

Quarterly

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INEQUITIES

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PARTNERSHIPS AIM TO PREVENT
AND ADDRESS UNJUST CONDITIONS**

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School of Medicine
and Public Health
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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QUARTERLY

The Magazine for Alumni, Friends,
Faculty and Students of the University of Wisconsin
School of Medicine and Public Health

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JANUARY 2021

Thursday, January 21 Virtual Operation Education

MARCH 2021

Friday, March 19 Virtual Match Day

APRIL 2021

Friday, April 23 Virtual WMAA Awards Banquet
Virtual WMAA Board of Directors Meeting

MAY 2021

Friday, May 7 MD Recognition Ceremony*

JUNE 2021

Friday, June 4 Spring Alumni Weekend*
Reunions for the Classes of 1956,
'61, '66 and '71

** Event details are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines related to COVID-19 in this region.*

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CALENDAR

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Crabapples hold on to branches on a winter afternoon at University of Wisconsin-Madison. In the background is the Red Gym.
—Photo by Brian Huynh/UW-Madison

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Healing Health Inequities

Wisconsin Partnership Program grants support organizations that aim to prevent and address unjust conditions, including racism.

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Middleton Society

Paul Harari, MD, shared an inspiring keynote address at the virtual gathering of the school's ardent supporters.

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Awards

George Fall, MD, and Shenikqua Bouges, MD (PG '20) (pictured), are being honored with awards for their accomplishments and service to others.

On the Cover

Rev. Alexander Gee, DMin, founder and president of the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, received a Community Impact Grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Program to address the impact of microaggressions on the health and well-being of African Americans.

ROBERT N. GOLDEN, MD



A bedrock principle of our school can be summarized in one word: Diversity. The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health’s (SMPH) mission includes the reduction of health disparities and recruitment of students and faculty members from groups that are underrepresented in medicine. This issue of *Quarterly* focuses on developments that accelerate our progress toward becoming an anti-racist institution and emphasize health equity and inclusivity. As you will read, the Wisconsin Partnership Program grant portfolio includes awards that help community organizations address unjust conditions that impact health.

Our commitment to diversity means we must “walk the walk,” rather than “talk the talk.” A national leader in this “walk” is Dr. Molly Carnes (see the Faculty Profile), who has dedicated her career to advancing the position of women in academic medicine. I have learned a lot from Dr. Carnes, and the outcomes of her research help guide our efforts to promote women into leadership roles throughout the SMPH.

The magazine’s theme of diversity continues in the Alumni Profile of Dr. Paul Wertsch and his views on medical education,

health care systems and the need for social advocacy. He is a community leader in providing quality care for patients who identify as LGBTQ+, while advocating for their rights. We are proud that he co-founded—along with his late wife, Dr. Kay Heggestad, and Dr. Daniel Barry—the Wildwood Clinic, and we are grateful for their mentoring of our medical students and the career opportunities they have provided for SMPH graduates.

You also will read about how student volunteers are addressing unique needs related to the pandemic. Further, COVID-19 has forced us to creatively expand our approaches to celebrations. Eight virtual class reunions were heartfelt successes this fall, and I appreciate our alumni family’s robust participation in the online Homecoming Town Hall with the Deans.

Earlier this fall, the virtual Middleton Society gathering included an inspiring keynote address by Dr. Paul Harari. Four years ago, Dr. Harari and his colleague, Dr. Deric Wheeler, created The Ride. This flourishing, annual event brings together a community of patients, families, health care providers and others who pedal to honor or remember loved ones as they raise money

for cancer research. Among the beneficiaries is Dr. Josh Lang, who received a scholarship that ignited an innovative pilot research project which helped him obtain competitive federal research funding (learn about his research in the Perspectives column).

We are proud that an exceptional faculty member, Dr. Shenikqua Bouges, was recognized as a 2020 Outstanding Woman of Color at UW-Madison. A recent fellowship graduate, we anticipate that she will join the SMPH’s Centennial Scholars Program. That program is designed to support the recruitment of new faculty from groups that experience health disparities in Wisconsin, with the awareness that faculty diversity enhances the quality of all of our missions.

In the Healer’s Journey section, we turn our attention to important reflections of an alumnus during this period of growing awareness of the epidemic of racism. I hope you will find Dr. Marvin Dingle’s timely poem, “If I Die Tonight,” as moving as I did.

As I reflect on the pandemic, the Grateful Dead’s classic lyrics come to mind: “What a long, strange trip it’s been.” The work of our SMPH family is accelerating our “trucking” toward the end of this public health catastrophe, and I believe we are seeing glimpses of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel.

When the pandemic is under control and we have safely entered the “new normal,” I hope your travels bring you back to the SMPH as we rekindle in-person traditions. Our New Year’s wish includes the opportunity in 2021 to welcome you as we continue to share exciting news about advances being made by the faculty, staff, students and alumni of your school of medicine and public health.

Robert N. Golden, MD
*Dean, University of Wisconsin
 School of Medicine and Public Health
 Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs,
 UW-Madison*

MARK FENLON, MD '84 (PG '87), MBA

These trying times. These challenging times. These uncertain times. Some version of these sentiments has likely been written or said more in 2020 than ever before. The COVID-19 pandemic—caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2—has upended pretty much everything we had considered as “normal.” As I write this, the United States is approaching 18 million cases and 320,000 deaths. No one would have contemplated these tragic numbers a year ago. In addition, the nationwide reckoning of systemic racism has added to our national angst.

In the midst of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, your University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) has continued to thrive, rapidly adjusting to a sudden new reality and recreating how our students learn and how our patients receive care.

The SMPH has been at the forefront of efforts nationally to battle the twin pandemics of coronavirus and racism. Researchers and clinical staff at UW-Madison have been leaders in the development of convalescent plasma therapy for COVID-19. The SMPH also has participated in one of the largest COVID-19 vaccine trials in the United States.

At the same time, efforts to do our best to make the SMPH an anti-racist school have continued. This work has been in progress for years, long before the events of this past summer. The Wisconsin Partnership Program has awarded more than \$10 million in grants to community-based projects, much of it aimed at eliminating health disparities. The Dean's Academic Support Fund, established as a priority initiative for the SMPH, supports medical students who are members of populations that are underrepresented in health care fields and who are experiencing health disparities in

Wisconsin. Demonstrating their commitment to issues of racial injustice, medical students led a very successful “White Coats for Black Lives” event in spring 2020.

The pandemic caused nearly all SMPH events to become virtual, making it difficult to stay connected. Initially, medical students quickly moved to an all-virtual format for learning. Fortunately, they are now back to in-person clinical rotations with ample safety measures in place. Traditional in-person events—including Match Day, graduation and the White Coat Ceremony—all were accomplished in online formats. I was impressed with the resiliency of our medical students as they navigated these major changes. Homecoming and class reunions, sponsored by the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA), also moved to a virtual format, and they were wildly successful. More than 400 viewers logged into the Homecoming Town Hall with the Deans live online event on Facebook, where they could “attend” without the risks associated with traveling during the pandemic.

Times of crisis and uncertainty tend to exacerbate inequities and add significant stress for students, faculty and staff. During these trying times, your philanthropy becomes even more important. State funding for higher education remains below pre-recession levels. Overall, the UW System is anticipating approximately \$320 million in combined lower revenue and increased costs between March 2020 and the end of the current fiscal year. In 1984, our tuition was \$5,796. Today, it is \$39,614, and the average debt of graduating SMPH medical students is now \$157,000. The real value of state revenue to UW-Madison is lower now than at any time in the past 45 years. The COVID-19 pandemic will intensify



these concerns as the state grapples with significantly lower revenue.

In my time on the WMAA Board of Directors and now as its president, I have become keenly aware of the remarkable work and outstanding reputation of the SMPH. As alumni, we own part of that, and we should be proud. Your support of the SMPH is more important than ever. Get involved, stay connected and please consider a donation to the school to assist our medical students as they become the next generation of Badger physicians.

Thank you for your support, and I wish you a happy and healthy new year!

**Mark Fenlon, MD '84
(PG '87), MBA**

*President, Wisconsin Medical
Alumni Association*

Black History for a New

JUSTIFIED ANGER™

Madison, Wisconsin

February 3, 2020



Rev. Alexander Gee, DMin, shares an address during a Black History for a New Day course, which teaches African American history in the context of U.S. history to help white people understand structural and institutional racism and how certain practices, behaviors and environments exacerbate the stress African Americans experience.

Healing Health Inequities

**STRONG COMMUNITY AND ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS
AIM TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS UNJUST CONDITIONS**

Hope and healing. These are top of mind for Rev. Alexander Gee, DMin, as he embarks on his work to address how the chronic stress of microaggressions experienced by Black people influences their health and well-being. Gee is the founder and president of the Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development. The center is using a Community Impact Grant from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP) to improve health within the African American community, where chronic stress contributes to shorter life expectancies and higher rates of disease, and where infant mortality rates among Black mothers are two to three times higher than white mothers. The awardee's approach to addressing the chronic stress caused by systemic racism is two-fold. It seeks to build leadership and social connection among emerging Black leaders; and it teaches a history course to educate white people on the roots of racism and its ongoing impact on the health of their Black colleagues, friends and neighbors.

"Black people are dying from chronic stress," says Gee. "When we understand how this stress makes us prone to illness—from COVID-19 to dementia—it is only then that we can change it."

Through its grant programs, the Wisconsin Partnership Program is striving to catalyze this change.

Microaggressions are defined as statements, actions or incidents regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority.

Health Equity Focus

The Wisconsin Partnership Program's commitment to addressing systemic, avoidable and unjust conditions that impact health is reflected in many grant programs and collaborations across the program's

pillars: community partnerships, research and education. To date, the program has awarded nearly \$36 million for initiatives and projects designed to advance health equity.

"The Wisconsin Partnership Program's approach to grant making and community-academic partnerships continues to evolve to reflect the latest understanding of what creates health, based on cutting edge National Institutes of Health scientific approaches," says Amy Kind, MD '01, PhD '11 (PG '05, '07), chair of the program's Oversight and Advisory Committee. "Though addressing health disparities has been at the core of our mission since the program's inception, a more explicit focus on health equity and the social determinants of health—including the impact of racism—ensures that our investments will have a great impact on health and well-being over the course of a lifetime."

Community-Led Partnerships

Since 2015, the Wisconsin Partnership Program has awarded more than \$30 million in community grants to advance health equity and address social determinants of

health. Awards support health-improvement initiatives led by rural and urban communities across Wisconsin, including in communities of color, such as Wisconsin's Hispanic, Native American and African American populations.

The grant to Nehemiah expands its Black History for a New Day course, which teaches African American history in the context of U.S. history to help white people

communities and businesses to provide coaching and training related to equity and inclusion goals. The results of these engagement and education efforts will inform how policy makers, employers, health care providers, public leaders and others view their work, and will help Black individuals and families survive, achieve health and succeed in Madison.

among farmers in southwest Wisconsin, says this population often doesn't prioritize their health and well-being.

"There are cultural barriers that impede farmers' ability to have the same opportunities to lead healthy lives," says Frakes, adding that they might joke about "putting duct tape on a broken finger," but the reality is they often don't seek support for physical or mental health problems—and mental health challenges continue to grow amid economic burdens and the generational pressure farmers feel to carry on their family farms.

However, Frakes also notes a shift in openness among farmers who are seeking support for themselves and fellow farmers. The grant team is harnessing this shift to change the narrative around farmer suicide and mental health. They are developing outreach strategies that are led by and for farmers; providing community education and training to improve responses to mental health crises; and partnering with local primary care providers and medical students to improve depression assessments and training specific to caring for farmers.

"Supporting the health of farmers is a broad societal issue, as well," explains Frakes. "The health of our farming community impacts our access to food and, ultimately, influences everyone's health and well-being."

Research Approaches

In addition to its investments in community partnerships, the Wisconsin Partnership Program supports nearly \$3 million in grants that incorporate a health equity approach to research, including projects to improve health care delivery for vulnerable communities.

Kara Hoppe, DO, MS '19, an assistant professor in the SMPH Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, is using one such grant to improve postpartum care for Black women. Hoppe; Tia Murray, co-founder of Harambee Village, a community-based program that provides pregnancy, birth and lactation support to mothers and families in south-central Wisconsin; and Susan Passmore, PhD, assistant director of the Center for Collaborative Health Equity at the



Farmers such as David Unbehaun (above) have been faced with economic uncertainties that can lead to mental health challenges, a situation being addressed by Chris Frakes, PhD, of the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program, and academic partners at UW-Madison and UW Division of Extension through a WPP Community Impact Grant.

understand structural and institutional racism and how certain practices, behaviors and environments exacerbate the stress African Americans experience. To date, more than 1,000 people from the Madison area have attended the nine-week course.

