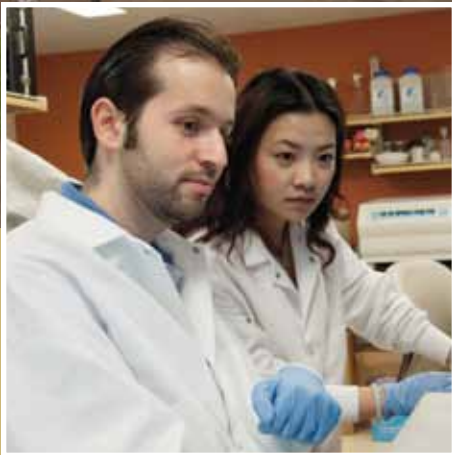


PITT Pharmacy

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

FALL 2010





Dear Friends,

We are at an intersection in time that is truly historic for our School of Pharmacy. As you look behind me in the photo, you see historic Salk Hall, the 1941 building that housed the team that discovered the Salk Vaccine and that has been the home of the School of Pharmacy since 1966. Some of you will see further into our history—to the years at Scaife Hall and to the School on the Bluff.

Regardless of how far back your image of your school goes, this view of Salk Hall will change significantly once construction begins, though faculty, staff, and students will still occupy Salk Hall. The process of planning, visualizing, and choosing among options for the new construction project has been exhilarating. It has been the opportunity to merge the physical changes to state-of-the-art laboratories, renovation of Salk Hall, and additional space with the more ethereal changes of progress and programs that can occur because of construction. Construction gives us an opportunity to frame our future.

Construction is also a metaphor. As Adrienne Clarkson, former Governor General of Canada, has said, “Each of us is carving a stone, erecting a column, or cutting a piece of stained glass in the construction of something much bigger than ourselves.” Yes, each steel beam, pane of glass, and slab of granite is an entity unto itself. Together, they will form the beautiful facility that will make a neighborhood with Salk Hall—something far grander than any one element on its own.

The stone or column that each of us is constructing is our story, our career. For the entire 132 years since the founding of the School of Pharmacy, alumni, faculty, students, and staff have been building their stories, their careers, each in their own way. Together, these careers form our legacy. As the stories on the pages of *Pitt Pharmacy* show, ours is a legacy that lives up to our mission of “excellence, innovation, and leadership.”

Let’s watch as the construction of Salk Pavilion and the Commons begins, and join me as we imagine and construct our future.

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Members of the 2010–11 Dean's Advisory Board with Dean Patricia Kroboth and Assistant Dean Sharon Corey. The Board members include class officers and the ASP president and president-elect. Front row, left to right: Rhea Santangelo, Amanda Johnson, Dean Kroboth, Assistant Dean Corey, Nicole Pezzino. Back row, left to right: Elyse Weitzman, Eric Saggio, Taylor Miller, Alex Gelfand, Michael Smith, Tamiko Yamatani, Christine Jordan, Adam Martin, Alicia Lichvar, Shailly Shah, and Maggie Ryan

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On the Cover:

1. Graduate students Ayman Akil and Minlu Hu.
2. School of Pharmacy Class of 2010 celebrating the moment. Photo by Jim Burke.
3. Assistant Professor Maggie Folan (PhD '03) discussing experiential learning with P3 students Kevin Mohler, Courtney Kominek, and Amanda Tomich.

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In the Fight Against HIV, New Hope Comes in the Form of a Film Strip



TianTian Gong, graduate student, and Lisa Rohan (PhD '95)

If Lisa Cencia Rohan (PhD '95) ever needs inspiration to keep her going in her research, she needs only to remember these two facts: The HIV infection rate is extremely high among people 25–29. And very few of the people who fall in that age group believe it will happen to them.

Rohan, an associate professor in the School of Pharmacy with a secondary appointment in the School of Medicine, is working on the front lines of this most critical battle: the quest to block new HIV infections from sexual contact. Fortunately, her current project is among the most promising means of protecting women that is under way.

"I actually believe that this form of prevention probably lies at the forefront of what we will see," says Rohan. "I think the probability of us seeing a vaccine in the near future is low."

What her project entails is an idea borrowed from a concept used to make breath strips. By using a quick-dissolving vaginal film containing an anti-HIV drug, or microbicide, researchers believe they can stop transmission of the disease at the point of infection in a less expensive manner that women will, hopefully, accept.

"I just felt I was definitely in a place where I could work on significant research that could potentially make a big impact, and I got hooked."

—Lisa Rohan

“The drugs must be taken from discovery of antiviral or antibacterial properties all the way to formulation assessment.”

—Lisa Rohan



Lisa Rohan (PhD '95), associate professor

Existing drug, new platforms

One of the drugs being developed as a film, the anti-retroviral tenofovir, is already used to treat HIV in pill form and has been tried as a HIV prevention product as a vaginal gel.

“An effective microbicide strategy should include different forms of the product,” she says. “Women will have preferences, and having options to meet those needs will lead to greater use and therefore better protection from infection.”

Within a year, Rohan and co-principal investigator Sharon Hillier of the Magee-Womens Research Institute (who also is a professor at the School of Medicine) hope to conduct human trials comparing the film and gel dosage forms. When applied as a gel, tenofovir was found in earlier trials to reduce infection rates. Women who used the gel before and after intercourse were 39 percent less likely to become infected with HIV.

The film is less expensive to produce than the gel, more portable and discreet, less messy, and does not require refrigeration — all factors that could increase the chances that women would use them routinely. To support its development, Rohan and Hillier received an \$11.8 million, five-year federal grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health.

“For research in the area of HIV, I really don’t think I could be in a better place,” says Rohan. “We have such a huge concentration of excellent scientists who are top

In the Fight Against HIV, New Hope Comes in the Form of a Film Strip (continued)

in the field and at the forefront of critical science in this area.... I just felt I was definitely in a place where I could work on significant research that could potentially make a big impact, and I got hooked."

From industry to classroom

Rohan, who formerly worked in the pharmaceutical industry, arrived at Pitt for advanced training in mucosal immunology to complement her existing background as a chemical engineer and physical

pharmacist. She originally planned to return to industry, but fell in love with research and teaching and joined the faculty 11 years ago. She then immediately set about working on prevention of both HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

"I really love educating the next generation of scientists. Developing new expertise and excitement for science is very important, especially in this field," she notes.

Recruiting candidates for human trials can be challenging, especially in a study involving such intimate details and the added component of a drug

Lisa Rohan with members of her lab. Front row, left to right: Lin Wang, research assistant; Phillip Graebing, research assistant; Tia Kimbro, graduate student; TianTian Gong, graduate student; Navya Chitte, research assistant; Lindsay Ferguson, (PharmD '09) graduate student; Minlu Hu, graduate student. Back row, left to right: Sheila Grab, summer internship student; Nicholas Obitte, visiting scientist; Hrushikesh Agashe, postdoctoral fellow; Ayman Akil, graduate student. Center: Rohan (PhD '95).



aimed at blocking such a frightening disease. Rohan credits the Microbicide Trials Network, for which Hillier is the principal investigator, with helping to overcome these obstacles.

However, “that doesn’t come without a great deal of hard work and an excellent team,” she adds.

“I really found the whole HIV prevention field to be very challenging,” she says. “The vaginal environment is very dynamic. From a drug delivery standpoint, there are so many variables.”

On one hand, the researchers had to determine the delivery platform — for example, gel or film. But they also had to figure out which drug candidates would work best. Their research has included development of anti-HIV drug candidates ranging from small-

molecule drugs to biomolecules such as peptides and proteins. The Pitt group collaborates with a large number of other institutions, a hallmark of all drug development.

The drugs must be taken from discovery of antiviral or antibacterial properties all the way to formulation assessment before they are ready to enter the clinic, Rohan says.

Planned studies will also examine how readily women will accept the film dosage form and how it should be sized or textured — acceptability is a key component of the product’s success.

“If women won’t use the product, it’s not going to be effective at all,” Rohan points out.

“If women won’t use the product, it’s not going to be effective at all.”

—Lisa Rohan

Facts about HIV Transmission

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1.1 million Americans are living with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and one-fifth of them are unaware that they are infected.

In 2008, the most recent year for which statistics were available, the estimated number of people infected with HIV in the 37 states and five U.S.-dependent areas with confidential name-based HIV infection reporting was 42,439.

Of that number, 10,332 of the diagnoses were in females.

The highest rate of infection was among people ages 40–44, with 5,788. Second were people ages 25–29, at 5,646, and third were people ages 20–24, at 5,427.

