



Philanthropist Larry Freeman (left) and Keck School Dean Carmen Puliafito toast the Larry Freeman Cancer Day Hospital.

USC/Norris Cancer Center receives \$5 million gift

By Veronica Jauriqui

A philanthropist, businessman and long-time supporter of USC's cancer treatment initiatives, Larry Freeman has donated \$5 million to the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen Puliafito made the announcement March 13.

The gift will name the Judy and Larry Freeman Cancer Day Hospital, an outpatient facility currently located on the first floor of the USC/Norris Cancer Hospital.

"The core of the USC/Norris Cancer Center and cancer care at USC has always been extraordinary philanthropy," Puliafito said at the USC/Norris

Advisory Board Meeting where the gift was announced. "We at USC are deeply grateful, and I can't wait until we see the Freeman name outside the building."

Freeman is founder and CEO of Freeman Cosmetic Corporation and has served on the advisory board for the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center since 1991. His and his wife's reasons for making the gift were extraordinarily personal, he explained.

"I have a son who is alive today in part due to some of the work done here at USC," Freeman said. "It is a debt that I can never repay."

"This is a very special place made up of very special people," he said.

The Freemans, along with their

daughter Jill and son Mark, have been major supporters of USC's cancer research programs for almost two decades, establishing the Freeman Aces Cancer Tennis Tournament, which has raised more than \$3 million dollars.

In addition, the family endowed the Judy and Larry Freeman Chair in Basic Science Research, currently held by Amy Shiu Lee, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology.

Freeman also is involved with the Sportsman's Club, the Union Rescue Mission, the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver, and the Skin Cancer Institute. He earned a "100 Points of Light" honor from former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley.

The Doctors of USC-Downtown celebrates a new name—and expanded services

By Cheryl Bruyninckx

The Executive Health and Imaging Center officially changed its name to The Doctors of USC-Downtown, with a reception on March 14, attended by the clinic staff, Dean Carmen Puliafito and Minor Anderson, president and CEO, The Doctors of USC.

Open since February 2001, the Doctors of USC-Downtown was designed to meet the growing needs of people living or working in downtown Los Angeles.

In addition, USC relocated its Faculty/Staff Health Center to this location, expanding these services to faculty, staff and their dependents, as well as university retirees.

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THE SPIRIT OF TROY—The Keck School of Medicine hosted Trojan Spirit Day on March 14, featuring a raffle for prizes, including lunch with Dean Carmen Puliafito (announcing the winners above, at left), a \$100 gift certificate to the USC Bookstore and a 19" high-definition color television.

SAVE THE DATE

Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen Puliafito will host a Town Hall meeting on April 8, in the Aresty Auditorium of the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower. From 4-5 p.m., he will present an update of recent activities and strategic directions for the future of the Keck School and answer questions from the audience. For more information or to RSVP for the event, visit www.usc.edu/dept/pubrel/specialevents/esvp/ and enter esvp code: th08.

Physician-author Vergheze stresses value of hands-on healing

By Meghan Lewit

In a lecture at the Keck School of Medicine, Abraham Vergheze urged graduating students to focus on providing personal care to patients.

"You can do it by caring and being attentive and by your presence," he said. "These are not trivial things."

Vergheze is a professor and senior associate chair for the Theory and Practice of Medicine at Stanford University. He is the author of several books, including *My Own Country*, a memoir that describes the emergence of AIDS in Johnson City, Tenn.

His March 14 lecture, "Touching Where it Hurts: The Role of the Bedside Exam in a Technological Age," was part of Visions and Voices, a university-wide arts and humanities initiative established by USC Provost C. L. Max Nikias.

While technology has benefited medicine in many ways, it also can erode the personal connection between patient and doctor, Vergheze said.

He pointed to the famous 1887 Luke Fildes painting, which depicts a doctor at a patient's bedside, as the traditional image of the doctor in family life.

Another slide of this painting, in which Vergheze had replaced the patient with a photograph of a computer, reflects the current image of medicine, he said.

Vergheze urged students to emphasize bedside diagnostic skills in their future. The hand is often the most important tool that a physician has, he said.

