



PHARMACY FOCUS



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Chair of Pharmacy Practice

Dr. Charles D. Hufford
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Dr. Michael A. Repka
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Dr. Donna West-Strum
Interim Chair of Pharmacy Administration

Dabney Weems
Editor

Growing company gives back to school

by **Sonia Thompson** and **Rebecca Lauck Cleary**

Medical Marketing Economics (MME) LLC, a consulting group based in Oxford, has committed \$350,000 to support The University of Mississippi's (UM) School of Pharmacy.

The gift will support the pharmacy school in three different ways: \$150,000 will create and endow the MME Fellowship in Pharmacy Administration; another \$150,000 will create a general fund to support the school; and the remainder will support the Science Library located in the Thad Cochran Research Center.

"Faculty, staff, and students of the School of Pharmacy are grateful for the generous support of the MME partners," said pharmacy Dean Barbara G. Wells. "This gift will make a meaningful difference for both graduate and professional students and their faculty. MME provides a wonderful example for us all—alumni, businesses, faculty, and staff—to emulate. These forward-looking, community-minded individuals believe in the importance of supporting the school to ensure that we can provide the best education possible. We thank them for the faith they place in us and our students."

Housed in a newly built retail/residential building just north of the Oxford Square, MME has an important effect on international pharmacy pricing.

"Our little company, a block off the Square, has been growing 33 percent a year, just by advising multinational corporations," said E.M. "Mick" Kolassa, CEO and managing partner of MME. "Our company, MME, wouldn't be here if it weren't for the Ole Miss School of Pharmacy. It is where many of us met, the source of many of our employees, and a major source of pride for all of us. We see this gift as a way for us to give back."

Kolassa, who also holds a Ph.D. in pharmacy administration from Ole Miss, serves as an adjunct professor of pharmacy administration and adjunct research professor in the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He maintains his Ole Miss connections.

"Very frequently we involve faculty and graduate students in our work here. We are products of the School of Pharmacy and the pharmacy administration department, and there is a linkage there that can't be broken," Kolassa said. "Our first choice is always people with a background in pharmacy administration."



Medical Marketing Economics pledged \$350,000 to the UM School of Pharmacy. The firm's partners include (front row, left to right) Bill Lobb, Brian Reisetter, and Mick Kolassa and (back row) Doug Paul and Kevin Patterson.

MME employs more than 35 people, eight of whom are UM pharmacy administration graduates. The company has offices in Oxford, Miss., Montclair N.J., and Oxford, England. MME continues to provide value-based marketing strategies for the pharmaceutical and biotech industries.

Kolassa is cognizant of giving back to the community around him.

"I've taken risks in my career, and the business has been very successful. We at MME have been fortunate to be able to give back to the community by supporting graduate assistantships in the pharmacy administration program, as well as bringing back access to online journals for pharmacy students," he said.

The company also supports various local projects, including the Interfaith Compassion Ministry and the Boys and Girls Club, where it helped to install new basketball courts.

MME's gift is part of the university's MomentUM campaign, a four-year initiative to raise \$200 million, and the Promises to Keep Campaign, an initiative of the School of Pharmacy to raise funds for endowments to support students and faculty and to build a new pharmacy building on the Medical Center campus in Jackson. •

Message from the Dean

As I reflect on 2007-08, I realize that the faculty, students, and alumni can take pride in many accomplishments. We have been ranked among the top five pharmacy schools in the country for almost a decade, according to the ranking of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, which is based on total external funding for research. In addition, the pass rate of our pharmacy graduates on the national licensure exam is among the highest pass rates of U.S. pharmacy schools.

To enhance the quality of our educational programs and to comply with the new standards for accreditation of schools of pharmacy, a new pharmacy curriculum was designed and adopted by the faculty. This enhanced curriculum will be implemented over a two-year period. Practice experiences will now be provided each semester of the program, and skills laboratories will be provided each semester the students are in Oxford. The biomedical sciences will be enhanced in the pre-professional curriculum, and professional electives now will be provided throughout the professional curriculum, not just during the final year. Introductory practice experiences were enhanced, and the number of preceptors who provide practice experiences for our students was increased. In addition, our admissions process was strengthened, and services provided to students, especially those at the Medical Center, were improved.

Our total external funding for 2007-08 was nearly \$21

million. Our funding from the National Institutes of Health was \$6.3 million, the highest in our history. A strong research program and enhanced infrastructure development are essential to support a highest quality graduate program, allow us to procure and maintain critical research instrumentation, help us attract the best faculty and graduate students, elevate our national recognition, and stimulate economic development in Mississippi.

Two centers' administrations are housed in the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (RIPS) within the School of Pharmacy. They are the National Center for Natural Products Research (NCNPR) and the Center for Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management (CPMM). Both of these centers continue to grow and prosper, and the work of these two centers contributes immeasurably to the research, educational, and service missions of the school throughout the year.