Heterosexual contact was responsible for 13,180 cases, of which 8,684 were women.

When categorized by ethnicity, African Americans had the highest rate of HIV infection at 21,289, with whites second at 11,778, and Latinos third at 7,121.

In 2007, the estimated number of deaths among people who were infected with HIV was 17,197.

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/basic.htm#hivest

Pilot Program Tests Pharmacist's Role as Patient Counselor to Improve Health Outcomes

At 118 pharmacies across Pennsylvania, customers who come in to pick up their prescriptions are also sometimes finding time for a five-minute chat with their pharmacist about strategies to improve their chronic conditions.

The pilot project is part of a study led by Janice Pringle, research associate professor at the School of Pharmacy and director of the Program Evaluation Research Unit. Working in partnership with Rite Aid pharmacies, CECity, and Highmark health insurance, her goal is to determine whether such interventions lead to better outcomes. Pharmacists whose quality of care is measurably higher could earn better compensation for their efforts.

Approximately 270 pharmacists at Rite Aids across the commonwealth are being trained to screen patients for problems that could affect their medication adherence. In addition to learning three or four screening questions, they also learn motivational interviewing, says Pringle.

"It's a way that you talk to a patient that is collegial and helps facilitate the patient's desire to make changes that you mutually agree may be beneficial to their health," she explains.

Pharmacists then complete some of an online report card indicating the number of patients to whom they provided the brief interventions. They also can access resources developed by CECity's ASPIRE web-based platform to support the patient's medication use, such as financial aid. Highmark's claims data autopopulates the report card with adherence rates for seven classes of drugs. And pharmacists can use



Janice Pringle, research associate professor

“That’s actually the active ingredient in healing: that somebody cares about you, and treats you as a unique individual, and hears what you have to say.”

—Janice Pringle

the report card to see how they compare to their peers, which are other stores of similar volume.

Program evaluators at the School of Pharmacy and at Highmark will measure changes in medication adherence and health utilization outcomes and evaluate them against the outcomes of 120 comparison pharmacies.

Active ingredient in healing

Previously, Pringle had conducted similar research in North Carolina, which offered promising results of greatly improved medication adherence outcomes.

“In essence, when the person feels that this is a health care professional who really cares about me, he/she is more apt to want to work with that health care professional on ways to improve his/her health,” says Pringle of the customer’s sentiments about pharmacists. “That’s actually the active ingredient in healing: that somebody cares about you, and treats you as a unique individual, and hears what you have to say.”

The premise of the project is that when pharmacists come out from behind the counter, all kinds of good things can happen; yet too often, they are overlooked as a factor that could contribute to better patient and community outcomes.

“There are a lot of pharmacists within the community who could be used to support the community’s health and wellness,” says Pringle. “There have been studies

that say they are one of the most respected health care professionals, and they’re trained to provide their patients with clinical guidance about their medications, but they don’t get to use these skills very often when they’re working in a dispensing environment.”

In the trainings that have been done to date, “the pharmacists are extraordinarily eager to have more patient contact, and they’ll tell you that,” says Pringle. “It’s essentially changing the way pharmacy care occurs within the community. It’s putting the pharmacist into the quality arena that other health care providers have been put into, such as physicians, nurses, and psychologists.”

Initially funded for two years, the project may continue for another one to two years if additional funding can be secured. The Institute of Medicine has recommended improved medication adherence as a strategy for improving community health outcomes and also reducing health care costs. Pringle says people are not adherent with their medications because they sometimes believe their medication will do them more harm than good, or remain in denial about their particular disease state — for example, patients who use antidepressants may not want to admit that they need them, so they stop taking the drugs when they feel better.

Patients also fail to comply because they feel the medication is too expensive.



Janice Pringle, Justin Scholl (PharmD '07), and Michael Melczak, senior research associate, at recent Pharmacy Quality Alliance training program.

Pilot Program Tests Pharmacist's Role as Patient Counselor to Improve Health Outcomes (continued)



Pharmacy Quality Alliance School of Pharmacy research team. Left to right: Roger McDonald, Randall Smith, Jan Pringle, Lois Edmondston, Susan Price. Missing from photo: Jessica Adams Meyers, Michael Keyes, Michael Melczak, Marleen Bruce.

In other cases, they take the medication, but not when they should — such as the asthma patient who only uses an inhaler during an attack instead of as a preventive measure.

“By the time they have a problem, it takes awhile for the medication to get their asthma back under control,” Pringle says.

Pay-for-performance model?

If the outcomes improve the way researchers think they will, Highmark could develop pay-for-performance models that would support the program at Rite Aid stores throughout Pennsylvania.

“That changes the whole financial model for community pharmacy,” says Pringle. The stores “could be provided more revenue to

do more patient-related work, which for pharmacists is a win-win.”

Pringle, who is an epidemiologist by training, has designed screening and intervention systems for about 10 years. She also performs program evaluation and research. Over the years, she has developed a specialized expertise in facilitating behavioral change in patients.

“The last person standing is the expert,” she jokes about her specialization.

She has high hopes for the program’s results, and notes that she has received several calls from outside parties interested in seeing its results.

“I do think we’re going to improve adherence, and we’re going to find some pharmacies doing better than others. The

issue is, what is pharmacy [as a profession] going to do with this? ... They’re going to have to think outside the box and be innovative.”

Pringle envisions a future where people make appointments with their community pharmacist to pick up their medication and possibly visit other specialists, such as smoking cessation consultants, behavioral specialists/counselors, or dietitians.

“It would change the pharmacy from a place where you run in to get your mascara and your aspirin to a place where you go to change your health,” she says. “Pharmacists, I call them the secret weapon in health care. People have not tapped them, and I think they could make the health of the population much better. We’ve got an army of pharmacists who are underdeployed right now.”



Dexi Liu



Amy Seybert (BS '94, PharmD '96)



Sandra Kane-Gill

Liu honored for scholarly contribution

Dexi Liu, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, has received the Rho Chi Society's Outstanding Scholarly Contribution Award.

Rho Chi encourages and recognizes intellectual achievement and critical inquiry in the profession.

"I appreciate the recognition from Rho Chi and feel honored to receive this award," said Liu, who has been on the faculty of the School of Pharmacy since 1993.

Liu is a member of the American Society of Gene Therapy and the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists. He has been on the editorial board for *Molecular Therapy*, *Gene Therapy*, and on the editor's advisory board for *Pharmaceutical Research*. He currently serves as associate editor for the *AAPS Journal*.

Two faculty members recognized for innovation in teaching

The Rho Chi Society honored two School of Pharmacy faculty members with its Innovation in Teaching Award.

The honorees were Amy Seybert (BS '94, PharmD '96) and Sandra Kane-Gill, both associate professors of pharmacy and therapeutics.

Seybert directs the cardiovascular and critical care specialty residencies at the School of Pharmacy and is the pharmaceutical care coordinator for critical care at UPMC's Department of Pharmacy. Her clinical research specialty areas include heart failure, acute coronary syndromes, antiplatelet therapy, acute myocardial infarction, and simulation education.

"I am truly honored to receive this award because teaching is

my passion," Seybert said. "I especially enjoy the creativity and innovation associated with the use of human patient simulation in the pharmacy curriculum. When we can make a change in student learning that will ultimately improve the care of our patients, it is tremendously rewarding and makes me proud that I teach at Pitt."

Kane-Gill is the critical care patient safety officer at UPMC's Department of Pharmacy. Her research interests focus on economic, clinical, and humanistic evaluations for critically ill patients; specifically patient safety, quality of life in the critically ill, and development of cost models.

"It has been a rewarding experience creating a course that incorporates online learning with human patient simulation since the students appear to really enjoy it," says Gill. "The enthusiasm that the

Great Faculty Members Honored

students bring to class each week combined with their hard work is what makes the course successful.”

Smith named ASP Faculty Member of the Year

Randall Smith, professor and senior associate dean, has been named ASP Faculty Member of the Year at the School of Pharmacy.

Smith, whose research interests include developing and applying novel systems of health care delivery and the education of health professionals, has authored more than 100 articles and book chapters. He is a fellow of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists.

“Seeing students succeed when they take on interesting professional challenges or when they explore new experiences is rewarding in itself,” said Smith. “When they recognize your efforts to make this possible for them, it warms your heart and reminds you that you have a great job.”

Schonder wins Stanford I. Cohen Teacher of the Year award

Kristine Schonder, an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics, has been named the Stanford I. Cohen Teacher of the Year for 2010, an honor she also received in 2008.

