

Baxter Foundation celebrates 50 years of philanthropy

By Sara Reeve

The Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary at a reception on April 27 held in the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower's Aresty Conference Center Atrium. The foundation, which was established by Delia Baxter to honor her husband Donald, made its first grant of \$6,000 in 1959 to USC.

In recognition of the extraordinary contributions of the foundation to the faculty and students of the Keck School of Medicine, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and M. Elizabeth Fini, vice dean for research, unveiled the new name of the lower ground floor of the Harlyne J. Norris Cancer Research Tower—the Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Floor.

In a letter to the foundation's trustees, USC President Steven B. Sample expressed his profound gratitude for the foundation's generosity and commitment. "With gifts in excess of \$10 million, your family has demonstrated its unwavering confidence in the school, its faculty and students," he stated. "Your family has had and will continue to have an extraordinary effect on the Keck School,

"The things you do make the world a better place."

— Baxter Foundation Trustee Donald Haake



At an unveiling ceremony event with Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito (center left) on April 27 at the Harlyne Norris Cancer Research Tower are Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation Trustees (from left) Richard Haake, Donald Haake, Jane Haake-Russell, Martha Haake and Jim Russell.

medical education, research and human health around the globe." Puliafito presented the letter to the trustees, along with a letter from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Through the Baxter Junior Faculty Fellowship Program and the Baxter Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship Program, the foundation has provided 25 faculty members and more than 600 medical students with resources to pursue cutting edge research.

Jonah Chan, assistant professor of biochemistry and

molecular biology and a 2007 Baxter Fellow, spoke to the trustees and guests about the common goals of the foundation and the Keck School's faculty and students. "We are all here today because we all share in the same vision—to make a difference and really contribute something special to humanity by minimizing human suffering," said Chan. "All of us gathered here are striving to do this, and it is only through your generosity, contributions and commitment to scientific research that we can make substantial progress."

Foundation trustee Donald Haake offered his thanks to the university administration, faculty and students. "The truth is we are very honored and feel fortunate to be able to support each and every one of you and the research that you do," he said. "The things you do make the world a better place."

The Donald E. and Delia B. Baxter Foundation supports educational and scientific institutions for research and development of medicine, instruments and fluids for alleviating pain and protecting and prolonging human life.

New executive team takes helm of USC hospitals

By Sara Reeve

In a recent memo sent to hospital personnel, Mitch Creem, CEO for the USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, announced the new senior management team that will help lead the hospitals. "This team will be working closely with me and with all of you as we enter this new era of excellence for both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital," said Creem.

The list includes several familiar names of individuals with years of experience at the hospitals, as well as new additions. "Like any dynamic organization, our hospital management structure will be evolving as we expand our size and scope of operations with new programs," said Creem. "I expect our management team to drive organizational change and create a collaborative and supportive environment for all of you so that we may provide the highest standard of service to our patients. Together, we will create and implement a vision of excellence for USC's

new academic medical center."

Donald Larsen joins the management team as chief medical officer for the hospitals. His wide-ranging responsibilities include developing and implementing system-wide solutions to improve clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction, and the academic environment for teaching programs.

Larsen, an interventional neuroradiologist and associate professor at the Keck School of Medicine, has been on faculty since 1998 and has served as medical director of The Doctors of USC since August 2006, providing leadership on such issues as medical quality, risk management, credentialing and peer review. He will continue to serve in that role for The Doctors of USC as he assumes the medical director role for the hospitals.



Donald Larsen



WELCOME ABOARD—The Keck School of Medicine welcomed to campus on May 4 students accepted to the medical school for the fall. Faculty and current students made presentations on medicine and the curriculum. Above, students checking in pick up name tags and receive Keck School-themed gifts.

MANAGEMENT: Executive team assembled to guide hospitals into 'new era of excellence'

Continued from page 1

Scott Evans serves as operating executive, retaining the same scope of responsibility and authority that he had prior to the change in hospital ownership. He is in charge of the daily operations



Scott Evans

of professional, supportive and administrative areas of the hospitals, fostering teamwork among hospital directors and staff in collaboration with the medical staff leadership.

Evans served as chief operating officer since 2007, and prior to that appointment, he was the director of pharmacy, leading operations for the hospitals' three separately licensed pharmacies. Evans is also an adjunct faculty member with the USC School of Pharmacy and is director for the School of Pharmacy's Acute Care Residency Program.

