### Obama to honor Humayun

*By Robert Perkins*

President Barack Obama will bestow the National Medal of Technology and Innovation on Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, at a ceremony in Washington, DC, this month.

Humayun, who holds joint appointments at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, is the inaugural Cornelius Pings Professor of Biomedical Sciences and professor of ophthalmology, biomedical engineering, and cell and neuroscience.

He earned worldwide acclaim through his development of a retinal prosthetic system that helps individuals with a certain type of blindness to see. A recent iteration of that system, the Argus II, became the first retinal implant to receive FDA approval two years ago.

“Mark Humayun is such a deserving recipient of this prestigious honor,” said USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD.

“He dreamed the impossible: to help the blind see. With fearless imagination, bold leadership and biomedical expertise, he and his team made that dream come true with the world’s first artificial retina.”

See HUMAYUN, page 3

### Faculty Council taking bigger role on both campuses

*By Les Dunseith*

Suzanne Palmer, MD, president of the Keck School of Medicine Faculty Council, smiles as she talks about the pragmatic aspect of leading the 4-year-old group, which is the only elected body representing the interests of the whole the Keck School faculty.

In 2012, the members first reached out directly to peers — a practice that has continued — to solicit opinions about how best to expand their on-campus role and focus their energy to bring about meaningful change. The No. 1 concern?

“The food on the campus,” Palmer recalled with a chuckle.

“And in 2013 it was updat

See COUNCIL, page 3

### Researchers discover a way to improve image sharpness

*By Meg Aldrich*

Retinal implants that deliver longer pulses of electrical current may notice-ably improve image sharpness for individuals who have lost their sight due to retinitis pigmentosa, according to a new study by researchers from the USC Eye Institute and USC Viterbi School of Engineering.

The research was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Science Translational Medicine* online in Dec. 16.

Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is an inherited disease of the eye that causes blindness through gradual degeneration of photoreceptors, the light-sensing cells in the retina. The disease affects about one in 4,000 people. The Argus II retinal implant, also known as the “bionic eye,” was developed by a team of ophthalmologists and engineers at USC, including Mark Humayun, MD, PhD, the recipient of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation.

See SHARPNESS, page 3

### Construction boom changing HSC look

*By Douglas Morino*

Construction projects continue to move forward across the USC Health Sciences Campus.

From new clinical and research buildings and student housing units to parking areas, trees-lined sidewalks and a new hotel, a series of projects are underway at the 79-acre campus to transform the area into an oasis for medical research and health care.

“This work is being done to ensure Keck Medical Center of USC remains a leader in cutting-edge research and world-class healthcare for generations to come,” Tom Jackiewicz, senior vice president and CEO of Keck Medicine of USC, said during a ceremony in September to mark the latest construction milestone: The final steel beam was placed atop the Norris Healthcare Center, a building next to Keck Medical Center of USC representing the ongoing construction across HSC.

“It’s an exciting and historic time to be at Keck Medicine,” Jackiewicz added.

The new hotel and student housing complex are being funded by private donations and support from USC, along with the Norris Foundation and other donors.

Now little more than a skeleton of concrete and steel, the Norris Healthcare Center stands near the corner of Alcazar and San Pablo streets and is the first new medical building on the USC Health Sciences Campus in more than a decade and will expand outpatient care space by 36 percent, adding more than 100,000 square feet of space. The Norris Healthcare Center is scheduled for completion by 2017.

See CONSTRUCTION, page 2

### Shuttle times, routes shift

Shuttle times, routes shift

The ongoing construction across HSC has caused changes in bus and tram routes and schedules:

- **Union Station/Intercampus Shuttle**
  - Bus stop location has moved around Union Station.
  - Soto Shuttle runs every 15 minutes and has been rerouted.
  - The affected stops are: the Eastlake bus stop location has moved around Union Station/Intercampus Shuttle.

- **Alhambra**
  - No longer serviced; and the CSC stop has moved northwest, in front of the glass door entrance to Radiation & Oncology.

- **Soto**
  - Route has been rerouted.
  - The Soto Shuttle runs every 15 minutes and has been rerouted.

- **Alcazar**
  - No longer serviced; and the CSC stop has moved northeast, in front of the glass door entrance to Radiation & Oncology.

- **Circuit Tram**
  - Soto and Alhambra bus stop on Eastlake has moved southwest, in front of the glass door entrance to Radiation & Oncology.