Schonder joined the faculty at the School of Pharmacy in 2000. She also provides clinical pharmaceutical care to patients who have received kidney, pancreas, or liver transplants. Much of her work in the clinics revolves around optimizing drug regimens for patients; providing drug information to patients, physicians, and nurses; and recommending appropriate and cost-effective therapies for transplant recipients.



Randall Smith



Kristine Schonder

Schonder teaches in the PharmD curriculum in several courses. Her areas of expertise include nephrology and immunology. She was also named Preceptor of the Year in 2002 and ASP Faculty Member of the Year in 2005.

Breadth of experience characterizes Fleeeger's preceptor role

When Nicole Fleeeger guides pharmacy students through their rotation at the Butler VA Medical Center, she ensures that they have the opportunity to experience as much of the center's broad range of services as their time will allow.

Students can spend time in outpatient mental health, long-term care, the anticoagulation service, lipid clinic, primary care, non-formulary requests, and adverse drug reaction reporting. It takes a lot of task management, but that's the kind of challenge on which Fleeeger thrives.

"I love to be organized," she admits. "I like to have a plan and have everything mapped out, so that's what I do for the students. They know roughly everything they have to do — the day, the time, who they're supposed to be with."

For her efforts, the School of Pharmacy honored Fleeeger with one of its two Preceptor of the Year awards.

Fleeeger, a clinical pharmacist at the medical center, was asked to serve as a preceptor for Pitt students in the 2009–10 academic year. She proceeded to design the rotation down to the last detail, from preliminary training to one-on-one counseling with patients, chart reviews, admission notes, and patient education.

In their letter nominating Fleeeger for the award, Ashley Craig and Emily Mantini, both 2010 graduates of the School of Pharmacy, praised her for providing the opportunity to gain so much hands-on experience.

"There was a significant amount of work involved with this rotation, but we were able to actively participate in the pharmacists' day-to-day activities," they wrote.

Craig was so enthusiastic about the rotation that she accepted a position at the medical center, so she now sees her former preceptor on the job daily.

Fleeeger says both she and her VA colleagues remember what it was like to be young and on rotation, so they are eager to give back to the students who follow in their footsteps.

Potoski goes the distance, and then some, as a preceptor

Brian Potoski (PharmD '99) is used to going the extra mile for the students who complete his rotation in infectious diseases at UPMC Presbyterian.

During their five-week stint, his students not only experience the consultation service that he leads, they also learn about antibiotic management, providing feedback to a medical service about susceptibilities with certain medications, appropriate doses and durations of drug therapies, and alternatives to current treatment.

"There's lots of excellent learning opportunities for the students that are still patient-care oriented," says Potoski, the associate director of the hospital's antibiotic management program as well as an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacy and Therapeutics at the School of Pharmacy.

"Infectious disease pharmacists now are really sought after for what I do, which is the stewardship side of things," he explains.

For his efforts in creating a meaningful experience, the School named Potoski one of its two Preceptors of the Year. He was nominated by Safia Kuriakose, who earned her PharmD from Pitt in May 2010 and credits Potoski with helping her gain the experience that distinguished her from



Nicole Fleeeger



Brian Potoski
(PharmD '99)

the competition when she landed interviews with several prestigious institutions, eventually winning a residency in Boston.

"I know that I owe a great deal to Dr. Potoski in making this possible," Kuriakose wrote in her nominating letter. She said he had "the genuine intent to prepare us to obtain the best training so that we may one day become leaders in the profession."

For his part, Potoski — who has been serving as a preceptor for about eight years — says he finds satisfaction in watching students put their knowledge into practice.

"The number one thing I enjoy is seeing them become empowered, using the knowledge they've accumulated over the past six years of school so they can develop into independent practitioners," he says.

Robert T. Abraham

Distinguished Alumnus 2010



Robert T. Abraham
(PhD '81)

For Robert T. Abraham (PhD '81), the benefits of attending the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy were two-fold. First, he would be back in the city where he grew up; near family and friends that he had missed while he was attending Bucknell University. And, second, he would be able to participate in one of the best pharmacology programs in the nation. "Coming back home after four years away to bring together my love of biology and chemistry was very exciting to me," Abraham explains.

He remembers how inspired he was at Pitt. "The very first class I took really got me motivated for the rest of my time in the program," he recalls. The class was demanding. The exams were difficult. It was one of those courses where you couldn't cram. You had to keep up or fall inescapably behind. "I really latched onto that course," he says with a smile. "It gave me the foundation that I knew I would need to move forward."

And Abraham did move forward, completing his postdoctoral training at the Mayo Clinic and then joining the Mayo Clinic Department of Immunology as an assistant professor. It was here that he

experienced some very pivotal moments in his life. Not only did he begin work leading to one of his most rewarding discoveries – a protein called mTOR that is deregulated in cancer cells– but he also met his most trusted lab partner and the woman who would one day become his wife, Diane Otterness. "We met at Mayo Clinic and we've been together since," Abraham explains. "She and I have worked together during my entire academic career, and she is such an accomplished scientist in her own right."

They both left the Mayo Clinic in 1998 when he went to Duke University Medical School, Department of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology, where he received an endowed chair. After Duke, he began working at the Burnham Institute for Medical Research in La Jolla, Calif. There he founded the Signal Transduction Program and served as director of the Burnham Institute's Cancer Research Center.

"I always thought I'd do a stint in industry," he says, "and the prospect of leading the cancer drug discovery efforts of Wyeth was too good for me to pass up." After Wyeth was acquired by Pfizer in 2009, Abraham was appointed

"It's pretty amazing that I am now working for a company that markets a drug that inhibits the protein that I helped discover, mTOR, in renal cancer patients."

—Robert Abraham

to his current post of vice president and chief scientific officer at Pfizer's Center for Integrative Biology and Biotherapeutics. "It's pretty amazing that I am now working for a company that markets a drug that inhibits the protein that I helped discover, mTOR, in renal cancer patients," he says.

Bob and Diane currently live in New York, just 25 miles outside of New York City. A martial arts expert and physical fitness enthusiast, Abraham enjoys participating in heavy bag and weight training. "Diane and I also love taking our dogs hiking on the trails and walking along the Hudson River," he says. Plus, he's still a huge fan of Pittsburgh sports, particularly his beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. Still, after his many successes throughout his career, one of his biggest accomplishments has been watching the students that came through his lab launch their careers. "It's always so satisfying for me to talk with one of my former students and have them tell me that they've appreciated my help along the way. I really treasure the time I've spent with them and am so honored to have been even a small part in their success."



Left to right: Bill Abraham (brother), Shelly Abraham-Weir (sister), Bob Abraham, Glenda Abraham (aunt) and Mike Abraham (brother).

Larry J. Merlo

Distinguished Alumnus 2010

Originally from a small town just south of Pittsburgh, Larry Merlo (BS '78) was destined for a wonderful future and an amazing career in pharmacy. "I always enjoyed science in high school," he explains. "I was lucky enough to have a terrific chemistry teacher who helped steer me toward a life in pharmacy."

As soon as he knew which career path he would follow, Merlo began looking into pharmacy programs at many different colleges and universities. "The University of Pittsburgh was certainly my first choice," he says. "And, when I came to tour the campus, I loved how it had both an urban and a small town feel. For me, it truly was the best of both worlds."

He fondly recalls taking classes and having many wonderful mentors during his time at the School of Pharmacy. He also remembers studying and preparing for exams and labs with his classmates. "I will never forget my first microbiology exam," he says. "It was multiple choice – but there were eight different options for answers! I had never seen anything like that before."

Not only did Pitt impress him with its outstanding curriculum, it also left an indelible imprint on his

heart the day he met the woman who would one day become his wife. "One of my pharmacy classmates set me up on a blind date with a beautiful chemistry major at Pitt," he smiles. "The rest is history, and 31 years later Lee Ann and I are still as happy as we were then."

In addition to meeting Lee Ann, college life at Pitt was exciting for Merlo. "There was always something to do!" he remembers. He loved spending his Saturdays as a football fan – especially when he was watching the 1976 national championship team with his friends. Plus, he always kept busy exploring all of the culture and restaurants Oakland had to offer.

After graduating, Merlo began his career at Thrift Drug and People's Drug, which was ultimately purchased by CVS/pharmacy. He has held many positions at the company as his professional life has continued to soar, including executive vice president of stores for CVS/pharmacy, president of CVS/pharmacy, and executive vice president of CVS Corporation. Today, Merlo serves as president and chief operating officer for CVS Caremark Corporation.