The center's leadership institute provides culturally relevant coaching that builds leadership skills, and networking and entrepreneurial opportunities for young African American professionals. These opportunities strengthen their ability to process the stress and anxiety caused by microaggressions they experience. More than 40 young Black leaders have participated in the program thus far.

The grant team also has developed new partnerships with school districts, faith

Rural Perspective

The health of Wisconsin's rural communities is affected by inequities, as well. In addition to health disparities influenced by access to health care and coverage, the community of farmers faces significant health challenges. Though stoic and unwavering in their commitment to their farms and families, these individuals experience chronic stress, social isolation and economic hardships that adversely affect their health and well-being. The current suicide rate for farmers is more than two and a half times that of the general public.

Chris Frakes, PhD, program director of Farm Well Suicide Prevention Project at the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program and leader of a Wisconsin Partnership Program grant aimed at preventing suicide

SMPH, are working with Harambee doulas to expand a successful home telehealth/remote patient-monitoring program for postpartum hypertension. Their goal is to improve the health of new Black mothers by providing an all-inclusive approach to addressing their postpartum needs.

The project recognizes that the chronic stress that many Black women experience over their lifetime—stemming from discrimination and bias—is a significant driver of poor birth outcomes among Black mothers and babies. Additional socioeconomic conditions, such as housing or income instability, can further exacerbate chronic diseases and health conditions, putting new Black mothers at heightened risk for complications after childbirth.

According to Murray, the partnership with Harambee reflects the crucial role doulas play in building trust between patients and providers because they understand the challenges and lived experiences of Black mothers.

“Increasing access to quality postpartum care that’s delivered in an environment based on trust and community connection will have direct health benefits for the mothers, their infants and entire families,” says Hoppe.

Education Programs

Health equity also is infused into education initiatives supported by the Wisconsin Partnership Program. More than \$3 million is directed specifically toward health equity topics and issues within curriculum and education programs.

The recently established Wisconsin Partnership Program Scholarship—a four-year scholarship created with the goal of increasing the SMPH’s enrollment of medical students from communities that have been historically underrepresented in medicine. Funds are provided to two or more medical students matriculating at the SMPH, for up to \$40,000 per year.

“Our hope is that the scholarship program will enhance the recruitment and retention of medical students from underrepresented communities, and in doing so, will help create and sustain a physician workforce

Governor’s Health Equity Council



Gina Green-Harris, MBA



Amy DeLong, MD, MPH



Shiva Bidar-Sielaff



Tito Izard, MD '96 (PG '99)



Paula Tran Inzeo, MPH '10



Jasmine Zapata, MD '13, MPH '17 (PG '16, '18)

The new Governor’s Health Equity Council includes six members with close ties to the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and UW Health. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers created the council to address factors that increase health disparities by creating a comprehensive plan to achieve long-lasting and equitable health outcomes for the state’s residents.

Gina Green-Harris, MBA, director, SMPH Center for Community Engagement and Health Partnerships, is chairing the 33-member council. She also directs the regional Milwaukee office of the Wisconsin Alzheimer’s Institute and the Milwaukee office of the SMPH’s Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families.

“We are excited to begin this new venture, and I’m thrilled that so many of my UW colleagues have been trusted to take on this vital work,” says Green-Harris.

Other council members affiliated with the SMPH and UW Health are:

- Amy DeLong, MD, MPH, family physician, Ho-Chunk Nation, and advisory board member, Native American Center for Health Professions, SMPH;
- Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, vice president and chief diversity officer, UW Health;
- Tito Izard, MD '96 (PG '99), president and CEO, Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., and member, Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association Board of Directors;
- Paula Tran Inzeo, MPH '10, program director, Mobilizing Action Toward Community Health, UW Population Health Institute; and
- Jasmine Zapata, MD '13, MPH '17 (PG '16, '18), assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics, affiliate assistant professor (CHS), Department of Population Health Sciences, faculty director, local branch of The Ladder, SMPH.

Reflecting upon a 2016 report published by the UW Population Health Institute, in which Wisconsin was given an overall health disparities grade of “D,” Green-Harris notes, “In a state that has so much to offer and such great potential for prosperity, we must ensure that all of our residents are lifted up and cared for. A ‘D’ grade in a state like ours is simply not acceptable.”

—Continued on page 32

JOHN WINGREWMEDIA SOLUTIONS



The Middleton Society Donor Wall at the Health Sciences Learning Center features this quote by William Middleton, MD: “Each of us contributes to advancing our mission; and when we do so together, we make the never-dreamed-possible a reality and we change history.”

Middleton Society

VIRTUAL GATHERING HONORS DONORS

At the September 2020 assembly of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health’s (SMPH) most dedicated supporters, Dean Robert N. Golden, MD, shared that he wished they were “breaking bread” together in person—rather than virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic—but everyone made the most of the need to meet online.

A fan of history, Golden described seminal contributions by the event’s namesake, William S. Middleton, MD, who served as dean of the UW Medical School (now the SMPH) for two decades starting in 1935 and including the WWII era.

“Under Dr. Middleton’s leadership, the school planted some of the most important

seeds that grew into our forest of tall trees of cancer research,” Golden noted. “For instance, in 1940, Dr. Harold P. Rusch created the nation’s first basic science department devoted to the multidisciplinary study of cancer, the storied McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research.”

Further, in 1952, Middleton addressed a crowd from the steps of a new addition to Wisconsin General Hospital that was devoted to cancer care, and he pledged the support of “every member of the medical school faculty” in the effort.

As Golden thanked Middleton Society attendees for their support in advancing research, training and clinical care for cancer and all other diseases that attack

people and populations, he introduced the keynote speaker: Paul Harari, MD, chair of the Department of Human Oncology, who co-founded The Ride—a cancer fundraising event—with Deric Wheeler, PhD ’04, an associate professor in the same department.

As he welcomed Harari to the virtual stage, Golden reflected upon his experience bicycling in the first such event four years ago.

“Their vision became a reality as more than 800 bikers rode off in support of cancer research at The Ride’s inaugural event in 2016. All biked for research, and many rode with a particular person in mind, someone who had been touched by

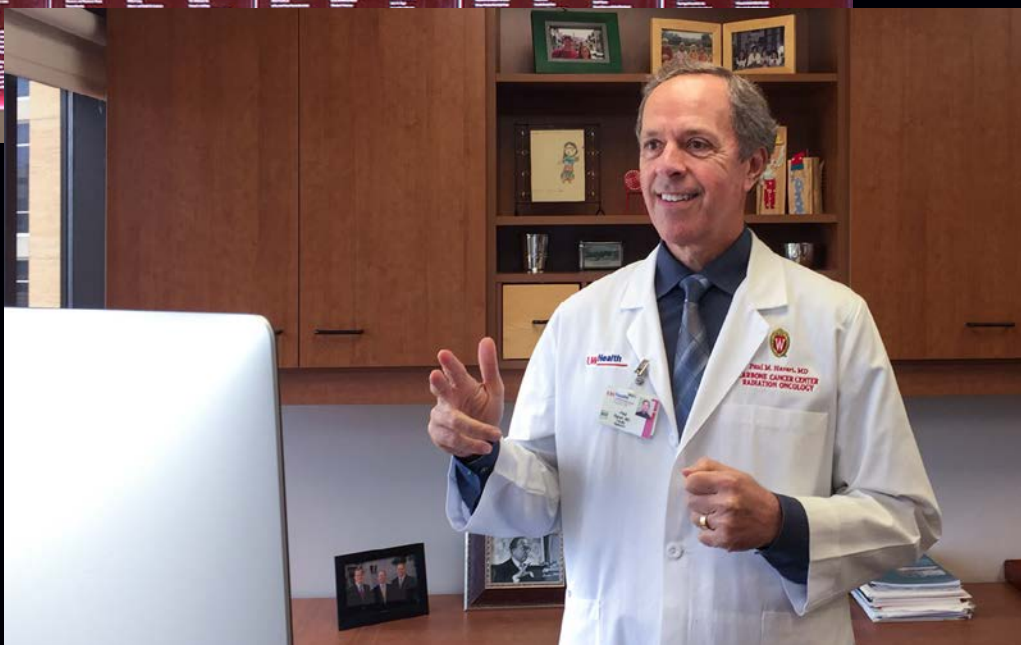


cancer, while many were themselves cancer survivors or current patients,” said Golden.

“It was an inspiring and lovely autumn day that I’ll always remember,” he added. “But the most important aspects of The Ride take place in the laboratory and the clinical trial check-in room, where scientists, study coordinators, patients and their families work together to advance our understanding of the fierce enemy known as cancer.”

The annual event has grown each year in number of participants (except 2020) and dollars raised. In total, The Ride has raised \$1.3 million, with 100 percent of rider-raised money directly powering the cancer research and clinical missions of the SMPH and UW Health.

A cancer clinician and translational researcher, Harari described Wheeler as “one of the most gifted, talented and tenacious cancer researchers I have ever known.”



Paul Harari, MD, described The Ride and cancer research at the Middleton Society event.

Harari added, “We make an ideal team, partly because we are so meticulous in our desire to bring forth high-quality activities and results.”

A tenet of The Ride, from the beginning, has been to involve the community—including professionals involved in cancer care and research, patients and their loved ones, who participate side-by-side.

Proceeds fill a major funding gap, given that only about 10 percent of grants submitted to the National Cancer Institute are funded, Harari noted. Through Ride Scholarships, researchers receive seed grants to ignite innovative projects that may otherwise not get funded.

To learn more about The Ride, see the article on page 28 or go to TheRideUW.org

Class Reunions

CYBER CELEBRATIONS DRAW FRIENDS FROM NEAR AND FAR

Proving that the pandemic can't quell the desire to celebrate milestones, eight University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's (SMPH) MD classes united virtually in fall 2020. With guidance from class representatives, the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) hosted online reunions for the Classes of 1980, '85, '90, '95, 2000, '05, '10 and '15. Executive Director Karen Peterson says turnout was incredible and feedback has been positive.

Steve Merkow, MD '80—who co-hosted the Class of 1980 reunion with Patrick McBride, MD '80, MPH—shares, “I had been skeptical about a virtual reunion, but I was blown away by how much I enjoyed seeing and hearing from my classmates.”

McBride adds, “It was enriching to hear updates about classmates' lives, and also to share some emotional moments about those who are facing illnesses, others we have lost and our mutual gratitude.”

He continues, “The Class of 1980 also announced a new scholarship, the Bruce C. Wilson, MD, Memorial Award, in honor of our classmate who we lost in 2018. We are grateful to Drs. Steve Merkow (MD '80) and Ann Bartos (MD '79) for creating the award with their generous starting gift of \$50,000 in matching funds, and we appreciate all others who have donated, as well.”

Aiming to ease medical students' financial burden with their gift, Merkow and Bartos note that Wilson was a cardiologist for more than two decades when he became increasingly interested in

end-of life-care; he subsequently became a hospice physician who taught widely about death and dying. The annual award will be given to one or more fourth-year medical students who demonstrate many of Wilson's outstanding attributes. For details, please contact Jill Watson at jill.watson@supportuw.org or (608) 262-4632.

About the Class of 2015 reunion, Marvin Dingle, MD '15, said he and his classmates were happy to gather after their first five years in practice. His poem is featured in Healer's Journey on page 33.

Another well-attended virtual event, the Homecoming Town Hall with the Deans, provides an update of SMPH activities; see <https://www.facebook.com/UWMedAlum/posts/10157757408095959>



Class of 1980

Top row (left to right): Steve Merkow, Andrea Larson, John Drawbert and Christian Peterson, Linda Zetley, John Herman, Gary Benke. Second row: Peter Rothe and Gail Amundson, Peggy Rupp, Patrick McBride, Karen Adler-Fischer, Karen Peterson, Sari Rotter. Third row: Dennis Schultz, Julie Jagemann, Dave Kloehn, Charles Kagen, Felix Yip, Jeff Winston. Fourth row: David Warner, Eric Hughson, Paul Caskey, Lori Neumann, Steven Schopler. Bottom row: Art Derse, Helene Connolly, David Duppler, Alan Strobusch, Sara Dillivan-Graves, Ann Wendling.

