

PHARMACY MATTERS

JUNE 2012

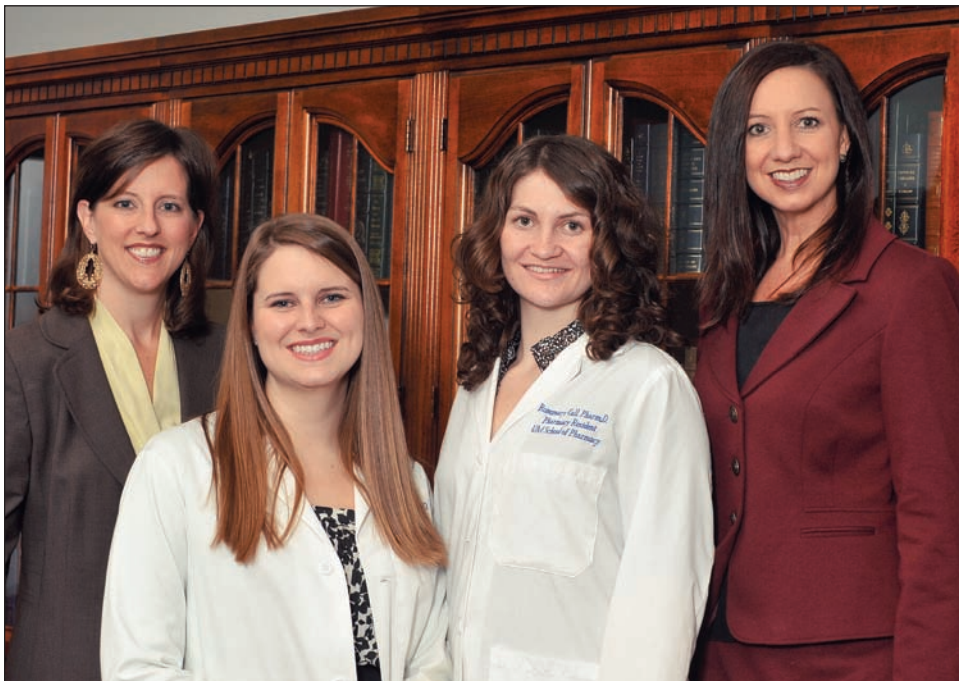


Inside:

- 2 Dean's inaugural message
- 8 Students win FDA rotations
- 12 New RIPS center created
- 14 New building unveiled
- 19 All grads pass NAPLEX
- 22 Distinguished alumni recognized
- 26 Donors provide nearly \$1 million
- 30 Supplement guru receives honorary degree



Pharmacy Dean David D. Allen shares why Ole Miss is a great place to work.



Heavily involved in multifaceted initiatives in the Mississippi Delta are Lauren Bloodworth (left), Catherine Black, Rosemary Call and Leigh Ann Ross.

School recognized nationally with community service award

For its life-changing work in 12 Delta communities, the School of Pharmacy won the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's 2011-12 Lawrence C. Weaver Transformative Community Service Award.

AACP presents the award annually to one pharmacy school that not only demonstrates a major commitment to addressing unmet community needs through education, practice and research but also serves as an example of social responsiveness for others.

AACP's selection committee was impressed by the school's many community-based initiatives that are providing innovative pharmacy, disease education and other services in 11 counties of the impoverished region.

The initiatives have "gone beyond the traditional academic role of service," said

an AACP release announcing this year's award recipient.

"Our institution has long been committed to service," said UM Chancellor Daniel W. Jones. "Our School of Pharmacy faculty, staff and students share this commitment, and their work is making a tremendous difference in the health and lives of our fellow citizens."

"Their partnerships with community pharmacists, physicians, community health centers, employers and others are quickly becoming a model for increasing access to health care and overcoming our nation's ethnic, economic and geographic health care disparities."

Through the the community-based research programs, pharmacy school personnel are providing general and disease-specific medication therapy management, or MTM, services to many of the region's patients and

continued on page 4

Dean's message

Wow! I can only describe my first few months as dean of the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy as “exhilarating,” maybe even “breath-taking,” because of the school’s prolific activities and accomplishments.

One of my many goals is to meet all of our school’s alumni and friends. Since arriving Jan. 1, I’ve visited dozens of pharmacies around the state. If I haven’t yet visited yours, I hope to do so in the coming months.

Words cannot express how proud I was to learn this spring that our May 2011 graduates not only posted a perfect pass rate on the NAPLEX exam but also that their performance pushed our school’s five-year pass rate to second in the Southeastern Conference and fifth in the nation. That accomplishment, alone, validated my decision to become this school’s dean, but there have been many others. Among them is the number of our students being selected for national scholarships and rotations among professional, federal and other agencies. I view these accomplishments as further proof of the excellence among our students and the quality of instruction and experience they’re receiving.

Our teaching and research faculty members continue to lead in helping assure the quality and safety of herbal products. They also continue to discover and develop new compounds for treating and preventing a host of medical maladies and diseases.

I want you to know that we are undertaking a process I refer to as “research visioning,” which has led us to examine our strengths and weaknesses in state, national and international research and development arenas. When complete, this process will help us direct dwindling state and federal resources to areas with potential for providing the greatest return on investment.

You will be hearing more about this visioning process, as well as its results, in coming months, but I’m extremely proud to now announce that we have added a third center to our Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, thanks to a five-year commitment from Pharmaceutics International Inc. The Pii Center for Pharmaceutical Technology will collaborate with others to expand our research in drug-delivery systems.

I’m also exceptionally proud of the national recognition of our school’s practice and service

efforts. In addition to the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy’s 2011-12 Lawrence C. Weaver Transformative Community Service Award, our practice faculty, residents and others received leadership and performance awards from the Health Resources and Service Administration. The awards recognize the high-caliber pharmacy services our school is providing through HRSA’s Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative, a national breakthrough effort to improve the quality of health care.

Probably the most spectacular experience for me as your new dean was dedication of our gorgeous new building in Jackson. We are excited about its possibilities for enhancing learning and patient care among students and faculty across all of the Medical Center’s health professions, and I congratulate Dean [Barbara] Wells and others for their tenacity and vision, which made this facility possible.

Members of the American Council of Pharmaceutical Education’s site team, who visited us in March as part of the reaccreditation process, were blown away by this new building, as well as all of our facilities, students, faculty, and teaching, research and other programs. If you haven’t already noticed, we’ve ratcheted up our electronic and social media communications programs. To stay abreast of our reaccreditation news and day-to-day activities and accomplishments, I invite you to “like us” on Facebook, “follow us” on Twitter, etc.

I congratulate our faculty, students, staff, and alumni and friends for their extraordinary achievements over the past six months, and I thank them for enhancing this great school’s collective impact on the health and economic well-being of our state and nation. Our mission to improve the health of Mississippians and citizens throughout the world is richly vibrant, and we are achieving it one day and one success at a time.

But cumulatively, those astounding successes already have validated my decision to become dean of this outstanding pharmacy school and part of the wonderful opportunities it provides!



David D. Allen, R.Ph., Ph.D.
Dean

Dr. David D. Allen
Dean

Dr. Marvin C. Wilson
*Associate Dean for Academic
and Student Affairs*

Dr. Leigh Ann Ross
*Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs
and Chair of Pharmacy Practice*

Dr. Charles D. Hufford
*Associate Dean for Research
and Graduate Programs*

Ms. Beverly M. Butts
Assistant Dean of Administration

Dr. Stephen J. Cutler
Chair of Medicinal Chemistry

Dr. Michael A. Repka
Chair of Pharmaceutics

Dr. Daneel Ferreira
Chair of Pharmacognosy

Dr. Anthony J. Verlangieri
Interim Chair of Pharmacology

Dr. Donna S. West-Strum
Chair of Pharmacy Administration

INSTITUTES & CENTERS

Dr. Benjamin F. Banahan III
*Director of Center for Pharmaceutical
Marketing and Management*

Dr. Michael A. Repka
*Director of Pii Center for
Pharmaceutical Technology*

Dr. Larry A. Walker
*Director of National Center for
Natural Products Research*



Service continued from page 1

are training local pharmacists to do the same. In addition, they are providing disease-education classes in targeted communities and, in Greenwood, are piloting an employer-based diabetes program.

To date, faculty, students, residents and community pharmacists have conducted more than 4,000 MTM encounters, identified and helped correct more than 8,500 drug-therapy problems, improved the conditions of nearly half of their patients and avoided untold emergency room visits.

"We have a truly extraordinary team working on these projects, led by Lauren Bloodworth, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice and program administrator," said Leigh Ann Ross, associate dean for clinical affairs and chair of pharmacy practice. "Our faculty and community partners are committed to helping others, and this award is a reflection of their hard work over the past few years.

"This award is based on an institutional commitment to transformative service, and we certainly would not be the recipient without the vision and support provided by Chancellor Jones, Provost [Morris] Stocks, [former] Dean [Barbara] Wells and other university administrators," Ross said.

"We appreciate the school's service and research approach, which will allow us to evaluate the program's impact on our employees' health and productivity."

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS BILL CRUMP, VIKING RANGE CORP.

The award consists of a commemorative Steuben glass Beacon of Light and a \$5,000 honorarium, which the school plans to use to support pharmacy services as an integral part of the care, health information and other patient-support systems at the G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center's Canton location. The services will mirror those established more than a year ago at G.A. Carmichael's Yazoo City location, where the school embedded a clinical pharmacist to work with patients and care providers in the delivery of MTM and diabetes education.

During the selection process, which included a site visit, the AACP committee looked for programs that emphasize research, involve community participation and train student pharmacists, residents and other postgraduates. They found what they were seeking in

the multifaceted pharmacy school projects in the Mississippi Delta.

The Work

Obesity, diabetes and their complications are more prevalent and cause more deaths in Delta communities such as Charleston, Greenwood, Greenville, Indianola and Yazoo City than anywhere else in the nation. In Greenwood, the pharmacy school implemented a childhood-obesity prevention program in Bankston Elementary School over the past year and is addressing diabetes through a workforce initiative at the Viking Range Corp.

"With these programs, the school is empowering our existing and future workforces to make healthy decisions," said Greenwood Mayor Carolyn McAdams.

At Viking, employees who have diabetes or are at risk for developing it receive pharmacist-delivered health screenings, MTM services, and individual and group education sessions.

"Our employees welcomed this program and provide positive feedback on their successes with it," said Bill Crump, Viking's director of governmental affairs. "We appreciate the school's service and research approach, which will allow us to evaluate the program's impact on our employees' health and productivity."

Pharmacy faculty and residents also have been active in other communities, such as Charleston, where Southern Discount Drugs owner and Diabetic Shoppe president Robert Salmon and his pharmacist received MTM training and mentoring.

"Faculty and residents helped us implement specialized MTM services in asthma and diabetes in my pharmacy," Salmon said. "This has allowed us to expand the clinical



With the help of UM pharmacists such as Lorelei Farr (right), diabetic patients such as Bettina Hall (left) are better able to control their blood sugar.