While Merlo has experienced many terrific work-related honors, including serving as chairman of the Board for the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), one of his greatest joys is his family. Lee Ann, Larry, and their teenage daughter Kristen currently live in East Greenwich, R.I., although Merlo is still a die-hard Steelers and Pitt football fan, even dedicating one corner of his office to his Pittsburgh memorabilia. Together, the family enjoys traveling, especially to Europe where they were able to explore its rich history and culture. Golf is another of Merlo's favorite pastimes—especially since he's often joined on the links by his daughter. "There is really nothing like that father-daughter time together," he smiles. "When I look at my family and see what a wonderful woman Kristen is becoming, I truly believe that is my greatest accomplishment."



Larry J. Merlo
(BS '78)

"The University of Pittsburgh was certainly my first choice."

—Larry Merlo



Left to right: Elizabeth Lloyd (Lee Ann's mother), Lee Ann Merlo (Larry's wife), Larry Merlo, Kristen Merlo (daughter), Sharon Willey (cousin), Samuel Lloyd (Lee Ann's brother).

Photographic Memories

RxTravaganza 2010...With a Twist



To see more photos from Rxtravaganza Gala 2010 go to www.pharmacy.pitt.edu/about/Gala/about.html



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See page 35 for captions.

The Excitement Is Building



Illustration of the new construction project: the six-story Salk Pavilion and the Commons.

You might be wondering what building is pictured on the front cover. What you see is the new look of the School of Pharmacy. As you already know from previous *Pitt Pharmacy* issues, the University of Pittsburgh and the School of Pharmacy have embarked on the historic opportunity to construct Salk Pavilion, which will connect to Salk Hall by a commons. The Pavilion will be the first new construction for the School of Pharmacy in its 132 year history. Needless to say, the excitement among faculty, staff, and students is high.

During the accreditation site visit last fall, the ACPE visitors noted how effectively we used our limited space. They indicated the need for improvement in research laboratories, new kinds of teaching and learning environments, and additional faculty offices. Given the

commitment from the University, we are right on track in addressing the comments.

The new construction will provide state-of-the-art research laboratories for our growing programs, a commons for gathering, and the opportunity to modernize Salk Hall. The good news is that the design phase for the project has been brought to a close and it has been sent out for bid. When this article went to press, the exact dates of construction start and end had not been established. What is known is that the parking lot was closed to cars on November 1, 2010.

Students have longed for a place to get coffee. The Commons will be just that place. Not only will it have a café, it will create a bright “neighborhood” for meeting, reading, and eating. Faculty, staff, and alumni will also enjoy the space. Through a generous

donation, commissioned artwork will be installed in the Commons. The location of our current “Brick Walkway” will lead to the lobby of the Elmer H. Grimm Sr. Pharmacy Museum. The Walkway itself will be moved to a site just outside the entry to the Commons.

The story only begins, however, with the new construction. As research faculty relocate to Salk Pavilion, spaces in Salk Hall will be vacated, then renovated to create technologically advanced teaching and learning spaces.

The University is generously providing the support for Salk Pavilion as well as funds to make Salk Hall more energy efficient. The School of Pharmacy must raise the funds to build the Commons and assure the renovation of spaces in Salk Hall. This is your opportunity to help make a difference for your School. An artfully elegant, lighted DNA image in the Commons will recognize major benefactors to the capital campaign. Other donors will be recognized in other ways.

Become part of our DNA!

Contact Graham Ciraulo, Director of Development, 412-648-0185 or gac17@pitt.edu. www.pharmacy.pitt.edu/Salk_Pavilion



Shally Shah (P3) (center), School of Pharmacy ASP chapter president, accepts the Outstanding IPSF Activity Award from Bonnie Hui Callahan, APhA-ASP national member at large, and Pree Sarangarm, Awards Standing Committee vice chair.

The School's International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) chapter received the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists Outstanding IPSF Activity Award at the Annual Meeting held in March 2010. This award recognizes the most superior programming of IPSF chapters nationwide. Among other activities, the School's IPSF chapter organized the first-ever medical Spanish course for student pharmacists, conducted blood pressure screenings in the local Hispanic community, raised funds for UNICEF, and hosted two international exchange students.

Pitt Interprofessional Team Wins National Competition

The University of Pittsburgh schools of the health sciences team placed first in the 2010 CLARION National Interprofessional Case Competition, held at the University of Minnesota in April. The competition engages teams of up to four students from at least two health professions. The goal of the CLARION Competition is to involve health professions students in the analysis of patient safety issues. The groups are presented with a hypothetical case scenario that highlights unsafe, less than optimal care. They then analyze the situation and propose system changes to prevent the same outcome from occurring again. A panel of judges representing several health professions evaluates each team's

presentation based on standards of practice. The University's team was one of nine that participated in the 2010 competition. As members of the winning team, the following students equally shared the \$7,500 prize: Garrett Eggers (School of Pharmacy), Maria Falcone and Debra Thompson (School of Nursing), and Sean Tackett (School of Medicine). Team advisors were Loren Roth, associate senior vice chancellor for health sciences, and Susan Meyer, associate dean for education and professor, School of Pharmacy. This was the first year that the University participated in the competition.



Susan Meyer, team advisor, with members of the winning team. Left to right: Meyer, Sean Tackett, Garrett Eggers, Maria Falcone, and Debra Thompson.

Our School

The School hosted Deputy Director Thomas McLellan of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (of the Executive Office of President Obama), who presented to the schools of the health sciences the new directions the Obama administration is taking in terms of substance abuse research, prevention, and treatment.

School of Pharmacy staff members **Jane Gilchrist, Susan Price, Jan Shaw, and Anna Schmotzer** volunteered their time and effort during the United Way Day of Caring on September 29, 2010. Energy was spent sorting and clearing bricks in the South Lawn Oakland site in preparation for a future greenway space. Staff member **Kathy Woodburn** volunteered her skills painting the community garden fence.

Julie Johnson, professor and chair of the Department of Pharmacotherapy and Translational Research at the University of Florida College of Pharmacy and director of the University of Florida Center for Pharmacogenomics, presented the 54th Annual Koch Lecture on March 24, 2010. The title of her presentation was "Cardiovascular Pharmacogenomics: From DNA to the Clinic." The lecture commemorates Julius A. Koch, the first and founding dean of the School of Pharmacy, and is sponsored by the students of the School's Rho Chi Society.

The School hosted one of four AACP regional educational programs on "Enhancing Diabetes Care" at the Holiday Inn in Oakland in July. **Sharon Connor**, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and **Lauren Jonkman**,



Left to right: Levent Kirisci, Duncan Clark, Thomas McLellan, Maureen Reynolds, Ralph Tarter, Ty Ridenour, Michael Vanyukov.



Day of Caring staff volunteers, left to right: Jane Gilchrist, Susan Price, Jan Shaw and Anna Schmotzer.



Koch lecturer Julie Johnson (center), with faculty members Susan Skledar and Susan Meyer.

School Promotes Proper Medication Disposal

Eleven individuals from the School of Pharmacy, including Assistant Professors James Pschirer and Heather Johnson and nine students, volunteered at Allegheny County's first-ever pharmaceutical collection on Saturday, May 15, at the Hampton Township Community Center in Allison Park, Pa. The event attracted residents from more than 250 households who brought 60 pounds of controlled substances and 612 pounds of non-controlled and over-the-counter medications for proper disposal. A profes-

sional contractor, law enforcement officials, and licensed pharmacists were on site to ensure all material collected was handled in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. The event was sponsored by the Southwestern Pa. Household Hazardous Waste Task Force, Allegheny County Health Department, UPMC, University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, Hampton Township, KDKA Radio, and other private and public sector partners.



Assistant Professor
James Pschirer
(BS '76)



P3 students
Katie Lynch and
Charles Hoffman

instructor of pharmacy and therapeutics, organized this educational program focusing on successful team-based approaches to caring for patients with diabetes. The purpose of the program was to identify system barriers that adversely affect care providers' ability to achieve optimal health outcomes. They were joined by Stephen Chen, associate professor, Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Economics and Policy, University of Southern California School of Pharmacy; Robert Kerr, vice president of Academic Affairs, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy; Mark Loafman, chief clinical integration officer, Norwegian American Hospital, associate professor of family medicine, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine; and Todd Sorensen, associate professor, University of Minnesota College of Pharmacy.