Our faculty and research scientists are among the finest in any pharmacy school in the country. They are excellent teachers, and they are prolific in their grantsmanship and in publication of their research findings. They provide essential leadership to professional and scientific associations and government agencies. They serve on critical advisory boards and editorial boards. Dr. John S. Williamson received the university's Excellence in Promoting Inclusiveness in Graduate Education Award. Dr. Daneel Ferreira was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Free State University in South Africa, and Dr. Marc Slattery presented an overview on marine genetic resources at the General Assembly of the United Nations. Dr. Dewey D. Garner received the 2008 Career Achievement Award from the Professional Fraternity Association. Dr. H. Joseph Byrd was inducted into the Mississippi Pharmacists Association Hall of Fame, and Dr. Brian L. Crabtree completed his tenure as chair of the Council of Faculties within the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. As our faculty members gain recognition around the world as leading experts in their fields, we are also seeing an expansion of our national and international prestige, as well as opportunities for leadership and major impact on the health of citizens worldwide.

Challenges Ahead

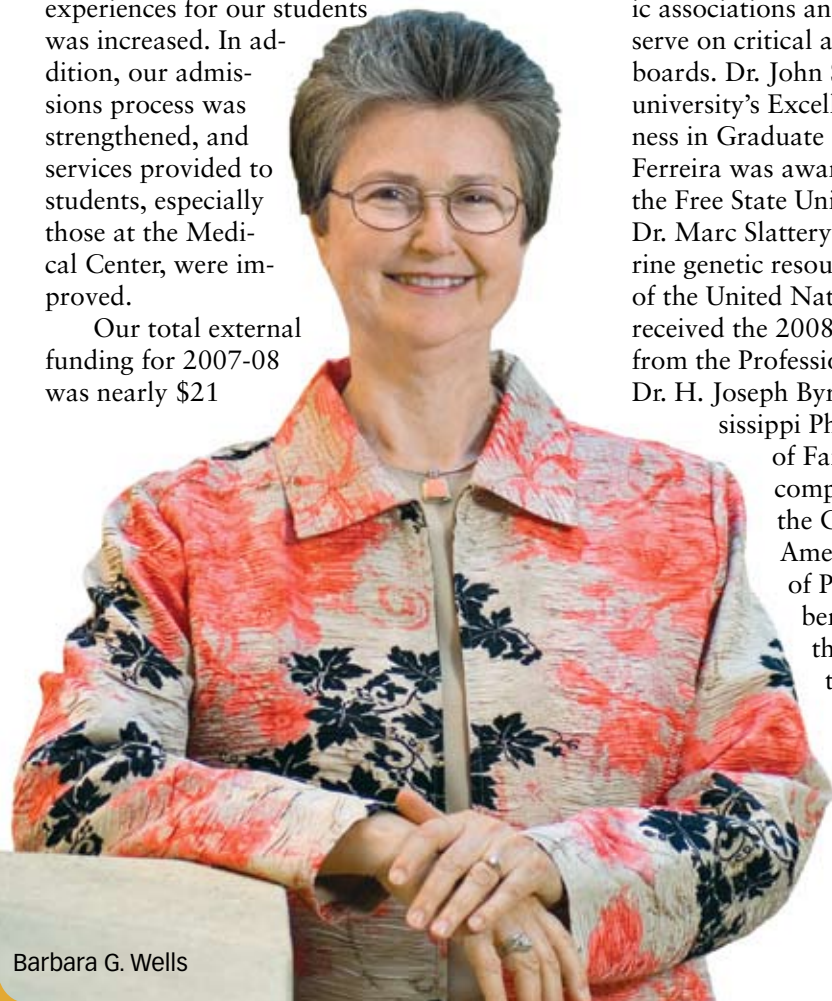
As we contemplate our future, we also must be mindful of some real constraints. It is important for us to continue to increase our enrollment to better meet the need for competent pharmacists in Mississippi and also to continue to expand our research enterprise. Our enrollment growth is facilitated by the completion of the new 250-seat pharmacy auditorium on the Oxford campus, but continuing enrollment growth and accreditation of our school are contingent on the completion of the new pharmacy building on The University of Mississippi Medical Center campus in Jackson.

To address the needed growth, we have plans to construct a new research building on the Oxford campus for the NCNPR. The first bolus of funding for this critically needed 104,000-square-foot building already has been received from the Health Resources and Services Administration. Using state-allocated bond money, the research space on the third floor of Faser Hall is being renovated to enhance research efficiency and productivity. In addition, planning and design documents are being prepared for the new 26,000-square-foot pharmacy building to be constructed on the Medical Center campus. A capital campaign is underway to raise funds for this critical building, as well as to raise endowments to support students and faculty. Construction of the first phase of this new academic building in Jackson will begin during 2009.