(L to R) Gary Theilman, Leigh Ann Ross, Jay Pitcock, Courtney Davis, Kris Harrell, Lauren Bloodworth, Rosemary Call, Justin Sherman, Catherine Black, Scott Malinowski, Lorelei Farr, Meagan Brown and Laurie Warrington are among those working on the community-based research programs.

pharmacy services offered in this underserved area of Mississippi.”

In Yazoo City, where 31 percent of residents live below the poverty line and more than 12 percent have diabetes, pharmacy school faculty, residents and students have been traveling to Webb’s Pharmacy regularly since September 2008 to assess and manage patients’ medication regimens and educate them about diet, exercise and taking their medications as prescribed. When they uncover medication-related problems, they work with patients’ primary-care providers to resolve them.

School of Pharmacy personnel also have been working closely with the G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center in Yazoo City, supplying it with a clinical pharmacist since fall 2010.

“Integrating the pharmacist into our health care team has been beneficial for our physicians and, more importantly, our patients,” said Janice Bacon, the clinic’s executive director.

“We are beginning to see improvement in clinical outcomes from pharmacy interventions. Our clinic would not be able to provide this level of service without its partnership with the School of Pharmacy. Our community is grateful that the school generously provides access to the specialized care required to address the complex needs of our diabetes patients.”

The school also is collaborating with the Delta Health Alliance, a Beacon Community grant recipient, to expand adoption and use of electronic health records and other health information-technology-driven communica-



Megan Brown, Laurie Warrington and Lorelei Farr show off awards won at HRSA’s Learning Session.

tion among pharmacies, clinics and hospitals to improve clinical outcomes. The school’s efforts in this area are focused on the Indianola Family Medical Group.

The Impact

So far, pharmacists in 14 Delta community pharmacies have completed the American Pharmacists Association’s “Delivering Medication Therapy Management in the Community” certificate training program. The school also provided pharmacists and primary-care providers with continuing education programs on cultural-competency issues and caring for minority diabetes patients, and offered APhA’s “Pharmaceutical Care for Patients with Diabetes” certificate program to interested pharmacists.

UM and other pharmacists are now providing MTM in 14 Delta communities, which provides patients with access to additional health care services. Patients enrolled in the program indicate they are more knowledgeable about their medications and are able to better control their diseases.

For patients such as Bettina Hall of Yazoo City, who had been struggling to control her diabetes for some 20 years, the UM pharmacists’ work in the Delta is a blessing.

“I’ve been able to reduce my hemoglobin A1c from 12.9 percent to 8.9 percent,” Hall said.

She also self-administers her insulin shots at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. every day, without exception.

“They taught me that I need to take my shots twice a day at regular intervals to smooth out my blood-sugar levels,” she said.

The Team

“We have an incredible team of pharmacy practitioners, including Department of Pharmacy Practice faculty, residents and local pharmacists delivering patient-centered care to underserved populations in the Mississippi Delta and beyond,” Wells said, before retiring in December. “Many practicing pharmacists and other health care professionals who live in these areas are passionately committed to these projects.”

Researchers in the Center for Biostatistics and Bioinformatics at the UM Medical Center and faculty and graduate students in the pharmacy school’s Department of Pharmacy Administration and Center for

continued on page 6

Service continued from page 5

Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management are helping to evaluate the impact of the school's activities.

"These projects are improving the health and quality of life of Mississippians and providing our students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in our classrooms and labs," Wells said. "Through these experiences, students see firsthand the impact they can have on the health and quality of life of underserved populations. These are life-changing lessons for students and patients."

The pharmacy school's Delta and Beacon projects are funded through grants from the Health Resources and Services Administration and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. Additional funds have been awarded from the Mississippi State Department of Health's Delta Health Collaborative funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The MSDH funds allow the school to expand its services by embedding three pharmacy faculty members in four community health centers throughout the Delta.

Revenue streams are being explored to make the Delta projects self-sustaining, so they can continue even if federal and state funds diminish.

During the 2010 annual meeting of the HRSA Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (a national breakthrough effort to improve the quality of health care), the school and its partners at G.A. Carmichael and the DHA 21st Century Good Samaritan Health Center in Greenville won three awards: two Health Outcome Management and Clinical Pharmacy Services Improvement awards and an Outstanding Performance award.

At the collaborative's learning session earlier this year, they received three more awards. In addition to an Outstanding Performance Award, they brought home two "Change Package" awards. One was for leadership commitment, and the other was for patient-centered care. ■



Students from Murrah, Bailey Magnet and Jim Hill high schools in Jackson enjoy a visit to the pharmacy school's headquarters in Oxford.

Student Focus

Walgreens helps school increase diversity

The School of Pharmacy is increasing diversity among its student body with an initiative that continues to be supported by Walgreens.

The school received \$10,000 from the drug-store chain to continue to provide students at Jackson's Murrah High School and Bailey Magnet High School with opportunities to learn about the pharmacy profession. This is the third consecutive year that Walgreens has provided support for the program.

"It's of tremendous value to have the opportunity to enhance diversity in our profession within the state," said Chris McLaurin, pharmacy supervisor for Walgreens. "It's wonderful to have local students interested in our profession and to remain in-state. It benefits everyone."

A portion of the gift is also allocated to a scholarship. Its inaugural recipient is Brittany Cavett of Jackson. Cavett, who participated in the program at Murrah, is enrolled in the pharmacy school's early-entry program and the UM Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Since the diversity initiative's inception, the pharmacy school's minority enrollment in regular and early-entry classes has nearly doubled, rising from 16 students in 2009 to 31 in 2011.

"The program provides an excellent opportunity for us to expose talented students at our partner schools to the breadth of career opportunities within the profession and make receiving a degree in pharmacy a preferred academic goal," said Marvin C. Wilson, associate dean for academic and student affairs. "The Walgreens initiative, as well as others, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the diversity of the applicant pool for our professional program."

School faculty members work with advisers at the high schools to coordinate pharmacy clubs. Conducted by pharmacy students and faculty, club activities include an overview of pharmacy-career options and a compounding exercise.

The highlight of the year is a field trip to the pharmacy school in Oxford, where the students sit in on a pharmacy class and take part in a laboratory exercise.

"This is a great experience for the school and students," said coordinator Lauren S. Bloodworth, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice. "It's a wonderful opportunity to advocate for our profession. It's gratifying to see the students' eyes opened to this career path." ■



T. Kristopher Harrell conducts a laboratory exercise with Jackson area high school students.

Student Focus

Two students selected for AACP experiences in D.C.

Two of six students selected to work at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's headquarters in the nation's capital this fall are from our School of Pharmacy.

Robin Parker and John Michael Segars, both entering the fourth year of the professional pharmacy program, were selected from applicants across the country and are looking forward to acquiring association management experience.

"I hope to learn about big-scale organization management, its potential advocacy opportunities and the impact that it has on the realm of pharmacy," said Parker, a Dyersburg, Tenn., native. "In addition, I am looking forward to living in Washington, D.C., for awhile."

"There are a myriad of things that I can take away from this opportunity, but primarily I want to learn more about academic pharmacy," said Segars, who hails from Saltillo. "I also want to know more about the goals that AACP has for the future of pharmacy and how I can potentially be a part of that to promote our field."

Upon learning she had been selected for the AACP rotation, Parker said, "I was beyond excited, and I feel so privileged to have the opportunity to take part in this experience. I also feel responsible to represent Ole Miss well."

"Robin and John Michael both have so much passion for the profession and for the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy," said T. Kristopher Harrell, director of professional experience programs and associate professor of pharmacy practice. "I am extremely proud of them."

All students enrolled in UM's professional pharmacy program practice what they learn by working with patients under the supervision of a faculty member or licensed pharmacist.

"These practical experiences enable our students to hone their therapeutics skills in community pharmacy and specialties ranging from ambulatory care, cardiology and critical care to oncology, pediatrics, psychiatry and even veterinary medicine," said Marvin C. Wilson, associate dean for academic and student life. "But it is unusual for our students to have an opportunity to hone their skills in association management. We are thrilled that two of our students have been selected for this competitive rotation."



Robin Parker



John Michael Segars

Parker and Segars are already certified in such areas as medication therapy management, basic life support and immunizations and are members of student chapters of the American Society of Health-Systems Pharmacy, Phi Lambda Sigma, National Pharmaceutical Association and other professional pharmacy associations.

Parker is the pharmacy school's representative on the UM Medical Center's associated student body and interprofessionalism committee. She also was a chapter delegate to the American Pharmacists Association annual meeting last year and often discusses pharmacy school and the profession with Jackson-area high school students. She has participated in several health fairs, raised money for breast cancer awareness and collected donations for the Gardner-Simmons Home in Tupelo and Domestic Violence Project in Oxford.

"Obviously, the School of Pharmacy faculty and staff have played an integral role in my professional development," Parker said. "Without their communication of opportunities and resources, like the AACP rotation in Washington, D.C., I would have no idea of such opportunities."

Segars is vice president of his pharmacy class, served as a smoking cessation counselor for Ole Miss students and helps pharmacy school personnel interview applicants for its early-entry and regular-entry admissions programs. In his mother's honor, he directed a 36-person team in 2010 that raised nearly \$4,000 in a single day for breast cancer research.

"Dr. Harrell is an exceptional role model in that he helps all students decide what they want to do with their futures and has helped me see different possibilities," Segars said. "But the most positive influence on me has been my mother. She is a cancer survivor and has a 'never-give-up' mentality. She has taught me to always strive to do my best even when things are difficult."

Segars and Parker both completed their pre-pharmacy course work at Ole Miss before entering the professional pharmacy program. They chose to do so because of its early-entry program, which enables students to apply for admission to UM's pharmacy school during their senior year of high school, rather than the third year of their pre-pharmacy curriculum.

"Ole Miss has always felt like home and seemed like a natural choice," Parker said. "Acceptance into the early-entry program simply solidified my decision."

Both students are undecided about just what type of pharmacy they want to practice when they graduate in May 2013. While Parker sees herself applying for residency programs in the coming year, Segars sees himself pursuing something in academia and ambulatory care pharmacy.

"I am pulled toward teaching because my mother is a teacher, but I also have a great love of helping patients," Segars said. "Hopefully, I can find a niche in the ambulatory care setting and use my personality to not only help patients but also teach upcoming pharmacists." ■

*Student Focus***Second student wins prestigious FDA rotation**

Andrew Loeffler is one of a handful of students selected from around the country to work at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Silver Spring, Md., this fall.

The New Jersey native will be working in the FDA's Division of Nonprescription Regulation Development, which oversees over-the-counter, or OTC, products.

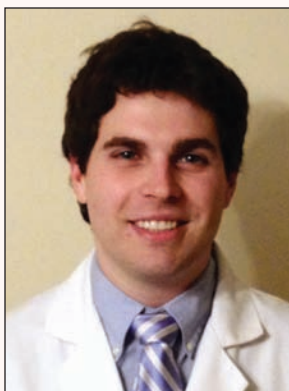
He said that he is interested in this division because nonprescription drugs are the most readily available medications.

"Many people just buy these without a recommendation by a doctor or pharmacist, and the only way they are regulated is by the ingredient and labeling requirements set by the FDA," Loeffler said. "I am interested in learning and experiencing what is done to ensure that their benefits outweigh their risks."

