Recruits on the Front Lines of Science

The First Biological Sciences Scholars Arrive
Kate F. Barald, Ph.D., associate professor of anatomy and cell biology, received the Instructor of the Year Award from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry Class of 2002. Barald was chosen in recognition of her outstanding ability as an instructor in the communication of knowledge and stimulation of interest in her area of study. This is the second straight year Barald has been chosen by dental students to receive this award.

Steven R. Buchman, M.D., associate professor of surgery in the section of plastic and reconstructive surgery, and director of the Craniofacial Anomalies Program, won an award for the “Best Paper of the Year” selected from all the articles published in the Journal of Craniofacial Surgery during the previous 12 months. The award for the paper, “Use of Scanning Electron Microscopy in the Evaluation of Craniosynostosis,” was presented to Buchman at the 68th Scientific Meeting of the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons in New Orleans this past October.

Thomas J. Carey, Ph.D., senior research scientist in the Kresge Hearing Research Institute and the Department of Otolaryngology, received the University of Michigan’s Distinguished Research Scientist Award for 1999 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the intellectual environment of the University. The Distinguished Research Scientist Award was created as a testimony to the quality and dedication of research scientists at the U-M. To reinforce and accentuate the high prestige of the award, Carey has been granted the official title of “Distinguished Research Scientist.”

Kathleen L. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of internal medicine and of microbiology and immunology, has been named a 1999 Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences. Collins was one of only 20 Scholars chosen from nominations from over 100 institutions in the U.S. The Pew Charitable Trusts support nonprofit activities in the areas of conservation and the environment, culture, education, health and human services, public policy and religion. Collins was selected for her promise as a biomedical researcher and will receive a total award of $240,000 to help support her research over a four-year period.

James M. Cooke, M.D., co-chief resident and house officer in the Department of Family Medicine, was selected to attend the 1999 C. Everett Koop Residency Physician Leadership Symposium. The Leadership Symposium is designed to promote resident leadership and was held in September, 1999.

James T. Elder, M.D., Ph.D., (Residency 1988) associate professor of dermatology and of radiation oncology, has been appointed to serve on the National Psoriasis Foundation’s (NPF) Medical Advisory Board. The NPF Medical Advisory Board counsels the NPF on technical and scientific matters and provides guidance in effective application of the organization’s resources in improving the medical treatment and control of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.
David Engelke, Ph.D., professor of biological chemistry and director of the Program in Biomedical Sciences (PIBS), has been chosen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to serve as chairperson of the Cell Development and Function Study Section, Center for Scientific Review. According to the NIH, “the skill and leadership offered by the chairperson determine to a significant extent the effectiveness and efficiency of the review group.” Engelke will serve as chair through June 30, 2001.

A. Oveta Fuller, Ph.D., associate professor of microbiology and immunology, and Denise Kirschner, Ph.D., assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, have been chosen to receive Career Development Awards by the Michigan Agenda for Women. This is an award established to acknowledge contributions to the University by female faculty members. The discretionary funds ($5,000) can be used for books, travel for professional activities, graduate student support or other purposes. The funds were established under the Michigan Agenda for Women and through the Office of the Vice President for Research.

TRANSWEB: A Web Site for Transplant Patients

An early participant in the electronic media revolution, a 5-year-old U-M-based Web site dedicated to the concerns of transplant patients now receives more than one million visits a month. Entitled TransWeb: All About Transplantation and Donation, the site (www.transweb.org) provides reliable information about all aspects of transplantation. Users include transplant patients and their families, medical professionals, and teachers and students. TransWeb’s mission is to provide information about donation and transplantation to improve organ and tissue procurement efforts worldwide, to present information related to issues of concern to transplant patients and their families, and to provide an index of sources for transplant-related information. In September of 1999, Popular Science ranked the TransWeb site one of the five best sites on health and medicine in the world. Pictured above: TransWeb Editor Eleanor Jones (center) and the TransWeb Editorial Board, from left to right, Jeffrey Punch, M.D., assistant professor of surgery; Jim Dean, senior programmer analyst; Robert Garypie, organ preservation specialist; Robert Merion, M.D., associate professor of surgery; and Alan Leichtman, M.D., associate professor of internal medicine.
Jameelah Gater, a fourth-year student in the Medical School, was elected student delegate to the American Academy of Family Physicians Congress of Delegates. The AAFP Congress is composed of two physician delegates from each of the 50 states and U.S. territories as well as two national representatives from the following constituencies: new physicians, women, uniformed services, residents, and students. Representing the student voice for the nation, Gater testified and voted on health care issues at the annual congressional meeting in Florida in September, 1999. This new position also allows Gater to function as a member of the National Committee on Resident and Student Affairs (CRSA) which deals with issues ranging from licensure to cultural diversity awareness and competency. She is also active at the state level currently serving on the Michigan Academy of Family Practice Board of Directors, CRSA, and Statewide Student Day Planning Committee.

