

## USC Norris Cancer Hospital remodel offers a whole new look

By Tania Chatila

USC Norris Cancer Hospital has debuted a fresh, new look with the unveiling of a remodeled main lobby and renovated inpatient units on the third and fourth floors.

Upgrades to the main lobby include a new concierge desk, new admitting space and a new waiting area boasting an open floor plan. The remodeled inpatient units include modern aesthetics, new telemetry equipment, new computers and new nurse call systems.

“These projects are an important element of our ongoing efforts to provide our patients with a more comfortable, welcoming environment,” said hospitals CEO Scott Evans. He emphasized that efforts to create more patient- and family-centered experiences extend beyond USC Norris to across the entire medical center. The work at USC Norris has received many positive accolades from staff, physicians and visitors alike.

“With the new technology and the spectacular upgrades, [USC Norris] feels up to date with today’s standards of a high quality hospital,” said Bryan Ezralow of the Ezralow family for which the inpatient tower at USC Norris is named. Ezralow was one of more than 150 visitors and staff who toured the renovations at a special open house last month. “It makes me so happy that USC continues to do the right thing for its patients and our community. It’s the patient experience that really makes a difference between a good hospital and a great hospital.”

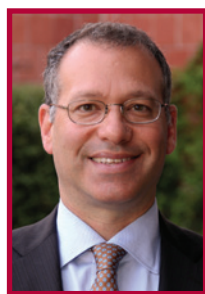
The renovations come as USC Norris prepares to grow its inpatient population. In March

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## CHLA receives \$11 million from estate of filmmaker Billy Wilder

Keck School of Medicine-affiliated Children’s Hospital Los Angeles announced on Dec. 20 that the estate of the legendary Oscar-winning filmmaker Billy Wilder and his wife Audrey made an \$11 million gift to the hospital’s new endowed chair in the division of neurosurgery and to the hospital’s endowment in neurosurgery.

In recognition of the gift from The Wilder Family Trust, the hospital will name the new neurosurgery chair the Billy and Audrey Wilder Endowed Chair in Neurosurgery, which will receive \$5 million of the donation. In addition, \$3 million will be dedicated to the new Billy and Audrey Wilder Endowment in Neurosurgery, a hospital clinical care program under



Mark Krieger

the stewardship of Chief of Medical Staff Mark Krieger, head of the hospital’s neurosurgery division and assistant professor of pediatrics at the Keck School.

Of the remaining gift, \$1.5 million is to be distributed to the endowed chair of the hospital’s newly established inter-departmental Neuro-Oncology Program under the direction of Jonathan Finlay, director of the Children’s Hospital Los Angeles Neural Tumors Program within the Children’s Center for Cancer and Blood Diseases.

In addition, \$300,000 will be earmarked to complete the Hay Edward Baher Chair in Pediatric Rheumatology, which will be under the leadership of Andreas Reiff, chief of the division of rheumatology and

professor of pediatrics at the Keck School. The remaining donation will go toward the hospital’s underfunded and unreimbursed hospital programs that help the more than 96,000 young patients Children’s Hospital Los Angeles treats annually.

“We are incredibly thankful and humbled by this donation from The Wilder Family Trust,” said Richard D. Cordova, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “This generous and amazing gift will impact the lives and future treatment of children diagnosed with life-threatening and often devastating diagnoses. As our chief of medical staff and our division chief of neurosurgery, Dr. Krieger has demonstrated the leadership ability to utilize this gift to the utmost in the treatment and care of our patients and to strengthen and

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**‘This generous and amazing gift will impact the lives and future treatment of children diagnosed with life-threatening and often devastating diagnoses.’**

**—Richard D. Cordova, president and CEO of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles**

## Beautification plan under way to make HSC look more like a campus

By Hope Hamashige

The Health Sciences campus, in the estimation of some, looks more like a collection of professional buildings along some ordinary-looking streets than it does a proper university campus. In order to change that perception, a beautification project is under way to give USC’s Health Sciences campus a much more university-like feel.

“When it is done, it is going to feel like a campus and it is going to look a lot more like it is part of USC,” explained Jay Fischer, who is the project manager overseeing the HSC beautification.

Anyone who has visited both University Park and HSC knows the two campuses are distinct. UPC has a cohesive Italian Romanesque style while HSC’s architecture is more eclectic. In an effort to tie the two campuses not only in name, but also in their look, the HSC beautification plan includes bringing some of UPC’s charming architectural features to HSC.

“HSC and UPC are always going to be distinct, but we can bring elements from UPC to the streetscapes here at HSC,” said Laurie Stone, executive director of



Artist’s rendering

A \$35 million project to improve the Health Sciences campus will feature wider sidewalks and decorative brick accents—features reminiscent of those on the University Park campus. Above are before-and-after images of the planned renovation on San Pablo Street at Hospital Drive.

land use and planning.

Most sidewalks will be widened and, just as at UPC, will have bands of decorative brick running through them. Likewise, HSC’s utilitarian street lamps will be replaced by the decorative ones

from UPC, and the style of benches that are found at UPC will be installed campus-wide at HSC.

