



DEAN'S MESSAGE: What's On My Mind



What's on my mind this month is the resolve of the people of Baltimore to spark a national conversation about quality education, health disparities, equity, poverty and other deficits in the minority communities that could have played a role in the recent unrest we witnessed.



On April 27th, Baltimore made national headlines when peaceful protest turned violent, destroying vital neighborhood businesses and homes. We all felt the sadness that this night caused for the residents, small business owners and employees of the devastated areas. When a "state of emergency" was declared, the words accurately described what we were feeling.

However, the citizens rallied. In the days that followed, the nation also saw hundreds of residents cleaning up their neighborhoods. We were gratified to see that protests and marches throughout the city remained largely peaceful, and pointed to reform. The city's problems have not disappeared, but the fog of violence, thankfully, seems to have lifted, and there are calls for creative solutions. The School of Medicine continues to do its part through its community outreach mission.

It is befitting that this month's newsletter celebrates the distinguished careers of two of the University of Maryland's staunchest change-agents: Chancellor William "Brit" Kirwan and the late Dr. Elijah Saunders. These iconic figures have worked tirelessly to improve the health and educational opportunities for all, including the minority community.

The center spread is dedicated to Chancellor Kirwan. Of his numerous endeavors as the leader of the University System of Maryland (USM), Dr. Kirwan launched the Closing the Achievement Gap initiative to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the disparity in higher education participation, retention and graduation between students from lower-income and underrepresented minority backgrounds and the general student population.

I am both honored and pleased to have worked with someone who was not afraid to work for necessary change. Dr. Kirwan is also a devoted supporter of higher education and medical discovery and innovation. He was indispensable in bringing the new School of Medicine Research Building, Health Sciences Facility III, into reality, because he knows the transformative research that will take place there will improve the lives of all people, regardless of race, income or creed. We are all so fortunate to have been the beneficiaries of the work of this visionary leader.

This month, we also celebrate the commitment to Baltimore and the tangible scientific contributions of the late Dr. Elijah Saunders. As an alumnus of the School of Medicine (Class of 1960), and one of the first African-American graduates, Dr. Saunders became a leader in medicine at a time when many cultural and societal obstacles stood in his path. He became the first African American resident in the University of Maryland Internal Medicine Program; the first African American fellow in the Maryland Cardiology Program; and the first African-American cardiologist in the State of Maryland.

Dr. Saunders was integral in abolishing segregated hospital wards at what was then University Hospital (now the University of Maryland Medical Center). As the Head of the Hypertension Section in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine in the Department of Medicine, his groundbreaking research showed that African Americans respond differently to blood pressure medications, which prompted minority enrollment in clinical trials.

Most notably, he established a community health program to promote greater awareness of heart disease incidence, the importance of screening and the need to adhere to medication regimens within the African-American community. Had he still been with us, I have no doubt that Dr. Saunders would have been distressed about the recent events in Baltimore. Nevertheless, the Elijah Saunders we knew would have been undaunted in his resolve to continue his work in the community.

As we reflect on the rebuilding—both physical and ideological—that is underway in Baltimore, and the visionary leaders who helped shape this city, let us honor their legacy by remaining optimistic and joining the renewal of the community of which the School of Medicine is an integral partner.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am

Sincerely yours,

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Point of Pride

Dr. Robley
Dunglison, who was
dean of the school from
1834–35, went on to
found the
University of Virginia
School of Medicine
and was physician
to presidents



Jefferson,
Jackson,
Monroe and
Madison.

This makes
us proud!

