Visionary gift names the USC Roski Eye Institute

By Lynn Lipinski

Longtime USC benefactors Gayle and Edward Roski have made a landmark $25 million gift to endow and name the USC Gayle and Edward Roski Eye Institute at Keck Medicine of USC, reflecting the institute’s position as one of the nation’s leading centers for advanced vision care, research and education.

The Roskis’ gift will support USC’s initiatives to preserve, restore and improve the sight of patients in Southern California and worldwide. By propelling discovery of new knowledge and furthering the education of tomorrow’s leaders in ophthalmology, the gift will enable the USC Roski Eye Institute to continue its powerful influence on vision care, research and education across the world. It also will advance Keck Medicine of USC’s position as a leader and innovator in the global human health revolution.

USC Trustee Ed Roski and his wife, Gayle, are major benefactors to USC’s art and design school, students and programs. This latest generous gift takes on special meaning because of the couple’s own experiences. Gayle Garner Roski, a plein-air watercolorist, received cataract treatment at USC Roski Eye Institute. The procedure dramatically improved her ability to see color and light values. After the surgery she realized how her vision, blurred and darkened by cataracts, had affected her paintings and changed how she used color.

The Roskis hope to help others suffering from vision loss or impairment. The couple’s roots at USC run deep. They met their first year on campus as undergraduate students. Ten years ago, the USC Gayle Garner Roski School of Art and Design was named in recognition of the couple’s transformative gift. Their generous support helped the fine arts program embrace new media and digital arts, as well as provide for a graduate student art gallery. Other notable gifts to the university by the Roskis have supported athletics and the USC Marshall School of Business. With this most recent gift, the Roskis reaffirm their long-standing support, while bringing a unique perspective— that of the visual artist— to the study and treatment of eye disease.

“Gayle and Ed Roski stand among USC’s most treasured friends,” said USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD. “Generations from now, our community will continue to learn about this extraordinary couple, and their enduring contributions to our university. With this most recent gift, the Roskis build beautifully on their already impressive legacy, while widening the scope of their remarkable philanthropy.”

Led by Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, professor and chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and interim dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the USC Roski Eye Institute traces its roots to the founding of USC’s ophthalmology department in 1974. In 60 faculty members have created partnerships in the communities surrounding

In memoriam: USC President Emeritus Steven B. Sample

By Sue Vogl and

Lynn Lipinski

Steven Browning Sample, who served as USC’s 10th president from 1991 to 2010 — a time of remarkable transformation at the university — died March 29. He was 75. During Sample’s 19-year tenure as president, the university ascended nationally prominent faculty, created a global presence, completed what was at the time the largest fundraising campaign ever in higher education and built partnerships in the communities surrounding

USC’s campuses. “Generations from now, those studying the history of our university will quickly find themselves learning the remarkable story of Steven Sample,” said USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD. “So many of

Varma named interim dean of the Keck School

By Amanda Busick

Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, holder of the Grace and Emery Beardsley Chair in Ophthalmology and director of the USC Eye Institute, was announced as the interim dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC on March 24 in an email from Provost Michael Quick, PhD. Varma, who serves as chair of the Department of Ophthalmology, is professor of ophthalmology and preventive medicine, and was recently elected president of USC Care Medical Group, will be continuing in all his current leadership roles while a nationwide search is underway to identify a new permanent dean for the Keck School.

In his email, Quick stated, “An accomplished physician-scientist, Dr. Varma is also a dedicated and capable leader and we appreciate his service in this interim role.”

Varma earned his medical degree at the University of Delhi, India, and his master of public health degree from Johns Hopkins University. Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA, announced his resignation as dean of the Keck School of Medicine of USC on March 24 in an email addressed to faculty, staff and students of the medical school. Puliafito stepped down to “return to academic ophthalmology and pursue some identified opportunities in health care,” according to the statement.

Puliafito served as dean of the Keck School of Medicine since 2007.
By Zen Voong

Researchers at USC and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory say they will be the first team in the world to launch fungi into space for the purpose of potentially developing new medicine for use both in space and on Earth.

USC and JPL researchers are scheduled to send specimens of the Aspergillus nidulans fungus to the International Space Station aboard the Space X CRS-8 mission April 8. The stressful environment of the International Space Station could trigger changes in physiological responses (such as gene expression) and metabolism of Aspergillus nidulans, said Clay Wang, PhD, a professor of pharmacology and pharmacaceutical sciences and chemistry at the USC School of Pharmacy and the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences.