Loeffler, who begins the fourth year of the professional program this fall, said the FDA rotation is available to all students attending accredited pharmacy schools, "so it is very competitive. This is why I was ecstatic when I found out that I had been chosen."

Loeffler has already completed internships at Walmart pharmacies in Pearl and Batesville, community pharmacy rotations at Walgreens and Kroger in Oxford, institutional pharmacy rotations at Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi in Oxford and Grenada Lake Medical Center in Grenada, and an ambulatory care rotation at a UM Medical Center clinic in Jackson.

He is the second Ole Miss pharmacy student to learn this spring that he had been selected to complete an FDA rotation this fall. The first was Laurin Dixon of Germantown, Tenn., who was selected to

*Andrew Loeffler*

complete a rotation in the FDA's Office of Orphan Drug Products, which oversees development and evaluation of products with promise for diagnosing, treating or preventing rare diseases or disorders.

"I am extremely proud of Andrew and Laurin, and I have no doubt they will represent our school well," said Kristopher Harrell, director of professional experience programs and associate professor of pharmacy practice. "Both are outstanding students and are passionate about the pharmacy profession."

Loeffler has expressed that passion as a volunteer at the Oxford Medical Ministries Clinic, which provides free services to working adults with low incomes.

"I learn something new everywhere I work, and I feel that meeting different people at different pharmacies has a positive influence on me," he said.

Loeffler, who grew up about 45 minutes from New York City, has attended Ole Miss since graduating from high school.

"The main reason I came to Ole Miss was because I wanted a change of scenery to a warmer location, but when I visited during my senior year, I fell in love with the campus and the culture," he said.

He has yet to decide what he will do after receiving his Doctor of Pharmacy degree next spring. "I really enjoy working at Walmart, and I plan to stay on with them, even if it's only part time," he said. "But, depending on how this FDA rotation goes, I could be looking for a job near D.C. as well."

Pharmacy Dean David D. Allen said, "We are thrilled to learn that both Andrew and Laurin were selected for these highly prized FDA rotations. This is a wonderful opportunity for both of them, and what they learn will make a meaningful difference in their lives." ■

*Dean David D. Allen (left), Katie Sims and Scott Hicks**Student Focus***Two students inducted into Hall of Fame**

Doctor of Pharmacy students Katie Sims of Athens, Ala., and Scott Hicks of New Albany were inducted into the School of Pharmacy's Hall of Fame during commencement ceremonies.

They were selected by their classmates for their significant scholastic and professional contributions to the school.

Sims is president of UM's graduating Doctor of Pharmacy class and served as president of

Student Focus

Honor student wins competitive national scholarship

Pharmacy student Laurin Dixon is the recipient of a Taro Research Foundation Scholarship.

The \$5,000 award is part of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation student scholarship program, which supports development of future leaders in the chain community pharmacy industry and recognizes students with a strong interest in pursuing careers in chain community practice.

"I was really excited to receive the scholarship," said Dixon, a Germantown, Tenn., native. "It was such an honor to be selected from all of the students nationally. It means a lot to be recognized for my hard work and accomplishments, and I'm so grateful to Ole Miss for preparing me so well and giving me the opportunity to succeed both inside and outside the classroom."

Dixon, who is entering the fourth year of the professional pharmacy program this fall, completed her pre-pharmacy course work on the Oxford campus, where she was enrolled in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

One of her biggest achievements, she said, was "completing my honors thesis and graduating from the Honors College in three years, in addition to presenting [a] poster at the AACP [American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy] conference."

She also is proud to have served last summer as one of four Walgreens corporate interns in Chicago and for being selected to complete rotations this fall at NACDS and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Office of Orphan Drug Products.

While in Oxford, Dixon served as an Ole Miss Ambassador, historian for her pharmacy class and tutor for students struggling with organic chemistry. A member of the student chapters of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and American Pharmacists Association, she was selected for membership in such honorary organizations as



Laurin Dixon

Omicron Delta Kappa, Mortar Board, Who's Who and Order of Omega.

This year, the NACDS Foundation awarded 58 scholarships totaling \$190,000 to pharmacy students around the country. Of these recipients, Dixon was one of just eight students chosen to receive named scholarships, which honor distinguished pharmacy leaders and companies that share the foundation's commitment to education, research and charitable work.

More than 950 students applied for the NACDS Foundation scholarships, so competition was stiff and the achievements of recipients were exceptional, said Kathleen Jaeger, president of the NACDS Foundation.

"As the future of pharmacy care, we applaud these students for their academic accomplishments and are delighted to honor them with scholarships to assist them in continuing their pharmacy education," Jaeger said.

David D. Allen, dean of the UM pharmacy school, said, "We are thrilled to learn that this generous scholarship is being awarded to Laurin. This is a wonderful scholarship program, which makes a meaningful difference for pharmacy students, education and our profession."

The NACDS Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization that serves to improve the health and wellness of Americans. It uses education, research and charitable involvement to help people improve their health and quality of life through an understanding of medication therapy and the importance of taking medications appropriately. ■

her class the previous two years. She also received the school's inaugural Ainsworth Leadership Award in 2011 and is a co-founder of the University Designated Drivers at Ole Miss.

She is a member of Phi Lambda Sigma pharmacy leadership society and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

"Katie was our class champion," said classmate Ashley Rather of Oxford. "She listened to our suggestions and complaints willingly. She got things done for our class and always kept a positive attitude. I am proud that she is representing us in the Hall of Fame."

Upon graduation, Sims will begin a residency with Huntsville Hospital in Huntsville, Ala.

Hicks received his bachelor's in chemistry from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana before enrolling in the UM pharmacy school's medicinal chemistry graduate program. As a graduate student, he found his "true calling" and enrolled in the professional pharmacy program.

He is a member of Rho Chi pharmacy honor society and Sigma Xi scientific research society. As a graduate student in medicinal chemistry, he received the department's

Noble-Sam Student Research Award in 2000 and 2002. He also was named Class Member of the Year by his classmates during the school's awards program in April.

Hicks has accepted a job with Walgreens in the Jackson district, which he began after graduation.

"Scott is genuine, reliable and insightful," Sims said. "Scott is exactly the kind of person you would want to be your pharmacist. He's trustworthy, professional and very knowledgeable. Our class has a lot of respect for him." ■

News

Researchers help shed new light on medicinal benefits of plants

Scientists in the School of Pharmacy's National Center for Natural Products Research, together with colleagues at a number of other institutions around the country, have developed new resources poised to unlock yet another door in the hidden garden of medicinally important compounds found in plants.

The resources were developed by the Medicinal Plant Consortium, led by Joe Chappell, professor of plant biochemistry in the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture. They grew out of a \$6 million initiative from the

National Institutes of Health to study how the genes of plants contribute to production of various chemical compounds, some of which are medicinally important.

"Our major contribution to this project is to provide biogenetic samples of well-known medicinal plants for the advancement of

drug discovery and development," said Ikhlas Khan, professor of pharmacognosy and assistant director of NCNPR.

"Most people are unaware that [more than] 50 percent of the current anticancer drugs have originated from medicinal plant sources. Additionally, according to the World Health Organization, 80 percent of the world's population relies on herbal medicines for [its] health needs. Many plants are commonly used as dietary supplements as well as other natural products that come to consumers in the form of cosmetics, fragrances and household products."

The MPC project also includes participants from Michigan State University, Iowa State University, Purdue University, Texas A&M University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Kentucky and the John Innes Institute in Norwich, England. The associated researchers represent a broad spectrum of expertise, from plant biology and systematics to analytical chemistry, genetics and molecular biology, and drug development from natural products.

Some well-known medicines have come from plants. For instance, the foxglove plant gives us the cardiac muscle stimulant digoxin, and the periwinkle plant offers a source for the widely used chemotherapy drugs vincristine and vinblastine.



Baleria



Periwinkle

Coriander



"Thanks to the funding received for these projects, the talents and skills of experts from all of these institutions have been brought together with the goal of forging a new model in drug discovery," said Chappell, the MPC project coordinator.

Some well-known medicines have come from plants. For instance, the foxglove plant gives us the cardiac muscle stimulant digoxin, and the periwinkle plant offers a source for the widely used chemotherapy drugs vincristine and vinblastine. Similarly the anticancer agent Taxol is derived from the bark of the Pacific yew tree (*Taxus brevifolia*).

These and many other medicinal plants, often commonly found in household gardens and flower boxes, represent cornucopias of compounds ripe for discovering and developing diverse medicinal applications.

"The current understanding of the molecules and genes involved in the formation of plant-derived medicinal compounds is very incomplete," Chappell said. "However, the ability to conduct genome-wide studies of model plant species has resulted in an explosive increase in our knowledge of and capacity to understand the biological processes."

Work conducted at UM's natural products research center has provided a foundation of information for studies of several potentially useful plants, said Troy Smillie, a senior research scientist at the center.

"This research will provide the scientific community with several sets of valuable data



UM researchers Troy Smillie (right) and Ikhlas Khan are providing biogenetic samples to the Medicinal Plant Consortium.

that can be used to significantly further the understanding of how the inherent transcriptional information encoded within each of these medicinally important plants allows for the respective production of their unique chemistries," Smillie said.

During this two-year project funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, researchers from the consortium set out to develop a collection of data that would aid in understanding how plants make chemicals, a process called biosynthesis. This knowledge ultimately could make it possible to engineer plants to produce larger quantities of medicinally useful compounds as well as different versions with other therapeutic potential.

To develop the resources, the researchers studied the genes and chemical composition

of 14 plants known for their medicinal properties or compounds with biological activity. These included plants such as *Ginkgo biloba*, *Hoodia gordonii*, *Panax quinquefolius* and *Valeriana officinalis* that were provided by the UM researchers. Altogether, these efforts are providing a rich toolbox for researchers to discover how nature's chemical diversity is created, thus empowering efforts to uncover new drug candidates and increase the efficacy of existing ones.

Khan and his UM colleagues obtained materials for the medicinal plants in the study. His lab also performed the initial processing of materials to determine the plants' chemical profiles and to obtain their genetic blueprints to study how genes control the various chemical compositions.

"This work offers a valuable data resource for understanding the genes, enzymes and complex processes responsible for the biosynthesis of important plant-derived drugs," said Warren Jones, who manages this grant and other research grants in biotechnology at NIH's National Institutes of General Medical Sciences, through which the ARRA funds were provided.

"The collaborative effort should greatly contribute to our ability to understand and exploit the rich biochemistry found in plants," Jones said. ■

Wild Dagga



News

Company's gift supports research, education

Pharmaceutics International Inc. has made a gift to the University of Mississippi to support pharmaceutical education for graduate students and create a center devoted to research related to hot-melt extrusion and other pharmaceutical-processing technologies.

The Pii Center for Pharmaceutical Technology will collaborate with private industry, government agencies and other universities to conduct research aimed at developing novel, cost-effective, patient-friendly and efficacious formulations for delivering new and existing pharmaceutical products.

The center is being directed by UM's Michael A. Repka, a leading researcher in the field of hot-melt extrusion and thermal processing.

