



Scoop

Aug. 15, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

October

10 Fun Fest, 2 - 6 p.m., Hornberger Conferenc Center. Visit <<http://www.uthouston.edu/funfest>>.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Michael McKinney has been named senior executive vice president and chief operating officer, effective **Sept. 2**, of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston...**Dr. Samuel Kaplan** has been appointed as an Honorary Professor in the School of Molecular & Microbial Sciences, The University of Queensland, Brisbane Australia, for 2003-2006...**Larry Dierker** and the Astros staff will make a delivery of children's books to the Good Neighbor Healthcare Center at 277 West Gray on Tues., **Aug. 26** at 9 a.m. The books donated will be a result of a Reach Out & Read book drive.

CO-ED & MEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUES FORMING

Interested? Co-Recreational and Men's Softball Leagues in the Texas Medical Center forming, starting **Aug. 25**. For further details, contact **Chucky Son** at <Chucky.L.Son@uth.tmc.edu> or 713-500-8422.

NEW HOMETOWN PARTNERS PROGRAM!

If you are an out-of-town medical student and don't know much about Houston and/or are unable to go home for the holidays, this may be the program for you!

If interested in being matched with an alum, faculty member, or UT employee, call the Office of Alumni Affairs at 713-500-5121 or e-mail <jean.m.mullin@uth.tmc.edu>.

MEDICAL SCHOOL HOSTS HARD HAT HAPPENING

Medical School faculty, students, and employees attended a Hard Hat Happening in the Medical School's Leather Lounge on Tuesday to celebrate the beginning of ground floor construction that will bring the School back to better than before. The event included brief remarks by **Drs. Willerson, Schultz, and Buja**, along with a project construction overview by **David Healey**, acting vice president for Facilities, Planning, and Engineering.



Ceremonial ribbon cutting with (l. to r.), **D. Healy, Drs. McKinney, Willerson, Buja, and Schultz**.

Dr. Schultz prefaced his remarks by showing his Parking Lot A tag that was the only item he salvaged from his car that was also flooded by the waters of Tropical Storm Allison in June 2001.

"The next two years will be difficult and I urge you to be patient and maintain the heroic spirit that has gotten us to this point. The end product will be beautiful and a facility well worth the wait," he noted.

Dr. Willerson summarized the teamwork and efforts these past two years to raise the funds needed to rebuild the school with enhancements designed to prevent future flooding and new facilities that will set the course for the School in coming decades.

"Without **Dr. Willerson's** efforts to raise the \$34.9 million from legislature this past June, we simply would not be where we are today cutting ribbon on this important phase of construction," noted **Healey**.

Dr. Max Buja, who served as dean of the Medical School since 1996 and throughout the flood recovery, gave a special thanks to the faculty, students, and staff of the school for all they have done in the face of such difficult circumstances.

While work on the exterior walls and new structural biology facilities on the ground floor is well underway or complete, ground floor construction will be ongoing throughout the coming year and will be followed by vivarium construction for animal facilities on the top of the building which is expected to last up to two years.

For readers who wish to review events surrounding the Allison storm, see *Scoop* archives, Sept. 21, 2001 and Aug. 10, 2001, at <http://www.med.uth.tmc.edu/community_affairs/escooparchives.htm>, and Tropical Storm Allison News Archive at <http://www.uthouston.edu/Media/newsreleases/nr2001/msb_flood/archive.html>.



Dr. Willerson signed and dated the progress timeline board near the guard's desk on the ground floor, Medical School.



Dean Schultz talks to the lunchtime crowd who filled the Leather Lounge for the Hard Hat Happening, Tues., Aug. 12.



