

By Josh Grossberg

It somehow all flew by in an instant. But here she was, after four years of medical school, receiving her diploma and officially becoming a doctor.

And as if it didn't go by fast enough, Kaitlin Carroll was the first person called on stage to receive her diploma at the Keck School of Medicine of USC's commencement ceremony May 18 at the Shrine Auditorium.

"It's been eight years since high school," said Carroll, who also served as the co-president of the student body. "It's blown by."

With more than 2,000 family members cheering and waving, the Keck School class entered the hall at the start of the ceremony. The class included 154 M.D. graduates, with three of them also receiving a Ph.D., one an M.B.A. and one an M.P.H.

It was one of several graduation ceremonies held during the week for students in various fields of study across the Health Sciences campus.

The newly minted doctors received a wide range of send-offs that were in turn solemn, poignant and funny.

Commencement speaker, and recipient of the Dean's Humanitarian Award Robert K. Ross, president and CEO



Jon Nalick

HSC celebrates as graduates step up to make their mark

of the California Endowment, wove a story about a 2-year-old boy who was rushed to the hospital after being found in the bottom of a swimming pool. Ross was a resident at the time and got

to know the family over the course of the boy's treatment. The initial news was not good, and the family was offered the chance to remove the boy from his respirator. But they refused, deciding

instead to hope for the best.

Ross lost touch with the family, but seven years later received a telephone call. On the other end was the young boy, who was then 9.

"I was talking to a mira-

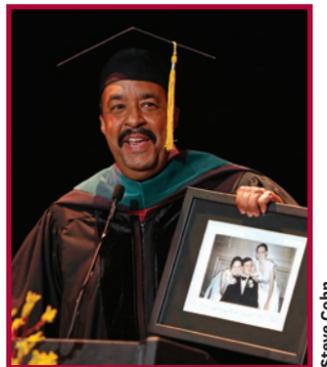
cle," Ross told the audience.

And then Ross held up a photo. It was the boy at his high school graduation. Ross said the boy then went on to graduate from college. Ross

See **COMMENCEMENT**, page 4



Clarissa Tu



Steve Cohn

Clockwise from left: USC School of Pharmacy graduate Justin Shintani flashes a victory sign at the school's May 17 commencement ceremony; Tracy Forster proudly displays her occupational therapy doctorate; speaking at the Keck School of Medicine commencement ceremony, Robert K. Ross, president and CEO of the California Endowment, illustrates a story of faith and perseverance with the photo of a young man who graduated from college years after a near-death experience.

Program offers real-world training for aspiring health care workers

By Josh Grossberg

Ariel Bodden always wanted to be a nurse, but there were hurdles to overcome: She didn't graduate from high school until she was nearly 20 because she was pushed back a grade when she emigrated from Belize. And, of course, advanced educations do not come cheap.

But thanks to her own determination and a new program that offers

students real-life hospital training, Bodden is well on her way to a fulfilling career in health care.

The program is called the USC Family of Schools Concurrent Enrollment Initiative, and it is an offshoot of the Neighborhood Academic Initiative. Targeted to low-income, disadvantaged, first-generation students, the program gives high-achieving students the chance to learn valuable skills in a real-world setting at Keck Medical Center of USC. Bodden was in the first class of students to participate.

While the students at Foshay Learning Center—a member of the university's Family of Schools—took their regular classes during the week, they also had intensive learning



Ariel Bodden

Jon Nalick

See **TRAINING**, page 2

Nobel Laureate discusses key stem cell work

By Josh Grossberg

Cells can be stubborn things. A skin cell resists changing into a liver cell, and a heart cell wants to remain a heart cell.

But with the right kind of manipulation, they can be changed—a skin cell can turn into a liver cell or even a pulsing heart cell, Nobel Laureate Sir John Gurdon told a crowd of students, faculty and staff at a talk on May 16 in the Aresty Auditorium.

"The process of cell differentiation is remarkably stable," Gurdon said. "Very rarely do cells of one kind switch into another kind. We don't have skin in our brain or liver in our muscles. Nevertheless, it can happen."