"Hot-melt extrusion offers multiple advantages over traditional processing techniques for pharmaceutical processing," said Repka, chair and professor of pharmaceutics and research professor in the UM School of Pharmacy's Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

"HME is anhydrous, requires fewer processing steps, entails no organic solvents, requires no compression of active pharmaceutical ingredients and improves the bioavailability of poorly absorbed drugs," said Repka. "Thanks to Pii's support, we will be able to greatly expand our research into how this advanced technology can be used to produce various dosage forms and improve drug delivery through oral and other routes."

Pii's chief executive officer, Syed Abidi, a graduate of UM's Ph.D. program, has remained active in the university's pharmaceutical-education programs over the years. Pii's commitment to the university is further matched by the company's support of UM's Distinguished Research and Creative Achievement Award given annually to a faculty member who has achieved national and/or international recognition in his or her field. The company also sponsors the School of Pharmacy's Alumni and Friends Luncheon, held in conjunction with the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists' annual meeting.

"This generous gift from Pii to create the Center for Pharmaceutical Technology enables us to expand our research in drug-delivery systems," said Alice Clark, vice chancellor for research and sponsored programs and president of UM's Research Foundation, which is administering the company's grant.

"Our pharmaceutics faculty includes nationally recognized experts in hot-melt extrusion processes to improve delivery of active pharmaceutical ingredients," Clark said. "This new center will have a huge impact on accelerating the use of this advanced manufacturing process in the pharmaceutical industry, and we are grateful to Pii for making this possible."

After expanding its dosage-form development and Good Manufacturing Practice capabilities with the addition of hot-melt extrusion, Pii recognized the need for additional graduate-level education in the area. Given Abidi's affiliation with the university and Repka's leadership in the field, the gift to UM was a natural fit for Pii.

"Today's pharmacy students are tomorrow's health care leaders," Abidi said. "Through this long-term commitment to UM, we are delighted to know our country's future pharmaceutical researchers will possess a better understanding of advanced and novel pharmaceutical-processing technologies and the important role they play in the development of lifesaving medications."

Pii is a contract development and manufacturing organization that specializes in developing difficult-to-formulate compounds.

"We are indebted to Pharmaceutics International Inc. for its support of our School of Pharmacy and our Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences," said David D. Allen, the school's dean and the institute's director.

"Pii's gift to establish this new RIPS center is a testament to the quality, importance and national competitiveness of the work and expertise of our faculty and scientists," Allen said. "We look forward to demonstrating this new center's unique capability for advancing pharmaceutical technology." ■



Michael Repka works with graduate students using hot-melt extrusion technology.

News

Researchers give malaria presentation to congressional groups

Two scientists from the School of Pharmacy spoke at the U.S. Capitol in April about the university's scientific and technological advances in the field of malaria research.

"Malaria research is important because it causes close to 1 million deaths every year," said Babu Tekwani, principal scientist and professor of pharmacology for the pharmacy school's National Center for Natural Products Research. "Half of the globe is at risk of being exposed to malaria."

The research, which has been conducted for more than 20 years, takes a multidisciplinary approach. The main goal is to make advances toward developing new antimalarial drugs.

"Our work has opened the way for developing safer drugs that kill the liver stages and the blood-transmission stages of the parasite," said Larry Walker, NCNPR director. "These forms are hard to kill."

A second objective of the research is to improve primaquine, an existing drug used to treat malaria. For more than 50 years, primaquine has been the only drug available for the treatment and prevention of a relapsing form of malaria. However, the drug causes serious side effects in individuals who have a certain enzyme deficiency. This is a common genetic disorder in many parts of the world.

Walker and Tekwani presented their most recent findings to the U.S. Senate Working Group on Malaria, Congressional Caucus on Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases and other groups at the Russell Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C., on April 25, World Malaria Day. Malaria No More, a nonprofit agency determined to help the world reach the global goal of near-zero malaria deaths by 2015, organized the meeting.

UM researchers were invited to the Capitol along with those from 20 other prestigious institutions, including Johns Hopkins and Harvard universities.

"All of these groups were selected simply on the basis of their strong malaria drug and vaccine research programs," Walker said. "It was an opportunity to, first, highlight the research programs for congressional staff and other government and advocacy groups, and, second, to let these research programs interact and explore further collaborations."

At the Capitol, the university was recognized for its partnership with the U.S. Army. Because malaria poses a threat to servicemen and women when stationed in disease-endemic countries, the U.S. Department of Defense provided UM with a grant to support the research.



Babu Tekwani addresses the U.S. Senate Working Group on Malaria about his research to find new antimalarial drugs.

"Our troops are sent into countries where malaria is prevalent, so it is important that we make an effort to further our research into these antimalarial drugs," Tekwani said.

U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), who is also co-chair of the Senate Working Group on Malaria, recognized the university's presence and contributions to the fight against the disease.

"I am really impressed at the support that malaria research has in the U.S. government," Tekwani said. "Even though here in the 21st century, malaria generally does not occur in the U.S., our citizens generally are concerned about global health. Any disease that is curable but is still killing 1 million people warrants our national attention." ■

"It was an opportunity to, first, highlight the research programs for congressional staff and other government and advocacy groups, and, second, to let these research programs interact and explore further collaborations."

NCNPR DIRECTOR LARRY WALKER

New facility unveiled at medical center





The School of Pharmacy celebrated completion of a new education and research building on the campus of the University of Mississippi Medical Center with a Feb. 23 dedication ceremony.

The new facility gives the Oxford-based school a central home in Jackson.

Leigh Ann Ross, the school's associate dean for clinical affairs, said the building will provide a sense of community for faculty and students in Jackson.

"The most important thing is, it will bring us all together," Ross said. "It will increase our face-to-face interaction, and that is going to increase morale, both for students and faculty."

Students in the pharmacy school spend three years of pre-pharmacy training and two years of professional training in Oxford before transitioning to Jackson for their third professional year. The new classroom and research building, which is the newest addition to the Medical Center, will be home for those students at UMMC as well as faculty and researchers with the Department of Pharmacy Practice.

Students spend their final professional year undergoing advanced-practice training at clinical sites across the South. The school has been offering the Doctor of Pharmacy, or Pharm.D., since 1998.

The new building's cutting-edge amenities also promise to enhance learning and research, thanks to fully equipped research laboratories and unique classrooms outfitted with videoconferencing technology.



"This technology provides us the ability to be innovative in our educational offerings," Ross said.

Located on the northeast side of campus, the two-story, 29,692-square-foot building includes 17 classrooms, three research laboratories and a 173-seat auditorium. With a modern design that complements the look of most other facilities on campus, the building features expansive windows overlooking the Norman C. Nelson Student Union and the Guyton Research Building.

(L to R) The new building in Jackson provides a much-needed home and sense of community for the School of Pharmacy's students and faculty at the UM Medical Center. Lauren Bloodworth discusses a case with students in one of 17 new classrooms tailored to the school's problem-based learning curriculum. Three laboratories provide space for faculty and student research. Leigh Ann Ross in her new office. The front lobby to the new building.



The basic science laboratories on the second floor support a second mission of the facility: research.

"Specifically, the laboratories are designed to handle four to eight researchers, and they provide an environment to perform a broad spectrum of translational research," said John Cleary, professor of pharmacy practice.

The laboratories are geared toward investigating patient-care problems largely concerning pharmacotherapy and pharmacogenomics, he said. Cleary, who has been performing

collaborative research with the Department of Infectious Diseases for 25 years, said that he and his pharmacy colleagues work in partnership with many other departments.

The new labs will provide space for researchers, both faculty and students, to expand their focus on medication-therapy issues.

"It's critical that our students be good problem solvers so they can contribute to the scientific basis for recommendations regarding medication therapy," Cleary said.

The building's classrooms, meanwhile, are tailored to the school's educational model of problem-based learning. The rooms fit small groups of students who use flat-screen monitors to study patient cases and map out what Ross terms learning issues.

She said the number of classrooms, and the building's advantages as a whole, will aid in the goal of boosting the school's class size to 115.

"The classrooms will help the overall experience, and that word will get out to students who are looking at pharmacy school," she said. ■



(L to R, top to bottom) A conference room honors Leigh Ann Ross's father, Louis H. Ramsey. U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran speaks at the ceremony dedicating the new building in February. A 173-seat auditorium honors Dean Emeritus Barbara G. Wells and her husband Richard. The new building provides several areas for students to study, relax and interact. The dedication ceremony allowed faculty, students and others opportunities to explore the new building. Chancellor Dan Jones receives a tour of the new building from Barbara Wells.



University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy



News

Students choose outstanding teachers

The School of Pharmacy's graduating classes recognized their outstanding teachers during spring awards and commencement ceremonies.

Students enrolled in the first year of the professional pharmacy program (PY1) chose Soumyajit Majumdar, associate professor of pharmaceutics, as their Teacher of the Year. PY4 students graduating with Doctor of Pharmacy degrees selected Bridgett H. Chisolm, pharmacy manager at the UM Medical Center, to receive the Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experience Preceptor of the Year award and G. Phillip Ayers, chief of clinical pharmacy services at Baptist Health System in Jackson, as their Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience Preceptor of the Year.

The PY2 class chose Stephen J. Cutler, chair and professor of medicinal chemistry, as its Teacher of the Year, and PY3 students selected Laurie Warrington, clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice, as their Teacher of the Year. PY2 and PY3 classes presented their awards during the school's awards program in April.

Majumdar teaches the course Basic Pharmaceutics to PY1 students. He received the pharmacy school's 2011 New Investigator Award for his research on ocular drug delivery and biopharmaceuticals and a Faculty Research Fellowship Award from UM in 2007. He is the author of 15 scientific papers and has garnered more than \$2.7 million for research during the past four years.

"Dr. 'Jit' is an amazing professor who is always willing to help," said Kayla Hawkins, PY1 class president, of Mendenhall. "He is always available to anyone in need and strives to make each and every student happy."

Ayers is board certified in nutrition support pharmacy and was named Pharmacist of the Year by the Mississippi Society for Health-System Pharmacists in 2002 and 2009. He also received the school's Clinical Sciences Teacher of the Year Award in 2007 and 2008, and its Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2011.

"Dr. Ayers is an exceptional pharmacist and a wonderful teacher," said Katie Sims of



Bridgett H. Chisolm, G. Phillip Ayers (center) and David D. Allen



Upon receiving his Teacher of the Year award at commencement, Soumyajit Majumdar tells the crowd what the award means to him.

Athens, Ala., president of the Doctor of Pharmacy class. "He is always thoughtful of his patients and students, and is a great role model."

Chisolm received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from UM and has served as a preceptor for the school since 2006. Her areas of practice include pharmacy management and institutional practice.

"We are so thankful to have Dr. Chisolm as a preceptor," Sims said. "She has a great personality and goes above and beyond to make sure that students get a variety of experiences that will help them in practice."

Cutler teaches Introduction to the Principles of Medicinal Chemistry, and his research interests include evaluating isolated natural products for effects on the central nervous system as well as their potential as anti-infective agents. In 2008 and 2009, he received the school's Pharmaceutical Sciences Teacher of the Year Award.

