Star-studded USC Norris gala raises more than $2 million

By Sherri Smilling

U.S. News & World Report’s 2015 America’s Best Graduate Schools rankings, released at the first-ever Graduate Education Summit at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), has recognized the University of Southern California’s (USC) School of Medicine as a top-tier institution in the field of graduate education.

The event honored the achievements of five outstanding scientists and educators with the inaugural Excellence in Graduate Education Awards, which are bestowed annually to faculty members who have made significant contributions to the field of graduate education at USC.

The winners included:

- Professor Alice Huang, chair of the Department of Biomedical Engineering at USC Viterbi School of Engineering.
- Professor Richard Murray, chairman of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at the Viterbi School.
- Professor David Bredesen, director of the USC Institute for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine.
- Professor Jennifer Doudna, professor of biochemistry and molecular cell biology at the USC School of Medicine.

The awards were presented during a special ceremony held at the USC School of Medicine’s Kresge Auditorium, where attendees had the opportunity to network and celebrate the accomplishments of these exceptional educators.

In addition to the awards, a panel discussion on the future of graduate education was held, featuring distinguished academics and leaders in the field. The panelists included USC Provostに基づいた署名権、または署名権のより具体的な記述...

As open enrollment nears, USC Primary Care continues to expand

By Douglas Horine

With offices dotted across Los Angeles, Keck Medicine of USC’s primary care network is growing. This fact is especially important now, with open enrollment for Keck Medicine of USC employees set to begin Monday, Nov. 2, and continue until Nov. 18.

The open enrollment period is the only time each year when employees can change most of their benefits, including medical, vision and dental plans. Among the choices is Keck Medicine’s primary care network, which offers patients a broad range of high-quality health services.

Primary care physicians and nurses from Keck Medicine provide patients with a comprehensive, holistic approach to health care and offer a broad range of services to address health issues, promote preventive health and link patients to specialty care.

It’s a formula for success. Keck Medicine’s primary care practice has grown over the past two years to an average of 162 patients seen each day at its six offices across the region.

“With exceptional physicians and hospitals,” said David Goldstein, MD, director of primary care for Keck Medical Center of USC, “we offer patients a broad range of services to address health issues, promote preventive health and link patients to specialty care.

A significant growth spurt in primary care was spurred after Keck Hospital kicked off primary care initiative in January 2014. The growth of primary care includes the activity of physicians in the departments of family and internal medicine.

The practice sites include Healthcare Center II at Keck Medical Center of USC and sites in Downtown Los Angeles, La Cañada, Pasadena, Beverly Hills and...
GALA: Dana Carvey, Don Henley are featured performers at fundraiser for USC Norris

Continued from page 1

the USC Marshall School of Business and Dana, a member of the USC Phi Kappa Phi House Society. Their long-time transformative support of the mission of USC includes being named donors of the USC David and Dana Dornsife College of Letters Arts and Sciences where David serves as chairman of the board and Dana is a board member of the USC Brain and Creativity Institute at the Dornsife College.

“Our honorees, David and Dana Dornsife, are not only accomplished figures in their respective professional fields, but each is personally dedicated to supporting the efforts to conquer cancer and provide comprehensive care to patients,” Gruber said. “We are honored to celebrate the Dornsife’s for their continued generosity to USC and to our commitment to our mission.”

Honorary Chair Raymond Mirza joined Gruber on stage to present the Research Innovation Award to Gill, professor of medicine and pathology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Gill’s laboratory at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has an active translational program to develop cancer therapies based on basic or clinical bench research.

“Dr. Gill’s extraordinary research is supporting our mission to make cancer a disease of the past,” said Gruber. “It is the dedication of Dr. Gill and our entire university-based research team that continues to make USC Norris recognized as one of the top cancer research centers in the nation.”

Dana Carvey’s comedic monologue led into the introduction of special guest Pierce Brosnan. The actor who played James Bond, among other roles, was on hand to introduce multi-Grammy award winner Don Henley. Currently touring for his new album, Class County, the founding member of the Eagles brought the crowd to its feet with performances of classic favorites such as Dirty Laundry, New York Minute and All She Wants to Do Is Dance.

Above top: Award winner Parkavich Gill gets laughs despite professing not to be funny. Left: comedian David Spade.

