



Scoop

Oct. 31, 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

November

- 11 Reproductive Biology Series, Dr. Frank Talamantes**, speaker, noon, MSB 6.018-D.
- 13 Fields Lecture, Dr. John Marler**, 4 p.m., MSB 3.001.
- 19 Dean's Lecture Series, Dr. Victor McKusick**, speaker, 4 p.m., MSB 3.001.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Guy Clifton, chair, Neurosurgery, was referenced in a recent article concerning a study on rewiring damaged microscopic nerve cells (*Houston Chronicle*, 10/21/03).



NOTE - Lynne Cleveland, research associate, MSI, is presented the "Mayor's Disability Advocate of the Year Award" by **Mayor Lee Brown**.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT STUDY NEEDS YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

A research study that may lead to a better understanding of brain development and neuropsychological functioning in autism seeks participants from three groups of children and adolescents. These are: • Preschool-age boys, ages 3-6, without developmental delays or serious emotional/behavioral problems; children and adolescents, ages 7-18, who have trouble learning; they may have mental retardation or be in special education or resource class, but should not have serious emotional/behavioral problems such as autism or depression; and verbal adolescents, ages 14-18, with autism who do not have serious emotional problems such as depression. For more information contact **Bryant Shaw** or **Stacy Reddoch** at 713-500-2580, or <Bryant.Shaw@uth.tmc.edu>.

MULTI-PATENT HOLDER HUNTER PRESENTED LEVINE AWARD

Dr. Robert Hunter, holder of the Distinguished Chair in Molecular Pathology and chair, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, recently received the American Society for Clinical Pathology's (ASCP) Philip Levine Award for Outstanding Research in New Orleans. Dr. Philip Levine is best known for his discovery of the human Rh antigen blood factors. The 140,000-member ASCP, the largest association of pathologists and laboratory professionals in the world, presents the award to researchers who have made acclaimed contributions to molecular pathology, immunohematology, and immunopathology in the clinical sciences.



Dr. Robert Hunter

Internationally known for his work in immunopathology, Hunter began his career at the University of Chicago. His work on the role of adhesion in vaccines led to discoveries with application in diverse areas of medicine. Many of the graduate students Hunter has mentored now are professors in medical schools around the country and in other parts of the world, passing on what they learned.

Hunter also is a founder of CytRx Corp and holder of 38 American patents and more than 100 patents in foreign countries. The patents include vaccine adjuvants, antimicrobial agents, and Flocor. Flocor is a polymer drug for common problems of ischemic and damaged tissue. It binds to hydrophobic regions on injured cells, restores hydration lattices, and aborts the cascade of mediators, thereby protecting cells from many noxious stimuli. It also improves blood flow through damaged tissue by reducing friction between cells and walls of the microvasculature and inhibits reperfusion injury.

The vaccine adjuvants, antimicrobics, and Flocor have recently been licensed to a new company, SynthRx, founded by Dr. Hunter in partnership with CytRx that will continue development of these technologies in Houston. Dr. Hunter is optimistic that clinical trials on Flocor can be resumed soon and that research will progress on the other technologies. "I am delighted to have the opportunity to form a partnership with CytRx to develop three co-polymer technologies," he said. - C. O'Brien

DEAN'S LECTURER TO ADDRESS GENETICS AND GENOME TOPICS

Dr. Victor McKusick, professor of medical genetics at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Hospital, will be the next speaker in the Dean's Lecture Series 4 p.m. Wed., **Nov. 19**, MSB 3.001. McKusick, often called the "father of medical genetics," is credited with patiently and relentlessly demonstrating the importance of studying the genetic basis of diseases and disorders. On June 13, 2002, he received a National Medal of Science, the highest scientific honor in the United States, from President Bush at White House ceremonies. The title of his lecture on Nov. 19 is "The Development of Medical Genetics as a Clinical Discipline and the Anatomy of the Human Genome as a Neo-Vesalian Basis for All of Medicine."



Dr. Victor McKusick



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
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THREE WINNERS PLACE AT THE 2003 RESEARCH FORUM



Owen Mogabgab, MS II, first place, with Dr. Gary Rosenfeld, director, Summer Research Program.

