonary gene therapy, and the genome-based discovery of therapeutic genes.

**Denise Sokos, PharmD, BCPS**

Pharmacists in nearly all states have the authority to administer vaccines; however, research shows that most have not adopted this opportunity into practice. Denise Sokos' research interests lie in the health behavior related to adult immunizations: specifically how pharmacists' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs affect the rate of adult immunization. She recently assessed attitudes among Pennsylvania pharmacists practicing in independent community settings toward the change in the Pennsylvania Pharmacy Practice Act allowing pharmacists to immunize adults. Her long-term research goal is to increase the number of pharmacists providing immunizations to adults. ∞



Song Li, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, is conducting experiments to develop novel therapies for pulmonary hypertension.



Yong Tae Kwon, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, is conducting an experiment for proteomic analysis of ubiquitin pathway.

When duty calls

Students put education on hold to serve overseas

For Jim Fischer, serving his country is second nature. His grandfathers and uncles have served in both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam, and Fischer himself enlisted in the Army right after high school.

So when his National Guard unit was called up for active duty in Iraq in 2004, Fischer went without hesitation—even though it meant that he would lose a full year of pharmacy school in the process.

“Combat medicine gives you a greater scope of practice than you would have on the civilian side.”

—Jim Fischer (P1)



Jim Fischer (P1)

“All the people who were in my class are in their third year and getting ready to do their rotations,” says Fischer, who reverted to P1 status upon his return in November 2005. Taking time out for active duty “requires a lot of patience, I guess.”

A sergeant and medic in the National Guard, Fischer divided his time between a battalion aid station in Bayji and various missions around town, such as patrols and raids. With temperatures soaring to 130 degrees, staying hydrated was a challenge, but Fischer gained a lot of hands-on training and knowledge about various types of medication.

“I got to actually do more than the normal scope of practice for a pharmacy tech,” he says. “Combat medicine gives you a greater scope of practice than you would have on the civilian side.”

Fischer is among an elite group of students who are combining their pharmacy education with stints of active duty as members of the military. Although they take longer to earn their degrees, all say the sacrifice is worthwhile—not

only for patriotic reasons, but also for practical benefits such as tuition assistance and career training.

Heather Derby (P1), a sergeant and medic in the Army Reserves, had just started her pharmacy training in the fall of 2003 when her unit was deployed to Iraq. Although leaving school was difficult, she was able to broaden her skill sets through her military service.

“I am reconciled with it; it’s okay,” Derby says. “Time is the disadvantage, but the advantage is I’m older, more relaxed.”

In addition to helping reorder prescriptions and other pharmacy-related work, she worked as an emergency medical technician, accompanying a platoon of soldiers as they traveled through the outskirts of Baghdad looking for improvised explosives.

The hands-on work appealed to Derby, and she is considering additional training as a physician’s assistant so she can combine the disciplines of medicine and pharmacy. She believes the faculty at the School of Pharmacy will help her find the right fit for her interests.

“There’s so much that I don’t know,” Derby says. “I think there’s a lot of opportunity, and the faculty here have a lot of unique experiences.”



Louis Portas Jr. (P3)



Heather Derby (P1) shakes hands with Barry Gold, professor and chair of pharmaceutical sciences, at the 2006 Gordon J. Vanscoy White Coat Ceremony. Robert Weber, associate professor and chair of pharmacy and therapeutics, and Deanne Hall, clinical pharmacist of pharmacy and therapeutics, look on.

Louis Portas Jr. (P3), who just completed six years in the Army National Guard, spent a year in Kosovo from March 2002 to March 2003. Although he was able to pick up a spot with the next class, regaining the momentum of his college studies was difficult.

“I have trouble getting the ball rolling after a summer, let alone a whole year,” he jokes. “The professors really went out of their way to make sure I fell on track with the next class,” meeting with him to help prepare for exams, giving him study guides and breakdowns, and helping him get back up to speed.

Originally from Lebanon, Pa., Portas joined the guard right out of high school as a means of learning new skills and expanding his horizons. Being in Kosovo helped him appreciate how well Americans live by comparison.

“It’s a third world country,” he says. “It’s very hard for Americans to realize the poverty levels. Even the poorest of our poor aren’t as bad off as the people in Kosovo.”

Keeping it real

Medical simulator gives students hands-on experience

He talks and coughs. He breathes and bleeds. He can have high blood pressure, an abnormal heartbeat, or a full-scale heart attack. When his neophyte pharmacist is done examining him, he can do it all again.

“He” is SimMan, a medical simulation dummy developed through a collaboration between UPMC and Laerdal Medical Corporation. His permanent address is UPMC’s Peter M. Winter Institute for Simulation, Education, and Research, also known as the WISER center, although he has also made guest appearances at the School of Pharmacy, where he was carried on a stretcher.

For a year beginning in April 2005, Amy Seybert (BS ’94, PharmD ’96), assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and a clinical pharmacist in cardiology at UPMC, has taken her PharmD students through the institute to hone their skills on SimMan. They begin by learning how to take blood pressure, then move on to treat an abnormal heart rhythm with drugs.