Above and below: Gill along with USC President C.L. Max Nikias and County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Right: medical expert Lawrence Piro talks to USC Provost Michael Quick and Keck Medicine CEO Tomicki J. Ackermann.

Calendar of Events

Sunday, Oct. 25
4 p.m. USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center Talk, “2nd Annual Event Benefiting Breakthrough Research in Breast Cancer,” Julie Long, MD, USC, 460 N. Allen Ave., Pauvana, Info: Nash McE, (626) 827-5011, breastcancerdo@gmail.com

Tuesday, Oct. 27
11 a.m. USC Stem Cell Seminar, Veronika Grafham, California Institute of Technology, UCI and Elyseh Breast Care Center, University Park, Info: Cindy Lyan, (323) 442-2172, trina1@msn.com

Nov. 1, USC Institute for Global Health, Grove Hall, at USC, Global Health and Human Rights program and Occidental College Seminar, “Sexuality, Health and Human Rights: Filling the Promise of Health and Human Rights for All,” Sofia Girodias, J.D., USC, Franklin Room, Suite 1 GCC 356, Ronald Vroman Campus Center, University Park Campus, Info: Nury Hertz, (323) 865-0459, nuryhertz@usc.edu

Wednesday, Oct. 28
11 a.m. Diabetes and Obesity Research Institute Seminar, “Developing Evidence-Based U.S. Dietary Guidelines Process, Policies and Politics,” Frank Hu, MD, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School, Light lunch provided at 12:30 p.m. McKibben Annex 140, Info: Chiana Syd, (323) 442-2594, trina1@msn.com

Thursday, Oct. 29
6 p.m. Department of Orthopedic Surgery Grand Rounds, “SOGOS Lecture,” Anthony A. Romeo, MD, Rush University Medical Center, Ankylo Arthrosis.

12 p.m. USC Institute for Genetic Medicine Lecture, “Mosaic Preclinical Lecture,” Meyer Auditorium, Info: and RSVP: info@usc.edu

Friday, Oct. 30
6:30 a.m. Department of Anesthesiology Grand Rounds, “Point of Care Transesophageal Echocardiography: The Next Big Thing?”, Stephen Hooks, M.D., Hospital for Special Surgery, New York, McKibben Hall, Room 256, Info: Renee Meadows (323) 409-0856, rmeadows@usc.edu

11 a.m. Medicine/Pulmonary, Critical Care Seminar, “Hasting Center for Pulmonary Research Seminar: Discussing the Mechanism of Hypoxia-Dependent Autophagy,” Heather Jones, MD, IRD 734, Info: Elva Rubin, (323) 226-7923, elvarubin@usc.edu

Nov. 7, Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar, “D.A.T.E.: A Critical Regulator for Liver Homeostasis and Carcinogenesis,” Edfua Sol, MD, PhD, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Hastings Auditorium, Info: Dolores Mendola, (323) 442-1201, dmmendola@usc.edu

Tuesday, Nov. 3
10 a.m. Keck Medical Center of USC Employee Safety Fair. Hospital ID required. NFT Parking Lot, Info: Robert Varece III, (323) 442-9915, robert.varece@broad.usc.edu

Medicine Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Third party submission does not guarantee publication in print. Two more calendar entries at hnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Submit items at hnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Include date, title, and location of event, affiliation of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.

TODAY
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Stem cell scientist receives Hearst Fellowship

By Cristy Lytal

How do you turn stem cells into nephrons, the functional unit of the kidney? Albert D. Kim, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Andy McMahon, PhD, is exploring this question with support from a Hearst Fellowship, an award recognizing an exceptional junior postdoctoral fellow pursuing stem cell research at USC.

As a Hearst Fellow, Kim will launch his early scientific career with a generous startup package, including salary and benefits for a full year. The grant will enable access to world-class facilities and equipment at the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC — including the William R. Pecora Imaging Facility and the Foundation Imaging Laboratory, supported by a previous $100,000 gift from the Hearst Foundations. He will also connect with faculty and colleagues across the university through USC Stem Cell, a collaborative and multidisciplinary effort bringing together more than 100 researchers working to translate discoveries into cures.