The School of Pharmacy's student chapter of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) received a

scholarship from the pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and drug metabolism (PPDM) section at AAPS. This scholarship is awarded to help the chapter host a speaker in the area of pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and drug metabolism, and is designed to foster interaction between graduate students, postdocs, and scientists in the PPDM area.

Members of the faculty and staff from the School of Pharmacy attended a working retreat at the University of Pittsburgh Johnstown campus this summer. Discussions and workshops focused on the changing instructional technologies that may be applied in teaching, research, and practice settings, including social networking and use of iPads. Attendees used "hands on" technologies to film, edit, and produce creative videos while learning new skills to enhance instruction in the classroom.

Residents



Since 1990 the School of Pharmacy's Residency Program has had a total of 208 residents, 26 of which have completed two years of residency training in our programs. This represents 100 second-year specialty residents and 108 pharmacy practice residents. Applications have come from across the nation and even as far as Australia and Thailand.

School of Pharmacy
Residency Class
2010-11

Our Faculty



Philip Empey

Philip Empey, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was selected as a University Clinical and Translational Science Institute Clinical Research Scholar. The Multidisciplinary Clinical Research Scholars Program, funded by the National Institutes of Health, is a very prestigious and competitive career development award. Empey is studying the effects of mild hypothermia on drug transport in cell culture, in a preclinical model of cardiac arrest, and in critically ill patients receiving this treatment. Mild therapeutic hypothermia is the standard of care for neuroprotection after cardiac arrest and alters drug metabolism, but its effects on drug transport remain largely unknown.

Kerry Empey, assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and Clinical Research Scholar, was awarded an additional year of funding for her research by the University's Clinical and



Kerry Empey

Translational Science Institute Clinical Research Scholars Program. She is evaluating immune modulating therapies directed at improving pulmonary infections in immune deficient populations. She is seeking to determine the effectiveness of inhaled IFN γ and GM-CSF targeted at immature infant lung macrophages in RSV disease pathogenesis using an infant mouse model and isolated human infant lung macrophages in culture.

Deanne Hall (BS '96, PharmD '98), assistant professor of pharmacy and therapeutics and co-advisor of the School's Beta Kappa chapter of Kappa Psi, was awarded a Certificate of Excellence for being named one of the top ten 2010 Kappa Psi Fraternity Grand Council Deputies. Hall was nominated by the chapter members.

Sandra Kane-Gill, associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was appointed



Deanne Hall (BS '96, PharmD '98)

co-chair of the Society of Critical Care Medicine's 2012 Program Committee for Congress. She has the distinct honor of being the first pharmacist to serve in this capacity.

Edward Krenzelok, professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and director of the Pittsburgh Poison Center and Drug Information Center, served as a guest expert panel member at the FDA meeting of the Drug Safety and Risk Management Advisory Committee on Dextromethorphan on September 14, 2010.

Melissa Somma McGivney (PharmD '98), associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, was invited to be an expert advisory panel member for the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) Curricular Project undertaken by the American Pharmacists Association and the American Association of Colleges of

Pharmacy. The goal of the project is to research “best practices” of teaching MTM in the curriculum to create a framework for MTM curriculum across schools of pharmacy nationally. McGivney was also invited to be a content matter expert and member of the content development team for the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and American Pharmacists Association Ambulatory Care Preparatory Review Course. This course is being designed to prepare pharmacists for the board certification exam in ambulatory care.

Susan Meyer, professor and associate dean for education, was elected to a second three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research. Meyer also has been appointed to represent the profession of pharmacy on the Interprofessional Collaborative Practice and Education Panel. The panel is charged to identify a core set of competencies common across the health professions in preparation for interprofessional collaborative clinical practice and to recommend associated educational strategies to facilitate student achievement of those competencies.

Samuel Poloyac (BS '93), associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, co-chaired the symposium Clinical Focus on Hypothermia: Keeping It Cool—How to Implement Hypothermia in Your Clinical Practice sponsored by the Society of Critical Care Medicine and held in Pasadena, Calif., in April.

Janice Pringle, research associate professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, served as a panel

member on the State Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT): Systems Implementation, Implications and Impact Panel. The panel met during the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) Innovation in Treatment and Recovery Systems Conference in Baltimore, Md., in August. The primary goal of SBIRT is to develop and implement training programs to teach medical residents the skills to provide evidence-based screening, brief intervention, brief treatment, and referral to treatment for patients who have, or are at risk for, substance use disorders.

Raman Venkataramanan, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, was invited to speak at the Global Biobusiness Forum, held in Hyderabad, India, last February. He presented a talk titled “Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics in Optimizing Drug Development.” He also was an invited speaker at Novartis India, where he presented “Pharmacokinetics and Pharmacodynamics of Immunosuppressive Drugs.”

Venkataramanan was elected member at large of the executive committee of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists.

Wen Xie, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences and associate director of the Center for Pharmacogenetics, was an invited speaker and chaired sessions at two international conferences last May: the Nanjing International Symposium on Pharmacogenomics and the Regulation of Drug Metabolism Enzymes and Genes (Nanjing, China), and the 2010 Microsomes and Drug Oxidations Meeting (Beijing, China).

Grants

Kim Coley (BS '87), professor of pharmacy and therapeutics, and **Patricia Kroboth** (MS '80, PhD '83), dean and professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a grant from the Jewish Healthcare Foundation to lead a one-year project to develop, implement, and assess a model of care that incorporates a pharmacist advocate in the patient care transition team. This model will focus on empowering patients to more effectively manage their medications and health when discharged from the hospital, with the ultimate goal of reducing and preventing readmission.

Alexander Doemling, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a three-year grant from the National Institutes of Health for “Protein-Protein Interaction Directed Libraries.” This study will develop libraries of new, diverse, and biologically inspired compounds that encourage or discourage interactions between proteins. The libraries most likely will result in novel biological patterns and lead to follow-up projects aiming to better understand individual protein-protein interactions and their involvement in disease pathology.

Robert Gibbs, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation for his project, “Role of GPR30 in Estrogen-Mediated Effects on Cholinergic Function and Cognition.” Gibbs will study the role of GPR30, a cell membrane protein, in mediating estrogen effects on cognitive performance via effects on basal forebrain cholinergic function.

Our Faculty



Faculty members become students when learning about the simulation mannequin as demonstrated by colleague Amy Seybert.

Donna Huryn, research professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a grant from the National Cancer Institute, Science Applications International Corporation-Frederick, for "Discovery and Optimization of Inhibitors of STAT3 Activation for the Treatment of Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the Head and Neck." STAT3 (Signal Transducer and Activator of Transcription 3) is a protein that plays a role in regulating the expression of genes involved in cancer and is therefore an attractive target for the design of new anticancer drugs. The aim of this project is to identify inhibitors of STAT3 using a combination of cheminformatics, medicinal chemistry, and computational chemistry. The overall goal is to identify 1-4 potent compounds that can be developed into drug candidates.

Levent Kirisci, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a five-year independent scientist award grant from NIH for "Quantifying and Tracking Risk for Substance Use Disorder." This project will derive and validate an instrument to quantify substance use disorder risk on a continuous scale, based on CEDAR's 19 years of empirical research into SUD etiology.

Song Li, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a one-year grant from the Department of Defense for "Targeted Co-Delivery of Synthetic microRNA and microRNA Expression Vector for Rapid and Sustained Inhibition of Breast Cancer." The purpose of this study is to develop a novel nanotechnology for co-delivery of synthetic microRNA and microRNA expression plasmid. Successful completion of this study may lead to the development of an improved targeted therapy for the treatment of breast cancer.

Li also received a grant from the University of Pittsburgh Central Research Development Fund for "Farnesoid X Receptor and Hepatic Stellate Cells," to study the role of FXR in hepatic stellate cells and to develop a new therapy for the treatment of liver fibrosis.

Dexi Liu, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received funding from Pain Therapeutics, Inc., for "Expression of Human Factor IX in Large Animals Using the OC31 Gene Expression" to study the expression pattern of PhiC31 gene expression system in large animals. The PhiC31 system is a proprietary gene expression sys-

tem owned by Pain Therapeutics for treatment of hemophilia.

Ralph Tarter, professor and director of the Center for Education and Drug Abuse Research (CEDAR), received a five-year continuation of his NIH grant "Drug Abuse Vulnerability: Mechanisms and Manifestations." This award continues the follow-up research on 775 families enrolled in the Center's prospective investigation into the etiology of substance use disorder. Multidisciplinary research is conducted on family members with the objective of elucidating the genetic, biobehavioral, and environmental factors on development of substance use disorder consequent to use of illegal drugs.