The third time the students encounter SimMan, Seybert puts them through their paces. Students must introduce themselves, question him, and ask for pieces of information to help them form a diagnosis.

“They had no idea what could be wrong with the patient,” Seybert says of the final session, which occurred in December.

SimMan presented a different ailment to each group of six students, who were graded for their skill in obtaining vital signs and making a correct diagnosis. They then had to develop a treatment regimen and a protocol for monitoring that regimen. A final grade



Aaron English (P2), Angela Slampak (P2), Joshua Wireman (P2), and Brittany DeVoge (P2) work with Amy Seybert, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and SimMan in the WISER center.

assessed how well the students worked overall with their “patient.”

Seybert or another faculty member or resident can sit behind a glass panel and provide the voice of the patient, an experience she admits can be as fun for the teacher as it is unsettling for the students.

The mannequin “can cough and choke,” she says. “It can be pretty realistic. Some [of the students] get a little afraid, to be honest.”

The benefits are obvious. Because SimMan can bleed, go into cardiac shock, or offer any number of jarring surprises, students get the opportunity to overcome their initial squeamishness without upsetting a real patient. Moreover, Seybert can control the environment, guaranteeing which answers are correct and which are not.

“It’s the most exciting thing I’ve ever done,” she says. “It’s as close to real life as you can imagine.”

Some students have affirmed or reversed decisions to enter clini-

cal pharmacy on the basis of their simulation experiences, she says.

In the spring of 2006, Seybert expects to publish a paper in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* chronicling the impact of simulators on student retention of information delivered in lectures. In the fall 2005 semester, Seybert trained 97 students through the institute, measuring their knowledge of lecture material before and after simulation. Scores indicated the simulator helped them strengthen their grasp of the information after they were able to put it into practice.

“To our knowledge, there is no other pharmacy school doing research on this type of education,” Seybert says. “One student said, ‘I’ve learned more in that two-hour simulation session than I’ve learned in the entire semester.’”



Picture Perfect

Photography from the School of Pharmacy



*Graduation Ceremony and Dinner
April 30, 2006*

*Gordon J. Vanscoy White Coat
Ceremony, January 27, 2006*



*Helping Hands for Healthy Hearts
February 2006*

Picture Perfect

Photography from the School of Pharmacy



2005-06 Scholarship Recipients

*The 2005 Board of Visitors with
Dean Patricia Kroboth. Seated left
to right: John Curran, chair, Donald
Abraham, and Daniel Cobaugh;
standing: Rosalie Sagraves, John
Pieper, Kroboth, Victoria Roche,
William Bailey, and Coleen Kayden.*



*GEAR UP 2006: Galina Kirillova,
research assistant professor of
pharmaceutical sciences, with
Caroline Cooper of Pitt, Jacob Albin
of Creighton University, Robert
Bondi of Geneva College, and
Nathan Hunnell of Pitt.*

Our School



SPOTLIGHT ON BALWANT DIXIT

When Balwant Dixit was putting himself through college in his native India, he worked as a professional tailor, designing his own patterns with a system that is based on the relative anatomical proportions of each person.

It is a fitting example of the way Dixit—who has taught at the School of Pharmacy since 1963 and currently is a professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences—has approached the challenges in his life. When a need arises, he uses the resources around him to improvise a solution, then sets about perfecting his work. And whether he's training apprentice tailors or teaching a new generation of pharmacists, that philosophy also has infused his approach to education.

"I personally think that a university is a place where people should have an open mind, both as teachers and students," he says. "That is our mission, to teach people how to make knowledge-based rational decisions."

Long a familiar face at the School of Pharmacy, Dixit initially intended to become a doctor. But in 1950, in his premedical studies, he was forced to drop out of college to support his family because of the untimely death of his father. He was successful enough to earn a living as a tailor while completing undergraduate degrees in biology and industrial chemistry, as well as two master's degrees, one in biochemistry and the other in pharmacology. He also mentored four deaf boys and taught them his sewing trade, allowing them to run their own businesses.

Dixit arrived at Pitt in 1962 as an international fellow in pharmacology. He completed his doctoral studies and joined the faculty three

years later as an assistant professor, and has served as chair of the Department of Pharmacology, interim dean, and associate dean for graduate studies and research. During his tenure as the chair of the Department of Pharmacology, the department was nationally ranked, and more than 70 doctoral students completed their studies.

During his three-year tenure as the interim head of the school, he established the Departments of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutics, a program in clinical pharmacokinetics, a drug information center, and a full-service pharmacy for students. Although his original idea was to use the pharmacy as a training ground for the school's students, it since has evolved into a division of the Student Health Service.

Yet Dixit hesitates to characterize any of his accomplishments as a legacy, preferring instead to view them as ideas born out of necessity.

"I'm not the kind of person who is hung up with having certain things done because somebody should remember them," he says.

In addition to his work in pharmacy, Dixit also established the Center for the Performing Arts of India as an exchange agreement between Pitt and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Dixit's interest in presenting Indian performing arts to Americans began soon after he arrived in Pittsburgh and found the area devoid of Indian culture.