Ellen Whalen is the hospitals' nursing executive, retaining the scope of responsibility for quality of care and service



Ellen Whalen

provided to patients by nursing staff. Her priorities going forward will include recruitment and retention initiatives to ensure that we have exceptionally qualified nurses to support our current and expanded programs.

Whalen has nearly 20 years of progressive nursing leadership in both hospital and faculty practice settings. Among her achievements at University Hospital, she implemented a highly successful RN residency program for new graduate nurses. She is a member of the American

Organization of Nurse Executives and has been inducted into Sigma Theta Tau, the honor society of nursing.

Jonathan Spees serves as the hospitals' chief financial officer. A newcomer to USC, Spees directs and oversees the management of the hospitals' financial planning, analysis, reporting and operations. He will provide the strategic and operational direction necessary to achieve financial performance targets and increase



Jonathan Spees

profitability. He is responsible for directing the development and implementation of the hospitals' annual operating budgets.

Prior to joining USC, Spees was a senior executive vice president of corporate development and finance and a founder of Merit Health Systems, LLC, a hospital management company. He has a successful track record in health care investment banking and corporate finance, including mergers and acquisitions, strategic planning, auditing and consulting. Spees is a certified public accountant and member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the California Hospital Financial Management Association and the Group Health Association of America.

Strawn Steele serves as executive director of finance, contributing more than 20 years of top-level financial management experience for health care and hospital systems. Strawn will be working closely with Jon Spees to manage a new financial model for the two hospitals under university ownership. Steele has worked for the USC hospitals since 2007, leading financial operations that include patient financial

services, admission, registration, scheduling, financial reporting, health information



Strawn Steele

management, case management, information technology and materials management. Before joining the USC hospitals, Steele was the chief financial officer of Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha, NE, a 330-bed, academic medical center with \$200 million in revenue. His experience also includes leadership positions with INTEGRIS Health, a large not-for-profit health system with 12 medical centers throughout Oklahoma. Steele is a certified public accountant and member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the California Hospital Financial Management Association.

Karen Ribback, another newcomer to USC, has assumed the new position of executive director of transition and planning.

Her primary role will be to support the hospitals' transformation into an academic medical center and to facilitate their integration with the university. She will



Karen Ribback

be responsible for developing relationship strategies with key partners and stakeholders, as well as leading short- and long-term strategic planning initiatives for the hospitals.

For the last 15 years, Ribback has been an independent consultant who focused on optimizing financial and organizational performance for

businesses undergoing significant change. She has worked with Fortune 500 financial services companies, major educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations to effect change and improve overall business performance.

Stacy Rummel Bratcher joins the management team as interim hospital counsel, expanding her role as associate general counsel for USC health sciences. She has a diverse and extensive legal background in health care that qualifies her to provide legal counsel on a variety of



Stacy Rummel Bratcher

issues involving our hospital programs, such as hospital/physician relationships, contract law, regulatory and compliance matters. A staff member in USC's Office of General Counsel since 2005, Bratcher is a health care attorney who provides primary legal support for the Keck School of Medicine, USC Care Medical Group, Health Research Association and the two USC hospitals.

Prior to joining USC, Bratcher was an associate with the Los Angeles office of health care law firm, Hooper, Lundy & Bookman Inc. There she practiced in the firm's regulatory and litigation departments, handling fraud and abuse defense, Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement cases, and managed care litigation for a variety of health care providers.

Jane Brust joins the hospital management team to lead public relations and marketing activities. A public relations practitioner and marketer in academic health care for



Jane Brust

25 years, she was recruited to USC in 2006 as associate senior vice president for health sciences public relations and marketing. She assumes responsibility for pro-

moting the hospitals as part of an expanded, integrated program to promote The Doctors of USC and the Keck School of Medicine through media relations, publications, internal communications, marketing, advertising and Web site development.

Brust has considerable experience in marketing academic medical centers, having led integrated communications and marketing programs at The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center and The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. She is an active member of the Group on Institutional Advancement of the Association of American Medical Colleges.

Janis B. McEldowney joins the hospital management team as interim chief human resources officer, augmenting her current role as associate senior vice president for administrative operations for USC. She will oversee employee support services



Janis B. McEldowney

and labor relations, including consultation with supervisors and human resources staff regarding best practices and regulatory compliance; investigation of discrimination and harassment complaints; dispute resolution for staff complaints; and employee benefits.

McEldowney has worked with the university since 1979, serving in a variety of operational, administrative support and advisory roles. She guided the HR transition related to new hospital ownership, ensuring that all personnel were enrolled in USC benefits and ready to receive their USC paychecks on schedule.

