Sample lauds faculty, touts progress in emotional final address

By Allison Engel and Ina Fried

USC President Steven B. Sample’s last address to the faculty on Jan. 26 at Town & Gown was marked with warm and poignant moments, as well as sustained standing ovations before and after he spoke.

Sample told the group that when he arrived on campus in 1991, he encountered “something really wonderful—a faculty who were willing to cut me some slack.”

He said that he and his wife, Kathryn, realized early on how fortunate they were to be part of a university where the term “family” had real meaning and where lifelong bonds were a reality, especially among alumni. But the people key to bringing his dreams to fruition were “the people who actually do the teaching, research, public service and patient care.”

“At the heart of our efforts are excellent faculty who are highly motivated, who believe in the goals and the mission of this university,” he said.

For example, one of the initial goals of Sample’s presidency was developing the Health Sciences Campus into a world-renowned center for clinical care and research, and he acknowledged “the pivotal role that faculty played when the university took a major step in that direction.” Many members of our medical faculty kept working, keeping believing and keeping guided the university until eventually we took the bold and salutary step” of purchasing USC University Hospital and the USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

He cited the purchase of the hospitals as “an opportunity to do something well to make our mark.”

The president’s talk included the trademark Sample wit, including an opening joke and jaw-dropping statistics that illustrated how fast and far the university has risen in his 19-year tenure. It was

Renowned environmental scientist sees unfulfilled promise in mapped genome

By Sara Reave

Donald Kennedy, Bing Professor of Environmental Science and President Emeritus at Stanford University, spoke on Jan. 29 about the promise of—and the problems associated with—the human genome map and society’s use of it, both for medical and forensic uses.

Held in the Artest Family Conference Center, the lecture, “The Bumpy Road to Personalized Medicine,” offered a nuanced view of the value of genetic information for both scientists and society. His presentation was the first in a planned seminar series on translational medicine organized by Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito.

Jon Samet, chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School, introduced Kennedy as someone who “has made the right enemies, and therefore must be doing the right things”—a reference to Kennedy’s position as editor of the journal Science from 2000-2008, where he became a lightning rod for criticism for his willingness to speak out about the intersection of science and politics.

In his presentation, Kennedy said the complete mapping of the human genome, first announced in 2000, held much promise for scientists, researchers and physicians. Labeled the “blueprint of life,” by leading scientists, the human genome sequence was going to usher in the “golden age of truly personalized medicine, such as preventive therapies to preclude diseases that will immunize us against the health risks that our genome is suggesting,” said Kennedy.

“We don’t know anything, automatically, based on the genetic sequence, about the expression level of that particular gene. It’s a very difficult business,” he said.

While he did not dismiss the possibility of utilizing genetic information to better understand disease, Kennedy noted that the promise has not yet been fulfilled, due in large part to the lack of understanding of the epigenome, which can control the expression of genes. The discovery of the epigenome has added another layer of variability into the process of managing and preventing disease on a genetic basis.

“Many of our medical faculty kept working, keeping believing and keeping guided the university until eventually we took the bold and salutary step” of purchasing USC University Hospital and the USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

He cited the purchase of the hospitals as “an opportunity to do something well to make our mark.”

The president’s talk included the trademark Sample wit, including an opening joke and jaw-dropping statistics that illustrated how fast and far the university has risen in his 19-year tenure. It was

USC Norris inpatients to begin shift to USC University Hospital

By Tania Chatilla

In an effort to expand and improve patient care facilities, USC University Hospital will begin treating all USC Norris Cancer Hospital inpatients and handling all Norris surgical cases beginning March 1.

Administrators say the plan is part of a larger initiative to provide enhanced facilities for all patients at USC hospitals—starting with the opening of the Norris Inpatient Tower at USC University Hospital to treat USC Norris Cancer Hospital inpatients come March 1.

Meanwhile, administrators will also take this time to identify key expansion and upgrade opportunities at the Norris facilities.

“This is really about providing the best possible opportunities for improved facilities for our patients,” said hospitals CEO Mitch Creeem. “By caring for our cancer patients at USC University Hospital, we will finally have the long-awaited opportunity to treat patients in the brand new, state-of-the-art Norris Inpatient Tower. At the same time, we’ll also have a chance to look at the best possible ways to utilize our Norris facilities in the future for our patients.”

Months of preparation have gone into the March 1 transition effort, and plans are in place to ensure smooth operations. Ingrid Nouri, a clinical coordinator also on the medical/surgical floor at USC Norris Cancer Hospital for the transition. Nouri, who worked at USC University Hospital for 10 years before arriving at USC Norris Cancer Hospital four years ago, said she has also been trying to help her colleagues prepare for March 1. “I feel like I am able to assist in the transition because I have been there and I have also been here.”

Surgery schedulers have begun arranging for patient cases on or after March 1 to be completed at the USC University Hospital.

See INPATIENTS, page 3
The Bogart Pediatric Cancer Research Program has awarded a five-year $4.7 million grant to support the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases (CCCB). The grant also will support 25 scholarships and personal laptops for pediatric cancer survivors currently attending college. Stuart E. Siegel, director of the CCCBD and professor and vice chair of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine, said he would use the research being funded.