In response to this void, he met with other students from Pitt, Duquesne University, and Carnegie Mellon University, and cofounded the Indian Association of Pittsburgh, which organized cultural activities. In 1985, he was asked by the government of India to help arrange nationwide performances

and workshops for the Festival of India. Within three months, he raised \$80,000 for the project and designed a detailed program for 27 musicians; the rest is history.

Until 2003, when the center's national programming ended for various reasons, Dixit had arranged more than 1,800 concerts in the United States, exposing the nation to the world of classical Indian music. Although he has never taken any money for his efforts, it is unmistakably hard work. Dixit and his wife, Vidya, meticulously planned details such as health insurance and tax obligations, hosted musicians at their home, and prepared brochures and tickets in marathon sessions at their kitchen table.

Today he is working to bring qualified teachers from India to Pittsburgh to offer courses in Indian classical music to students from local universities.

Although he is 73, Dixit is not contemplating retirement yet, but when it comes he hopes to be ready to take on new projects. An accomplished cook, he once thought of opening an Indian restaurant since he characterizes existing Indian fare in Pittsburgh as "mediocre," and believes there is a market for something better. Already, he has prepared buffets for upwards of 200 people, and is remodeling his home kitchen to include commercial-grade appliances.

He is also passionate about improving the world around him. Whether it's a broken traffic light, a faulty medical billing process, or a misplaced dumpster, if Dixit notices a problem, he will start making phone calls—stopping only when the issue is resolved.

"My wife and other people say, 'Why are you so interested in doing these things?'" he says. His answer is simple: "Why should I keep quiet? I'm a person who wants to speak my mind." ∞

Our School



Melanie Zimmerman, executive secretary of the Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy; Ed Bechtel, board vice chair; Carole Clarke, board counsel; Richard Smiga, board member; Michael Romano, board chair; Frank Rubino, secretary; Paul Miller, public board member; and Basil Merenda, Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs commissioner

The School of Pharmacy hosted the **Pennsylvania State Board of Pharmacy** meeting on the University of Pittsburgh Oakland campus in October 2005, affording our students the opportunity to attend one of the board's monthly meetings. This was only the second meeting held outside Harrisburg (Temple University hosted a state board meeting in 2005). Students and faculty from Duquesne University, Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Bidwell Learning Center were invited; approximately 120 people attended. The meeting gave students an opportunity to meet the board members and learn firsthand how the regulatory process works. After the meeting, the commissioner of the Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs (BPOA) and the state board counsel gave presentations to the P1 class about the roles of the BPOA and the State Board of Pharmacy. The board members were so pleased with the visit that they plan to continue to visit other schools of pharmacy for future meetings.

January 27, 2006, marked the **fourth annual Gordon J. Vanscoy White Coat Ceremony**, when 102 P1 students were presented with their first white coat, symbolizing their passage into the pharmacy profession. The ceremony took place in Scaife Hall and was attended by more than 470 family members, faculty, and friends. After receiving their coats, the students recited the pledge of professionalism, indicating their willingness to assume the obligations and responsibilities of the pharmacy profession. A reception was held in Salk Hall following the ceremony.

The **fifth annual GEAR UP (Graduate Education and Research at the University of Pittsburgh) mini-graduate school weekend** was held this year on February 25 and 26. This weekend provides undergraduate and pharmacy students who are considering future research careers in pharmaceutical sciences with the opportunity to meet faculty members and graduate students in our program while learning about graduate school and pharmaceutical sciences research.

More students attended this year than in any previous year, with 29 students arriving from 13 schools including the University of South Florida, Creighton University, Samford University, West Virginia University, Haverford College, the University of Virginia, and many more. As in past years, this top-notch group of students finished the weekend expressing excitement and enthusiasm about graduate education and research in pharmaceutical sciences. The experience was a lot of fun and a great way to pass along the love of research to a group of aspiring young students.

Last fall, the School of Pharmacy once again collaborated with the Graduate School of Public Health's Center for Minority Health (CMH) during the center's annual **Take a Health Professional to the People Day**. Teams of volunteer physicians, nurses, public health educators, dentists, and pharmacists were dispatched to nine local barbershops and beauty salons to provide lifesaving information and health screenings, and to build trust needed to create healthy African American families. CMH highlighted the essential health education role played by pharmacists in helping people take their medications and avoid side effects and dangerous combinations.



Take a Health Professional to the People Day, 2006



Our Faculty

Degrees conferred by the University of Pittsburgh have a year following them; degrees without a year following were conferred by another institution of higher learning.



Amy Seybert
(BS '94,
PharmD '96)

Amy Seybert (BS '94, PharmD '96) assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was one of four faculty members University-wide to receive the 2006 Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award. Chancellor Mark Nordenberg commended Seybert for her teaching excellence in the PharmD program as well as in the postgraduate residency and continuing education programs. Seybert has introduced innovative teaching methods into her classes and has the distinction of being the first within all schools of pharmacy in the United States to use patient simulation education within the curriculum. Seybert established and directs the specialty residency program in cardiovascular pharmacy practice.