"Dr. Cutler always comes to class prepared to massage our brains and presents interesting stories that pertain to the information we are learning," said Jeremy Carpenter, PY2 class president, of Olive Branch. "When he can tell that the class understands the information he is teaching, he yells out, 'Oh man, we're cooking with gas now!'"

Warrington, who also received the PY3 class award in 2011, facilitates problem-based learning during the third professional year. Board certified in advanced diabetes management and in ambulatory care, she serves as vice president for the central region of MSHP and on the advisory panel of the American Pharmacists Association's community pharmacy residency program.

"Dr. Warrington is a very effective teacher who consistently makes herself available to her students and warmly welcomes them with her cheery smile," said Miranda Jordan, PY3 class president, of Jackson. ■

News

Grads post perfect pass rate on NAPLEX

... Rank fifth nationally in licensure exam success

Last year's graduating class of pharmacists at UM was perfect — literally. All of the May 2011 Doctor of Pharmacy graduates passed the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination on their first attempt.

The perfect score is part of a report posted on the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy website. The report, which includes pass rates for all accredited schools and colleges of pharmacy over the past five years, also reveals that UM School of Pharmacy graduates' cumulative pass rate is the nation's fifth highest and the Southeastern Conference's second highest.

The NAPLEX is the examination used by state boards of pharmacy nationwide to assess new graduates' competence to practice pharmacy.

"Words simply cannot express how amazingly proud I am that 100 percent of our May graduates passed the NAPLEX," said David D. Allen, the school's dean. "Their performance pushes our pass rate over the past five years to 98.96 percent."

Only six of the nation's 104 other pharmacy schools posted a perfect pass rate on the NAPLEX last year.

Brent Crenshaw, president of the 2011 Pharm.D. class, said he wasn't surprised that he and the rest of his classmates all passed the exam.

"We had an amazing class," said Crenshaw, a CVS pharmacist in Southaven. "Everyone was so supportive of each other, and people helped each other out. Everybody wanted everyone else to succeed."

Crenshaw was surprised that, over the past five years, graduates of a relatively small Mississippi school such as his alma mater outperformed those from what many consider the "Titans" of pharmacy schools — the University of California at San Francisco, University of Texas at Austin, Purdue University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Minnesota and University of Michigan.

"Their performance pushes our pass rate over the past five years to 98.96 percent."

DEAN DAVID D. ALLEN

That kind of performance, he said, is due to "a combination of faculty, facilities and perseverance of a highly motivated group of excellent students," Crenshaw said. "Some of the best and brightest are coming out of Mississippi, and the addition of a new build-

ing on the University of Mississippi Medical Center campus will only push the program to even greater success."

The only SEC pharmacy school outperforming Ole Miss in the ranking is the University of Kentucky.

This is the second time in five years that every one of UM's pharmacy graduates passed the exam on his or her first attempt.

It is a "high honor" for the pharmacy school and its students to post a perfect pass rate on the NAPLEX, said Marvin C. Wilson, the school's associate dean for academic and student affairs.

"We are proud of our new practitioners, who have worked hard to learn everything they possibly can that would help them become exceptional pharmacists," Wilson said. "This is also a great accomplishment for our faculty and a testament to the format and content of our curriculum and to our admissions procedures."

Announcement of pass rates tops an already stellar year of achievement. Last year, the school ranked No. 1 among pharmacy schools for total extramural funding awarded for research and construction projects, according to a report compiled by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.

Most recently, the school's life-changing work in 12 Delta communities won AACP's 2011-12 Lawrence C. Weaver Transformative Community Service Award and three awards from the Health Resources and Services Administration's learning session in Herndon, Va. The honors were for leadership commitment, patient-centered care and outstanding performance.

"It is a remarkable achievement to be No. 1 for external funding, No. 5 for NAPLEX performance and tops for transformative community service in the same year," Allen said. "The school is achieving new heights, and the credit goes to our students, faculty, preceptors, staff, community partners, and loyal alumni and friends." ■



All of the 2011 Doctor of Pharmacy graduates passed the North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination on their first attempt.

News

Hapten Sciences licenses promising poison ivy preventive

Hapten Sciences Inc. of Memphis has licensed a compound developed by ElSohly Laboratories Inc. and University of Mississippi pharmaceutical researchers to prevent reactions to poison ivy, oak and sumac.

The compound, HPT-721, is being developed for the prevention of contact dermatitis secondary to poison ivy, oak and sumac. The molecule contains chemical derivatives of urushiol (u-ROO-she-ol), the oily substance in the plants that causes dermatitis.

“Our HPT-721 molecule provides a completely new solution to the problem of urushiol exposure,” said Raymond J. Hage Jr., president and CEO of Hapten. “We are enthusiastic about the significant potential health benefits of this product candidate.”

The compound “demonstrated efficacy in an accepted animal model used in preclinical studies,” said Mohammad K. Ashfaq, a veterinarian and senior scientist in the National Center for Natural Products Research at the School of Pharmacy.

The scientist behind the compound is an NCNPR research professor, Mahmoud A. ElSohly, who is also president and director of ElSohly Laboratories Inc. of Oxford. ELI’s synthetic chemist, Waseem Gul, produced the compound, and preclinical development studies were conducted at ELI and NCNPR with more than \$800,000 from the National Institutes of Health Small Business Technology Transfer Program, or STTR.

The compound is water-soluble and has demonstrated long-term stability in aqueous solution, ElSohly said, so it will be developed as an intramuscular injection, like many flu shots. Next development steps include final formulation analysis, completion of manufacturing processes and toxicology studies. Hapten plans to file an Investigational New Drug Application with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and begin clinical trials this year.

Hypersensitivity to poison ivy develops with repeated exposure to the plants, Ashfaq said. “The first time people are exposed, there is no reaction. The second time they



Mahmoud A. ElSohly is the mastermind behind HPT-721, a product to desensitize people to poison ivy.

are exposed, they get the flared reaction typical of poison ivy dermatitis — the redness and blistering.”

Each year, nearly 50 million Americans develop that irksome skin rash, resulting in more than 7 million visits to health care providers.

“Hapten Sciences’ officers and board members have significant experience in the pharmaceutical industry,” said Walter G. Chambliss, UM’s director of technology management. “We are excited they are partnering with us to develop our new prophylactic treatment.”

Hapten Sciences, a privately held biopharmaceutical company, is dedicated to identifying and developing novel, early-stage products with potential for contributing to the health and well-being of people around the world. Hapten is

backed financially by MB Ventures Partners, also headquartered in Memphis.

ElSohly Laboratories is a small Mississippi corporation dedicated to servicing the drug-testing industry and is heavily involved in pharmaceutical research and development. ■

Alumni Focus

Meet your new alumni chapter officers, board members

PRESIDENT: Jillian James Foster (BSPS 02, PharmD 04) of Oxford is director of pharmacy services at Baptist Memorial Hospital-North Mississippi. She is past president of the Mississippi Society of Health-System Pharmacists and is MSHP's membership chair. She is on the executive committee of the Mississippi Pharmacists Association and chairs its education committee. She also is parliamentarian of Phi Lambda Sigma.



Jillian James Foster

A Rotarian, Foster is an Oxford Medical Ministries Clinic volunteer and an officer of the Delta Gamma alumni chapter. Her husband, Doug (JD 02), is an attorney with Harris, Shelton, Hanover, Walsh. They attend North Oxford Baptist Church.

PRESIDENT-ELECT: J. Todd Dear (BSPS 03, PharmD 05) of Jackson is clinical pharmacy manager at the University of Mississippi Medical Center and adjunct clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice with the School of Pharmacy. He completed his pharmacy practice residency at North Mississippi Medical Center in 2006 and is a board certified pharmacotherapy specialist. He previously served on the pharmacy alumni chapter's board and in numerous leadership roles with MSHP.



J. Todd Dear

Dear and his wife, Carley, attend Grace City Church. Carley, a Mississippi College graduate, works at Hinds Community College in Raymond. Their son, Jack, celebrates his first birthday this coming football season.

BOARD MEMBERS



Wendy McKinney

Wendy McKinney (BSPH 86) of Moss Point and her husband, John (BSPH 86), own pharmacies (Burnham Drugs) in Moss Point, Gautier, Vancleave, Escatawpa and Biloxi. They also own Burnham Home Medical Equipment in Moss Point and Lucedale.

A member of MPhA and the Mississippi Independent Pharmacies Association, McKinney served on the board and was vice president of Moss Point Active Citizens. She serves on her local Art for Heart committee, and she and John are co-treasurers of the Resurrection Catholic School's Baseball Booster Club. They attend Dantzler United Methodist Church.



Josette Nelson

Josette Nelson (BA 93, PharmD 07) of Oxford is the pharmacy director at the Tri-Lakes Medical Center in Batesville. Before joining Tri-Lakes, she was the clinical pharmacy manager at Northwest Mississippi Regional Medical Center in Clarksdale. She also was a medical technologist for 10 years prior to returning to Ole Miss to pursue her pharmacy degree.

Nelson is a member of several professional pharmacy organizations, including MSHP, and the Young Professionals of Panola County. Her husband, Mark (BBA 95, MBA 99), is senior project manager of the Client Services Group of FNC Inc., headquartered in Oxford. Both are avid Ole Miss sports fans.



Jonathan Pharr

Jonathan Pharr (BSPS 02, PharmD 04) of Saltillo is board certified in nuclear pharmacy and works at Cardinal Health's Tupelo location, which provides radiopharmaceuticals to hospitals and clinics in the north half of Mississippi and northwest portion of Alabama. At Cardinal Health, Pharr has four titles: pharmacy manager, Mississippi Board of Pharmacy liaison, sales consultant and CE Solutions speaker.

He and his wife, Kim, have two boys: Tristan, 6, and Isaac, 4. An avid cyclist, Pharr raises funds for cancer research by participating in rides across the country. A former youth minister, he also coaches several Little League teams in Saltillo (baseball, basketball, football, soccer, etc.). He and his family attend Mayfield Church of Christ. ■

Alumni Focus

School honors three with Distinguished Alumni Awards

Three UM School of Pharmacy alumni were honored for their outstanding careers and contributions to the school during Pharmacy Alumni Weekend activities on March 30-31.

Recipients of the school's 2012 Distinguished Alumni Awards are Kristie Gholson of Tupelo, William B. Harlan of Brandon and Richard Allen Jackson Sr. of Sarasota, Fla.

Gholson is assistant director of pharmacy at North Mississippi Medical Center. Before joining NMMC, she was director of pharmacy for HPI, a contract pharmacy management organization, and Noxubee General Hospital. She also was a nursing home consulting and materials-management director.

A fellow of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists, Gholson received her pharmacy degree from UM in 1977 and has served the Mississippi Society of Health-System Pharmacists as secretary/treasurer, vice president, president and delegate. She also has served on the UM pharmacy school's curriculum, accreditation and strategic-planning committees.

She has been a preceptor for UM pharmacy students for nearly 25 years and received the Roche Preceptor of the Year Award from graduating Doctor of Pharmacy students in 2005. She also has been recognized as MSHP's Pharmacist of the Year and received the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Crystal APPLE Award and American College of Apothecaries' Albert E. Rosica Jr. Award for pharmacy education.