The fellowship would have come as no surprise to Kim’s grandfather, who predicted that his five-year-old grandson would grow up to become the family’s first scientist.

“My grandfather noticed my curiosity about nature and the world, and he was a good judge of character,” said Kim, whose parents both have degrees in science-related fields: a florist, and a graphics designer/architect.

Kim spent his formative years in Los Angeles’ Koreatown before heading to UC San Diego, where he earned his bachelor’s, master’s and PhD degrees. While he was earning those degrees, he worked in the laboratory of David Traver, PhD, and studied the early formation of blood stem cells in zebrafish embryos. When McMahon gave a guest lecture in San Diego, his clarity of scientific thought made a strong impression on Kim. In 2015, Kim became a postdoctoral research associate in McMahon’s laboratory at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, where he is applying his expertise to the challenge of kidney regeneration.

“My longstanding scientific interest has been aimed at understanding how the microenvironment of immature cellular precursors is important for properly instructing specific cell fates,” he said. As a Hearst Fellow, he aims to initiate and generate a large number of kidney progenitor cells with the ultimate goal of repairing damaged adult kidneys.

Although researchers have recently used stem cells to form primitive kidney organoids, mystery shrouds the process and requirements of kidney formation in humans. By comparing kidney cells from human and mouse embryos with kidney cells produced in the laboratory, Kim and his team are identifying the optimal conditions and genetic profile for kidney formation. To produce an appropriate amount of cells necessary to grow these cells, Kim is collaborating with the laboratory of Megan McCain, PhD, at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

“As the multiple interactions I have had with Albert, I get the sense that he really wants to push the field in new directions and pursue innovative and creative projects, which is refreshing,” McCain said. “He is an excellent candidate for this fellowship, and I look forward to continuing to collaborate with him.”

McMahon, Kim’s mentor and director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, added, “Dr. Kim is just the sort of talented young scientist we seek to encourage and acknowledge as a Hearst Fellow. His proposal is ambitious, as it should be for a scientist of his caliber. The potential is enormous; the time opportunity and Dr. Kim has the credentials to make his mark in this important new area.”

Student helps peers decide their medical specialities

By Hope Hamshidge

One of the most important decisions medical students have to make — and one that is on their minds from just about the first day of medical school — is choosing a specialty. Melody Rasooli, president of the student chapter of the Scripps College, the Keck School of Medicine of USC alumni organization, is planning an event designed to help medical students make that critical decision.

The weeklong event, called Keck School of Medicine Alumni Shadow Week, gives students at the Keck School of Medicine of USC a chance to spend part of a day at work with Keck School alumni you who practice in the area.

Rasooli pointed out that, while Keck School students typically get more clinical experience than most other medical students, that experience is often in hospital settings. She hopes Shadow Week will give students the opportunity to peek behind the scenes, not only at different specialties, but also in different practice locations.

“They will be able to see what life is like in an outpatient setting, which is something we don’t see here,” said Rasooli, a second-year student at the Keck School. “Dermatology, for example, is going to be practiced differently in private practice than it is in a hospital.”

Participating in Shadow Week is an opportunity to get quick insights, but Rasooli admits she hopes it will also foster longer-lasting connections between some of the students and alumni.

As an undergraduate at USC, Rasooli learned that one of the benefits of a degree from USC is the fact that Trojans look out for one another well past graduation. She said she often heard of USC graduates providing advice, mentorship and even job opportunities to younger generations of Trojans.

“I really came to understand what it is to be part of the Trojan family,” she said. “I hope that some people might find mentors who will help them even after they are done with school.”

Keck School of Medicine Alumni Shadow Week is tentatively scheduled for the week of Feb. 29 to March 4, 2016.

$8 million grant to fund adolescent brain study

By Debra Kahn

A study of landmark research into the effects of adolescent substance use on the developing brain, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles has been awarded a five-year grant totaling almost $8 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study is a national longitudinal investigation of the short-term and long-term effects of substance use on brain development. The project will recruit 10,000 children ages 9 to 10 before drug use is initiated, and through the period of highest risk for substance use and mental health disorders. Scientists will track exposure to substances that include nicotine, alcohol and marijuana, focusing on their impact on academic achievement, cognitive skills and mental health, as well as brain structure and function.

