$200 million gift launches new cancer institute

By Lynn Lipinski

Technology entrepreneur Larry Ellison has donated $200 million to establish the Lawrence J. Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine of USC, a new center in Los Angeles that will combine interdisciplinary research with the holistic prevention and treatment of cancer. David B. Agus, MD, professor at the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, will lead the institute.

Ellison’s gift is among the largest made to cancer research and treatment in recent years.

The donation was announced at the Rebels with a Cause fundraising gala for the USC Center for Applied Molecular Medicine on May 11.

“Tonight I’m announcing a gift of $200 million to the University of Southern California to build an interdisciplinary center for cancer research headed by Dr. David Agus,” said Ellison, Oracle Corp. chairman and chief technology officer.

“The new institute will invite mathematicians, physicists and other scientists to collaborate with cancer researchers from the traditional disciplines of medicine and biology. We believe the interdisciplinary approach will yield up new insights currently hidden in existing patient data.”

Ellison also was the speaker for USC’s 133rd commencement May 13.

Shuttle schedules to change for summer

USC Transportation has announced several time changes affecting Health Sciences Campus bus routes for the summer, which went into effect May 16. For more information on the new times, go to transnet.usc.edu and navigate to Bus Schedules from the home page.

Awards, statue unveiling mark Nurses Week events

By Douglas Morino

Celebrations rang out across Keck Medical Center of USC during Nurses Week, a time to honor the men and women on the front lines of patient care.

Two ceremonies highlighted the important work being done by nurses at Keck Medical Center. The Nursing Recognition Awards Ceremony on May 6 was followed by a dedication on May 11 of statues donated by the DAISY Foundation to Keck Hospital of USC and the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Hand-carved from a single block of serpentine stone by artists of the Shona Tribe in Zimbabwe, the Healer’s Touch statues honor the nurses who continue to make this organization a great place to receive beyond exceptional care.

“This statue is dedicated to all of the nurses who continue to make this organization a great place to receive beyond exceptional care,” said Annette Sy, chief nursing officer of Keck Medicine of USC.

“It will serve as a constant reminder of how special our
New eye pathology lab on campus

By Amanda Busick

One of the few dedicated eye pathology labs in the country has opened at the Keck School of Medicine, providing an important resource for clinical applications, education, and researchers studying the disease, sometimes very small tissue samples that are common in ophthalmology.

The Ophthalmologic and Immunology-Pathology Lab at the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute, under the direction of Nursing A. Rao, MD, professor of ophthalmology and pathology, opened April 8 on the USC Health Sciences Campus.

To handle the small specimens common in eye pathology, a dedicated lab with a properly trained technician is preferred, providing the specific expertise to make proper diagnoses based on a minimal amount of available tissue.

"General pathologists are not exposed to these kinds of material," Rao explained. "That's one reason that the eye pathology lab is needed. Eye pathologists are trained ophthalmologists, as well as trained pathologists."

The lab utilizes various examination methods, including molecular diagnostic techniques. This allows not only for diagnosis but also prognosis of a given condition.

The lab, which had an opening reception on March 5, provides expertise in complex ophthalmic cases for Keck Medicine of USC, as well as other local and regional hospitals.

Residents and fellows from the USC Roski Eye Institute also will be rotating through the lab as part of their education, so they can use this training to make proper clinical diagnoses. General pathology departments cannot provide training specific to ophthalmology.

"Establishing this integrated pathology and ophthalmology service enables a level of patient care, teaching, and research that continues a long history of excellence in academic eye care at USC," said Michael E. Selsted, MD, PhD, chair of the Department of Pathology. "The central role of the new laboratory ensures that USC Roski Eye Institute patients receive state-of-the-art care while continuing to support ophthalmology education and discovery."

Researchers also will benefit from the opening of the lab, where tissue and fluid samples will be stored and made available for analysis in clinical trials, studies and advancements in diagnostic and clinical techniques.

Roshit Varma, MD, MPH, director of the USC Roski Eye Institute, chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, is pleased that the lab is now available for use.

The pathology lab is a great resource for physicians, scientists, educators and students at Keck Medicine and throughout the community," he stated. "We are excited at the prospect of being able to advance clinical diagnoses and scientific research in the field of ophthalmology and molecular diagnostics."

Rao believes that the success of the lab would not be possible without cooperation and enthusiasm of Keck School leadership.

"I'm grateful for both the chairman, Dr. Varma, as well as the pathology chair Dr. Selsted. To do this, it has to be a close cooperation between two disciplines."