Janet Gilsdorf, M.D., professor of pediatrics and communicable diseases, received the third annual 1999 Journal of General Internal Medicine Creative Writing Award for Prose for her short story, "Off to the Left." Gilsdorf’s work was chosen from more than 70 submissions and was published in the June 1999 issue (Vol. 14, No. 6). The Journal of General Internal Medicine is the official journal of the Society of General Internal Medicine.

Susan Dorr Goold (M.D. 1987, Fellow 1992), assistant professor of internal medicine, has received a four-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for her research project “Consumer Values and Preferences in Managed Care.” The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the largest philanthropy organization devoted exclusively to health and health care.

Carmen R. Green, M.D., assistant professor of anesthesiology and director of the Acute Pain Service, was named the Woman of the Year in Human Relations by the University of Michigan’s Women of Color Task Force.

In nominating Green for the award, Kevin Tremper, M.D., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, noted that Green “has been a role model for women of color and women in medicine” and praised her work in training nurses in acute pain management, in directing the clinical experience and clinical research experience for medical students in the summer between their first and second years, and in coordinating the Midwestern Anesthesia Residents Conference.

Lazar J. Greenfield, M.D., Frederick A. Collier Distinguished Professor and chair of surgery, has been elected secretary general of the International Society for Cardiovascular Surgery. The mission of the Society is to provide an international forum for the presentation, discussion, and dissemination of the state of the art and science of cardiovascular disease and its treatment to those professionals.

Peter Hedera, M.D. (Neurology Residency 1998), house officer in medical genetics in the Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, has received the Founders Award of the Auxiliary of the American Academy of Neurology. This award is designed to encourage clinical research in neuroscience by physicians in clinical neurology training programs. Hedera received this award for his genetic research on hereditary spastic paraplegia.

Robert B. Kiningham, M.D. (Residency 1992, Fellow 1993), clinical assistant professor of family medicine and director of the Primary Care Sports Medicine Fellowship, was named a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine. The American College of Sports Medicine promotes and integrates scientific research, education, and practical applications of sports medicine and exercise science to maintain and enhance physical performance, fitness, health and quality of life.

Michael S. Klinkman (M.D. 1982, Residency 1985), associate professor of family medicine, received the 1998 Volunteer Physician of the Year award from the Hope Medical Clinic in Ypsilanti.

The Hope Medical Clinic is a non-demonational Christian medical outreach clinic that provides free medical and dental care to all those with unmet health care needs and no access to care. It has served thousands of persons in need during the past 15 years.

Arno K. Kumagai, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine, was recently recognized as one of only 44 physicians nationwide selected by medical students for the 1999 Association of American Medical Colleges’ Humanism in Medicine Award. Kumagai was nominated by the AAMC Organization of Student Representatives as a physician embodying the finest qualities in a healer who teaches healing. The nomination stated that Kumagai “demonstrates an unusual compassion and understanding of people and quickly puts people at ease... he was always sensitive to patients’ needs and went out of his way to provide the highest quality of care. It is no wonder that Dr. Kumagai has a very loyal following of patients who often insist on seeing only him as their diabetes health care specialist.”

Ralph Lydic, Ph.D., Bert La Du Professor of Anesthesiology, associate chair for anesthesiology research and professor of physiology, has been elected the 1999 president-elect of the U.S. Sleep Research Society. The Sleep Research Society’s mission is to promote understanding of the processes of sleep and its disorders through research, the training of practitioners of research, and the dissemination of their research results to the scientific and medical communities as well as the general public.

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Three Medical School Professors Receive U-M Faculty Recognition Awards for Their Outstanding Contributions as Scholars and Teachers

David T. Burke, Ph.D., associate professor of human genetics and senior associate research scientist in the Institute of Gerontology, received a University of Michigan Faculty Recognition Award for 1998-99, as did Fred J. Karsch, Ph.D., professor of physiology and research scientist in the Reproductive Sciences Program, and Jairam K.M. Menon, Ph.D., professor of biological chemistry and of obstetrics and gynecology.

Faculty Recognition Award recipients have made substantive contributions to the University of Michigan through significant achievements in research and other scholarly activities, excellence in teaching, and participation in service activities. Burke, Karsch and Menon were chosen for their outstanding contributions as teachers and scholars.