Certain types of fungi produce very important molecules called secondary metabolites that are not essential for their growth or reproduction but can be used to benefit both pharmaceutical and agricultural purposes. The Aspergillus organism, for example, is being used to cure glaucoma, macular degeneration and other conditions.

Verna, who also holds the Grace and Emery Beardsley Chair in Ophthalmology and is president of USC Care Medical Group, is a recognized expert in glaucoma and has led the nation’s most innovative glaucoma studies in minority and vulnerable communities for the past 20 years.

Gayle and Edward Roski’s gift is an incredible vote of confidence in the work we do at the USC Roski Eye Institute,” Verna said in a statement. “It will have been unwavering over the decades and I am humbled that they have chosen to invest in our faculty and our work, “Verna said. “This gift will enable us to advance eye research in fields such as ocular imaging, drug delivery, dry eye, stem cell therapies and public health and policy.”

“These funds will also establish a surgical training laboratory for teaching the most advanced surgical skills to the next generation of eye surgeons,” she added. “With this gift, we will continue to make progress toward our most ambitious goal — eliminating blindness altogether.”

Ed Roski said he and his wife are honored to help the institute grow and expand its operations and continue to evolve. “Sight is so profoundly important, and we feel fortunate to be in a place where we can help bring the institute to this time,” he said.

President and chairman of the board of Majestic Realty Co., Ed Roski also is co-owner of the Los Angeles Kings and Los Angeles Lakers. Combining his love of sports with his passion for business, he is recognized for playing a critical role in developing the Staples Center, a landmark in downtown Los Angeles.

A generous and humble philanthropist, he commits his time and resources to countless civic organizations throughout Los Angeles, and has served as a member of the USC Board of Trustees since 2002, having previously served as chairman.

Gayle Roski is a native of Los Angeles who studied fine arts at USC. Her watercolor paintings have been exhibited extensively in museums and galleries from Southern California to Scotland. She is a member of the USC’s board of the East of the University/Senior VP Luncheon,” Saturday, April 16, noon. Hastings Auditorium. Info: Deborah Carville, (323) 361-8715, dc@usc.edu.

April 8, 2016

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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 impact.hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-hsc. Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.
Keck Scholarship Gala honors faculty, alums

By Amaida Busick

The 2016 Keck Scholarship Gala on March 12 was a sold out event, with more than 300 alumni, current scholarship recipients, parents, donors, and other friends of Keck School of Medicine of USC gathering to honor two renowned alumnus and one esteemed faculty member.

The event raised close to $300,000 to help fund recruitment scholarships at the Keck School, surpassing their goal of bearing the previous gala total of $225,000.

The Distinguished Faculty Award was presented to Donald J. Feinstei, MD, MACP, emeritus professor of medicine, a revered hematologic-oncology doctor and a Master of the American College of Physicians. His areas of expertise include hematologic disorders associated with bleeding and thrombosis, and he was responsible for naming the most common inhibitor of the partial thrombosis time (PFT), the Lupus Anticoagulant. Even after his official retirement eight years ago, he still continues to work at the Keck School.

The Distinguished Alumni Service Award was presented to Michele M. Cannis, MD ’77, former associate clinical professor. Cannis is a respected pediatrician and educator, as well as the former president of the volunteer and support organization the Salerno Collegium Alumni Association. She has given countless hours of service as a volunteer throughout her long-standing relationship with USC.

In addition to these honorees, Betty Scheirer, MD, ’61, was also recognized for her recent $1.25 million gift that established the Joseph and Mariette Scheirer Scholarship Fund in honor of her parents, who worked hard to send her to medical school at the Keck School in the late 1950s. Scheirer attended the event with the inaugural recipient of this scholarship, Chaima Motene.

The program for the evening also included a presentation from Raquel Arias, MD ’84, MPP, associate dean for admissions, associate professor of clinical obstetrics and gynecology, and a recruitment scholar herself. She highlighted the fierce competition the Keck School faces with other schools and how scholarships are needed to continue to attract the best and brightest medical school applicants.