- **Soto and Alhambra**
  - Bus stop on Eastlake has moved northwest, in front of the glass door entrance to Radiation & Oncology.

- **Eastlake**
  - No longer serviced; and the CSC stop has moved east onto Playground Street just before the stop sign.

- **Alcazar**
  - No longer serviced; and the CSC stop has moved east onto Playground Street just before the stop sign.

- **San Pablo**
  - No longer serviced; and the CSC stop has moved east onto Playground Street just before the stop sign.

- **CSC**
  - Corner stop (mentioned above); the corner stop is at Lot 71.

- **Intercampus Shuttle**
  - Route has been rerouted.

- **Alhambra**
  - Route has been rerouted.

- **Eastlake**
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- **CSC**
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- **Alhambra**
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CONSTRUCTION: New parking to open soon

Continued from page 1

Currie Hall, a new student housing complex, will stand just south of the hotel. The complex will have 178 units with about 450 beds and is scheduled for occupancy in September 2016. The ground floor will include a child care center with room for 130 children.

To help ease car traffic within the Health Sciences Campus, a new signalized intersection at Soto and Norfolk streets recently opened. The intersection provides an additional entrance to the campus and its completion marks another milestone in the $35 million USC Beautification Project — a multiyear construction initiative that includes 12 phases across the Health Sciences Campus.

Calendar of Events

Friday, Jan. 15
1:30 p.m. Department of Anesthesiology Grand Rounds. “Quality Improvement in Perioperative Care,” Michael Gipper, MD, PhD, USCF McKenzie Lecture Hall, Room 206. Info: Renee Mezawos, (323) 409-8565, mezawos@usc.edu

11 a.m. Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology Center for the USC Blood Diseases Grand Rounds. “Mouse Models of Hematologic Neoplasms As Tools for Target Discovery and Validation,” Richard Van Eten, MD, University of California, Irvine. LAC-USC Medical Center, Education Tower Conference Room 2. Info: Carolyn Castellanos, (323) 865-3913, castellanos_m@med.usc.edu

Saturday, Jan. 16
7 a.m.-2 p.m. Continuing Medical Education 2nd Annual Update on Esophageal Diseases Grand Rounds. “The Survival Mechanism in Advanced Esophageal Lymphoma,” Chien-Shing Chen, MD, PhD, Loma Linda University, School of Medicine. LAC-USC Medical Center Inpatient Tower Conference Room D. Info: Patricia Tosa, (323) 830-3913, castellanos_m@med.usc.edu

Tuesday, Jan. 19
5:30 p.m. Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. One-Tot Lee, MD, USC HIgh Conference Room, 2nd Floor. Info: Tanya Christopher, (323) 409-5233, tychristopher@med.usc.edu, http://www.usceye.org

Friday, Jan. 22
8:30 a.m. Medicine/Pulmonary, Critical Care Sleep Seminar. “Hastings Center for Palliative Research Seminar Running to Stand Still: The Maintenance of Quiescence in the Adult Lung,” Tien Peng, MD, USC IRD 734. Info: Elva Rubino, (323) 226-7923, elvaurbo@usc.edu

11 a.m. Jane Anne Nohl Division of Hematology Center for the USC Blood Diseases Grand Rounds. “Mouse Models of Hematologic Neoplasms As Tools for Target Discovery and Validation,” Richard Van Eten, MD, University of California, Irvine. LAC-USC Medical Center, Education Tower Conference Room 2. Info: Carolyn Castellanos, (323) 865-3913, castellanos_m@med.usc.edu

Monday, Jan. 25

Thursday, Jan. 28
11 a.m. USC Stem Cell Seminar. Didier Stainier, Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Eli and Edythe Broad Institute for Heart and Lung Research, BGC, 1st Floor. Info: Genny Lyal, (323) 442-1272, lyal@med.usc.edu

Saturday, Jan. 30
7 a.m.-4:15 p.m. Continuing Medical Education 2nd Annual USC Multi-Disciplinary Breast Cancer Symposium. USC program organizers: Eric L. Chung, MD, Eugene Chung, MD, PMD, JD; Christy A. Russell, MD, Naomi R. Schechter, MD, Stephen F. Sener, MD, Jennifer T. Blow, MD, Reem Mostafa, MD, Department of Surgery, Keck School of Medicine at USC. Info: Anika Bobb, (323) 442-2547, anika.bobb@med.usc.edu, http://hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events

Notice: Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Timely submission does not guarantee publication in print. See more calendar entries at hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Submit items at inquiry.com/calendar-hsc. Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker and a phone number/email address.

