

On a sunny Sunday afternoon last August, the 171 members of the Class of 2004 were inducted into the University of Michigan Medical School during the fifth annual White Coat Ceremony held in Rackham auditorium.

The Class of 2004 White Coat Ceremony

“A rite of passage into one of the proudest professions”



above: MCAS Board member **Tom Varbedian** congratulates **Lorin Sanchez**. Sanchez and his brother, Sean, come to Michigan from Portland, Oregon, one of two sets of identical twins in the Class of 2004.

right: **Njeri Thande**, from Boston, Massachusetts, dons her white coat for the first time.



far right: **Gerald Abrams**, keynote speaker: “Each of you has the individual task to become the best physician you can be.”

“Two ceremonies will mark your time here,” Dean Allen Lichter (M.D. 1972) told them. “Graduation day in 2004 when you become doctors of medicine, and today when you receive the white clinicians’ coats you will wear during your time as medical students here.” By becoming Medical School alumni, a group numbering approximately 16,000 living members, the incoming students will be joining a world-

wide fraternity that supports the School spiritually as well as financially, the dean said.

Coming from 61 different undergraduate schools and selected from among nearly 5,000 applicants, the entering Medical School class was welcomed by Tom Varbedian (M.D. 1956), speaking on behalf of the Medical Center Alumni Society, to this “rite of passage into one of the proudest professions.” MCAS co-sponsored the ceremony with the Medical School.

Delivering the keynote address, Professor of Pathology Gerald D. Abrams (M.D. 1955) noted that the entering class comes from the top one percent of the population intellectually. Calling them “learning machines that, by succeeding, make faculty look good,” Abrams complimented them on a “fabulous career choice” and quoted Studs Terkel, author of the seminal book on work, *Working*, who said, “Physicians work not for daily bread but for daily meaning and astonishment.” “Practicing medicine is an incomparable endeavor,” Abrams said. “Every day as a physician is a fascinating parade of human experience, and no other experience except war so alters the cognitive power of the mind.”

But certain obligations come with the profession, Abrams pointed out. Since the public substantially funds education, a social contract exists that calls upon physicians to give with equal measure, to turn unselfish attention to the welfare of the public, to nurture the faith and trust patients place in doctors and to guarantee that faith and trust are not misplaced. “Each of you has the individual task to become the best physician you can be.”

Abrams, who was himself inducted into the medical profession in Rackham Auditorium nearly 50 years ago, thanked the parents of entering students for inspiring and enabling

them to this point in their education. As Francis Collins did in his commencement address to the Class of 2000 last spring, Abrams encouraged the students to not slight the needs of their personal lives and to nurture the close professional relationships with colleagues they will form. In light of the demands of medical education and the rigors of the careers that follow, Abrams said, such connections will prove to be “wonderfully supportive and sustaining.”





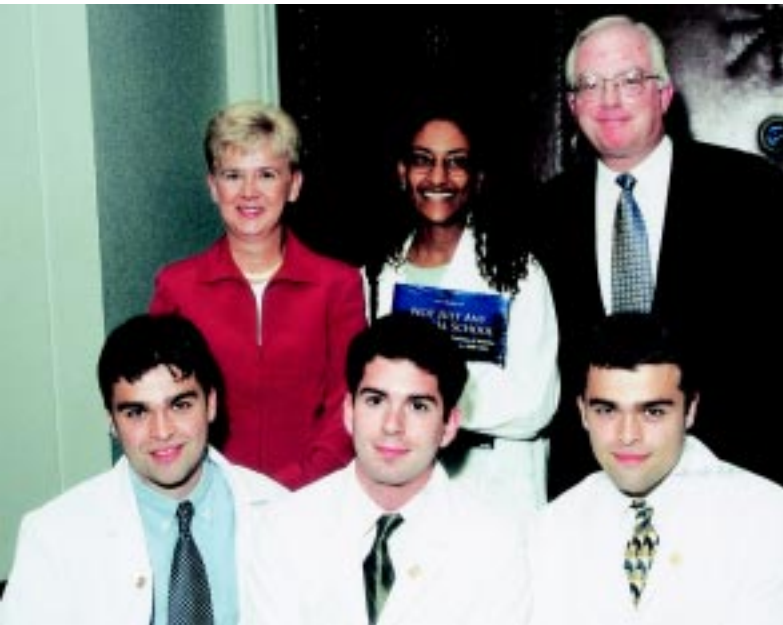
George Blum (M.D. 1955) with **Mark Shaver**, recipient of scholarship support from the Class of 1955. Shaver is from Reno, Nevada.

The Class of 2004

The University of Michigan Medical School Class of 2004 represents, as always, a very selective group of students from Michigan and across the nation. Of 4,928 applicants, 606 were invited to personal interviews. From those interviewed, 171 (about 3.4% of all applicants) were accepted into the class.

A little more than half of the students (93) are from Michigan, 68 of them graduates of the University of Michigan. The remaining 78 students come from 24 different states. More than half the students majored in biology as undergraduates; two students entered with degrees in dentistry, one with a degree in law and another with a doctorate in genetics.

The mean college grade point average of this year's entering students was 3.6 (out of 4) and their mean score on the MCAT was 11 (out of 15). The gender and ethnic composition of the class closely mirrors that of classes across the nation: 42 percent of entering students were female (45.8 percent nationally), 19.9 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander (19 percent nationally), 12.3 percent were black (8 percent nationally), 8.2 percent were Mexican-American, Puerto Rican or other Hispanic (7 percent nationally) and .6 percent were Native American (1 percent nationally). (National numbers are from an article in the September 6, 2000, issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* by B. Barzansky et. al., "Educational Programs in U.S. Medical Schools.")



left: First-year students (front, left to right) **Sean Sanchez**, **Corey Bregman** (from Skokie, Illinois), **Lorin Sanchez** and (rear, center) **Rahwa Ghermay** (from Seattle, Washington), recipients of Norman H. Mette Foundation scholarships, with Foundation trustee and attorney **Karl Schettenhelm** and his wife, **Suzanne**

below: **Hehshin Kwak** from Canton, **Alica Arnold** from Hudson, Ohio, and **Gretchen Carter** from Grosse Pointe have their picture taken on the steps of Rackham.



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—Gerald Abrams