Tanya Fabian
(PharmD '98,
PhD '03)

Tanya Fabian (PharmD '98, PhD '03) has been appointed director of pharmacy research and pharmacy services at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, effective February 1, 2006. In addition, she was named assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics. As the pharmacy director, Fabian has clinical responsibilities that focus on developing, implementing, and evaluating psychiatric pharmacy services as part of an interdisciplinary team. Fabian also has been invited to serve on the selection panel for the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Foundation Literature Awards Program. She will serve on the Pharmacy Practice Research Award Panel through June 1, 2006.

The National Certification Board for Diabetes Educators announced that **Deanne Hall (BS '96, PharmD '98)**, associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, has achieved certified diabetes educator (CDE) status by successfully completing the certification examination for diabetes educators. The CDE credential demonstrates to patients and employers that the healthcare professional possesses distinct and specialized knowledge for promoting the quality of care for patients with diabetes.



Deanne Hall
(BS '96,
PharmD '98)

Scott Mark, PharmD, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, has been invited to serve a two-year term on the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists Foundation Research Advisory Panel. This panel consists of pharmacy research experts who help guide the foundation in its research efforts and assist the board and staff in establishing research priorities and identifying funding opportunities.

Ted Rice, MS, associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was elected chair-elect of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' (ASHP) Section of Clinical Specialists and Scientists. The section's members include pharmacists interested in advancing science and providing scientific and clinical specialty practice leadership with ASHP.

Kristine Schonder, PharmD, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, received the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists Faculty Member of the Year award.



Susan Skledar
(BS '88)

Our Faculty

Denise Sokos, PharmD, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was named a member of the 2006–09 editorial board of the *Journal of Managed Care Pharmacy*. The journal publishes peer-reviewed original research manuscripts, subject reviews, and other content intended to advance the use of the scientific method, including the interpretation of research findings in managed care pharmacy.



Joanne Kowiatek
(BS '77)

Robert Weber, MS, associate professor and chair, Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics, edited *The Handbook on Storing and Securing Medications*, published collaboratively by the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and Joint Commission Resources. Weber; **Susan Skledar (BS '88)**, associate professor; **Scott Mark**, assistant professor; and **Joanne Kowiatek (BS '77)**, adjunct instructor, were contributing authors. The handbook provides a resource to improve the safety of the medication use process and broadly addresses and clarifies medication storage and security terms, safe practices, tips, and processes for healthcare professionals.

Wen Xie, MD, PhD, assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences and interim director of the Center for Pharmacogenetics, was an invited speaker at several national meetings last fall including the 2005 American Society of Nephrology meeting, the 13th North America International Society for the Study of Xenobiotics and 20th Japanese Society for the Study of Xenobiotics, the Keystone Symposium on Tissue-Selective Nuclear Receptors, and the 2005 Land O'Lakes Conference on Drug Metabolism and Applied Pharmacokinetics.

Our new faculty members are **Beth Minnigh (PhD '79)**, senior lecturer of pharmaceutical sciences; **Christine Scelsi (BS '90, PharmD '94)**, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics; and **Takafumi Tasaki**, research assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences.



Christine Scelsi
(BS '90,
PharmD '94)



Dean Patricia Kroboth, Distinguished Lecturer Pieter Cullis, and Wen Xie, interim director of the Center for Pharmacogenetics, in front of the Elmer H. Grimm Sr. Pharmacy Museum.



Margaret Verrico
(BS '93)

Margaret Verrico (BS '93) was promoted from instructor to assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and **Susan Skledar (BS '88)** was promoted from assistant to associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics.

Our Students

P1—Class of 2009
P2—Class of 2008
P3—Class of 2007
P4—Class of 2006

Kristin Bigos, a predoctoral fellow in pharmaceutical sciences, has been awarded the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award, a predoctoral fellowship funded by the National Institute of Mental Health to study the impact of acute drug response on functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) signal. The study specifically focuses on the effects of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor, citalopram, on neuronal activation elicited during an affective task using fMRI, and aims to evaluate the impact of a polymorphism in the promoter region of the serotonin transporter gene.

Rama Sivasubramanian, graduate student, received an American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists travel award to the annual meeting in Nashville, Tenn., in November 2005 for her poster "Valerian does not alter acetaminophen glucuronidation." Raman Venkataraman, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, and Reginald Frye coauthored the poster.

Nickolas Kernich (P2) was awarded a scholarship from the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation. Students selected for the foundation scholarships must be enrolled as full-time pharmacy students, have experience in chain community pharmacy, and have a desire to pursue a career in chain community pharmacy. Students are evaluated based on their career goals, interest in chain community pharmacy practice, and their credentials, including leadership activities and professional and community involvement. Kernich was one of 32 students selected from schools of pharmacy across the country.



Students discuss job opportunities at the 2005 Career Expo.

National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) members **Kristen Topolosky (P2)**, **David Julian (P3)**, **Christine Huber (PharmD '05)**, and **Jeanine Buccì (P4)** competed in the NCPA Pruitt-Schutte Student Business Plan Competition. This is the first national competition of its kind within the profession of pharmacy, in which pharmacy students design a business plan to purchase an existing independent community pharmacy or develop a new community pharmacy. These four students placed 12th nationally at NCPA's 107th annual convention in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in October 2005.