By Cristy Lytal

Tuning is everything when it comes to the development of the vertebrate face. In a new study published in PLoS Genetics, an international researcher Lindsey Barske, PhD, from the laboratory of Gage Crump, PhD, and her colleagues identify the roles of key molecular signals that control this critical timing.

Previous work from the Crump and other labs demonstrated that two types of molecular signals, called Notch and Edelman (Edn1), are critical for shaping the face. Using sophisticated genetic, genomic and imaging tools to study zebrafish, the researchers discovered that in the lower face, Edn1 signals accelerate cartilage formation early in development, while the upper face, Jagged-Notch signals prevent stem cells from making cartilage until later in development. The authors found that these differences in the timing of cells making cartilage to form cartilage play a major role in making the upper and lower regions of the face distinct from one another.

"We've shown that the earliest blueprint of the facial skeleton is set up by spatially intersecting signals that control when stem cells turn into cartilage or bone. Logically, therefore, small differences in the latency of these signals throughout evolution could account for much of the diversity of faces we see within the skulls of different animals, as well as the wonderful array of facial shapes seen in humans," said Barske, lead author and associate professor in the USC Department of Anatomical Sciences.

"There is a close cooperation between two disciplines."
Laughter, tears as graduates celebrate commencement

By Health Sciences staff

Pyramid graduates celebrated with pomp and circumstance May 13 and 14 as USC held its 133rd commencement. The Keck School of Medicine of USC, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC and USC School of Pharmacy held eight satellite ceremonies to honor the hundreds of graduates.

Health Promotion and Global Health
On May 13, 105 newly minted graduates from the Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Global Health programs of the Keck School of Medicine of USC cheered as Program Director and Associate Dean, Elahe Nezami, PhD, told them to “Fight on!” one last time after announcing their degree completion.

Interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, was among the Keck School’s leadership present at the celebration. The commencement speech was given by Jonathan Samet, MD, director of the USC Institute for Global Health and Distinguished Professor and Flora L. Thornton Chair, Health and Distinguished Professor and the USC Institute for Global Health.

MD/PhD and MD
The Keck School of Medicine of USC’s MD and MD/PhD ceremony, held May 14 at the Galen Center, was both heartfelt and humorous.

Henni Ford, MD, MHA, vice dean for medical education, was the grand marshal of the ceremony. Interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, set the tone for the graduates with three items of advice for the future: look beyond the status quo to find ways to break new ground; provide care not only to those who can afford it but also to those who cannot as they serve good health as much as anyone; and always practice with passion.

Attendees were particularly moved by the commencement address from Paul Farmer, MD, co-founder of Partners in Health.

“You will feel fear and see suffering, but most of all you will experience the joy of the most rewarding profession that I can imagine. And that’s true no matter where you end up practicing or how,” Farmer said.

PhD, Master of Science and Master of Public Health
Thousands of family and friends filled the Galen Center on May 14 as more than 400 PhD and master’s students celebrated their commencement from the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, conferred the degrees. Master of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology graduate Nell Narasappa gave a spirited student address, while Barbara Wold, PhD, the Bren Professor of Molecular Biology, Beckman Institute, California Institute of Technology, gave the commencement address.

Varma, MD, MPH. Faculty member Mitzi D’Aquila, MACM, PA-C, led the ceremony this year beginning with the achievements of the Class of 2016, particularly those students who participated in the Interprofessional Geriatric Curriculum and the selected individuals to be inducted into Pi Alpha Honor Society, the national honor society for physician assistants.

Raymond Valiani, MD, then rose to the podium to speak about the graduating class about being human in their practice. He referred to his own experience as it taught him to be a better listener and physician. Next Jennifer Wegler, MMSc, MA, PA-C, advised the students that they were about to start on a new journey in their career, but the best advice was to “be on time and bring doughnuts.”

USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
Fanboz Maseeh, Sc.D, delivered the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy ceremony.

For more stories and photos, go to spn.usc.edu.

UCSCHC/Photos by Steve Cohn
MASECHB, 2016: Congratulations Class of 2016!

The USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy awarded degrees to 180 students. Dr. Myriam Masechb, interim associate dean, delivered the commencement address and highlighted the advancement of physical therapy.

The class of 2016 consisted of 106 doctors of physical therapy and 74 physical therapists. Of the 106, 53 doctor of physical therapy, 2 doctors of philosophy, and 5 masters of science. Additionally, 35 pharmacists were recognized for completing residency training along with eight individuals who received certificates marking the conclusion of their fellowships.