The study seeks to address questions related to substance use, including possible links to the risk for mental illness and the impact on physical health, plus psychological development, learning and memory.

The research will impact children from across the country in order to follow children beginning at age 9 to 10, before drug use is initiated, and through the period of highest risk for substance use and mental health disorders. Scientists will track exposure to substances that include nicotine, alcohol and marijuana, focusing on their impact on academic achievement, cognitive skills and mental health, as well as brain structure and function.

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OCTOBER 23 • 2015

Professionalism Week focuses on conduct in the workplace
By Douglas Morino
A physician-led initiative to create a code of professional standards for Keck Medicine of USC will take center stage during a weeklong celebration to end October.

Professionalism Week from Oct. 26–30 will see Keck Medicine develop a set of professional standards. Events will be held at Keck Hospital of USC, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and USC-Verdugo Hills Hospital.

The project grew out of discussions among Keck Medicine physicians and administrators regarding the costs of incivility in the workplace and the benefits of establishing a defined professional culture across the organization.

“We have a renewed institutional commitment to promoting professionalism,” said Kiran Dhanireddy, MD, assistant professor of clinical surgery and director of transplant quality. “It’s important that leaders become role models and engage the whole community to develop a collective sense of professional values. We’re setting something that’s meaningful to every person who works at Keck Medicine of USC.”

The network of primary care is the dirtiest possible community in Southern California,” Berhane said. “So qualitatively what the Eastern African studies could give us is actually a much better understanding compared to anything we have seen in the Southern California study.”

USC researchers hypothesize that the percentage of children who are below the healthy lung function threshold will be much higher in Eastern Africa.

“In a way, you could extend the pollution branch,” Berhane said.

“We should still be able to at least say — if it materializes — that as we go way beyond the levels that we see in Southern California, there is increased risk of children’s respiratory health being compromised.”

Despite recent advances, hazards associated with air pollution, pesticides, mining and other factors continue in many low- and middle-income countries.

Regional GEOHealth Hubs will examine how these risks are linked to illness and how to control them.

U.S. scientists will train Ethiopian, Kenyan, Rwandan and Ugandan researchers in the techniques and minutiae of air pollution and climate change.

The study started last month and is set to conclude in August 2020.

In the initial phase of the study, the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the University of Wisconsin-Madison will train an inaugural Eastern Africa cohort of lead scientists how to conduct research, including setting up air quality monitoring stations and collecting respiratory data.

Scientists in Eastern Africa will also learn how to translate findings into policies.

The Eastern Africa Children’s Health Study, which will begin in the second year, will look at the impact of air pollution on the respiratory health of 9 to 10-year-old students in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda — 4,000 in all. This approach resembles that of the initial USC Children’s Health Study, which began as one-off query and concluded as a longitudinal study lasting 21 years.

By the hub’s final year, a dozen lead scientists will be trained to continue their work as new leaders in GEOHealth research. The goal is for the Eastern African hubs to be self-sustainable and extend into other countries in the region.

“We recognize that governments are hamstrung by a lack of resources,” said Jonathan Samet, MD, chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, director of the Institute for Global Health and a co-principal investigator of the GEOHealth Hub.

“We hope to develop clear evidence that will motivate policymakers to take action to protect their populations.”

Other international hubs in India, Bangladesh, Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, South America and West Africa will address GEOHealth topics focused on the most pressing challenges in each region. In Eastern Africa, air pollution is one of the biggest concerns, according to the GEOHealth Hub’s initial assessment.

The five-year, $3 million grant was awarded Sept. 28 to a team comprising the USC Institute for Global Health, the USC Department of Preventive Medicine and the Addis Ababa University School of Public Health.
Med-COR Director Joyce Richy, back row center, introduced students from the program during the annual Oktoberfest event presented by the School of Medicine of USC.

MED-COR: Program benefits medical magnet high schools

Continued from page 1

was designed to address the fact that minority students, and especially those from low-income families, are traditionally underrepresented among the student body at the medical school and in other health-related programs.

In the early days, the program assisted Cisco students from 34 high schools and 43 middle schools in the Los Angeles area. As a result of budget cuts, the program has been reduced to four medical magnet high schools, including Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School and Orthopaedic Hospital Medical Magnet High School.