Another challenge confronting us is the cuts in state funding. The state has imposed initial cuts, and more are promised in the coming months. We are taking advantage of all opportunities for cost savings, and we are streamlining our operations to make them more efficient. We must and will be practical, entrepreneurial, and innovative.

The School of Pharmacy, through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and RIPS, provides an aggressive intellectual property development program, which has the potential to benefit both the school and our faculty. The school currently has 28 active U.S. patents, 18 of which are either licensed or under research and development collaborations. In addition, we have 32 pending U.S. patent applications.

The bottom line is that we are growing in enrollment, the quality of our educational programs, research productivity, infrastructure, and national and international recognition. Our many accomplishments track an upward,



Barbara G. Wells

accelerating trajectory. These accomplishments constitute a legacy of strategic growth that positions us for even greater prominence in the future. In spite of austere financial times, significant opportunities are before us to use our expertise to advance pharmacy education, elevate the practice of pharmacy, and enhance the quality of health care in Mississippi and across the globe.

It is my pleasure to update you on our recent accomplishments, and I welcome your comments and recommendations on how we can be even more successful in the future. The faculty and staff are privileged and blessed to have these opportunities, and we look forward to working with our alumni and other strategic partners to ensure our success. We have much to be thankful for, and high on that list is loyal alumni without whom we could not be the school that we are. On behalf of faculty, staff, and students, I thank our alumni and all of our strategic partners for their support and faith in us. •

Sincerely,



Barbara Wells

Students reap benefits of new auditorium

by Dabney Weems



The new 5,000-square-foot auditorium consists of 250 seats, Wi-Fi, a stage, increased desk space, and state-of-the-art, high-definition video equipment.

Pharmacy students have more room to learn this year, thanks to a new auditorium.

The 5,000-square-foot auditorium, adjacent to the foyer of the Thad Cochran Research Center, consists of 250 seats, Wi-Fi, a stage, increased desk space, and state-of-the-art, high-definition video equipment. No state or private funds were used in building the \$2.5 million addition.

“We are deeply appreciative of the hard work of Sen. Thad Cochran and his staff in helping us to secure funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration to build this new auditorium, which is designed to meet the needs of the National Center for Natural Products Research and the School of Pharmacy,” said pharmacy Dean Barbara G. Wells. “If not for the NCNPR, we would not have received this federal support, so this is just one more of many instances where our excellent research programs have enriched and enhanced our teaching programs.”

With additional seating for classes, the school can now move forward with its goal to increase class size to address the shortage of practicing pharmacists.

The entering class of 2008 is the largest since the mid-1980s, with 100 new students beginning the pharmacy curriculum in fall 2008. All of the students’ lectures meet in the auditorium.

“I really like being able to meet with my whole class,” said P3 student Hart Wardlaw

from Tupelo. “I feel like it unifies us as a whole, and I think it makes all things simpler by meeting together.”

Mary Ellen Ray of Hattiesburg also enjoys the increased room for class.

“It’s really spacious, which is nice because I can spread out all my notes and have my computer open without it all turning into a big mess,” Ray explained. “There are 100 people in our class, which is big compared to other classes I’ve taken, but I definitely prefer us to be together and on the same page about everything. We all seem to pick up on different parts of the lectures, so when we study we can kind of combine it all to help ourselves learn.”

The Pharmacy Student Body also uses the space for assembly meetings at which both first- and second-professional-year students meet to hear guest speakers on career options in pharmacy and other vital topics. In previous years, these meetings were held at other venues on campus, which presented scheduling challenges given the university’s need for larger classrooms resulting from increased enrollment.

“Attending assemblies is much more convenient, and we can easily walk a few feet to another location in our own building,” said Pharmacy Student Body President Matt Hill of Petal. “Absences have been cut in half, and feedback from the student body has become much more positive.”

Additional uses for the new auditorium include hosting continuing education classes for licensed pharmacists and research symposia. •



Alumni Spotlight

The following alumni have established successful careers which serve as shining examples for our students. Their work improves the health of our citizens and elevates our profession.

Jimmy D. Ainsworth

Jim Ainsworth (BSPH '67) began his 40-year career with the Baptist Memorial Health Care Corp. as a pharmacist at its medical center in downtown Memphis. He quickly climbed the center's ranks to pharmacy director, then administrator to chief executive officer. In 2000, Baptist moved him to the conglomerate's headquarters as vice president and head of Mississippi operations.

Today, he is Baptist's vice president of regional operations.

Samuel Eugene Daniel Jr.

A regional segment manager with Amgen's Senior Care department in Orange Park, Fla., Sam Daniel (BSPH '72) has helped shape pharmacy education and professional development in several states. He is a former adjunct faculty member for the School of Pharmacy and is active in the American College of Apothecaries, National Community Pharmacists Association, Florida Pharmacists Association, and the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists.