"The privilege of being able to lay your hand on your patient is a skill," Vergheze said. "I hope that you will see your hand as a potent instrument no

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Childrens Hospital Los Angeles targets vascular anomalies with new center

Childrens Hospital Los Angeles has opened a new Vascular Anomalies Center (VAC), which will specialize in the management of a variety of complex vascular tumors and malformations.

"For years, there has been no systematic and consistent way to diagnose and treat vascular anomalies," said Andre Panossian, co-director of the Vascular Anomalies Center at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles and visiting assistant professor of clinical surgery at the Keck School of Medicine.

"Vascular anomalies can occur anywhere in the body and affect virtually any organ," he said. Vascular anomalies are composed of blood vessels that have developed abnormally.

"Only within the last 20 years, has the treatment of vascular anomalies emerged as a new and rapidly developing discipline in pediatric medicine," said Dean Anselmo, co-director of the VAC, and a visiting assistant professor of clinical surgery at the Keck School of Medicine. "The management of these lesions presents unique challenges that cross the border of traditional surgical and medical specialties."

A multidisciplinary approach is essential, according to Anselmo and Panossian, in order to accurately diagnose and treat vascular anomalies. The

team of physicians and nurse practitioner collaborates in the evaluation, management and emotional support of children with vascular lesions.

The monthly VAC clinic offers the convenience of having patients seen by more than one specialist during the same visit, and allows physicians to share their assessments and concerns with one another, as well as with the patients and family members.

The vascular tumors and malformations in which the Vascular Anomalies Center specializes are:

- Arteriovenous malformations
- Capillary malformations
- Combined vascular malformations
- Cutis Marmorata Telangiectatica

Congenita

- Hemangiomas
- Kaposiform

Hemangioendothelioma

- Kasabach-Merritt Phenomenon
- Klippel-Trenaunay Syndrome
- Lymphatic malformations
- Lymphedema
- Sturge-Weber Syndrome
- Vascular tumors
- Venous malformations

Patients may call for general information and to make appointments at (323) 361-5682. Physicians may refer a patient to the Physicians Line at (323) 361-8212.



Jon Nalick

Medical author Abraham Vergheze, professor and senior associate chair for the Theory and Practice of Medicine at Stanford University, emphasizes the importance of physicians using their bedside diagnostic skills to help patients during his March 14 lecture in Mayer Auditorium.

VERGHESE: Modern medicine can learn from its past

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matter what (area of medicine) you go into."

The lecture was the final event in the in the fourth-year student curriculum in the USC Program in Medical Humanities, Ethics, Arts and the Law (HEAL).

"I can't think of a better way to send our fourth year students to the next phase of their professional lives," said

Pamela Schaff, assistant dean for curriculum and student affairs and director of the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics at the Keck School of Medicine.

The event was co-sponsored by the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics, the USC Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics and the USC Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics.

Genetic tests launched to help tailor cancer therapies

By Jennifer Chan

Through a strong collaborative effort between USC and Response Genetics Inc., genetic tests were recently made available to clinicians to help guide therapeutic treatment decisions in patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and colorectal cancer (CRC). The company Response Genetics Inc. is offering the tests called ResponseDX: Lung and ResponseDX: Colon.

"These tests allow clinicians to tailor cancer therapies specifically for each patient to maximize the benefits of their treatments," said Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, as well as a USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center oncologist. "The tests help determine which course of chemotherapy would be effective or, importantly, potentially toxic to each patient."

The tests are now available at the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, other select medical institutions and practice groups through Response Genetics's CLIA-registered laboratory.

"USC has been on the forefront of this type of

work and we are well suited to use these tests right away," continued Lenz. "The ability to personalize treatment programs is very important in terms of success, and I think these tests will eventually become the standard of care."

During this initial launch Response Genetics Inc. will gather additional data about the utility of these genetic tests, including excision cross-complementing repair factor 1 (ERCC1) gene expression, in the treatment of NSCLC and CRC; clinical practice activities such as sample acquisition, logistics, patient and physician communication; and the use of the test in normal clinical practice related to NSCLC and CRC.

Response Genetics Inc. also offers several genetic tests, in addition to ERCC1, that can use the same formalin-fixed paraffin-embedded tumor tissue sample, which eliminates the need for additional tumor samples.

"We are eager to continue to work with our basic scientists to develop better tests and enable physicians to continue to personalize treatment programs for our patients," said Lenz.

