

LAC+USC receives stellar accreditation review

In a singular tribute to its staff and to clinical faculty at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, the LAC+USC Medical Center has received the maximum full accreditation by the Joint Commission after an unannounced hospital inspection. The accreditation survey, designed to measure a wide range of patient care criteria, took place the week of Jan. 28.

A team of 10 surveyors—including physicians, hospital administrators and nursing directors—conducted the survey on behalf of the Joint Commission. Adding to the degree of scrutiny, the survey team itself was being observed by a Joint Commission federal liaison to ensure the integrity of the survey. Surveyors visited all components of the medical center operations including Women and Children's Hospital, the outpatient department and the inpatient psychiatric services at the Ingleside and Augustus F. Hawkins sites.

During this same period, an additional team of Joint Commission surveyors also surveyed LAC+USC Healthcare Network's three Comprehensive Health Centers: El Monte, H. Claude Hudson and Roybal. Each center also received full accreditation.

LAC+USC Medical Center Chief Medical Officer Stephanie Hall said the surveyors were specifically impressed with the quality of service the Network provides, given the challenges of working in a public hospital system.

"The surveyors were highly complimentary of our medical staff and medical staff leadership," says Hall, who is also



As staff and clinical faculty of the LAC+USC Medical Center prepare to move into the LAC+USC Replacement Facility (above), regulators were impressed with the high level of care patients continue to receive.

assistant dean at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. "The quality of patient care delivered here was clearly evident. We couldn't have achieved our successful outcome without the passionate commitment of all of our staff."

The facility is staffed by several hundred physicians and nearly 1,000 residents from the Keck School of Medicine of USC, a long-term partner at the facility since it opened in 1933.

"We are proud of this partnership, which has served the health care needs of our community for more than a century," says Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen Puliafito. "We salute our colleagues at the Department of Health Services and the County of Los Angeles, as well as the Board of Supervisors. We look forward to celebrating with them later

See LAC+USC, page 3

Visions and Voices lecturer Sandra Gilbert reflects on death and loss

By Meghan Lewit

In 1991, Sandra M. Gilbert lost her husband due to a medical error. At a Feb. 8 lecture to medical students and faculty at the USC Health Sciences Campus, the author spoke about the death, providing a first-person account of the painful repercussions of medical error.

"You are the audience I have dreamt of speaking to," Gilbert told the students assembled in Mayer Auditorium. "I fear I may be the speaker you least want to hear."

Gilbert is a professor of English at the University of California, Davis, and the author of several major works of literary criticism. She is also the author of the memoir *Wrongful Death*, and the prose work *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve*.

The event was part of Visions and Voices, a university-wide arts and humanities initiative established by USC Provost C. L. Max Nikias. It was presented in conjunction with a two-day Senior Seminar Series in Medical Humanities, Ethics, Arts and the Law (HEAL), part of the four-year integrated Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics at the Keck School of Medicine.

During the lecture, entitled "Writing/Righting Wrong: A Patient's

See GILBERT, page 2



HAPPY (LUNAR) NEW YEAR!—A Vietnamese Tet culture show at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on Feb. 6 featured a traditional *tieng sao thien thai* dance, symbolizing the beauty of springtime.

Sample annual address slated for Feb. 26 at HSC

USC President Steven B. Sample will deliver his annual address to HSC faculty and staff on **Feb. 26 from 8-9 a.m.**, in the Aresty Auditorium at the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower, 1450 Biggy St. All faculty and staff are welcome and encouraged to attend the event and the **7:30 a.m. hot breakfast** immediately preceding. To RSVP, visit: www.usc.edu/dept/pub-rel/specialevents/president/ and use **esvp** code FA108.

WSCI names Keck School physician-researcher outstanding investigator

By Katie Neith

Keck School of Medicine gastroenterologist Laurie DeLeve was recently honored with the Western Society for Clinical Investigation's Outstanding Investigator Award. She is the third female physician-scientist from the USC Department of Medicine to win the award in the past four years.

A distinguished honor of the Western Society for Clinical Investigation (WSCI), the award was presented to DeLeve at the organization's annual meeting on Jan. 31 in Carmel, Calif.

DeLeve, a professor of medicine in the division of gastroenterology and liver diseases, has been examining the basic mechanisms underlying liver disease at the Keck School for 17 years. The primary focus of her research has been on diseases of the liver microcirculation, such as hepatic veno-occlusive disease that can be caused by high dose chemotherapy used prior to bone marrow transplantation. DeLeve's lab has characterized the mechanisms of injury to the liver in this disease. Their research has shown that veno-occlusive disease is due to a combination of injury to the liver and impaired repair of the injury due to toxicity to bone marrow-derived stem cells.

