

medicine

at M I C H I G A N

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Medicine at Michigan welcomes your letters and comments. Please send them to Richard Krupinski, Editor, Medicine at Michigan, Office of Medical Development and Alumni Relations, 301 E. Liberty, Suite 300, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2251, e-mail address: rkrup@umich.edu, or fax them to (734) 998-7268. MM may edit letters for clarity and length.

Letter

Research Holds Promise for a Better Life

I read with much interest your report of research on bipolar disorder (Winter 2001), and I wanted to express my deep appreciation for the efforts of the scientists involved. My son was diagnosed with bipolar disorder about two years before he committed suicide at the age of 21. I feel that there is still a great stigma related to mental illness, and obtaining treatment is burdened with so many obstacles that victims and their families often do not seek or benefit from treatment.

I hope that someday the findings of dedicated scientists such as Dr. Jon-Kar Zubieta and his colleagues at the University of Michigan will enlighten all of us, and create a better life for those afflicted with mental illness. I am a nurse in an emergency department in Arizona (my husband did his pediatric residency at U-M), and besides my own sad experience, I see daily the devastation that this disorder places upon so many people.



Jon-Kar Zubieta

Good luck in your future research.

*Valinda Walter
Tempe, Arizona*

Contributions Overlooked

Thank you for the article highlighting our research on the health care experiences of African Americans in Southeast Michigan (Winter 2001). Unfortunately, it failed to recognize the contributions of George Myers, Ph.D., program manager of the Survey Research Center at U-M's Institute for Social Research, who served as project coordinator and research investigator.

Dr. Myers helped establish the support of the African American community in Detroit and collected and organized all of the oral histories, with the help of

Letters to the Editor

Ron Amos and other members of our research team; our project would not have been possible without him.



I also want to recognize the essential contributions of the 41 individuals who contributed their personal stories, making our collection one of the largest of its kind in the world. Many of your readers may recognize the eight narrators who are graduates of the University of Michigan, including five graduates of the Medical School. Our Web site (<http://www.med.umich.edu/haahc>) includes biographies, brief audio clips from the oral histories, a bibliography, and pictures of the 18 black hospitals in Detroit that made it the “Black Hospital Capital” in the middle of the 20th century.

This research is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when the University and the community work together. We hope that it will serve as a model for other University-community collaborations.

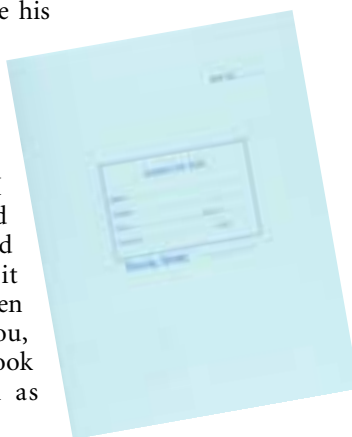
Norman L. Foster, M. D.
Professor of Neurology

“I thought I had done an excellent job...”

I recently read “How It Was Then” (Fall 2000) and it reminded me of an episode I had as a freshman student with Professor Bradley Patten during the 1950-51 school year.

Professor Patten was a very proud man who was world-renowned at the time for his definitive work, *The Embryology of the Pig*. He taught histology as well as embryology, and most of us medical students were rather cowed by this imposing man. He threw a quiz one day asking us to draw and delineate the histology and growth changes of an extremity bone (I believe it was the humerus). Even though I wasn't much of an artist, I thought I had done an excellent job in my drawing and labeling. To my amazement, I got the blue book back a few days later with a 6½, the best score being 10.

I was crushed and a bit irate. I bravely told my buddies that I was going to approach “Bradley” to see if he wouldn't reconsider or at least explain my poor mark. They warned me against doing it, but I wouldn't listen. I knocked on his office door and with much trepidation walked in. He said, “What can I do for you, son?” I showed him my blue book and asked him whether or not he had mistakenly given me a 6½. He looked it over, leaned back in his chair, seemed to inflate his body and said: “Son, when I marked this exam, I must have just finished a delicious dinner with a fine glass of wine. Because if I wasn't in such a good mood, you never would have gotten a 6½ — it would have probably been a 4 or 5. So, if I were you, son, I'd take this blue book and leave this room as quickly as possible.”



That was the first and last time I ever questioned a grade.

Fred Horwitz (M.D. 1957)
Ellenville, New York

Zina, not Abraham

While I was delighted to read your account of the Medical School's Sesquicentennial's grand finale celebration (“Sesqui-Finale,” Winter 2001), there was a glaring error I feel compelled to correct with great haste.

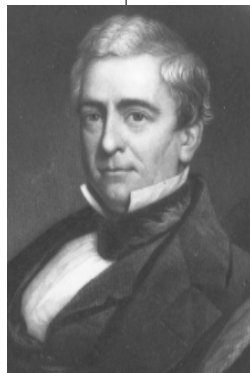
The article graciously mentioned the lecture I gave on the history of the University of Michigan Medical School but erroneously adduced its title, “An Example Worthy of Imitation,” to the famous [Abraham] Flexner Report on Medical Education of 1910. The quote was actually from a report by Dr. Zina Pitcher to the U-M Board of Regents dated January 9, 1848, urging them to establish a first-rate medical school that would be “an example worthy of imitation.” Indeed, this touches on the main point of why ➤

Michigan is a great medical school — more than half a century before national reforms in medical education were developed, quality medical education was of critical importance to the founders and faculty of our medical school.

I only regret I did not bring along a test question or two with me to the Sesquicentennial Celebration to ensure the quote's author, Dr. Pitcher, stayed correctly in your reporter's memory. I can, of course, recommend some excellent reading materials if you need a refresher course!

