

Worthy of note: Honors, awards, appointments, etc.

Jay Dunlap, Ph.D., a professor and chair of genetics, received the first Robert L. Metzenberg Award from the Genetics Society of America, for his contributions to understanding the genetics of the fungus *Neurospora*; the award was presented at the annual Fungal Genetics Conference.

Allen Dietrich, M.D., a professor of community and family medicine, received the 2005 Curtis G. Hames Research Award. The award honors dedication to research in family medicine; the recipient is selected by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the North American Primary-Care Research Group, and the Hames Endowment.

Surachai Supattapone, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor of biochemistry, was named a member of the Clinical Neuroimmunology and Brain Tumors Study Section of the National Institutes of Health.

Nancy Speck, Ph.D., a professor of



MEDIA MENTIONS : DMS

Among the people and programs coming in for prominent media coverage in recent months was a DMS neurologist who was quoted in numerous reports about Terri Schiavo—the brain-damaged Florida woman whose parents petitioned

the courts to keep her alive. “The persistent vegetative state is a chronic disorder of consciousness in which the centers of the brain that are responsible for awareness have been damaged or destroyed, but the centers of the brain responsible for wakefulness remain intact,” Dr. **James Bernat** explained on National Public Radio’s *All Things Considered*. “So the patient has the tragic and ironic combination of wakefulness without awareness.” Bernat was also sought out for commentary by many other news outlets, including the *Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and NPR’s *Talk of the Nation*.

“At Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, doctors are trying out a radical new concept for their patients: full disclosure of their success rate for medical treatments—even when they don’t measure up,” began a piece in the *Wall Street Journal*. “Of course,” the article went on, “disclosure is easier when a hospital has a stellar record. Consumers would be hard-pressed to find mortality rates at . . . DHMC . . . not on par with or better than national averages for any condition.” But, noted the *Journal*, even at DHMC, “there was invariably some skepticism and questioning,” says D-H Executive Vice President **Paul Gardent**. But doubters were eventually persuaded that disclosure of less-than-perfect performance could provide ‘an additional stimulus for improving quality.’” (See pages 15 and 16 for more on this initiative.)

A DMS research team helped the public make sense of various medical topics in the press this past spring by speaking with *Consumer Reports*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and ABC News. “Medical news often seems to follow an all-too-familiar pattern: New drugs or therapies are intro-

duced with glowing reports, followed a few years later by headlines blaring their dangers,” said *Consumer Reports*. “That pattern leaves many people confused or even angry,” says **Steven Woloshin**, M.D., a professor at Dartmouth Medical School. One of Woloshin’s research colleagues also aimed to temper such hype, in an ABC report about ways to prevent breast cancer and heart disease: “It’s important that we not say more than we know,” said **Lisa Schwartz**, M.D. The team also writes a regular series of articles for the *Washington Post*; their latest piece was titled “Overstating Aspirin’s Role In Breast Cancer Prevention: How Medical Research Was Misinterpreted to Suggest Scientists Know More Than They Do.”

A recent Dartmouth study about the relationship—or the lack thereof—between malpractice



awards and insurance premiums drew press from all over the country, including the *Boston Globe*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the Associated Press, National Public Radio, and the *Los Angeles Times*. “Physicians and insurers may fear multimillion-dollar jury awards,” the *LA Times* reported, “but the average court judgment in 2003 was \$461,000, said **Amitabh Chandra**, a Dartmouth College economist and one of the authors. And 96% of malpractice cases that year were settled out of court for an average of \$257,000, he said. . . . The researchers concluded that malpractice payments had risen in line with medical care costs, while doctors’ insurance premiums grew far faster—by double-digit percentages for some specialties. They suggest that recent malpractice premium increases may have had more to do with insurers’ documented losses in the bond market from 1998 to 2001.”

A recent feature in the *New York Times Magazine* about the importance of autopsies in assessing “diagnostic and treatment routines” and catching “mistakes and bad habits” said few hospitals today value autopsies. But “hospitals that do—teaching hospitals like New York’s Mount Sinai; **Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center**, in Lebanon, N.H.; and Baylor University Medical Center, in Dallas—manage to absorb the costs [and thus] have a

PAGES PAST



biochemistry, was appointed chair of the Hematopoiesis Study Section of the National Institutes of Health.

