



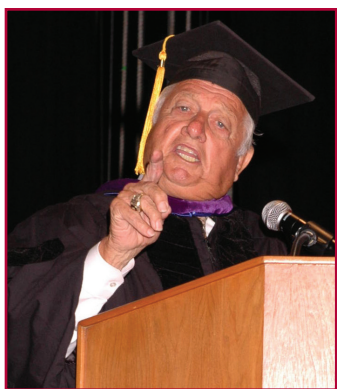
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Congratulations, Class of 2010!

Clockwise from top right: Keck School graduate Carolyn Gates lets out a cheer after the school's ceremony on May 16; School of Pharmacy graduate Natalie Behfarin is all smiles after receiving her diploma; Los Angeles Dodgers executive Tommy Lasorda speaks at commencement for the Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy at the School of Dentistry; Roseann Mulligan, associate dean of community health programs and hospital affairs, places the hood on Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry graduate Jon Fu; Henri Ford (left), Keck School vice dean for medical education and Dean Carmen A. Puliafito prepare to hit the stage at the Shrine Auditorium; Miriam White, a master's student in occupational therapy, shows off her diploma.

By Ryan Ball

Cardinal caps and gowns were the fashion of the week as USC Health Sciences units gave a proper send off to a new batch of health care professionals ready to carve out their own place in the changing face of American medicine. Their hard-earned diplomas arrive just as the medical establishment braces for implementation of the Health Care Affordability Act.

Dean Carmen A. Puliafito wasted no time in addressing the elephant in the room as he provided the opening remarks for the 125th Keck School of Medicine of USC commencement ceremony on May 16 at the Shrine Auditorium.

"What will this legislation mean for these graduates and our

See **COMMENCEMENT**, page 4

New USC center takes aim at cancer

By Leslie Ridgeway

A new program created at the Keck School of Medicine aims to treat cancer and other diseases by discovering and modulating cellular communication pathways.

The USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery was announced May 11 at a special dinner with members of the USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center's Advisory Board. The center was created by Michael Kahn, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, provost's professor of medicine and pharmacy and co-leader of the USC GI-Oncology program, and Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine, associate director of clinical research at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Kathryn Balakrishnan Chair for Cancer Research and co-leader of the USC GI-Oncology program.

The center was designed in collaboration with the Keck School, USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC.

The idea sprang from a partnership that began more than two years ago between Kahn, a research scientist, and Lenz, a clinical translational research investigator, with the goal of bringing together basic science and clinical science to

See **CENTER**, page 3

Union election to be held at USC University Hospital May 26, 27

By Tania Chatila

A National Labor Relations Board election will be held at USC University Hospital on May 26 and 27 to determine representation for about 700 hospital employees.

The election date was set earlier this month, following a petition filed in September by the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW), which has been vying for the membership of the roughly 700 USC

University Hospital employees who currently belong to the Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

As of press time, SEIU has disclaimed any interest in representing USC hospital employees, effective immediately. Those employees include pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, monitor technicians, radiology and environmental service workers, among others.

On May 26 and 27, eligible voters will see two options on their election ballot. Those options will be to vote for whether or not they wish to be represented by NUHW.

"I am very proud of the workplace environment that we have created here at USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital," said hospitals CEO Mitch Creem. "Our overall retention rate is 92 percent, and we stand

committed to providing a supportive and empowering environment for all of our employees. On May 26 and 27, our employees will have an opportunity to exercise their rights to vote for representation. I look forward to those employees joining me in our journey for excellence and placing their trust in USC by voting 'No.'"

The secret ballot election (no one will know how one votes) will be conducted and

monitored by the National Labor Relations Board. The voting polls will be located in the Salerni Room on the fifth floor of USC University Hospital and will be open on both days from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

While the election results will be known after polls close, they will not be certified until at least a week later.

The winning option needs to receive more than 50 percent of the votes.

Keck School celebrates Introduction to Clinical Medicine's 40th anniversary

By Ina Fried

The patient is the reason for medicine, yet 40 years ago, the idea that medical students should encounter patients during their first semester in medical school was revolutionary.

tradition.”

The ICM program was the first in the country to offer first- and second-year medical students an opportunity to interact with patients.