Making it happen is what earned Gurdon the 2012 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. In the early 1960s, he was able to replace the immature nucleus in a frog egg cell with the nucleus from a mature intestinal cell. The modified egg developed into a normal frog with the DNA of the mature cells.

In his talk, "Nuclear Transplantation to Prospects of Cell Replacement," Gurdon told about the advances made in the areas of cloning and nuclear transplantation since his discovery that mature cells can be reprogrammed to develop into different kinds of tissue.

His pioneering work continues to reverberate in the world of science. Although he did not mention it, Gurdon's talk came



Steve Cohn

Nobel Laureate Sir John Gurdon lectures on stem cells on May 16 at Aresty Auditorium,

the day after scientists announced that for the first time they were able to transform human skin cells into embryonic stem cells—a breakthrough that links directly back to Gurdon's original experiments.

See **GURDON**, page 3

Harlyne J. Norris receives Elaine Stevely Hoffman Award

By Josh Grossberg

For her and her family's decades-long commitment to health care at USC, Harlyne J. Norris received the Elaine Stevely Hoffman Award during commencement ceremonies for the Keck School of Medicine of USC, held on May 18 at the Shrine Auditorium.

Before she accepted the honor, Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito thanked her for her "longstanding contribution and unwavering dedication to the Keck School of Medicine and its people."

"She serves as a trusted adviser to the president of the university on health care matters," he said.

The honor comes as the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center celebrates its 40th anniversary. The cancer center is part of the Keck School.

"The Norris relationship with the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center goes back to a lead gift that her husband, Kenneth Norris Jr., made to the center," Puliafito said.

A trustee and past chairman of the Kenneth

T. and Eileen L. Norris Foundation, Harlyne Norris is a renowned medical benefactor.

Through the Norris Foundation, the Norris family has donated nearly \$200 million to USC. The family's legacy can be seen across both the Health Sciences and University Park campuses—from the USC Norris Cancer Hospital and Norris Medical Library to the Norris Cinema Theater and Norris Dental Science Center.

In 2012, the foundation made a \$15 million gift to support construction of the Norris Healthcare Consultation Center, which broke ground on the Health Sciences campus earlier in the month. The building will house multidisciplinary clinics focused on cancer care.

She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from USC in 2008. She has served on the Board of Trustees since 2000.

Norris is also known for her many charitable activities dedicated to children and the arts.

The award is named in memory of Elaine Stevely Hoffman, a Los Angeles philanthropist who contributed to building a research center on the USC Health Sciences campus.



Steve Cohn

Harlyne J. Norris received the Elaine Stevely Hoffman Award during commencement ceremonies for the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Through the Norris Foundation, the Norris family has donated nearly \$200 million to USC.

TRAINING: Program targets high-achieving students seeking careers in health professions

Continued from Page 1

sessions every Saturday and Sunday at Los Angeles City College.

In March, five of the students moved on to get some hands-on training at Keck Medical Center of USC, with Bodden working in cardiology. They work 20 hours a week for three months and are also enrolled at college.

And it's all 100 percent free. Not bad when similar courses can cost thousands of dollars. While it was anything but easy, the allure of a free education made it all worthwhile.

"I didn't have to pay for anything—shoes, books," Bodden said. "They even provide transportation."

The program became a reality last year when Theda Douglas, USC associate vice president for government partnerships and programs, applied for a grant from the

USC Neighborhood Outreach, which is funded by the annual Good Neighbors Campaign.

"We took high school students who are very serious about their career and wanted to be in the profession," Douglas said. "It took them 16 weeks, every Saturday and Sunday. Their parents had to have them here at 6 a.m. We are thrilled to see the dedication of both parents and students in this endeavor. It is programs like this that provide a meaningful career path and give students a glimpse of what they can become."

The Community Benefit and Outreach Department at Keck Medical Center of USC was instrumental in bringing the program to the Health Sciences campus. Providing medical education to minority students is one of the department's focused

outreach initiatives, said Community Benefit and Outreach Administrative Director Sevanne Sarkis.