Another area of focus for DeLeve is characterizing the cell-cell crosstalk within the liver that maintains the normal phenotype of the sinusoidal endothelial cell

and the hepatic stellate cell. Her laboratory's research has shown that de-differentiation of the sinusoidal endothelial cell, so-called capillarization, is permissive for the phenotypic change in the hepatic stellate cell that leads to liver fibrosis.

DeLeve has had continuous funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 1994 and is currently the principal investigator on two NIH grants. She is associate chair for scientific affairs in the Department of Medicine and director of the Pilot/Feasibility Project at the USC Research Center for Liver Diseases.

"I am very grateful to have been nominated and chosen for this award," said DeLeve. "It is a tremendous honor to be recognized by your peers."

Past recipients of the award were Zea Borok, professor of medicine in the division of pulmonary and critical care medicine, in 2007, and Shelly Lu, professor of medicine in the division of gastroenterology and liver diseases, in 2005.

"The Keck School of Medicine is fortunate to have physician-scientists of this caliber contributing to the accomplishments that propel USC forward," said Edward Crandall, chair of the Department of Medicine. "We are especially proud of the success of our outstanding female faculty, exemplified by the exceptional achievements of DeLeve, Borok and Lu."



Laurie DeLeve



Jon Nalick

GILBERT: For victims, families, 'the loss is forever'

Continued from page 1

Perspective on Medical Error," Gilbert encouraged the students to be honest and compassionate when dealing with the victims of medical error. After the death of her husband—who suffered a post-operative hemorrhage after a routine surgery—Gilbert said that her family struggled to get answers.

"No one at the hospital has ever explained how or why he died," she said.

Gilbert said she wrote her memoir in an attempt to "right the wrong" of her husband's death. Still, for victims and their families there is no closure.

"The loss is forever," she said.

Pamela Schaff, assistant dean for curriculum and student affairs at the Keck School and director of the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics, said she had heard Gilbert speak at a medical meeting several years ago.

"I thought she would be ideal for our medical humanities program here," Schaff said. "It was a wonderful culmination to a day spent looking at systemic approaches to medical error and professional responsibility."

"(Gilbert) brought all of the themes of the day very nicely together," she said.

The event was co-sponsored by the Program in Medical Humanities, Arts and Ethics, the USC Levan Institute for Humanities and Ethics and the USC Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics.

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Forum to focus on improving birth outcomes

The USC Center for Premature Infant Health Development and the Pasadena Birthing Project will host a University-community forum on Feb. 26 to discuss strategies to improve birth outcomes for African American women.

The event, which will feature James Ammons, president of Florida A&M University, will run from 4-6 p.m. at the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Conference Center, Harlyne J. Norris Research Tower. An information session and discussion begins at 4:30 p.m.

To attend, contact Joyce Mayne, Director of Development, by Feb. 22, at joyce.mayne@usc.edu or 323-442-1757.

Parking passes will be provided for the Eastlake Parking Lot. Refreshments will be served.

LAC+USC: Regulators laud care patients receive

Continued from page 1

this year as we jointly open a new state-of-the-art hospital replacement facility that will improve our ability to offer the highest standard of medical care to all members of our community without regard to their ability to pay."