SHARPNESS: Implants let patients see motion, light

Continued from page 1

Retinal implants (artificial retinas) give people with RP the ability to perceive light, detect motion and locate large objects. However, because the implants currently intentionally stimulate axons in the retina, patients sometimes see large oblong shapes of light that reduce the quality of their vision. In order for patients to see more clearly, the images created by the implant should be made of focal spots of light. Current implant technology stimulates the retina with brief pulses of electrical current roughly 0.5 millisecond (ms) in duration. The researchers found that increasing the duration of the stimulus pulses allows visualization of distinct focal spots of light. “This is a huge step forward in helping restore sight for people with retinitis pigmentosa,” said Andrew Wetzel, PhD, assistant professor of research ophthalmology. “Being able to create focused spots of light is important. Think of each light spot as a pixel in an image. By arranging many light spots into a shape of an object, we can generate sharp images of that object. For those of us who wear glasses, imagine the difference between trying to read a distant neon sign with and without your glasses on.”

Professor reflects on decades in medicine

continued from page 1

by Melissa Masatani

Though decades have passed since Michael Kennedy, MD, AE, first enrolled at USC, he still thinks about the unlikely course of events that led the Chicago native to earn his degree from the Keck School of Medicine. “It was all a surprise,” Kennedy said recently. “I had no idea what to expect because nobody in my family had gone to college.”

The Mission Viejo resident is a father of five, including USC graduates Michael Jr., ’90, and Kathleen, ’99, and has five grandchildren. In June, Kennedy published a memoir, “War Stories: 50 Years in Medicine,” which reflects on his life and career in the operating room. But a career in medicine is not what the retired surgeon originally had in mind.

There were no student loans and few scholarships available to students in the mid-1950s, so the then-high school senior turned down a spot at the California Institute of Technology for a scholarship at USC engineering program. After two years at USC, a series of events led him to work at the Douglas Aircraft Company, join the Air National Guard and, following a late-night conversation at the beach, apply for medical school. But even that decision had a hiccup, as his National Guard unit was called up a month after he started medical school, delaying enrollment for another year.

In the 50 years since, the medical field has changed drastically. But from Kennedy’s perspective, which included more than 20 years on the surgical faculty at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center and more than a decade as a professor in the Introduction to Clinical Medicine course at the Keck School, at least one thing has remained the same: “My first year of internship, a resident I was working with in the emergency department (at Massachusetts General Hospital) had been an intern at County and he was always telling me rules he had learned at County, he would quote USC faculty for why he did things,” Kennedy said. “And I thought, ‘Wow, he’s a resident at Mass General but he thinks so highly of USC.’” He closed me in that USC faculty were really superior at teaching.”


“I really try to convert at least one of my students to surgery,” he said. “It’s fun when you can influence students, that’s what I love about the classroom.”

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Michael Kennedy
HUMAYUN

Continued from page 1

University of Southern California (USC) is tremendously proud to be Professor Humayun’s academic home.”

“The level of recognition is very exciting and very much a surprise,” Humayun said. “I’m honored to be the recipient of this award.”

The Argus II system restores some visual capabilities for patients whose blindness is caused by retinitis pigmentosa. RS is an inherited retinal degeneration that affects about 100,000 people nationwide.

“Science and technology are fundamental to our country’s legacy as some of our nation’s biggest challenges,” Obama said in a White House news release announcing the National Medal of Technology and Innovation honorees. “The knowledge produced by these Americans today will carry our country’s legacy of innovation forward and continue to help countless others around the world. Their work is a testament to American ingenuity.”

Humayun joined USC in 2001 after receiving his bachelor’s degree from Georgetown University, MD, and residency in ophthalmology at Duke University Medical School, PhD in biomedical engineering at the University of North Carolina and advanced fellowship training in retinal surgery from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. In 2013, Humayun was named the inaugural director of the USC Eye Institute and interim chair of the USC Department of Ophthalmology. He holds more than 100 patents and patent applications, and is a member of both the U.S. National Academy of Medicine and the National Academy of Engineering.

The Academy II was first approved for use in Europe in 2011 and has been implanted in dozens of patients in clinical trials — often by Humayun himself.

