

## Class Notes

### 60s ]

**Michael M.E. Johns** (M.D. 1969, Residency 1975), former interim executive



vice president for medical affairs at U-M, was honored with the 2015 Castle Connolly National Physician of the Year Award for Lifetime

Achievement. Throughout his career, Johns achieved an international reputation as a cancer surgeon of head and neck tumors and has become a leading spokesman on the reform of the nation's health care system.

### 70s ]

**Ronald E. Cheek** (M.D. 1975) was selected by the Wayne State



University School of Medicine's Class of 2015 to win the Voluntary Faculty Award, given to faculty who excel in the instruction of clinical medicine.

Cheek was also honored with the inaugural Dr. Ronald E. Cheek Lectureship on May 12 in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Sinai-Grace Hospital/Detroit Medical Center.



**Peter R. Lichstein** (M.D. 1976) became Governor of the North Carolina Chapter of the American College of Physicians, or ACP,

the national organization of internists. His term began during the ACP annual scientific meeting in April. Lichstein is professor of medicine in the Section on General Internal Medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine.

**David Reifler** (M.D. 1978), an ophthalmologist specializing in oculoplastic and reconstructive surgery, recently published *Days of Ticho: Empire, Mandate, Medicine and Art in the Holy Land*. The book details the medical career of Avraham Ticho during his time in Jerusalem at the Lema'an Zion Eye Hospital in the early 20th century. Reifler is an on-call professor at the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.



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### 80s ]

**Robert D. Ross** (M.D. 1981), director of Fellowship Programs and the Pulmonary Hypertension Program at the Children's Hospital of Michigan, chaired the steering committee that developed the 2015 SPCTPD/ACC/



AAP/AHA Training Guidelines for Pediatric Cardiology Fellowship Programs. Ross, also a professor of pediatrics at Wayne State University, served as the lead author.

### 90s ]

**Deepi Goyal** (M.D. 1993) recently became a director on the American



Board of Emergency Medicine. Goyal, associate professor of emergency medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, will serve a four-year

term beginning in July. The Board of Directors of the American Board of Emergency Medicine is one of 24 specialty certification boards recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties.

**Katja Rowell** (M.D. 1998) coauthored



*Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating: A Step-By-Step Guide for Overcoming Selective Eating, Food Aversion, and Feeding Disorders*.

Rowell serves on the medical advisory board of the SPOON Foundation, bringing nutrition and feeding support to orphaned, foster and adopted children worldwide.

#### Alumni: Share your news!

*U-M Medical School alumni are impacting patient care, research, education and public health in Michigan, across the country and around the globe. We are proud to share your stories with our Medical School community in "Class Notes." Submit your alumni news and photos for "Class Notes" to: [lmcrowfo@umich.edu](mailto:lmcrowfo@umich.edu).*

## Alumni Profile ] Jason Dykstra: Keeping Less to Do More

### LIFE REVEALED ITS PURPOSE TO JASON DYKSTRA

(M.D. 2004) in University Hospital Cafeteria on an otherwise typical day during his third year of medical school.

He was eating lunch with some of his residents, who were collectively imagining what life would be like when they finished their medical training and could begin earning salaries that would free them from debt. They pictured the places they would live and the luxuries they would buy, and then Dykstra said something that changed the tone.

“I, admittedly and completely naïvely, threw out this comment that I was hoping to maintain a lower standard of living and maybe see what my extra money could do out in the world for the greater good,” Dykstra says. “One of my residents looked right at me with these wide eyes and said, ‘No. You. Won’t.’ I remember that look to this very day because I think it challenged me to make that naïve comment into a reality, and I never forgot that challenge.”

Today, Dykstra, a diagnostic radiologist, his wife, Laura, and their two children through adoption live off less than the U.S. median income in Holland, Michigan. Jason and Laura made the decision to do so more than five years ago, and it has allowed them to pay off all their personal debt, while supporting causes they are passionate about. They also give their time to various causes mentoring college students, working with the trans-racial adoption community, and advising people experiencing infertility and financial difficulty.

Driven by his Christian faith and personal definition of generosity, Jason says he and Laura chose their standard of living because it allowed them to focus on how much they were giving as well as how much they were keeping. They wanted to embody the concept of giving more and keeping less.

Income that the Dykstras don’t keep, which includes all the proceeds from Jason’s 2013 book *Healing and the Hereafter*, goes to groups of volunteers doing humanitarian work around the world, many of whom include Jason’s fellow U-M alums. The family also gives to different charitable organizations that serve populations such as teenagers, veterans, single moms and prisoners.

“That’s what makes this exciting — to be able to support



causes that are really a part of who you are,” Jason says. “We were able to sit down and say, ‘Which groups do we really have a heart for and what did God put us here to do with this money?’ We found organizations that were not only caring for those people but doing it in responsible ways.”

Because Jason began living at a lower income early on in his career, the transition was smooth from life as a medical student and resident to his current standard of living. In fact, he sees his decision not as a sacrifice, but as an exciting challenge that has enriched his life in unpredictable ways. Sharing his story with colleagues and medical students over the years has led to discussions that foster mutual appreciation for different perspectives and experiences.

“When we tell our story, we try to focus on the great relationships and fulfillment that have come from making this choice,” Jason says. “And hopefully people identify with that.” — ALLISON WILSON