SAMPLE: dynamic leadership

Continued from page 1

USC’s successes, so much of our university’s current stature can be traced back to Dr. Sample’s dynamic leadership, keen foresight, and extraordinary prudence. Dr. Sample stood over our university — and led our Trojan Family — as it began its singular transformation, and for this we should all be grateful.

Among Sample’s achievements was a remarkable ability to attract the resources the university needed to build endowment, develop academic programs and support campus improvements.

USC’s Building on Excellence campaign raised $2.85 billion, and the university became the first in the U.S. to receive five gifts of $100 million or more. During this time, USC also secured naming gifts for seven schools, including the $110 million naming gift for the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

The gift was the largest philanthropic gift ever made to a U.S. medical school at the time. Sample is survived by his wife, Kathryn Brunckow Sample, daughters Michelle Sample Smith and Elizabeth Sample, son-in-law Kirk Smith and grandchildren Kathryn and Andrew Smith.

PA Program travels to Washington D.C.

By Claire Norman

This spring break, students from the Primary Care Physician Assistant (PA) Program at the Keck School of Medicine of USC attended the fourth annual Advocacy Trip to Washington, D.C. The experience is intended to promote leadership and inspire students to advocate for their profession and patients.

This year 16 students traveled to meet with their congressional representatives and California senators to talk with them about legislation that impacts primary care, student loans and divers ity.

Last fall, Congresswoman Karen Bass, an alumna of the Primary Care PA Program, introduced the Physician Assistant Education Public Health Initiative Acts of 2015 and the Physician Assistant Higher Education Modernization Act of 2015 to Congress. These pieces of legislation work to combat issues of medical shortage in primary care by providing scholarships to disadvantaged PA students, authorizing loan repayment for PA students who serve in areas of need, increasing loan limits for PA students, developing PA programs at historically black institutions, providing grant preference to Hispanic Serving Institutions, and enhancing educational technology for PA programs.

“It was so exciting to meet with Congresswoman Bass and collaborate,” said PA student Sijin Park. “It was an opportunity of a lifetime to be on Capitol Hill and represent the voices of future PA students.”

Students met with American Academy of Physician Assistant and Physician Assistant Education Association team members to learn about how to talk to representatives and staffers to advocate for co-sponsorship on these bills. They learned about how the activities in Washington, D.C. affect their practice and how they can put their best foot forward to advocate for students, practicing PAs and patients.

On the final day of the trip, students also met with staffers for Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and with representatives from their other congressional districts. Students spoke about their experiences in the classroom, participating in Student-Run Clinic and the Pipeline Program. Students advocated for their represen tatives to act as co-sponsors of the two pieces of legislation in the House and for the Senators to lead in creating a matching bill for the Senate.

New HSC Housing
Opening Fall 2016!

Be one of the first 50 people to mention this ad & get a FREE HSC GIFT BAG!
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.

Los Angeles Times Festival of Books
Visit the Keck Medicine Health Pavilion at the 2016 LA Times Festival of Books, held on the University Park Campus

Saturday, April 9
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
• BMI measurements
• Dental screenings
• Glucose and blood pressure screenings
• Hand hygiene
• Medication checks
• Melanoma screenings
• Oral health and hygiene instruction
• Sleep hygiene presentations
• Vision screenings

Sunday, April 10
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
• Weight and stress management

10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
• Dental screenings
• Hand hygiene
• Melanoma screenings
• Oral health and hygiene instruction
• Robotic surgery demonstration
• Vision screenings

2 p.m. – 5 p.m.
• BMI measurements
• Glucose and blood pressure screenings
• Medication checks

To support Jung’s efforts, the NCI will provide an annual grant of $1 million for the next seven years, totaling $7 million for the Jae Jung Lab in the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology. “I am honored to be recognized as an Outstanding Investigator by the NCI,” Jung said. “But more importantly, I am excited for the opportunity, with the financial support of the NCI, to heavily focus on bigger questions about Kapo�i’s sarcoma and lifelong, persistent infections of KSHV. I am very much looking forward to our discoveries over the next few years.”

The Outstanding Investigator Award is a new grant program developed by NCI.

Former astronaut to speak at annual Zelman lecture series
The Vladimir Zelman, MD, PhD, distinguished and endowed lecture series returns for its sixth year.

By Virginia Baca
Los Angeles area health care executive Smitha Ravipudi, MPH, has been appointed Chief Operating Officer of USC Care and Ambulatory Care Services.