Daniel has served as a member of the UM School of Pharmacy Dean's Advisory Committee, University of Florida College of Pharmacy's Advisory Board, and Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy's Advisory Board, as well as a trustee of the Florida Pharmacy Foundation. While a student, he was president of the Pharmacy Student Body and a member of Phi Lambda Sigma.

Before joining Amgen, Daniel was a senior regional account manager at Pharmacia/Searle, executive director of the Mississippi Pharmacists Association, and founder of Medical Center Pharmacy (MCP) in McComb. As MCP's owner, he received the pharmacy school's Syntex Preceptor of the Year award and MPhA's Wyeth-Ayerst Bowl of Hygeia. In 2007, the School of Pharmacy named him a Distinguished Alumnus.

Henry A. Frazer

As founder and president of Drug Research and

Analysis Corp. of Montgomery, Ala., Henry A. Frazer (BSPH '63, PharmD '75) has helped the pharmaceutical industry obtain FDA approval of more than 50 new drugs over the past 28 years. He and his company also have provided millions of dollars in free health care to thousands of patients.

Frazer chaired the board of the Montgomery Regional Medical Center and was president of the Central Alabama Community Foundation, Landmarks Foundation, Medical Outreach Ministries, Montgomery Ole Miss Alumni Club, and the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery. He is a member of the School of Pharmacy Dean's Advisory Committee and a sustaining member of the Galen Order.

In 2005, the UM Alumni Association inducted Frazer into its Alumni Hall of Fame, and in 2007, the School of Pharmacy named him a Distinguished Alumnus.

David Joseph Slatkin

The founding dean of three pharmacy schools, David Slatkin (MSPH '71, PhD '72) has made immeasurable contributions to the profession, and in 1999, *American Pharmacist* magazine selected him as one of the 50 most influential pharmacists in the United States.

Slatkin served as professor of pharmaceutical sciences at Chicago State University College of Pharmacy and the Midwestern University Chicago College of Pharmacy. He was founding dean and professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the Midwestern University College of Pharmacy-Glendale. He also consulted in the establishment of several other pharmacy colleges, was assistant dean for student affairs and director of graduate programs at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, and served on the faculty of the Northeast Louisiana University School of Pharmacy.

His research interests encompass several areas of pharmacognosy. Slatkin has authored more than 80 scientific publications and served as a reviewer for the *Journal of Natural Products* and *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences*. He has served as treasurer of the American Society of Pharmacognosy since 1981.

Rhonda K. Clark

As owner of six successful independent pharmacies, Rhonda Clark (BSPH '86) wears many different hats. Each of the pharmacies is different—one includes a restaurant, another houses a UPS outlet and gift shop—so Clark finds herself juggling a myriad of challenges as a professional pharmacist and entrepreneur.

The daughter of UM pharmacy graduate McKinley Clark (BSPH '60), she worked for a pharmacy chain before returning to Pascagoula to work with her father who owned three pharmacies. When he retired, Clark bought the business and has expanded Sav-Rex Pharmacy to six locations.

Clark, who says she found her calling when she entered the profession, finds time to give back some of what she has gained through an annual trip to Guatemala where she provides pharmaceutical care to people in need.

"My life has been totally fulfilled as a pharmacist," she said. "I could not have entered a better profession. There is so much opportunity. I feel blessed to have a job that I wake up every morning and look forward to doing."

Alan Bert McKay

As the first and only dean of the Bernard J. Dunn School of Pharmacy at Shenandoah University, Alan McKay (MSPH '78, PhD '80) says his primary job is to "make sense out of chaos." This involves staying proactive and involved with various committees, students, and faculty at the school, as well as writing research articles and participating in several university and community organizations.

McKay was honored in 2002 as the Alumnus of the Year from the Department of Pharmacy Administration. He is a member of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy, the American Society of Health System Pharmacists, the American Pharmacists Association, the National Community Pharmacists Association, and various state and honorary organizations. He is a fellow in the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education and vice president of the American Institute for the History of Pharmacy.

Before becoming dean at Shenandoah University in 1995, McKay served on the faculty at Mercer University and the universities of Arkansas and Maryland.

Thomas C. Hardin

Working at Johnson & Johnson as associate director of the Anti-Infective Scientific Affairs Liaison Team, Tom Hardin (BSPH '76) develops and maintains scientific relationships with key opinion leaders in infectious-disease therapeutics across the country.

After graduating from Ole Miss, Hardin went to the University of Texas, earning his Pharm.D. in 1980. Before moving to the pharmaceutical industry in 1999, he achieved the academic rank of clinical professor at the

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Faculty and practitioners team up to improve health in Delta

The Department of Pharmacy Practice received funding in July for a project that will partner School of Pharmacy faculty with community pharmacists in the Mississippi Delta.