IN MEMORIAM:

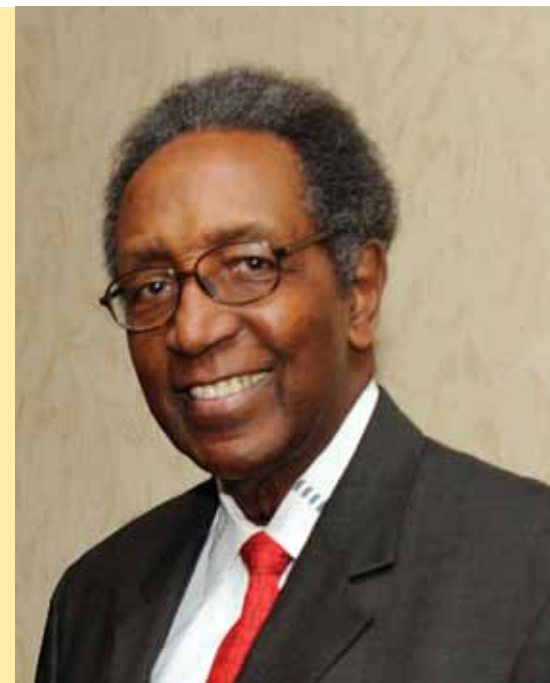
Dr. Elijah Saunders

On April 8, E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President of Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine, announced with deep sadness the passing of one of the legendary figures in School of Medicine history, **Elijah Saunders, MD, FACC, FACP, FAHA, FASH**, Professor of Medicine and Head of the Section on Hypertension in the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine. Dr. Saunders' passing was very unfortunate. He was designated to receive the Dean's Distinguished Gold Medal at the SOM Graduation in May. His wife, Dr. Sharon Saunders, received it on his behalf. Also, the SOM planned to establish the Elijah Saunders Endowed Professorship in his honor, and the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine

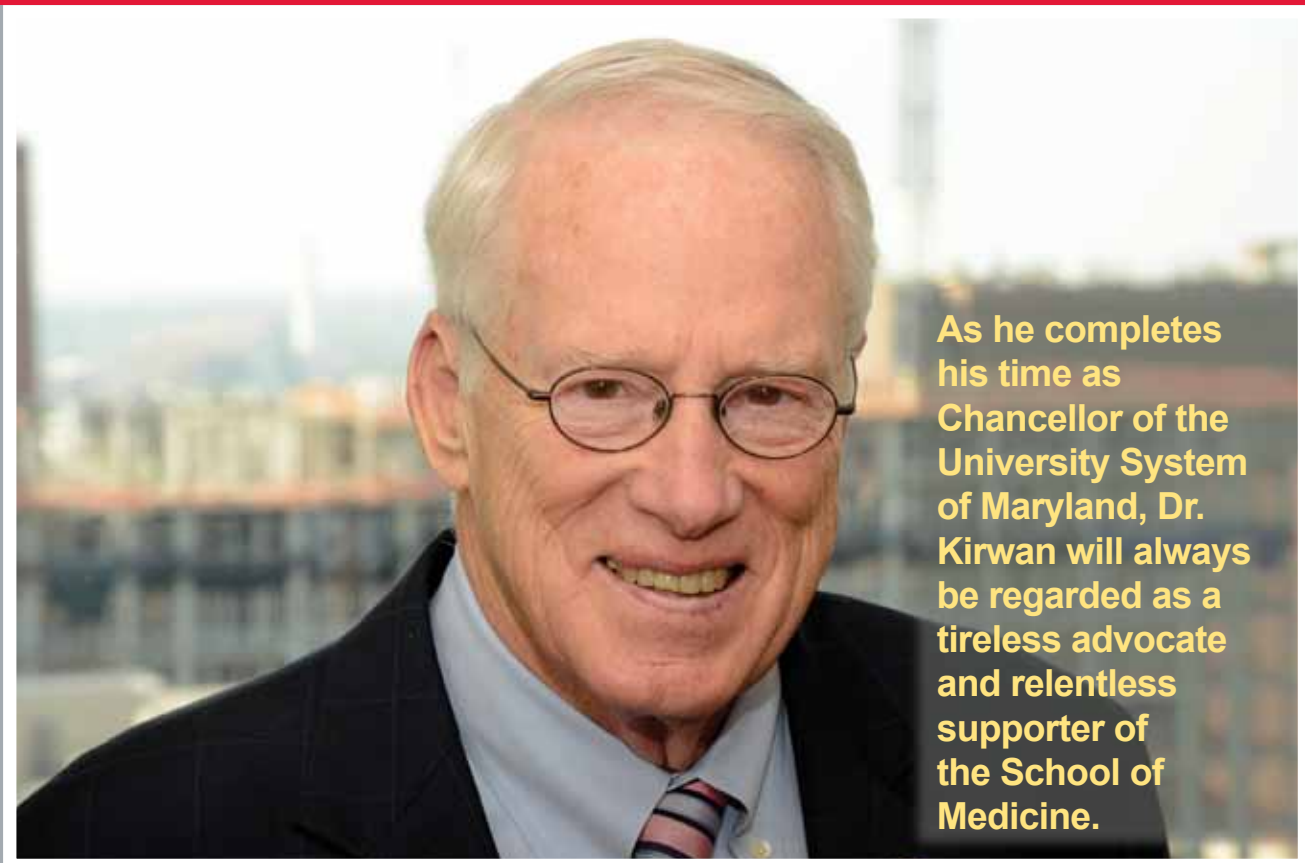
in the Department of Medicine planned a celebration of Dr. Saunders's career. All these events Dr. Saunders was aware of and to some extent participated in the preparations.