Mobile Clinic gives kids a smile

By Sean Gallagher

The USC School of Dentistry, in cooperation with L.A. Care Health Plan, recently took part in the annual "Give Kids a Smile Day."

Sixty dental students and faculty accompanied the USC Neighborhood Mobile Clinic to 10th Street Elementary School to provide dental screenings and applications of tooth sealant to hundreds of low-income students.

USC School of Dentistry Dean Harold Slavkin was there to observe his students at work. "Oral health is not just about white teeth and fresh breath," he said. "It is a part of your overall health."

Slavkin said children who suffer from tooth decay often miss out on numerous chances to succeed throughout life because dental pain limits eating, sleeping and learning.

An investment into providing low-income families with proper oral care for their children can save millions in health care costs and give children more opportunities to thrive, he said, adding: "It's a small investment with a big return."

USC study links rising obesity rates nationwide to increase in women's strokes

Middle-aged women's waists aren't the only things that increased in the last decade. So did their chances of stroke.

In a new study reported at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference 2008, rising obesity rates have been linked to more strokes among women aged 35 to 54. A previous analysis of stroke prevalence rates in the United States from 1999 to 2004 revealed that women in their midlife years were more than twice as likely as men of similar age to report having had a stroke, said Amytis Towfighi, assistant professor in the Department of Neurology at the Keck School of Medicine.

To determine if this was a new phenomenon and to explore the potential contributions of vascular risk factors to stroke prevalence rates, researchers analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Surveys 1988–1994 (NHANES III) and 1999–2004.

Researchers found that while 1.79 percent of women ages 35 to 54 who participated in 1999–2004 reported having stroke, only 0.63 percent of women the same ages who participated in the earlier survey (NHANES III) reported stroke.

The analysis compared medical history variables (including smoking, diabetes mellitus and heart attack), medication usage and clinical markers among women in NHANES III and 1999–2004. Clinical markers included waist circumference, body mass index (BMI), total cholesterol, low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL, also known as bad cholesterol) and blood pressure.

"We did not find significant differences in presence of conventional cardiovascular risk factors, such as blood pressure, total cholesterol, LDL, smoking, heart disease or diabetes, when we compared the two groups," said Towfighi, lead author of the study.

Instead, women in the more recent survey were more likely to be using medications to control blood pressure and cholesterol.

In fact, 14.8 percent of women in NHANES 1999–2004 reported using medications to lower blood pressure, compared to 8.9 percent in the earlier survey. Nearly 4 percent of women in NHANES 1999–2004 used medications to lower cholesterol, versus 1.4 percent in NHANES III.

"Women in NHANES 1999–2004 were signifi-

cantly more obese than women a decade prior, with an average BMI of 28.67 kg/m² versus 27.11 kg/m² the decade prior," Towfighi said. BMI of 25.0 to 30.0 is considered overweight, while BMI of 30.1 or more is considered obese.

"In addition, women in NHANES 1999–2004 had an average waist circumference of nearly 4 centimeters more than women in the earlier study," Towfighi said. Women in NHANES 1999–2004 also had higher average glycated hemoglobin (an indicator of poor blood sugar control).

The researchers concluded that although key traditional risk factors, such as high blood pressure, may not be higher today than in the '90s, obesity and blood sugar markers are on the increase.

"Abdominal obesity is a known predictor of stroke in women and may be a key factor in the midlife stroke surge in women," Towfighi said. "This study highlights the need to intensify efforts in curbing the obesity epidemic in the United States."

Co-authors are Rita Engelhardt, and Bruce Ovbiagele, from the University of California at Los Angeles.

School of Pharmacy professor named to NIMH Blue Ribbon panel

Upon the invitation of Elias Zerhouni, director of the National Institutes of Health, Roberta Diaz Brinton, professor of pharmacology and pharmaceutical sciences at the

School of Pharmacy, has been named a member of the National Institute of Mental Health Blue Ribbon Panel.



Roberta Diaz Brinton

The Blue Ribbon Panel convenes every 10 years to advise the NIH and NIMH leadership on the direction and development of the NIMH intramural research program for the coming decade.

The panel is chaired by Solomon Snyder, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, with a host

of neuroscience experts from the nation's top universities composing the panel membership.

