

ent actions into the ecofootprint tool to learn each action's relative impact.

And best of all, as changes are made, it will be possible to clearly track and not just guess at their impact on the institution's ecological footprint.

Leigh believes a hospital should do all it can do reduce its ecological impact in part because it's unavoidably high. For example, infection-control procedures require the consumption of vast amounts of disposable supplies. The temperature in patient-care areas must be kept comfortably warm in winter and cool in summer. Life-safety features like automated doors and a constant oxygen supply are energy-intensive. Some of the anesthetics used in surgery are greenhouse gasses, so there is a cost to handling them. The list of special needs goes on and on.

**Lots:** Besides Leigh, one of the people who helped to make DHMC a pioneer in sustainability was his predecessor, Laura Brannen. She now works for a national program called Waste Management Health Care Solutions. "Successful programs," she says, "depend on people to make them happen." Lots of people, she adds. "It was certainly helpful to get buy-in from the top" when DHMC made sustainability a priority 20 years ago, Brannen says, but real success comes when every employee tosses bottles in the recycling bin instead of the trash or considers walking instead of driving to work.

Sometimes the steps toward sustainability are quite literal.

ROGER P. SMITH, PH.D.

## INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT

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

**Charles Cole, Ph.D.**

**Professor of Biochemistry and of Genetics**

*Cole studies how messenger RNA and mRNA/protein complexes are exported from the cell nucleus to the cytoplasm to be translated into proteins. He has been at DMS since 1983.*

**How did you get interested in your field?**

Growing up in the post-Sputnik era, there was increased interest in teaching science and math, and I was fortunate to participate in an accelerated math and science program. I was also quite interested in chemistry. I had a chemistry set with a large number of compounds and became very interested in chemical mixtures that sparkled or smoked or smelled bad.

**What do you consider your most important work?**

I've changed the primary focus of my research during the course of my career, which many do not do. In my lab's work on DNA tumor viruses, we made an important contribution to the understanding of the immortalization and malignant transformation of cells by the virus SV40. Then 20 years ago, we began studying mRNA export, and we developed a screen to identify mutants of yeast defective in this fundamental process.



**What was your first paying job?**

The summer before I entered college, I had an incredibly boring job transferring data about farmers' tractors to huge ledger sheets. Farmers who subscribed to *Farm Journal*, published in Cincinnati where I grew up, had been asked to fill out questionnaires about their tractors, and I had to enter the data by hand from about 2,500 questionnaires. This was early in the era of

computers, and it was clear to me that this was a task for a computer.

**Who are your heroes?**

Yoda, for his perspective on the world (or universe might be more accurate). I'm a big fan of Hermione in *Harry Potter*, and Grover has always been a favorite of mine. I like the whimsical and the ironic, both in fiction and in life.

**What are your favorite books?**

While I was growing up, the works of Hermann Hesse were being translated into English. Starting with *Siddhartha*, I read and enjoyed all of them. *The Glass Bead Game*, probably his crowning achievement, was my favorite. I really like future histories—*The Glass Bead Game* is one—and many of my other favorites are from that genre, including Olaf Stapledon's *Star Maker*.

**If you invented a time machine, where would you go?**

Far into the future. We have a pretty good idea what happened in the past. But we have no idea what is going to happen. I won't be around then, but I'd be really interested in knowing how it all comes out. I recently read a book called *Year Million*, and almost all those writing in the book had no doubt that there would be some sort of human civilization at that time. So let's set the time machine for the year one million.

**What about you would surprise most people?**

I am quite good at sewing and have made clothes for my children for many years. I learned how from a woman who stayed with my siblings and me when my parents were on vacation. She brought her sewing machine and made clothes for our stuffed animals. I bought my first sewing machine soon after college.

**What's your favorite nonwork activity?**

That depends on the season—cross-country skiing in winter, kayaking and hiking in summer, cooking all the time, and travel.

**What is a talent you wish you had?**

I wish I could play an instrument. If I had my choice, I'd probably want to be able to fiddle.

