

Beginning the Journey: *First-Year Medical Students Don Their White Coats*



Above: Dean Allen S. Lichter addresses the assembled students, their families and friends, and members of the faculty.

Right: LaToya Taylor of Flint with sister Stacey Thompson and boyfriend Steven James on the front steps of the Rackham Building. Taylor is this year's recipient of a scholarship associated with the Carolyn D. and Asa Yancey, Sr., M.D. Endowed Student Aid Fund.



The newest class of students in the University of Michigan Medical School donned their first-ever white clinician's coats and affirmed "that into whatsoever house I shall enter, it shall be for the good of the sick to the utmost of my power" and the several other solemn promises of the Hippocratic oath in the fourth annual White Coat Ceremony on the stage of Rackham Auditorium in mid-August.

A growing number of medical schools, including the University of Michigan Medical School, have begun welcoming new students with the white coat ceremony to honor the beginning of their medical training and eventual careers in medicine, with special emphasis on the importance of empathy and caring in the doctor-patient relationship.

"The White Coat Ceremony is a way of highlighting the sense of professionalism inherent in the practice of medicine," said Gerald D. Abrams, M.D., professor of pathology, who delivered the day's keynote address, "The Journey Begins." "The ceremony emphasizes to students, at the outset of their training, the moral obligation to achieve technical excellence, to gain a compassionate understanding of the human dimensions of illness, and to become fully dedicated to the care of their patients.

"It is also a means of demonstrating our commitment, as faculty, to helping them in every way to become full-fledged members of a profession with a proud tradition. Finally, the ceremony provides a wonderful opportunity for the students' families and friends to share the joy of their entry into the profession."

Arnold Gold, a professor of clinical neurology and clinical pediatrics at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons for the past 40 years, has been a strong advocate for the white coat ceremony at medical schools across the country since 1993, as has the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The ceremony at Michigan is currently supported by the Medical School and the Medical Center Alumni Society. [m](#)

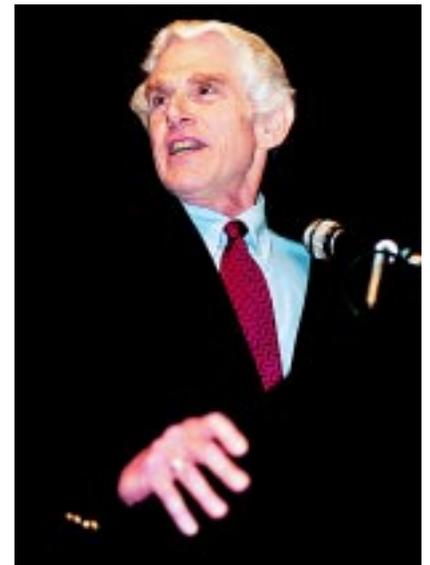
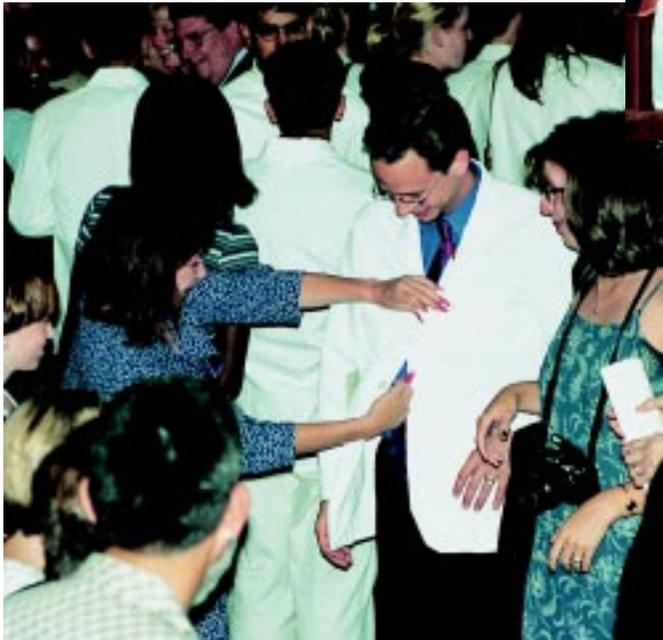


Top Left: Layne Kumetz (center) of Los Angeles, California, gets her picture taken by mother Bobbie Kumetz with West Bloomfield cousins Nancy Tuttleman, Carolyn Jacobs, Lesley Jacobs, and Pam Freed.

Top Right: Hien Duong, from Whitehall, with her congratulatory bouquet of red roses.

Center Left: Carla Newcomb removes wrinkles from son David Newcomb's white coat for his first-ever photo in his clinician's garb as wife Kelly looks on. Newcomb is from Sanford.

Center Middle: Ann Arborite Alice Lin, recipient of a scholarship this year from the Norman H. Mette Foundation.



Center Right: Gerald D. Abrams, M.D., professor of pathology, delivers the keynote address, 'The Journey Begins.'

Bottom Left: Natalie Hubbard of Detroit prepares to be cloaked by Dean Lichter.

Bottom Right: Dean Lichter helps Ian Mutchnick on with his white coat on the stage of Rackham Auditorium. Mutchnick is from Saline.