"We have certain priorities we're trying to meet in the community," she said. "We're trying to give them as much experience as possible."

Bodden's class was something of a test. If the students didn't do well, the program would face an uncertain future. But Bodden is now tutoring the second group of kids starting their studies.

The program makes the students more attractive when it comes time to enroll in college, said Alicia Syres, director of volunteer services at USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

"Grades are wonderful, but (colleges are) looking at the whole person now," she said. "Have they gone out of their way to help someone

else? They want more than numbers on paper. They want the whole package."

Although she still has a way to go before reaching her ultimate goal of becoming a nurse practitioner, Bodden has already received vocational certification as a certified nursing assistant and a home health aide.

In fact, she already puts her skills to use. To make extra money, she spends weekends tending to an elderly woman with dementia.

So with classes, hospital training, offering in-home care and tutoring, when does Bodden get a few free minutes for herself?

"Holidays," she said with a laugh.

USC Norris study validates way to improve breast cancer survival

A new study from the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center shows targeting both hormone receptors (HRs) and human epidermal growth factor receptor 2 (HER2) in first-line treatment of metastatic breast cancer patients significantly increased overall survival times.

A team of researchers led by Debu Tripathy, professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, looked at data provided by RegistHER, a prospective, observational study of 1,023 newly diagnosed HER2-positive metastatic breast cancer patients.

They found that hormonal therapy given with the anti-HER2 antibody trastuzumab (Herceptin) and chemotherapy is associated with improved survival and progression-free survival outcomes, compared to no hormonal therapy.

The study, titled "First-Line Treatment Patterns and Clinical Outcomes in Patients with HER2-Positive and Hormone Receptor-Positive Metastatic Breast Cancer from RegistHER," appears in *The Oncologist*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Society for Translational Oncology.

"This study can aid in significantly improving treatment planning and shared decision-making with patients," Tripathy said. "It provides a platform for considering hormonal therapy as a standard component of treatment regimens for patients with HER2-positive and hormone receptor-positive metastatic breast cancer."

Using data from RegistHER, a multicenter, prospective cohort registry study, the research team determined that the targeting of both hormone and HER2 receptors is associated with better outcomes compared to HER2-based therapy alone. HER2-positive breast cancer, which accounts for about 25 percent of breast cancers diagnosed, tends to be more aggressive than other types of breast cancer because it promotes the growth of cancer cells.

About half of HER2-positive breast cancer cases are also estrogen receptor-positive. Trastuzumab specifically targets HER2 cells and is the standard of care for patients with HER2-positive breast cancer, while HR-positive breast cancer is treated with hormonal therapy designed to interfere with HR signaling.

The Weekly

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GURDON: Lecture describes anticipated therapeutic breakthrough

Continued from Page 1

Gurdon was introduced by Andrew McMahon, director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, who called the Nobel Laureate a “scientist’s scientist.”

Gurdon touched on another milestone in the history of cloning—Dolly the sheep, which in 1996 became the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell using Gurdon’s nuclear transfer process. That it took more than 30 years to accomplish indicates just how groundbreaking Gurdon’s efforts were.

Although Dolly died at about half the age of an average sheep, Gurdon called the cloning a success. He blamed the animal’s early death on it not being allowed outdoors to prevent

Nobel Laureate Sir John Gurdon visited the USC Health Sciences Campus on May 16. After presenting a public lecture, he was interviewed by Madeline Andrews, a Ph.D. student who conducts stem cell research.

For the full interview, visit usc.edu/13t.

Q: Do you have any advice for young scientists, current students who are struggling with their own research?

A: My own background is that I was extremely unsuccessful early on. Everything went wrong. And so, one piece of advice would be: Don’t give up too early.

Q: What are your hopes for the next generation of scientists? What are the big questions that you anticipate will be answered?

