

INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT



In this section, we highlight the human side of biomedical investigation, putting a few questions to a researcher at DMS-DHMC.

Alice Givan, Ph.D.

Research Associate Professor of Physiology

Givan develops methods for studying cells that have been activated by the presence of foreign antigens. She also directs the Englert Cell Analysis Laboratory at DHMC's Norris Cotton Cancer Center.

What are your primary research interests?

My research career has been erratic for many reasons (some more interesting than others). I started out working on photosynthesis in unicellular green algae, then progressed to studying cells from transplant patients by flow cytometry. Now I am mainly collaborating with other scientists but also studying methods for identifying cells when they become activated.

How did you decide to become a scientist?

I don't remember any actual decision. I just remember that I always wanted to be a biologist.



If you weren't a scientist, what would you like to be?

An archeologist or, if I had any musical talent, the first violinist in a string quartet.

What famous person, living or dead, would you most like to meet?

Pete Seeger or Nelson Mandela or Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King.

What are the last book you read and last movie you saw?

Right now I'm reading *Birdsong* by Don Stapp. It's about birds, their songs, and the scientists who study them. I like the book because it hangs at the interface of science, anthropology, and philosophy. The last movie I saw was *Sabrina*—the old version. I liked it; who can't like anything with Audrey Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart.

What's in your CD player right now?

All "my" CD players are currently being used by other people, but what I like most is classical chamber music or jazz.

Who were your scientific mentors?

My first mentors were my parents. My father was an electrical engineer and high school teacher (he was the first person in his family to have a college education). My mother did not graduate from high school but was the wisest person I'd ever met. They took me to the botanical gardens to make collections of leaves. They took me to concerts, art museums, Ebbets Field, and Coney Island. And neither one ever suggested that I needed to choose between science and a "real" life. My first traditional mentor was Robert Conner, my undergraduate advisor. Science is based on the apprenticeship relationship, so I owe much of my approach to science to Dr. Conner.

What's your favorite nonwork activity?

Cooking, reading novels, watching baseball games, and doing just about anything with my children (who are no longer children).

What about you would surprise most people?

Perhaps the fact that I like cooking, reading novels, watching baseball games, and doing anything with my children.

Would you change anything about your career?

Perhaps I would have pursued my career with more determination—and not worked part-time when I could have been working full-time. However, I am still not sure that I would have been willing to give up all that time that I spent cuddling my kids.

Finish this sentence: If I had more time I would . . .

Read more, cook more, and start square dancing again.

What do you ultimately want to discover?

I think that science works mainly by informed chance, not by purpose. So I will refrain from answering this question.

Two former DHMC section chiefs attain emeritus status

Two longtime members of the Dartmouth Medical School faculty were named to emeritus status during the past year. And although life has thrown them each a curve ball, they're still in the game and swinging away.

Dr. Barry Smith, who was the head of obstetrics and gynecology for nearly 30



years—from 1976 to 2004—had anticipated spending time in retirement traveling with his wife,

MaryAnn, a retired nurse practitioner. But when she died this past February from a worsening heart condition, he decided it would be best if he returned to work and kept his mind busy despite his new emeritus status.

An alumnus of both Dartmouth College (Class of '59) and Dartmouth Medical School (Class of '60), Smith completed his M.D. and residency training at Cornell Medical College. In 1970, he returned to DMS and Mary Hitchcock and joined what was then the Section of Obstetrics and Gynecology, within the Department of Maternal and Child Health.

Six years later, he was named chief of the section and became a driving force behind its growth and eventual establishment as a department, with a residency program. In addition, Smith is credited with introducing gyne-

LESS IS MORE: Now that a branch of Norris Cotton Cancer Center is open in St. Johnsbury, Vt., radiation therapy patients in the North Country will save 20,000 hours and 1.1 million miles a year driving to get their care.



colgic laparoscopic surgery to New Hampshire.

And now, even in the twilight of his career, Smith continues to contribute to his field. During the summer of 2005, for example, he was involved with five different Dartmouth-Hitchcock projects—including an obstetrics quality improvement program—and he was also running for a national position with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Whether he gets elected or not, “either way I’ll have plenty to do,” he says.