The featured commencement speaker was USC Distinguished Professor Dana Goldman, PhD, director of the USC School of Pharmacy.

The USC School of Pharmacy marked its 100th Commencement May 13. Interim Dean Glen L. Stimmel, PharmD, presided over the event, awarding degrees to 177 Doctors of Pharmacy, 18 Doctors of Philosophy, and 28 Masters of Science. Additionally, 35 pharmacists were recognized for completing residency training along with eight individuals who received certificates marking the conclusion of their fellowships.

USC School of Pharmacy

Masechb took a moment to recognize Masechb, who noted the school’s record number of 94 new doctors of physical therapy into the profession as part of its 2016 commencement proceedings.

“Graduates, you are entering the profession at a very exciting time. Barriers to practice are coming down and your financial incentives will come. You will be rewarded for working smarter instead of harder,” said commencement speaker Shann

Richard Bruce, Master of Physician Assistant studies. His work in this field is recognized by his active participation in the American Association of Physician Assistants (AAPA) and the National Association of Medical Assis

Sandra Nujama, Master of Public Health on her first day of the Master of Public Health Program, Sandra Nujama heard her presentation from the USC Institute for Global Health about its projects around the world, including Uganda. As a Ugandan, Sandra said she was greatly inspired in 2005, when she attended the eighth World Health Assembly in Geneva and took an internship with the Ebola team at the World Health Organization. After graduation, Sandra will continue on as co-academic director for Global Health projects in Uganda.

“Keep an open mind in the first year. You will be surprised what elements of public health will fascinate you.”

Vamsi Arbindi, Doctor of Medicine Vamsi Arbindi was set to be an aerospace engineer when, as an undergraduate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he joined the Emergency Medical Services group. He fell in love with medicine and the HTE@USC program caught his eye. Five months before earning his medical degree, though, he was diagnosed with diffuse large B-cell lymphoma — but didn’t let that stop him from matching in general surgery at Baylor College of Medicine and being named the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award winner for his graduating class.

“There are so many people in my class who are deserving of the award, so it’s really an honor.”

Allison Fich, Master of Public Health Allison Fich began her master’s degree in public health after she already began her career working for nonprofits. After college, she spent time living on the border of Thailand and Myanmar working with Burmese migrant children.

“I realized I wanted to spend time working to give agency to those who are underserved and do not have it but desperately need it,” she said.

When asked about the social justice health experience at USC, she added that the experience allowed her to understand how different systems work and how they can be fixed.

“I would encourage everyone to start as soon as possible. If you don’t like it, you can change careers. I highly recommend it to everyone.”

Anthony Searcy, Master of Physician Assistant Studies

When Anthony Searcy’s father was sick, he had a great appreciation for the medical staff that took care of him. When one of the main caregivers was introduced as a PA, Searcy was inspired by his career, compassion, and understanding in his way of practicing medicine.

“Thank the most important takeaway I have from the program is to continue to make positive impacts on people’s lives and continue to cultivate personal relationships. When I’m out in practice I need to make strong bonds with my patients who will help me be the best PA I can be.”

Martha Ryan, Bachelor of Science, Global Health

Martha Ryan took a winding path towards her degree, starting first as a pre-med student, then in environmental studies because she knew she wanted to work in the health sector with the ability to affect people on a population level.

“I was inspired by my undergraduate studies to work in global health and policy for her undergraduate studies, and that is why she wanted to work in the health sector with the ability to affect people on a population level. Her biggest takeaway from her work in the health sector with the ability to affect people on a population level was that the biggest takeaway from her global health education was “everything begins and ends with education and community empowerment.”

With that guiding principle, she is entering the Peace Corps as an HIV/AIDS civil society capacity-building volunteer in Botswana after graduation.

Clare Yarka, Master of Science, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine

Clare Yarka decided to come to USC as a translational step between undergraduate and graduate school. One of the most rewarding parts of the program for her was the bridging STEM Cells to the Clinic class. Once I learned about all the different opportunities in industry, I really thought that that could maybe be the direction that I go. So I got a job at a small biotech firm here in Southern California. It’s called Kite Pharma in Santa Monica, and I’ll be working as a research associate in the field of immuno-oncology. So, onward and upward!”