A: In the field where I work, I think cell replacement is surely going to work in some cases. Perhaps it’ll work in many others too, as we find ways of doing things better. In the talk I gave this morning, I mentioned that when you have beating cardiomyocytes [heart muscle cells], they don’t integrate properly into the heart. I’m sure that will be soluble, and that will make a big difference. So, when you have cells or tissues working well in the laboratory, you can then transplant them into a host and even the brain. That would be fantastic if one could do that.

it from being stolen.

“It lived for six years,” he said. “It was so precious they had to keep it indoors.”

As for the next breakthrough, Gurdon said he anticipates a therapeutic use to treat age-related macular degeneration.

“An eye could be easier to restore than other organs

like the heart or liver because it needs relatively few cells—about 10,000—compared to millions,” he said.

“This is remarkably reversible,” he said of the leading cause of blindness in older people.

But there are still hurdles to be cleared. Much of the

process of how and why cells can transform remains mysterious even while progress is being made.

“Our aim was and still is how this rejuvenated programming is happening,” he said.

The day after his speech, Gurdon received an honorary degree from USC

during commencement.

The talk was sponsored by USC Stem Cell, the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, and the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Keck Medical Center of USC patient turns room into impromptu art gallery

By Josh Grossberg

Dominic Quagliozzi was looking for a unique place to display his artwork. He found it in his hospital room at the Keck Medical Center of USC.

Unusual, yes, but certainly appropriate. Quagliozzi made the art while recovering from an acute exacerbation episode of his cystic fibrosis, a genetic condition that lands him in the hospital two or three times a year.

Quagliozzi channeled his illness through his art, giving viewers a chance to see what cystic fibrosis looks like—at least through the eyes of a trained artist.

In all, he made 20 paintings that reflected the pain and the loneliness he felt during his 11-day hospital stay. An additional image was projected on a bathroom wall.

The subject matter ranges from his interpretation of the hives he developed during an allergic reaction to abstract drawings of faces that represented the hospital staff.

“When the doctors come into the

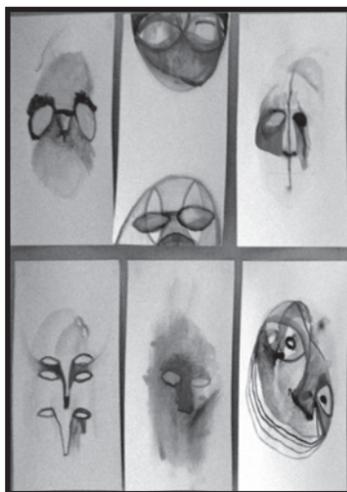
room, they wear gowns and facemasks to protect me,” said the 30-year-old Burbank resident, who has a degree in fine art. “I made abstract paintings of that sensation of having all these people come in and observe me and take care of me, but I never see their faces.”

Others show what Quagliozzi calls “base human functions,” paintings of him relieving himself, for example.

“My work is basically all centered around the body, health, fitness and how society reacts to that,” he said.

The rest of the 11-by-15-inch pieces represent how he dealt with his situation.

“There are emotions about being alone in the hospital—isolation,



Patient Dominic Quagliozzi’s artwork reflects his stay at the Keck Medical Center of USC.

alienation, separation anxiety,” he said. “These things that come up when you’re in the hospital for an extended period alone.”

With local artists expanding the idea of what a gallery can be, Quagliozzi had the idea of showing his paintings right there in his room.

“The CF team heard about it,” he said. “They contacted the hospital administration. They were

really supportive of having the show.”

In fact, the hospital catered the April 10 event with cookies and drinks.

“Being in a hospital for two weeks can be really hard, he said. “It really meant a lot to me. Having drinks and cookies really made the guests appreciate what was going on.”

Debbie Benitez, nurse coordinator for the cystic fibrosis program at Keck Hospital of USC, said the hospital encourages patients to find fulfilling activities during their stay.

“We want to support our patients and their dreams,” she said. “It was really amazing. You were just looking through the eyes of a CF patient.”

When guests arrived, they had to navigate around Quagliozzi’s bed and his IV pole. He didn’t want them to forget where they were.