Jennifer Stover (P4) received the School of Pharmacy's American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists Student of the Year award.

Stephanie Spence (P3) and **Kamile Whitters (P3)** were recognized at the Student National Pharmaceutical Association's (SNPhA) annual meeting for their presentation on the effect of direct-to-consumer advertising on prescribing. They also earned appointments to the SNPhA national executive board.

Margie Snyder (P4) was appointed as the student forum member of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists' Commission on Therapeutics, which focuses on issues related to drug therapy and societal drug use and develops position statements and therapeutics guidelines regarding such topics.

The school had another outstanding year in support of the **annual Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Walk for the Cure**. More than 130 walkers participated and raised \$2,863. This strong showing of support netted the school a fourth-place finish in total dollars raised for school walk teams.

Our Alumni

PHARMACY ALUMNI SOCIETY BOARD 2005–06

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Chair of the Board
Joseph Gatto '75

Immediate Past President
Lorraine Corsi '69

President
Jay Stragand '88

Vice President
Amy Seybert '94, '96G

Secretary
Samuel Poloyac '93

BOARD MEMBERS
Nicole Ansani '95, '98G
Kathleen Bartony '76
Joanne Bosilovic '83
Annette Boyer '81
William Crossey '76
Timothy Davis '00
Scott Dunham '97
Jeffrey Goff '92
Gina Kimball '02
Alicia Mack '96
James Pschirer '76
Ernest Sanchez '02
Melissa Somma '98
Lisa Strauss '03
Janet Traynor '87, '95G
Michael Vozniak '01
George Zula '93

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Matthew Wyse '05
Lauren Hynicka '07
Christopher Miller '08

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
Dean
Patricia D. Kroboth '80G, '83G

Assistant Dean
Gary Haberle

Director of Development
Lawton Snyder

Alumni Coordinator
Laraine Kuchma

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been a wonderful experience being part of the Pharmacy Alumni Society of the University of Pittsburgh. I have been an active member for more than five years and have enjoyed every interaction along the way. I am grateful for the friendships and support each member gives to the society.

In looking at the School of Pharmacy, we who are past graduates should feel a sense of pride for being part of this wonderful school. We continue to retain and attract top faculty to teach our students. Having a great faculty allows us to recruit some of the top students around. We can all be proud of the caliber of students that our school continues to attract. With each White Coat Ceremony that I attend, I am more impressed every year by the students coming into the School of Pharmacy.

Our alumni organization is one that is very active and strong. We continue to support the school and its alumni by sponsoring such events as homecoming weekend, alumni day, alumni weekend, golf outing, senior dinner, and career roundtables, as well as many other events around the school. This is all possible because of those who volunteer to be part of the alumni society and the support of the faculty and Dean Patricia Kroboth, Laraine Kuchma, Lawton Snyder, and many others.

Our alumni society, along with the tremendous help of our golf outing and its sponsors, has continued to grow our endowment. This endowment gives scholarships each and every year to students who are in need of them. We do many good things as an



Alumni Society Board President
Jay Stragand (BS '88)

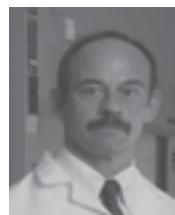
organization, but one that stands out in my mind is the support for education through the endowment. This benefits students in need and hopefully lightens their stress so that they may put greater focus on their studies.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to think about becoming an active member of our alumni society. We need your help. Being part of the alumni society allows you to interact more with the School of Pharmacy, the students, and other alumni. It is a great feeling giving back to the school and being involved. The rewards you get by helping the organization and school far outweigh the amount of time and effort put in. If you would happen to be interested in helping, please contact Laraine Kuchma at kuchma@pitt.edu. It is my hope that when you see events happening over the next year, you will make an effort to attend and reconnect with the school and your fellow alumni. Of all the schools at Pitt, the School of Pharmacy ranks first for alumni engagement. And with your help, we can do even greater things.

I am looking forward to more great things happening in the School of Pharmacy over the next year. Best wishes to all! ∞

We're Number One!

Congratulations, alumni! The School of Pharmacy is ranked the number one school within the University of Pittsburgh in alumni engagement. Thank you for your continued support!



Robert Abraham (PhD '81) formerly of the Burnham Institute, is now the vice president of oncology research

at Wyeth in Pearl River, N.Y. He was honored as a University of Pittsburgh Legacy Laureate last fall, a distinction that is awarded to individuals who have achieved accomplishments that are recognized well beyond their own discipline. While at Pitt, Abraham referred to the celebration at Wyeth regarding the results of the initial clinical trials on Rapamycin and its use to treat metastatic breast cancer. Rapamycin also appears to have benefits in treating other types of cancer (renal and lymphoma). Abraham has spent his career developing Rapamycin—he worked on the molecular level development of the drug when he was at the Mayo Clinic, Duke University, and the Burnham Institute. Now, he has the responsibility for those clinical trials and the opportunity to see molecular work have benefit for women with metastatic breast cancer.

Richard Bertz (PhD '95) was recently named the director of clinical discovery for infectious diseases at the Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceutical Research Institute. He left his position at Abbott to move and assume his new responsibilities in Princeton, N.J.