Dr. McKinney, (l.), David Healey, and Rives Taylor discussed reconstruction plans.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

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QUOTABLE QUOTES, CONTINUED, FROM *HARD HAT HAPPENING STORY*, FRONT PAGE



Dr. Willerson and Schultz

Dr. Stanley Schultz, interim dean, The University of Texas Medical School at Houston –

- ◆ “A psychologist I’ve known for 42 years, my wife, urges us to track our progress as we go through this coming two year, sometimes painful, period of restoration. There will be noise and disruption. We will try to anticipate this and notify everyone, of course. But all of us will be called upon to exhibit the same kind of fortitude and patience that were the hallmarks of our heroes during Tropical Storm Allison. The banner on the wall (wall next to guard desk) will allow all to track by percent of project completed, where we are in this process.
- ◆ “When this project is 100 percent completed, we will have the biggest party you have ever seen!
- ◆ “This is not only a restoration but also a reinvigoration.
- ◆ “To paraphrase Winston Churchill, today can be described as ‘not the end, but surely it is the beginning of the end.’ Dr. Willerson wrestled \$35 million from a starving legislature. Now all of these things that are going to happen, couldn’t have happened, without Dr. Willerson.”

Dr. James T. Willerson, president, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston –

- ◆ “There were so many heroes during the flood – many doctors, nurses, technicians, and administrative staff – all helped in dealing with the immediate problems. Patients were being carried down dark stairwells on stretchers, medical personnel had to use flashlights to see in the dark. \$160 million worth of damage was incurred as a result of this disaster.
- ◆ “You don’t recover from this kind of event quickly. But out of this kind of disaster came a lot of good. This Medical School will become one of the finest structures in the country, largely protected from similar disasters. I have optimism and confidence for the future.
- ◆ “In the spring of this year, after numerous trips to Austin and discussions with elected officials, the Texas State Legislature earmarked \$64.9 million in tuition revenue bonds for the Health Science Center’s recovery; \$34.9 million of that is earmarked for this Medical School.
- ◆ “We are confident now that we have a secure chance to rebuild the School, in a way that will make it better than ever.
- ◆ “In addition, groundbreaking for the Institute of Molecular Medicine for the Prevention of Human Diseases will take place **Sept. 23**. This is a \$135 million philanthropic project that will bring us closer to the day when physicians can prevent disease, not merely treat its symptoms.”



Dr. Richard Wainerdi, president of TMC, and Dr. Willerson

David Healey, acting vice president, Facilities, Planning, and Engineering –

- ◆ “Due to the remarkable efforts of Dr. Willerson and his associates, we now have the money to go forward with this rebuilding effort. Our team is in place and we will be on time and on budget.
- ◆ “We’re going to pick up about an additional 15,000 square feet (building the exterior walls out to enclose former breezeway space).”

TWO RESEARCH STUDIES AT U.T. MEDICAL SCHOOL NEED ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Women who want to quit smoking are needed for the Smoking and Heart Study for Women (or “Smart Women”), which consists of therapy sessions led by specially trained counselors and the use of a medication called Bupropion, approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to aid people in smoking cessation. There are no costs involved with this study.

Candidates must be English-speaking women aged 20–65, who are in reasonably good health and smoke at least 10 cigarettes a day. Hispanic volunteers are especially needed. Parking or transportation will be reimbursed, and qualified candidates will receive a small remuneration for completing the study.

Also, the center is recruiting volunteers for its Alcohol and Smoking Abstinence Program (or “ASAP”). ASAP is a 12-week program that combines behavioral and pharmacological therapy. For more information or to volunteer, call the Treatment Research Center at 713-500-2802.

- S. Rasp

GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH FORUM

Excellence in Biomedical Research is the theme of the 9th Annual Graduate and Postgraduate Research Forum, formerly called Research Day. The event will be held 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., Fri., **Nov. 14**, at the Edwin Hornberger Conference Center. All students, faculty and staff are invited to attend. All six University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston schools and the IMM may participate.

Formerly called Research Day, this year's symposium will feature projects with students and postgraduate trainees as first authors. Other researchers may participate as additional authors. There will be platform presentations of selected abstracts in the morning and an extensive poster presentation program in the afternoon.

Watch for more event information in the months ahead, including a call for students and postgraduate trainees to register and submit abstracts online.