Lydic’s research ranges from transmembrane cell signaling to integrative aspects of respiratory and arousal state control. These studies aim to elucidate the cellular and molecular mechanisms that cause respiratory depression during the loss of waking consciousness. Lydic’s studies are funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute because of their potential clinical relevance to disorders such as sudden infant death syndrome, adult sleep apnea, and anesthesia-induced respiratory depression.

The December 9, 1999, issue of the Wall Street Journal featured a commentary in the Leisure & Arts section by Howard Markel, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics and communicable diseases and director of the Historical Center for the Health Sciences, and Ada Louise Huxtable. Entitled “Ghosts of Hope and Despair: Ellis Island’s Abandoned Hospitals Are Crumbling Reminders of America’s Immigrant Story,” the column was an urgent plea to save the abandoned hospital buildings on Ellis Island, closed for almost 50 years now, that tell their own story of immigrant hope and despair. Markel and Huxtable are both among the first group of fellows selected to do scholarly work for a year at the Center for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library. Huxtable is a noted architecture critic.

Harold Oberman, M.D. (Internship 1957, Residency 1961), professor of pathology and director of the Blood Bank and Transfusion Service, was given the Founders Award of the Michigan Association of Blood Banks at its annual meeting on September 16, 1999.

In Print

Recently published books authored or edited by members of the University of Michigan Medical School include:

Deborah C. Otteson, a graduate student in the program for cell and developmental biology working in the lab of Peter Hitchcock, Ph.D., associate professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences and of anatomy and cell biology, received the Chapter Award from the Michigan Chapter for the Society of Neurosciences for 1999 for her work, “Expression patterns of IGF-I and IGF-I receptor mRNA suggest an autocrine/paracrine role for IGF during retinal growth and regeneration in goldfish.” Otteson presented her research at the Society’s annual meeting held at the Fetzer Center of Western Michigan University in May.

Otteson successfully defended her thesis, “Morphogenesis, Neurogenesis and Regeneration in the Retina: Genetic, Cellular and Molecular Biological Perspectives,” in December, 1999. She will be doing post-doctoral research at the Wilmer Ophthalmological Institute at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the laboratory of Donald Zack, M.D., Ph.D., as a post-doctoral fellow on the Visual Neuroscience Training Program.

James Peggs, M.D., clinical associate professor and senior associate chair in the Department of Family Medicine, has been selected by the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians as 1999 Family Practice Educator of the Year.

Mack T. Ruffin IV, M.D., M.P.H., associate professor of family medicine, received the 1999 Outstanding Medical Alumnus Award from the Medical College of Virginia.

David Ginsburg, Julian Hoff and Michael Marletta Named to the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine

Three noted researchers from the Medical School have been named to the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine. David Ginsburg, M.D., Julian T. Hoff, M.D., and Michael A. Marletta, Ph.D., were among 55 new members in the U.S. named in 1999. They join approximately 20 U-M faculty, current and former, named to the 588-member body.

Election to the Institute of Medicine, the medical arm of the National Academy of Sciences, is an honor reserved for those who have made major contributions to health and medicine or related fields. One-fourth of the members are drawn from outside the traditional health professions. Members volunteer their time on committees devoted to studies on a broad range of health policy issues.

David Ginsburg, M.D., holds joint appointments in the U-M Medical School’s Departments of Internal Medicine and Human Genetics as the Warner-Lambert/Parke Davis Professor of Medicine, chief of the Division of Molecular Medicine and Genetics and professor of human genetics. He is also an investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.

Ginsburg has been cited as a leader in the effort to find the molecular genetic basis of human bleeding and clotting disorders. Notably, he has focused on the von Willebrand factor, or VWF, a protein central to the body’s blood coagulation system. About one percent of the general population may have an inherited bleeding disorder caused by abnormal VWF. Ginsburg’s work began with the cloning of the von Willebrand factor gene and now includes studies of how mutations in this gene lead to bleeding, and how mutations in other genes may also regulate VWF levels in the blood.

Ginsburg and his team also research how blood clots are dissolved, and how abnormalities in this process contribute to human diseases including heart attack and stroke. Most recently, his studies identifying the cause of another inherited bleeding condition have revealed important new information about how many proteins, including clotting factors, are transported within and out of cells.

