



# Scoop

June 30, 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

## Events to Know

### July

3 "Skeleton Crew" Holiday.

4 Independence Day Holiday.

7 No *Scoop* (next issue July 14).

12 MSRDP Board Meeting. 4 p.m.-6 p.m., MSB 3.001. All members invited.

21 "Performance Management," an HR-Training and Development class. 9 a.m.-11 a.m., MSB B.625.

## Food Drive to benefit Houston Food Bank through July 11

Help fight hunger by giving food or money to benefit the Houston Food Bank at the UT Houston Food Drive, now through July 11. The food drive is in conjunction with the Texas Medical Center and Channel 11 Spirit of Texas Food Drive, and non-perishable donations currently are accepted at various collection boxes throughout the Medical School.

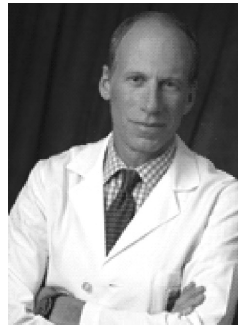
Monetary contributions can be given by cash or check to **Courtney Webb**, the Medical School's food drive coordinator. Or, donate online at [www.uthouston.edu/community/food\\_drive/index.html](http://www.uthouston.edu/community/food_drive/index.html). A \$1 donation buys \$8 worth of food. (Make checks payable to the Houston Food Bank.)

## UTMost Interest

**Dr. Thomas Clanton**, chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, was quoted in the March 25 issue of the *Houston Chronicle* about using human cartilage instead of manufactured implants to treat arthritic knees during replacement surgery.

**Dr. Usha Joseph**, assistant professor of diagnostic and interventional imaging, was the keynote speaker at the 4th International Conference on Update of Thyroid Gland Disease from April 1-3 in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The Kuwait Ministry of Health and Kuwait Medical Association were hosts to Joseph, as she presented for the Kuwait Society for Endocrinology and Kuwait Society for Oncology.

## GROTTA APPOINTED CHAIR OF NEUROLOGY



Dr. James Grotta

Interim Dean **Dr. Jerry Wolinsky** has announced the appointment of **Dr. James Grotta** as chair of the Department of Neurology, effective July 1.

"Dr. Grotta is recognized as one of the nation's most respected researchers and clinicians in the management of patients with stroke and is a recent recipient of the American Heart Association Physician of the Year award," Wolinsky said. "He has built a strong research and clinical team here and has a comparable commitment to the training of future physicians. I am confident that you will support him as he works to advance the Department of Neurology and the mission of the Medical School."

Grotta, holder of the Roy M. and Phyllis Gough Huffington Distinguished Chair in Neurology, is also director of the Medical School's Stroke Treatment Team, which he formed in 1988 and serves as Houston's premier medical team for the treatment of acute stroke emergencies. He replaces **Dr. James Ferrendelli** who recently announced his plans to step down as chair of the department after serving for 10 years.

Grotta's research focuses on the development of new therapies for acute stroke patients, including laboratory studies on the biology of brain injury and recovery after stroke and clinical studies of thrombolytic therapy. He has taken innovative research projects from the laboratory to the

(Cont'd. on back)

## NORTHWESTERN "TOP DOC" NAMED NEW CARDIOLOGY CHIEF



Dr. David McPherson

**Dr. Bruce Kone**, chair of the Department of Internal Medicine, has announced the appointment of **Dr. David McPherson** as the new director of the Division of Cardiology effective July 1. McPherson comes from Northwestern University and also will direct cardiovascular medicine at the Memorial Hermann Heart and Vascular Institute-Texas Medical Center.

"Dr. McPherson is a triple-threat star in cardiology and a leader with great passion and vision," Kone said. "He will have an enormous impact on our department, the health science center, and our teaching hospitals. This outstanding recruitment would not have been possible without the generous support of **Erin Aspre** and **Juanita Romans** of Memorial Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center, **Deans Schultz** and **Wolinsky**, **President Willerson** and the health science center, and **Dr. Richard Smalling's** leadership as interim division chief."

McPherson has been with Northwestern for 18 years and recently was professor of medicine at the Feinberg School of Medicine, holder of the Knight Chair in the Department of Medicine, and director of research in the Division of Cardiology. He also co-directed the echocardiography laboratories at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

He said he looks forward to living in Houston and the new possibilities the Medical School

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A part of The University of Texas  
Health Science Center at Houston



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Produced weekly by the Office of Communications

## Volunteer faculty recognized for heroics during Rita

With Hurricane Rita bearing down on the Texas Gulf Coast, and four severed fingers on his left hand, Homeland Security Special Agent **Gilbert Mendoza Jr.** was in need of a swift miracle. Not a simple request considering the severity of the injury in addition to the gridlocked roadways that the weather emergency had spawned.