Dr. Saunders was an internationally-renowned expert on hypertension in African Americans. He was consistently recognized for his pioneering patient education efforts in raising awareness of high blood pressure and of the connection between diabetes, heart attack and stroke, particularly in the African-American community. He devoted his career to exploring new treatment options and developing innovative programs to reach patients—often in non-traditional settings in the local community—and to educating at-risk members of the

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Chancellor Brit Kirwan: A LEGACY OF



As he completes his time as Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, Dr. Kirwan will always be regarded as a tireless advocate and relentless supporter of the School of Medicine.

W

ith a gentle expression of thoughtfulness and intent, Dr. William English "Brit" Kirwan, humbly surmised that he has held positions of leadership for more than 37 years during his long and distinguished 50-year career in academia—as department chair, vice chancellor for academic affairs, provost, president at two major universities, and then chancellor of the 12-campus University System of Maryland since 2002. It is not surprising then that the 77-year old native of Kentucky, whose father was also a University president, has been a student of leadership throughout his career.

"The first thing to know about being a successful leader is that it is *very, very* difficult," he said, smiling. "The second thing to know is that it is not based as much on intelligence as it is on wisdom." And, he added, while wisdom is naturally acquired over time and through life's experiences, it can also be learned.

"Wisdom and age can go hand in hand, but wisdom also requires the ability to understand complex issues and to look at problems from every possible perspective and point of view," he said. "That is what good leaders are able to do, no matter how old they are."

He described what he believes are the three pillars ("a three-legged stool") of what makes transformational leaders. "First, above all," he said, "is integrity. You

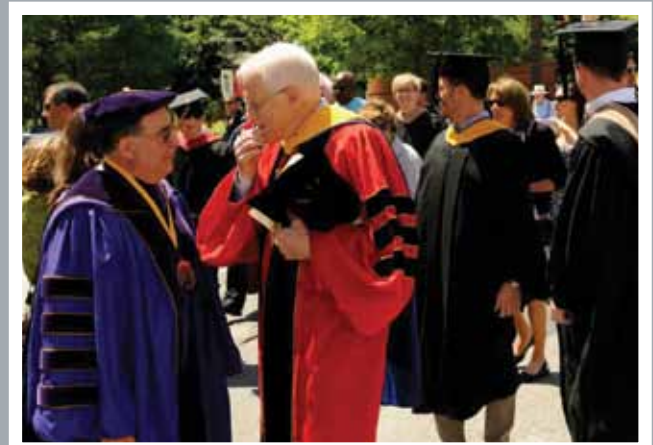
must have complete and absolute trust of those around you. Second is humility. You *have* to be able to admit to mistakes," he said, noting that often leaders surround themselves with boosters who always are placating the boss. "That can result in a leader feeling a sense of entitlement. You have to do everything you can to prevent that." His third pillar is empathy. "A great leader works to understand where others are coming from—they can walk in the other person's shoes. Listening has become a lost art, and, in fact, it is probably one of the most under-rated attributes of leadership," he said.