Julian Hoff, M.D., is head of the Neurosurgery Section and professor in the U-M Medical School Department of Surgery. He also heads the Neurosurgery Training Program, one of the most sought-after neurosurgery residencies in the nation.
His Institute of Medicine nomination called Hoff a “triple threat” neurosurgery educator who combines clinical practice, teaching and research in a way that has brought him to national prominence and enabled him to influence the future of surgery. A clinical specialist in acoustic tumors, cervical spine surgery and brain tumors, Hoff has also conducted laboratory research on cerebral edema and intracerebral hemorrhage funded by the National Institutes of Health for 25 years. He has received two NIH neuroscience awards.

His leadership activities in neurosurgery education include terms on the Residency Review Committee for Neurosurgery, as chairman of the American Board of Neurological Surgery, and as chair of task forces on neurosurgery resident education and fellowship. A past president of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and of the American Academy of Neurological Surgeons, he is now president-elect of the Society of Neurological Surgeons, the principal society for neurosurgery educators, and second vice president of the American College of Surgeons.

Michael A. Marletta, Ph.D., is the John G. Searle Professor of Medicinal Chemistry in the U-M College of Pharmacy and a professor of biological chemistry in the U-M Medical School, as well as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator. He also serves as chair of the Biological Sciences Scholars Program in the Medical School.

Marletta’s initial basic research on the biochemistry of nitrogen-containing compounds in the body has led to important knowledge about how cells send signals to one another, and has additional implications in toxicology. Specifically, his work on determining the biochemical precursor to nitrates and nitrites led to the discovery of a previously unknown metabolic pathway that produced the potent toxin nitrous oxide, or NO. These novel findings provided the basis for other researchers’ work on NO and Marletta’s analysis of the enzyme and chemical mechanism that result in NO formation in humans and other animals. His work was featured in the Spring 1999 issue of Medicine at Michigan.

Nitrous oxide is now known to be an important signaling molecule in the body, but it was a mysterious one until Marletta and his colleagues solved the riddle of how it can send signals from one cell to another when its chemical reactivity with oxygen should cause it to decompose rapidly, preventing its function as a signaling agent. Further, his studies have shown how NO is able to signal without killing the cells that produce it. His work on the cellular receptor that captures NO molecules and keeps them from reacting with oxygen is important to the ongoing understanding of NO’s role in intercellular communication. These basic science discoveries have now led to NO’s being used clinically to treat pulmonary hypertension, and have suggested treatments for stroke, colitis and toxic shock syndrome.
Following is a complete listing of all faculty and students who received awards at the 1999 Honors Convocation.

**FACULTY AWARDS**

**American Medical Women’s Association Gender Equity Award**
Elizabeth M. Petty, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine
Assistant Professor of Human Genetics

**Elizabeth Crosby Award**
Joseph M. Metzger, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Physiology
Associate Professor of Internal Medicine

**Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Humanism in Medicine Award**
Arno K. Kumagai, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine

**Kaiser-Permanente Awards for Excellence in Teaching**
Michael D. Jibson, M.D., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychiatry

**William Dodd Robinson Award**
Michael E. Widlansky

**Eli G. Rochelson Memorial Award**
Seema Baranwal

**Terence C. Davies Award**
Lisa M. Long

**Excellence in Emergency Medicine Award**
Rosemarie Fernandez

**Robert B. Sweet Award**
Eric Huang

**William B. Taylor Dermatology Award**
Jason B. Van Ittersum

**J. Robert Willson Award**
Jennifer A. Zelenock

**Senior Awards**

**Dean’s Awards for Research Excellence**
Arul M. Chinnaiyan
Rosemarie Fernandez

**George R. DeMuth Medical Scientist Award for Excellence**
David P. Olson

**Ralph M. Gibbons Award**
Tiwanda C. Williamson

**Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey Humanism in Medicine Award**
Matthew M. Bressie

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**Michael D. Uhler**, Ph.D., associate professor of biological chemistry and senior associate research scientist in the Mental Health Research Institute, received the University of Michigan’s 1999 Research Scientist Recognition Award. The Research Scientist Recognition Award recognizes scholarly promise in primary research faculty related to the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge or the development of innovative technology or concepts that lead to significant advances in science, education, health, the arts or humanities. Uhler was chosen for his achievements and his exceptional scholarly promise and received the award at the Faculty Awards event on October 6, 1999.

**Wendy Uhlmann**, genetic counselor in the Division of Medical Genetics and clinical instructor in the Department of Human Genetics, is serving as president this year of the National Society of Genetic Counselors, an organization representing more than 1,700 genetic counselors nationwide.

