



Scoop

June 16, 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

June

16 "Communicating Assertively," an HR-Training and Development class. 9 a.m.-11 a.m., MSB B.625.

What's coming up?

Mark your calendars for the Women and Liver Health Seminar 2006 to be held Sept. 30 at the Hilton Post Oak Hotel in Houston.

The American Liver Foundation, in collaboration with the Medical School, will present this continuing medical education program. Participating Medical School faculty include **Drs. Ruben Quiros**, Pediatrics/Gastroenterology; **Rafael Botero**, Internal Medicine/Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition; and **S. Chris Pappas**, Internal Medicine/Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition.

Some topics include current therapeutic approaches to viral hepatitis, liver disease during pregnancy, drug-induced hepatotoxicity, and nutritional considerations in women with chronic liver disease.

The conference is accredited by The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, and attendees will receive a maximum of 6 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™, including 1 credit of ethics. Details and registration currently are available at www.UTcme.net.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Sukesh Burjonroppa, a third-year cardiology fellow, had one abstract and one case report accepted for presentation at the recent 17th Annual Scientific Sessions of the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) in Baltimore. Burjonroppa's case report titled "Right Atrial Mass" was included in the first annual ASE Cases Competition. Furthermore, his abstract titled "The Case for Echocardiographic Assessment of Volume Overload Beyond B-Type Natriuretic Peptide Levels" was selected for the "Meeting Highlights" session, which featured the most innovative and impactful research presented at the meeting. This honor was bestowed to the top 40 abstracts.

MEDICINE HELPS MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS PATIENTS MAINTAIN MOBILITY

Daily injections of glatiramer acetate appear to slow the progression of multiple sclerosis in patients who continue this therapy over a long period of time.



Dr. Jerry Wolinsky

In a landmark study published in the June issue of *Multiple Sclerosis*, researchers found that nine out of 10 patients with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis who remained on the Copaxone therapy for 10 years or longer were still walking without assistance.

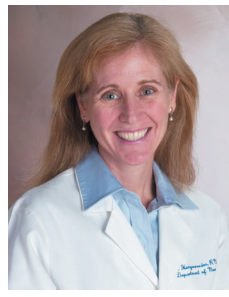
Dr. Jerry Wolinsky, lead researcher and interim dean of the Medical School, said these patients also suffered fewer relapses. Prior to the study, which began in 1991, patients had an average of 1.18 multiple sclerosis attacks per year. During the 10-year study, there was an 80 percent reduction in the number of attacks.

"Now, on average, they may have one attack every five years. People actually forget they have the disease," said Wolinsky, holder of the Bartels Family and Opal C. Rankin Professorships in Neurology. "They don't remember what the attacks feel like, and when they do have an attack, the symptoms often are not as severe."

Wolinsky, who directs the Multiple Sclerosis Research Group and Magnetic Resonance Imaging Analysis Center at the Medical School, said patients who remained on continuous therapy did extraordinarily well.

Multiple sclerosis, which affects approximately 400,000 Americans, is a chronic, neurological *(Cont'd. on back)*

HERGENROEDER WINS OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE AWARD



Gigi Hergenroeder

Her nominators described her as *intelligent, outstanding, highly organized and efficient, and always going beyond the call of duty*. **Gigi Hergenroeder, B.S.N., M.H.A.**, the research manager in the Department of Neurosurgery, is the Medical School's Outstanding Employee of the Quarter.

With a background in nursing and health administration, Hergenroeder effectively leads the department's clinical research protocols, while serving as a role model to her staff and other members of the department.

"Her intelligence and thirst for knowledge form the basis for the research questions and protocols and inspire us all to higher levels of performance," a nominator said. "A physician may have a research idea, but it is Gigi who thoughtfully and intelligently generates the question, the research of that idea, the protocol, and the data collection tools."

Hergenroeder follows the status of multiple ongoing research studies, and most of the subjects are patients within the Neurotrauma Intensive Care Unit. To that end, she is compassionate and empathetic in her interactions with patients and their families.

"She is intensely aware of the emotional hardships endured by the families of patients within the Neurotrauma ICU that we attempt to include in our research," a nominator said. "Throughout her interactions with them, she is kind, thoughtful, and empathetic to their pain. She insists upon

(Cont'd. on back)



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Produced weekly by the Office of Communications



Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award – Dr. W. Keith Hoots



Dr. W. Keith Hoots

To get to the root of a patient's problem, listening is key. That's the approach **W. Keith Hoots, M.D.**, takes when caring for patients. "The most important thing is to really try to assess what the patient's real issues are and see if you can intercede," he said.