Indeed, it has been exactly these attributes that have guided the success of the one-time Mathematics professor, who is also a devoted husband, father and grandfather. "Remember, Maryland also has tremendous leadership at both ends of the DC-Baltimore biomed corridor in Dr. Wallace Loh and Dr. Jay Perman," whom he describes as two towering bookends at either end of the region.

Moreover, these attributes have built a lasting bond between Dr. Kirwan and SOM Dean E. Albert Reece, who Kirwan hired as SOM Dean in 2006. As a "dynamic duo," the two have guided the largest period of growth in the 200+ year history of the SOM, with Dr. Kirwan indicating that he "fully understands and endorses Dean Reece's vision and the critical role that the SOM play in the state, in the economy, and as the engine for growth in the knowledge economy."



SOM breaks ground on new 430,000 sq ft Biomedical Research Building (HSF III), the largest building ever constructed in the University System.



UMB President Dr. Jay Perman and Dr. Kirwan

Under Chancellor Kirwan's Watch at the SOM

2002

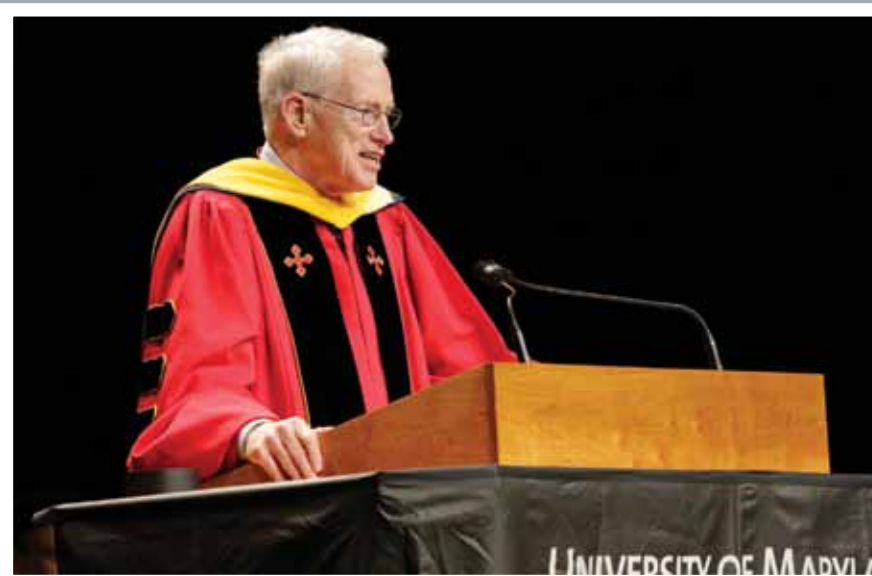
William E. "Brit" Kirwan is named the third chancellor of the University System of Maryland.

ENDURING LEADERSHIP

No instance more exemplifies this alignment than HSF III, the new SOM biomedical research building now rising to 10 stories on the UMB campus, the largest facility ever constructed in the history of the USM.

"I think everyone would agree that HSF III would not be a reality without Dean Reece's absolute resolve and relentlessness in making it happen—despite what seemed like insurmountable odds. I can say that it was truly a privilege to be side-by-side with him every step of the way during that process."

In addition to HSF III as a centerpiece for the School and region's future in expanding as a biomedical hub, Dr. Kirwan pointed to both the MPower Initiative and UM Ventures as two initiatives that he launched as a catalyst for growth in Baltimore and across the region.



As he reflects on his career, there is no other topic that Dr. Kirwan is more passionate about than the value and necessity of education.

University of Maryland Medical Center, as his wife, Patricia has been battling myeloma. "I cannot say enough about the sensitivity and caring by every single care-giver at the Greenebaum Cancer Center," he said. "The treatment she has received here has been tremendous."