Anthony Civello (BS '67) assumed the top elected position of the National Association of Chain Drug

Stores in April 2005. He will serve as chair of the organization for two years. Civello is the chair, president, and chief executive officer of Kerr Drug Inc., a regional pharmacy chain headquartered in Durham, N.C.



Daniel Cobaugh (BS '87) is the director of research for the American Society of Health-System

Pharmacists Research and Education Foundation in Bethesda, Md. In that role, he is responsible for implementing the foundation's research agenda, which will include patient safety and draw upon his clinical toxicology background.

Tim Davis (PharmD '00) and **Brenton Cornwell (PharmD '05)** spent time last summer assisting Hurricane Katrina victims. Davis, a pharmacist at Brighton Pharmacy, went to the area with a truckload of supplies that he obtained from pharmaceutical companies. Cornwell, a pharmacist for Rite Aid, went with two other Rite Aid pharmacists, and actually lived in a pharmacy while in New Orleans, La.

Wayne Howard (BS '79), director/leader of hospitalist services at the Lehigh Valley Hospital at Muhlenberg, became board certified in internal medicine.

Julie Aaron Kasing (PharmD '03) was married last fall and also recently accepted a new position as clinical pharmacist for Accredo Therapeutics in Warrendale, Pa.

Douglas Landy (BS '99), MBA, accepted a position with Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Securities in Manhattan, N.Y. He is a specialty pharmaceuticals equity analyst.

Dominic Lio (BS '92) district manager for Pfizer Inc., accepted a district manager position in Pittsburgh for the newly formed anti-infective division for Pfizer. Lio will cover all of Pennsylvania with the exception of the Philadelphia area.

Alicia (Gallagher) Mack (BS '96) is now at Allergan as the manager of regional scientific services within its neuroscience division. Mack and her husband, Rob, became the proud parents of McCauley Coletta Mack this past March.

Baby Oliver Daniel Marks arrived in January to **Iny (PharmD '00)** and **David Marks**. Big brother Braiden, Mommy, and Daddy are doing quite well and enjoying the new addition to their family.

Amy Pittenger (MS '96), PharmD, is the assistant director of professional education in the Office of Educational Development at the University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy. She has the responsibility for online curriculum development for pharmacy programs. She also coordinates pharmacy-related educational programs for other professional schools and is responsible for continuing education.

In Memoriam

Sam Conte (BS '41)
Zolen Lazer (BS '49)
Walter Manns (BS '50)
Ali Giampolo Phar (BS '92)
Elizabeth Schottenheimer (BS '29)
Katie Stamm (BS '99)



Alum heads national Greek American group

For half a century, Franklin Manios (BS '57) has proudly carried the torch of his Greek heritage through his membership in the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA).

In 2004–05, the Warren, Ohio, resident served as the group's supreme president, having been elected by its membership. Founded in 1922 to combat bigotry and help Greek immigrants assimilate into American society, the association is the oldest and largest of its kind in the nation.

During his tenure, Manios led an annual excursion to Greece, including a visit with officials of the AHEPA Hospital in Thessaloniki in March 2005. He also met with Greek President Karolos Papoulias and Parliament President Anna Psarouda-Benaki.

The association expanded to include new chapters in the United States and overseas, as well as a larger Internet presence.

Manios says he believes the organization will continue to grow by enhancing its communications.

"What we've been able to accomplish is rather admirable given the minimal amount of resources we appropriate toward communications," he says. "However, what we could do with the proper resources is mind blowing."

Manios was born in Weirton, W.Va., the son of Greek immigrants. Two years after graduating from the School of Pharmacy, he married Mary Mitaras. The couple settled in Warren and had three children—Irene, Lee, and Juanita. Irene (whose last name is now Buccino) followed in her father's footsteps and graduated from the

School of Pharmacy with a BS in 1986.

Manios opened Franklin Pharmacy in 1966, expanding it to include medical equipment in 1979 and changing the name to Franklin Pharmacy and Health Care. Today, his daughter also works in the family business.

In addition to his accomplishments with AHEPA, Manios received the Ohio Pharmacist Centennial Award in 1978 from the Ohio State Pharmaceutical Association (now the Ohio Pharmacists Association); was named an "independent superstar" by the trade journal *Drug Topics*, which also recognized him with Readers Choice Awards in 1998, 2000, and 2002; and received professional recognition awards from Eli Lilly, Abbott Labs, E.R. Squibb, and Parke Davis. ∞

Serving Students Effectively

Walgreens gift helps renovation turn Student Services into 'one-stop shopping'

For more information on making a gift to the School of Pharmacy, contact Director of Development Lawton Snyder at 412-624-3545 or las63@pitt.edu.

On the ninth floor of Salk Hall, a beehive of student activity is humming due to the redesign of existing space into the new John P. and Constance A. Curran Student Services Center.

Patterned after the Toyota production system workflow method for maximum efficiency, the ultramodern space skillfully blends several vital services into a single destination. Here, prospective students visit admissions, while enrolled students obtain information on scholarships, experiential learning, registration, academic affairs, and professional organizations.