"It is an honor to serve with this group," remarked Brinton, who is holder of the R. Pete Vanderveen Chair in Therapeutic Discovery and Development. "My colleagues on the committee include a Nobel Laureate and members of the National Academy of Sciences and come from the leading universities in the nation."

The panel will review the NIMH Division of Intramural Research Programs, the internal research unit where scientists investigate a full range of subjects—from mechanisms of brain function at the cellular and molecular levels to clinical investigations into the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental illness.

The Blue Ribbon Panel sets the course for the development and direction of the division's research efforts in the coming decade. This, in turn, impacts research direction of extramural research, as the NIH strives to create a complementary environment between the two.

Brinton is the principal investigator on a four-school, \$8 million grant examining the impact of hormone therapy on the risk of Alzheimer's disease. She is also a key investigator of the University's Clinical Translational Science Award planning grant team.



From left, Darla McBride, manager of clinical operations for the downtown clinic, Keck School Dean Carmen Puliafito, and Minor Anderson, CEO of The Doctors of USC, flank a newly designed sign renaming the clinic. Dozens of staff members and prospective patients attended the March 14 event.

Veronica Jauriqui

DOWNTOWN: Renamed center bolsters services

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Minor Anderson, president and CEO of The Doctors of USC, said, "Changing the name of the clinic to The Doctors of USC–Downtown helps us to better establish The Doctors of USC brand in the downtown Los Angeles community. The new name says who we are and better describes the services offered at the clinic."

Located in the heart of the downtown area, the Doctors of USC–Downtown offers general and specialty medical care from the University of Southern California's faculty physicians. The center offers easy access to healthcare services including internal medicine, women's health, including gynecology and mammography, and cosmetic and therapeutic dermatology. There is also an

Executive Health Program with highly personalized disease detection and prevention exams.

New services have been added recently to The Doctors of USC–Downtown, including acupuncture services to treat stress, jet lag, menopausal symptoms, headaches and back pain. An endocrinologist also has joined The Doctors of USC–Downtown staff, offering services for patients with diabetes, thyroid and pituitary diseases.

The Doctors of USC–Downtown is located in the Bank of America Plaza at 333 South Hope Street, Suite C-145, Los Angeles, CA 90071. USC trams provide transportation from both the University Park and Health Sciences campuses. Call (213) 437-1000 for information or an appointment.

Calendar of Events

The HSC Calendar is online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar

Monday, March 24

NOON. Fellows' Didactic Teaching Conference. "NEPHSAP: Acute Renal Failure (2007)," Mitra K. Nadim, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

4 P.M. "Transplant Conference," Various faculty speakers. UH Salerni Rm. Info: (323) 226-7307

Tuesday, March 25

9 A.M. Neurology Grand Rounds. "New Perspectives on Pediatric Dystonia," Terence D. Sanger, Stanford. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11 A.M. "Paget's Disease," Frederick Singer, Saint John's Health Ctr. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-2806

NOON. Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. "Functional & Molecular Imaging in Monitoring and Guiding Cancer Treatment," Walter Wolf, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

Wednesday, March 26

NOON. Renal Grand Rounds Conference. "Renal Biopsy," Michael Koss, USC. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7307

NOON. USC Ctr. for Excellence in Research. "Innovation, Paradigm Shifts and the Information Age," Rand Wilcox, USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

4 P.M. USC Ctr. for Excellence in Research. "Developing NIH Grant Applications," Steve Moldin, USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

5 P.M. "HPV Update: Immunology, Epidemiology and Prevention," Ian Frazer, University of Queensland, Australia. NRT. Aresty Conference Ctr. Info: (323) 442-1757

Thursday, March 27

11 A.M. "What's New With Bone and Fat?" Cliff Rosen, Maine Medical Ctr. Research Inst. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-1144

NOON. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. "Protein Kinase C in Life and Death of the Heart and the Brain," Daria Mochly-Rosen, Stanford. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

5 P.M. Hematology Case Conference. "Update on CML Management," Francis Giles, UT Health Science Ctr. at San Antonio. NOR 4444. Info: (323) 865-3950

Friday, March 28

8 A.M. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. "Scene Investigation - Directed Autopsy," Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, USC/UCLA. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