“I was interested in the dynamic of people coming to a hospital room to observe not only a patient, but the periphery,” he said.

Quagliozzi hopes his art teaches others that having an illness is not something to hide.

“Sometimes I have a group show and I’ll just project one of my X-rays,” he said. “It’s a prompt to make it OK for people to feel comfortable enough to share their personal health stories.”

To see more of Quagliozzi’s artwork, visit www.artistdominic.com.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A May 20 article in the *U-T San Diego* featured research led by **Cheng-Ming Chuong**, professor of pathology at the Keck School of Medicine, and colleagues from the Salk Institute of Biological Studies and University of California, Irvine, finding that hair loss from radiation therapy may be reduced based on the time of day that therapy is initiated.

A May 20 report on KPCC-FM’s “On Central” blog quoted **Heather Macdonald**, assistant professor of clinical OB/GYN and breast surgery at the Keck School of Medicine, and **Agustin Garcia**, associate professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, about accessible and affordable cancer screenings available in South Los Angeles.

A May 18 article in the *Los Angeles Times* featured the Laboratory of Neuro Imaging, which will move to the Keck School of Medicine next fall. The lab

includes professors **Arthur Toga**, **Paul Thompson** and more than 100 faculty, researchers and staff, including graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and others. *Los Angeles Magazine* also covered the story.

A May 18 post on Domain-B.com (India) featured research led by **Andrew McMahon**, Provost Professor and director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, and **Qi-Long Ying**, associate professor of cell and neurobiology at the Keck School, looking into the potential of studying embryonic stem cells for future medical breakthroughs.

A May 16 column in *Los Angeles Daily News* features the story of **Jaime Gonzalez**, a recent M.D./MPH graduate of the Keck School of Medicine whose parents were told he’d never see his first birthday.

“He has a resilience and inner strength I’ve rarely seen,” said **Erin Quinn**, professor of family medicine and former associate dean of admissions and educational affairs at the Keck School. “I’m so proud of him. He’s going to be one terrific doctor.” The column also appeared in the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*.

A May 13 article in The Huffington Post cited a study by **Victoria Cortessis**, assistant professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, and a colleague finding a link between marijuana and testicular cancer.

A May 13 story in *U.S. News & World Report* featured research by **Cheng-Ming Chuong**, professor of pathology at the Keck School of Medicine, and colleagues studying how alligators can regenerate a lost tooth up to 50 times. Researchers are hoping doctors could one day stimulate the same ability in humans.

COMMENCEMENT: Newest graduates celebrate with friends and family

Continued from page 1

used the story to ask the graduates to imagine things beyond science.

“This craft that you’ve chosen, never forget that it’s about healing and there is an element of that craft of healing that has to do with faith—faith in the power of unseen evidence,” he said. “It’s a reminder about those things that you just can’t measure. You can’t measure faith, attitude and courage.”

In his address, Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito recalled how the Boston Marathon bombing occurred just weeks after faculty, staff and students from the Keck School and Keck Medical Center of USC volunteered at the Los Angeles Marathon. And while the event was a na-



Steve Cohn

tional tragedy, it was a time physicians could feel proud for rushing to the scene and putting themselves in danger to help the injured.

“Just a few seconds after the blast, we saw true heroism everywhere,” he said. “And physicians led the way. It was a great moment in the history of American medicine and something every one of

us in the medical profession can be proud of.”

He then urged the class to take on the mantle of leadership in their careers.

“In moments of crises large and small, both communities and individuals look to physicians to lead the way toward healing,” he said. “It may be on the battlefield. It may be on the sidewalk. I know you’ll be ready for the difficult times ahead with both courage and compassion.”

Elizabeth Garrett, USC provost and senior vice president for academic affairs told the graduates that they possess knowledge that took previous doctors an entire career to master. And she urged them to put their expertise to good use.

“Your passion to help and comfort others is not just a passion anymore—it is also your responsibility,” she said.

And then it was time for some fun. Student speaker Nima Taheri seamlessly mixed pop-culture references with experiences from school for a comedic turn that had the audience laughing.