As he reflects on his career, there is no other topic that Dr. Kirwan is more passionate about than the value and necessity of education. He is known for his long-standing position that every child deserves the opportunity to receive an education so that they can achieve their fullest potential from their life's journey.

"I will remain steadfast in my commitment to doing whatever

I can to address the under education of the population. We have created an economic caste system that is exactly what people came to this country to escape. For many people right now, the American Dream has become a nightmare. We urgently need to provide greater educational opportunities for the lowest income segments of our population. I will continue my very close involvement to help solve this problem."

As for the School of Medicine, Dr. Kirwan sees a very bright future. "This is a true star of the University System of Maryland," he said. "It has strong leadership in Dean Reece, who has nurtured a can-do, no-limits attitude throughout the School," he said. "From a chancellor's point of view, the school is everything you would want it to be—it takes all of its responsibilities very seriously, it is committed to the highest level of academic excellence, it has a tremendously talented group of faculty, physicians and scientists and a culture of creativity that thrives, even in challenging times."

"I would say that the University of Maryland School of Medicine is a star that will continue to rise and shine," he said

Many would say the same about the retiring chancellor.



"Both the MPower Initiative and UM Ventures have enabled us to move forward in the areas of developing new patents, licenses, new ventures and infrastructure that we needed in order to compete at that level," he said. Interestingly, he noted that having two large research campuses in the state, at either end of the Baltimore-Washington, DC corridors, gives Maryland an advantage.

"In many ways, the School of Medicine is the anchor for all of these collaborations—whether it is biomedical research, medical technology, public health or bioinformatics, we are elevated by the School's position as one of the fastest-growing and successful biomedical research programs among schools of medicine in the nation."

Dr. Kirwan talked emotionally about his personal connection to the School of Medicine and the

2003

SOM opens new research and academic facility (Health Sciences Facility II).

2005

The University opens first building at UM BioPark.

2006

E. Albert Reece is appointed by Dr. David Ramsay and Dr. Kirwan as Vice President of Medical Affairs at the University of Maryland and the 30th Dean of the SOM.

2007

SOM establishes new Institute for Genome Sciences and recruits Dr. Claire Fraser as its first Director.

2008

SOM transfers the Institute of Human Virology to SOM, with Dr. Robert C. Gallo remaining as its Director.

2009

SOM establishes new Center for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine and recruits Dr. Curt Civin as its first Director.

2010

SOM establishes the new Shock Trauma Anesthesiology Research Center (STAR), and recruits Dr. Alan Faden as its first Director.

2010

SOM establishes the new Center for Biomolecular Therapeutics (CBT), and appoints Dr. David Weber as its first Director.

2011

SOM establishes new Research Group within the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology.

2012

SOM, in public-private partnership with APT, breaks ground on the over \$300 million new Maryland Proton Treatment Center.

2013

SOM breaks ground on new 430,000 sq ft Biomedical Research Building (HSF III), the largest building ever constructed in the University System.

2014

SOM exceeds \$400 million in total research funding.

2015

Brit Kirwan delivers final commencement address as USM chancellor to the UMB graduating class.

Top: Chancellor Kirwan at the 2015 UMB Commencement

Middle: Chancellor Kirwan, his wife Patricia, Dr. Robert Fischell, and Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rollins-Blake at the Proton Center groundbreaking

Bottom: At SOM's 200th birthday celebration, an actor portraying the School's first Dean, John Beale Davidge, is surrounded by Dean Emeritus Donald Wilson, MD; Dean Reece; Chancellor Kirwan; and former UMB President David Ramsay.



IN MEMORIAM: Dr. Elijah Saunders

[Continued from front page]

population about the importance of cardiovascular health.

A Pioneer and Visionary

Dr. Saunders developed his clinical and leadership skills at a time when there were few African-American colleagues, and even fewer mentors within the field of medicine. He graduated from the School of Maryland in 1960 and became the first African-American resident in internal medicine at what was then University Hospital (now the University of Maryland Medical Center), and the first African-American cardiologist in the state of Maryland in 1965. He was also integral in abolishing segregated hospital wards at University Hospital. Despite the challenges, Dr. Saunders followed his own vision for equality in health care, and became a compassionate leader for what was, at the time, an often overlooked patient population.