Wen Xie, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, received a grant from the National Institutes of Health for "A Novel Role of the Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptor in Hepatic Steatosis." It is hoped that results from this study may help to establish aryl hydrocarbon receptor as a novel therapeutic target for fatty liver in human patients.

Xie also received a minority supplement from the National Institutes of Health for "Regulation of Sulfotransferases by LXR and Its Implication in Pathophysiology." This project will support a first-year graduate student in Xie's laboratory.

Xiang-Qun (Sean) Xie, professor of pharmaceutical sciences, was awarded a five-year grant from NIH for "Structure/Function of the CB2 Receptor Binding and G-protein Recognition Pockets."

PharmD Students

Andrew Clark (P3) was selected by the Jewish Healthcare Foundation and Health Careers Futures to participate in the 2010 Patient Safety Fellowship. He engaged with 21 other students in health-related fields from Pittsburgh universities in the eight-week summer program. The Fellowship Program strives to prepare future health care leaders who will be able to apply an interprofessional team approach to health care practice and systematically improve health care and patient safety.

Katlyn Cochran (Class of 2010) and **Steven Zona** (P4) were selected by the National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation as scholarship recipients for their exceptional achievements and their desire to pursue a career in chain community pharmacy. Cochran received the NACDS Foundation Pharmacy Student Scholarship, and Zona received the Taro Research Foundation Scholarship.

Third-year pharmacy student **Amanda Johnson** was selected to receive one of ten highly competitive \$5,000 scholarships awarded by the UCB Family Epilepsy Scholarship Program. This program provides financial support to encourage academic and personal achievement not just to people with epilepsy, but also to the family members and caregivers who contribute to their successes. This year, more than 800 people applied for the scholarship. Johnson's story will be featured on the UCB Web site and in the magazine *Epilepsy Advocate*.



Andrew Clark (P3),
Amanda Johnson
(P3)

The Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association's Special Interest Group (SIG) recently announced that **Sarah Krahe Dombroski** (P3), **Amanda Nguyen** (P3), **Alexa Ray** (P4), and **Nicholas Wytiaz** (P3) were four of only six students chosen nationally this year to receive grants to cover their expenses to attend the National Community Pharmacists Association Annual Convention in Philadelphia in October. Qualifications for the grant require that each recipient be a fifth- or sixth-year pharmacy student enrolled at a Pennsylvania School of Pharmacy, a Pennsylvania resident, a PPA student member, and have a strong interest in community pharmacy, particularly in independent pharmacy.

Julie Lauffenburger (Class of 2010) was selected for the Young Professional Commission, an international, interdisciplinary young professional advisory group to the Global Commission on Education of the Health Professionals for the 21st Century. Lauffenburger also received the 2010 Phi Lambda Sigma American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education (AFPE) First Year Graduate Scholarship.

The School's Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) Pharmacy and Therapeutics team was chosen as a "Top 8 National Finalist." Team members **Michael Smith**, **Gerard Mascara**, **Benjamin Cassidy**, and **Eric Gardner** (all P3 students) went on to compete in the finals at AMCP's National Conference in San Diego, Calif., in April. As part of the competition at the Academy's annual meeting, student teams analyzed a disease state and drug, presented their findings, and made recommendations to a mock Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee. At many hospitals and other health-care facilities, a Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee advises on formulary decisions and other matters pertaining to the use of medications. Twenty-one schools of pharmacy originally submitted materials to the national competition.

An article by **Julie Lauffenburger** (Class of 2010) and **Steven Zona** (P4), "Student pharmacist perspectives from across the ocean: pharmacy education in the United States," was published in *Folia Pharmaceutica*, the national magazine of the Netherlands Pharmaceutical Student Association.



The School's SNPhA chapter won the Rite Aid/Chauncey I. Cooper Chapter Excellence Award for best small chapter at the National Pharmaceutical Association Annual Conference in Seattle on July 24, 2010. Pictured are Kaitlyn You (P2), Adam Martin (P3), Elsa Tchakoute (P2), and Samantha Holliday (P1).

Christina Martin (Class of 2010) was selected as a recipient of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists student leadership award. Christina is completing a two-year residency in Kansas.

Nicholas Wytiaz (P3) was one of 12 students chosen nationally to receive the 2010 Managed Care Pharmacy/Foundation for Managed Care Pharmacy/Pfizer Managed Care Pharmacy Summer Internship. During this structured ten-week program, Wytiaz had the opportunity to participate directly in the daily activities of a managed care pharmacy practice site. He will also spend one week interacting with a medical outcomes specialist at AMCP Headquarters in Alexandria, Va.

John Yamber (P3) participated in Pennsylvania's first medication clean-up day, held in May in Pittsburgh, along with alum **Thomas Duda Jr.** (BS '66), who is a pharmacy inspector from the State Bureau of Enforcement and Investigation. Using his Blackberry, John helped identify old meds from containers that had the Rx labels removed.



The School's Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) chapter received the Rite Aid/Chauncey I. Cooper Chapter Excellence Award for best small chapter. The award was announced at the National Pharmaceutical Association (NPhA) Annual Conference in Seattle, Wash., in July.

During the final phase of competition, each competing chapter was allotted 20 minutes to present to a panel of Rite Aid judges. Students **Adam Martin** (P3), **Elsa Tchakoute** (P2), **Samantha Holliday** (P1), and **Kaitlyn You** (P2) represented our chapter. The judges focused on qualitative analysis of the chapters' involvement, which included their impact on the community and patients. The award, sponsored by Rite Aid, consisted of a trophy and \$5,000.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy welcomes the Class of 2014 to the PharmD Program. The diverse class includes students ranging in age from 19-30, from nine states, and 12 different undergraduate institutions (three AAU institutions), including 91 percent from the University of Pittsburgh.

Graduate Students

Ayman Akil, graduate student, received a scholarship to attend the international microbicides meeting. The meeting was held in Pittsburgh in May. Akil presented his research on developing quick dissolve vaginal film dosage form to deliver combination of microbicides drug candidates.

Nisanne Ghonem, PhD candidate working under the supervision of Professor Raman Venkataramanan, and co-authors Junichi Yoshida, Noriko Murase, Donna Stolz, Ahbinav Humar, and Thomas Starzl, received an award of distinction for their work presented at the American Transplant Congress, May 1-5, 2010, in San Diego. The title of their poster was "Trepstinil, a prostacyclin analogue, ameliorates ischemia-reperfusion injury after orthotopic liver transplantation."

Rebecca Hammond, graduate student, was selected to give an oral presentation of her research project "GPR30: Effects on Basal Forebrain Cholinergic Function and Spatial Learning" at the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) Summer Research Conference, "The Physiology of Integrated Nuclear and Extranuclear Steroid Signaling," in August in Snowmass, Colo. She received a travel award to attend the conference.

Yijun Huang, together with former postdoctoral students Barbara Beck and Stuti Srivastava, co-authored a hot paper entitled "Robust Generation of Lead Compounds for Protein-Protein Interactions by Computational and MCR Chemistry: p53/Hdm2 Antagonists" in the top-ranking journal *Angewandte Chemie*.

The School of Pharmacy's American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS) student chapter won the 2010 AAPS Pharmaceutical Sciences Awareness Student Video Contest. The winning video features graduate students (**Ayman Akil, Kareem Khoury, Mohammad Shawaqfeh, Tia Kimbro**) and faculty members (Randall Smith, Billy Day) speaking about pharmaceutical science, the PhD program at the University of Pittsburgh, and the AAPS chapter at the School of Pharmacy. The video will be screened during the PSWC2010 meeting in New Orleans, November 14–18, 2010.

Kareem Khoury was selected to participate in the 2010 AAPS Graduate Student Symposium in Drug Design and Development in November.

Jung Hoon Lee, a recent graduate of our Pharmaceutical Sciences Graduate Program, has been awarded an American Heart Association Postdoctoral Fellowship. She was a graduate student in the laboratory of Wen Xie, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences. She defended her thesis and began her postdoctoral position at Harvard University in 2009.

Graduate students **Kareem Khoury** and **Yijun Huang** (Alexander Doemling laboratory) on invitation published a chapter in the prestigious series, "Topics in Heterocyclic Chemistry" on "The Piperazine Space in Isocyanide-based MCR Chemistry" (ftp://ftp-us.spi-bpo.com/OF_series/Eoffprints/THC_23_Orru/THC_Vol.23_Orru_Chapter3.pdf). This book chapter describes state-of-the-art synthesis pathways to and



structural chemistry and biology of the important class of piperazine scaffold, which is widely used in medicinal chemistry to design drugs.

