UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

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DEAN'S MESSAGE: What's On My Mind

What's on my mind this month is how fortunate we are to have excellent and wonderfully vibrant graduate, allied health and public health programs embedded within the School of Medicine, which form an invaluable part of our academic enterprise.

About half of the approximately 1,300 students enrolled in the School of Medicine are working toward degrees in **life sciences, physical therapy, genetic counseling, medical and research technology, public health, and pathologist assistant.** As advances in science and research move us closer to understanding health and disease at the molecular level, the medical and allied health professions must be intimately linked to scientific research. **At UMSOM, we are extremely fortunate to have every phase in the biomedical and healthcare enterprise represented.**

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Students in our **Graduate Program in Life Sciences (GPILS)** pursue competitive research degrees under the mentorship of faculty within the School of Medicine, the School of Dentistry, and, most recently, the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology. In fiscal year 2012, **our PhD students held individual research grants totaling approximately $600,000.** Recognizing that the career choices for graduate students are ever-changing, the GPILS program staff has modified course structure to maximize classroom discussion time and will incorporate training in careers beyond academia, such as biotechnology, science writing and patent review, into the curriculum.

Motion-sensing technology in PTRS

Our Department of **Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science (PTRS) program** is one of only five physical therapy programs in the country that are departments within a school of medicine. **It has trained the majority of the licensed physical therapists practicing in Maryland.** Many of our faculty and graduates have held national-level leadership roles. PTRS research studies of patients with neuromotor control impairments due to stroke and Parkinson's disease are recognized across the country and around the world. Faculty and students in the department also run a service-learning center that provides pro-bono therapy to patients without health coverage and real-world experience to students-in-training.

With the increased interest in personalized medicine, our genes may be the basis upon which we are treated, and the demand for graduates from programs such as our **Master in Genetic Counseling** program also will increase. Our students are committed to their genetics, clinical, and service learning education and are publishing at a success rate of 70–80 percent based on the quality of their research. All of our alumni are certified by the American Board of Genetic Counseling, and **this year our students had a 100 percent pass rate for first-time test takers on the board exam.**

The **Department of Medical and Research Technology (DMRT)** offers undergraduate and Master's degrees, and prepares medical laboratory scientists through specialized training in healthcare screening, diagnostics and monitoring, and laboratory management. DMRT students come from a variety of backgrounds and account for much of the racial and ethnic diversity at the School of Medicine. **Our graduates have careers at academic centers and organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Georgetown University, and UMSOM**; several graduates have gone on to medical school; and many graduates have applied their skills to better our local hospital and biomedical workforce.

Our **Master of Public Health (MPH)** program within the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health provides a unique opportunity for students to complete single and dual degrees with medicine, dentistry, law, nursing, pharmacy and social work. The program attracts students from across the United States and internationally, many of whom are students-of-color. Drawing from a wealth of diverse perspectives in the classroom, a number of our MPH students have **chosen to take their education to places such as Mali, India and Nigeria to complete their senior projects**, while others work to address the myriad of public health needs in Maryland.

One of only eight such programs in the country, our **Pathologists' Assistant Program** trains students who will work in surgical pathology laboratories preparing complex specimens and assisting in hospital autopsies. Thanks to rigorous academic and clinical training, **our elite program has 100 percent job placement for graduates within the field.** Our program has received accreditation for the maximum number of years by the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, and the application rate has increased about 60 percent over the last year due to the incredible reputation and work of our students, faculty and staff.

Effective and dynamic graduate programs are essential for a medical school to succeed. Every member of our community is vital to maintaining the UMSOM's leadership in training the next generation of biomedical healthcare professionals, and **I applaud our graduate programs for providing such a rich academic environment for all our students.**

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am

Sincerely yours,

E. Albert Reece

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

In Memoriam

Dr. John M. Dennis

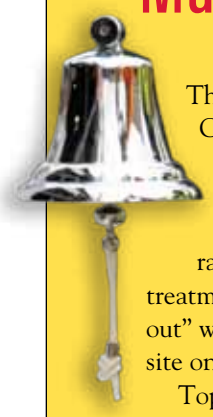
John M. Dennis, MD, former dean of the University of Maryland School of Medicine, passed away on January 17, 2013 at the age of 89. Dr. Dennis had devoted nearly 50 years of service to the University of Maryland upon his retirement, and spent 17 years (1974–1990) as Dean of the School of Medicine. The School of Medicine is indebted to him for his fine leadership and his dedication to this campus.

