

## Class Notes

60s ]



**Hossein Gharib** (M.D. 1966) was elected president of the American College of Endocrinology at its annual meeting in May. He has been practicing and teaching endocrinology as a consultant and as professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine since completing his internal medicine residency and endocrinology fellowship at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in 1971. He resides in Rochester, Minnesota.

**Robert D. Greenberg** (M.D. 1967) has been elected assistant secretary-treasurer of the American Academy of Dermatology and its corresponding association. His term will begin in 2010. Greenberg is in private practice with a faculty appointment at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. Previously a member of the academy's board of directors, he also chairs its ethics committee. Greenberg resides in South Windsor, Connecticut.

**James H. Thrall** (M.D. 1968) was elected chair of the American College of Radiology Board of Chancellors during the organization's annual meeting in May. An ACR fellow, he also serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of the American College of Radiology*. Thrall is



radiologist-in-chief at Massachusetts General Hospital and a professor of radiology at Harvard Medical Center in Boston, where he resides.

70s ]



**Elizabeth Burns** (M.D. 1976) has been named assistant dean, president and CEO of the Michigan State University Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies, effective July 1. Previously, Burns was a tenured professor at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences in Grand Forks and an elected member of the university's graduate faculty.

80s ]



**Roger Albin**, M.D. (Residency 1988), is the recipient of one of five Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research 2007 Clinical Discovery Awards, announced in December. This annual initiative funds clinical research projects with strong potential to yield new treatments for people living with Parkinson's. Albin, professor of neurology at the U-M Medical School, will use

the award to help support his research on improving sleep disorders, a common problem for people with Parkinson's.

90s ]



**Michelle J. Alpert** (M.D. 1991), along with Saul Wisnia, has authored *Spinal Cord Injury and the Family: A New Guide*, published by Harvard University Press in 2008. The book addresses issues that affect families in which one person is recovering from a spinal cord injury — from daily routines to larger issues concerning sex, education, employment, childbearing and parenting. Alpert is director of rehabilitation medicine at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center, and clinical instructor in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School. She was the founder and first director of the Spinal Cord Injury Program at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. She resides in Newton, Massachusetts.

### ALUMNI: Update your classmates!

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## Alumni Profile ] Kathleen Weston: Still Blazing Trails at 101

**WHEN KATHLEEN WESTON JOINED PARKE-**Davis to help test the newly invented Salk vaccine in the 1950s, she was the first woman M.D. the pharmaceutical giant had ever hired.

“They needed a lot of people and I was handy,” says Weston, from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, who turned 101 in March. The mobilization to produce the vaccine that virtually eradicated polio created new employment opportunities for women in the drug industry much as the mobilization for World War II had done in other fields, and she was “handy” because her husband directed one of their laboratories. Weston’s family participated in early trials of the vaccine.

“The head of research knew I had worked with microscopes and the nervous system, so he recruited me,” she says. “He said, ‘You know, you’re an M.D. and we have to pay you this salary that’s way beyond what we usually pay women.’ But that was what the rest of the pharmaceutical companies paid M.D.s. He also took me to the executive dining room to have lunch after he talked to me. I was the first woman to eat there. That caused quite a stir.”

Weston grew up in Kenton, a tiny town in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula that’s now just a name on the map. There were only 15 students in her high school. She went on to earn a B.A. in biology at Northern State Normal School (now Northern Michigan University), then taught high school biology in Munising. During the summers, she attended the U-M Medical School, earning a master’s degree in anatomy and physiology in 1934.

Upon receiving her Michigan degree, she and her husband, Jean K. Weston, M.D. (M.S. 1931, Ph.D. 1933), joined the faculty of Temple University in Philadelphia. After more than a decade of teaching various courses to medical students there, she felt obliged to go to medical school herself.

“I felt if I was teaching medical students, I ought to know more about the subject,” she says. “Sometimes there were questions I couldn’t answer adequately.” She approached the dean about it, and he offered a deal.

“He had problems with his nursing school,” she recalls.



“He said, ‘You’re a good teacher, why don’t you teach the nurses to pass the board exam?’ I began to teach the nurses; they responded and passed their exams, and he said, ‘Okay, you can go to medical school.’”

In 1951, at age 44, Weston received her M.D. from Temple. She was one of only five women in a class of 125.

After Parke-Davis, Weston and her husband worked in toxicology for Burroughs-Wellcome; later, he went to work for the National Pharmaceutical Council in Washington, D.C., and she worked as a toxicologist for a variety of government agencies, including the NIH.

After her husband died in 1985, Weston continued to work as a consulting toxicologist until retiring in 1997. She lived on her own till age 100 when she moved in with her son and daughter-in-law. Weston uses a walker to help her get around these days, but her mind travels as fast as ever. “I read a great variety of things,” she says, “especially about nutrition. That’s something we weren’t taught in medical school.”

Today’s medical curriculum is just one of the amazing changes Weston’s witnessed — and helped bring about — in a long and amazing life. —JEFF MORTIMER

## Alumni Profile ]

### Donald Miller: The Lawyer Is a Doc



**DON MILLER HAS A MESSAGE: IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE USEFUL.**

At the age of 54, in what seemed to be the middle of a distinguished career as an orthopaedic surgeon and researcher, Miller (M.D. 1967) was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. One of the first orthopaedists in the country to transplant cadaver meniscus and the first to use the technique of cryopreservation, Miller was withstanding long hours and significant professional pressure over procedures that were out of the mainstream of orthopaedic surgery at the time. His physicians prescribed, among other things, retirement.

But after seven years of therapy and six hours of golf a day (“My wife called it dropping me off at day care”), “I couldn’t believe how much I missed making a difference in people’s lives,” he says.

Believing his background would serve him well as a mediator in medical malpractice, personal injury and wrongful death cases, Miller started work toward a master’s in mediation at Pepperdine University School of Law when a colleague told him a law degree would help him be more effective. He enrolled in the Arizona State University College of Law and finished his degree

in two-and-a-half years, graduating in December 2005, three weeks after he turned 65 and went on Social Security.

“I’m enjoying private practice in my small firm of Donald Miller and Associates,” he says now from his home in Scottsdale, Arizona. “Each case is like a ‘whodunit,’ and unraveling the puzzles is challenging. About 90 percent of personal injury involves orthopaedics, so I use my medical background every day. That’s why I love it.”

So after playing in two Rose Bowls and as part of a national championship team for the University of Minnesota, training as a classical pianist, working for professional athletic teams in addition to his regular practice, and helping to pioneer arthroscopic surgery techniques in the knee, Miller is creating yet another productive chapter of his life.

“I plan to go out with my boots on,” he says. “I still want to make a contribution.” —JEFF MORTIMER

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