Twenty-one medical students who conducted research during the Medical School's Summer Research Program presented their findings to 11 judges on Oct. 27 during the annual Research Forum & Webber Competition. Sponsored by the Medical School dean and the Office of Educational Programs, three medical students received awards based on content, presentation, and knowledge of the subject matter. Winners were: first place - **Owen Mogabgab, MS II**, for his "Phosphodiesterase inhibition reduced vascular permeability following spinal cord contusion injury," sponsored by **Dr. Raymond Grill**, Neurosurgery; second place - **Melissa Van Arsdall, MS II**, for her "Activation of PPAR γ restores metabolic flexibility and improves contractile function in failing hearts from Zucker diabetic fatty rats," sponsored by **Dr. Heinrich Taegtmeier**, Internal Medicine;

and third place, **Teresa Smith, MS II**, for her "Mapping genes involved in multiple congenital anomaly syndromes and/or mental retardation," sponsored by **Dr. Hope Northrup** and **Dr. Kit-Sing Au**, Pediatrics.



Melissa Van Arsdall, MS II, second place, with Dr. Rosenfeld.



Teresa Smith, MS II, third place, with Dr. Rosenfeld.

For his support of the program, **Dr. Max Buja** received a plaque from the participating students.

- story and photos, C. O'Brien

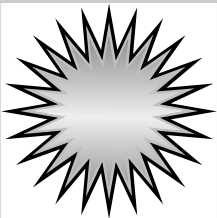
OCTOBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH - STEVE JONES

Steve Jones, residency program adviser, Office of Student Affairs, started with the Medical School back in March of 1993, working with **Dr. Andrij Holian** in his pulmonary research laboratory in the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Holian has since moved on to the University of Montana and invited Steve to come along. Luckily for us, Steve decided to stay behind. "Although I enjoyed the lab experience with Dr. Holian, I decided that administrative work and working with people was a better fit," Steve said. He has processed grants, worked both with graduate and medical students, scheduled rotations, lectures, examinations, and grading. Steve is now the residency program adviser for the Medical School's Office of Student Affairs, reporting to **Pat Caver** and **Dr. Margaret McNeese**. He advises students on their career objectives and handles all fourth-year scheduling changes. "I work closely with **Jimi Park** to make sure that all residency applications are uploaded into ERAS (Electronic Residency Application Service)," he said. ERAS is a document handling system that provides for the electronic distribution of application materials for "The Match," such as the dean's letter and letters of recommendation, to each residency program our senior students designate.



Steve Jones

In addition to his full-time job, Steve is currently finishing up prerequisite course work in physics, calculus, biology, general, and organic chemistry. Why all the science and math courses? "I'm applying to medical school." Steve says it's always been one of those things that he's wanted to do. "I guess I just built up confidence over the years." During his last semester at Texas Tech, Steve took 27 credit hours; got a 4.0, and made the President's list! Smiling, he said, "That's the first time I've had all A's since the third grade!"



"Every single boss that I've ever had here has allowed me to grow, including **Dr. Laura Colletti** in the Junior Clerkship, where I ran the day-to-day operations, and **Dr. Mark Farnie's** area, where I was the senior electives coordinator. I made the approvals, reviewed the applications, and coordinated visiting students. Dr. Holian gave me projects while I was doing bench work. From there I evolved into grant management and budgeting. Although Dr. Holian moved away, I still keep in touch with him," he said.

Today, Steve is eager to grow into his role with Student Affairs and enjoys the camaraderie with the new team. "I've had incredible work experiences here at UT-Houston. The Medical School is a very tight-knit community; it's resourceful; it's resilient. Even during the tough times, most people here pick up the ball and keep moving."

Steve is from Houston and went to Katy High School. He met his wife **Amy**, who works for **Dr. Bill Weems**, while at Texas Tech. The couple has two German shepherds, Callie and Maggie, and loves to travel. Steve and Amy have been to the Bahamas, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Mexico, and almost 30 states. "The oceans and mountains are our favorite destinations. Next year we plan on visiting Alaska and England."