Class of 1985

Top row (left to right): Nisha Dave, Andrea Larson, David Larsen, Tim Gundlach, Sara Dillivan-Graves. Second row: Mary Rowe, Steven Blaha, Ronald Rothfusz, Jack Brewer, Mary Mishefske. Third row: Philip Bain, Tom Novacheck, Eric Singer, Steven Anderson, Daniel Ripp. Fourth row: Craig and Suzanne Zarling, Kerry Jedele, Lon Peterson, Peter Emanuel, Thomas Jaeger. Bottom row: Lori Allen, Sandra Mendez Takagi, Steve Wiesner, Karen Peterson.



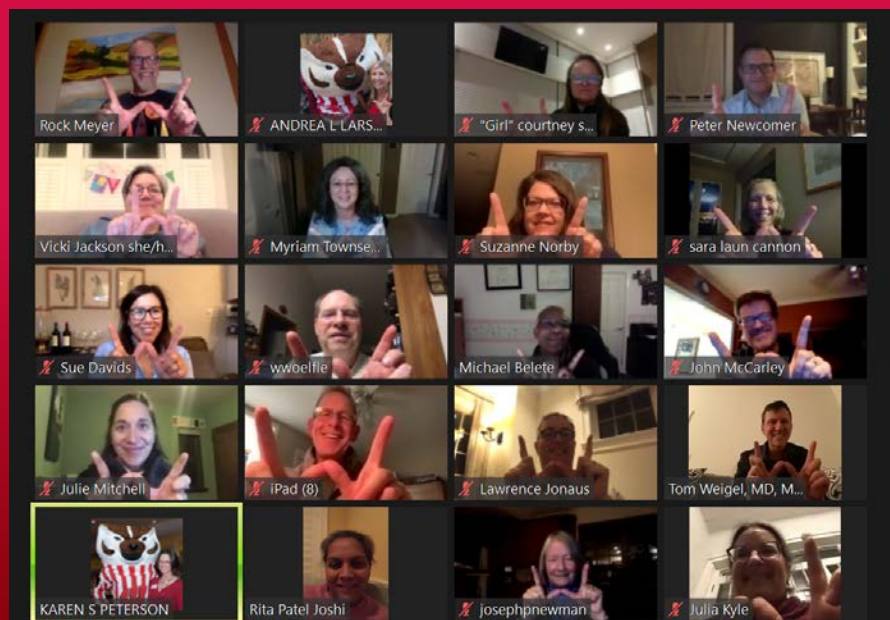
Class of 1990

Top row (left to right): Pam Heilman, Andrea Larson, Daniel Zimmerman, Paul Rust and Sue Schlafmann, Kathy Dalsing. Second row: John Hokanson, Humphrey Wong, Martha Sommers, Joshua Safer, Bill McIvor. Third row: John Frohna, John Daley, Thomas Beaver, Beth Neary, Jack Handley. Fourth row: Sara Dillivan-Graves, Joel Henry, Kurt and Meriel Rongstad, Susan Acuna, Daniel Beck. Bottom row: Thomas Knickelbine, Kevin Robertson, Shirley Handley, Karen Peterson, Scott Sell.



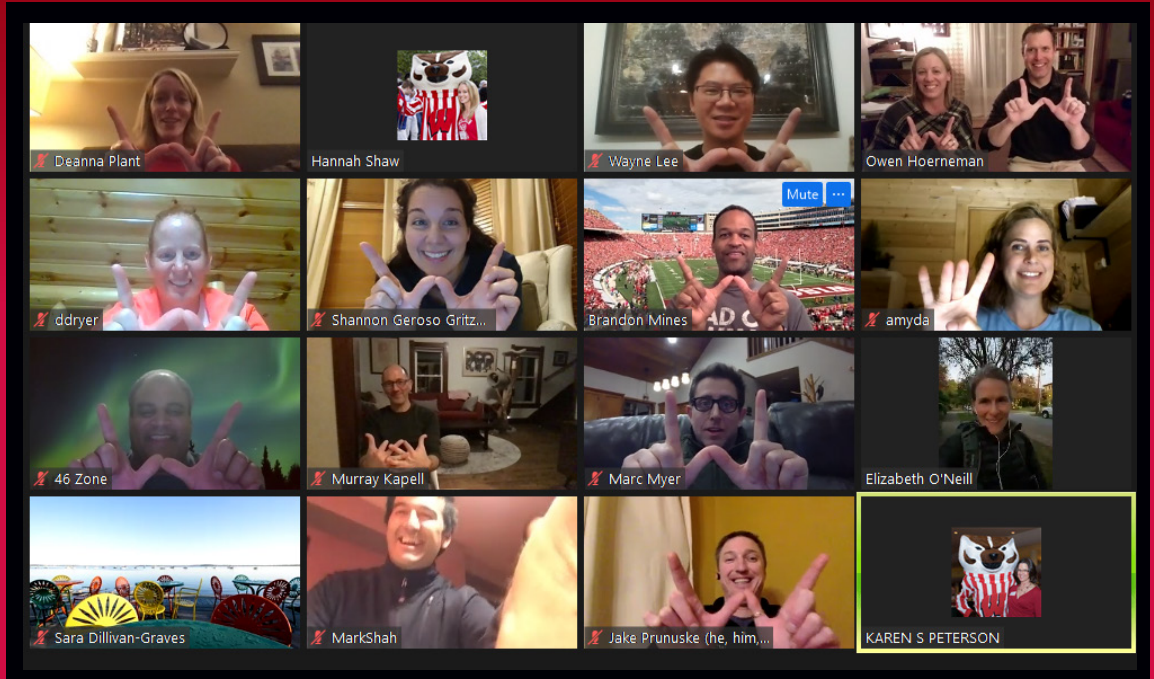
Class of 1995

Top row (left to right): Thomas Meyer, Andrea Larson, Courtney Scaife, Peter Newcomer. Second row: Vicki Jackson, Myriam Townsend, Suzanne Norby, Sara Laun-Cannon. Third row: Susan Davids, Wade Woelfle, Michael Belete, John McCarley. Fourth row: Julie Mitchell, Kurt Oettel, Lawrence Jonaus, Tom Weigel. Bottom row: Karen Peterson, Rita Joshi, Alida Evans, Julia Kyle.



Class of 2000

Top row (left to right): Deanna Plant, Hannah Shaw, Wayne Lee, Tanya and Brian Hoerneman. Second row: Deb Dryer, Shannon Gritzenbach, Brandon Mines, Amy Tomlinson. Third row: Christopher Taylor, Murray Kapell, Marc Myer, Elizabeth O'Neill. Bottom row: Sara Dillivan-Graves, Mark Shah, Jake Prunuske, Karen Peterson.



Class of 2005

Top row (left to right): Brian and Kim Arndt, Hannah Shaw, Brian Haugen, Scott Anderson. Second row: Jenny Krupp, Courtney Jensen, Sarah Fox, Andrew Braun. Third row: Katy Cahill, Christine Pagel, Jessica Rock, Brett Rusch. Fourth row: Sabrina Guse, Sara Lorenz, Karen Peterson.



Class of 2010

Top row (left to right): Sarah Tevis, Hannah Shaw, Lisa Shen, Jesse Coenen. Second row: Sara Dillivan-Graves, Hong Yin, Stephanie Place, Sarah Vepraskas. Third row: Nana Bentum, Matthew Harer, Jessica Schrieber, Jacqueline Mullvain. Fourth row: Olamide Zaka, Anjali Tannan, Matthew Szadkowski, Lin Li. Bottom row: Weronika Armstrong, Matt Young, Karen Peterson.



Class of 2015

Top row (left to right): Alison and Augie Saiz, Hannah Shaw, Ann Tran, Jamie Goehner. Second row: Laura Hanks, Mick Kelly, Benjamin Lipanot, Patrick McBride. Third row: Susan Vehar, Shola Vaughn, Allie Grace, Alison Gegios. Fourth row: Nayeli Spahr, Paul Stevens, Molly Day, Marvin Dingle. Bottom row: Melanie Scharrer, Elan Lindenbaum, Kathleen Penzenstadler, Karen Peterson.





Specialists at UW Health at The American Center perform an orthopedic surgery.

MATTHEW P. ABDEL, MD '07

My roles at the Mayo Clinic, where I am a professor of orthopedic surgery, include serving as chair of the Division of Orthopedic Surgery Research and vice chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery. I also am a consultant in the Division of Adult Reconstruction at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. I focus on complex total hip arthroplasties and total knee arthroplasties, particularly periprosthetic joint infections, arthrofibrosis and reconstructions after oncologic

resection. I have pioneered techniques for custom oncologic resections and reconstructions in the same setting.

Following my residency at the Mayo Clinic, I completed an adult hip and knee reconstruction fellowship at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City and a Müller Foundation/Hip Society European Fellowship in Hip Surgery. I also completed the Insall Traveling Fellowship in Knee Surgery.

As director of the Genetic Host Variation Laboratory, my

research focuses on the genetic expression profiles of people predisposed to arthrofibrosis. I am the principal investigator of a National Institutes of Health R01 grant to support this work. I also have received the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons Dorr Award, the Hip Society Aufranc Award, and the Knee Society Coventry Award. I have authored more than 280 peer-reviewed publications and 75 book chapters. I am currently a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Board of Directors.



I find orthopedic surgery to be incredibly rewarding. We can substantially improve patients' quality of life, including reducing their pain and increasing their function. We are able to cure pathologic processes. These are the reasons I chose this amazing specialty.

JASON JAGODZINSKI, MD '09

I am a pediatric orthopedic surgeon with University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), and I work primarily at our Benioff Children's Hospital of Oakland.

An aspect I love about my field is that it allows me to operate all over the body for many potential issues in the growing pediatric skeleton. I focus on trauma, osteogenesis imperfecta, neuromuscular conditions such as cerebral palsy and spina bifida, and sports injuries.

I've grown to enjoy doing modified Sofield osteotomies

with Fassier-Duval rod insertions for osteogenesis imperfecta. Kids with this condition have brittle bones that lead to numerous fractures, severe deformities and disability. To improve their quality of life, we realign and fix the long arm and leg bones with a "growing" rod. Caring for this condition incorporates fracture management, complex surgery, risk mitigation and long-term care of a vulnerable population, all of which I enjoy.

My interest in pediatric orthopedics began with my exposure to sports injuries as an athlete and my experience

growing up with a sibling with cerebral palsy. I firmed up my decision during my orthopedic residency at Loyola University in Maywood, Illinois, and I subsequently completed a pediatric orthopedic fellowship at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

I have taken on a role at UCSF as the pediatric surgical physician lead in informatics. Nationally, I am a member of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America and Pediatric Research in Sports Medicine.



Pediatric orthopedic surgery is an awesome field that includes operative and non-operative care. I get to help kids and their families through acute injuries to get them back into their daily lives, and I help others through chronic conditions in a way similar to care by a primary care provider.

VIRGINIA (GINNY) WINTERSTEEN, MD '82

After completing a residency at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, I headed to The DuPont Institute for a fellowship in pediatric orthopedics. For the past 32 years, I have practiced general pediatric orthopedics at Gundersen Health in La Crosse, Wisconsin. There, I have enjoyed the challenge of caring for everything from spine deformity, hip dysplasia, cerebral palsy, leg-length discrepancy and congenital foot syndromes, to general trauma in adult and pediatric

patients. On the same day, I have treated a newborn and a 104-year-old patient, both with hip pathologies. And some days, I operate on five different joints. I love the fact that there is nothing routine or repetitive in my practice.

I came into medicine through my involvement as a student athletic trainer at UW-Madison. I thought I would go into sports medicine, but during my residency, I became fascinated with how the growing skeleton responds to pathology and to treatment, so I chose pediatric orthopedics.

Each child presents at a different stage of growth, so we call upon our knowledge of the pathophysiology of the disease process and consider a constellation of potential treatment options, including surgical interventions. I enjoy the longitudinal relationship with my patients over their childhood years, and with their families. In pediatric orthopedics, we can help children who have been dealt a "short straw" in life optimize their function. The patients and families are very grateful.



Although orthopedics has not been a traditional field for women, I'd like female medical students to know there are women in every orthopedic subspecialty. You do not need to be a physical giant to be a giant in the field. Follow your dreams! If you need a mentor, please reach out to me or to the Ruth Jackson Society.