Dubbed the Delta Pharmacy Patient Care Management Services Project, it aims to improve medication use and health outcomes for Medicaid patients in Coahoma, Panola, and Yazoo counties. The project is supported by a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration through the Delta Health Alliance.

“The School of Pharmacy welcomes this opportunity to work more closely with pharmacists in the Mississippi Delta,” said Dr. Leigh Ann Ross, associate dean for clinical affairs, chair of pharmacy practice, and principal investigator of the project. “Community pharmacists are qualified and positioned to improve health outcomes for patients in this underserved region, particularly the Medicaid population. We are hopeful that this project will further demonstrate the important contributions of pharmacists to the overall system of care.”

This innovative project is on target with the mission of The University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy, which is to improve the health of the state’s citizens as well as those of the nation and the world. The school seeks to fulfill this mission through its educational, research, and service programs. The programs include service to the public and service aimed at advancing the practice of pharmacy.

Dr. Lauren S. Bloodworth, clinical assistant professor, serves as program administrator. Nine additional faculty members will be involved in some aspect of service implementation, and the school’s Center for Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management has agreed to evaluate the clinical and economic impact of the new offerings.

Pharmacists in the program will provide one of two levels of service: generalized Medication Therapy Management (MTM) services, which will address issues of adherence to and appropriate use of all medications, and specialized, disease-specific MTM services in asthma and diabetes, which include patient education on self-management and recommendations to a primary care physician regarding medication adjustments.

School of Pharmacy faculty will travel to eight pharmacies in these counties to provide the disease-specific patient care. Participating community pharmacists and faculty completed American Pharmacists Association Medication Therapy Management training offered by the School of Pharmacy to provide the first level of service. The MTM services have been offered since October.

According to Bloodworth, studies have shown MTM provided by pharmacists can cut health costs and improve health.

“Pharmacists are uniquely trained to provide direct patient care services that improve medication use and promote chronic-disease management,” she said. “Community pharmacists are accessible, even in areas where physician care is limited. Successful implementation of a community pharmacy MTM model in an underserved region, such as the Mississippi Delta, would provide a strategy to address access to care, chronic-disease management, and improvement of public health in rural areas throughout the United States.”

A second objective of the study is to provide electronic health-record (EHR) technology for a participating physician practice in each community. In addition to the traditional benefits observed when EHR is introduced to a practice setting, such as improved quality of care, the project pharmacists will be given access to the EHR to document the MTM or disease-management encounters.

Patients eligible for generalized MTM must be taking two or more medications and have one or more chronic conditions other than asthma or diabetes. Patients will meet with their pharmacists regularly to receive education and information to improve their use and understanding of their medications.

The following pharmacies and private practices are participating in the project:

- Medicap Pharmacy (Coahoma County)
- Henderson Drug and Home Health Center (Coahoma County)
- Fred’s Pharmacy (Coahoma County)
- Metabolism Clinic at NWMRC (Coahoma County)
- Fred’s Pharmacy (Panola County)
- Medicap Pharmacy (Panola County)
- Saverex Pharmacy (Panola County)
- Kroger Pharmacy (Panola County)
- Batesville Clinic (Panola County)
- Webb’s Pharmacy (Yazoo County)
- Midtown Clinic (Yazoo County)

“We are excited about being a part of the Delta Pharmacy Patient Care Management [Services] Project,” said Donna Heidel, who is a pharmacist at Webb’s Pharmacy in Yazoo County. “I am glad that our patients will have the opportunity to receive extra education on their medications to improve their outcomes. Everyone at Webb’s Pharmacy is looking forward to working with the School of Pharmacy in enhancing the role of the community pharmacist.”

Upon completion of the study, the school hopes to replicate the service in more community pharmacies throughout Mississippi to further demonstrate how community pharmacists can impact clinical and economic outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries. •

Charles W. Hartman lecture challenges students to correct health care inequities

by Deborah Purnell

The country's "broken health care system" has burdened the economy and created a moral imperative to address health care disparities.

This statement was issued Aug. 28 at The University of Mississippi (UM) by Dr. Dan Jones, vice chancellor for health affairs, dean of the School of Medicine, and Herbert G. Langford Professor of Medicine at the UM Medical School in Jackson.

"Our country is faced with substantial health care challenges. Those challenges are often described in economic terms," said Jones, who delivered the address "2008 Presidential Campaign and Health Care" in the Gertrude Ford Center for the Performing Arts to a crowd of more than 400, including many UM students planning to become pharmacists and other health care professionals.

"We spend almost twice as much as other industrialized countries per capita on health care, yet most of our quality measures lag behind other countries. This dilemma is creating a large negative economic impact on our country."

At the root of the economic impact is a "moral imperative issue we need to change—health care disparities," said Jones, immediate past president of the American Heart Association.

