

Health Sciences leaders hail Samples' service to USC

By Ina Fried

USC Health Sciences leaders gathered May 10 to honor USC President Steven B. Sample and First Lady Kathryn Sample as the university's 10th president prepares to step down in August.

They were joined by university officers, hospital executives, clinical leaders, members of the USC Board of Trustees and members of the Keck School of Medicine Board of Overseers at a luncheon in the midst of USC's academic medical center.

Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the Keck School; R. Pete Vanderveen, dean of the USC School of Pharmacy; and Mitch Creem, CEO of USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, presented the Samples with a Tiffany crystal bowl engraved with a caduceus in recognition of nearly two decades of leadership at USC.

In the acquisition of the two USC hospitals and the creation of the academic medical center, Sample showed "tremendous courage and flexibility," both signs of great leadership, Puliafito said.

Creem called the decision to purchase the two hospitals "a bold and brilliant move." He said, "We have so much to look forward to—a future of excitement, anticipation and inspiration, a future that



From left, USC President Steven B. Sample and First Lady Kathryn Sample accept a crystal bowl filled with cardinal and gold apples from School of Pharmacy Dean R. Pete Vanderveen, USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem and Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. The bowl was inscribed "with heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for good health and much happiness."

Steve Cohn

includes creating a model of innovation and compassionate care for the rest of the country to follow, a future full of meaningful research that will yield new discoveries, new treatments and new procedures."

Vanderveen shared his sentiments reflecting his "great respect and admiration for the Samples" in a short poem, that concluded, "Dr. Sample showed us how to lead with humor, class and dignity."

On behalf of the Health Sciences faculty, Peter A. Jones, director of the USC

Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, expressed appreciation for Sample's work in changing perceptions of the university in Los Angeles, in the nation and around the world. "What you've really done for us is to make us a first-rate university. For that we'll always be grateful," he said.

Sample expressed his own gratitude in return, thanking deans, administrators, faculty, staff and hospital partners for all that they do.

"You do far more than heal people's bodies," he said.

"You lift their spirits, you give them hope, you enrich their lives."

Sample said that he is proud of the accomplishments at the Health Sciences Campus and of the spirit of optimism.

"I'm proud that in the years ahead you will have the opportunity to improve the quality of life for even more people," he said, and predicted that "the best is yet to come for our Health Sciences Campus, for our hospitals and for all the health-related professions at USC."

'I'm proud that in the years ahead you will have the opportunity to improve the quality of life for even more people... The best is yet to come for our Health Sciences Campus, for our hospitals and for all the health-related professions at USC.'

— USC President Steven B. Sample

TOMMY'S TROJANS—

Right, employees of the USC hospitals grab lunch from one of three Tommy's Burger trucks serving food for Hospital Week on May 12. Nearly 2,000 employees made it out to the lunchtime event, one of several activities this week recognizing USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital staff members for their work and dedication. Other activities included motivational speaker Donna Tyson—who provided three encore performances of her talk "Celebrating Change"—on May 10, hourly Dodgers tickets drawings on May 11 and ice cream treats on May 13. All employees of the USC hospitals will receive a special gift today to wrap up the week



Tania Chatila

Haitian officials describe challenges in providing care after deadly quake

By Meghan Lewit

Rebuilding the social and institutional fabric of Haiti was the main focus of a May 6 town hall meeting featuring top-ranking Haitian health officials.

The event, hosted by Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and Vice Dean for Medical Education Henri Ford, followed a day of meetings to discuss current challenges and needs in Haiti, and how USC may be able to provide further assistance.

The USC/L.A. County Haiti Medical Aid Team has been traveling to Haiti since Jan. 15, three days after the deadly earthquake killed more than 200,000 people, injured more than 300,000, and left up to 1 million homeless.

Four teams including 27 Keck School faculty members and Los Angeles County Health Department staff have taken personal vacation time to provide uncompensated care, sleeping in tents during their weeklong medical missions.

"The unmet medical needs in Haiti are

tremendous," Puliafito said. He noted, however, that the goal is for Haiti to be able to care for its own in the future.

"It will only work if there are Haitians providing health care in Haiti," he said.

The delegation included Ambassador Leslie Voltaire, U.N. special envoy of the Government of Haiti; Alex Larsen, Haiti minister of health; Ariel Henry, chief of staff, Haitian Ministry of Health; and Claude Surena, president, Haitian Medical Association.