Class Notes

Compiled by Andrea Larson

We want to hear from you!
med.wisc.edu/shareyournews

Class of 1974

Timothy Peterson

was elected chair of the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Board of Directors for 2021. The board advocates for patient safety, provides strategic guidance on program development and administration, and shares ideas to ensure the organization's success. Peterson is a primary care physician with more than 30 years in private practice. He completed his family medicine residency at the University of Minnesota and has held roles at Thomas-Davis Medical Centers in Tucson. There, he served as president and chief executive officer. Subsequently, he served as the medical director for Pima Health System, vice president of medical affairs for Bridgeway Health Solutions and medical director of United Health Care Community Plan. Peterson is a quality management and quality improvement consultant in the State of Arizona's Division of Developmental Disabilities.



Answers to Urgent Environmental Questions, which was created as a guide for parents.

Class of 2012

Victor Tseng

received a \$1.5 million, five-year Career Development Award from the Veterans Administration (VA). It will support his transition toward independence as a physician-scientist in the VA. Tseng developed an interest in pulmonary disease and critical care medicine while rotating with Drs. Richard Cornwell and Keith Meyer on the SMPH pulmonary consult service. He completed a pulmonary science and critical care medicine fellowship at the University of Colorado and National Jewish Health Combined Program, and a National Institutes of Health fellowship in adaptation to hypoxia and translational pulmonary vascular biology. Tseng is an assistant professor of medicine at Emory University School of Medicine and a staff physician at the Atlanta VA. He studies the role of mitochondrial energy metabolism in pulmonary hypertension, right ventricular failure, acute lung injury and other critical illnesses.



Class of 2017

Adam Bailey received the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director's Early Independence Award for his project, "Determinants of Yellow Fever Pathogens in Humans." The award supports outstanding junior scientists with the intellect, scientific creativity, drive and maturity to bypass the traditional post-doctoral training period to launch independent research careers. Bailey's training has informed his approach to understanding complex systemic viral diseases, including viral hemorrhagic fever and COVID-19. His research initially will focus on dissecting the mechanisms governing coagulopathy in yellow fever, with the goal of developing broadly applicable therapies to treat viral hemorrhagic fever. He also received an NIH K Grant. He and his wife, **Erin Bailey, MD '17**, will soon move their careers to UW Health and the SMPH, where she will start a maternal-fetal medicine fellowship, and he will join the SMPH Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in a position that combines research and clinical care.



Class of 1980

Ruth Etzel

is a pediatric epidemiologist and public health specialist at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at The George Washington University in Washington, DC. She is editor in chief of a new book, *Protecting Your Child's Health: Expert*



Class of 2016

Alexander Girgis came up with the concept and design enhancements for a modified COVID-19 intubation box, resulting in increased safety (maximally contained aerosols) and improved intubation success. The box modifications have been published in the *Journal of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesiology*. Girgis is an anesthesiology resident at the University of California, San Diego.

WMAA's Corporate Status

In an October 30, 2020, virtual meeting, the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) Board of Directors and members in attendance voted unanimously to have the WMAA change from a 501c3 organization to a new model. An article about the proposed (now approved) structure appeared in *Quarterly* magazine, Volume 21, Number 4, 2019, page 23.



Goodbye Dear Friend

RENATA LAXOVA, MD, PHD

by Teresa Palumbo and Kaine Korzekwa

Renata Laxova, MD, PhD, a dedicated clinician, educator, advocate and researcher, passed away on November 30, 2020, following a brief illness in Tucson, Arizona.

A professor emerita of medical genetics and pediatrics at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), she made countless contributions in the decades between joining the faculty in 1975 and retiring in 2000. Her interests included intellectual and developmental disabilities, prenatal diagnosis of genetic disorders and birth defects, cancer genetics, and—above all—the relationships among medical professionals, their patients and families.

In her students, she fostered the importance of those doctor-family

relationships. She also was instrumental in establishing the Master of Genetic Counselor Studies Program in 1976 with its founding director, Joan Burns, MSSW.

Laxova is fondly remembered by her students for exemplifying compassion in patient care. Among them is Catherine Reiser, MS, CGC, director of the SMPH Genetic Counselor Training Program, who graduated in the third class of genetic counselors. Elizabeth Petty, MD '86 (PG '89), SMPH senior associate dean for academic affairs, also was mentored by Laxova.

“Renata was an amazing and inspiring woman who guided me throughout my career, starting when she invited me to shadow her for a day when I was a young teenager,” Petty says. “She inspired and supported me as I pursued a career in genetics from that day forward. The way she cared for her families and patients with a wide variety of physical and intellectual disabilities was exceptional. I still find myself using her words with patients.”

Laxova also helped establish the Genetic Contact Network. Within the

network, professionals throughout Wisconsin identify people in need of genetic counseling and make referrals. These efforts led to the Genetic Services Network of outreach clinics.

Laxova earned her medical and doctorate degrees from the University Medical School in Brno, in what is now the Czech Republic.

While known for the successes of her career, Laxova also is remembered for her experiences escaping both the Holocaust and communism. She escaped her homeland of the Czech Republic (then known as Czechoslovakia) ahead of World War II through safe passage to Britain on the last Kindertransport, which rescued thousands of children from the Holocaust. She returned in 1946 but fled again for Britain in the late 1960s with her husband and young children. The couple later moved to Wisconsin.

See a longer article about Laxova at <https://news.wisc.edu/holocaust-survivor-geneticist-patient-advocate-remembered-for-inspiring-others/>

IN MEMORIAM

Milton Shapson, MD '55
Mequon, Wisconsin
January 18, 2019

John M. Ackerman, MD '64
Santa Barbara, California
August 2, 2020

Richard C. O'Connor, MD '67
Savannah, Georgia
September 3, 2020

Eddie A. Negron, MD '83
Shalimar, Florida
July 23, 2020

Elmer R. Taake, MD '57
Appleton, Wisconsin
July 1, 2020

Martin J. Rubinowitz, MD '64
Denver, Colorado
February 13, 2020

Roger L. Kimmel, MD '74
Keokuk, Iowa
August 24, 2020

Daniel I. Kaufer, MD '88
Chapel Hill, North Carolina
July 2, 2020

Jerome R. Hanson, MD '61
Colorado Springs, Colorado
April 28, 2020

Robert D. Beckenbaugh,
MD '66
Austin, Texas
April 24, 2020

Ronald R. Sommerfeldt, MD '75
Owensboro, Kentucky
May 22, 2018

Former Faculty Member
Renata Laxova, MD, PhD
Tucson, Arizona
November 30, 2020

Quaran-TEAM

HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS COLLABORATE ON PANDEMIC-RELATED NEEDS

In the months since the COVID-19 pandemic reached Wisconsin, students in health professions programs at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) teamed up to help fulfill needs of community members in Madison, Milwaukee and other areas of Wisconsin. Students led some of the activities, while SMPH faculty and staff members—including Kristi Jones, MPH, director, Community Service Programs, and Melissa Lemke, program manager, Training in Urban Medicine and Public Health (TRIUMPH) Program—organized others. These photos show a sampling of such activities.



Foster

M4s Jose Carrillo and Alex Hua (pictured in left photo, left to right), and Yoseph Semma (pictured in foreground of right photo) have volunteered several times per week with the nonprofit FOSTER, a case management program that addresses the needs of underserved communities and families in Dane County. They deliver meals to people who don't have transportation to access food pantries or grocery stores.

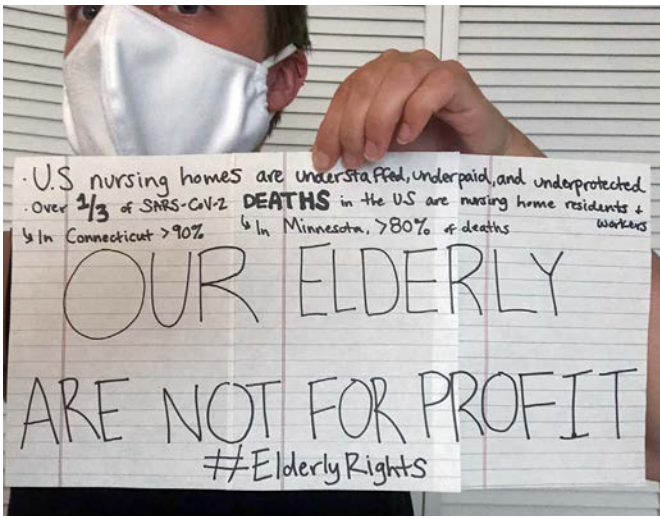
Project Linus

SMPH health professions students have made no-sew fleece blankets and donated them to Project Linus, which gifts them to children who are ill or who are facing traumatic situations. Here, M1 Felissa Hong displays her creation. Jones, who coordinated the materials, schedule and logistics of the donations, says this has been a perfect opportunity for students to work separately with a common goal.



DonatePPE

A group called DonatePPE organized a donation of face masks to front-line workers. TRIUMPH students Do Dang and Sara Cuadra Aruguete (left and right, respectively) volunteered for the effort; in this photo, they are dropping off 4,000 face masks to Froedert Hospital in Milwaukee County, which has been heavily hit by COVID-19.



Senior Chats

In summer 2020, Jones' office recruited student leaders to coordinate a group of students to hold social phone chats with senior citizens in Madison-area nursing homes and assisted living facilities. M4 Stacey Rolak and M3 Athena Wilson stepped up, and others have followed. Alexis M. Eastman, MD '10 (PG '13, '14), clinical assistant professor, SMPH Department of Medicine, Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology, and her colleagues arranged connections with facilities. Their goal is to provide social support from a distance for elderly individuals who experience feelings of separation and disconnection from loved ones due to the pandemic. Trainees in the SMPH's MD, Physical Therapy and Physician Assistant Programs were matched with seniors for weekly phone calls. Shown here, M3 Taylor Caldwell displays a sign in support of adequate COVID-19 precautions for seniors.



Med Supply Drive WI

As part of a Wisconsin effort and national thrust, volunteers in Green Bay, Madison and Milwaukee worked with community organizations, businesses, public health offices, emergency operation centers, clinics and hospitals to receive donations of personal protective equipment (PPE) and reallocate it to organizations and people in need, including essential workers. Shown here is M4 Yanzi Jiang, who delivered supplies by bicycle. M4s Sara Cuadra Aruguete and Kali Olson were regional coordinators for Wisconsin; they partnered with students from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee and Green Bay.

Forward Garden

Jones and several first-year medical students—including M1 Felissa Hong (in photo)—volunteered to harvest vegetables at the Forward Garden, one of the Madison-Area Food Pantry Gardens. Noting that this was an excellent activity because participants could maintain a safe distance as they worked, Jones points out another benefit: new medical students got to know each other at the start of the fall semester. The Forward Garden donated the vegetables to food pantries.



Voter Registration

M4 Camila Khan (pictured) used e-mail and social media to rally volunteer forces among health professions students at voter registration stations. Jones comments, "Knowing our students, they would have engaged with this cause even if not for COVID-19, but with the pandemic, their engagement made a big difference."



COVID-19 Messaging

M4s Angela Ai and Paige Skorseth (left to right, in separate panels of this Zoom screen shot) coordinated with UW-Madison undergraduate and graduate students to create an Instagram account as part of the UW Task Force for COVID-19. Volunteers aim to reach as many people as possible with accurate data and engaging information about safety precautions related to the novel coronavirus. See the Instagram account and web site: @doyourpart.covid or <https://www.doyourpartcovid.com/>

Fiedler Named Presidential Leadership Scholar

Amy Fiedler, MD, cardiac surgeon and assistant professor in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) Department of Surgery, has been named a 2020-21 Presidential Leadership Scholar. The scholars program selects 60 candidates annually from all geographic, professional and societal demographics to study leadership through the lens of the presidential experiences of George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

Scholars travel to each participating presidential center to learn from former presidents, former administration officials,

business and civic leaders, and leading academics. They create a personal leadership project intended to solve a problem in their community, country or the world. To address the challenges of rheumatic heart disease in Rwanda, Fiedler has partnered with non-profit Team Heart to establish the first cardiac surgical unit there.

Fiedler had attended two in-person sessions before the COVID-19 pandemic and has since turned to virtual means of advancing her project. Because Fiedler and Team Heart are unable to travel to Rwanda to mentor surgeons and provide necessary infrastructure, she is working with technology firms to

develop a virtual operating room. Cameras would be implemented in the operating room in Rwanda, allowing for real-time operative feedback from on-call physicians with Team Heart.