Harlan received his pharmacy degree from Ole Miss in 1966, then practiced community pharmacy with Southwest Drugs in Jackson. Twelve years later, he and his wife, Pat, founded Harlan Discount Drugs in Jackson. After operating the pharmacy for 20 years, they sold it to Fred's Pharmacy.

Harlan was a preceptor for UM pharmacy students for more than four decades and received the school's Preceptor of the Year award in 1982 and 2006. He is one of only two pharmacists to receive the honor twice.

He also served on the pharmacy school's Dean's Advisory Committee and the UM Alumni Association's board of directors, and is a member of the Galen Order. A certified consultant pharmacist, he was president of the Mississippi Society of Consultant Pharmacists and Mississippi Pharmacists Association, which inducted him into its Hall of Fame in 2010.

Jackson is professor emeritus of Mercer University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences and president of Community Pharmacy



Bill Harlan (left), Kristie Gholson and Richard Jackson

Consulting. He received his master's (1971) and Ph.D. (1972) in health care administration from Ole Miss, then joined the pharmacy faculty at Mercer and retired in 2010 with 38 years of service. When he retired, he was professor and director of Mercer's Center for Community Pharmacy Practice and Research.

He has 65 publications in scholarly and professional journals, is the author of 16 chapters in six books and is editor of the National Community Pharmacists Association's Effective Pharmacy Management. He received NCPA's Reed Peterson Award for Excellence in Teaching Pharmacy Administration in 1990 and 1999, the Rho Chi Society's Distinguished Service Award in 1997 and Mercer's Distinguished Educator Award in 2004.

A fellow of the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education, Jackson was president of Rho Chi and chair of AACP's Teachers of Pharmacy Administration section. He also served on SSS/Pfeiffer Pharmaceuticals' board for more than 15 years.

At Mercer, he still teaches an online course in community pharmacy ownership, which is also taken by students at other schools of pharmacy nationwide for transfer credit. He was recently appointed adjunct professor of pharmacy administration at the UM pharmacy school and serves on its Dean's Advisory Committee.

"These three remarkable individuals have done our school, our profession and their communities proud," said Dean David D. Allen. "They are an example of what can be accomplished through good preparation, dedication and hard work, and it is an honor for us to recognize them as distinguished alumni of our school." ■

Alumni Focus

Pharmacy alumnus drives Ole Miss VIPs on Rebel Road Trip

As a huge Ole Miss fan, Ben Burns (BSPH 94) often drives his RV to games. Burns is also a life member of the Ole Miss Alumni Association and member of the Vaught Society, which is why Alumni Association and UMAA Foundation employees knew about his RV when they began planning the 2012 Rebel Road Trip.

"I figure they were sitting around a table in their office and thought, 'Who better to suck into this?'" Burns said.

Many alumni saw the RV that Coach Hugh Freeze, Athletics Director Ross Bjork, Chancellor Dan Jones, Alumni Association Executive Director Tim Walsh and Alumni Association President Richard Noble rode in during most

of the inaugural Rebel Road Trip, which hit 16 cities in six days to help spread excitement about Ole Miss athletics and alumni events. What many may not know is that the RV belongs to the owner of two pharmacies and a health clinic, who donated not only the RV but also his time to drive it around the region.

For Burns, driving an RV full of Ole Miss VIPs was grueling but rewarding. He got up every morning to make sure everything on the RV was running right, then he slept the entire weekend when the road trip was over because he was so tired.

"It was great getting to know everybody," Burns said. "It was really cool."

Burns said that, without a doubt, he would do Rebel Road Trip again. He even joked about a "small reunion" participants were planning for the Ole Miss vs. Tennessee baseball game. It was to feature Gus's Fried Chicken from Memphis, a place at which Coach Freeze made them stop during the trip.

Burns said that it was "kind of weird" how often he was in the spotlight during the trip. He appeared in the middle of a picture a local paper took of the group, and he was introduced at events throughout the trip.

"One of them would say, 'And back here is our bus driver,' and I would just say, 'Y'all are embarrassing me,'" Burns said. "It was a blast, and I can't wait until the next one."

Throughout the trip, Burns' RV sported a bold multicolored wrapper proclaiming the 2012 Rebel Road Trip. Burns said he hopes another wrapper will take its place next spring.

When not transporting Burns' family to Ole Miss games or on a yearly vacation, the RV spends most of its time in storage.

"Ninety percent of the time, we use it to go to Ole Miss sporting events," said Burns, who lives in Iuka with his wife and four children. "Other than that, it's a family trip every year to some place like Destin or the Smoky Mountains. It's just like home." ■

(From left) Ole Miss Athletics Director Ross Bjork, Ben Burns (BSPH 94), Burns' son Konner, Coach Hugh Freeze and Chancellor Dan Jones pose in front of Burns' RV during the 2012 Rebel Road Trip.

Throughout the trip, Burns' RV sported a bold multicolored wrapper proclaiming the 2012 Rebel Road Trip. Burns said he hopes another wrapper will take its place next spring.



Development Focus

Clark family gives back to profession, school through two endowments

As children growing up in Pascagoula, Kenny Clark and his sister Rhonda Clark experienced firsthand the golden age of the small-town drugstore — those idyllic days of cherry Cokes served from soda fountains, milkshakes in tall, curved glasses and a kindly, wise pharmacist who knew every customer by name.

For Rhonda and Kenny, that pharmacist was their father, McKinley Clark, a 1960 graduate of the UM School of Pharmacy. And, when they grew up, they wanted to be just like him.

Today, both siblings are pharmacists and Ole Miss alumni themselves, still living and plying their trade in their hometown. The profession has changed dramatically over the years, but their admiration for their dad has only grown. So when it came time to get him a Christmas present last year, they chose one that would honor him for decades to come: a \$50,000 gift creating two endowments to benefit School of Pharmacy professors and students.

“It’s inspiring to listen to the many stories about how McKinley Clark has given back to the community in so many ways. To be able to help them carry on their family legacy for many years to come is truly an honor.”

RAINA MCCLURE

The McKinley R. Clark Faculty Support Endowment will provide funds to the pharmacy school for faculty support, while the



Raina McClure (left) and David D. Allen (right) thank Kenny Clark and Rhonda Clark for honoring their father, McKinley Clark (center), with scholarship and faculty support endowments at his alma mater.

McKinley R. Clark Scholarship Endowment will offer financial assistance to pharmacy students, with first preference going to residents of Jackson, Harrison and Hancock counties.

The Clark siblings worked after school every day in the pharmacy founded by their dad and their late mother in 1964.

“Dad set the standard,” Kenny Clark recalled. “That drugstore used to be open 365 days a year, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. I worked a lot of those 11 o’clock shifts myself at the cash register. When you grow up in that business, you tend to want to go into it yourself.”

Kenny Clark graduated from the pharmacy school in 1980, and his sister earned her degree there in 1986. As the family business expanded, the three of them owned, at one point, seven stores incorporated under the name Sav-Rex.

For McKinley Clark, the health of his customers took priority over profits, Rhonda Clark said. “He’s one of the most honest people I know, a man with high moral standards. I’ve seen him give medicines to families when they’ve been laid off from their jobs and can’t afford to pay. He’d just let them pay for it later, and if they didn’t come back, he wouldn’t go after them. It was just forgotten.”

The elder Clark has fond memories of Ole Miss and his professors.

“I owe my success to the School of Pharmacy,” he said. “It’s done so much for me and my children. Ole Miss has been nothing but supportive of us, and that’s why we’ve all been so successful.”

The siblings felt inspired by their UM professors to create the faculty support endowment.

“With the current economic situation, universities have to rely more on these types of gifts rather than state and federal money,” Kenny Clark said. “So we felt this was something we needed to do. There comes a point when you need to start giving back to those who have helped you in your own livelihood.”

Rhonda Clark agreed. “We wanted to find a way to give back to the pharmacy profession in our father’s name,” she said. “Everything we’ve got, everything we’ve achieved is because of him. And it means a lot to him to give something that’s going to help others in the long run.”

David D. Allen, dean of pharmacy, said the endowments will reap enormous benefits for future generations. “This country’s premier pharmacy schools not only have a stellar and

continued on page 27

Development Focus

1908 Society created to recognize school's annual donors

The 1908 Society has been created to help the University of Mississippi better recognize those who provide financial support to its School of Pharmacy every year.

"Essentially, the 1908 Society will allow those who truly understand the value of our pharmacy school to be recognized every year for their loyalty and support," said David D. Allen, the school's dean.

Allen and his wife, Loree, became the society's first members earlier this year.

"In order for Ole Miss to continue to produce excellent pharmacists to serve our state and region, annual private financial support at all levels is absolutely critical," Allen said.

"Larger endowed gifts are extremely important to our continued success, but annual, or 'flow-through,' gifts are just as essential, and we want to recognize those who provide them."

Alumni and friends who give \$1,000 or more during a school year (July 1-June 30) will be included in the 1908 Society for that year.

"Unlike the Galen Order, alumni and friends don't have to 'join' the 1908 Society," said Raina McClure, the pharmacy school's development officer.

Young alumni, who graduated from the school within the last 10 years (2002 or after), will be included in the society if they give \$500 a year, and current students will be included if they give \$100.

"In general, our younger alumni, and certainly our students, aren't quite as 'flush' as our older alumni, so we're giving them a sort of 'discount,'" McClure said.

All 1908 Society-level donors will be recognized by their names being listed in the fall issue of *Pharmacy Matters*, as well as an invitation to a special reception at some point in the year.

"Every gift of every size to the School of Pharmacy truly does make a significant difference for both our students and faculty," Allen said. "But these gifts also make a difference for alumni because they strengthen our programs and subsequently increase the value of the thousands of degrees we've already awarded."

Donors at the 1908 Society level may designate their gifts to meet any of the pharmacy school's needs, such as scholarships for students, professional development for faculty, technology upgrades, travel for faculty and students to professional conferences and meetings, and Science Library and skills lab resources.

"Designated gifts are important because they enable donors to give to areas that are especially meaningful to them," McClure said. "But those gifts that are given to the school in general, rather than designated for a particular use, allow Dean Allen to address needs as they arise. Gifts such as these are key to ensuring that the school's students and faculty have the resources they need to be successful."

Donors may make a single gift or several throughout the year to reach the 1908 Society level. Gifts to the society, which was named for the year in which the School of Pharmacy was founded, are tax-deductible.

To make a gift and help guarantee the continued excellence of the pharmacy school at Ole Miss, contact Raina McClure at 662-915-6967 (office), 662-832-7137 (cell) or raina@olemiss.edu; visit <http://umfoundation.com/makeagift>; or mail a check with the School of Pharmacy noted to the University of Mississippi Foundation, P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677. ■



Faculty and students are benefiting from the gifts made to the pharmacy school last year.

"Every gift of every size to the School of Pharmacy truly does make a significant difference for both our students and faculty."

DEAN DAVID D. ALLEN

Development Focus

Alumni, friends provide more than \$900,000 over past 11 months

Gifts from 360 loyal alumni, friends and corporate supporters provided more than \$900,000 to the School of Pharmacy since July 1, 2011, enabling it to continue its quest to remain one of America's premier pharmacy programs.