The delegates discussed the difficulties of rebuilding infrastructure and meeting the continuing medical needs. Many displaced Haitians are living in temporary camps with little access to health care. The country is facing a deficit of human resources and has lost many health professionals following the earthquake. Officials are also working on a process to coordinate the non-governmental organizations and aid groups that have flooded Haiti since January.

See **HAITI**, page 2

Flora Laney Thornton, philanthropist, USC benefactor, 96

'Few members of the Trojan Family have left a legacy that is as significant, extensive and enduring as that of Flora Thornton.'

— USC President Steven B. Sample

Flora Laney Thornton, a philanthropist with a lifelong interest in higher education, the arts, preventive medicine and numerous charities, died May 7 of pulmonary disease. She was 96 and attributed her longevity to practicing what she preached about preventive medicine.

Through the Flora L. Thornton Foundation, she made a number of generous gifts to health-related programs at USC, including \$1.5 million to endow the Flora L. Thornton Chair in Preventive Medicine; \$1 million to support a floor in the Norman Topping Tower at the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, which houses the Department of Cancer Prevention; and \$2 million to establish the Flora L. Thornton Chair in Vision Research at the Doheny Eye Institute and the Keck School of Medicine of USC. She also established an endowment fund in support of Keck Professor Francine Kaufman's youth fitness program at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

In 1999, Thornton gave \$25 million to USC's music school. In recognition of that gift—at the time, the largest ever given to a school of music at a U.S. college or university—the USC Board of Trustees voted to rename the school in Thornton's honor.

"Few members of the Trojan Family have left a legacy

that is as significant, extensive and enduring as that of Flora Thornton," said USC President Steven B. Sample.

Thornton was a longtime champion of the health sciences, especially nutrition, preventive medicine and community education. These longstanding interests earned her an appointment to a term on the California Commission on Food and Nutrition. She sponsored the 1984 nutrition exhibit at the California Museum of Science and Industry and remained an honorary member of that museum's board.

Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito said Thornton's longstanding support of diverse USC medical programs "exemplifies the depth of her commitment to improving the health and extending the lives of her fellow citizens. Her legacy of caring and compassion will be felt for generations to come."

At USC, Thornton was a member of the Keck School's Board of Overseers and a founding member of the governing board of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. She also belonged to the USC Associates.

In 2000, she became one of the first honorary members of the USC Board of Trustees, named for her extraordinary contributions to the university's advancement.

Thornton was born in



Flora Laney Thornton

Independence, Kan. The Laney family relocated to Ft. Worth, Texas, and after high school, Flora Laney attended Texas Tech University, majoring in nutrition and clothing design. She subsequently studied voice in New York and performed in two Broadway musicals, *May Wine* and *White Horse Inn*, before marrying Charles Bates "Tex" Thornton, in 1937. Following World War II, they spent two years in Detroit while he and his colleagues, dubbed "The Whiz Kids," revamped Ford Motor Company.

The Thorntons relocated to Southern California in 1948, where "Tex" worked for several years with Howard

Hughes at Hughes Aircraft. He made an entrepreneurial leap and, with some partners, founded the electronics and shipbuilding firm, Litton Industries. As company CEO and chairman, he served on various local boards, and together, he and his wife became involved in local community-building and philanthropic efforts.

"Tex," a USC trustee, endowed the Charles B. Thornton Professorship in Finance at the USC Marshall School of Business. After his death in 1981, a floor of the USC Norris Cancer Hospital was named in his honor through a gift from Litton Industries.

In 2005, Thornton married Eric Small. Together, they supported National Multiple Sclerosis Society programs and established the Eric Small Centers for Optimal Living for people with MS and similar challenges. The four centers include one at USC and one at UCLA.

Flora Thornton is survived by her husband, Eric, sons Charles and Laney, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

USC neurosurgeon receives prestigious Durante Prize

Michael Apuzzo, the Edwin M. Todd/Trent H. Wells, Jr. Professor of Neurological Surgery, Radiation Oncology, Biology, and Physics at the Keck School of Medicine has received the Francesco Durante International Prize in Neurosurgery.

The presentation took place at the Civic Center Auditorium in Letojanni, Sicily, with more than 500 international academicians, political and medical leaders from throughout the world.

Apuzzo was lauded as "an inspired visionary whose ideas, research and contributions revolutionized neurosurgery worldwide."