Jiawei Zhao, Master of Science, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine

“My father died of myelodysplastic syndrome transformed acute myeloid leukemia when I was 14. That was my initial inspiration to do cancer research. I figured out that there was a tight relationship between cancer and stem cells, so I came to USC’s master’s program to study more about stem cell biology and prepare my PhD applications. I got offers from a few institutions: University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Harvard University, Yale School of Medicine, Massachusetts Medical School, University of Rochester Medical Center, and University of California, San Francisco.

“I got PhD offers from a few institutions: University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Harvard University, Yale School of Medicine, Massachusetts Medical School, University of Rochester Medical Center, and University of California, San Francisco. So I got a job at a small biotech firm here in Southern California. It’s called Kite Pharma in Santa Monica, and I’ll be working as a research associate in the field of immuno-oncology. So, onward and upward!”

David Sprague
In Memoriam: Daniel Mishell Jr., 84

Daniel R. Mishell Jr., MD, a long-time professor and former chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, died May 4. He was 84.

“Daniel R. Mishell Jr., MD, had been a leader in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology for almost 40 years until his recent retirement,” said Lulu Maders- pach, MD, chair of obstetrics and gynecology. “Dr. Mishell led us in so many ways, from the day he arrived on campus to the day he retired. He always generously shared his clinical insights, intellectual acumen and passion for women’s health. His pioneering work in family planning touched the lives of women all over the world.”

A national and international pioneer in the fields of contraception, infertility and reproductive endocrinology related to menopause, Mishell was recruited to USC from UCLA in 1969 as a professor and went on to serve as chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Keck School and chief of professional services at Women’s and Children’s Hospital from 1979 to 2005. He was appointed professor of ob/gyn in 1989. He remained a valued and highly respected member of the department until his retirement on April 4, 2016.

Mishell’s original research resulted in the development of the majority of devices and Hormonal treatments used for contraception today. Other aspects of his research led to technologies that allowed women who desired pregnancy to more easily conceive.

While Mishell was renowned for his landmark contributions to contraception, infertility and reproductive endocrinology, when asked for an interview what he regarded as his greatest accomplishment, he pointed to USC.

“I’ve trained over 400 residents and made sure they would provide excellent health care in the field of Ob/Gyn,” he said at the time. “That’s what I’m most proud of.”

Mishell also was noted for his commitment to providing excellent medical care to the underserved and as a particularly strong proponent of recruiting women to his field.

Mishell earned his bachelor and medical degrees from Stanford Uni- versity, then went on to an internship at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, and residency training in internal medicine at Bellevue Hospital (Go- nell University) and in obstetrics and gynecology at UCLA.

Mishell is survived by his wife, Carol, and his three children, Sandra, Daniel III and Tony. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested donations to the Keck School of Medicine Daniel Mishell Jr., MD, Professorship. See http://keck.usc.edu/giving/dan- ielmishell for more information.

Longtime employees honored at breakfast

By Douglas Morino

Employees were recognized recently for their years of dedicated service to Keck Medical Center of USC. About 470 employees were honored at the 2016 Years of Service Breakfast, an annual event held May 9 in the Soto I Courtyard.

The longest-serving em- ployees honored were Aurora Badurina, a registered nurse in the outpatient surgery center, and Debra Jean Baffler, a payroll coordinator in General Accounting. Bada- rina and Baffler were recognized for serving 40 years with Keck Medical Center.

The commitment of the staff is instrumental to the continued success of the medical center, Rod Hanners, Keck Medical Center CEO, told guests gathered at the breakfast ceremony. “You are the reason why Keck Medical Center of USC shines,” Hanners said.

Patients, colleagues remember John Niparko

By Alyxias Young

A gentle giant, selfless, gracious, angel in hu- man form. These were just some of the words used to memorialize the late John K. Niparko, MD, former Tirher Alpert professor and chair of the USC Rick and Tina Caruso Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, who died April 25. He was 61.

On May 10, hundreds of otorhinolaryngology, family, colleagues and students filled Mayer Auditorium on the Health Sci- ences Campus to capacity, while dozens more stood in the vestibule at the memorial service for the internationally- renowned otorhinolaryngologist and authority on implantable technologies.

USC President C.L. Max Nikias, PhD, Keck School of Medicine of USC interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, university trustee Rick Caruso and his family, and patients of Niparko were among those who spoke about the impact he made in their lives and at USC.

President Nikias described Niparko as a remarkable human being, saying, “He said nothing reveals the vast- ness of a physician more than his ability to blur the lines between the medical and the miraculous, and the dutiful and the devoted. To be under John Niparko’s care, to work alongside him, to witness his transformation of lives — it was an experience not forgotten.”