More recently, programs have been added to enhance the experience for the students. Selected students can now spend six weeks in the summer doing a work-study internship at L.A. County-USC Medical Center or Keck Hospital of USC. The students also spend time volunteering in the community at local health fairs, including the Ferry House hosted by the American Red Cross.

Over time, Med-COR has seen success in sending its graduates on to major universities, with many of them majoring in biomedical sciences. Many go on to medical, dental, pharmacy and nursing schools across the country.

"Med-COR supports, motivates and prepares marginalized and underrepresented students to be competitively eligible for admission to college and ultimately a career in the health professions," said Joyce Richy, PhD, assistant dean and chief diversity officer for student affairs at the Keck School and program director for Med-COR.

Richy added that 100 percent of Med-COR's students graduate from high school and attend college. Their average SAT scores are far above the national and LAUSD student averages. "We are really making an impact."

Grant to fund tissue regeneration center

By John infield

"Tissue regeneration is getting a boost from a $2 million grant divided among 10 research centers and universities, including the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC. The National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research has directed the research community to devise interdisciplinary plans to help bring to market and efficiently clinical strategies for dental, oral and craniofacial tissue regeneration."

"This is really about engineering a product," said Yang Chai, DDS, PhD, associate dean of research at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC. "It's not about being able to understand what stem cells can be used, but how they develop the stem cells for patient care."

Chai will serve as the principal investigator of USC's interdisciplinary consortium — called the Center for Dental, Oral and Craniofacial Tissue and Organ Regeneration (C-DOCTOR) — which has enlisted nearly 30 individuals from USC-Viterbi School of Engineering (Keck School) of Medicine of USC, Children's Hospital Los Angeles and USC School of Pharmacy.

The first task will be to identify areas in which tissue regeneration could improve patient outcomes and have immediate impact. For this endeavor, Chai has enlisted representatives from endodontics, oral surgery, periodontics and prosthodontics to make product suggestions based on their own clinical practices.

An example is developing an effective strategy to use a 3-D printed, dissolvable scaffold to help organize stem cells for repair of damaged jaw bone.

"Bone deficiency is a very common problem that patients face when they need an implant or when they have periodontal disease, traumatic injury or birth defect," Chai said. "Instead of stealing bone from other parts of the body, we're going to be able to use stem cells to regenerate their own bone."

In addition to the clinical team, the interdisciplinary group will feature a pre-clinical team whose role is to test the technology and sound statistical methods to test potential therapies as well as a regulatory team that will interface with the Food and Drug Administration and provide guidance regarding intellectual property protection. The grant money will be awarded in phases, with Phase One awards lasting a year and supporting the development of an overall vision, road map, organizational structure and operational procedure.

Each of the 10 grantees will then have to compete for a Phase Two award, which will provide additional funding for three to four years.

Stem cell researcher Min Yu earns Innovation Award

By Crysti lytal

A winner of an NIH Director's New Innovator Award, USC Stem Cell principal investigator Min Yu, MD, PhD, will strive to develop individualized medicine targeting rare and deadly breast cancer stem cells. The five-year, $2.7 million award is part of the High-Risk, High-Reward Research program supported by the NIH General. This year's New Innovator Awards support 41 utterly creative and truly innovative scientists. The New Innovator Awards are unique in emphasizing preliminary data and instead focusing on the creativity of the investigators, the innovation of the research approach and the potential of the projects to have significant impact on important health problems.

"This program has consistently produced research that revolutionized scientific fields by giving investigators the freedom to take risks and explore potentially groundbreaking concepts," said NIH Director Dr. Francis S. Collins, MD, PhD. "We look forward to the remarkable advances in biomedical research that the 2015 awardees will make."

Yu's New Innovator project tackles one of breast cancer's biggest challenges for treating breast cancer: targeting rare metastatic cancer stem cells that contribute to cancer's ability to evolve tumor unique to each patient.

CSCs are thought to be a highly metastatic subset of the broader population of tumor cells that enter a patient's blood circulation. Therefore, Yu will first obtain these circulating tumor cells from patient blood samples, expand the number of tumor cells in the laboratory and pinpoint the most metastatic of these cells — the dangerous and deadly CSCs — by evaluating their ability to form tumors in mice.