Carmen A. Piliulfitto, dean of the Keck School of Medicine, hailed the award as providing a major boost for crucial research, adding that it “underscores the depth of the Bogart Pediatric Cancer Research Program’s commitment to—and passion for—for the work of our physician-researchers.”

Over the past 25 years, the Bogart Program has awarded nearly $27 million for cancer research at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “The Bogart Pediatric Cancer Research Program has been critical in our efforts to find new treatments for children with cancer,” Siegel said. “Their support allows us to rapidly move new discoveries and strengths to share their opinion as to what the campus needs from a number of standpoints (class room space, gym, research space, open space, etc.),” said Laurie Stone, with USC Real Estate and Asset Management. “That feedback will be taken into account as concept plans are put together, and then we’ll likely have additional town halls in the future to share the plans as they are developed.”

USC also is in the planning process, said the final master plan will reflect the needs of USC units, including the hospitals and their patients and visitors, as well as identify future development sites and opportunities for optimal use of existing buildings and available land.

The process began a year ago with an initial background phase. “We anticipate having a plan that is ready to put before the trustees for approval by the end of the year,” Stone said.

For more information, call (323) 442-1336.

**Men 60-80 years old sought for exercise study**

Researchers at the USC Clinical Exercise Research Center are seeking healthy men 60-80 years old to participate in a 12-week resistance training program on the Health Sciences Campus.

The program will examine the effects of a three-times-a-week training regimen coupled with protein and creatine supplementation. Todd Schroeder, assistant professor in the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, said the study will explore whether such a regimen can improve participants’ overall fitness.

For more information on the study, call (323) 442-2190 or e-mail: eschroed@usc.edu.
Keck School kicks off seminar series for residents

By Ina Fried

If you want to assume a leadership position in medicine, work on your social skills, pursue learning and develop teamwork—and take advantage of unexpected opportunities. These were among the tips that three leaders in the Keck School of Medicine presented Jan. 26 in Aresty Auditorium at the first in a series of Keck dinner seminars for LAC-USC residents.

Two of the panelists earned master of business administration degrees after advancing into their medical careers: Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, who chaired the panel, and Donald Larsen, chief medical officer of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital and of the Doctors of USC. The third panelist, Stephanie Hall, medical director of LAC-USC Medical Center, has an MBA in her plans for the future.

“There’s a huge difference between medical school and business school,” Puliafito said. “Medical school is a very individualistic thing. In business school, the first thing we learned was working as part of a team.” He said that social interactive skills and organizational skills are “super important” to a career.

Larsen, who agreed that a formal business education gave him another tool to use in medical leadership, never thought he would achieve the positions he holds now. The only one in his family to go to college, Larsen followed his interests in photography and the sciences to a medical degree and a specialty in radiology. His desire to work more directly with patients led to an advanced specialization in interventional neuroradiology, in which he uses medical devices to prevent or treat strokes.

“There is nothing wrong with following your heart and your interests,” Larsen said. “Whatever you do, you should enjoy it and do it well.”

Larsen, Hall never imagined herself in her current position. Her love of emergency medicine led her to a medical degree, and she looked forward to a career in a busy urban trauma center with “blood and guts.” Taking on the challenges of quality, risk management and organizing the hospital for a successful accreditation review led to her administrative positions.

“I love administrative medicine and clinical medicine even more,” Hall said. “I encourage all of you to respond to things that really motivate you.”

Larry Opus, associate dean for graduate medical education, introduced Stephanie Hall, (left) medical director of LAC-USC Medical Center, and Donald Larsen, chief medical officer of USC’s two hospitals and of the Doctors of USC, at the Jan. 26 seminar for LAC-USC residents.

Larry Opus

“...nothing wrong with following your heart and your interests. Whatever you do, you should enjoy it and do it well.”

— Donald Larsen, chief medical officer of USC’s hospitals and of the Doctors of USC

Keck School of Medicine researchers Elizabeth R. Lawlor and Markus Müschen, have received grants totaling $1.5 million from the organization Stand Up To Cancer (SU2C). Müschen is director of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Program at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and associate professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine. Lawlor is an assistant professor of pediatrics and pathology at the Keck School of Medicine. Both are also researchers at the Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases and The Saban Research Institute of Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

Over a three-year period, Lawlor and Müschen will each receive up to $750,000 as part of SU2C’s Innovative Research Grants program, which supports the next generation of cancer research leaders. SU2C awarded 13 young scientists a total of $9.8 million to support high-risk, high-reward cancer research.

“We asked our best and brightest young researchers to step outside their comfort zones and strive to make big differences with bold initiatives,” said Richard D. Kolodor, professor of medicine at the University of California, San Diego, and chair of the grants review committee. “If these projects come to fruition, some of the ideas could be game-changers in cancer research.”