Gilbert Fanciullo, M.D., an associate professor of anesthesiology, was elected to the board of the American Pain Society.

James Bernat, M.D., a professor of medicine, testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions about end-of-life issues and advance directives. He is former chair of the American Academy of Neurology's ethics committee.

Ronald M. Green, Ph.D., an adjunct professor of community and family medicine, was recently awarded a fellowship by the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The fellowship will support his examination of ethical, religious, and literary perspectives on genetic enhancement.

Patricia Ernst, Ph.D., an assistant professor of genetics, received a Kimmel Scholar Award from the Sidney Kimmel Foundation.

Nicholas Shworak, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor of medicine,

was selected as the American Heart Association's Lobby Day representative for New Hampshire. One researcher was chosen from each state to exemplify the objectives of the association's funding process.

Andrew Pomerantz, M.D., an associate professor of psychiatry, based at the White River Junction, Vt., VA, was honored as

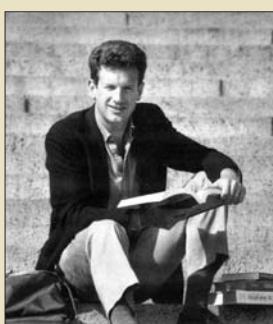
In this section, we highlight tidbits from past issues of the magazine. These messages from yesteryear remind us of the pace of change, as well as of some timeless truths.

From the Summer 1990 issue

Fifteen years ago, DARTMOUTH MEDICINE invited Montgomery Brower to write a feature. A 1981 Dartmouth College graduate who'd been a staff writer for *People* magazine for seven years, he described, at age 31, a change of heart:

"I hesitated when the chief of cardiac surgery at Leningrad's Pavlov Institute of Medicine invited me, on a visit to Russia back in 1986, to observe some of his doctors at work. During my five years as a magazine journalist, I had so far avoided any conspicuous gore, and I was not sure I could stomach the sight of a Soviet citizen laid open by a scalpel. But before I could muster any excuses, I had been masked and gowned and led into the operating room, where one of the surgeons motioned me to step up onto a stool on the floor behind the patient's head.

"I braced myself for a shock, stepped up, looked down, and was instantly awestruck. There before me lay a secret revealed: the heart tossing in its place, the lungs emptying and filling in a steady rhythm, every part real and alive.... For the next half hour, I watched and listened, my fears forgotten.... Later, as I left the operating room, I felt a new excitement. 'I wonder,' I found myself thinking, 'if I could be a doctor.' ...



It's never too late to consider career change, even into medicine, DC grad Brower concluded.

inative careerists and celebrated my own literary bohemianism, probably in part because I feared the science that I was sure I could never understand, let alone enjoy.... The scientist and the humanist within us make rival claims to truth, and in the 20th century neither seems to understand the other. In that epiphanous moment over the operating table in Leningrad, I believe I saw the human heart in both its guises: as a wellspring of feeling and as a wonderwork of biological engineering."

Writing's loss has clearly been medicine's gain. Brower graduated from Cornell Medical College and is now deputy medical director of Massachusetts's Bridgewater State Hospital.

Manager of the Year and Federal Employee of the Year by the Federal Association of Vermont.

Dean Seibert, M.D., an associate professor of medicine emeritus, was elected to the DMS chapter of Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA), the national medical honor society. Three third-year DMS students were also elected to AOA: **Lisa Ernst, Greg Fuhrer, and John Raser**.

Jeffrey Barrett, a fourth-year medical student, was awarded a Minority Medical Student Travel Scholarship by the American Psychiatric Association.

Karen Skalla, A.R.N.P., received the Oncology Nursing Society Pat McCue/New Orleans Chapter End-of-Life Nursing Career Development Award. She is an oncology nurse practitioner at the Claremont, N.H., Valley Regional Hospital, part of DHMC's Regional Cancer Program.

Dartmouth Medical School was again ranked among the top 50 medical schools in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

DMS was 35th in the research category and 34th in a category that factors in the percentage of graduates who go into primary care. DMS was also 17th in the "Rural Medicine" specialty category. The rankings are based on reputation, research funding, student selectivity, and faculty/student ratios.

The DHMC **Adult Diabetes Self-Management Program** was recently accorded recognition as an "outstanding program" by the American Diabetes Association. ■