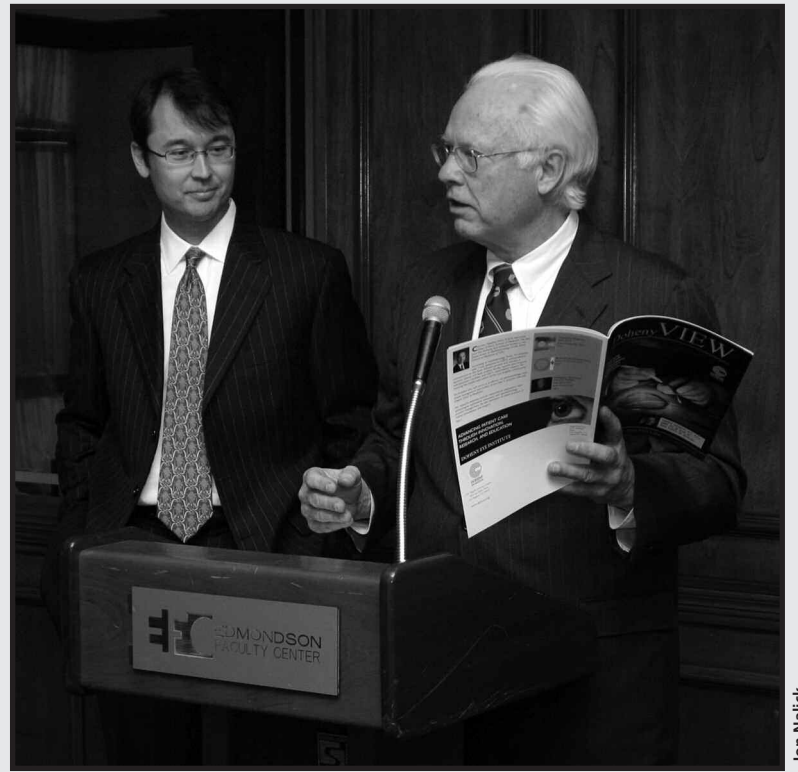
The Joint Commission accredits more than 15,000 health care organizations. Its accreditation is a nationwide seal of approval that indicates a hospital meets high performance standards. Joint Commission accreditation helps hospitals improve their performance, raise the level of patient care, and demonstrate accountability in the rapidly changing health care marketplace.

The LAC+USC Medical Center is

among the largest academic teaching institutions in the nation and hosts 51 ACGME fully accredited physician training programs. The main General Hospital measures 1.2 million square feet and spans 19 floors.

The medical center includes a Level I Trauma Center and Certified Burn Center serving the San Gabriel Valley, and the East, Metro and South areas of Los Angeles, representing a population of nearly seven million people.

Hall has managed three other surveys for the LAC+USC Health Care Network, two of which yielded the highest scores ever for LAC+USC Medical Center. It was last accredited in May 2005.



Jon Nalick

Ronald E. Smith, right, chair, Department of Ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine, shares magazine coverage about the work of Brian A. Francis, left, inaugural holder of the Ralph and Angelyn Riffenburgh Professorship in Glaucoma. Francis and the Riffenburghs were honored at a Feb. 8 reception. Ralph S. Riffenburgh opened an ophthalmology practice in Pasadena in 1954. For many years, he has taught on the faculty at the Keck School of Medicine and performed eye pathology at Doheny Eye Institute. He received the 1995 alumni award for outstanding faculty at Doheny. His wife, Angelyn, was professor of bacteriology at Los Angeles Valley College until her retirement and is now working with International Place at the Claremont Colleges. A glaucoma specialist, Francis is associate professor of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine and medical director of the Doheny Eye Institute's satellite office in Orange.

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Calendar of Events

The HSC Calendar is online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar

Tuesday, Feb. 19

9 A.M. Neurology Grand Rounds. "Fabry's Disease," Edward Cupler, Oregon Health and Science Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:30 A.M. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. "Eating Disorders: Treatment Strategies for Anorexia Nervosa," Michael Strober, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 226-5572

NOON. Cancer Center Grand Rounds. "Interplay Between Cadherin & Integrin Signaling in Squamous Cell Carcinoma," Agnieszka Kobiela, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

NOON. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. "Combinatorial Approaches to Novel Monoamine Receptor Ligands: Ergot-based Libraries," Matthew Parker, ChemDiv, Inc. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

Wednesday, Feb. 20

7 A.M. Medicine Grand Rounds. "Alternative to Blood Transfusions," Terri Abe, USC. GNH 1645. Info: (323) 226-7591

NOON. "Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension," Teresa DeMarco, UC San Francisco. GNH 7420. Info: (323) 442-6130

NOON. Renal Grand Rounds Conference. "Renal

Biopsy," Michael Koss, USC. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7307

NOON. ZNI Faculty Candidate Seminar. "Axonal-Glial Interactions of Myelination," James Salzer, NYU. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

4 P.M. USC Ctr. for Excellence in Research. "Grants Opportunities in the Humanities," Peter Mancall, USC. UPC: CUB 329. Info: (213) 740-6709

Thursday, Feb. 21

8 A.M. NCBI Field Guide Workshop. "A Field Guide to GenBank and NCBI Molecular Biology Resources," Peter S. Cooper and Simin Assadi, NCBI. NRT Aresty Aud. Registration required: usc.edu/nml/ncbi. Info: (323) 442-1125

NOON. Cellular Homeostasis Lecture. "Function & Regulation of the JAK/STAT Signaling During Drosophila Eye Development," Y. Henry Sun, Caltech. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, Feb. 22