Fiedler says she has been able to “take my love of cardiac surgery and couple it with a passion for global health, human rights and improving health equity.”

She hopes her experience in the Presidential Leadership Scholars program will not only have an impact on rheumatic heart disease patients in Rwanda, but also bring visibility to women in science, technology and medicine.



Engle Honored with Presidential Early Career Award

Jonathan Engle, PhD '11, regards his Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers as “validation that the physics research we do in medicine is important to the nuclear physics community.”

The award, the highest honor given by the U.S. government to scientists and engineers at the outset of their careers, recognizes individuals who show potential for leadership in the advancement of science and technology. An assistant professor in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Departments of Medical Physics and Radiology, Engle was nominated by the U.S.

Department of Energy in 2016, and formally received the award in Washington, DC, in 2019.

His team is pioneering ways to use high-energy neutron fluxes to create radionuclides used to diagnose and treat diseases such as cancer. He is studying ways to manufacture specific radionuclides with particle accelerators on a scale large enough for clinical application. The method he has developed may generate radionuclides that traditional methods struggle to produce. These radionuclides are essential for targeted therapy, which attacks cancer cells with greater specificity than conventional treatments, and which spares more healthy tissue.

Engle predicts targeted radionuclide therapy will be used in the near future in combination with methods such as genetic therapy and immunotherapy to improve cancer treatment. For him, the work is the perfect combination of helping others, collaborating and problem-solving, letting him—as he puts it—“interact with really cool, very motivated people.”

Ultimately, Engle hopes his work will lead to more effective treatments with fewer undesired side effects compared to traditional methods.

“I want to do something that has a real chance of helping people in a tangible way,” he says.



Shah Leads Grant Aimed at Enhanced Emergency Care for People with Dementia

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is one of four sites awarded a total of \$7.5 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for research to improve care in emergency departments for people with dementia.

Through combined expertise among health care providers and researchers in emergency medicine, geriatrics, and Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, the project aims to identify and address gaps in emergency care for people with dementia. Manish Shah, MD, MPH, professor, SMPH Department of Emergency

Medicine, is a co-principal investigator with Ula Hwang, MD, MPH, Yale School of Medicine. The Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis also are participating in the study.

"The emergency department is not an ideal care setting for people with dementia," Shah says.

For example, many commonly used medications are problematic for people with dementia. Better understanding which medications are safest for this vulnerable population would help clinicians better care for them.

The study has two phases. In phase one, the co-principal investigators will convene a panel of experts to review current research related to dementia patient care in emergency departments, identify areas where more research is needed, and create an infrastructure in which care researchers across the country can conduct this research.

In phase two, the research will commence. More than \$1.1 million will be available to fund nine pilot study awards. Phase two also will see the deployment of resources and mentoring support to help researchers successfully execute their research projects.



Bridges Garners Prestigious Veterans Health Administration Award

Ilan Bridges, MD (PG '86, '89), a professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and chief of staff at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, has received the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) John D. Chase Award for Executive Excellence in Health Care. The award recognizes sustained excellence in executive leadership by an individual from any health care discipline.

Known for a humble demeanor that belies his many accomplishments, Bridges has spearheaded many organizational quality

improvement initiatives since taking the helm of the Madison VA in 2005. The results have earned the Madison facility a national reputation as a high-performing VA hospital.

"It is a pleasure to work with Dr. Bridges in his role as chief of staff at the Madison VA hospital," says Robert N. Golden, MD, dean of the SMPH. "He is a remarkably effective and innovative leader, as well as a wonderful partner, colleague and person. I am delighted he has received this top honor from the Veterans Health Administration."

Bridges has held multiple VA leadership roles during the COVID-19 pandemic. He serves on the VHA's national COVID-19 care transition planning team

and on the Madison VA's incident command team. He also is the medical incident commander for the VA Great Lakes Health Care System, which has eight hospitals from central Illinois to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In early summer 2020, he led the effort by the Chicago-area's two VA hospitals to accept humanitarian patients in partnership with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"I am thrilled that Dr. Bridges has received this national recognition," says Lynn M. Schnapp, MD, chair, SMPH Department of Medicine. "His work to ensure the best possible care for veterans during this pandemic has been nothing short of amazing."



CLINT THAYER/DEPT. OF MEDICINE

PAUL A. WERTSCH, MD '70

**Community-
Minded**

Physician

Entrepreneur

Advocate

Looking to the future, Paul A. Wertsch, MD '70, has established the Heggstad-Wertsch Family/Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association Scholarship Fund to help support the next generation of students at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health.

by Masarah Van Eyck, PhD

The years that Paul A. Wertsch, MD '70, spent at University of Wisconsin-Madison—first as an undergraduate and, later, as a medical student at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH)—left an indelible mark on his career.

For one, as a young man living in Madison in the mid- to late-1960s, Wertsch says he couldn't help but be influenced by the political unrest and social activism he saw all around him. For another, it's where he met his classmate and future wife, Kay Heggstad, MD '70 (PG '75). As the first woman to graduate from the SMPH's Family Medicine Residency Program, Heggstad shared Wertsch's pioneering spirit. Together, they devoted their careers to realizing the progressive and reformist ideals that punctuated their early years on campus. Some related memories are recorded in Heggstad's self-penned 2017 obituary, which went viral for its humor and tell-it-like-it-is account of navigating the health care system as a patient with multiple myeloma.

Certainly, their greatest manifestation of these ideals is the independently owned Wildwood Family Clinic, which Wertsch, Heggstad and Daniel J. Barry, MD (PG '76), founded in 1978 on Madison's east side.

Recalling the "egalitarian spirit" that inspired their choice to found a clinic, Wertsch says, "Working in a group where you're not in control just wasn't appealing."

From the onset, the trio focused on "getting the right people in and being a small group so we didn't have to go through a huge corporate process to get things approved," says Wertsch, adding that the ability to adopt new practices allowed them a different kind of relationship with patients.

"We believed if you told people the truth, you could get them to work with you," he notes.

Illustrating the formula's success, Wildwood has grown to include a dozen physicians—including some who earned their medical degrees at the SMPH, others who graduated from the school's Family Medicine Residency Program, and one who holds a master of public health degree

from the SMPH. They also employ several physician assistants and physical therapists, as well as psychiatric social workers.

Having recently opened a second location in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, the clinics emphasize treating the whole patient by offering in-house laboratories, physical therapy rooms, imaging, massage therapy and health coaching.

"We were holistic before people were holistic," Wertsch shares.

Another ground-breaking aspect of Wildwood Clinic is that, from the beginning, the founders made a point of hiring women physicians. Wertsch notes that Heggstad was the second female doctor to deliver babies in Madison, with the first being the physician who delivered her.

Further, having always emphasized maternal health, Wildwood is among the few clinics in Madison that provide lactation consultants outside of the hospital and is the city's only Milk Collection Depot for nursing mothers who wish to donate their milk.

Although Wertsch left his practice when his wife was ill and "just didn't go back," he is far from retired; he jokes, "I still go to meetings and bother people with my ideas."

He also remains passionately involved in reforming the health care system. He has tackled the health care worker shortage, supported gay rights and spoken out against a faltering Medicare system.

Champion for Medical Education and the Health Care Workforce

Recalling back to 2003, when Wertsch was serving as president of the Wisconsin Medical Society, he says, "It already looked like there would be a shortage of nurses."

Indeed, that shortage continues, and Wisconsin also is facing additional health provider shortages, including primary care physicians, surgeons and child psychiatrists.

Wertsch's work through the years on several task forces and work groups has given him a handle on the reasons behind these shortages. For instance, he notes, less competitive salaries and difficult schedules can deter future physicians from practicing in primary care. Wertsch aims to help the public understand what's at stake—such as how a

shortage of generalists will lead patients to visit more costly specialists, who may order unnecessary, costly tests, he says.

Through a study conducted by the Wisconsin Council on Medical Education and Workforce, Wertsch hopes "to get some facts and find a way for society to help solve these issues." Given his record, there's reason to believe he will succeed.

Bolstering the next generation of physicians has always been important to Wildwood Family Clinic's health care providers. Thus, they mentor SMPH medical students at the clinic and teach SMPH family medicine residents at St. Mary's Hospital.

"Teaching keeps us sharper and ensures that we will have good doctors to care for us in the future," says Wertsch.

Early Advocate for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues

A longtime active member of the Madison chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Wertsch brought this advocacy to the national level when, in 2005, he was named the inaugural chair of the American Medical Association's (AMA) Advisory Committee on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Issues. He successfully led that committee as it developed a resolution convincing the AMA to reject the Don't Ask Don't Tell policy, which was in effect in the U.S. Military from 1994 to 2011. The resolution argued that the policy forced physicians to lie in military personnel records, which were open to commanding officers, or risk their patients' careers.

Noting that the AMA's stance was quite a turn for an association characteristically reticent to take political positions, Wertsch says, "We got them to stand by it, and there was a lot of national attention on this. Eventually, the military rescinded this policy, and it influenced the country at large."

He found similar success as an advocate for gay marriage. As chair of the Wisconsin Medical Society's Task Force on GLBT Issues, Wertsch convinced the organization to support gay marriage, arguing that dependent children of GLBT parents should receive the same benefits, including health care and parental sick leave, as those

with heterosexual parents. Later Wertsch succeeded in this cause with the AMA. As medical societies began to publicly recognize the ways in which gay rights impacted their professions, the public also gained awareness and acceptance.

Influencer about Medicare

About Wildwood's 2012 announcement that it would be the first clinic in the region to consider turning away new patients insured by Medicare, Wertsch recalls, "I was afraid of how patients would react. But they were quite positive after they understood how Medicare reimbursement affects the physician office."

Noting that it was not an easy choice, Wertsch reflects on his own aging patient population as he says, "After all, as a family doctor, your practice kind of grows with you."

Yet, as someone who proudly served for eight years on the AMA Council for Medical Service, Wertsch understood very well the frustrating circumstances of the system. He

hoped that by taking a stand, the Wildwood Clinic's leaders might help the public understand the situation, too.

Agreeing to be profiled by journalists, Wertsch explained how the government was reimbursing primary care visits at a fraction of the cost compared to specialty visits. Not only was this an unsustainable business model for the clinic, he argued, it ignored the role that primary care providers can have in drastically reducing health care costs. After all, whether treating strep throat, diagnosing early symptoms of appendicitis or delivering healthy babies, primary care often translates into preventive care.

Even for more complex diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, he says, patient education and counseling are essential.

"But people don't want to change their diets. They want to take pills," Wertsch notes, adding that this leads to a situation in which insurance companies continue to reimburse visits to specialists, and researchers keep

developing drugs "that allow people to keep eating what they want."

About that time, he says, "I think a lot of people learned much more about the economics of how this works."

And while he feels that his messages still face an uphill battle, his commitment to medical care that encourages patient education, partnerships and advocacy remains unthreatened.

"I feel privileged that I could take part in people's lives," Wertsch says of the deep relationships he built with his patients. "And they took part in mine. It was a two-way street, and it was wonderful."

Noting that specialists may enjoy higher salaries and better schedules compared to primary care physicians, he shrugs and says, "But I don't think specialists enjoy their lives as much—and they probably don't get hugged by their patients as frequently as I have, either."

Wertsch Remembers the Blue Bus

Paul Wertsch, MD '70, remembers the progressive origins of Madison's Blue Bus Clinic, the city's first free clinic that started out educating and counseling community members about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and psychotropic drug use.

"When I came to medical school, the American Medical Student Association was sort of a staid organization, but the Student Health Organization (SHO) was just being developed. I went to Austria for an international medical student meeting, and that really influenced me as far as my activism was concerned."

Upon returning to Madison in 1968, Wertsch served as president of the SHO until he earned his medical degree in 1970.

"We were an independent student organization, but for advice and help, we would talk to Dr. Ted Goodfriend," he says.

"In Wautoma, Wisconsin, there was a migrant worker clinic, and we got funding to work there in the summer of 1968. Student volunteers and faculty members from UW-Madison went there once a week to staff the clinic outside the pickle farms. Over time, we wanted a bus to get to the migrant camps," he recalls.

Wertsch, along with fellow medical students—including Kay Heggstad, MD '70 (PG '75), Neal Halsey, MD '71, and Christine Nelson, MD '70—convinced Dean Eichman to purchase an old school bus.

Wertsch recalls that, once again, Goodfriend's support proved helpful because he let the students use a toll-free phone in his lab to purchase the bus. With a coat of donated blue paint, the Blue Bus began its long and storied existence.