“Forty years ago an orthopedic surgeon and jazz musician,

said alumnus Stephen J. Forman in describing influences of ICM on his practice of medicine. “To me, everyone, no matter what the station in life, what age, is a great book. The history you take is the tale or the meaning of the person you have sitting before you. ... And they're trusting you to tell you that story.”

Helen K. Kornreich, past ICM director, said the program embodies the bio-psycho-social approach to clinical reasoning and patient care.

“Students learned it was important to look at their own feelings about patients. What were their own past experiences, what attitudes made him or her feel that way? ... In this day of increasing technology, advances in automation in medicine, the doctor-patient relationship may be more important than ever,” she said.

Kenneth Geller, class of 1972, was so impressed as one of the early students in the program that he named his son in memory of Lorin Stephens.

“It was that course that made me so grateful for having been a student here, because it has shaped my life and my career,” he said.

The program has had a major influence on faculty, as well. Pamela B. Schaff, assistant dean for curriculum and past ICM director, said, “With my students each week,

I listen to patient stories as I help them navigate their way through the often complicated pathways that make up patients' experiences with health and illness. I remember why I wanted to be a doctor, and I feel a rebirth of my passion for learning and for caring. ... Teaching future doctors has been what inspires me, and ICM is where that began for me almost 25 years ago. I simply can't imagine a more rewarding professional life than what I have had the good fortune to enjoy here at USC.”

Forman delivered the Lorin L. Stephens, M.D. Memorial Lectureship.

Forman, who is a 1974 graduate of the Keck School, is chair of Hematology and Hematopoietic Cell Transplantation at City of Hope. He described his work using bone marrow transplants “to cure diseases that previously were universally incurable”—cancers, autoimmune diseases and sickle cell disease.

“In 1968 the first successful bone marrow transplant was done, and now it's become the most common cell-based therapy. It was a game changer for a lot of people and a lot of lives,” he said.

Other speakers included Althea Alexander, assistant dean for diversity; Donald W. Jackson, one of the original ICM directors; and Barbara M. Korsch, past ICM director.



Jon Nalick

From left, during his lecture at the Keck School of Medicine, alumnus Stephen J. Forman talks with Mary, Abe and Marissa Ayala. The family received extensive publicity in the early 1990s after Abe and Mary conceived Marissa in order to find a bone marrow donor for their older daughter, Anissa, Forman's patient, who was diagnosed with leukemia. The transplant was a success, and today, Anissa is a fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and Marissa is a college student. The Ayalas' efforts also were successful in increasing the number of people of color in the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

At least it was—until “Introduction to Clinical Medicine” (ICM) program pioneer USC faculty member Lorin L. Stephens and fellow revolutionaries changed in a fundamental way how people become physicians.

On April 15, the Keck School of Medicine celebrated their success and marked the USC program's 40th anniversary with a program that drew current and former students and faculty to Mayer Auditorium. Welcoming the group, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito said, “We are celebrating what is really the heart and soul of the Keck School of Medicine.” He called the ICM program a “great rich

Dr. Lorin Stephens, had the crazy idea that medical students shouldn't spend the first two years of their medical life in a classroom, but they should get out of the classroom and experience the centrality of the doctor-patient relationship in real life, as well as the clinical experience of developing their history and physical exam skills,” said Theresa Woehrle, assistant professor of family medicine and current ICM director.

After its introduction at USC, the ICM program was copied and implemented at medical schools across the country.

“It's about taking the time to get to know the patient,”

New USC cancer research center slates June 18 symposium

The Physical Sciences in Oncology Center (PS-OC)—a new cancer research center at USC—will hold its first symposium on June 18 at the Davidson Conference Center. The center is part of a new strategy against the disease by the National Institutes of Health and its National Cancer Institute, and is one of 12 in the nation to receive the designation.

“We desperately need new approaches to treat cancer, and getting people from other disciplines to think about this problem is going to be the key to spur on progress,” said David Agus, senior scientific investigator on the \$16 million grant that established the PS-OC.

During a five-year initiative, the Physical Sciences-Oncology Centers will take new, non-traditional approaches to cancer research by studying the physical laws and principles of cancer; evolution and evolutionary theory of

cancer; information coding, decoding, transfer and translation in cancer; and ways to de-convolute cancer's complexity.