She'll prepare to studies to reveal the CSCs' unique molecular properties and biomarkers, which are expected to be different from standard samples obtained from different patients. She will then test if CSCs with certain properties or biomarkers respond best to certain drugs — which could eventually inform clinicians about individualized treatment regimens for targeting CSCs in breast cancer patients.

"Breast cancer is a disease that affects eight women in the United States and leads to 40,000 deaths annually," Yu said. "I believe that we can help these patients by targeting CSCs, the most important cells for sustaining tumor growth."

Yu has devoted herself to advancing patient care for more than 15 years. Born and raised in the city of Qingdao in northeast China, Yu earned her MD at Shandong University in China and completed a master's degree in neurology at Peking University Health Sciences Center.

After working with patients with intractable neurological diseases, Yu recognized gaps in the literature and in new treatments through medical research. She joined the PhD program in genetics at SUNY Stony Brook University and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, where she developed her interest in breast cancer in the laboratory of Scotti Matushansky. She pursued postdoctoral training in the laboratory of Daniel A. Haber at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School, where she characterized circulating tumor cells isolated from the blood of cancer patients.

In 2014, Yu became an assistant professor in the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine and a member of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, where her laboratory is located in close proximity to the patients and clinicians who play a key role in advancing the translational aspects of her research.

USC Norris Director Stephen B. Gruber, MD, PhD, MPH, who enabled this synergy, called Yu "a bright, innovative researcher with an exceptional track record, incredibly relevant research program, and strong drive to succeed."

"She proposes bridges innovative basic research and translational oncology to address critical questions about cancer stem cells, and it could have a huge impact on the treatment of cancer patients worldwide."

In addition to the NIH Director's New Innovator Award, Yu has received the NCI Transition Career Development Award (K22), the STOP CANCER Research Career Development Award, the Pew-Stewart Scholar for Cancer Research award, and the Donald E. and Dolly B. Reiter Foundation faculty fellowship. "The New Innovator Award recognizes Min's exceptional creativity in pursuing individualized stem cell-targeted treatments for breast cancer patients," said Andy McMahon, PhD, FRS, chair of the Department of Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine.

"Since her arrival at USC, Min has admirably demonstrated this creativity along with every other quality required to succeed in the challenging and critically important field of cancer research."

A CTC-cluster stained for keratin (red) and proliferation marker (green).
HSC Newsmakers

A rundown of news items related to Keck Medicine of USC, which may include philanthropic donations, research grants, publication in academic journals and mentions in the news media.

Artist Erna Braun poses with grandchildren Lauren, Sophia and Aiden in front of a painting from Erna’s Hope Rose Collection.

Art opening continues series that features work by cancer survivors

ARTIST AND CANCER SURVIVOR ERNA BRAUN spoke Oct. 14 to mark the opening of an exhibit of her paintings in the Jennifer Diamond Cancer Resource Library at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Braun has been the sixth in a rotating exhibit titled The Survivor Art Series. Braun credited her “wonderful, supportive family” in helping her deal with a 1990 cancer diagnosis, and she noted that the experience helped reinforce her interest in art. Braun spoke in front of one in a series of artworks focusing on women that she calls the Hope Rose Collection, from which a portion of sales go to breast cancer research. “Painting is my escape, my therapy and passion,” Braun said at the show’s opening. “I know that I am one of the blessed, the fortunate ones—a cancer survivor.” The exhibit will continue through early January in the resource library, which also hosts a survivor support series that will feature 29-year-old writer Eric Glynn at 2 p.m., on Nov. 11. Glynn wrote RockingCancer, My Battle Told Through Social Media.