At the end of the 1968 growing season, students found themselves with nowhere



to use the bus, so they parked it on Mifflin Street. There, it became an impromptu free clinic in which medical student volunteers provided information and counseling about STDs and psychotropic drugs to the Madison community.

"The first patient was a dog that had overdosed on someone's marijuana brownies," recalls Wertsch.

Thus began a model that continued long after the literal bus rolled to a stop. In 1970, the Blue Bus Clinic moved out of the vehicle and into the basement of a building on North Bassett Street, where it served the community for decades. It is now part of the University Health Services.

Max Fox Award



George Fall, MD—founder of Fall General Surgery, LLC, in Ashland, Wisconsin—received the 2020 Max Fox Preceptor Award from the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) and University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH). They give the prestigious annual award to an outstanding preceptor whose effective service as a mentor and teacher has guided medical students. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fall's award ceremony was held virtually in November rather than along the picturesque shore of the northernmost Great Lake.

Recognizing Fall's practice location and reputation, Dean Robert N. Golden, MD, called him a "truly *superior* preceptor."

Golden continued, "Dr. Fall is a stellar advocate of medical education. He is an outstanding role model for our students, providing them with individualized learning experiences in a rural setting. A primary goal of the SMPH is to increase the number of physicians who practice medicine in Wisconsin, especially in underserved rural and urban settings. I thank Dr. Fall, his clinic, the Memorial Medical Center and the Ashland community for helping us achieve this goal by providing the resources and displaying the dedication that has allowed our medical students to gain the experiences needed to improve health in rural communities."

FALL HONORED FOR LONG-STANDING SUPPORT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION

The Max Fox Preceptor Award was established by the WMAA in 1969 and named for its first recipient, who taught for 46 years, served as a preceptor for two decades and influenced the careers of more than 4,000 physicians.

Many people spoke highly about Fall, who earned his medical degree at the University of Minnesota, completed his general surgery residency at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa, and practices at several hospitals and medical centers in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

A first-year medical student in the SMPH's Wisconsin Academy for Rural Medicine, Victoria (Tori) Johnson grew up in Ashland, with Fall as a family friend. After Johnson completed her undergraduate degree at UW-Madison, she returned to her hometown for a year to prepare for medical school. Fall allowed Johnson to shadow him at the clinic and nearby hospitals.

"Having this experience before I was in medical school was a huge blessing," said Johnson, who plans to practice rural medicine in Wisconsin, perhaps in Ashland.

Kelli Culver, NP, Fall General Surgery, said, "It has been a privilege to work with such an excellent provider, teacher and person. Dr. Fall teaches students to treat patients as if they are family. Students are made to feel like an important part of our team even in their short time here!"

Deb Dryer, MD '00, chief medical officer and physician, NorthLakes Community Clinic, Ashland and Iron River, Wisconsin, reflected upon her informal summer rotation with Fall, after her first year of medical school.

"I was nervous and naive, and I was impressed with his willingness to spend time teaching," said Dryer. "As a physician, I see Dr. Fall go above and beyond the call of duty to get to know his students and energize those around him. He provides students with

a learning environment in which being wrong is an opportunity to learn and grow."

Angela Blackman, business manager, Fall General Surgery, described how Fall encourages each student to rotate briefly with every member of the clinic to learn about each role and process, including patient scheduling, check-in, prior authorizations, pre-surgical consults, billing, insurance and marketing, many of which Blackman helps coordinate.

"This exposure lets students know what it takes to open a small private practice like ours in case they decide to pursue this type of practice in their careers," said Blackman.

Fall conducts procedures and surgeries throughout the region so patients—who come from as far away as Lake Superior's North Shore—can get care as close to home as possible. He is among only a few surgeons to treat varicose veins in the area.

He shared, "I have enjoyed the many years I have been working with fourth-year medical students from the SMPH. I believe the Ashland medical community and the patients who allow the students to participate are a big part of this award, as well. Working with the students, other preceptors and the SMPH is a blessing, and I feel the Max Fox Award is the icing on a very good cake."



2020 and 2000 Max Fox Award recipients, respectively: George Fall, MD, and Aryn "Joe" Koeller, MD '61, a retired family physician from Ashland

SHENIKQUA BOUGES, MD (PG '20)

Outstanding

Woman

of Color

Award

by Madeline Rastall, MS

As an accomplished clinical researcher who is committed to serving marginalized groups, Shenikqua Bouges, MD (PG '20), was among those who earned 2020 University of Wisconsin-Madison Outstanding Women of Color Awards. Her generosity, passion for her work and spirit of service have inspired those around her, and these traits have been noticed.

"I was shocked when I heard about [the honor]. I thought it was amazing, but it also motivates me to continue striving for my best. It's very encouraging to me," says Bouges, an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine's Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH).

As a recent fellow-turned-faculty member, Bouges focuses on addressing the underrepresentation of Blacks/African Americans in Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research. African Americans are nearly twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as white people, and Bouges is working to determine the best recruitment strategies to improve African Americans' enrollment and participation in Alzheimer's disease research. To do this, she is studying why people trust medical researchers, investigating various trust-building techniques and testing the success of different recruitment strategies to improve an individual's willingness to participate in research.

"Community work has always meant a lot to me, and I wanted whatever career choice I made to involve public service."

—Shenikqua Bouges, MD (PG '20)

Bouges also recognizes the importance of providing dementia resources to African Americans, and she has not only dedicated her career to it, but looks to help her family and community, too.

This work is personal to Bouges, as dementia runs in her family. She makes sure to talk with her family members to help them understand dementia, and she keeps a list of her grandmother's medications in her phone to help her keep track of them. Making sure her family and community have the resources they need to stay proactive about their health is Bouges' top priority.

"Community work has always meant a lot to me, and I wanted whatever career choice I made to involve public service," she shares.

Throughout her education and career, volunteering has been a priority for Bouges. As an undergraduate student, she served at clinics and hospitals and traveled to Jamaica to work with children living with HIV; more recently, she volunteered with the Department of Medicine's COVID-19 Journal Club and mentored undergraduate students who are from minority communities and are interested in pursuing careers in Alzheimer's disease research.

Bouges earned her medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine in Charleston, and she completed a residency in internal medicine and pediatrics at the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

Upon her move to Madison, Wisconsin, for her fellowship in geriatric medicine, she became involved with Memory Sunday, an initiative to increase awareness about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and encourage churches to recognize dementia in the month of June.

"I provided a presentation on Memory Sunday for a health ministry event at our church, and I believe people were very receptive to the information provided," she notes.

Now, every June, the church will acknowledge Alzheimer's and related dementias. But her service work does not end there. Bouges also had a conversation about health and wellness at a Get Movin' exercise class, where participants raved over her ability to listen, make medical language understandable and offer solutions to their questions.

"Not only is she a knowledgeable and conscientious physician, she shows a unique balance of respect and empathy toward her older patients—another population frequently marginalized. With all her patients, she listens and takes the extra time."

—Carey Gleason, MS '09, PhD

From the colleagues who feel privileged to work next to her, to family and community members who feel more confident to seek out the health care they need, it is safe to say that Bouges' compassion and caring heart have left a mark on everyone she meets.

Carey Gleason, MS '09, PhD, associate professor, Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology, Department of Medicine, who nominated Bouges for this honor, describes her as someone she would want to care for her own mother.

"Not only is she a knowledgeable and conscientious physician, she shows a unique balance of respect and empathy toward her older patients—another population frequently marginalized. With all her patients, she listens and takes the extra time," says Gleason.

The thought of making a difference in someone else's life is what keeps Bouges moving forward.

She concludes, "That's what gives me the feeling to keep going, just knowing that I'm doing something to potentially help someone else, or make someone else's life better."

The Ride Inspires Participants

AND POWERS INNOVATIVE CANCER RESEARCH

The Ride in 2017



by Rob Kelly

Federal grants are the largest source of funding for cancer research, but intense competition for limited funds means that not all high-quality, high-impact projects make the cut. Investigators can increase their chances by demonstrating project feasibility with preliminary data from pilot studies. But proof-of-concept projects also are expensive. Where does the money come from?

Increasingly, the answer to this question for cancer researchers at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) is The Ride, a benefit for cancer research. Rolled out in 2016, this popular and growing annual event has already raised over \$1.3 million for innovative cancer research and treatment.

“Raised Here. Stays Here.”

“We created The Ride as a fun and inspiring way to get the community involved in funding promising cancer research. And we’ve gotten a great response,” says Deric Wheeler, PhD '04, associate professor, Department of Human Oncology, and co-founder and director of the event.

“The Ride empowers people to be part of a community effort to help drive the UW research engine and enable our researchers to work toward making cancer treatments more effective,” he notes.

In 2020, The Ride modified the event to ensure the health and safety of participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was

no central gathering or set time to ride the course. Participants had the option to ride one of the routes at their leisure or take part in the new Global Program, which enables riders to participate from anywhere around the world. The Ride attracted more than 850 registrants in 2020, a remarkable accomplishment in a year when many events had to cancel completely, says Wheeler.

“We knew it was critical to deliver a safe environment for those participating on-course in 2020, and we wanted to expand the reach of The Ride to allow people worldwide the ability to impact the UW-Madison cancer mission,” he explains. “The new Global Program provides individuals the ability to partake in the annual event remotely from their hometown by completing one of the many distance routes while advancing The Ride’s mission

of accelerating cancer research and patient treatment programs.”

The motto of The Ride from the beginning has been “Raised Here. Stays Here.” All dollars generated by The Ride go toward funding innovative cancer research projects and programs. The Ride Scholarship program competitively funds projects that emphasize translating discoveries made in the lab to the clinic with the goal of improving cancer treatment.

“The Ride Scholarships provide opportunities for researchers to apply their creativity to complex questions and advance their work so they can compete for funding from other sources, such as the National Cancer Institute,” Wheeler says. “This program funds excellent projects that might have been shelved if not for the commitment and generosity of The Ride’s participants, donors, volunteers and sponsors.”

\$1.3
MILLION TO
40 PROJECTS

So far, The Ride Scholarship program has awarded over \$1.3 million to more than 40 projects and programs encompassing a wide range of cancer research subspecialties, including genomics, imaging, immunology, population health, precision oncology, radiation therapy, targeted therapies and viral oncology.

“We knew that awarding seed grants from The Ride would be a powerful mechanism to ignite researchers’ best ideas and help them gain early traction,” notes Paul Harari, MD, chair of the Department of Human Oncology and co-founder of The Ride. “We have seen a whole cadre of Ride Scholars gain a foothold in attaining federal funding support with stimulus from The Ride.”

In 2017, Joshua Lang, MD, MSc '17 (PG '08, '11), associate professor, Department of Medicine, earned a \$25,000 Ride Scholarship for a pilot project to develop

new biomarkers of epigenetic alterations in prostate cancer with the goal of developing new approaches for cancers that have become resistant to therapy. With this seed money, he was able to successfully compete for a multi-million dollar R01 grant from the National Cancer Institute to advance this important research.

Zachary Morris, MD, PhD (PG '16), assistant professor, Department of Human Oncology, was a 2016 Ride Scholar. The award enabled him to pursue highly innovative research ideas to generate supporting data that helped secure more than \$8 million in federal funding for his laboratory program over the subsequent four years, exploring the combined use of radiation and immunotherapy to treat cancer.

“That funding is the direct result of early seed money provided by The Ride,” shares Morris. “In addition, the results we generated from our research have brought two novel clinical trials to the University of Wisconsin. This is directly impacting the care available to cancer patients.”

He notes, “The Ride has a very special place in my heart. We rode the very first Ride as a family. Later that year, my dad was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The second year, my dad and I rode a tandem bike because he was no longer able to pedal. My dad passed away the following year, and we rode in his absence. The Ride is one of those important landmarks in my life and that of my family. It reminds us we’re all in this together. Participating in The Ride and supporting this

“The Ride Scholarships provide opportunities for researchers to apply their creativity to complex questions and advance their work so they can compete for funding from other sources, such as the National Cancer Institute.”

—Deric Wheeler, MD '04

cause is a great way to help the University of Wisconsin’s cancer research and, ultimately, cancer patients.”

Reflecting on sentiments such as those shared by Morris, Harari says, “The Ride is a remarkably inspirational event. Bringing cancer patients and their families together with health care providers and community supporters is a very powerful formula.”