The symposium will be a forum to highlight scientific efforts within the PS-OC network of researchers. It will feature notable speakers from USC and from leading medical centers across the country who are national leaders in the integration of the physical sciences as applied to cancer.

“The cancer research field has focused on understanding of cancer for the last several decades, and an engineering approach to focus on control may provide novel treatment methodologies,” said Agus. “We have assembled a remarkable group of speakers for this conference and look forward to broad USC participation.”

Register now at: <http://bit.ly/USCPSOC2010>. Deadline for registration is June 2.

The Weekly

Next Issue: May 28

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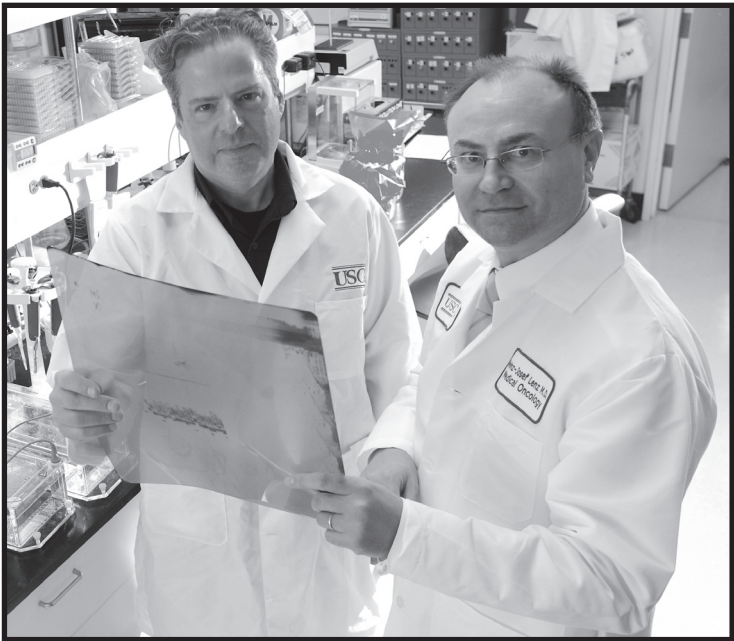
CENTER: Research aims to shut down cancer pathways

Continued from page 1
develop new drug therapies and rapidly translate them into the clinic.

“The unique aspect to this program is that rather than picking drug targets, we are picking drug pathways,” said Kahn. “Pathways incorporate many different targets simultaneously. It’s like the 10 freeway, where there are many exits, or targets. We are trying to shut down the whole freeway.”

Most cancer research has focused on one target at a time. Cancer cells, with their voracious survival instincts, find ways to bypass single targets that have been shut down. By focusing on networks of targets, the USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery intends to control hubs where disease cells’ pathways intersect, and correct the cells’ communication “maps.”

Lenz called the new center



Michael Kahn (left), professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, provost’s professor of medicine and pharmacy, and Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine, have partnered to bring together basic science and clinical science to develop new drug therapies and rapidly translate them into the clinic.

“a unique marriage between clinical research and basic science, a real bench to bedside approach.”

“We hope this center will be the mechanism, or pipeline, for faster translation of novel

promising molecules to bring them into the clinic more quickly,” he said.

One of the first products slated to come from the USC Center for Molecular Pathways and Drug Discovery

Center and into the clinic will be the first drug specifically targeting the Wnt pathway, a network of proteins that is fundamental in the development of all major human organs, as well as blood diseases and solid tumors.

“We have taken samples from Heinz’ patients and put them into mouse models to show that the Wnt antagonist we developed is effective,” Kahn said.

A clinical trial to prove effectiveness in humans is planned to start in the summer of 2010, he said.

“The new center can get the right people together to identify inhibitors of pathways critical for diseases and move forward more effectively,” Lenz said.

The center will be housed in the Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC, scheduled to open in fall 2010.

‘The new center can get the right people together to identify inhibitors of pathways critical for diseases and move forward more effectively.’