Hoots, a professor of pediatrics, is the 2006 recipient of the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award, which is sponsored by the Arnold P. Gold Foundation. The award honors faculty who are exemplary in their compassion

and sensitivity in the delivery of care to patients and their families, who administer scientifically excellent clinical care, and who serve as role models to students.

Hoots spent a good part of his medical career caring for patients with HIV, and it was during this time when he learned the most about patient care.

"In terms of learning about caring for patients, the most I learned was at that time – when all there was to do was care for them because not much was known about HIV," he said.

During his 26 years teaching at the Medical School, he also has learned a lot about teaching and said he enjoys getting students excited about their own ideas.

"My philosophy is to try to ascertain what excites individuals and to

try to encourage them to explore what excites them most – try to build an enthusiasm for academics," said Hoots, who is also division director of pediatric hematology.

Hoots teaches third- and fourth-year medical students, residents, and fellows in a clinical setting, rather than a classroom. "I particularly like the kind of teaching I do, which is one-on-one, one-on-two, or one-on-three," he said. "You get an immediate sense of whether you're connecting, as opposed to in a classroom where there's more distance. There's no ambiguity of whether you're transpiring the information."

He also finds it gratifying to watch the students mature through the years. "That's an advantage of being here a long time," he explained. "I've seen a lot of students progress to faculty – that's really rewarding."

When asked how he felt to be selected this year's Humanism in Medicine Award winner, he said: "Knowing the majority of the people who received the award before me makes it even more of an honor. It gives importance to the interaction you have with patients, as well as training and teaching students."

Previous winners of the award are **Larry C. Gilstrap III, M.D.**, 2005; **Virginia A. Moyer, M.D., M.P.H.**, 2004; **Cheves M. Smythe, M.D.**, 2003; **Oscar Rosales, M.D.**, 2002; **Philip C. Johnson, M.D.**, 2001; **Philip R. Orlander, M.D.**, 2000; and **John R. Stroehlein, M.D.**, 1999.

-C. Webb

Students selected for summer externship

The Division of Cardiology selected **Brinkley Sandvall, Aimee Hoyer, Julie Clift, and Laura Mengheang** to participate as this summer's Mary Ann Lunsford Student Externship participants. These talented undergraduate students were selected from a vast applicant pool based on their grade point average, interest in pursuing a medical career, and commitment to public service.

The Division of Cardiology and the Medical School sponsor the Mary Ann Lunsford Student Externship. It provides an in-depth exposure to all aspects of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of cardiovascular disease. The externship offers two six-week periods with two positions each, and a \$1,000 stipend is provided to each student.

Multiple sclerosis, cont'd.

disease that attacks the central nervous system. Left untreated, patients may develop complications, including episodes of numbness and tingling and the loss of mobility.

"Those on continuous therapy are only slightly worse today than they were 10 to 15 years ago, which is remarkable," Wolinsky said. They can walk without assistance and are less likely to require hospitalization. More than a decade after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, some of Wolinsky's patients in the multi-center study are still dancing and taking on physically-demanding jobs.

"I think we really made a difference," Wolinsky said. "Without treatment, because of the natural course of the disease, you would expect many of those patients to require assistance when walking."

The study represents the only prospective, open-label follow-up of more than 10 years' duration designed to evaluate continuous immunomodulatory therapy in relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis patients.

-M. Raine



A SPECIAL REUNION

U.S. Rep. Dr. Michael Burgess chats with Interim Dean Dr. Jerry Wolinsky, during a recent visit to the Medical School. Burgess graduated from the Medical School in 1977.

Photo by Nancy Hudgins.

Employee award, cont'd.

the same caring from her staff of research personnel, thus combining a genuine 'human element' to the moralistic protection of human subjects."

Putting the patient's needs above the research and conducting the research ethically are very important to Hergenroeder. "We are often meeting people at one of the worst times in their lives," she said. "We offer them something potentially good to come out of something bad. It's important for us to conduct the research ethically, and it's really important to me. We try to do research with everyone's best interest in mind."

Hergenroeder not only excels in supervising research efforts but also in building team spirit and morale among neurosurgery personnel. "Whenever there is a special event in a person's life in this group – be it a birthday, an accomplishment, or a going away – Gigi is always there with a cake in hand ready to celebrate the occasion," a nominator said. "She works very hard to maintain unity in the group by involving everyone as much as possible in pertinent decisions that she deems worthy of group approval."

-C. Webb