Dr. Dennis was born in 1923 in Wicomico County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He earned his MD from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1945, completing course work in three years (the curriculum was condensed into three 12-month sessions to meet the increased demand for physicians during wartime). After serving in the Army, Dr. Dennis returned to the School of Medicine in 1951 to teach in the Department of Radiology and became its first full-time chair in 1953, a position he remained in for 20 years. In 1973, Dr. Dennis was made acting dean of the School of Medicine. He was appointed Dean in 1974, Vice Chancellor for Health

[please turn to back page]

► BY CAELIE HAINES

Maryland Proton Treatment Center Celebrates Its Topping Out Ceremony



The Maryland Proton Treatment Center, a more than $200 million collaborative health care project that will bring to Maryland the most advanced radiation technology in cancer treatment, celebrated its "topping out" with a ceremony at the building's site on January 17, 2013.

Topping out is a major construction milestone, marking the last beam being laid in the building. The University of Maryland School of Medicine and its Department of Radiation Oncology, which will operate the proton therapy center, was joined by the developer, San Diego-based Advanced Particle Therapy, as well as Haskell, the architecture, construction and engineering firm for the project, in celebrating this milestone with a traditional topping out ceremony. The facility is scheduled to begin treating patients in 2015.

"We are delighted that this project is moving forward so swiftly and are most grateful for the assistance of our partners in bringing the Maryland Proton Treatment Center to fruition," said E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, School of Medicine. "I have enjoyed watching this building grow from the time of our groundbreaking exactly nine months ago, and I am excited to mark the progress with today's traditional topping out ceremony. My congratulations go to the entire construction, radiation oncology, and proton therapy teams."

At the ceremony, a giant crane hoisted a nine-foot beam three stories above the street and rested it in place at the top of what will be a 122,000 square-foot facility in the University of Maryland BioPark in West Baltimore. Nearly 400 invited guests—including construction workers and leadership from all the partner organizations—signed the white beam in a rainbow of colors before it was put in place. Each color represented a different cancer: i.e., gray for brain cancer, pink for breast cancer, orange for kidney cancer, etc. In keeping with a long-standing tradition of the topping out ceremony, the beam carried with it an evergreen tree and an American flag.

An artist's rendering

> "Our challenge is to take this triumph of engineering to the next level—the triumph of hope. The triumph of hope is illustrated in that beam that we had the opportunity to sign today in a variety of colors. Each color represents a unique patient…"

The beam also carried a bell, which will be displayed in the center's lobby upon completion of the building. Patients will ring the bell at the end of their proton treatment, to celebrate that healing milestone. "It's a bell of hope," said William Regine, MD, the Isadore & Fannie Schneider Foxman Professor and Chair in the Department of Radiation Oncology. "That bell represents the end of precision radiation therapy and hope for cancer survivorship. We are building a facility that will give us another tool in our cancer-fighting toolbox, proton radiation therapy, something we don't have in the Baltimore/Washington area right now. This building that you're building will truly have an impact on the lives of cancer patients."

Minesh Mehta, MBChB, FASTRO, who will be medical director of the Maryland Proton Treatment Center, thanked the construction crews for putting their all into this project. "Today represents a triumph of engineering and organizational skills that has brought us here to this stage of construction safely, thanks to all of you," he told them. "Our challenge is to take this triumph of engineering to the next level—the triumph of hope. The triumph of hope is illustrated in that beam that we had the opportunity to sign today in a variety of colors. Each color represents a unique patient—a father, mother, child, sister, brother or friend—someone we care about who has suffered the ravages of cancer. With the raising of this beam, the expectations of cancer patients are raised on us as well. Thanks to all of your hard work, we will be able to deliver for those patients."

► BY KAREN ROBINSON

DR. CHRISTOPHER HARMAN

Appointed Chair of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences

University of Maryland School of Medicine Dean E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, has appointed Christopher Harman, MD, an accomplished expert in maternal-fetal medicine (high-risk pregnancy) with a distinguished career in clinical medicine and research, to serve as the chairman of the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences. Dr. Harman has served as interim chair of the department since 2010, and was also the department's vice chair for many years.