"On behalf of our faculty and students, I thank each and every donor who gave this past year," said David D. Allen, the school's dean. "We are immensely grateful for their love for our school, their loyalty and their generosity, which is benefiting our students and faculty in numerous ways."

Student support

Among the largest of the 560 individual gifts received last year was \$400,000 from

the estate of Madeline O. Sciacca (BSPH 53) of Slidell, La., who remembered her alma mater in her will by creating a scholarship endowment. (See story, page 28.)

Another scholarship endowment was created by Albert Sanderson (BSPH 79) of Nashville, who committed \$75,000 to fund a scholarship honoring his son, Quentin Ross Sanderson, who died in a car accident in 2002 at the age of 19.

Corporate gifts provided even more scholarship funds. One of them was from Cardinal Health, which chose the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy to receive funding from its new \$1.1 million scholarship program. Each school received an endowed scholarship ranging from \$50,000 to \$125,000.

"Scholarship support helped diminish the financial burdens faced by many of our students," said Marvin Wilson, associate dean for academic and student affairs. "In fact, about 52 percent of our professional students received scholarship support last year."

Among them were 2012 Doctor of Pharmacy graduates Laura C. Luther of Hattiesburg and Katie Sims of Athens, Ala., inaugural recipients of the Jim and Sarah Ainsworth Leadership Awards, and Laura Schrock of Durant, Miss., inaugural recipient of the Pharmacy Alumni Chapter Scholarship.

The Ainsworth awards were funded by the Baptist Memorial Health Care Foundation. The PAC scholarship was funded by proceeds from the alumni chapter's Pharmacy Week-end golf tournament.

Faculty support

Last year's gifts also enabled the school to reward several talented teaching, research and practice faculty, send others to professional conferences, or make vital purchases for their classrooms and laboratories.

Among them were Brian Crabtree, David McCaffrey, John Rimoldi and Gary Theilman, who were recognized through the Distinguished Teaching Scholars Program. Established in 2005, the awards are funded by private gifts and provide an annual stipend for three years.

Both students and faculty members will benefit from two endowments created by Rhonda Clark (BSPH 86) and Kenny Clark (BSPH 80) in honor of their father, McKinley Clark (BSPH 60), all of Pascagoula. One \$25,000 endowment is directed to scholarships; the other \$25,000 endowment will support faculty. (See story, page 24.)

"Words cannot express my gratitude to McKinley Clark's children for supporting both our students and faculty," Allen said. "Their generosity to our School of Pharmacy will help ensure that our talented students continue to become outstanding pharmacists, and that our talented faculty [members] continue to innovate and contribute in amazing ways to pharmacy education, their disciplines and patient care."



Pharmacy Alumni Chapter Scholarship winner Laura Schrock of Durant (third from left) is congratulated by deans Marvin C. Wilson (left) and Barbara G. Wells, and former PAC president James Pittman.



Sarah (left) and Jim Ainsworth of Hernando meet the first recipients of the scholarship they created in their names: Laura Luther of Hattiesburg (second from left) and Katie Sims of Athens, Ala.



Pharmacy development officer Raina McClure (left) and former dean Barbara G. Wells thank Albert Sanderson for the scholarship he created honoring his son.

Students and faculty members are also benefiting from the new pharmacy building on the Medical Center campus.

"Private support, along with grant and university funds, helped make this structure possible, and we are immensely grateful to those who contributed to this critical need," Allen said.

General support

While many of last year's gifts increased the number and value of the school's named endowments, many others were unrestricted, meaning they could be used to address the school's greatest, or unforeseen, needs.

One such gift, which will greatly impact the school's future, is the result of a charitable trust created by the late Beverly Waller of Oxford. Upon her death, the trust

provided \$190,000 to the school to be used at the dean's discretion.

Beverly Waller was the wife of the late Coy W. Waller, former director of the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, for whom a lecture series was created in 2004 to recognize his many contributions to the pharmaceutical industry, pharmaceuticals and School of Pharmacy.

"We are immensely grateful to Mrs. Waller for her loyalty to our school and the institute her husband once directed," Allen said. "We are also grateful for the faith and trust she has placed in us to use her gift wisely and to the school's best advantage."

With state appropriations diminishing, the School of Pharmacy's financial health is becoming more dependent on short- and long-term contributions from the private sector, said Raina McClure, the school's development officer.

"It is also becoming increasingly important that more individuals, corporations and other stakeholders join the 63 new donors who gave to the school last year, so we can expand our donor base," McClure said.

For more information about how you can impact the School of Pharmacy in a way most meaningful to you while helping to guarantee its continued excellence, please contact McClure at 662-915-6967 (office), 662-832-7137 (cell) or raina@olemiss.edu; visit <http://umfoundation.com/makeagift>; or mail a check with the School of Pharmacy noted to the University of Mississippi Foundation, P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677. ■

Clark continued from page 24

diverse cadre of talented students but also a stellar and diverse cadre of talented faculty. Our school is fortunate to have both, and it is because of their knowledge, energy, enthusiasm and passion that we have a nationally ranked program.

"If we are to remain a top-notch program, we must be able to continue to attract the best and the brightest, but competition for outstanding students and faculty is growing ever stiffer," Allen added. "Words cannot express my gratitude to the McKinley Clark family members for supporting both our students and faculty. Their generosity to our School of Pharmacy will help ensure that talented students continue to become outstanding pharmacy practitioners and that our talented teaching, research and patient-care faculty [members] continue to innovate and contribute in amazing ways to pharmacy education, their disciplines and patient care."

Raina McClure, director of development for pharmacy, echoed Allen's remarks. "It's inspiring to listen to the many stories about how McKinley Clark has given back to the community in so many ways," she said. "To be able to help them carry on their family legacy for many years to come is truly an honor."

McKinley Clark's daughter from his second marriage, Amanda Erin Clark, also earned her degree in pharmacy administration from UM as did her mother, Nanette Clark, and Dempsey Levi, the Clark family's business partner in the Sav-Rex stores.

Now semiretired, McKinley Clark still dispenses meds and sage advice three days a week at a Fred's Pharmacy in Pascagoula. He said the endowments made the ideal gift.

"It was a pleasant surprise," he said. "Nothing they could have given me would have been more enjoyable or satisfying. I don't have any material needs, so I'd rather pass on some of our success to future generations. This was a real pleasure and an honor."

The McKinley R. Clark Faculty Support Endowment and McKinley R. Clark Scholarship Endowment are open to receive gifts from individuals and organizations. To contribute, send a check with the funds noted to the University of Mississippi Foundation, P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677; contact Raina McClure at 662-915-6967 or visit www.umfoundation.com/makeagift. ■



Cardinal Health's Robert Clift presents a gift for scholarships to Dean Emeritus Barbara G. Wells.

*Development Focus***School receives major gift from estate of alumna***... Gift creates scholarship endowment for Ole Miss pharmacy students*

(Above) Madeline O. Sciacca receives her pharmacy degree from Ole Miss in 1953. (Right) Sciacca as she appeared during her prime.



Thanks to the generosity of the late Madeline O. Sciacca of Slidell, La., who remembered her alma mater in her will, generations of pharmacy students at the University of Mississippi will receive scholarship support.

Sciacca, who obtained her pharmacy degree from UM in 1953, left \$400,000 to the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy to create the Madeline Occhipinti Sciacca Memorial Scholarship Endowment.

To honor the gift, Sciacca's 1953 diploma and a plaque bearing her name have been placed in the pharmacy building.

"We are humbled by this tremendous gift," said David D. Allen, the school's dean. "It greatly expands our ability to help young people pursue their dreams of becoming practicing pharmacists and ensures that Madeline Sciacca's name will remain a part of our school for years to come."

Sciacca practiced pharmacy at Walgreens in downtown New Orleans for years. After retiring in the 1970s, she began buying rental properties and buying and selling real estate.

In 2001, shortly after Barbara G. Wells became dean of the Ole Miss pharmacy school, Sciacca contacted her and said she wanted to leave some money to the school for scholarships.

"She wanted to help students, and that fit very nicely with our goals for the school," said Wells, who retired as dean emeritus in December. "That began our 10-year relationship."

During that time, Sciacca told Wells of her fondness for the school.

"She loved the School of Pharmacy," Wells said. "She loved her time here and her memories. She also said her father valued education, and it was important to him that all his children get educated."

Sciacca attended San Marcos Academy, a boarding school in San Marcos, Texas, as did her two sisters, Frances and Fara, and two brothers, Anthony and Gasper, said her niece and the executor of her estate, Leslie Occhipinti of Metairie, La.

"They were all college educated, and they became engineers, lawyers, pharmacists and physicists," Occhipinti said. "Madeline left a nice donation to that academy, as well as Ole Miss."

Sciacca married Thomas V. Sciacca at the age of 47.

"Her husband was truly devoted to her, as she was to him," Wells said. "He was a fine gentleman, and they had a genuine late-life love for each other."

Dean Emeritus Barbara G. Wells and Dean David D. Allen display Madeline Sciacca's diploma and a plaque bearing her name, which have been hung between Faser Hall and the Thad Cochran Research Center to commemorate her bequest to the pharmacy school.



"When she got into real estate, Thomas did, too," Occhipinti said.

He died two years ago, and she died Sept. 5, 2011, at the age of 80, following a long illness.

"Madeline was Italian," Wells said. "She was fiercely loyal to the people and institutions that she cared about. She was a strong-willed woman who fought the good battle against her illnesses the entire 10 years that I knew her."

She took care of both her mother and father before they died.

"She also cared for students and wanted to make a difference in their lives," Wells said. "She wanted to give back and make things better for people. She was very generous, as expressed by her gift to our school, and she is an excellent role model for our students and for all of us in pharmacy."

The Madeline Occhipinti Sciacca Memorial Scholarship Endowment is open to accept gifts from individuals and organizations. To contribute, contact Raina McClure at 662-915-6967 or raina@umfoundation.com, visit <http://umfoundation.com/makeagift>, or mail a check with the endowment noted to the University of Mississippi Foundation, P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677. ■

Faculty Focus

Researcher, entrepreneur named Pitt 'Legacy Laureate'

Mahmoud A. ElSohly was named one of the University of Pittsburgh's 16 Legacy Laureates, alumni recognized for their outstanding personal and professional accomplishments.

ElSohly, a professor of pharmaceuticals in the UM School of Pharmacy and research professor in the school's National Center for Natural Products Research, "has commanded a distinguished career in biochemical pharmacology," said a Pitt news release.