In the memo to staff, Creem also noted that the hospitals are recruiting a chief human resources officer and a chief information technology officer to serve on the hospital management team and provide leadership in their respective areas of hospital administration.

The Weekly

Next Issue: May 15

The Weekly is published for the faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the University of Southern California's Health Sciences Campus community. It is written and produced by the Health Sciences Public Relations and Marketing staff. Comments, suggestions and story ideas are welcome. Permission to reprint articles with attribution is freely given.

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In Case of an Emergency...

Call the Emergency Information Phone: 213-740-9233 The emergency telephone system can handle 1,400 simultaneous calls. It also has a backup system on the East Coast.

Visit the USC Web: <http://emergency.usc.edu> This page will be activated in case of an emergency. Backup Web servers on the East Coast will function if the USC servers are incapacitated.

USC programs top *U.S. News* grad school rankings

By Carol Matthieu

Several USC health science schools and programs were ranked in this year’s edition of *U.S. News & World Report* “America’s Best Graduate Schools,” released April 24. The Keck School of Medicine and the physical therapy and occupational therapy programs all were ranked nationally among the elite in their field.

Ranked highest was the physical therapy program which placed first in the nation and the occupational therapy program which ranked No. 3.

Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, a division at the USC School of Dentistry, has placed first in the nation since 2004. At the Health Sciences Campus, division faculty provide care at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. The first student-patient interaction takes place at University Hospital, with joint clinical and academic faculty oversight.

“We have always known that we are doing excellent work here at USC, but it’s wonderful to have that confirmation from our peers,” said James Gordon, associate dean and chair of the division. “Now we just need to continue working hard to stay on top,” he added.

The USC Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy has been consistently ranked

among the best in the nation since the magazine first began ranking occupational therapy graduate programs in 1998.

“We are proud to continue to offer one of the top occupational therapy programs in the United States,” said Professor, Associate Dean and Chair Florence A. Clark. With a faculty practice on the Health Sciences Campus, division faculty employ innovative occupational therapy treatment models to support the division’s research and teaching missions.

The Keck School of Medicine of USC placed No. 39 in research among medical schools nationally, tied with Georgetown University in this year’s ranking. The school

saw a slight improvement over 2008 in its reputation rank by residency directors nationwide.

U.S. News & World Report analyzed more than 12,000 graduate programs for this year’s list, using several indicators to calculate its rankings. In its ratings of medical schools, the magazine looked at factors such as acceptance rates, the caliber of incoming students based on average GPA and MCAT scores, faculty to student ratio, and research activity. The health specialties ranking, which features the PT and OT programs, was based on the results of peer assessment surveys conducted in 2007 for the 2008 rankings.

“We have always known that we are doing excellent work here at USC, but it’s wonderful to have that confirmation from our peers.”

—James Gordon, associate dean and chair of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

Symposium shines light on macular degeneration

By Cheryl Bruyninckx

Faculty, staff and students joined the governing board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) on April 29 for an educational program titled “Spotlight on Macular Degeneration.” Led by a panel of Keck School of Medicine experts, the program was part of a day-long meeting of CIRM’s Independent Citizens Oversight Committee hosted by the Keck School.

“Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in the industrial world,” said Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, who hosted the program and opened with an introduction about the eye condition. “In California, there are about three million patients who have some degree of macular degeneration.”

According to Puliafito, with the average age of the population in the United States increasing, macular degeneration is a growing public health challenge. “As the general health of individuals improves and their activity levels remain high in advanced age, the inability to read, to drive a car, to recognize faces—which are the three things that macular degeneration steals from patients—are

increasingly important,” said Puliafito.

Sharon Hayes, a macular degeneration patient cared for by Puliafito, spoke of her appreciation for treatment aimed at preserving her remaining eyesight. “Dr. Puliafito and so many others are doing everything in their power to find a cure,” said Hayes. “I am so fortunate to be under Dr. Puliafito’s care at a time when medical research is at the brink of being able to restore sight.”

Looking to the future, Puliafito said, “Much is left to be done, particularly in patients with the dry form of macular degeneration. For those patients, stem cell biology and the translation of stem cell biology into the clinic offer perhaps the most direct path to a cure.”

Martin Pera, director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, and David Hinton, professor of pathology at the Keck School of Medicine, discussed advances in stem cell research related to macular degeneration. “When I came to USC, I learned about our Doheny Eye Center and Mark Humayun and my colleague David Hinton,” said Pera. “With their expertise and with the help of the CIRM grant, there has really been remarkable progress.”