Yves DeClerck, director of The Saban Research Institute, and Stuart E. Siegel, director of the Childrens Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases at Childrens Hospital, said in a joint statement, “We are particularly pleased to have two of our researchers chosen among just 13 nationwide for the honor of receiving one of these grants. We know that these awards are highly competitive, and the research into cancer and blood diseases being conducted by these two scientists is extremely important.”

Lawlor’s focus projects on modeling Ewing tumor initiation in human neural crest stem cells. Müschen is exploring targeted inhibition of B-cell lymphoma 6 protein for leukemia stem cell eradication.

Stand Up to Cancer awards USC researchers $1.5 million

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

continued from page 3

UCS Norris Cancer Hospital, said she was excited about the upcoming transition, and looking forward to working in the new facility. “This is an older building,” said Victoria, who has worked in the Norris facilities for more than two decades. “The new tower is very beautiful and modern. It’s nice to have that kind of rooms and an environment that is more conducive to caring for our patients.”

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

Julie Croner, executive administrator for Norris Cancer Services, said the tower is specifically designed to meet the medical and surgical needs of cancer patients.

“The new Norris Inpatient Tower is designed around private rooms with all the amenities,” Croner said. “And what’s even more important is that our patients will be cared for by the same nurses and physicians they’ve grown to trust in the most comfortable surroundings.”

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telemetry system upgrade and new hand-washing sinks on the floors for staff and physicians.

INPATIENT: New tower is specifically designed for cancer patients

The Norris Inpatient Tower was completed in 2007 but has been virtually unused since then. It recently underwent renovations, including a telev
Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Monday, Feb. 8

 Noon. “Secrected Semaphorins Control Spine: Distribution and Morphogenesis in the Postnatal CNS,” Tracy Tran, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509

 Noon. KISOM Research Seminar “The Role of TGF- 

bets in Lung Development and Disease,” Parvizi Minoo, USC. NRT Anxiety Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Tuesday, Feb. 9


 Thursday, Feb. 11

 Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Niches-mediated Regulation of Hematopoietic Stem cells in the Adult Bone Marrow,” Gregory Adams, USC. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

 Friday, Feb. 12

 8:30 a.m. Surgery Grand Rounds: “PFA for CXX: – The Operation, the Outcomes and the Future,” Bruce Wolff, Mayo Clinic. DOH 100. Info: (323) 865-3690

 3 p.m. Visions and Voices The USC Arts & Humanities Initiative: Professionism, Electronic Records and the Physician-Patient Relationship,” Howard Bovdy, Un. of Texas at Galvaston. KAM Meyer Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-2553

 Tuesday, Feb. 16

 10:30 a.m. USC University Hospital Guild Speaker’s Series and Luncheon. “Preservative Medicine,” Jonathan Samet, USC. DEI 3rd Floor Conference Room. Reservations and Info: (323) 254-6600


 Wednesday, Feb. 17


 Noon. “The Role of Physic- 

ians in Affecting the Health of Communities: The Case of Obesity in America,” Annetteone Yancey, UCLA. HMB 100. Info: (323) 442-1679

 Noon. “Signaling between Synapse and Nucleus During Neuronal Plasticity,” Kelovy Martin, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

 4 p.m. Research Advancement: Spring Semester Workshops. “Obtaining Research Funding from Corporate Sponsors,” Danis Atkinson, USC. NML West Conference Room. Info: (213) 740-6209

 Thursday, Feb. 18

 Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Epigenetic Regulation of Natural Cell Fate,” Yi Sun, UCLA. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121


 Friday, Feb. 22

 Noon. “Dopamine Regulates Multiple Dimensions of Arsenicide in Drosophila,” ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-1509


 Wednesday, Feb. 24

 4 p.m. Research Advancement: Spring Semester Workshops. “Developing Funded Research Programs,” Randolph Hall, USC. NML East Conference Room. Info: (213) 740-6709

 Thursday, Feb. 25

 Noon. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture Series. “Regulation of Stem Cell Fate,” Helen Blau, Stanford. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3211

 SAMPLE: Speech reflects on USC’s past and future

 Keck School scientists named to Society of Pediatric Research

 Two Keck School of Medi- 

cine research scientists—Sha- 

hab Asgharzadeh and Gay A. Young—have been elected to membership in the Society of Pediatric Research.

 The election of the pair, both members of The Saban Research Institute of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles—will be formally announced at The Pediatric Academic Societies annual meeting, to be held May 1-4, in Van- 

cover, Canada. Asgharzadeh, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Keck School, focuses his studies on neuroblastoma and medulloblastoma. He and his colleagues developed a novel detection technique for determining chromosome copy number alterations, which are associated with the development and behavior of tumors.

 The new method is extremely accurate and also faster than previous methods.

 Young, an associate profes- 

sor of clinical pediatrics at the Keck School, focuses his research on the development of novel anticoagulant therapy in children with thrombosis.

 His second focus area in his research is improvement in the management of bleeding symptoms in patients with hemophilia.

 Keck School of Medicine

 Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to The Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-3822, or e-mail to etblausw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.

 In case of an emergency...

 Call the Emergency Information Phone: 213-740-9233 The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

 Visit the USC Web: http://emergency.usc.edu This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.