— Heinz-Josef Lenz, professor of medicine and preventive medicine

Team USC Norris boasts 139 Revlon Run/Walk participants

By Tania Chatila

For Payge O’Donnell, there was something extra special about this year’s Entertainment Industry Foundation Revlon Run/Walk for Women.

Running with Team USC Norris, O’Donnell was not only honoring her husband, she was also celebrating the birth of her surrogate twins, Caitlyn and Kyra. The couple had picked out those names in 2005, long before the girls’ conception and two years before O’Donnell’s husband lost his battle with bladder cancer.

Michael O’Donnell was a patient at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, and although the Revlon Run/Walk raises money for women’s cancer research, that didn’t stop Payge and several other O’Donnell family members from commemorating his heroic battle and

celebrating the children Michael had always wanted.

“Through everything that happened, Michael’s mental state was always focused on hope,” said Payge O’Donnell. “Doing this for him honors his memory and also shows our support to the whole Norris family for everything they did.”

The 17th annual Revlon Run/Walk attracted an

estimated 40,000 walkers and runners to the Los Angeles Coliseum on May 8 for a 3.1-mile trek around Exposition Park. The USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer center—which this year is a beneficiary of the fundraiser—made its mark with a team, while Norris Cancer Hospital hosted a booth to promote patient services.

Thousands of Revlon Run/Walk participants lined

up before the start of the race for giveaways like hand sanitizers, bandage holders and other items. Once the walk started, Team USC Norris could be seen making its way through the sea of participants. The team was made up of 139 patients, supporters and employees of Norris.

“Whenever the Norris has events we always participate,” said Kevin O’Donnell, Michael’s brother.

“They did so much for us and for my brother.”

Eliza Wells, an office assistant in radiology at USC Norris Cancer Hospital, said she joined the team to advocate for her patients. “In radiology, we see a lot of patients with cancer,” said Wells. “This is a good way for us to show our support outside of the hospital.”



The USC Norris booth at the Revlon Run/Walk attracted hundreds of visitors who received balloons, hand sanitizers, band aid holders and educational pamphlets.

Keck School honors USC Trustee David Lee for support of school

David Lee, chair of the Board of Overseers of the Keck School of Medicine, received the Elaine Stevely Hoffman Award May 16 during the Keck School’s commencement ceremonies.

“As the medical school at USC has moved forward, often in challenging times, David Lee has been an unwavering advocate, a voice of optimism and encouragement,” said Keck School

Dean Carmen A. Puliafito in presenting the award.

The annual award honors an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to advancing the mission of the school. A physicist, entrepreneur, financier and philanthropist, Lee has served on the Keck School Board of Overseers since its inception. As a trustee of USC, he was instrumental in the 2009 acquisition of the USC University Hospital and USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

Lee is co-founder and managing general partner of Clarity Partners, L.P., a private equity investment firm based in Los Angeles.

The award is named in memory of Elaine Stevely Hoffman, a Los Angeles philanthropist who contributed to building a research center on the USC Health Sciences Campus.



David Lee

The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

On May 13, KABC-TV featured work by assistant professor of neurology **Lilyana Amezcua** to understand why multiple sclerosis is on the rise in minorities.

On May 12, KABC-TV quoted genetic counselor **Charite Ricker** about a San Diego-based company that plans to sell genetic testing kits in drugstores.

On May 12, CBS News ran a WebMD story that highlighted research by associate professor of anesthesiology and pediatrics **Jeffrey I. Gold**, which found that children and adults with acute or chronic pain received some analgesic benefit from playing video games. *Medical News Today* and the *Times of India* also featured the study.

On May 11, American Public Media’s “Marketplace” quoted professor of clinical preventive medicine **Edward Avol** about the city of Mira Loma, Calif., which has an active warehouse district and some of the worst air pollution in the country.

On May 10, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an obituary for **John M. Peters**, Hastings professor and director of the Division of Environmental Health in the Department of Preventive Medicine. Peters was also principal investigator of the Children’s Health Study. A second *Los Angeles Times* story also remembered Peters.

COMMENCEMENT: Newly minted graduates turn eyes to the future

Continued from page 1
nation?” Puliafito asked. “First of all, it will mean unprecedented job security for the graduates of this class.”