To drive home his point, Jones related two examples of how access to health insurance or the lack of proper coverage makes a difference: A 74-year-old white male complains of chest discomfort, and someone calls 911. He is transported by EMS to a major hospital where he is diagnosed with a heart attack. The man is a physically active hypertensive, whose condition is well-controlled with medication and a low-sodium diet. His elevated cholesterol, diagnosed at age 66, also has been controlled with medicine for the past eight years. He is treated with a stent and discharged home. His chances for complete recovery are good.

A 38-year-old black female collapses at home. She's aphasic and can't move her right arm or leg. Her daughter calls a relative, not 911, who rushes her to a local emergency room two hours after onset of symptoms. The woman is diagnosed with a stroke. She has been struggling with diabetes and hypertension since age 24 because she is rarely able to afford medications. She is hospitalized for two weeks and must later receive physical therapy to gain



Dr. Dan Jones delivers the address "2008 Presidential Campaign and Health Care" in the Gertrude Ford Center for the Performing Arts to a crowd of more than 400, including many UM students planning to become pharmacists and other health care professionals.

partial use of the right side of her body. Her chances for complete recovery are slim. The male has insurance, and the female is among the more than 47 million Americans with no health insurance, Jones said.

Sadly, issues of health care disparities or health care inequities are truly a problem in Mississippi where many people have poor health outcomes because of socioeconomic status, race, education, and geography, Jones continued.

In Mississippi, black women suffer the highest death rate of any group, he said.

"Differences in health outcomes are a complex issue. Access to health care, genetics, environment, behavior, social issues, and political issues can all play a part, but we have a moral duty to meet this challenge and find a solution.

"What should be the role of medical professionals to the problem of health disparities?" Jones asked.

Challenging his audience, Jones said, "I believe The University of Mississippi family has an opportunity and a responsibility to address health care disparities, and the 2008

presidential campaign is the perfect platform.

"It is our duty to make progress toward eliminating health care disparities by working together to keep this issue a key priority, seek understanding and solutions through research, advocate for more research funding and better access to health care, and focus more on prevention," Jones said.

Barbara G. Wells, dean of the UM School of Pharmacy, said she is not surprised by Jones' challenge to the students.

"Dr. Jones is a man committed and devoted to continuous improvement of the health of Mississippians," Wells said. "He is a champion for the health care needs of both adults and children throughout Mississippi and across the world. To leave the audience with a sense of responsibility to do their part to address this moral and ethical issue is no surprise, and I know our students are primed to meet his challenge."

Jones' address was among dozens of UM events planned to prepare students and local audiences for the first 2008 presidential debate, hosted at UM on Sept. 26. •

Alumni assume leadership roles within school

by Dabney Weems

University of Mississippi (UM) School of Pharmacy graduates Leigh Ann Ross and Donna West-Strum were named to leadership positions at their alma mater. Ross was named chair of pharmacy practice and associate dean for clinical affairs, and West-Strum was named chair and associate professor of pharmacy administration.

“Drs. Ross and West-Strum are two very accomplished educators and scientists with impressive careers,” said pharmacy Dean Barbara G. Wells. “I have every confidence that their accomplishments within their discipline and their leadership training and experience will serve the department and the school exceedingly well in the years ahead.”

Ross spent the previous two years as a legislative assistant with U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran. Before joining Cochran’s staff, Ross was a UM assistant professor of pharmacy practice and director of pharmaceutical care services.

Her responsibilities include overseeing the teaching, research, professional service, and patient care activities of the department, and advocating for interprofessional connectivity and collaboration in teaching, research, service, and patient care. She also serves as an advocate for the department and school with many outside agencies and works with the



Dr. Donna West-Strum

school’s Division for Pharmacy Professional Development to provide professional development for alumni and other pharmacy practitioners in Mississippi.

Ross plans to promote more interaction between the Oxford and Medical Center campuses, play a part in the construction of a permanent instructional and research facility at the Medical Center, and foster improved relationships with community partners. Her immediate attention will be directed toward improving the students’ transition to the Medical Center campus and increasing collaborations between the pharmacy practice department and other departments in the school.

Ross earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1993 and Doctor of Pharmacy from UM in 1998. Upon graduation from pharmacy school, she completed a residency in primary care at the UM Medical Center. She is a board-certified pharmacotherapy specialist and a certified diabetes educator. She is also a certified disease manager in the areas of anticoagulation, asthma, diabetes, and dyslipidemia.

Her research interests are primary care, particularly medication therapy management in diabetes and dyslipidemia. In 2006, Ross completed the Academic Leadership Fellows Program within the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy.

Ross was named the Mississippi Pharmacists Association’s Young Pharmacist of the Year in 2008 and served as the association’s president during 2003-04. In 2004, she received the Faculty Service Award from the pharmacy school and was selected Mississippi Society of Health-System Pharmacists Outstanding Young Pharmacist in 2001.