One goal is to make HSC, like UPC, more pedestrian-friendly. The beautification efforts will also add the

benches and 700 new trees, creating enticing spots to gather outdoors across the entire campus.

The \$35 million project to improve HSC’s appearance has been two years in

See **BEAUTIFICATION**, page 2



# USC researchers find clue to how Hepatitis C virus harms the liver

**By Leslie Ridgeway**  
USC researchers have discovered a trigger by which the Hepatitis C virus enters liver cells—shedding light on how this serious and potentially deadly virus can begin to damage the liver. The findings, reported in the Dec. 7, 2012, issue of the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, may give scientists a target for future development of treatments for the virus. In the early stages of a Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, the researchers found, the virus binds to receptors on the liver cells’ surface and activates PI3K and AKT, two proteins that control cell growth and metabolism, and which allow HCV to enter liver cells. “When these two protein factors are activated, they trigger a cascade of reactions, altering the physiology of infected cells,” said corresponding author and lead researcher James Ou, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “Later, by continuing to disturb this pathway, the virus may sensitize the liver cells to eventually become cancerous.” The findings were reported in a paper titled “Transient Activation of the PI3K-AKT Pathway by Hepatitis C Virus to Enhance Viral Entry.” First author was Zhe Liu, a postdoctoral research associate in Ou’s lab. Serving as co-investigators were Keck School faculty members Keigo Machida,

assistant professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, and Michael M.C. Lai, distinguished emeritus professor of microbiology and immunology, and neurology. There are four million carriers of HCV in the U.S. Often, people don’t know that they have the virus until they already have some liver damage, which can take many years to develop. In time, the virus can lead to serious and deadly liver conditions: cirrhosis, a chronic, degenerative condition; cancer; and organ failure.

Some 20 percent of HCV patients will develop severe liver cirrhosis and may require liver transplantation, Ou noted. About five percent develop liver cancer after 20 to 30 years. Ou has been studying HCV for 20 years and Hepatitis B virus for 30 years. The most recent study reflects his long-term interest in understanding the interactions between these two viruses and their host cells, and how they cause liver cancer. “The next step, which we’ve just begun, is to understand how the

activation of the PI3K-AKT pathway allows the [HCV] virus to enter the cell,” Ou said. “This research has led to the identification of a novel target for the development of new anti-HCV drugs. Compounds that disrupt the PI3K-AKT pathway are expected to prevent the virus from entering liver cells, causing the virus to disappear,” he added. The research was supported, in whole or in part, by National Institutes of Health grants DK094652 and AI083025.

## \$125,000 gift helps bring the business of medicine to Keck

**By Amy E. Hamaker**  
As more provisions of the Affordable Care Act become active, the business of medicine will need to change to accommodate them. Thanks to a \$125,000 gift to the Keck School of Medicine of USC from Jerrilyn and Steven Nagelberg, Keck students will be better prepared for the realities of medical practice in today’s world. The business of medicine is a familiar topic for Nagelberg, a spine surgeon who received his Executive MBA degree from the University of Southern California in 2009. He holds a strong belief that information on successful business practices is essential for aspiring physicians. Nagelberg shared, “To succeed in the changing health care environment, today’s leaders in medicine must blend the business savvy of a CEO with the knowledge and compassion of a top-notch care giver. Without education in health policy and the health care system, physicians are missing critical tools in their professional toolbox.” The gift will establish the Nagelberg Business of Medicine Fund to support the

development of a core business of medicine curriculum. The funds will help underwrite a faculty stipend, curriculum development and administrative costs associated with creating and offering the program. The hope is that this new curriculum will provide a solid foundation in the fundamentals of business and the practice of medicine. The Nagelberg’s daughter, Jodi, a second-year medical student at the Keck School, will experience first-hand the benefits of this curriculum enhancement. As part of the development process, Michael E. Porter, Bishop William Lawrence University Professor at the Harvard Business School, visited the Health Sciences campus on Oct. 11 to meet with both students and faculty about value-based health care delivery. Porter has experience developing business of medicine curricula designed for use at universities, medical schools and professional education programs for health professionals. Porter met with Keck School faculty to discuss new business models for the medical profession, and how that might fit into a curriculum at the university.

## NORRIS: Remodel enhances hospital aesthetics, spaces

**Continued from Page 1**  
2010, the USC hospitals began admitting the vast majority of patients with cancer to Keck Hospital of USC. At the time, Keck

Hospital provided enhanced aesthetics and more advanced operating suites for Norris patients. The move also allowed leaders to be able to ensure seismic regulatory requirements at USC Norris. Today, with seismic standards secured and a growing census,

administrators are preparing to accommodate medical oncology and hematology inpatients at USC Norris beginning next month. Each nursing floor has been maintained at 30 beds, for a total of 60 inpatient beds. There are also plans to upgrade the Norris surgical suites in the future.