Nikias said just a short time after Niparko arrived at USC from Johns Hopkins University, he recruited a talented team that tripled in size and enlarged the otolaryngology department and its reputation. He also referred to Niparko’s surgical expertise as “unbound compassion and dedica- tion to giving children a successful future would attract the sup- port of our trustee Rick Caruso and his family.”

Caruso described meeting Niparko after seeing several specialists in search of treatment for his daughter Gianna, who was born with mild to moderate hearing loss.

“I remember our first meeting,” Caruso said. “John greeted me with a firm handshake, a soft voice, and a sense that he’s a truly kind and gentle man.”

Caruso said he and his family will always remember the day Niparko moved them to tears of joy. “That was the day that he gave Gianna the gift of hearing,” he said. “More than 14 years we had gone from doctor to doctor, from appointment to appointment, searching to get her the experience of the full sense of sound. It was John who provided a miracle, we will never forget that day."

Gianna Caruso fought back tears as she described Niparko as not only her doctor, but as a family member and friend.

Today we are here to honor an amazing man who changed my life, the way I view life and the way I live my life,” she said. “Dr. Niparko gave me the gift of hearing. I believe he was an angel sent down by God to change not only my life, but the lives of many others.”

Varma, who is the director of the USC Gayle and Ed- ward Roski Eye Institute, said Niparko stood out among the incredible group of scientists and physicians at USC.

“In part, this is because of his wide range of skills as a grafted physician and a scientist and an innovator, and his ability to lead and inspire. Even during his all-too-brief time here in L.A., it was his leadership that elevated the Caruso Department of Otorhinology into one of the best in the world as well,” he added. “But John also stood out because of his uncommon humility and humanity.”

Ellison

Continued from page 1

“This investment by Larry Ellison in USC is as inspirational as it is mo- tioning, and it will serve as a launching force for change in how we approach cancer treatment and prevention,” USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD, said. “It is a concrete endorse- ment of USC’s vision to invest in the people and potential of new technologies, and to support a bold push forward in how we achieve wellness.”

Ellison’s gift will provide the seed investment for a state-of-the-art facil- ity in west Los Angeles that will serve as the first cancer “campus” building will house interdisciplinary cancer research laboratories focused on scientific discovery and innovation.

“Larry Ellison’s extraordinary generosity will have a lasting impact on the way we conceive of cancer research and treatment,” said Keck School of Medicine Interim Dean Rohit Varma, MD, MPH. “The profound depth of his philanthropy and his dedication to medical discovery is truly inspiring.”

Clinical advances will focus on transforming cancer treatment through technology and an interactive care clinic that offers patients world- class healthcare. The institute’s col- laborative environment will include a think tank, education and outreach, and a wellness program. The institute will be an enterprise-health care system built on encouraging a healthful lifestyle, including a library and gardens. The center will open to the public to the community for lectures and wellness classes on nutrition and similar topics.

The Ellison Institute will draw collaborators from across conventional health and wellness fields, as well as from the worlds of other sciences such as physics, biology, math and en- gineering to study cancer and potential ways to detect, prevent and treat the disease. The institute will comple- ment and integrate cancer research being conducted by faculty physicians and scientists across the university.

Agus currently leads the USC Cen- ter for Health Sciences, which earned its name for the pioneering work in family planning — the study of the body’s proteins) and genomics, integrating clinical trials, preclinical and medical devices and targeted therapy, which focuses on molecular and cellular changes spe- cific to cancer. Molecularly targeted therapy helps determine which cancer therapies are likely to work best for individual patients, allowing physicians to customize treatment for each patient.

“It is an honor and a privilege to team up with Larry Ellison in the fight against cancer,” Agus said. “Larry understands the need for transfor- mation in cancer care. His gift will enable us to accelerate cancer research, treatment and prevention. We will create a new paradigm, where pa- tients and researchers have the oppor- tunity to interact, and where progress is not taking place in an isolated silo. I believe with Larry’s gift that we will advance our research to the next level, allowing the most effective treatments to be tailored to the cancer of each patient and the need of new therapies — today.”

Ellison, the founder and chairman of Oracle, is an internationally renowned entrepreneur and philanthropist. His founding of Oracle — the enterprise-technology giant — heralded a new era of corporate data manage- ment and organization, and established him as a visionary business leader.
HSC Newsmakers

A roundup 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.

Althea Alexander, left, receives the Fellowship Spirit Award from John K. Su, program director of the Schweitzer Fellowship.