West-Strum most recently was associate professor in the Division of Pharmaceutical Evaluation and Policy at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) College of Pharmacy. The Germantown, Tenn., native earned her bachelor’s degree in pharmacy, master’s in pharmaceutical sciences, and doctorate in pharmacy administration from UM. In 2007, she completed the Academic Leadership Fellows Program with the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. Her research interests focus on community pharmacy practice and using health-behavior theories to study the provision, use, and evaluation of pharmaceuticals and pharmacy.



Dr. Leigh Ann Ross, BCPS

West-Strum has published more than 40 articles and given more than 50 presentations at national meetings. She is active in the American Pharmacists Association and the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA). She was the faculty liaison for the NCPA chapter at UAMS and was named NCPA Chapter Adviser of the Year in 2004. She edits the *NCPA Digest*, a comprehensive financial guide to community pharmacy.

As the new department chair, West-Strum said she plans to ensure a smooth transition to the new pharmacy curriculum, ensure adequate resources to recruit and retain faculty and graduate students, develop synergies with the Center for Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management, and nurture collaborative relationships within the university and with outside stakeholders.

For more information on education and research at the School of Pharmacy, visit www.pharmacy.olemiss.edu.

Capital campaign builds on pharmacy school's promise



The new 26,000-square-foot building at UMMC will feature a technology-driven classroom, small group classrooms, and laboratory space for faculty to conduct research.

The School of Pharmacy has launched a \$5 million capital campaign as part of the university's MomentUM campaign. The "Promises to Keep" campaign pledges to elevate the school's standing among America's premier public pharmacy programs.

Funds from the campaign will help build a new School of Pharmacy building on the Medical Center campus, create endowments for student scholarships and fellowships, and create endowments to support faculty.

"The success of the capital campaign is essential to the continuing success of the School of Pharmacy," said pharmacy Dean Barbara G. Wells. "In these harsh economic times, it is even more important for those of us who are

able, to step up and support our educational and religious institutions and our charities. If we do not, then literally decades of progress can be lost in a short period of time, and the most vulnerable people and programs will suffer."

The new 26,000-square-foot building, slated to break ground later this year, will feature a technology-driven classroom, small group classrooms to enhance the problem-based learning curriculum, and laboratory space for faculty to conduct research.

In addition to classroom and research space, the facility will house a student lounge area and space for student-association meetings. When located under one roof, pharmacy students, faculty, preceptors, and administrators

will have direct access to one another.

With the additional space, the pharmacy school will be able to address the critical shortage of pharmacists by implementing a 28 percent increase in enrollment. The new building also is imperative for the school's continuing accreditation. The school's national accrediting agency found the current facilities at the Jackson Medical Mall to be inadequate and out of compliance with both current and new accreditation standards.

"In addition to meeting accreditation standards and allowing us to continue the enrollment increase, the new pharmacy building at the Medical Center will improve the morale of students and faculty immeasurably," Wells

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Capital campaign, continued from Page 8

said. “It will allow us to integrate our students into the Medical Center environment and allow our students to learn, work, and socialize in a truly interprofessional setting.”

The campaign also will focus on increasing endowment funds benefiting student scholarships. Eighty-two percent of the 2008 Doctor of Pharmacy class graduated with student-loan debt, which averaged more than \$49,000. Scholarship endowments provide incentives necessary to attract promising students as well as assist students with financial burdens. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$1.5 million in named endowments for merit- and need-based scholarships and fellowships.

“It is imperative, especially during these times of economic challenge and continuously escalating tuition costs, that we exhaust all efforts to assist our students in successfully completing their professional-degree program while minimizing their debt burden,” said Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs Marvin C. Wilson. “It is indeed tragic

in these times of practitioner shortage when the completion of the degree program is jeopardized or, worse yet, denied by the need to work full time to support oneself and/or dependents. Affordability should never be the factor depriving a qualified individual from the opportunity to achieve a professional degree.”

Endowments raised to support faculty will allow the school to attract and retain the best and brightest professors, clinicians, and researchers.

“Although our pharmacy school is 100 years old, we have no fully funded endowed professorships or endowed chairs,” Wells stated. “These instruments allow us to hire and retain the best teachers and researchers. I can think of no better way to support both students and faculty, or to make a gift that perpetually supports and strengthens teaching and research programs, than to establish an endowed professorship or endowed chair.”

The Promises to Keep campaign is part of the university’s MomentUM campaign, a \$200

million capital campaign designed to continue the momentum generated by the university in the last decade.

“Indeed, the capital campaign is about taking the steps to ensure that we keep the promises made long ago,” said Wells. “We owe it to our students to provide them with the very best education available anywhere. Our faculty members are dedicated to doing their part and more. Our students are highly motivated to achieve academic success and to better the lives of those they serve. In spite of difficult economic times, by working together to achieve the shared vision, opportunities will abound for us to continue our growth, to elevate the practice of pharmacy, and to improve the care of our patients.”