Shashikanth Sriram's recent first-author news and views manuscript titled "The Molecular Principles of N-End Rule Recognition" was accepted for publication in the October issue of *Nature Structural and Molecular Biology* (NSMB). The paper is based on Sriram's dissertation work under the guidance of Yong Tae Kwon, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences. This is the first time that a graduate student in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences has published in NSMB. In 2009, Sriram received the Dr. Zola Horowitz Award from the School of Pharmacy in recognition of a review article that was published in *Chemistry and Biology*.

Graduate students:
Ayman Akil (seated),
Mohammad
Shawaqfeh,
Kareem Khoury,
and Tia Kimbro



Graduate student
Rebecca Hammond

Our Alumni

Zachary Cain
(PharmD '09),
Gretchen Kreckel
(PharmD '09),
Adam Welch
(PharmD '03)



Zachary Cain (PharmD '09) was recently promoted to an Intercontinental Medical Strategy Manager position after completing his fellowship at Bristol-Myers Squibb.

Adam Christophe (PharmD '04) recently passed his Certified Diabetes exam.

Timothy Davis (PharmD '00) was named one of the "Technology Innovators of the Year" by playing a role in the design of new pharmacy solutions. Davis jumped at the change to register the newly founded Beaver Health Mart as a test site for McKesson's Navigator workflow system. As he worked to get his business off the ground, he also provided constant, insightful feedback to help McKesson fine-tune its product. Davis also recognizes the power of consumer technology to enhance the way information is shared between pharmacists and patients. He incorporates smartphones and social media into his pharmacy practice, and encourages others to do the same.



The Georgia Research Alliance has funded a new collaborative research project, led by Mercer pharmacy professor **Martin D'Souza** (PhD '87), to explore using nanotechnology to deliver a pneumonia vaccine. D'Souza, director of Mercer's Center for Drug Delivery Research, will collaborate on the grant with researchers from Emory University and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Gretchen Kreckel (PharmD '09) community practice resident at Buford Road Pharmacy in Richmond, Va., recently wrote a continuing education article, "Overview of Pediatric, Adults, and Travel Immunizations," which was published in NCPA's March 2010 edition of *America's Pharmacist*.

Lt. Colonel Keith Parry (BS '94) was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps in command of 1st Radio Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force. He was subsequently deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is his fifth combat deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan.



Margie Snyder (PharmD '06, MPH '09) has been accepted for a CTSI postdoctoral training position for 2010-2011 from Indiana University. Snyder will be eligible for a competing renewal for an additional year of funding.

Michael Umbleby (BS '96) has been promoted to director of POWER benefit attainment in Pharmacy Services at Walgreens. He joined Walgreens in 1996 as a pharmacy intern, became a pharmacy manager in 1996, Phoenix North pharmacy supervisor in 2004, and most recently manager of pharmacy training in Pharmacy Services.

Adam Welch (PharmD '03) was awarded promotion with tenure to associate professor of pharmacy practice at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. He was recently elected president-elect of the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association. Welch is also a practitioner at Standard Drug, an independent community practice in McAdoo, Pa.

Michael Miller (BS '88)

visited the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health as a presenter in "Current Topics in Health Policy and Economics" seminar series. Miller is associate professor in the Department of Pharmacy: Clinical and Administrative Sciences at the University of Oklahoma.



Robert Monte (BS '79),

director, Veterans Engineering Resource Center, is part of the team of collaborators between the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System, Pitt's industrial engineers, the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business, and the Graduate School of Public Health working to reduce costs while improving efficiency and quality of care delivered at the Oakland hospital. The idea of this three-year, \$3.6 million project is to help solve more complicated system-related problems to eliminate waste, reduce costs, and improve the quality of health care.



*Iny Marks
(PharmD '00),
Krista Scardina
Pedley
(PharmD '00)*

Iny Marks (PharmD '00) was

recognized by the Pitt Alumni Association as the 2010 recipient of the Ivan and Mary Novick Award for Young Alumni Leadership. Marks served on the School of Pharmacy Alumni Society Board as an undergraduate student and has been connected to the organization ever since. She was elected president of the society for 2008-09 and was a model young leader who successfully engaged new, young leaders in the School of Pharmacy. She is the director of Medicare clinical services at informedRx® in Pittsburgh.



*Members of the
Class of 1960 at
RxTravaganza 2010:
Robert Culliver,
Donald Holloway,
Walter Severs,
Marlene Rizk,
Fred Evans,
Robert McKenzie,
Thomas Young*

Larry Merlo (BS '78), CVS

Caremark president and COO, was honored by Fougera, a leading manufacturer of multi-source topical pharmaceuticals, with a

contribution of \$25,000 to the NACDS Foundation Pharmacy Student Scholarship program. The scholarship program supports the development of future leaders in patient care and recognizes pharmacy students who have a strong interest in pursuing a career in community pharmacy. Merlo is the current chairman of the NACDS.

Krista Scardina Pedley

(PharmD '00) has been selected as the director of the Office of Pharmacy Affairs (OPA). Pedley began her career as a pharmacist with the U.S. Public Health Service in 2000. She worked in the Food and Drug Administration, Office of Generic Drugs, as a project manager for bioequivalence and

then as medical affairs coordinator reviewing topical drug protocol design. Pedley then served as senior public health analyst for the National Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program before joining OPA.

In Memoriam

- Rouzeberry Bell '59
- John H. Christy Jr. '75
- Bernard Danenberg '50
- Curtis V. Hyde '50
- Harry W. Kerr Jr. '58

New Conference Room to Be Named for CVS Caremark

This past summer, CVS Caremark made a generous donation to support the construction of the new Commons that will adjoin Salk Hall and the new Salk Pavillion. In honor of this generous donation, the School of Pharmacy is proud to announce that the new 30-seat conference room in the Commons will be named the *CVS Caremark Conference Room*.

The School of Pharmacy and CVS Caremark have long been dedicated partners in providing much needed support as well as new opportunities for our students, particularly those who are interested in community practice.

Every year, CVS Caremark provides scholarships for students, regularly supports student organizations, and contributes to School of Pharmacy events such as the White Coat Ceremony and the RxTravaganza.

The company has also provided a unique opportunity in the form of a two-year community pharmacy management residency program. Residents in this program get to experience a range of mentored management rotations in a variety of corporate and community practice settings, all while earning an MS in pharmacy business administration.

Dean Kroboth calls CVS's latest gift "...an invaluable contribution to the life of our School." She went on to say that "by making this gift, [CVS] has given our student pharmacists a space to relax, study, and interact with each other and with faculty and alumni."

School of Pharmacy Golf Invitational a Success

For the seventh year in a row, the School of Pharmacy Golf Invitational was a resounding success. Thanks to our alumni, friends, and corporate sponsors, more than \$13,000 was raised for student scholarships. We would like to thank all of the businesses who donated prizes and the students who volunteered to help make this year's outing a fun time for all.



Rich Drozd (BS '88), Ed Duval (BS '93), Mark Kozlosky (BS '98), and Eric Vermilya (BS '88) at the Golf Invitational.

The Rite Aid Foundation Continues Its Support of the Lamsam Program

INVESTING IN
THE FUTURE

The Grace Lamsam Pharmacy Program for the Underserved received a gift of support from the Rite Aid Foundation for the third year in a row this October. The gift will provide vouchers so that patients of the program can obtain medications and supplies at Rite Aid stores throughout the region. The Foundation also donated glucose meters, test strips, and other supplies that have become vital to the Lamsam Program's success in treating patients with diabetes.

Gayle Rife, manager of the Rite Aid Foundation, said that her organization is "pleased to be able to partner with worthwhile organiza-

tions such as the Lamsam Program to reach our neighbors."

The Lamsam Program reduces health care disparities in Pittsburgh by improving use of and providing access to pharmaceuticals and medication therapies that improve the quality of patients' lives and reduce unnecessary emergency room visits.

Sharon Connor, assistant professor and director of the program, says that the Rite Aid Foundation's support "is so important in providing our patients with the highest quality health care possible and in making sure that those with diabetes understand their condition and follow the necessary steps to improve their outcomes."



The Birmingham Free Clinic, located at the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center on Pittsburgh's South Side, is one of two Grace Lamsam Pharmacy Program sites that receives support for diabetes care through the Rite Aid Foundation.