Puliafito noted that newly acquired health insurance coverage for more than 30 million Americans will drive tremendous demand for health care professionals, specialists in particular, and said that the health bill, while not perfect, is “the right thing for America, the right thing for medicine and a real plus for the class of 2010.”

(The full text of Puliafito’s remarks is online at tinyurl.com/24mpwro. A list of honorees from the Keck School of Medicine Senior Awards Ceremony is online at tinyurl.com/3yhvsf9)

Grads and other members of the Trojan Family in attendance also heard from C. L. Max Nikias, USC executive vice president, provost and president elect. Nikias reminded the fledgling physicians of the awesome responsibility they are taking on.

“With the technologies being developed at USC and elsewhere, and the technologies that many of you will develop yourselves, you will have greater power over life and death than anyone before,” Nikias said, adding



Eric Sue jumps for joy at the Keck School of Medicine reception at Founders’ Park following the school’s graduation ceremony.

that science and technology are simply a means to an end. “Our end is not to become more technological, but more human.”

Henri Ford, vice dean for medical education at the Keck School of Medicine and chief of surgery at Childrens Hospi-

tal Los Angeles, echoed Nikias’ sentiment as he delivered a poignant commencement address. He left the graduates with some guiding principles to help them become effective physicians and encouraged them to embark on their own quests for significance.

“Achieving significance is synonymous with service to mankind, service to your community and service to others,” Ford said. “Members of the class of 2010, significance is achieved by doing something that helps transform your environment in such a way that people will be better for your having been there.”

Ford’s inspiring words were backed by his own extraordinary actions. He was in Haiti on one of his frequent missions to provide medical aid to earthquake victims when he learned that class officers wanted him to be their commencement speaker.

Injecting some humor into the proceedings, M.D. candidate Janak Chandrasoma delivered the student address, speaking to his classmates as though he were a lover breaking the news that a relationship had run its course. Choking back faux tears, Chandrasoma acknowledged the bittersweet reality that they had been through a lot together but it was time to move on. “I think we need to see other institutions.”

Other Health Sciences

The commencement ceremony for the Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry saw Doctorate of Dental Surgery degrees conferred upon 171 graduates, while 39 received Bachelor of Science degrees in Dental Hygiene, and 44 in Advanced Dental Education. One Ph.D. was given in Craniofacial Biology. Niki Barry, a new Doctor of Dental Surgery, said, “It’s gone by really fast. There’s been lots of hard work, tears, laughter and now a lot of joy. My favorite experiences were just helping the patients, getting them out of pain and restoring their smiles.”

The Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy honored 14 Bachelor of Science and 128 M.S. recipients, 24 Doctor of Occupational Therapy and two Ph.D. recipients.

Phoebe Ning, a graduate of the Occupational Therapy program, remarked, “I’m excited to graduate, but I will really miss the HSC campus, the community I’ve found here, and the thai tea boba from Plaza Cafe!”

The USC School of Pharmacy awarded 173 new Doctors of Pharmacy, 56 M.S. and eight Ph.D. degrees, as well as 34 certificates to those completing residency or fellowship programs.

The Keck School awarded 161 M.D. degrees, six of which were combined M.D./Ph.D., and two combined M.D./M.B.A.

The Primary Care Physician Assistant Program awarded 44 Master of Physician Assistant Practice degrees.

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Calendar of Events

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

Monday, May 24

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “Deregulation of Transcription Initiation Factors by Oncogenic Signaling Pathways,” Deborah Johnson, USC. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-1144

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 Luncheon Speaker Series. “USC Hospitals: At One Year and Beyond,” Mitch Creem, USC. CHP 111. \$18 fee includes lunch. Info: (323) 442-1865

Thursday, May 27

Noon. Dean’s Translational Medicine Seminar. “The Physiology of Human Body

Weight Regulation: Why is Obesity so Hard to Prevent and Treat?” 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 7

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar. “A Stem Cell Therapy For AIDS,” Paula Cannon, USC. NRT Aresty Aud. Info: (323) 442-1144

Wednesday, June 9

Noon. ZNI Seminar. “Transcriptional Control of Serotonin System Function Across Life Span,” Evan Deneris, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

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 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.

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.