Mark Humayun, professor of ophthalmology, cell and neurobiology, and biomedical engineering, concluded with a presentation on the clinical applications of stem cell research in macular degeneration. He discussed the new minimally invasive approach to treating this condition, which is a faster and safer procedure when compared to other surgical options.



Robert Klein, chair of the Independent Citizens’ Oversight Committee (ICOC) that governs CIRM, and Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito attend an April 29 forum on macular degeneration as part of a day-long meeting of the ICOC.

HSC COMMENCEMENT EVENTS

The following lists the satellite commencement ceremonies for the Health Sciences Campus. The locations and times are listed, as well as the announced speakers. Please note that the Keck School of Medicine does not participate in the main commencement ceremony at the University Park Campus.

Wednesday, May 13

Keck School of Medicine—M.S., Ph.D. & M.P.H.
4 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on the Health Sciences Campus. Paul Zachary Myers, associate professor of biology, University of Minnesota Morris. Reception will follow.

Friday, May 15

Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy
11 a.m. at Bovard Auditorium at the University Park Campus. Kristina Ripatti, an LAPD officer shot in the line of duty in 2006, will share her inspiring recovery story.

Dentistry
11 a.m. on the Intramural Field at the University Park Campus. Arthur A. Dugoni, Dean Emeritus of the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry, University of the Pacific.

Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
10:30 a.m. on the lawn west of Leavey Library at University Park Campus. Shawn Phipps, distinguished USC alumnus, president of the Occupational Therapy Association of California. Reception will follow.

Physician Assistant Program
10:30 a.m. on the southwest lawn of the Hancock Building (AHF) at University Park Campus. Robert Miller and Robert Sachs of the Keck School of Medicine will speak. Reception will follow at the same location.

School of Pharmacy
3 p.m. at the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad on the Health Sciences Campus. Paul Gregerson, chief medical officer of the JWCH Institute. Reception to follow in the Upper Quad.

Sunday, May 17

Keck School of Medicine—M.D./Ph.D., M.D.
3 p.m. at the Shrine Auditorium. Peter J. Katsufakis, vice president for assessment programs of the National Board of Medical Examiners. Reception will follow at Founders Park at the University Park Campus.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

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

A May 1 *Newsweek* article quoted clinical pharmacy expert **Jeffery Goad** about potential shortages of flu vaccines. San Francisco affiliate KCBS-AM also interviewed Goad about vaccinations against the swine flu.

An April 30 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted infectious disease expert **Paul Holtom** about precautions people should take to avoid swine flu. He was also quoted in Associated Press and *Ventura County Star* articles.

An April 29 *Washington Post* article quoted microbiologist **James Ou** about a new drug for Hepatitis C called Telaprevir.

An April 28 *New York Times* article

featured a study on an experimental prostate cancer vaccine in which urologist **David Penson** was involved. Penson was also quoted or highlighted in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, Reuters, Bloomberg News, WebMD, and a widely carried Associated Press story.

On April 28, KCBS-TV interviewed otolaryngologist **Uttam Sinha** about the mechanics of sneezing, related to the spread of viruses like swine flu.

On April 28, National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” highlighted a man who has been getting dental work done free at the USC School of Dentistry’s dental clinic in Los Angeles.

Calendar of Events

This Calendar of events is also online at www.usc.edu/hscalendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Saturday, May 9

8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. “Thyroid 2009,” Various speakers. Los Angeles Marriott Hotel, Downtown Los Angeles. Info: (323) 442-2555

Monday, May 11

Noon. “Case Discussion: Acid/Base Disorders,” Elaine Kaptein, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Saro Khemichian, USC. D & T Bldg. B3B 105. Info: (323) 409-7995

Tuesday, May 12

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Update on Diagnosing and Long-term ‘Untreatable’ Neuromuscular Patients,” W. King Engel, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:30 a.m. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Building a Life Worth Living: Treatment for Non-Suicidal Self Injury in Adolescents,” Mary Ann Schaepper, Loma Linda Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

Wednesday, May 13

Noon. “Prostatic Cancer and Treatment,” Eila Skinner. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Thursday, May 14

Noon. “Epigenetic Regulation of Hepatic Wound-healing and Fibrosis,” Jelena Mann, Univ. of Washington School of Medicine. MCH 156. Info: (323) 442-3121