In Memory Fund

The School of Pharmacy In Memory Award was established in 2005 to provide a deserving pharmacy student with an award in memory of all alumni, families, or friends whose memorial gifts have come to the School of Pharmacy. Gifts have been made to this endowment in memory of:

Name	Year Gift Established
Kim Lawren Reighard (BS '76)	2006
Samuel P. Conte, Pharm (BS '41)	2006
Eilene Stauchler Liepack (EDUC '57)	2006
Margaret Madarasz Gerson (BS '52)	2006
Fred G. Gatto	2007
Janet Ball	2007
Carmen Muto	2007
Matthew O. Pecht	2007
Brian Haugh (BS '98)	2007
James C. Meisner (BS '48)	2008
Gerald Paulice	2008
Ethel M. Ritzman (BS '58)	2008
Tara Feroce	2008
H. Lawton Snyder	2008
Robert M. Fry	2009
Frank Ulyan	2009
Rose Borrelli	2009
Patricia Kuchma	2009
Betty Snyder	2009
William F. Roberts Sr.	2009
Bruna Migliorisi	2009
Wendell Bitzer	2010
Juliano Nickoline	2010
Anna M. Taylor	2010
Harry W. Kerr Jr. (BS '58)	2010
Mary Fisher	2010
John H. Christy Jr. (BS '75)	2010
Jean Cohen	2010
Bernard Danenberg (BS '50)	2010

A Husband Honors His Late Wife with Scholarship Endowment

*Left to right:
Alvin Segelman,
Florence Segelman,
and Robert Jackson,
graduate student,
circa 1975,
in Alvin Segelman's
laboratory,
Rutgers University,
Piscataway, N.J.*



Alvin B. Segelman (PhD '72) recently established a scholarship endowment in the name of his late wife, Florence Pettler Segelman (PhD '74), who passed away in 1994. Segelman remembers his wife as a "woman of valor...who gave selflessly to others of her love, goodness, kindness, charity, advice, and wisdom." He certainly had his wife's spirit of charity in mind when he made a very generous gift to create the Florence Pettler Segelman Scholarship Fund at the School of Pharmacy. His gift will ensure that Florence's legacy of selfless giving will continue to help pharmacy students for generations to come.

Passionate about each other, the Segelmans, who were married in 1972, also shared a love for science. Both specialized in the field of pharmacognosy at Rutgers University, where Alvin also served as chairman of the Department of Pharmacognosy. While he stayed at Rutgers for the next 20 years, Florence moved on to serve as senior scientist and section leader in the pharmaceutical industry at Wallace Laboratories. There she was involved in the development of several drugs, including a new anti-epilepsy agent released in 1993.

They moved to Orem, Utah, in 1990 where Florence spent her remaining years tending to her garden and her dog Golda, and touring the local countryside with friends. Alvin remembers Florence as being thoughtful and kind in everything she did. "Her home was everyone's home."

Class of 2010 Makes a Donation to Support Scholarships

INVESTING IN
THE FUTURE

The Class of 2010 presented Dean Kroboth with a generous donation to support scholarships at the School's Graduation Dinner and Hooding Ceremony. Many students in the class received scholarship support during their time at the School, and the class wanted to provide opportunities to future pharmacy students.



Dean Patricia Kroboth accepts the Class of 2010 gift presented by Catherine Andrews and Katelin Speer, class representatives.

Koch Portrait Adds Touch of History

SNAPSHOT FROM
PHARMACY'S PAST

The Pittsburgh College of Pharmacy began in 1878 with George A. Kelly as president, as one room rented for three evenings a week in the Western University of Pennsylvania. Of the 1880 class, eleven students received the Graduate in Pharmacy degree, attended only for self-betterment purposes. In 1884, with classes now at six evenings a week, nine men graduated at its fifth commencement with the degree of Graduate in Pharmacy. Among them was Julius A. Koch.

In 1891, Koch became the first dean of the College and also was appointed Professor of Pharmacy. He was to serve as dean until 1932. Upon being appointed, he immediately changed the classes to daylight hours. With the gradual increase in enrollment, Koch felt that there should be better quarters for the College. On April 1, 1895, the Pittsburgh College of Pharmacy leased a mansion located at Bluff, Vicroy, and Pride streets, with an option to purchase it. Following improvements the purchase was completed, and

classes were held there. Koch's report in 1900 on the inadequacy of the laboratories resulted in two additions being built. The College became the Department of Pharmacy of the Western University of Pennsylvania in 1896. Western University's Dental College relocated there in March 1905, remaining until September 1911. The Scio College of Pharmacy in Scio, Ohio, was purchased in 1908 and merged with the Department of Pharmacy of Western University. The College's address became 1431 Boulevard of the Allies at the dedication of the first section of the newly built Boulevard in 1921.

The College subsequently merged with the University of Pittsburgh on January 26, 1948, becoming the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy, and moved to its present location in Salk Hall in 1966. Plans are being made to have a portrait of Dean Koch displayed in '03 Hall in Salk Hall.



Julius A. Koch
Dean, 1891-1932



Welcome back to another great year at the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy. It is both an honor and a privilege to serve as your Alumni Society president. I am proud to say we are 5,000 members strong, good, and getting better. It is through your effort, participation, and support that the University of Pittsburgh has given the School of Pharmacy Alumni Society one of the top ratings for having the "most alumni engagement" of any of the societies in the University. What does this mean? It means we're the tops!

It means that you don't miss out on the opportunity to join in the exciting events throughout the year—events such as Homecoming, the Career Expo, Career Roundtables, the White Coat Ceremony, the Scholarship Golf Outing, and the RxTravaganza Gala.

It means that you are generous in your commitment and financial support to provide endowed scholarships, allowing students to study here and abroad. It means that you not only ensure the continued success of the School of Pharmacy but also continually strive to make the School an even stronger one. The future is now and includes exciting plans to build an addition to Salk Hall, the first new construction in the history of the School, which will house research labs and new teaching and learning spaces.

As alumni giving back, please continue to be generous of your time, talent, and financial support. For your commitment, involvement, and dedication to the School of Pharmacy, I say "thank you." We're the tops!



Irene Damratoski (BS '63, MS '66) with husband Daniel Damratoski (BS '68) at RxTravaganza 2010.

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TELL US ABOUT YOU!

Please send us information about your career advancements, papers presented, honors received, appointments, and further education. We'll include your news in the Alumni section as space allows. Photos are welcome. Please print clearly.

Name: _____

Degree and Year of Graduation: _____

Home Telephone: (____) _____

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Position(s): _____

News: _____

Let us know if you belonged to any of the following student organizations. Please check all that apply.

- Kappa Psi
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Joseph Gatto (BS '75) volunteers his time and expertise during Career Roundtables.

Memories of R_xTravaganza Gala 2010 (captions)

1. Imelda Evans, Fred Evans (BS '60) Juhl (BS '78), Larry Merlo (BS '78), and Distinguished Service Awardee Randy Juhl
2. Members of the Class of 1970 and guests: 2nd from left, Mary Skinner Brumback; 4th from left, Tom Bowlen; 5th from left, Kirby Stiening.
3. Staci Blocher Millward (BS '95), Joseph Millward (BS '95)
4. Diane Ammerman (BS '98), Robert Wanovich, Maria Wanovich (BS '89)
5. Distinguished Alumni Richard Bertin (BS '65), Robert Abraham (PhD '81), Balwant Dixit (BS '66), Walter Severs (BS '60, PhD '63), William Liepack (BS '52), Richard Lithgow (BS '50), Renée Kubacka
6. Justine Parker (P1) joins the band on stage.
7. Rafael Saenz, instructor of pharmacy and therapeutics, with Almira.
8. Dean Patricia Kroboth (MS '80, PhD '83) with the 2010 Distinguished Alumni Larry Merlo (BS '78) and Robert Abraham (PhD '81).
9. P4 volunteer students Michael Smith, Taylor Miller, and Rhea Santangelo add a touch of class.

facebook

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The School of Pharmacy Web site is a wonderful way of keeping in touch with all that is happening at the School.
 We invite you to visit the Web site at: **www.pharmacy.pitt.edu**.



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*School of Pharmacy
Suite 1100 Salk Hall
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THIS MAGIC MOMENT**

OMNI WILLIAM PENN HOTEL
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The
**Eighth Annual
School of Pharmacy
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Friday, June 10, 2011
Quicksilver Golf Club
Midway, PA

Benefits Student Scholarships