The system uses a camera mounted on special glasses that sends a signal to an electronic receiver with 60 electrodes that is implanted in the retina. The receiver also has an electronic signal that travels through the optic nerve to the brain, where they can be interpreted as a visual picture.

“These sort of things can only be accomplished if others join in and help you, and I’ve been very fortunate to have strong collaborators,” he said.

The National Medal of Technology and Innovation was created in 1980 and is administered by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and recognizes those who have made lasting contributions to America’s competitiveness and quality of life and helped strengthen the nation’s technological workforce,” according to a White House statement.

Study: New use for Parkinson’s drug

By Meg Aldrich

Researchers have found a use for a drug that is commonly prescribed for people with Parkinson’s disease. L-DOPA is a drug that the body converts into dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is lacking in individuals with Parkinson’s disease.

Researchers believe the study is the first scientific article to identify the autophagic pathway of stem cell marker NANOG and to posit NANOG as a target that will increase patient resistance to Sorafenib, the most common chemotherapy used on liver cancer patients.

NANOG controls the expression of genes that form “mitochondrial metabolic pathways” — energy sources — for cells that turn into tumors. It reprograms cells. Instead of using glucose as a carbohydrate, they are ordered to use fatty acid.

“If we shut down this alternative pathway, the liver cancer will become sensitized to chemotherapy again,” Machida said.

COUNCIL: HSC no longer ‘out of sight, out of mind’

Continued from page 1

In 2014, members turned their attention to improving communication between the Health Sciences and University Park campuses by initiating a productive push to improve the visibility of the Keck School faculty and HSC at JPO. “Out of sight, out of mind,” was the prevailing attitude on both campuses, Palmer said. “The Keck School can feel far removed from USC.” Most faculty members don’t even know that we have a voice at the university.”

Every school at USC has a Faculty Council that sends members to represent their interests on the university-wide Academic Senate. But last year, Cannon also is focusing her year as president on outreach. A big part of that effort will be the creation of a faculty-focused publication similar to the Research Quarterly that she expects to be distributed for the first time in April. “We expect that the Keck School Council will contain the up-to-date information we all should know regarding our clinical departments, including services available, their locations and personnel,” she said. “Information all we need regarding cancer development and promotion also will be included.”

Scientists root out the ‘bad seeds’ of liver cancer

By Yan Yang

Researchers at the Keck School of Medicine and others have discovered that a drug commonly used to treat metastatic colorectal cancer could delay the growth of tumor cells that are known to be involved in cancer relapse.

Researchers believe the study is the first scientific article to identify the autophagic pathway of stem cell marker NANOG and to posit NANOG as a target that will increase patient resistance to Sorafenib, the most common chemotherapy used on liver cancer patients.

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R

Researcher at six of the National’s top ophthalmology institutions, including the USC Eye Institute, have discovered that a drug intervention commonly used for Parkinson’s disease also may significantly delay or prevent age-related macular degeneration — the leading cause of blindness in the U.S., according to the National Eye Institute (NEI).

Researchers, including Andrew Mostofsky, MD, MBA, clinical trials director at the USC Eye Institute, found that patients who were administered the drug L-DOPA to treat Parkinson’s disease, Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS) and other movement disorders, were significantly less likely to develop age-related macular degeneration or developed it up to eight years later than patients not taking L-DOPA.

“The research is significant because it points to a possible association between L-DOPA and AMD risk,” says Mostofsky. “The hope is that this discovery may mean L-DOPA may play a protective role for AMD risk — the data also gives us new insights into potential treatment targets for this complex disease.”

Future clinical studies will have to validate this preliminary finding. After basic research on mice, the researchers examined the health records of 37,000 AMD patients or those taking L-DOPA for movement disorders at the Manhattanville Clinic looking for racial disparities in AMD. The results showed AMD patients also taking L-DOPA received their eye diagnosis eight years later than those who had AMD but were not on the drug.

These results then were confirmed on a larger set of 87 million nationwide patients where similar results were observed.
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.

A vendor sells a variety of fruit at the Lincoln Heights Farmers Market, held from 3 to 7 p.m. Wednesdays at North Broadway and Daly Street.