"The School of Medicine joins together with the entire University of Maryland Community to mourn the loss of this great pioneer and visionary. In particular, we extend our sincerest condolences to his wife, Dr. Sharon Saunders, and family," said Dean Reece. "Dr. Saunders transitioned with the grace and dignity that was symbolic of how he carried himself each day. He was a giant, a legend who leaves a legacy that will always live on in the hearts and minds of many of us at the School of Medicine. We will strive to uphold and honor his dedication to science and medicine and his lifelong efforts to respect and preserve every human life," Dean Reece added.

A Clinician and Researcher

After operating a successful private practice for the first 20 years of his career, Dr. Saunders became a professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, where he pursued research on hypertension among African Americans. Over his career, Dr. Saunders published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and eight books. His research showed that some blood pressure medications are more effective

for these patients. As a result of his findings, drug companies often require African Americans to be included in research in general and particularly in research on cardiovascular conditions.

"Dr. Saunders was the true definition of the healing physician," said **Jeffrey A. Rivest, MS**, President and Chief Executive Officer of the University of Maryland Medical Center. "His positive demeanor and caring disposition for each and every one of his patients, combined with his passion and persistence in finding a cure, made him one of the most revered doctors in Maryland history. He was a tremendous model for all of us in healthcare to follow."

Stephen N. Davis, MBBS, the Theodore E. Woodward Endowed Chair and Professor, Department of Medicine, said "Dr. Elijah Saunders is a great loss. He was an innovative and inspirational leader."

Sanjay Rajagopalan, MBBS, Head of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine, added, "We have been proud to have Dr. Saunders as part of our faculty and to lead our hypertension program. Indeed, we are eternally indebted to him for his selfless contribution by continuing to provide uncompensated care for patients in our clinic for more than a decade."

A Legacy of Leadership

Dr. Saunders was a founding member, past chairman of the board, and past president of the Association of Black Cardiologists; past president, chairman of the board, and founder of both the International Society of Hypertension in Blacks (ISHIB) and the (former) Urban Cardiology Research Center, Inc. He was the co-founder of Heart House of the American College of Cardiology; a charter member of the American Society of Hypertension; past president of the Maryland High Blood Pressure Coordinating Council; former commissioner of the Maryland High



He became the first African-American resident in internal medicine at what was then University Hospital, and the first African-American cardiologist in the state of Maryland in 1965.

Blood Pressure Commission; and chairman, Maryland Advisory Council on High Blood Pressure and Related Cardiovascular Risk Factors. Dr. Saunders was also a violinist and co-founded the University Players Orchestra, known for their concerts in the lobby of the medical center.

In 2006, Dr. Saunders developed the Hair, Heart and Health program, an effort to bring awareness of heart disease to African-American communities via barbers and hairstylists. This work received national and international attention and continues to train barbers and hairstylists to pre-screen customers for hypertension and make referrals for medical care.

In 2011, he received the prestigious Herbert W. Nickens Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges. The award honors those who make outstanding contributions to promote justice in medical education and health care equality. In the same year, he was featured in a documentary commissioned by the Diabetes Awareness Project called "Faces of Diabetes." Dr. Saunders also received posthumously the Dean's Distinguished Gold Medal at the 2015 SOM Commencement, in recognition of his exemplary life and work.

The SOM Office of Development and the Department of Medicine were working toward finalizing funds to establish a \$1.5 million **Elijah Saunders Endowed Professorship** in recognition of his lifetime of accomplishments. "Dr. Saunders' passing only strengthens our resolve to honor his legacy by establishing a permanent mechanism to remember his contributions," vowed Dean Reece.

somnews

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MAY 2015 VOL.16 No.9

SOMnews is produced by the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Office of Public Affairs
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▲ Printed using environmentally-responsible low VOC inks.

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