"The Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences has been a national leader in research and patient care, focused on the science and health of women and infants," says Dean Reece, who is also Vice President for Medical Affairs at the University of Maryland and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. "Our faculty are conducting cutting-edge research on problems that effect women, making groundbreaking advances in such areas as high-risk pregnancy, fetal abnormalities, critical-care obstetrics, gynecologic cancer, urogynecology, and general obstetrics and gynecology. Dr. Harman is an outstanding leader whose accomplishments in clinical medicine and research make him the obvious choice to guide our department to the next level of excellence."

"I am delighted at this leadership opportunity," says Dr. Harman. "We are going to build upon our well-deserved reputations for clinical research and upper-echelon patient care, adding physician-scientists in several divisions. With the unique and extraordinary resources of the School of Medicine, our basic science research in pregnancy will advance real-life solutions to obstetric complications. At the same time, we will develop statewide networks with our partners in the University of Maryland Medical System to put these advances into action. This is going to be an exciting time for our department, and I am thrilled to be a part of it."

Dr. Harman is a distinguished and highly regarded physician-scientist who has conducted extensive research aimed at improving high risk pregnancy care. He is the primary investigator for Maryland Advanced Perinatal Support Services—a research grant supported by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. This project delivers high risk pregnancy care statewide through a combination of telemedicine, on-site consultation by maternal-fetal medicine specialists, and the nationally-recognized COMPACT (Center for Outreach Medicine, Provider Awareness and Competency Training), a simulation-based training center for obstetrics emergencies.

Dr. Harman has published extensively on fetal medicine and has served as a reviewer for the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* and many others. He also published *Invasive Fetal Testing and Treatment*, an internationally recognized text on fetal therapy. Dr. Harman is a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The Society for Maternal Fetal Medicine, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada and the International Fetal Medicine and Surgery Society. He is chairman of the board of directors and a founding member of the North American Fetal Therapy Network (NAFT Net).

Dr. Harman is a graduate of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada, where he also did his residency training in Obstetrics & Gynecology. He completed his Fellowship in Maternal-Fetal Medicine at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom. Upon completion of his training, Dr. Harman joined the clinical staff of the University of Manitoba, where his team performed fetal procedures such as intravenous transfusions and intrauterine bladder shunts for the first time in North America. Dr. Harman joined the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1997.

"Dr. Harman has proven himself to be an outstanding physician-scientist and a strong leader for the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences," says Dean Reece. "His exemplary track record makes him ideal to lead this already strong department into a successful future."

► BY KAREN ROBINSON

DR. DAVID STEWART Named Inaugural Recipient of Dean's Faculty Award for Diversity and Inclusion

Master of Ceremonies Dr. Otha Myles with Dr. Stewart and Dean Reece

David Stewart, MD, associate professor and chair, Department of Family & Community Medicine, has been selected as the inaugural recipient of the Dean's Faculty Award for Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. The Dean's Faculty Award for Diversity and Inclusion recognizes a School of Medicine faculty member for his/her extraordinary work and notable achievements in the field of health care disparities and equity. Nominees have made outstanding contributions to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in medicine, medical school education, and/or the recruitment and retention of under-represented minorities.

"It is a privilege to honor Dr. David Stewart, who has done tireless work within the department, city, state and nationwide to improve health care disparities," says E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, School of Medicine. "We are grateful for his leadership in the creation of Eastern Shore Maryland Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) and admire his continuous commitment to the exceptional care of his patients."

"I would like to thank the School of Medicine for choosing me as the first recipient of the Dean's Faculty Award for Diversity and Inclusion," says Dr. Stewart. "It is a great honor to be recognized. I share this award with my colleagues in the Department of Family & Community Medicine, who are as committed as I am to trying to eliminate health disparities."

Dr. Stewart was nominated by Richard Colgan, MD, associate professor, who has worked with him in the department for the past 14 years. "I can think of no one more deserving of this honor than he," Dr. Colgan said in his nomination letter. "He has been a strong voice in the promotion of care for minorities and the inclusion of minority leaders in his 25 years plus here at the University of Maryland School of Medicine."

During his tenure as chair, Dr. Stewart has recruited diverse faculty and retained excellent leaders. He has significantly increased the underrepresented minority composition of his faculty and resident staff. According to Dr. Colgan, Dr. Stewart very much encourages his faculty to pursue grants and research in the area of health disparities. Dr. Stewart himself, has been the principal investigator on numerous grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, including research to increase awareness for African-American males with hypertension.