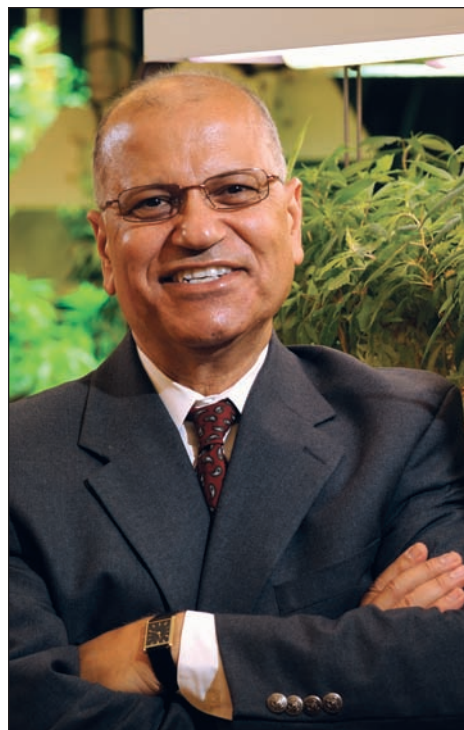
At UM, he is director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse Marijuana Project. Begun in 1968, the project boasts the longest running contract in National Institutes of Health history.

"Dr. ElSohly is an exceptional researcher," said Larry Walker, NCNPR director. "His consistent record and leadership in research throughout his career here are truly remarkable, as is his standing in the scientific community, so it doesn't surprise any of us that his alma mater has named him a 'Legacy Laureate.'"

ElSohly, who earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree from Pitt's School of Pharmacy in 1975, also is founder, president and laboratory director of ElSohly Laboratories Inc., a multifaceted lab that provides commercial and governmental clients with analytical drugtesting services and advice.

He has worked on many projects to advance human health and alleviate suffering, including a vaccine to protect people with severe allergies to poisonous plants, as well as drugs that stimulate the appetite of patients being treated for cancer or AIDS.

ElSohly and his wife, Hala, also a 1975 Pitt



Mahmoud A. ElSohly

graduate, were key investigators on the Mississippi team that cultivated a Chinese plant here and isolated the antimalarial drug artemisinin, allowing the World Health Organization to create clinical supplies of the drug for its first trials in the Western world.

A fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, American College of Forensic Examiners International and American Institute of Chemists, ElSohly has been recognized by *The Scientist*, *Science Watch* and the *Journal of Analytical Toxicology* as one of the most cited authors in forensic sciences. He has presented at more than 200 scientific meetings of professional societies and holds more than 20 patents.

Among Pitt's other 2011 laureates are a man who gave Pitt a historic \$125 million, a retired BP America president who helped build the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, a Pennsylvania congressman, one of the nation's leading appellate attorneys, the COO of the nation's largest non-profit Catholic health system, the CEO of one of the nation's largest outpatient rehabilitation networks, and Pitt's chancellor, provost and retired faculty member who developed Pennsylvania's child-welfare training program.

The 2011 laureates were honored with a dinner and awards ceremony during Pitt's homecoming festivities. ■

Faculty Focus

Dietary supplements guru receives honorary doctorate

An international expert on dietary supplements and pharmacognosy professor at UM has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Hamdard University in New Delhi.

Ikhlas A. Khan, who also serves as assistant director of the School of Pharmacy's National Center for Natural Products Research and director of its FDA Center for Excellence in Botanicals, received the honorary Doctor of Letters during March ceremonies in India.

"I am truly humbled to receive this degree from Hamdard," Khan said. "It is such an honor to receive this recognition, especially in my home country of India. Words can't express my gratitude."

Khan is a nationally and internationally recognized proponent of using analytical fingerprinting to standardize herbal products and using bio-analytical approaches to improve their quality and safety.

His work at NCNPR includes collaborations with the Medicinal Plant Consortium headquartered at the University of Kentucky and the Botanical Research Center at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. The consortium's work is focused on unraveling how plant genes contribute to production of various chemical compounds, while the botanical center's work is aimed at improving the safety and effectiveness of botanical estrogens.

Khan is also director of the U.S. efforts for the Sino-U.S. Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Center and director of the U.S. arm of the Center for Research of Indian Systems of Medicine, also located at UM. These centers study and promote the value, safety and utilization of Chinese and Indian traditional medicines in the U.S.

In addition, he is an adjunct professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a visiting professor at Soochow University, Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine and Hunan University, as well as the King Saud University School of Pharmacy. He also has more than 400 original research articles, publications and reviews to his credit.

"Dr. Khan has invested much of his career in bringing the tools of modern science



Hamdard University Chancellor Saiyid Hamid (left) and Registrar Firdous Wani (right) present an honorary degree to Ikhlas A. Khan during ceremonies in India.

"Dr. Khan has invested much of his career in bringing the tools of modern science to better understand and utilize medicines from ancient traditions."

NCNPR DIRECTOR LARRY A. WALKER

to better understand and utilize medicines from ancient traditions," said Larry A. Walker, NCNPR director.

"His leadership in research on botanical supplements continues to be recognized in the U.S. and abroad," Walker said. "This honorary degree from Hamdard, one of the leading research universities in India, testifies to the high international regard for his sustained contributions."

Khan has been recognized numerous times for his research. He is the recipient

of the *Nutrition Business Journal's* 2010 Education Award and the American Botanical Council's 2009 Norman R. Farnsworth Botanical Research Award. In 2011, Khan received the Varro E. Tyler Prize from the American Society of Pharmacognosy for his career contributions to medicinal plant research, education and advocacy for plant-based medicines.

He earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry and his master's degree in organic chemistry at the Aligarh Muslim University in India. He received his doctoral degree in pharmacy from the Institute of Pharmaceutical Biology in Munich, Germany, and completed his post-doctoral work at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich.

Khan has served on the advisory boards or expert panels of such organizations as the American Herbal Products Association, U.S. Pharmacopoeia, Women's Health and Asian Traditional Medicine, Missouri Botanical Garden, American Botanical Council, AOAC (Association of Official Analytical Communities) International Dietary Supplement Task Force and Health Canada's Natural Health Products Directorate. ■

Faculty Focus

National annual meeting organized by professor

Christopher R. McCurdy wonders if his plate could get any fuller. The medicinal chemistry professor has spent the year planning the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists' 2012 annual meeting.

McCurdy is co-chair of the association's program committee and is responsible for securing the meeting's keynote speaker, as well as speakers for its plenary sessions. Along with the committee chair, he is also overseeing all of the programming logistics of hosting nearly 5,000 members at the Chicago meeting.

"This is definitely a huge undertaking," McCurdy said. "AAPS is the organization at the leading edge of pharmaceutical sciences, and the executive committee has provided me a humbling opportunity to lead with my strengths."

The associate professor of medicinal chemistry will be installed as chair of the program committee during the October meeting and will begin assuming responsibilities for the association's 2013 annual meeting in San Antonio. As chair, McCurdy will be responsible for the entire meeting and will help section chairs plan their various sessions.

McCurdy is also chair of AAPS's publications committee and previously served as chair of the Drug Design and Discovery section.

Michael A. Repka, UM chair and professor of pharmaceuticals, also is on the national AAPS leadership team as vice chair of the Formulation Design and Development section. During the 2012 meeting, Repka will become the section chair and serve on the planning committee for the 2013 meeting with McCurdy.

"We are proud to have Drs. McCurdy and Repka both serving in leadership positions within AAPS," said David D. Allen, pharmacy dean. "This association's members are at the forefront of pharmaceutical sciences around the world, and it is a tribute to both of these professors, and our school, that they have placed such confidence and trust in them."

McCurdy was selected Teacher of the Year by UM pharmacy students enrolled in the second year of their professional program in 2003, 2006 and 2010. He also received the university's campuswide Faculty Achievement Award in 2010.

The author of more than 60 papers in professional journals, he has received research funding from the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Science Foundation.

AACP named McCurdy an Academic Leadership Fellow in 2006, and the Pharmacy Leadership and Educational Institute presented him with its Albert B. Prescott/GlaxoSmithKline Leadership Award in 2002 during the American Pharmacists Association's annual meeting.

AAPS, a professional association with about 12,000 members employed in industry, academia, government and research institutes worldwide, provides an international forum for the exchange of knowledge among scientists to enhance their contributions to public health. ■



Christopher R. McCurdy also chairs AAPS's publications committee.

UM chair elected AAPS vice chair

Michael A. Repka, chair of pharmaceuticals, is the new vice chair of the Formulation Design and Development section of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists.

Repka was elected vice chair during the association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in October. His election — a precursor to terms as chair-elect, chair and past chair — represents a four-year commitment.

"It is an honor and a privilege to be elected

vice chair of this section," Repka said. "I am humbled to represent such a significant number of AAPS members. I look forward to serving this group during the next four years."



Michael A. Repka

With 4,200 members, the FDD section

is AAPS's largest and enables its members to share experimental results, consider new formulation and dosage-form technologies, and discuss issues and concerns regarding the design and development of formulations and drug products.

With Repka's election, the School of Pharmacy holds leadership positions in the most visible professional pharmacy associations in the country. Brian Crabtree, professor of pharmacy practice, is president of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, and Walt Chambliss, professor of pharmaceuticals, serves on the executive counsel of the American Pharmacists Association's Academy of Pharmaceutical Research and Science.

"We are delighted that Dr. Repka has been elected to serve as FDD vice chair for AAPS," said David D. Allen, pharmacy dean. "Service is pivotal to our mission at the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy, and our students, faculty and staff continually seek opportunities to give back. We look forward to Mike's leadership in this role." ■



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Faculty Focus

AACP New Investigator Award goes to Khanna

A School of Pharmacy faculty member is among 18 recipients of New Investigator Awards announced by the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.

Rahul Khanna, assistant professor of pharmacy administration and research assistant professor in the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, will use the award to study the relationship between the health and well-being of caregivers of autistic children and the emotional and physical stress they experience.

"I am very excited about receiving this award," Khanna said. "The awards are very competitive. Only one in 10 applicants are successful, so being a recipient validates the nature of my work. I'm confident I'm going in the right direction, and I am thankful for the support I have received from my colleagues in the department and school."

The AACP awards support new faculty research in such areas as the biological sciences, chemistry, pharmaceutical sciences, pharmacy practice, and the social and administrative sciences. This year's recipients are investigating topics as diverse as medication

self-management, treatment for cocaine addiction and withdrawal, and the impact of Medicare payment cuts on treatment choices and patient outcomes.

"The NIA program at AACP provides seed money for new faculty investigators to establish their very first independent pilot research project," said Vincent Lau, vice president of research and graduate education at AACP.



Rahul Khanna

research," Lau said. "This year, we were pleased to have an exceptionally strong field of applicants. We believe that each of the award-winning projects has great potential to inform pharmacy science and improve health care."

"We are very proud of Dr. Khanna," said

Donna West-Strum, chair of pharmacy administration. "He is a talented young investigator with lots of potential, as indicated by the competitive nature of the AACP awards program. We look forward to collaborating with him as he continues to develop his scientific career."

Khanna, who joined the UM pharmacy faculty in 2010, obtained his Bachelor of Science in pharmacy from Delhi University and Master of Business Administration from the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade. He obtained his Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy from West Virginia University, both of which involved health-outcomes research.

"Our pharmacy school is known nationally for providing our talented and promising young faculty members with the resources and mentoring they need to become highly successful," said David D. Allen, the school's dean. "It's extremely rewarding to see one of them take the initiative to seek external funding for his research, and I have little doubt that Dr. Khanna will soon be contributing significantly to maintaining our school's No. 1 ranking (among 125 U.S. pharmacy schools) for extramural funding." ■