But, thanks to **Dr. Fernando Levaro**, a volunteer clinical instructor in orthopaedic surgery who performed a 10-hour surgery on the patient in September 2005, Mendoza is back at work and able to qualify with his weapon with both hands.

Patient and physician were reunited at a special award presentation during the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Graduation Dinner June 23. Representatives from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security wanted to honor Levaro for his outstanding work and heroics, bestowing upon him a plaque and a crystal badge.

**Bob Rutt**, special agent in charge, Office of Investigations for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said the office wanted to show its appreciation for a physician who left his family at the height of the storm to take care of their colleague. "Dr. Levaro fixed up one of our guys, so it was only right," he said.

Mendoza was injured during a circular saw accident while helping neighbors ready for the storm in his Cypress neighborhood. "One finger was completely detached and the others were severed – hanging on by just the skin itself," recalled Agent **Steve Greenwell**, Mendoza's supervisor who went to the hospital to ensure the well being of his employee and friend.

"They didn't have a hand specialist where he was first transported, but they found Dr. Levaro and said that he's one of the best, if not the best, and that he would take the case. The next step was to find an ambulance, and they finally found one to transport him to Memorial Hermann Hospital," Greenwell explained.

### McPherson, cont'd.

role brings.

"I will be working with the dedicated staff presently at UT to further expand and develop it into a world-class division of cardiovascular diseases that will be the envy of its local neighbors, as well as other major academic centers in the country," McPherson said.

His top priorities include strengthening the division by adding new positions in cardiovascular imaging, basic and clinical research, and electrophysiology, which will complement the already strong base of cardiology faculty.

McPherson is an established clinical researcher in cardiovascular imaging and vascular biology who has received continual funding from the National Institutes of Health, the Canadian Heart Foundation, private foundations, and pharmaceutical companies for nearly 25 years.

He has worked to build a solid research team at Northwestern in the field of vascular imaging with a focus on targeted gene and drug delivery to atherosclerotic plaque using ultrasonic contrast agents.

An accomplished cardiologist, McPherson is frequently consulted for his clinical expertise and patient management skills. *Chicago Magazine* also named him a "Top Doctor" for cardiology in 2006.

McPherson received his medical degree from the University of Alberta in Canada in 1978 and completed his internship, residency, and fellowship at Dalhousie University in Canada. He conducted an additional fellowship at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. He is board certified in cardiovascular disease, internal medicine, and echocardiography.

-C. Webb

Levaro, who did a residency in plastic and reconstructive surgery at the Medical School and a fellowship in hand and microsurgery at the Medical School, performed the surgery throughout the night and managed to attach all but Mendoza's left ring finger.

"Dr. Levaro told me that because the finger was detached for so long that I might have lost all of the fingers and even my whole hand if it had been attempted to be re-attached," Mendoza said. "Dr. Levaro also did some plastic surgery on my hand, which you can't even see. He also told me that I didn't need a second surgery. I am extremely satisfied with the results."

For the Office of Investigations, the immediate result is that Mendoza is back on the job – he came back in January 2006 and qualified with his weapon, a quarterly requirement for officers, in just a couple of weeks.

"Dr. Levaro has given me my job back. I am grateful, and my family is grateful. I want to thank him publicly for helping me do my job and for going above and beyond. His bedside manner is great and his optimism helped me recover. He is more than my physician – he has become my friend," said Mendoza during the ceremony.

A humble man, Levaro said he was not the only one working on Mendoza during the surgery.

"I was grateful to work with a great physician, **Dr. Tom Clanton**, who was there that night," Levaro said.

**Dr. Stacy Beaty** was the orthopaedic resident on staff that evening who provided care.

"I was there during the surgery and was very impressed with Dr. Levaro's work," said Clanton, professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and holder of the Edward T. Smith, M.D., Chair in Orthopaedic Surgery. "Our orthopaedic department has a history of private docs coming back to our department as volunteer faculty and doing a great job for patients – and this is an outstanding example."

-D. Brown



**Special Agent in Charge Bob Rutt, far left, and Group Supervisor Steve Greenwell, far right, present a plaque and crystal badge to Dr. Fernando Levaro, second from left, whose heroics helped save the career of Special Agent Gilbert Mendoza Jr.**

**NOTE:** The Medical School's Office of Finance and members of the travel team have moved to new office spaces in the Jesse H. Jones Library Building, JLL 475. All phone numbers remain the same.

### Grotta, cont'd.

bedside while training new stroke physicians.

He received his medical degree from the University of Virginia School of Medicine and completed his residency in neurology at the University of Colorado and a stroke fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital. He joined the Medical School in 1979.

-C. Webb