He has been the principal investigator on numerous grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, including research to increase awareness for African-American males with hypertension.

Dr. Stewart is also a close advisor to the University of Maryland's School of Medcine's Center for Health Care Disparities and the Maryland AHEC, led by Claudia Baquet, MD, MPH. He helped to create the Eastern Shore AHEC in 1988 and successfully pursued a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant to expand the Maryland AHEC system, which seeks to enhance access to quality health care by improving the supply and distribution of healthcare professionals in underserved areas through community and academic educational partnerships.

"David Stewart has committed his life to caring for others, particularly those who have been marginalized by our society," says Dr. Colgan. "He has stood as a highly respected leader nationwide for his promotion of equity and improvement of health care disparities, and has truly been one the most effective physician leaders and department chairmen that the School of Medicine has seen over the course of his tenure in our department. He is loved by his patients, highly respected by the medical students and residents he teaches, and identified by the leadership of the School of Medicine as someone who has unselfishly given of himself for no other purpose than to serve."

Dr. Stewart was presented with his award at the University of Maryland School of Medicine's annual *Celebrating Diversity Reception and Dinner* on Saturday, February 9, 2013 at the Baltimore Marriott Inner Harbor at Camden Yards.

"The destruction in New York and New Jersey was extremely raw and distressing. I felt extremely humbled to be invited onto the team of Maryland Task Force 1.

~ J.V. Nable, MD, NREMT-P

► LINDA KESSELRING

Maryland-Based FEMA Search and Rescue Team

Travels to Communities Devastated by Superstorm Sandy

The day after Hurricane Sandy slammed into New Jersey and New York in late October 2012, Maryland Task Force 1, a search-and-rescue team based at the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), was called to action. The team, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is one of 28 in the nation that respond to disasters demanding more resources than local organizations can provide.

The Montgomery County team had 70 members, including pre-hospital care providers, building engineers, rescue dog handlers (and four dogs), and one physician. The physician assigned to the Hurricane Sandy mission was J.V. Nable, MD, NREMT-P, a clinical instructor in the Department of Emergency Medicine and the department's emergency medical services (EMS) fellow. His duties were to provide medical assessments to residents in the communities to which the team was assigned and to monitor the medical needs of team members.

Dr. Nable's role in this mission grew out of an elective rotation in the department's EMS fellowship. Coordinated by Roger M. Stone, MD, MS, clinical assistant professor, Department of Emergency Medicine, and medical director for MCFRS, the elective provides training in EMS medical oversight. In addition, the FEMA team gives fellows the opportunity to be involved in readiness planning for real-world domestic disasters.

After traveling to the devastated area in vans, Maryland Task Force 1 was first deployed by the local incident commander to Rockaway Beach, on the south shore of Long Island, NY, one of the areas hit hardest by Sandy. During the team's initial door-to-door searches, Dr. Nable encountered many residents in need of basic resources. "They had no electricity, no water supply, and no phone service. Some of them were running out of necessary medications," he says. "Our mission quickly changed from search-and-rescue to more humanitarian concerns."

From the Rockaways, the team was sent to Staten Island, NY, to assist with search-and-rescue efforts in those neighborhoods. When they completed that mission and retired for the night to Fort Dix, NJ, they assumed their work was done. Instead, the next morning they were flown by helicopter to Nassau County, on Long Island, for more search and rescue.

During the community sweeps, Dr. Nable determined that several residents needed hospital treatment. Many hospitals in the region were not in service because of the storm, so transportation decisions were particularly challenging. Dr. Nable communicated his patients' needs to the Fire Department of New York, which then handled the logistics.

The Maryland-based FEMA team worked in the storm-devastated area for nine days. When it was time to rest and recuperate from the activities of the day, they were given accommodations in unusual settings, including three-tiered bunks on the ship TS Empire State VI, which was docked at the Maritime College of the State University of New York, and in sleeping bags on the floor of a casino near Kennedy Airport.

"The destruction in New York and New Jersey was extremely raw and distressing," Dr. Nable says. "I felt extremely humbled to be invited onto the team of Maryland Task Force 1. The dedicated members clearly have trained to provide excellent care to those they are called to serve."