Althea Alexander recognized for work with Schweitzer Fellowship

The Los Angeles chapter of The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship (LA-ASF) recently recognized Althea Alexander, assistant dean for student diversity in the Office for Diversity and Inclusion at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, with the Fellowship Spirit Award at the organization’s Celebration of Service, held April 8 in Los Angeles. The Fellowship Spirit Award recognizes extraordinary achievement by those working to promote the work of LA-ASF, and whose life example has influenced and inspired others. Alexander has served as an active board member of the Los Angeles chapter since its inception in 2007.

HSC News

USC School of Pharmacy’s annual High School Career Day brought approximately 140 students to the Health Sciences Campus.

High school students learn about pharmacy at annual career day

USC SCHOOL OF PHARMACY’S ANNUAL High School Career Day on April 15 brought approximately 140 students to the Health Sciences Campus from local high schools. Alumna Leticia Hernandez, PharmD, welcomed students from STAR Prep Academy, King Drew Magnet High School for Medicine and Science and Bravo Medical Magnet School by sharing her journey of growing up in Huntington Park, becoming the first female in her family to go to college, going to USC, and becoming a pharmacist in a predominantly Spanish-speaking Latino community. Students spent the afternoon in group rotations focusing on asthma, hypertension and diabetes and participated in a hands-on exercise to learn about compounded, the art and science of preparing personalized medicines for patients. — Michele Keller

Special gift to establish care program focused on patients

By Douglas Morino

A generous gift from the family of a grateful patient will establish an endowment and fund new programs in perpetuity that are designed to strengthen patient-centered care and support continued education and excellence throughout Keck Medicine of USC.

The gift from the Choi family will establish the USC Choi Family Patient-Centered Care Program. The program will foster a culture of service focusing on compassionate, empathetic care and patient advocacy across Keck Medicine by providing training and educational opportunities.

“The gift will fund a position after a Choi family member received exceptional care at Keck Hospital of USC,” said Henry Choi, a USC alum. “We want to reinforce their commitment and give our appreciation to this important value that ought to be the top priority in today’s medical world.”

The gift also will establish the USC Choi Family Patient-Centered Care Symposium, which will be organized annually and open to all health care professionals in the community, providing them with education and training focused on compassion, empathy, advocacy and patient-centered care.

“The Choi Family Patient-Centered Care program will continue to grow and sustain our Keck Culture,” said Char Ryan, MHA, patient experience and employee engagement officer for Keck Medicine. “Through education and recognition we will continue our focus on the voice of the patient and their family.

Additionally, the gift will establish the USC Choi Family Awards for Excellence in Patient-Centered Care, a public recognition of clinical staff, residents, physicians non-clinical staff and team who consistently demonstrate the ideals of patient-centered care, compassion and excellence.

The first awards will be given at a gala event May 25. “Patients are the heart of everything we do here at Keck Medicine of USC,” said Rod Hanners, CEO of Keck Medical Center of USC. “This special gift is a key investment in the future of patient-centered care at Keck Medicine and will help ensure the culture of service and patient advocacy that is such an essential part of our mission will be supported for generations to come.”

The Choi family is a longtime supporter of USC and Keck Medicine.

The family has made previous gifts to support stem cell research at the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, an artist-in-residence endowment at the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance and a violin scholarship honoring the late Eudice Shapiro at the USC Thornton School of Music.

‘This special gift is a key investment in the future of patient-centered care at Keck Medicine.’ — Rod Hanners

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GALLERY OPENING: Visitors look at artwork, including photographs and paintings by Keck School of Medicine of USC faculty, staff and students, on display in the Hoyt Gallery during the Spring gallery opening, April 27 in the basement level of the Keith Administration Building.

 USC Verdugo Hills Hospital joins Armenian women’s group for panel

The USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Foundation recently held a special event with the Armenian International Women’s Association (AIWA) Los Angeles Affiliate to better acquaint the community with the clinical innovations and high level of medical expertise available at the hospital. More than 100 people attended the April 6 event to mingle and enrich their health and wellness knowledge. Arman Doian, MD, associate professor of emergency medicine, moderated the panel discussions, which featured Rose Tariyan, MD, MPH, Andreas Hinkoyan, MD, Leo Doumanian, MD, ReneSotelo, MD, and Nemensanassian, MD. — Mary Dacuma

‘This special gift is a key investment in the future of patient-centered care at Keck Medicine.’ — Rod Hanners

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