Organizers are planning several exciting changes for the next version of The Ride, which will take place on September 26, 2021. The ever-growing event will occur at the American Family Insurance headquarters in Madison. In addition to five cycling routes (100 mile, 100K, 50K, 25K and 5K), The Ride 2021 will include a 5K run/walk and a 13.1 mile half-marathon.



THERE'S MORE ONLINE
including photos from 2020
and open registration for 2021:
See TheRideUW.org





MOLLY CARNES, MD,
MS '01 (PG '81)

Breaking

through

Biases

Having met as medical students in New York, Molly Carnes, MD, MS '01 (PG '81) (right), and her husband, Bennett Vogelman, MD (PG '81, '85) (left), came to UW Health for their residencies and established long, productive careers at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health and UW Health.

by Beth Pinkerton

As a University of Michigan freshman who excelled in math and science, Molly Carnes, MD, MS '01 (PG '81), recalls her father encouraging her to become a doctor.

She reflects, "There's such power in being told by a parent—in particular, for a girl to be told by her father—'you're smart and you work hard.'"

Carnes earned her medical degree at the State University of New York at Buffalo and made it her life's work to be a champion for the advancement of women and other talented individuals who have historically been underrepresented in medicine.

After completing her internal medicine residency at University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics (now UW Health) her fellowship in geriatrics and gerontology there was the perfect launch pad.

"Geriatrics was a new subspecialty at the time. It combined the best of everything," says Carnes, now the Virginia Valian Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology, at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH); until early-2020, she also maintained a clinical practice at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital (VA).

"When I started my training, the phrase 'social determinants of health' hadn't been used yet, but you have so many complex scenarios in geriatrics that it was like a team sport. We were working with nurses, pharmacists, social workers, occupational therapists and more, and I loved that," says Carnes, who also holds faculty positions in the SMPH Department of Psychiatry and the UW School of Engineering's Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

Early on, she discovered a talent for writing grants and developing programs, including The Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Research Center (GRECC). Part of the Division of Geriatrics and Gerontology, GRECC is home to many internationally renowned research programs on aging, Alzheimer's disease and older women's health.

Carnes hadn't formally studied gender issues, but she was a keen observer: Why were there so few women in leadership? Why were such talented women not being encouraged to pursue research careers or join the faculty?

The stage was set for Carnes to chart a new course. The VA recognized that 15 percent of active members of the U.S. Military were women, and it needed to make women's health a priority. At the same time, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) established the Office of Women's Health and the Office on Research of Women's Health.

Carnes recalls thinking, while she was reviewing grants for a fellowship in women's health at the VA, "I am in the perfect place to capitalize on this because geriatrics is essentially older women's health. Overnight, I rebranded myself from a geriatrician to an internist focusing on older women's health."

Upon earning an NIH Mid-Career Academic Leadership Award (K07), she developed research and education programs in older women's health and pursued a master's degree in epidemiology at the SMPH. She also pulled together a group of tenured female health sciences faculty members to discuss how women's health research and education could be strategically used as a way to bring more women into academic careers. With UW Hospital and Clinics, Meriter Hospital and the VA Hospital as clinical partners and several of UW-Madison's schools and colleges as academic partners (including the SMPH, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy and School of Veterinary Medicine), Carnes and colleagues founded the UW Center for Women's Health Research in 1999 as one of just 12 federally funded National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health Research.

As the local center's director, she developed a strong network of women across campus who, like her, were investigating gender bias in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). When the National Science Foundation introduced its ADVANCE Program to increase participation of women in STEM careers, Carnes added another "M" for medicine and applied for

a \$3.75 million grant with a co-principal investigator, Jo Handelsman, PhD, who now is the director of the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery at UW-Madison, as well as a professor in the UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. In 2002, upon helping to create the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute® (WISELI), Carnes' work took another turn.

As WISELI co-director, she began to focus on organizational change and went deep into experimental social science research, which was generally absent from medical education.

WISELI launched a longitudinal, campuswide study led by Jennifer Sheridan, PhD, to measure faculty attitudes about department climate, hiring and promotion processes, and job satisfaction. Study data show a persistent gap for women and for faculty members of color compared to faculty from majority groups across UW-Madison. Data also show that faculty were more productive and had more publications in departments with a more positive climate.



Molly Carnes, MD, MS '01 (PG '81)

WISELI leaders attacked gender issues with rigorous research methods and published their work in scientific journals. They conducted a systematic review of experimental interventions to reduce gender bias in hiring. Led by WISELI researcher Eve Fine, PhD, they also created and gave workshops to promote hiring excellent and diverse faculty. With NIH funding and with collaborators from several departments

including Patricia Devine, PhD, from the Department of Psychology, Carnes conducted a study of a bias habit-reducing workshop in 46 departments, with another 46 departments as a control group.

Faculty in departments that received the workshops reported more positive climate, and these departments had greater gender and racial/ethnic diversity among their new hires two to three years later.

"I knew the coin of the realm, you had to come with research, and now here's the data," says Carnes. "This was Level 1 evidence, so we got attention. The reviewers were harsh, and at first it was almost impossible to get anything published. But, we did publish, and we wrote every grant we could to get funds to support this research. The movement gained traction. Now you can hardly pick up a journal without seeing something about gender."

Today, the Department of Medicine has 27 tenured women on its faculty.

"And it's not just the numbers," Carnes notes with pride. "It's that they are changing the culture, making the microenvironment more supportive and inclusive."

Though best known for her work addressing gender bias, she says, "As white

women, we were the first to get our toes in the door, and now 50 percent of medical students are women. From the beginning, we said it is our responsibility to bring our sisters of color with us."

That means changing the attitudes and behaviors of those who shape department culture. With funding from the NIH, she is working with faculty in 19 departments of internal medicine across the United States to become bias-literate and use evidence-based strategies to "break the bias habit" through the Bias Reduction in Internal Medicine (BRIM) Initiative. Although Carnes worries that the pandemic will impact the ability to effectively measure climate change, BRIM has trained hundreds of people throughout the nation, from Johns Hopkins and Boston University on the east coast to the University of Washington.

But when asked about her greatest accomplishment, Carnes quickly answers, "My kids! They are amazing. Raising them is the best thing I ever did for gender or race equity!"

With the exception of her son, Paul Vogelmann, who works in business, an interest in medicine runs in the family. Her daughter, Lindsey Vogelmann, is a nurse and assistant

manager of the VA's community living center. And Carnes' husband, Bennett Vogelmann, MD (PG '81, '85)—as a professor in the SMPH Department of Medicine's Division of Infectious Disease and vice chair for education in that department—directed the Internal Medicine Residency Program for 31 years, making him one of the longest-serving residency program directors in the nation.

"A born educator" as Carnes describes him, Vogelmann retired in August 2020 to become a full-time kindergarten and preschool teacher for their three grandchildren, who are attending school virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vogelmann chimes in, "I'm also here to support Molly's career. That's always been a priority."

Carnes—an expressive lecturer who speaks with her hands—has found it challenging to fit into the small-screen, virtual environment during the pandemic.

Even so, she says, "We adapt," adding that she does not want her challenge with small spaces to prevent others from having room to grow.

HEALING HEALTH INEQUITIES *continued from page 7*

that reflects Wisconsin's diverse population," says Jonathan Temte, MD '87, PhD (PG '93), associate dean for public health and community engagement and a professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health.

The first two scholarships were awarded in February 2020 to two students who identify as Native American and participated in a pipeline program at the SMPH.

Future Outlook

In October 2020, the Wisconsin Partnership Program announced its sixth round of Community Impact Grants, awarding \$6 million in grants for community-academic partnerships that aim to advance health equity and address the root causes of health

inequities, which have been laid bare as the state and nation grapple with the painful impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The disparities in health outcomes that we see in Wisconsin have existed for generations, and it will take focused, collaborative and long-term efforts to change the trajectory," says Cedric Johnson, a public member of WPP's Oversight and Advisory Committee. "There is still much work to do to advance health equity, improve health outcomes in communities of color, and address the health impacts of racism. Supporting work that is community-led is critical to the success of our efforts."

Geer recognizes that healing the health impacts of racism and other health inequities is life-giving for those who are affected.

"We have created a culture where people are fighting against invisible systems, which exacerbates stress and leads to illness and premature death," he says.

Noting that he believes knowledge—through science and lived experience—leads to action, Gee concludes "I believe that when we learn this, if we are truly healers, we can do something about it."

If I Die Tonight

by Marvin Dingle, MD '15

If I die tonight
 March on
 For Ahmaud, for George, for Breonna
 For Freddie, for Botham, for Eric, for Trayvon
 For Tamir
 For that young black girl, Dajeria, who was thrown to the ground
 Kneeled on by a cop and arrested at that pool party in a bathing suit in Texas
 Remember that?
 March on
 For my grandparents whom I never knew who gave my father up for adoption
 But I know dreamed of a kinder world
 March on
 For my parents who taught me equality when they got none
 March on
 For my wife who loved me and tried her best to understand the complexity of waking up black in America
 March on
 For my three daughters to whom I taught equality but may never see it
 March on
 I tried to live my life treating everyone with love, so please
 March on
 Because all these degrees I have didn't protect me from
 The tidal wave of hate that crushes and erases
 March on
 March on
 After I'm gone.

*Published with permission from The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM).
 This poem appeared online at nejm.com on June 24, 2020.*



About the Author

Marvin Dingle, MD '15, is serving in the United States Navy as an orthopedic surgery resident at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland. He is set to graduate from the residency in 2021 and plans to complete fellowship training in hand surgery. He is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and earned his medical degree at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in 2015. Dingle refers to himself as a proud African American and Filipino American from California, and he has dedicated his life to improving the lives of others inside and outside of the operating room. He and his family (see photo caption) live in Rockville, Maryland.

Marvin Dingle, MD '15, and his wife, Michelle Dingle, pose with their three daughters (left to right): Penelope, Olivia and Lillian Dingle.

Model Quantifies COVID-19 Social Distancing Orders

In spring 2020, officials in areas hit hard by COVID-19 responded by closing schools and businesses, banning mass gatherings, issuing stay-at-home orders and enforcing other social distancing measures.

Now a University of Wisconsin-Madison study has quantified the impact of these measures in New York City; the Milwaukee, Wisconsin, metropolitan area; and Dane County, Wisconsin. The five-member research team was led by Oguzhan Alagoz, PhD, Proctor and Gamble-Bascom Professor of industrial

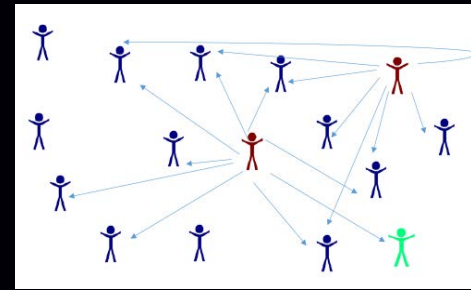
and systems engineering, UW School of Engineering, and Nasia Safdar, MD, PhD '09 (PG '00, '02), professor of medicine, UW School of Medicine and Public Health, and medical director for infection control, UW Health.

Using aggregated cell phone mobility data, the team created a computational model to simulate COVID-19 cases based on when directives were implemented and eased, and how diligently people adhered to the orders.

Results published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* show the timing of measures

was particularly crucial in New York, which first imposed restrictions on March 12. The model indicates that if the state had acted one week earlier, New York City would have seen 80 percent fewer cases (41,366 instead of 203,261) by the end of May. Conversely, a week's delay would have increased the caseload nearly seven times to more than 1.4 million.

The impact was less dramatic in Dane County, where a one-week delay would have led to 36 percent more cases by the end of July.



“In places with high population density and a lot of movement in and out of the area, the impact of social distancing is significantly greater,” says Alagoz. “Our model gives us a quantitative estimate of differences we will see from one region to another.”

Training Boosts Culturally Aware Mentorship

Higher education institutions frequently offer mentored research experiences to increase individuals' interest, motivation and preparedness for careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) fields.

Yet efforts to improve diversity may focus on increasing the numbers of historically underrepresented students and faculty without also fostering environments in which these individuals feel welcome, valued and accepted. Research has shown that culturally aware mentoring (CAM) training for academic

administrators and faculty can help improve diversity efforts by preparing faculty and staff to navigate the social and cultural dynamics of diverse academic communities.

In a recent study published in *PLoS One*, a multidisciplinary research team from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Northwestern University and University of Maryland conducted follow-up interviews with 24 research mentors who had participated in day-long CAM training sessions 18 to 24 months earlier.

