



# Scoop

May 10, 2002

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

## Events to Know

### May

**10 Today. Institute of Molecular Medicine, Dr. Peter Davies,** "New Perspectives on Estrogen Action in the Endometrium," 10 a.m.- noon, IBT Bldg., 2121 W. Holcombe, 11th floor boardroom.

**13 Biochemistry & Molecular Biology seminar, Dr. Joseph Alcorn,** on the protein B(SP-B)mRNA, noon, MSB 2.135.

**16 Organization of Faculty Wives and Women Faculty Luncheon,** 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., The Doctor's Club, 1020 Holcombe Blvd.

**The Association of Women Faculty** present "A Discussion of Promotion and Tenure Issues." Panel speakers: **Drs. Rena D'Souza, Asha Kapadia, Katherine Loveland, Virginia Moyer, Linda Nieman, and Hope Northrup.** Noon, Fifth Floor Gallery.

## HEAR THE DEAN'S ADDRESS

Annual Faculty Meeting. Open to all. Scheduled for Thursday, **May 23**, 11:45 a.m.- 1 p.m., MSB 3.001. Lunch at 11:30 a.m. for first 200. Meeting will be telecast to the LBJ/Annex Auditorium/Room 217.

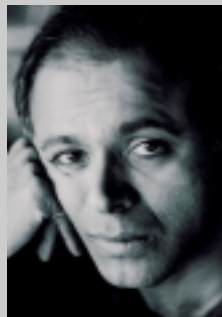
## UTMost Interest

**Dr. John Byrne**, chairman, Neurobiology and Anatomy, was on American Morning with Paula Zahan on CNN this past week addressing the abuse of an anti-narcolepsy drug...

**Dr. Bryant Boutwell**, Associate Dean for Community Affairs and Professional Education, was the commencement speaker for Fort Bend ISD's Hightower High School's Medical Science Academy Graduating Class of 2002. He also was a featured speaker at HISD's Lanthup Elementary School Career Day, speaking to five classes on health careers.

## UT-HOUSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT NEARS

Commencement will take place 10 a.m., Saturday, **June 1**, at the George R. Brown Convention Center Assembly Hall, with 212 seniors receiving their medical degrees. **Dr. Abraham**



**Verghese**, professor of medicine and chief of infectious diseases, School of Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center - El Paso, will give the commencement address. Dr. Verghese will take on a new role at UTHSC-San Antonio as the Marvin Forland Distinguished Professor of Ethics, and director, Center for Medical Humanities and Ethics.

During the course of his career, Dr. Verghese obtained an M.F.A. from the Iowa Writers Workshop. He is board-certified in internal medicine, infectious diseases, pulmonary medicine, and geriatrics. He has received a number of awards and has published extensively in the area of pneumonia, infections in the elderly, and HIV Infection. Verghese is the author of *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story*, and *The Tennis Partner: A Doctor's Story of Friendship and Loss*.

## RESEARCHERS LINK DIABETES AND HEART FAILURE RISK

Patients with diabetes have an increased risk of heart failure because their heart cannot adapt to the toxic levels of glucose and lipids that build up in the heart muscle, UT-Houston Medical School cardiology researchers have found.

"We have known that diabetes is an established risk factor for coronary artery disease, but diabetes does much more than put fatty deposits in the arteries. It also attacks the heart muscle, causing it to weaken and fail," said **Dr. Heinrich Taegtmeyer**, cardiologist and professor of medicine. The findings — the second of a two-part series — were published April 16, in *Circulation: A Journal of the American Heart Association*.

**Dr. Martin Young**, assistant professor of medicine and biochemistry, and co-author of the two-part perspective, said this finding put researchers one step closer to understanding why fat is so bad for the heart.

Taegtmeyer said the proposed link between diabetes and heart failure could have a profound effect on public health. Diabetes mellitus, or Type 2 diabetes, and the prevalence of heart failure are growing at alarming rates in Western countries.

"Worldwide, there are about 145 million patients with diabetes, almost five times more than estimates of 10 years ago," Taegtmeyer said. "People are getting fatter. As a nation, we tend to eat too much, and we've also become very sedentary. There is no magic pill for diabetes and heart failure, but now we can identify critical steps in a chain of events that cause heart muscle to weaken, because it loads up with more fat and glucose that it can use." - **M. R. Middleton**



The University of Texas  
Health Science Center at Houston  
Medical School

L. Maximilian Buja, M.D., Dean  
Darla Brown, Manager  
e-mail: M.Darla.Brown@uth.tmc.edu  
Colleen O'Brien, Editor  
e-mail: Colleen.L.O'Brien@uth.tmc.edu  
Phone: 713-500-5114; FAX: (713) 500-0597  
E-Scoop online:  
<http://deanweb.med.uth.tmc.edu/comm/scoop/>  
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Celebrating Teaching Excellence**THE JOHN FREEMAN FACULTY TEACHING AWARD**

Each year, the senior class selects the John Freeman Faculty Teaching Award winner to recognize the Medical School's outstanding basic science faculty member. **Kent A. Heck, M.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and director of the second-year pathology course, is the 2002 recipient.

The recipient of this award, which is made possible by a gift from the late Mr. Freeman, must exemplify enthusiasm and drive toward effective teaching, have a personal interest in students' problems and their educational goals, and set an example that serves as a high standard for students.

Dr. Heck exemplifies these ideals as a professor who also is a student advocate. "I've tried to take some of the formality out of the position and tried to teach more at the level of the students and be their advocate," he said. "The students will come to me with problems about their education, and I'll approach the administration, or other professionals, on their behalf."

It was mentors, especially **Dean Max Buja** and **Dr. Margaret Uthman**, who Dr. Heck said taught him this teaching philosophy of "being an advocate for those you lead."

An academic neuropathologist and an autopsy pathologist who is particularly interested in nerve and muscle disorders, Dr. Heck also is interested in educational research issues and is the faculty sponsor of the students' <UTMed.com> Web site.

Dr. Heck received his medical degree from Tulane University and came on board as a faculty member at the Medical School in 1994. He received the Residents' Faculty Teaching Award in 1994 and the Dean's Teaching Excellence Award in 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001. He is the Student Marshal and the Faculty Hooder for the 2002 Graduating Class.

Winners of the John Freeman Faculty Teaching Award since 1990 include: **Drs. Margaret O. Uthman** (2001, 1999, 1997), **Barry Van Winkle** (2000, 1998), **Marsha L. Eigenbrodt** (1996), **Ron C. Philo** (1995), **Harley D. Sybers** (1994, 1992, 1990), **Frank W. Booth** (1993), **Karmen L. Schmidt** (1991).



**Kent A. Heck, M.D.**



At the Reunion: **Dr. Cheves Smythe** (r.), **Dr. Mike McCrady** (center), '82, with his daughter, **Kate McCrady**. (photos by B. Boutwell).

UT-Houston Medical School - April 2002**SCENES FROM AN ALUMNI REUNION**

The Alumni Reunion, coordinated by the Office of Alumni Affairs, took place April 26 and 27. Approximately 120 people were in attendance at each of the various events. Classes participating were: the graduating classes of 1977, 1982, 1992, and 1997.



Participants gathered at the Alumni Reunion reception.



Enjoying the great outdoors were **Dr. Tamara Togliatti**, '97, with her spouse, **Michael**, and their two children, **Rachel** and **Nicholas**.