Durante is considered the father of modern

neurosurgery in Italy and one of Europe's historical surgical giants. Born in Letojanni in 1844, he created the Department of General Surgery at Rome's La Sapienza—one of Italy's premier universities. Durante led the department for 34 years making seminal contributions in general surgery, orthopedics, genitourinary surgery and surgical infection management, while helping to establish the emerging field of neurosurgery.

Awarded only occasionally, the Durante Prize is administered jointly by the Universities of Messina and La Sapienza and the European Association of Neurosurgical Societies. It was last awarded in 2002.



Jon Nalick

Above, Henri Ford (left), Keck School of Medicine vice dean for medical education, and second-year medical student Cianna Leatherwood present a check to Alex Larsen, Haiti's minister of health. The check represents money raised by USC students to bolster Haitian medical care. Right, Ambassador Leslie Voltaire, U.N. special envoy of the Government of Haiti, discusses the difficulties of rebuilding infrastructure and meeting the continuing medical needs of Haitian citizens.



Jon Nalick

HAITI: Leaders grateful for USC aid

Continued from page 1

"We don't want to discourage good will," Henry said. "But we are trying to plan for the future."

Second-year Keck School student Cianna Leatherwood presented the delegation with a \$4,250 check, the result of a student-led fundraising effort to "Help Haiti Fight On." The funds will support the GHEKIO clinic outside Port-au-Prince, where Ford has been assisting since the earthquake.

"I thank USC with all my heart," Larsen said via a translator. "Jan. 12 was a horrible day for us, a great catastrophe... those of us here have lost many friends. Thank you to the university and all those who went to Haiti to help us."

The Weekly

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John M. Peters, the Hastings Professor of Preventive Medicine, 75

By Jon Nalick

John M. Peters, the Hastings Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine and a renowned authority on the effects of air pollution on health, died May 6 at his home in San Marino of pancreatic cancer. He was 75.

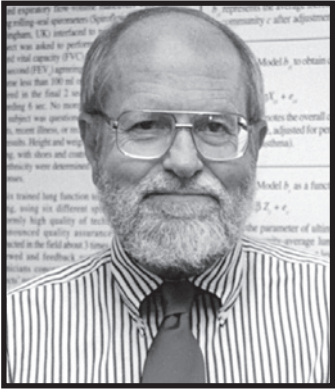
Peters, the founding director of the division of environmental health in the Department of Preventive Medicine, also founded the Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center and directed it for 10 years. Researchers at the center—a USC-based, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)-supported center—study how a wide variety of environmental factors and personal factors interact to produce human disease.

In a message to Keck School faculty on May 7, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito hailed Peters as “one of the legends of environmental and occupational health. ... The focus of his research was to investigate and quantify environmental risks and then contribute to strategies to mitigate those risks in the workplace and everyday life.”

Born April 24, 1935, in Brigham City, Utah, Peters studied at the University of Utah, receiving his bachelor’s degree in biology in 1957 and his M.D. in 1960. He decided to pursue occupational medicine as a career, receiving an M.P.H. in 1964 and a D.Sc. in 1966, both from Harvard University. He stayed on the faculty at the Harvard School of Public Health until 1980, as one of the pioneers in the field of occupational medicine. He published landmark studies on the health effects of silica, asbestos, vinyl chloride and other chemicals, and he did pioneering studies on the health of firefighters and granite workers.

In 1980 he moved to USC and founded the division of environmental health in the Department of Preventive Medicine. Perhaps his most important scientific contribution, which he made as the founding director of the Children’s Health Study (CHS) at USC, was to systematically address the question of chronic effects of air pollution on California’s children through a long-term health study.

The study’s research find-



John M. Peters

ings on the long-term effects of air pollution on children’s lungs helped to establish that:

- Current levels of air pollution have chronic, adverse effects on lung growth;
- Air pollution affects both development and exacerbation of asthma;
- Living or going to school close to busy roads and freeways is linked to asthma, reduced lung function growth and increased school absences;
- Genes affect the risk associated with exposure to air pollution.

These findings have had a significant impact on public health and public policy.

At USC, Peters established two national research centers, one on environmental health sciences and another

on children’s environmental health funded by NIEHS and the Environmental Protection Agency. Through these centers he recruited numerous investigators to USC who will continue to carry on his commitment to improve public health through environmental health research.

Jonathan Samet, the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, acknowledged Peters’ distinguished professional successes, but also added, “Beyond these scientific achievements, John was an extraordinary mentor, leaving a legacy of leaders at USC and around the world.”