Howard Markel, M.D., Ph.D.
(M.D. 1984)

George E. Wantz Professor of the
History of Medicine
Director, Historical Center for
the Health Sciences



Zina Pitcher

A Factual Error

I read with interest the excellent Winter 2001 issue of *Medicine at Michigan*. I am delighted with this high-quality publication and look forward to being able to contribute to subsequent issues.

I would like to correct, however, a factual error in the Medical Center Alumni Society Hall of Honor. John Floyd Holt, M.D., died in 1996 rather than 1991 as listed on page 27.

N. Reed Dunnick, M.D.
Professor and Chair,
Department of Radiology
Ann Arbor

Huggins and Nesbit Were Contemporaries

The commendable Winter 2001 issue of *Medicine at Michigan* made a mistake regarding the surgical trainee of Drs. Cabot and Collier, Charles B. Huggins. Dr. Huggins did not train in urology under

Dr. Reed Nesbit, they being contemporaries and roommates. While Dr. Huggins held Dr. Nesbit in great esteem and friendship, the urologist who trained them both was probably Edward Cathcart (M.D. 1921), who later went into practice in Detroit at Harper Hospital.

Just below the paragraph about Dr. Huggins there is one about Dr. Edgar Kahn who also was a contemporary of Dr. Huggins. Dr. Horace Davenport, in his book *University of Michigan Surgeons*, describes these two aspiring surgeons operating on a dog as things were turning into disaster, commiserating that they would never be surgeons. How wrong they were!

Jack D. McCarthy, M.D.
(Residency 1959)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

[Thanks to the astute observations of our readers, the MCAS Hall of Honor, from which the *Medicine at Michigan* text was derived, is being corrected.]

What a Great Privilege It Was

In the Winter 2001 edition of *Medicine at Michigan*, the Medical Center Alumni Society Hall of Honor helped me realize what a great privilege it was to be a student at the University from 1946-50. I was a student of 32 of the 76 members listed. What a powerful statement about the teachers of that era! Most, if not all of them, were nationally recognized as leaders in their respective fields. What an honor it is to have known these great people of medicine.

One of these men, Carl V. Weller, M.D., was my mentor. He made it possible for me to stay at the University through his generosity. I worked at his home for two years or more. I was gardener, houseman, chauffeur and anything else he and his wife wished me to be. The last thing he

asked me to do was drive an automobile, loaded with everything imaginable, to Boston where his son, Thomas Huckle Weller, was a researcher and eventually a recipient of a Nobel Prize in medicine.

Dr. Weller kept after me with my grades and made me apply for scholarships. Little did I know at that time that he was on the scholarship committee. Without those scholarships, it would have been impossible for me to continue at Michigan.

The University of Michigan School of Medicine has been, is, and hopefully always will be one of the top schools in the country. I am proud to be an alumnus.


John H. Varney
(M.D. 1950)
Middletown, Ohio

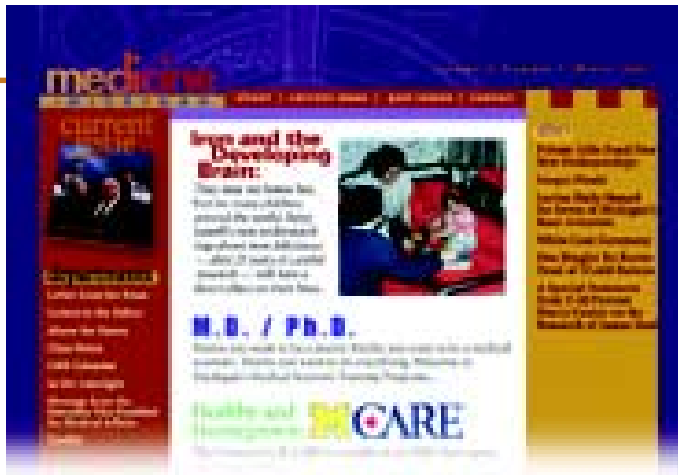
A Paradigm Shift

I have a different interpretation than Dr. Hamburger (Letters, Winter 2001) about your choice to publish the experience reported by Harry J. Schmidt, M.D., in "How It Was Then" (Fall 2000).

My belief is that to publish both Dr. Schmidt's and Dr. Hamburger's observations indicates openness and an obvious paradigm shift to what I consider better now than it was in the 1950s. Arbitrary discrimination at Michigan may not have passed completely, but it is obviously diminished if it is clearly recognized and reported.

Open discourse on this subject is refreshing. Had you failed to publish either submission, an opportunity for amelioration would have been lost.

Edward N. Willey
(M.D. 1958, Residency 1963)
St. Petersburg, Florida 



Now Available On-line!

For the convenience of our readers, *Medicine at Michigan* is now available on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.med.umich.edu/magazine/>

Electronic access to the publication makes it possible for readers of *Medicine at Michigan* to explore links to related sites within the University of Michigan Health System and beyond — thus providing more detailed or expansive information when desired — to retrieve the contents of past issues, to easily print copies of desired articles, and to allow colleagues and friends around the world to easily and quickly avail themselves of material of interest. The editor welcomes all suggestions regarding ways to make the Web version of *Medicine at Michigan* as useful as possible.

The Millennium Fund

Alumni Helping Students in the
University of Michigan Medical School

Your support means a lot to the next great generation of Michigan doctors and medical scientists. Your scholarship gift to the new Millennium Fund in the Medical School will help ease the heavy financial burdens faced by today's students and help ensure that Michigan continues to turn out generations of outstanding clinicians, researchers and teachers. For more information on scholarship giving opportunities, call (734) 998-7705 and ask Denise Harrington for a copy of "Ways of Giving." If you would like to make a gift to the Millennium Fund, send your check, made out to the University of Michigan Medical School, to Sandi Kline, Medical Development and Alumni Relations, 301 E. Liberty, Suite 300, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2251.