Friday, May 15

8 a.m. CHLA Grand Rounds. “Partnering with Families – Principles of Family-Centered Care,” Rev. Dagmar Grefe, USC, and Patti Woods, CHLA. CHLA Saban Research Auditorium. Info: (323) 361-2935

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “Burkitt’s Lymphoma,” Nitya Nathawani, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Kian Keyashian, USC. OPT A5C 129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Monday, May 18

Noon. “Late Medical and Surgical Complications Post-Transplant,” Miroslaw

Smogorzewski, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Optogenetics: Development and Application,” Karl Desseroth, Stanford. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Saro Khemichian, USC. D&T Bldg. B3B 105. Info: (323) 409-7995

4 p.m. “Research in Progress,” Jacob Ahdoot, M.D., USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Tuesday, May 19

Noon. Cancer Center Grand Rounds and Poster Session. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 865-0801

Wednesday, May 20

8:30 a.m. “Comprehensive Management of Subarachnoid Hemorrhage,” Steven Giannotta, USC. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. “Vascular Access,” Sue Hanks, USC. GNH 4420. Info: (323) 226-7337

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Plasticity and Neuromodulations in the Visual Cortex,” Yang Dan, Howard Hughes. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-3219

Friday, May 22

8 a.m. “Alzheimer’s Disease Research Update Day: Is Alzheimer’s Disease a Normal Part of Aging?” Various speakers. USC Andrus Gerontology Ctr. Info: (323) 930-6280

8 a.m. CHLA Grand Rounds. “Mechanisms of Viral Bronchiolitis at the Interface of Innate and Adaptive Immunity,” Jurgen Schwartze and Edward Clark, Univ. of Edinburgh. CHLA Saban Research Auditorium. Info: (323) 361-2935

8:30 a.m. “Role of Herpes Viruses in Pulmonary Fibrosis,” B.B. Moore, Univ. of Michigan. GNH 11-321. Info: (323) 226-7923

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “Acquired Hemophilia: Diagnosis and Treatment Options,” Doris Quon, Orthopaedic Hospital. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Noon. “Case Presentations,” Kiran Nandmuri, USC. OPT A5C 129. Info: (323) 409-7995

Hospital operating rooms run on ‘penguin power’

By Sandra Levy

With nearly 20 stuffed penguins inhabiting the operating room reception area of USC University Hospital, it’s never long before visitors ask, “What’s that all about?”

For Kevin Wagner, nurse manager of the inpatient operating rooms at USC University Hospital, the answer is that the birds represent some of the best qualities of operating room nurses and technicians—including an ability to thrive in a demanding environment as a result of cooperation and teamwork.

Last year, when trying to develop a program to motivate the staff and reward them for exceptional work, Wagner recalled watching the 2005 movie *March of the Penguins*. He was impressed by the penguins’ behavior and immediately drew a parallel to the behavior of his staff of 80 nurses and technicians.

“The penguins depend upon each other for survival and protect each other from cold and predators. They work as a team; alone they will never survive, but together they are strong,” Wagner said. “In the OR, staff members have a common goal and direction, but if someone gets off track, one of their colleagues will lead them back to the goal.”

Throughout each month, OR staff members nominate



Kevin Wagner

Operating Room staff at USC University Hospital are recognized as Penguins of the Month for their team efforts. Pictured are employees who have received the coveted Penguin of the Month award. Front row (from left), Kevin Ortiz, Theresa Castillo and Oscar Perez. Back row (from left), Claudia Hernandez, Leslie Ung, Gabriel Ortega and Jean Zalewa.

their colleagues to be recognized as “Penguin of the Month.”

Wagner and other department leaders vote on who should be awarded recognition and that person’s name is announced during a staff meeting.

The winning penguin receives penguin-inspired me-

mentos and has their picture posted in the unit for that month.

“I truly believe that this simple program has boosted morale in our unit,” Wagner said. “One of our staff told me that even though the program is really hokey, she loves it and she really wants to be a penguin!”



Carol Matthieu

TAKING THEM OUT TO THE BALL GAME—Housekeeping personnel at USC University Hospital were treated to a celebration of the LA Dodgers-USC University Hospital partnership April 30 with cake and punch. CEO Mitch Creem presented them with Dodgers tickets for upcoming games, saying, “You often hear how important our doctors and nurses are, but we want you to know you’re important to this hospital, too. That’s why we are giving you the first opportunity to have some Dodger tickets to enjoy this season.” Employees at both USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital should watch for opportunities to win Dodgers tickets during Hospital Week next week.

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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 ebLaauw@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.