8 A.M. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. "Do Blood Groups Have a Biological Role?" George Garratty, American Red Cross. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

11 A.M. "The Role of PLGF (Placenta Growth

Factor) in Sickle Cell Disease," Vijay Kalra, USC. GNH 14-441. Info: (323) 865-3947

4 P.M. USC Obstetrics and Gynecology Research Retreat. "Impacting Women's Health Through Collaborative Research," Various speakers. NRT Aresty Conference Room. Info: (323) 226-3416

Monday, Feb. 25

NOON. Fellows' Didactic Teaching Conference. "Calcium/Hypophosphatemia/Nephrolithiasis," Alan S.L. Yu, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rms. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

4 P.M. "Transplant Conference," Various faculty. UH Salerni Rm., 5th Floor. Info: (323) 442-9093

Tuesday, Feb. 26

NOON. Pharmacology and Pharmaceutical Sciences Seminar. "Hit to Lead and Beyond: Shortening the Path to Preclinical Drug Compounds Via Parallel SAR Generation," Russell Dahl, Burnham Inst. PSC 104. Info: (323) 442-2341

Friday, Feb. 29

NOTE: The early registration deadline for the USC Health for Women event in April has been moved to Feb. 29. For event information and online registration, visit usc.edu/events/hfw, or call (323) 442-2830.

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week's issue—although three weeks advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to HSC Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail to ebalauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.

HSC NEWSMAKERS

Complete listing at: www.usc.edu/uscnews/usc_in_the_news/

A Feb. 11 *Los Angeles Times* story quoted fertility expert **Richard Paulson** about a testosterone gel being tested as a treatment for women's loss of libido following menopause.

A Feb. 11 *Los Angeles Times* article noted that Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center will move to a new facility as early as June.

On Feb. 11, ABC News quoted pharmacologist **James Adams** about the possible effects of combining certain prescription medications.

On Feb. 7, the *Washington Post* featured a study led by Childrens Hospital Los Angeles pediatric researcher **Sebastien Bouret** that showed that brain circuitry controlling appetite can predispose some people to obesity. WebMD.com and WAGA-TV ran similar stories.

A Feb. 4 United Press International article featured research led by pathologist **Martin Kast**, which found a vaccine that appears to prevent prostate cancer in mice.

A Feb. 4 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted pharmaceutical expert **Greg Thompson** about the dangers of abusing prescription drugs.

A Feb. 4 *La Opinion* article quoted Doheny ophthalmologist **Rohit Varma** about glaucoma.



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MEDICINE ON TRIAL—Richard J. Ryan (standing), cross-examines a witness at USC's medical malpractice mock trial on Feb. 9 at Los Angeles Superior Court. The event mimicked an actual trial to prepare fourth-year Keck School of Medicine students for potential situations in the courtroom. As part of the Senior Seminar Series in Humanities, Ethics, Arts, and Law, the event was organized by the Pacific Center for Health Policy and Ethics, a university-wide program led by the Keck School of Medicine of USC and the USC Gould School of Law.

USC research team aims at cancer's weak spot

By Jon Nalick

A multidisciplinary research group at USC has discovered a biochemical Achilles' heel of certain cancerous tumor cells, which may render them susceptible to attack using existing chemotherapy drugs.

The group's findings were published in the Feb. 1 issue of the journal *Cancer Research*.

Researchers from the Keck School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy and the School of Letters, Arts and Sciences used tumor cells in culture and animal tumor models in vivo to investigate the effects of various chemotherapy drugs on the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) stress system of tumor cells.

"We found that specific combinations of such drugs, all of which converge on the ER stress system and thereby trigger system overload, lead to very efficient, synergistic tumor cell killing," said Axel H. Schönthal, associate pro-

fessor of molecular microbiology and immunology. "We expect that our discovery will be applicable to cancer patients, although this is something that needs to be confirmed and is planned."

The research group included members from the Keck School's Departments of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, Pathology and Neurosurgery as well as the School of Pharmacy and the School of Letters, Arts and Sciences' Department of Chemistry.

Adel Kardosh, Encouse B. Golden, Peter Pyrko, Jasim Uddin, Florence M. Hofman, Thomas C. Chen, Stan G. Louie, Nicos A. Petasis, Axel H. Schönthal. "Aggravated endoplasmic reticulum (ER) stress as a basis for enhanced glioblastoma cell killing by bortezomib in combination with celecoxib or its non-coxib analog, 2,5-dimethyl-celecoxib," Cancer Research 2008;68(3):843-51.

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