Angela Byars-Winston, PhD, professor of medicine and associate director of the Collaborative Center for Health

Equity at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), was the lead SMPH investigator. Byars-Winston (on the left in photo) and colleagues found that CAM training participants most frequently remembered activities that were novel or elicited an emotional response, for example, a video that highlighted what it's like to be the only visibly identifiable member of a specific group.

CAM training increased participants' cultural awareness and deepened their understanding of cultural differences. This helped them better recognize and respect differences; make fewer



TODD BROWN/MEDIA SOLUTIONS

assumptions; listen more closely; and intervene more effectively when insensitive comments arose.

“CAM training may increase mentors' empathy toward their historically underrepresented students and support attention to cultural dynamics in their mentoring relationships,” the authors conclude.

New Method Detects Heart Disease Biomarker

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) and other UW-Madison schools are combining sticky nanoparticles with a high-precision protein measurement to capture and analyze a common marker of heart disease, revealing details that were previously inaccessible.

The new method, known as nanoproteomics, captures and measures various forms of the protein cardiac troponin I, or cTnI, a biomarker of heart damage currently used to help diagnose heart attacks

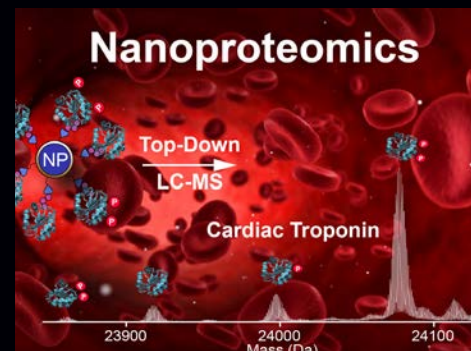
and other heart diseases. An effective test of cTnI variations could one day provide doctors with a better ability to diagnose heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.

Professor of Cell and Regenerative Biology and Chemistry Ying Ge, PhD, Professor of Chemistry Song Jin, PhD, and chemistry graduate students Timothy Tiambeng and David Roberts led the work, which was published in *Nature Communications*. Ge also is the director of the

Human Proteomics Program at the SMPH.

“We now want to use our nanoproteomics system to look at various forms of this protein rather than just measuring its concentration,” says Ge. “With high-resolution mass spectrometry, we can ‘see’ the molecular details of proteins, like the iceberg hidden beneath the surface.”

Jin adds, “We like to think a future blood test based on our work could be complementary to the current ELISA test. In the future, when ELISA shows an elevated cTnI level, doctors might order a comprehensive



nanoproteomics test to determine whether it is caused by heart disease or not, and identify different types of heart disease, for more precise treatment while avoiding unnecessary care and expense for patients.”

Stem Cells Hold Promise to Treat Parkinson's

Stem cells, with their infinite adaptability, have long offered the promise of better repair of neural damage caused by trauma, stroke and degenerative diseases like Parkinson's. But the brain's complexity has stymied the development of clinical treatments.

Now University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) researchers have demonstrated a proof-of-concept stem cell treatment in a mouse model of Parkinson's disease. They found that neurons derived from stem cells can integrate well into the

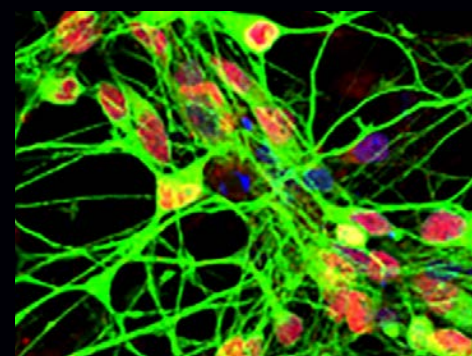
correct regions of the brain, connect with native neurons and restore motor functions. By carefully tracking the fate of transplanted stem cells, the scientists found that the cells' identity—dopamine-producing cells in the case of Parkinson's disease—defined the connections they made and how they functioned.

The team, led by neuroscientist Su-Chun Zhang, PhD '91, published its findings in *Cell Stem Cell*. Zhang is also a professor of neuroscience and neurology at the SMPH. The research was led by Zhang lab postdoctoral researchers Yuejun Chen, PhD, Man Xiong,

PhD, and Yezheng Tao, PhD, who now hold faculty positions in China and Singapore.

“Our brain is wired in such an accurate way by very specialized nerve cells in particular locations so we can engage in all our complex behaviors. This all depends on circuits that are wired by specific cell types,” says Zhang. “Neurological injuries usually affect specific brain regions or specific cell types, disrupting circuits. In order to treat those diseases, we have to restore these circuits.”

Each neurological disease or injury would require its own specialized nerve cells to treat,



but the treatment plans would likely be broadly similar.

“We used Parkinson's as a model, but the principle is the same for many different neurological disorders,” Zhang notes.

Revolutionizing Cancer Testing with Liquid Biopsies

“Doc, is this going to help me?” This is one of the most common questions we hear from our patients with cancer, regardless of the type or stage of disease. It gets at the heart of what precision medicine means to our patients: How do we match our treatments to the person sitting in front of us? The last 20 years have seen a revolution in our understanding of the genomic drivers of cancer with more than a dozen new therapies targeting these drivers for patients with prostate, lung, breast and many other types of cancer. And while the next generation of clinical trials seeks to discover and combine new therapies, it is important to recognize that many patients do not benefit from genomically targeted therapies.

Recent tumor biopsy studies have identified a much more complex biology—including genetic, epigenetic and microenvironment alterations—that underlies treatment resistance. For example, cancer found in a lymph node can be very different from cancer found in lung tissue in that same patient. As we learn more about tumor heterogeneity and the complex evolution of treatment resistance, the need for comprehensive and longitudinal evaluation of cancer cells becomes clear. But how do we acquire those tumor samples? Traditional biopsies are limited by the inherent challenge of performing biopsies on different tumor sites, as well as trying to repeat those biopsies if a treatment stops working.

But what if we could take advantage of the inherent nature of aggressive cancers to spread to other parts of the body? A century ago, researchers were able to identify “circulating tumor cells” in the blood of patients with advanced cancers. More recently, we found that in the process of cell death, tumor lesions also can shed DNA and other tumor-derived material into circulation. These findings have created an opportunity

to study metastatic and localized cancers from a simple blood draw. Known as a liquid biopsy, these different analytes may serve as surrogates of a tumor biopsy to understand cancer and guide patient care. The major limitation of liquid biopsies is the rarity of these tumor cells, because there can be as few as one tumor cell for every *billion* blood cells.

Unlocking the potential of liquid biopsies began with technological advances extending from microfluidic technologies to manipulate and isolate rare cells, as well as sequencing technologies that can perform highly specific DNA analyses at increasingly lower costs. These advances have led to recent approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for many types of liquid biopsy DNA tests to detect different mutations in patients with metastatic cancer.

However, we must remain cautious in identifying which patients can benefit from new liquid biopsy technology. It sounds exciting to use a liquid biopsy in lieu of a diagnostic tumor biopsy, but the chance of error significantly increases in early stages of disease simply because these cancers do not shed as many cells into circulation. For example, one study of patients with lung cancer was able to accurately detect DNA mutations in 96 percent of patients with higher stage lung cancer, but only 50 percent of patients with stage I disease.

New research is combining different types of liquid biopsies using cells, protein and DNA mutations to more accurately diagnose cancer and study cancer heterogeneity. More recent advances in molecular biology found that epigenetic changes in cancers, such as DNA methylation, may be even better than DNA mutations at detecting cancer, and these changes also can be found in liquid biopsies. This exciting new world of research is focused on improving care for patients through a better understanding of their diseases.

How is the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) working to develop liquid biopsies that will benefit our patients? The first step is to develop a critical mass of researchers in basic, translational and clinical science who are interested in liquid biopsy research. We now have investigators from the UW Carbone Cancer Center, SMPH Department of Human Oncology, Center for Human Genomics and Precision Medicine, and McArdle Laboratory for Cancer Research, among others, who are developing liquid biopsies for nearly every type of cancer. In 2017, the Carbone Cancer Center invested in a Circulating Biomarker Core (CBC) and a Liquid Biospecimen Clinical Research Team to aid investigators in testing patient samples, validating new technologies and developing revolutionary assays. The CBC has rapidly grown to be the primary liquid biopsy testing site for more than a dozen clinical trials being conducted in cancer centers across the country, including the National Cancer Institute, Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University. The CBC now processes greater than 1,000 blood samples per year, and the Liquid Biospecimen Clinical Research Team coordinates blood donations from more than 500 patients at the Carbone Cancer Center while also conducting clinical trials with industry partners, such as Madison, Wisconsin-based Exact Sciences.

The future of liquid biopsies is bright at UW-Madison, and most importantly, it is bright for our patients.

Joshua Lang, MD, MSc '17 (PG '08, '11)

Associate professor, Department of Medicine, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and UW Carbone Cancer Center





I Know YOU

... OR DO I?

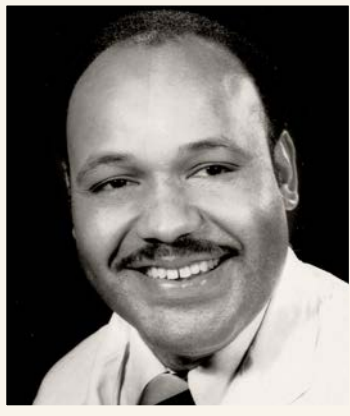
If you think you can identify the person in the photograph at right, send your guess to quarterly@med.wisc.edu. We'll draw one of the correct responses and announce the winner in the next issue of *Quarterly*.

For the last issue (see below), Lyle Wendling, MD '68, won the prize drawing and will receive a gift from the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association!



HINT ABOUT PHOTO ABOVE:

She has made her mark in the Lone Star State.



ABOUT LAST ISSUE'S PHOTO:

In the past issue of *Quarterly*, six people correctly identified the photo of Walter J. Tardy, Jr., MD '67, MPH. He passed away in 1988.

Among those who responded were Francis W. Parnell, MD (PG '70), and Diana D. Parnell, MD (PG '69), who were

completing residencies while Tardy was attending the University of Wisconsin Medical School [now the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH)].

Bob Lederer, MD '67, remembers Tardy being the only Black person in their medical school class. SMPH records indicate that Tardy was the first Black graduate from the school's four-year MD program.

An account of Tardy's training appeared in the program for the summer 1975 baccalaureate commencement of Tennessee State University (TSU), Nashville, where Tardy earned his bachelor's degree in 1962. Tardy was the distinguished alumni speaker in 1975.

The program indicated that after 1962, Tardy completed a National Institutes of Health fellowship to study computer applications in medical research at the University of Chicago Graduate School, and after medical school, he completed an internship in

mixed medicine at the Queen's Medical Center, Honolulu, and the Primary Course in Aviation Medicine at the U.S. Air Force (USAF) School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas. He was a chief resident at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City, and earned a master of public health degree from the Harvard School of Public Health Services Administration.

The TSU program also noted that Tardy received the USAF Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement and attained the rank of Major in the Medical Corps.

Tardy married Louise (Dickson) Tardy, who earned her master's degree from the UW School of Human Ecology in 1967.

Tardy became director of psychiatry at Queens Hospital Center, Jamaica, New York, and associate professor of psychiatry, State University of New York at Stonybrook. He was active in numerous professional organizations.

We Want to Hear From You

Please send us information about your honors, appointments, career advancements, publications, volunteer work and other activities of interest. We'll include your news in the Alumni Notebook section of *Quarterly* magazine as space allows. Please include names, dates and locations. Photographs are encouraged.

Have you moved? Please send us your new address.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association
750 Highland Ave.
Madison, WI 53705



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Help Our

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**MATCHING FUNDS
AVAILABLE FOR
NEED-BASED
SCHOLARSHIPS**



JOHN WINGREN/MEDIA SOLUTIONS

At the 2019 WMAA Scholarship Reception, fourth-year medical student Sean Duminie (left) poses with donor Salahuddin Abdur-Rahman, MD '82, who funded a scholarship that Duminie received.

Start a need-based scholarship as an individual, family or class, or add to an existing need-based scholarship! Your fund will receive a match of \$12,500 from the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association (WMAA) once \$12,500 in new gifts has been received.

These matching funds will be available until December 31, 2021, or until \$500,000 of matching funds has been expended.

For more information, please contact Sara Dillivan-Graves at (608) 280-1124 or via e-mail at Sara.DillivanGraves@supportuw.org