Peters received numerous honors for his work, most recently receiving the 2009 Haagen-Smit Clean Air Award from the California Air Resources Board.

In 2009, he garnered the Harvard University School of Public Health’s Alumni Award of Merit. Peters also received the 2009 John M. Peters Award from the Environmental and Occupational Health Assembly of the American Thoracic Society. He was the first recipient of the award, which was named in his honor.

In 2004, Peters received the Johns Hopkins Society of Scholars award, honoring former postdoctoral fellows and junior or visiting faculty who have gained distinction in their fields.

The John Peters Fund for Environmental Research and Education was established a year ago to sustain research and education in environmental health at USC. To make a memorial donation to the fund, contact Clara Driscoll at (323) 442-2358 or clara.driscoll@usc.edu or visit usc-som.convio.net/JohnPeters.

He is survived by his wife, Ruth Kloepper Peters (former faculty member of Preventive Medicine), sister Jody King, children John Peters, Philip Peters, Susa Brush and Charles Peters, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

‘John was an extraordinary mentor, leaving a legacy of leaders at USC and around the world.’

— Jonathan Samet, the Flora L. Thornton Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine



HONORING EXCELLENCE—Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito (left) and Yannis C. Yortsos, dean of the USC Viterbi School of Engineering, (right) congratulate Mark Humayan during a March 24 reception honoring Humayan’s election last year to the Institute of Medicine. Humayan is the Cornelius J. Pings Professor of Biomedical Sciences and professor of ophthalmology, and cell and neurobiology, and biomedical engineering at the two schools. He is a co-inventor of a revolutionary retinal prosthesis.

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A May 7 *Futurity* article featured research by professor of preventive medicine and director of the Master of Public Health program **Thomas Valente** and colleagues that developed a new measure to identify “bridging individuals” in social networks. These individuals act as critical connectors, facilitating the flow of information or spread of diseases between social networks.

On May 6, KNX Newsradio interviewed vice dean for medical education **Henri Ford** about the Keck School of Medicine-hosted town hall meeting on the status of the recovery of Haiti.

A May 6 *San Diego Union-Tribune* article reported that a presentation by professor of preventive medicine

and pathology **Thomas Mack**, who conducted research on cancer cases in a Carlsbad neighborhood, has been posted on a new website created by San Diego County’s Health and Human Services Agency.

On May 5, The Huffington Post ran an op-ed by assistant professor of clinical medicine **Michael Hochman** and a Harvard University colleague about comparative effectiveness research.

On May 5, KABC-TV quoted professor of neurology **Leslie Weiner** about the Nancy Davis Center Without Walls, a collaboration of seven centers dedicated to multiple sclerosis research, including USC. A *Los Angeles Daily News* article also quoted Weiner about the center.

A May 4 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted professor of obstetrics and gynecology **Daniel R. Mishell Jr.** about oral contraception.

A May 4 United Press International article featured research by professor of ophthalmology and preventive medicine **Rohit Varma** that indicates that Latinos have higher rates of vision disorders than any other ethnic group in the United States.

A May 3 *Los Angeles Times* article cited a Keck School of Medicine study, which found that if the mother smoked during pregnancy, there were long-lasting changes in her children’s epigenomes.

Calendar of Events

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

Monday, May 17

11:30 a.m. USC Norris Auxiliary Speaker Series. “USC’s World Class Institute of Urology,” Inderbir Gill, USC. San Gabriel Country Club. Info: (626) 282-9516

Tuesday, May 18

9 a.m. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Pompe’s Disease,” Edward Cupler, Oregon Health and Science Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

Noon. Cancer Center Grand Rounds. “The Search for Cancer Susceptibility Genes,” Brian Henderson, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 865-0801

Wednesday, May 19

8:30 a.m. “Arrhythmias in the Critically Ill,” David Cesario, USC. IRD 734. Info: (323) 226-7923

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Dscam1, Cell Recognition and the Assembly of Neural Circuits in Drosophila,” S. Lawrence Zipursky, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Friday, May 21

8:30 a.m. Surgical Grand Rounds. “Quality, Value and Access in Critical Care,” Timothy Buchman, Emory Clinic. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-2506

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “PET/CT and Lymphomas,” Robert Henderson, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

1 p.m. USC Physical Sciences Oncology Center Seminar. “Physical Sciences for Optical Molecular Imaging in Oncology – Adventures in the Translations Woods,” Daniel Farkas, USC. CSC 201. Info: (323) 442-2596

Monday, May 24

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Deconstructing Cellular Complexity for Disorders of the Nervous System,” Joseph Dougherty, Rockefeller Univ. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Tuesday, May 25

Noon. Women in Management. “USC Hospitals: At One Year and Beyond,” Mitch Creem, USC University and USC Norris Cancer Hospital. CHP 111. \$15 members, \$18 guests. RSVP: www.usc.edu/org/wim. Info: (323) 442-1865.