11 A.M. Hematology Grand Rounds. "Update on Acute Transfusion Reactions," Ira

Shulman, USC. GNH 14-441. Info: (323) 865-3950

Sunday, March 30

8:30 A.M. Childrens Hospital Los Angeles TTS Race for Hope. 1001 Rose Bowl Drive, Parcel H Parking lot, Pasadena. Info: www.ttsraceforhope.org

Monday, Mar. 31

NOON. Fellows' Didactic Teaching Conference. "Post Transplant Immunology," Yasir Qazi, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

Tuesday, April 1

NOON. Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. "Chronic Cancer Pain: Gene Therapy to (Epi-) Genomics," Andreas Beutler, Mount Sinai School of Medicine. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

Monday, April 7

NOON. Fellows' Core Curriculum Conference. "Edema & Diuretics," Mirosław Smogorzewski, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

Tuesday, April 8

NOON. Cancer Ctr. Grand Rounds. "Roles of the Transcription Factor LRF in Hematopoieses," Takahiro Maeda, City of Hope. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801



Jon Nailick

Author and physician Andrew Weil addresses a crowd at Mayer Auditorium on March 13, discussing his views on the importance of integrative medicine.

Author hails integrative medicine as key

By Ina Fried

Physician and best-selling author Andrew Weil believes that integrative medicine—practiced in a nonprofit setting—is a solution to an otherwise bleak future for the U.S. health care system.

In a speech last week at Mayer Auditorium, Weil said integrative medicine ensures that patients are more than their physical bodies; that "all aspects of lifestyle are relevant to health and disease."

Twice the cover subject of *TIME* magazine, Weil is a Harvard-trained physician and author of several bestselling books. He is also the founder and director of the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona's College of Medicine.

"What we have to do as a society is to work together to encourage people to make better lifestyle choices," Weil said in his talk, sponsored by Keck's Student Integrative Medicine Club in collaboration with USC's Visions and Voices.

He seeks to improve the training of physicians, nurses, pharmacists and allied health professionals, incorporating curricula on the use of natural therapeutics and

nutrition, and the close connections between mind and body.

"Some patients say the most important thing I did was first to say that they could get better," he said. "The relationship of doctor and patient is important."

Something magical happens when a health professional sits with a patient and actually listens."

The development of this therapeutic relationship requires time, which has been curtailed by financial pressures, he said, adding, "We're spending money on medical interventions that are inherently expensive, instead of spending on the prevention of illness."

Used appropriately, medical technology and pharmacological treatments are "terrific," Weil said, but the rising costs of medical care and medical interventions are driving "the beginning of the total collapse of the health care system."

The United States spends more per capita on health care than any other country in the world, he said, yet on every measure the country ranks near the bottom. In fact, he said, "we do not have a health care system; we have a disease management system."

HSC NEWSMAKERS

Complete listing at: www.usc.edu/uscnews/usc_in_the_news/

A Mar. 17 *Los Angeles Downtown News* article quoted Doheny ophthalmologist **Mark Humayun** about expanding the artificial retinal implant clinical trial.

On Mar. 17, Medical News Today online quoted USC/Norris colon cancer expert **Heinz-Josef Lenz** on a story about preventing colorectal cancer.

On Mar. 14, NBC's the "Today Show" interviewed USC/Norris oncologist **Syma Iqbal** about pancreatic cancer.

A Mar. 14 *Press-Enterprise*

article noted that environmental expert **James Gauderman** served on an Environmental Protection Agency advisory panel on Southern California air quality standards.

On Mar. 13, the United Press International featured research led by USC/Norris cancer researcher **Si-Yi Chen** about an unusual way to develop tumor vaccines that disables the suppressor function of regulatory T Cells.

A Mar. 13 *Las Vegas Sun* story quoted psychiatrist **Bruce Spring** about the possible motives for a group of nurses

and technicians in Nevada charged with reusing syringes in order to increase the profit for their medical center.

A Mar. 13 *USA Today* article stated that cardiologist **Uri Elkayam** manages the best-known registry of pregnancy-related heart failure cases in the U.S.

On Mar. 11, CNN cited USC/Norris cancer researcher **Giske Ursin's** study on the protective benefits of breast-feeding, which may reduce the risk for breast cancer.

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