Carol’s and Candy Canes brought the holiday spirit to the Health Sciences Campus on Dec. 18 as hundreds of employees from the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC School of Pharmacy attended the annual holiday breakfast. Keck School Dean Carmen A. Pulido, MD, MBA, and Interim Dean Glen L. Stimmel, PharmD, of the USC School of Pharmacy greeted staff and faculty members on the Harry and Celeste Pappas Quad during the two-hour event, which featured a hearty breakfast that included quiche, waffles, hot chocolate and cider.

Cyclotron device now available for research, clinical use

UCS Investigators now have access to a state-of-the-art cyclotron and PET eGMP radiopharmacy at the Molecular Imaging Center, located at the Keck School of Medicine’s Clinical Sciences Center. With the increasing demand for new and more sophisticated imaging probes for experimental research and clinical applications, the center has made the facility available for investigators to use the particle-accelerating device. The presence of the cyclotron will allow for the production of onsite radiopharmaceuticals for studies using Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scans, or whole-body imaging scans that allow doctors and researchers to view a patient’s internal organs at the cellular level. To get more information or to make an appointment, go to http://msec.usc.edu/contact-us/.

Department of Public Safety spreads cheer to local school

Volunteers from Keck Medicine of USC and the USC Department of Public Safety visited Santa Teresa Elementary School in Los Angeles recently as part of their annual Holiday Toy Drive. The volunteers, including executive director of the department of public safety Chief John Thomas, healthcare security director Charles Holloway, Sgt. Roland Gallardo, and community service officer Monica Sandoval, set up an assembly line to distribute the toys to more than 240 students from kindergarten through eighth grade on Dec. 16. “Keck Medicine of USC and the USC Department of Public Safety look forward to the Holiday Toy Drive each year as a unique opportunity to bring joy to the community we work hard to protect,” Holloway said.

Farmers market creates healthy connections in local community

By Melissa Acoba

The arrival of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables signals the beginning of a new season. In Lincoln Heights, the scent of such produce has given rise to the neighborhood’s curiosity over a relatively new phenomenon. Funded by the USC Good Neighbors Campaign, the Lincoln Heights Farmers Market has become a gathering place for locals, farmers and vendors to partake in a communal experience that reminds us of the importance — and joy — of healthy eating.

“I think it’s awesome,” said Sandy Castaneda, who unexpectedly bumped into her grandmother at the market. “I like that it’s just people coming together and supporting each other locally.”

Her grandmother, Amalia Montes de Oca, had just stepped out of the hairdresser when she discovered the market. She felt that it would provide her with access to vegetables, helping control her diabetes.

The market currently is operated by the Lincoln Heights Farmers Benefits Association of Los Angeles every Wednesday at North Broadway and Daly Street from 3 to 7 p.m. Pauline Martinez, a USC employee who sponsored the initiative, explained the significance of such community space: “A farmers market in Lincoln Heights means many different things to different people and yet they are curiously linked to the same value — to be the best we can be in a healthy environment, whether it’s the entrepreneur selling fruits and vegetables, the artisan, the baker, the hot food vendor or the entertainer looking for an audience.”

Mario Marullo, vice president of the Lincoln Heights Chamber of Commerce, added, “The partnership between USC and all this makes it possible for not only providing good food, but educating people about the importance of eating good food.”

ZulSurani, a member of the Lincoln Heights Farmers Market Committee and executive director of community partnerships for the USC Health Sciences Campus, added: “The university is proud to support collaborative efforts such as the farmers market and many others to make healthier choices easier choices.”

Moving forward, Martinez hopes that “people who live, work and travel through Lincoln Heights will continue to create and to contribute to a place that fills a great need in this community. We need healthy food choices and we need a place to connect, share ideas and gain knowledge on health and wellness.”

Study: Country of origin factors in colorectal cancer risk

By Zen Vuong

In a first study of its kind, USC researchers have found that colorectal cancer risk in Californian Latinos varies widely depending on their country of origin.

The study was published online Nov. 23 in Cancer Causes & Control. Using California Cancer Registry data, USC researchers examined the profiles of 36,133 Latinos and 174,710 whites diagnosed with colorectal cancer between 1995 and 2011. Specific findings include:

• Latinos from Mexico have the lowest chance of getting colorectal cancer when compared to other Latino subgroups.
• More Mexicans, Central and South Americans were diagnosed with colorectal cancer before age 50 versus other Latino subgroups.
• Among Latinos in California, Cuban colorectal cancer patients had the highest proportion of deaths, followed by Puerto Ricans.

HSC News

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