"It's a very well-thought-out and useful work space for our Student Services department," says Lawton Snyder, the school's director of development. "They



Kristen Wolf, PharmD, and Mike Umbleby (BS '96) of Walgreens Inc. present a check to Dean Patricia Kroboth and Lawton Snyder, director of development.

the office for the assistant dean of students, now known as the "Walgreens Room."

Other naming opportunities in the center are also available, including two conference rooms.

Naming rights are prestigious because they "give the company an opportunity to have their name displayed in an academic institution that's teaching pharmacists to be lifelong learners in the profession," Snyder says.

It also allows the company to remind students of its name every time they walk through the center, which is often. According to Snyder, approximately 450 existing students regularly visit the center, and another 500 prospective students and their families also stop by.

In fact, because admissions is located in the center, it is the first impression many prospective students have of the school. They enter a waiting room that features a plasma screen displaying student and faculty activities; some use the high-tech conference rooms, which are also available to faculty and other departments.

Prior to the renovations, which were completed in November 2005, the various services were split between the ninth and 11th floors. With the official opening in early 2006, the center became an instant hub.

Snyder says the corporate gifts that make such improvements possible are crucial to the school's ability to educate the pharmacists of the future.

"Most of our companies and partners that we work with are very understanding of the need to support academic institutions of pharmacy," he says. ∞



The new Student Services area.

were able to combine a lot of things like filing space as well as put all the areas that work with our students together. It made this area a one-stop shopping space."

The center, which was named in honor of alumnus John Curran (MS '68, PhD '71) and his wife—whom Snyder described as "dear friends of the School of Pharmacy"—was financed in part by a \$50,000 donation from Walgreens. The gift names

The Shear Family Scholarship

Family honors 1930 alum with gift to fund scholarship



Sam Shear (BS '30)

Sam Shear spent a relatively scant nine years as a practicing pharmacist, but the legacy of his early training at the University of Pittsburgh continues, thanks to a gift his family donated to create a scholarship in his honor.

Shear (BS '30), the son of a Lithuanian immigrant, bought Jackson's Pharmacy in Pittsburgh's Hill District, where he toiled through 18-hour days, seven days a week. During the Depression, he couldn't afford to hire any help.

Although he was passionate about his profession, Shear finally left the pharmacy and joined the trucking business his father started in 1898 with one blind mule and cart. Under Sam's stewardship, the H. Shear Trucking Company increased its fleet and added warehouses. Today, his own son, Herbert, is the chief executive officer of what is now known as Genco, a multimillion-dollar company focusing on logistics and supply-chain management.

Yet throughout his life, Sam continued to feel a kinship with the School of Pharmacy, and brought his son to Pitt football and basketball games from early childhood. He also stressed the importance of giving back to the community, establishing a philanthropic tradition that his descendants continue.

In 2005—the 75th anniversary of Sam Shear's graduation from Pitt—Herbert Shear's sons, Gerald and John, created the endowed Samuel T. and Herbert S. Shear Family Scholarship Fund at the School of Pharmacy. Each year, the fund will pay for a \$10,000 scholarship for each of two upperclassmen.

"We hope it will go to students who will make a difference in the pharmaceutical field," Herbert Shear says. "Hopefully it will also help students who have some financial needs."

Herbert and some of Genco's board members also have contributed to the fund, and Herbert Shear says he hopes the family will be able to meet the scholarship recipients.

"Even though I'm not a Pitt alumnus, I'm an avid Pitt fan," Herbert Shear says. "We feel very good about the scholarship, and we're very pleased to be able to do it." ∞



The 1787 Society

We would like to extend our most sincere apologies to the members of the 1787 Society. They were accidentally left out of the report to stakeholders published earlier this year. The names will be listed in next year's report.

The University of Pittsburgh recognizes individuals who have made gifts to the University by means of a will or trust, pooled income fund, charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity, life insurance, directors charitable award program, or other planned gift.

- Mr. Francis Balog
- Dr. Herbert Barry III
- Mrs. Betty Howard Brenneman
- Mr. David E. Brenneman
- Mr. John R. Burrows
- The J & W Burrows Family Trust
- Mr. Thomas William Carr
- Mr. M. Maurice Fierman
- Dr. James Mace Kirkwood
- Mrs. Denise Kubitsky Kreckel
- Mr. Peter Albert Kreckel
- Ms. Margaret Sherwood Oppedal
- Mr. John W. Ponas
- Ms. Janice Ridenour
- Mrs. Ethel Baran Ritzman
- Dr. Gordon Vanscoy



From a Sumerian tablet to chemotherapy, milestones in pharmacy are captured in the impressions of 36 coins donated to the Elmer H. Grimm Sr. Pharmacy Museum on the fourth floor of Salk Hall.

The silver-dollar-sized coins are divided into seven time periods and depict events or people who contributed to the growth of the profession. Among those honored are Paul Ehrlich, the Nobel Prize winner noted for his search for a "magic bullet" to cure syphilis; Edward Kremers and George Urdang, whose *History of*

Pharmacy: A Guide and A Survey is a familiar text to many alumni; and Emperor Frederick II, credited with pharmacy's magna carta, the Edict of Salerno.