Legislative Day

► BY CAELIE HAINES

Students Meet With Lawmakers to Raise Awareness

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, School of Medicine; Jay Perman, MD, University of Maryland Baltimore President; and more than 40 students and faculty members from the University of Maryland School of Medicine traveled to Annapolis on January 30, 2013 to speak with members of the Maryland General Assembly about issues of importance to the School.

In face-to-face meetings with lawmakers, faculty and students urged support for the Governor's budget, which would provide for the expansion of life-saving biomedical research. The capital budget provides more than $16 million dollars in funding to accelerate construction of Health Sciences Facility III, a new research building on the University of Maryland campus in Baltimore. Students also conveyed the importance of loan assistance and scholarship support. The average debt for School of Medicine graduates is more than $162,000, above the national average. The delegation urged lawmakers, as well, to support funding for the University of Maryland cancer program, which has helped to dramatically reduce cancer deaths in Maryland to below the national average.

"This is something that we do every year," said Dean Reece of the Legislative Day. "It is important for you, as students, and for faculty, as well, to get the opportunity to not only visit our legislative leaders, but at the same time to share with them how we, as an institution, work. Many are aware that we exist and know in a broad brush way what we do, but they very much appreciate hearing how our system works, how medicine works, and some of the challenges that we have to overcome."

Senator Thomas Middleton, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, agrees. "It's so important that we have the opportunity to get one-on-one with you," he told the students over breakfast. "You can share the role you will play as we roll out the Affordable Health Care Act in 2014. With all the medical needs we have out there, we don't yet have an infrastructure for them in place. You are going to be a very important part of that, and you have to communicate that to your legislators."

House Speaker Michael E. Busch was also a guest at breakfast, where he spoke about the Affordable Health Care Act, too. "Right now, Maryland is one of the states best in position to implement the plan that the president and Congress passed," he said. "There is going to be some ups and downs, but at the end of the day, we are going to have a system that insures 400,000 more Marylanders." Speaker Busch knows that taking care of all those new patients is going to require more doctors. "We are trying to make sure we get the resources to the University system and to students and faculty, to make sure we have the best and the brightest choosing to practice in the state of Maryland."

The students were grateful for the opportunity to see the effect that politics can have on their chosen profession. "It's nice to be able to see the bigger picture of what's happening in health policy and talk to some legislators and be aware of that debate as it happens," said second-year student Alexi Pappas. "As physicians, we will be in a position to affect change as well, so it's good experience for us."

Third-year student Joe Mechak agrees. "It's a great experience, it gives us exposure to this world of politics that we are not familiar with," he said. "More importantly, it gives politicians insight into the world of medicine and the School of Medicine and what's important to us. One of the things I've been talking about is the loan-assistance repayment program (LARP). I hope to go into pediatrics or family medicine, and debt is a big concern to me and many of my classmates, putting us in a spot deciding between what we're passionate about and what's financial feasible. It's an unfortunate position for students to be in. The LARP offers an opportunity for students to have some assistance with that. It's good for Maryland as well, because it keeps Maryland-trained physicians in Maryland, working in communities that need good physicians who care about the people of Maryland."

Joe Mechak, MS-III, with Delegate Tawanna Gaines

Dr. John M. Dennis

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Affairs in 1975, and Vice President for Academic Affairs in 1983. Dr. Dennis was also named Dean Emeritus in 1990 and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Diagnostic Radiology in 1995. At its 1993 commencement, the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), honored Dr. Dennis with an honorary Sc.D. degree.

"Dr. Dennis played a significant role at the medical school," E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA, Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland, and the John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and Dean, University of Maryland School of Medicine, told *The Baltimore Sun* in Dr. Dennis' obituary. "He made contributions to the rise of the School that made it the excellent institution that it is. He was someone who spent many years at Maryland, and even in his retirement he continued to attend major events. He was very loyal and extraordinarily engaged."

During Dr. Dennis's deanship, the School of Medicine developed into a major research institution with considerable growth in faculty and in research support. Dr. Dennis stewarded the development of a new Baltimore Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) on the UMB campus. The Baltimore VAMC's Dr. John M. Dennis Auditorium honors his dedication to this effort. Dr. Dennis was also instrumental in developing Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) to expose medical students to rural practice—a program that is still thriving today. He is credited, as well, with creating the faculty practice plan—now known as Faculty Physicians, Inc.—and chairing the ad-hoc committee responsible for its establishment.

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