

Making an impact

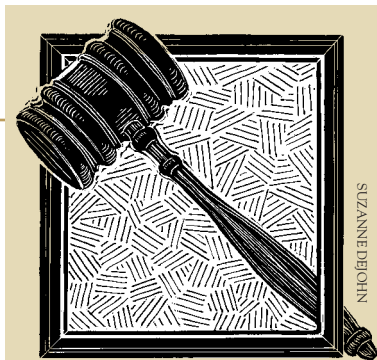
By Stephen P. Spielberg, M.D., Ph.D.

April is the cruellest month . . ." So begins T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land." The renewal of spring could indeed be cruel in a static, pessimistic environment—but such is clearly not the case at DMS. This year, spring (which comes late to northern New England, making us appreciate it all the more!) brought to DMS a series of exciting reminders of the contributions our school is making to the future of medicine.

Renewal: The pattern of renewal was evident in several recurring events, including "Visiting Day," when we host students admitted to this fall's first-year class, and "Match Day," when our fourth-year students find out where they'll do their residencies. Our students did very well in the Match this year. There were some interesting shifts in their choice of specialties—including increases in surgery, anesthesia, and radiology. To a great extent, such career choices are fostered by excellence in teaching, by both residents and faculty; we celebrate the contributions our teachers make to our students' futures.

This year DMS made an additional, very significant contribution to the Match, an educational process that has served medicine admirably through the years. In 2002, the National Resident Matching Program was challenged by a lawsuit over antitrust issues. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and related organizations have been facing enormous legal costs and time commitments over a suit that threatened to destroy a program that has worked well since 1953. In concert with the AAMC, DHMC's director of governmental relations, Frank McDougall, worked with U.S. Senator Judd Gregg of New Hampshire and his staff to introduce and pass legislation to exempt the Match from antitrust litigation. At a recent AAMC Council of Deans meeting, Dartmouth and Frank were singled out for recognition in saving this vital program.

Optimize: This wasn't the only recent event where it's been clear DMS is having a national impact. I went to a meeting of a program called Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) with Dr. Jocelyn Chertoff, an associate professor and vice chair of the Department of Radiology. Many of those who have done ELAM fellowships have gone on to distinguished careers. Dr. Chertoff, for her fellowship project, is studying the determinants of career satisfaction among our faculty, an activity that should help us optimize their career development. I also attended a meeting of the Medical School Collaborative with Drs. Paul Batalden, Mark Splaine, and Greg Ogrinc. This group of 10 medical schools is working to develop optimal learning environments within medical schools and academic medical centers. The Collaborative has fostered interactions among the 10 schools and with



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the AAMC and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Topics for this meeting included inter-professional learning (medicine, pharmacy, nursing, etc.) and vertical integration of learning (medical students, residents, continuing education for doctors in practice, etc.). DMS and DHMC are clearly leaders of these projects.

At home, we recently honored the recipients of this year's "Dean's Junior Faculty Awards

for Excellence." These awards, established last year by then-Acting Dean Ethan Dmitrovsky, recognize outstanding accomplishments in several areas. The Award for Basic Science was shared by Dr. David Robbins, an assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology, and Dr. Surachai Supattapone, an assistant professor of biochemistry and of medicine. Dr. Robbins has made major contributions to our understanding of Hedgehog (Hh) signal transduction pathways in *Drosophila*, achieving national recognition for identifying and studying the function of a soluble form of Hh. Dr. Supattapone studies prions, the agents responsible for Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. His groundbreaking work has led to understanding of how conformational changes in proteins lead to the formation of prions. The Award for Translational Science went to Dr. Michael Spinella, an assistant professor of pharmacology and toxicology, for his work on a novel retinoid receptor co-regulator called RIP-140. His work has major implications for developing potential therapies for germ cell tumors and breast cancer. It is striking that each of these investigators was also recognized for excellence in teaching and mentoring medical and graduate students.

Data: Dr. Pamela Jenkins, an assistant professor of pediatrics and of community and family medicine, received the Award for Clinical Investigation, in recognition of her work on outcomes in children with hypoplastic left heart syndrome. Her careful studies are changing clinical decision-making for children with this disease, replacing dogma and opinion with data. She was recently elected to the Society for Pediatric Research based on her contributions.

Finally, the Award for Clinical Care and Teaching went to Dr. Douglas Goodwin, an assistant professor of radiology and of surgery. Dr. Goodwin is an outstanding clinician in musculoskeletal radiology. He reorganized the diagnostic radiology rotation in musculoskeletal radiology, making it one of the most popular rotations among students. As noted above, there was a significant increase this year in the number of students going into radiology, a tribute, in large part, to Dr. Goodwin's efforts. He also studies novel diagnostic techniques, including magnetic resonance for microimaging of cartilage.

There's no better way, to my mind, to have celebrated spring than by having recognized outstanding young faculty members like these. This is clearly a place in full bloom. ■

"For the Record" offers timely commentary from the dean of Dartmouth Medical School. Dr. Spielberg has just completed his first year in the deanship.