But his plans aren’t all work and no play. “I hope to return to skiing, traveling, and perhaps to develop some [more] real hobbies,” he says—outside of medicine, that is.

Dr. Nathan Geurkink, who served as chief of the Section of Otolaryngology and Audiology for 15 years—from 1980 to 1995—had planned to retire at age 70 or 71. But in 2003, about a week before his 70th birthday, he was diagnosed with kidney cancer. So in December 2003, Geurkink took a leave of absence, and he officially retired this past May.

He still has cancer but remains in good health. “The problem is I don’t feel bad at all,” he says. Well, that’s not really a problem. In fact, since retiring, he’s taken up woodworking.

As an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) surgeon, specializing in head and neck cancers, he stayed

away from power tools for most of his life. “I didn’t want to cut a finger off,” he says. Now, however, he has a full-fledged workshop—power tools and all. Above the shop is a writing studio for his wife, Kathleen, a retired nurse practitioner.

Raised on a dairy farm in Oklahoma, Geurkink jokes that one of the accomplishments of his career was that he didn’t become a dairy farmer. But the Sooner State put a stamp on his medical career, since he earned his M.D. at the University of Oklahoma.

He arrived at Dartmouth in 1970 after four years at the Cleveland Clinic, two years in the U.S. Public Health Service, and his otolaryngology residency at the Mayo Clinic.

Although Geurkink is enjoying retirement—taking time to smell the acre and a half of wildflowers he planted near his house—he looks back on his career at DHMC fondly. “I really like the collegiality of this place,” he says. Geurkink was especially close to Dr. Samuel Doyle, who preceded him as section chief, and to Dr. Dudley Weider, a fellow ENT surgeon who died unexpectedly this past February (see the Spring 2005 issue of DARTMOUTH MEDICINE for more on Weider).

But most of all, Geurkink enjoyed his patients. “The people in the area, the patients, have been excellent,” he says, adding that head-and-neck cancer surgeons often form close relationships with their patients. “You get as fond of them as a close relative,” he says.

JENNIFER DURGIN

A HUFF AND A PUFF . . .

On July 9, nearly 2,000 bikers and walkers were huffing and puffing as they participated in the 24th Annual Prouty Bike Ride and Fitness Walk, a fund-raiser for Dartmouth’s Norris Cotton Cancer Center. And ever since then, Cancer Center officials have been gasping (in amazement) as they counted up the proceeds. The 2005 event not only broke but smashed previous records for the event. The 2004 Prouty raised \$366,000; this year’s income was still being counted at press time, but the total was nearing \$760,000.

The Prouty has become a huge presence in the region. Lawn signs sprout for miles around in the weeks before the event. Participants travel from all over the country to ride in memory of loved ones affected by cancer. And this year an unusual pair of local celebrities—a hand-carved wooden pig and wolf who ornament the lawn of a house in downtown Hanover—promoted the ride by donning Prouty t-shirts and bike helmets. So the fairy-tale ending (financially speaking) seems to have been foreordained.

A.S.



ORANGE YOU GLAD . . .

An orange circle connotes all sorts of upbeat messages: The liquid gold of Florida orange juice. The glow of a Halloween jack-o-lantern. The richness of a Thanksgiving pumpkin pie. Now there’s another symbol based on an orange circle: A new logo for Dartmouth’s Norris Cotton Cancer Center.

A logo is, of course, supposed to be simple, memorable, and evocative. According to a presentation unveiling the new symbol to Cancer Center staff, the three bars of the logo echo the bars of the DHMC logo and “lead the eyes upward toward the circle,” while the circle “suggests sun, light, and hope.” And the color orange was chosen because it “is associated with warmth, energy, and strength.”

Officials look to the new logo, according to the presentation to staff, “to strengthen our ability to communicate our distinction as a nationally recognized comprehensive cancer center,” as well as “to unify with a shared identity all Norris Cotton locations.” Those locations now include not only DHMC in Lebanon, N.H., but also permanent new facilities in Manchester, N.H., and St. Johnsbury, Vt., plus longstanding outreach sites throughout the two-state region.

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