“I’d like to take this time to welcome our friends, our family and our loan officers for coming out to support us at this very special time,” he said. “This is to you, Wells Fargo.”

Taheri, who transferred to the Keck School from UCLA, had some advice for his colleagues.

“Don’t be shy to tell everyone you went to USC,” he said. “But if you get caught not washing your hands and spreading drug-resistant bacteria to unsuspecting patients, that’s a good time to tell everyone you went to UCLA.”

Other ceremonies were also held throughout the week.

The Keck School’s Master of Science, Master of Public Health and Ph.D. students



Photos courtesy Homa Zadeh



Steve Cohn

Clockwise from above left: Keck School of Medicine graduate Diana Wu enjoys a light moment during commencement; USC School of Dentistry advanced periodontology graduates Chloe Cohen, Maria Galvan, Stephanie Gonzalez and Ivy Wu show their Trojan spirit; Keck School grads gather for a class photo at the Shrine Auditorium (To view the Keck School Senior and Faculty Award recipients, visit usc.edu/13w).

walked on May 15 in Pappas Quad.

On May 17, the Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC awarded 173 D.D.S. degrees, 32 bachelor’s degrees in dental hygiene, 46 advanced specialty certificates and one master’s degree in craniofacial biology.

The USC School of Pharmacy awarded 181 Pharm.D. degrees, 20 Ph.D. degrees and one Doctor of Regulatory Science degree. Additionally, 31 graduates were awarded master’s degrees, and 38 pharmacists completed their residency training.

On May 17, the Division of Biokinesiology and

Physical Therapy awarded 91 D.P.T. degrees, one master’s in biokinesiology and five Ph.D. degrees in biokinesiology, while the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy honored four graduates with Ph.D. degrees in occupational science, 51 Doctor of Occupational Therapy degrees, 131 master’s degrees and 21 bachelor’s degrees.

At one ceremony, Pam Corley of the Norris Medical Library received the division’s tribute for her more than 30 years of service. Her retirement came on the same day as the ceremony.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, May 29

8:30 a.m. “Photopheresis After Lung Transplant,” Mark Barr, USC. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

6:30 p.m. Keck Medical Center of USC Health Matters Free Community Information Session. “Breast Cancer Care: What Do You Need To Know?” Christy Russell and Stephen Sener, USC. University Club of Pasadena, 175 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena. Info: (323) 442-2830

7 p.m. USC Alumni Distinguished Speaker Series. “The How, What and Why of Regenerative Medicine,” Andrew McMahon, USC. USC Orange County Center, 2300 Michelson Drive, Irvine, CA. Info: (626) 457-4265

Friday, May 31

8 a.m. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “NexGen Pathology: Diagnostics and Theranostics,” Pamela Ward, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

8:30 a.m. KSOM Surgical Department Educational Lectureship. “Teaching Psychomotor Skills: Best Practices and Rules of Engagement,” Craig Baker and Maura Sullivan, USC. DOH 100. Info: (323) 442-9064

8:30 a.m. “Structural and Functional Characterization of ABCA3 in Health and Disease,” Surafel Mulugeta, University of Pennsylvania. IRD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds, Eddie Thara, USC. IPT Conference Room D. Info: (323) 865-3950

Saturday, June 1.

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. LAC + USC Neurosurgery and Trauma Symposium. “Neurotrauma L.A. 2013: Outcome Optimization,” Various speakers. LAC + USC IPT Conference Rooms A & B. Info: (323) 409-6899

Monday, June 3

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Adipocytes are Active Participants in Leukemia Progression and Drug Resistance,” Steven Mittelman, USC. NRT Aresty Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-7732

Tuesday, June 11

2 – 3:30 p.m. Breast Cancer Educational Forum. “Foods That Make a Difference,” Debu Tripathy and Carmen Martinez, USC. NRT G501 Jennifer Diamond Resource Library. Info: (323) 442-7808

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) 442-2832, or email to eblaauw@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.

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