Thursday, May 27

Noon. Dean’s Translational Medicine Seminar. “Molecular Physiology of the Control of Body Weight,” Rudolph Leibel, Columbia Univ. KAM Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-1626

Friday, May 28

11 a.m. Hematology Grand Rounds. “Pathology of Follicular Lymphomas – Part 2,” Bharat Nathwani, USC. IPT C2J103. Info: (323) 865-3950

Monday, June 14

11:45 a.m. – 5:15 p.m. Center for Craniofacial Molecular Biology Symposium. “Stem Cell Research and Application,” Various speakers. CSC 250. Info: (323) 442-3170.

Friday, June 18

7 a.m. USC Physical Sciences in Oncology Center Symposium. Various speakers. UPC Davidson Conference Center. Info: (323) 442-2596

Thursday, July 8 – Sunday, July 11

8 a.m. 6th Annual International Head & Neck Symposium. Various speakers. USC Health Sciences campus. Registration deadline: May 15. Info: (323) 442-7432

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 *The 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.

USC hospitals celebrate Nurses Week with events, recognition ceremonies

By Tania Chatila

The USC hospitals recognized nurses last week with activities, honors and gifts as part of National Nurses Week.

The festivities began on May 3 with a breakfast for nurses at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital, followed by the distribution of USC-themed popcorn-filled tins to all nursing areas later that morning.

On May 4, nursing leaders kicked off the first in a series of informational talks covering different topics like Magnet accreditation and risk reduction. A professional organization fair was also held that afternoon in the USC University Hospital cafeteria.

“I really think it’s excellent that they have done all of this for the nurses,” said nurse John Alexiou. He drove into the hospital on his day off to attend the fair, which included representatives from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses San Fernando Valley Chapter and the Oncology Nurse Society.

Also on May 4, a group of about 50 preceptors were honored at Luminarias Restaurant in Monterey Park for their work teaching new graduate nurses. Simone Shocklee, a nurse on 7-South in USC University Hospital, received the Nurse Preceptor of the Year award.

“There is a lot of patience, pride and dedication that you have to have in order to be a preceptor,” said Tania Zwick, manager of the Versant RN Residency Program. “Over the years, our preceptors have trained so many new graduate nurses, and we just wanted to recognize them for this accomplishment.”

Edgar Alvarez, a nurse preceptor who works in the gastrointestinal lab at USC University Hospital, said the luncheon was a nice gesture from hospital leadership.

“It’s like a ‘thank you’ for all the hard work we do,” Alvarez said.

On May 6, hospital leadership honored nearly three dozen more nurses during the 2010 Nurses Week Awards Ceremony. Oralia Aragon was named Nurse of the Year.

During the ceremony, USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem thanked the nurses for their love and compassion for patients and families, adding: “You have the most important job in the hospital, and every-



Tania Chatila

Above, Oralia Aragon tears up as she accepts the Nurse of the Year Award from Chief Nursing Officer Ellen Whalen. Right, USC hospitals CEO Mitch Creem (right) congratulates Patricia Nerad for being named Nursing Employee of the Year for the Outpatient Surgery Center area.



Tania Chatila

body knows it. You define us and we are you.”

Also during the week, nurses received ice cream treats, participated in a candy gram distribution and every nurse received a special gift—a cardinal umbrella with the USC logo and the Nurses of USC logo. Nursing support staff—including unit secretaries and patient care technicians—received a small USC wallet.

Chief Nursing Officer Ellen Whalen said, “Nurses Week is a nationally recognized week dedicated to honoring nurses

for their professional practice and all they do to create an environment conducive to excellent patient outcomes. The Nurses of USC provide outstanding care and service to our patients and families, they train and mentor our new nurses, and they are tireless patient advocates. For this we thank them from the bottom of our hearts! Our nurses are the best and the brightest in the profession and are truly deserving of this week of celebration.”

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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.