Ravipudi will be responsible for all Keck Medicine of USC ambulatory operations, including hospital-based clinics, Keck School of Medicine of USC department clinics, and outpatient care partnerships and community practices. She will report to Rod Hanners, COO of Keck Medicine of USC and CEO of Keck Medical Center of USC.

Ravipudi will work closely with system leaders, USC Care peers and the clinical chairs, led by Rohit Varma, MD, MPH, interim Dean of the Keck School of Medicine and president of USC Care, to execute the ambulatory strategy with assured physician alignment.

“Smitha’s skills and leadership qualities make her the ideal choice for COO of USC Care,” said Hanners. “This role is critical for our health system as we continue to partner with our faculty to improve operations, expand our geographic footprint in Southern California and advance our clinical expertise in surrounding markets,” adds Hanners.

Ravipudi joins USC Care from Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) where she held multiple leadership positions, most recently as vice president of ambulatory and ambulatory operations, overseeing the outpatient clinics, community ambulatory care centers, pre-service and access operations and patient relations and service excellence.

Under her leadership, CHLA developed and launched the ambulatory electronic medical record, the patient and physician portals, its meaningful use program, while opening five regional outpatient centers and the hospital’s first appointment center. Prior to assuming the vice president role, Ravipudi served as the administrative director for the Department of Surgery at CHLA.

“I am honored to join the Keck Medicine of USC team,” Ravipudi said. “I look forward to working closely with Keck faculty and hospital leaders to achieve and sustain operational excellence in the ambulatory space.

Former astronaut Garrett Reisman will speak at Hastings Community Ambulatory Care.

Jae Jung

Jae Jung, Distinguished Professor of Anesthesiology.

By Mary Dacuma
Distinguished Professor Jae Jung, PhD, chair of the Department of Molecular Microbiology & Immunology and the director of the USC Institute for Emerging Pathogens and Immune Diseases at the Keck School of Medicine, is among the 2016 recipients of the National Cancer Institute’s (NCI) Outstanding Investigator Award.

Jung contributed much of his last 20 years of research to examining viruses that thrive in the body for an entire lifetime and cause diseases upon declining immune conditions, with a particular emphasis on the Kapoio’s sarcoma-associated herpesvirus (KSHV).

When the immune system is weakened, KSHV can spread and cause Kapoio’s sarcoma, a form of systemic cancer with cutaneous lesions that can be solitary, localized or disseminated.

“We are investigating how the virus persists in the body, how the virus induces Kapoio’s sarcoma, and ultimately what we can do to prevent Kapoio’s sarcoma,” Jung said.

To support Jung’s efforts, the NCI will provide an annual grant of $1 million for the next seven years, totaling $7 million for the Jae Jung Lab in the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology.

“I am honored to be recognized as an Outstanding Investigator by the NCI,” Jung said. “But more importantly, I am excited for the opportunity, with the financial support of the NCI, to heavily focus on bigger questions about Kapoio’s sarcoma and lifelong, persistent infections of KSHV. I am very much looking forward to our discoveries over the next few years.”

The Outstanding Investigator Award is a new grant program developed by NCI.

Visit the Keck Medicine Health Pavilion at the 2016 LA Times Festival of Books, held on the University Park Campus.

Ideas needed for R3 Competition
The Interprofessional Finance Council, and R3 Hospital Initiative are hosting an R3 Innovation Competition.

The R3 initiative focuses on providing the right care, right resources and right cost for our patients. This Keck Medical Center of USC competition is an opportunity for clinical staff to submit innovative ideas that will make an impact on resource utilization and efficiency of care for patients. Submit entries at https://goo.gl/3b5cU by April 19 at 11:59 p.m.

This challenge is open to clinical staff at Keck Hospital of USC and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. For more information, email R3innovation@med.usc.edu.

More information
Email: hscnews@usc.edu
Fax: (323) 442-2832

Contributors:
Director, Internal Communications: Virginia Baca
Content Coordinators: Virginia Baca, Ricardo Carrasco III, Nathan Cowen, Mary Dacuma, Lynn Lipinski, Melissa Masatani, Claire Norman, Sara Reese, Carol Susman, Sue Vogt, Zen Vuong and L. Alexis Young

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