**John Wiley**, M.D. (Residency 1983, Fellow 1987), associate professor of internal medicine and chief of gastroenterology at the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center in Ann Arbor, was honored with the Janssen Award for Research in Digestive Disorders. Wiley was one of only 14 researchers from around the world honored at the Fifth Annual Janssen Awards in Gastroenterology in May, 1999. His research focuses on the effects of aging on colonic function and diabetes mellitus on sensory nerve function.

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**1999 Honors Convocation Awardees**

John Wiley, M.D. (Residency 1983, Fellow 1987), associate professor of internal medicine and chief of gastroenterology at the Veteran’s Administration Medical Center in Ann Arbor, was honored with the Janssen Award for Research in Digestive Disorders. Wiley was one of only 14 researchers from around the world honored at the Fifth Annual Janssen Awards in Gastroenterology in May, 1999. His research focuses on the effects of aging on colonic function and diabetes mellitus on sensory nerve function.
James Neel, Father of the Field of Human Genetics, Dies at 84

James Van Gundia Neel, M.D., Ph.D., professor emeritus of human genetics and internal medicine at the University of Michigan, died of cancer February 1 at his home in Ann Arbor. He was 84 years old. An internationally renowned scientist, Neel was a pioneer in the study of human genetics and one of the first to foresee its importance in the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions. During his 39-year career in the U-M Medical School, Neel established one of the first clinics to evaluate and counsel people with hereditary diseases, as well as the first academic department of human genetics in the United States.

Neel was the first scientist to recognize the genetic basis for sickle cell anemia. He conducted an extensive study on the aftereffects of atomic radiation on survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their children. During the 1960s, he proposed the “thrifty gene” hypothesis, which states that genes associated with common modern diseases like diabetes, hypertension and obesity are part of the human gene pool, because they helped our early ancestors survive when calories and salt were less abundant. Neel also was widely known for his studies of the genetic consequences of consanguineous marriage, the timing of human migration into North America and the genetic characteristics of isolated tribes in the Amazon rain forest.

His 39-year career in the Medical School was one of great vision and achievement.

Neel’s most recent research focused on severe chromosomal damage in what he named “rogue cells,” which he first identified in his studies of the Yanomama tribe in the Amazon and Japanese populations. Neel suggested that the origins of this chromosomal damage could be attributed to infection with human Polyomaviruses.

“Jim Neel was one of the most distinguished faculty in the 150-year history of this medical school,” said Allen S. Lichter, M.D., dean of the U-M Medical School. “He was a true visionary in how genetics would one day be used, not only to determine the cause of disease, but also to treat it. He trained some of the finest minds in the field and his international reputation was impeccable.”

“Dr. Neel was the father of the field of human genetics. He was the first to introduce a long list of bedrock principles, which we now take for granted,” said Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, who is on leave from the U-M Medical School. “He made a habit of being ahead of his time. Today, the Human Genome Project and associated advances in genetics are making it possible to test many of his hypotheses. There are growing signs that he was right on target.”

Neel was born on March 22, 1915, in Hamilton, Ohio, and received his A.B. degree in 1935 from the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio. After receiving his Ph.D. (1939) and M.D. (1944) from the University of Rochester, he completed his internship and residency at the Strong Memorial and Rochester Municipal Hospitals.

Neel joined the U-M faculty in 1946 as an assistant geneticist in the Laboratory of Vertebrate Biology. From late 1946 to 1947, he served in the Army Medical Corps and directed field studies for the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission of the National Research Council. In 1948, he returned to the U-M to direct the Institute of Human Biology’s Hereditary Clinic. Neel established the U-M Medical School’s Department of Human Genetics in 1956, which he chaired for 25 years. He was named the Lee R. Dice University Professor of Human Genetics in 1966—a position he held until his retirement on June 30, 1985.

“Jim Neel’s contribution to the studies of populations throughout the world and in patients right here in Michigan are seminal and legendary,” said Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D., U-M executive vice president for medical affairs. “He has been one of our most prominent faculty members and a great presence on this campus for more than five decades. He was completing additional collaborative research up to the time of his death, with work that will continue for several years.”

“Not only was James Neel a pioneer in human and medical genetics, he always kept foremost the physician’s perspective,” said Thomas D. Gelehrter, M.D., professor and chair of the U-M Medical School’s Department of Human Genetics. “He had a keen sensitivity to the societal implications of the knowledge he discovered. He truly embodied the title of his remarkable book, ‘Physician to the Gene Pool.’”

Memorial contributions can be made to the James V. Neel Fund at the U-M, which will be used to support an annual fellowship and an annual lectureship in the Department of Human Genetics. Contributions should be sent to: Medical Development and Alumni Relations Office, 301 E. Liberty, Suite 300, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2251.