The coins are the centerpiece of a large pharmacy collection donated to the museum in September 2005 by John Rosencrance (BS '60), and his wife, Jackie, of Johnstown, Pa.

Curator Stanton Jonas plans to display the coins at the museum's entrance.

"It is an absolutely lovely gift," Jonas says. ∞

Meet Stan Jonas, the new museum curator



Long before he took over as the curator of the Elmer H. Grimm Sr. Pharmacy Museum, Stanton Jonas (BS '51) was fascinated with the curiosities of the profession.

Jonas served in the Air Force before managing several retail drugstores. In 1965, he became Allegheny County's first chief pharmacist, earning a Master of Public Health from Pitt in 1972. He later became one of the county's five district health officers before retiring in 1990.

Along the way, he acquired a sizable pharmacy collection—everything from mortars and pestles to gold-embossed stock bottles, small paper bags of herbs, and five different types of suppository molds. (His favorite pieces include a circa 1898 book from Lilly Laboratories and a three-inch-high balance from the mid-1800s, complete with tiny weights.)

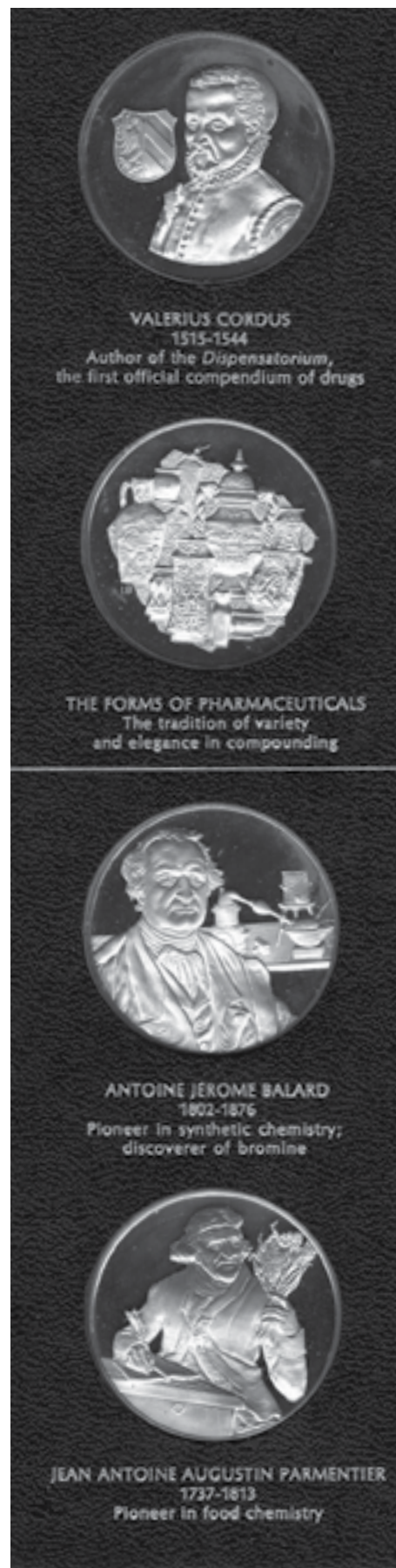
Items from the collection have been displayed at the Pittsburgh Children's Museum as well as libraries throughout Western Pennsylvania. When not in transit or in a showcase somewhere, the items rest on shelves in Jonas' game room and garage.

So when his friend, Richard Lithgow (BS '50), decided to retire as the museum's curator last year, Jonas seemed a natural successor. Dean Patricia D. Kroboth interviewed Jonas at Lithgow's recommendation, and he was appointed in June 2005.

"It's been a real challenge to be able to fill Dick's shoes," Jonas says.

As for his personal collection, he's ready to part with some of it and reclaim his game room—especially since it won't be going far.

"Slowly but surely, it's being incorporated into the Grimm collection at Pitt," he says. ∞



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Please send us information about your career advancements, papers presented, honors received, appointments, and further education. We'll include your news in the Alumni section as space allows. Photos are welcome. Please print clearly.

Name: _____

Degree and Year of Graduation: _____

Home Telephone: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

Home Address: _____

Business Address: _____

Business Telephone: _____

Position(s): _____

News: _____

Please complete and return to
University of Pittsburgh, *PITTPharmacy News*
Attn.: Laraine Kuchma
1104 Salk Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15261
Phone: 412-648-3304 E-mail: kuchma@pitt.edu



Distinguished Alumni Nomination Form

The Pharmacy Alumni Society invites alumni to nominate a fellow alumnus for the Distinguished Alumni Award. This award is presented annually to alumni based on outstanding professional achievements. All School of Pharmacy alumni are eligible and may nominate themselves or others. The nomination deadline is August 31.

Please complete and return to
University of Pittsburgh
School of Pharmacy
Attn.: Laraine Kuchma
1104 Salk Hall, Pittsburgh, PA 15261
Phone: 412-648-3304 E-mail: kuchma@pitt.edu

Nominee's Name: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

Your Name: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

Reason for Nomination: _____



University of Pittsburgh

School of Pharmacy
1104 Salk Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15261

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 511