Gruber is elected to AACI board

STEPHEN B. GRUBER, director of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, has been elected to the board of directors for the Association of American Cancer Institutes. Gruber, who holds a Ph.D., M.P.H., will begin a three-year term on the board starting Oct. 25 during the group’s annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Gift from dentistry professors endows clinic for special patients

THE HERMAN OSTROW SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY has received a financial boost—and a new name for its Special Patients Clinic—thanks to a donation from Roseann Mulligan and Glenn Clark. The other announcement was made on Oct. 13 to a crowd of Ostrow faculty, staff and alumni celebrating the clinic’s 30th anniversary at an elegant reception in Downtown Los Angeles. The gift provides the clinic with an endowment that will fund the operation for years to come. The new name—the Dr. Roseann Mulligan Special Patients Clinic—pays tribute to Mulligan (known as Nan). Her vision and leadership not only helped start the program, which is one of the first school-based dental clinics for patients with special needs, but also kept it running for three decades. “I’ve always been interested in caring for the oral health needs of those patients who couldn’t get treatment elsewhere,” said Mulligan, who is Ostrow’s associate dean of community health programs and hospital affairs. She and her husband, Ostrow Professor Glenn Clark, decided to make a large gift that could make a real impact on the clinic’s permanence at the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry. “What we wanted most,” Clark said, was for the clinic to be treated by that clinic to get continuous care—this year, next year, 10 years, 15 years down the road, if possible.”

Vo receives dissertation award

USC’s ANNE VO has received a prestigious award that was established to recognize a rising scholar-scientist’s significant intellectual contribution to evaluation theory, methodology and practice. The nationally recognized Michael Scriven Outstanding Dissertation Award is presented annually by Western Michigan University. Vo, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of clinical medical education at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and associate director of evaluation and assessment within the Department of Medical Education.

After she got a chance to experience virtual reality through hand-held devices at the conference.

New virtual care clinic is among highlights of annual USC Body Computing Conference

By Douglas Morino

Virtual reality, wearable technology, artificial intelligence — the dawn of the technologically-driven revolution in health care is here. Some of the latest medical innovations were highlighted Friday at the 9th USC Body Computing Conference, a daylong meeting on the bridges between medicine and technology. The conference featured physicians, tech leaders and university officials discussing the latest technological advances and how they can be used to better treat patients. A highlight of the conference was the announcement of a new virtual care clinic that will use technology to help physicians provide better, more personalized health care to their patients.

"In the last nine years there has been a revolutionary change in the way culture and society use technology," said Leslie A. Saxon, MD, a cardiologist and founder/executive director of the USC Center for Body Computing. "It’s about to happen in medicine."

The USC Virtual Care Clinic is in Playa Vista, near the Silicon Beach area that is home to some of the firms leading the way in technological breakthroughs, including YouTube, Facebook, Google, Twitter and Dropbox.

A collaboration of several technology partners and the USC Institute for Creative Technologies, the USC Virtual Care Clinic is a first-of-its-kind virtual hospital with health data being fed via wearable and injectable technology. Through the use of virtual reality and artificial intelligence, physicians will be able greatly increase the number of patients they see daily and increase personalized health care solutions, Saxon said.

"Technology has dramatically changed the way we communicate with each other," Saxon said. "Technology will make us more human and better connected to our patients."

Her advice? "Be prepared for hologram house calls."

To open the conference, Saxton showed the audience a demonstration of her interacting virtually with a patient in the form of a hologram. In Saxton’s example, the patient was in Dubai. Because Saxon was unable to physically meet with the patient, she stood in front of a video camera and had her image beamed in real time as

patients, veterans returning from war, elite athletes and patients who want to be more engaged with their own health care. The clinic will help veterans combat PTSD through technology called Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy, and it will develop games for patients with physical rehabilitation and create virtual “humans” with the ability to interview patients.

Other themes discussed at the Body Computing Conference included wearable technology and mobile health, as well as digital performance technology for elite athletes. The role of digital training and health tools to optimize training and support for the health of members of the military throughout the cycle of training, deployment and post-deployment was also discussed.

The Phan of the USC Institute for Creative Technologies shows a tool that uses a smartphone as a virtual reality device to simulate the effects of progressive blindness caused by diabetes, a hologram to the patient to discuss health care options.

This will be a clinic where patients can see the future—a clinic where the best doctor is always in,” Saxon added.

Through its partnership with the Institute for Creative Technologies, initially the USC Virtual Care Clinic will focus on serving chronically ill patients, veterans returning from war, elite athletes and patients who want to be more engaged with their own health care. The clinic will help veterans combat PTSD through technology called Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy, and it will develop games for patients with physical rehabilitation and create virtual “humans” with the ability to interview patients.

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346 S. Vermont Ave., Ste. 1408
Los Angeles, CA 90007

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