For more information about the Promises to Keep campaign, visit www.umpharmacycampaign.org or contact Sarah Hollis at shollis@olemiss.edu or 800-340-9542. •

Alumni, continued from Page 4

University of Texas College of Pharmacy and received the Excellence in Clinical Pharmacy Award from the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States. He earned a Master of Business Administration from Drexel University in 2005. A past president of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy and the Society of Infectious Disease Pharmacists, he also is a recipient of the UM School of Pharmacy’s Distinguished Alumnus Award.

“I received a second-to-none pharmacy education that served me well as the foundation for my postgraduate work and my academic and clinical practice career,” Hardin said.

Kimsey O’Neal Cooper

Before Kimsey O’Neal Cooper (BSPH ’94) ever began her professional career, she conquered lots of challenges as a student and Lady Rebels basketball standout. Honored as SEC Freshman of the Year, a four-time All-SEC player, and member of the 1,000 Point Club and the Rebel 3.0 Club, she earned a spot in the M-Club

Athletic Hall of Fame. In 1990, the student body elected her as the first African-American Miss Ole Miss.

She is a district pharmacy supervisor for Walgreens, responsible for about 25 stores.

“Kimsey’s commitment to her profession and to patient care, her integrity, professionalism, and work ethic make her an exemplary role model for our students,” Dean Barbara Wells said. “As icing on the cake, her effervescent personality makes her a delight to know. She is committed to helping us deliver the very best pharmacy education possible, and our students deserve no less. Her contributions take many forms, and her impact cannot be measured.”

Pedro J. Lecca

Pedro J. Lecca (PhD ’71) has guided thousands of budding pharmacists and Hispanic youth during his career. Lecca has operated a pharmacy serving a Spanish-speaking community, written and contributed to more

than 20 books, and garnered more than \$100 million in research funding. He is inventor of a compound with potential anticancer activity, for which a patent application has been filed.

“Ole Miss taught me the importance of good values, hard work, friendship, and memories,” said Lecca, dean emeritus and professor at Howard University College of Pharmacy, Nursing, and Allied Health Sciences. “It also prepared me with a good background in research and writing.”

Lecca also is a former professor and director of health care specialization at the University of Texas-Arlington and former dean and professor of the Texas Southern University College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. He serves on the board of the National Puerto Rican Coalition, on the Board of Visitors at Howard University, and as a consultant to several schools and colleges in Texas. He has been a Rotarian for more than 30 years and is a 32nd-degree Mason. •

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Skills lab incorporated into pharmacy curriculum

by Dabney Weems

The University of Mississippi (UM) School of Pharmacy has implemented a skills lab in its pharmacy curriculum to better prepare students for clinical practice in community and institutional settings.

Beginning in fall 2008, students started to take a lab in conjunction with their pharmacy practice class. Students will take skills labs each semester during their first two professional years of pharmacy school.

"We are very excited about providing a skills lab for the students," said Clinical Assistant Professor Rachel C. Robinson, who led the implementation of the lab. "It is designed to give the students hands-on experiences with products and services they will later provide in pharmacy practice. This will give them more confidence as they interact with their patients."

The labs consist of practical activities to help the students build their skills incrementally. In small groups of six to eight, students apply content learned in the didactic portions of the curriculum.

Students are taught skills during the fall semester of the first professional year, which involve medical-record review, medical terminology, drug information resources, prescription processing, patient counseling, medication therapy management, and assessment of vital signs. During the spring semester, lessons include medication safety, automation, unit dose, IV admixture, and compounding. Lessons also include learning to teach an asthma patient how to most effectively use a metered dose inhaler and learning to teach

a patient to use a home glucose monitoring device to help the patient manage his or her diabetes.

With the practical knowledge gained in the lab, students find themselves with a new sense of confidence in their abilities to ensure the best possible outcomes from medication therapy.

"Having a practical lab is incredibly helpful," explained Matt Bramuchi of Madison. "The lab allows you to visualize, reinforce, and expand your knowledge of material from other classes. The best part about the lab is that the material and exercises do not feel artificial, forced, impractical, or irrelevant. I have more confidence in my knowledge and abilities. That

was evident after going on my rotation."

Currently, the skills lab is located on the first floor of Faser Hall. It also includes a "clean room" for sterile-products preparation. The lab is equipped with laminar flow hoods, QS/1 pharmacy software, and various medical devices for training such as blood-glucose monitors, asthma metered-dose inhalers, spacers, and blood pressure monitors.

As renovations continue in Faser, plans call for construction of additional skills labs to include simulated patient consultation rooms, patient physical-assessment areas, and a simulated pharmacy. •



Dr. Rachel Robinson teaches a group of students how to use an inhaler during a skills lab.

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