**Longtime USC Norris volunteer honored for service—**  
Longtime USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center supporter Marie Eckstrom was honored for her dedication to USC Norris and her unwavering support of cancer research during the USC Norris Holiday Party, held on Dec. 2 at the Jonathan Club in Los Angeles. Cancer center Director Stephen Gruber presented Eckstrom with a commemorative engraved clock, a token of the cancer center’s appreciation of her efforts. Eckstrom has given more than 22 years of volunteer service to USC Norris, logging more than 9,000 hours of service time.

The Weekly

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## BEAUTIFICATION: Extensive project expected to be completed in 2015

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the planning and should be completed in 2015. The first phase of the project, which began in August, involves tackling the decidedly less-dramatic aspects of the beautification. They have moved water and gas lines on Alcazar Street and are taking down overhead power lines on Soto Street. All the power lines are coming down and, for a while, much of the work will be taking place under ground.

HSC will also get two large campus markers on Soto Street and three smaller ones at the secondary entrances to the campus. When those go up, it is going to be very clear to both visitors and passersby that this is a university campus and is part of the University of Southern California. This project is part of the larger HSC master plan—a large-scale development that will include the creation of a new campus entrance.

# Delegation of Thai physicians studies USC’s joint replacement program

**By Hope Hamashige**  
When the Bumrungrad International Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, decided to open a joint replacement center, they decided they wanted to model their program after the program at Keck Hospital of USC.  
With that in mind, a delegation of 16 doctors, nurses, physical therapists and administrators from the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery spent a week with Lawrence D. Dorr, professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, observing how he and his staff handle the joint replacement program at Keck Hospital.  
“They are interested in every aspect of this,” said Jeri Ward, director of joint replacement services at the hospital. “They want to look at our marketing materials;

they want to see how we handle the work flow and how quickly patients begin their physical therapy.”  
Siripong Ratanachai, an orthopaedic surgeon and incoming director of the joint replacement center at Bumrungrad International Hospital, observed several operations in which Dorr used a robot to improve the accuracy of the replacement and, hopefully, the longevity of the prostheses.  
Several members of the Thai medical delegation expressed surprise when they learned that most patients at Keck are on their feet and out the door within a day or two.  
“That is why the board of our hospital send us here,” explained Ratanachai. “They know Dr. Dorr’s methods and they believe in him.”



Siripong Ratanachai, an orthopaedic surgeon from Bumrungrad International Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand (left), observes a bilateral hip replacement surgery performed by Lawrence Dorr, professor of orthopaedics at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Ratanachai said he learned not only surgical technique from Dorr, but also how to handle pre- and post-operative procedures to minimize patients’ recovery time.

# Liver mitochondria improve, increase in number after chronic alcohol feeding in mice

**By Alison Trinidad**  
Scientists at the Keck School of Medicine of USC have found evidence that liver mitochondria in mice adapt to become better metabolizers of alcohol and increase in number after chronic exposure, which may raise the potential for free radical damage associated with aging and cancer over time.  
The liver is a vital organ, playing a major role in metabolism and detoxification in the body. Overconsumption of alcohol has long been tied to liver diseases such as fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis, but how the substance damages the organ is not fully understood. USC research published in the Dec. 7, 2012, issue of the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal, suggests

that mitochondria play an important role in the liver’s response to the metabolic stress caused by alcohol intake. If scientists observe the same results in human mitochondria, it could help pinpoint targets for therapy.  
“The liver has to adapt quickly to various toxins and drugs to meet the demands we place on the body,” said Derick Han, assistant professor of research medicine at the Keck School and first author of the study. “We’ve found that mitochondrial plasticity—the mitochondria’s ability to change—is probably central to the liver’s response to alcohol intake. This gives us a better understanding of how the liver works and how it adapts to stress.”  
Mitochondria are cellular organelles that generate most of the cell’s energy; they have been implicated

in certain neurological disorders and have been tied to aging. The metabolism of oxygen by the mitochondria normally generates reactive oxygen species, or free radicals, which in excess can be highly damaging to cells.  
“In the short term, it looks like mitochondria adapt to metabolize alcohol better, but as they increase in number and use more oxygen to help metabolize that alcohol, it could be harmful to the body,” Han said.  
Han and his team of scientists fed alcohol to mice over four weeks, isolated the liver mitochondria and measured levels of respiration and changes in the mitochondrial structure. They found significant increases in oxygen consumption by mice fed the alcohol in comparison to control mitochondria as early as one week after feeding. Changes were greater and

more extensive with higher alcohol intake.  
USC co-authors include Maria Ybanez, Heather Johnson, Jeniece McDonald, Lusine Mesropyan, Harsh Sancheti, Lily Dara and Enrique Cadenas. The study’s senior investigators include Hidekazu Tsukamoto, director of the Southern California Research Center for Alcoholic Liver and Pancreatic Diseases (ALPD) and Cirrhosis, and Neil Kaplowitz, director of the USC Research Center for

Liver Diseases. The study was supported by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism of the National Institutes of Health (grants AA016911, AA14428, and AA011999).  
A team led by Kaplowitz is set to launch a four-year clinical trial in 2013 to study two potential new treatments for alcoholic hepatitis. Han hopes to collect data from that trial to further examine mitochondrial function in human livers exposed to alcohol.

## Women’s health event slated for Jan. 26

The Keck School of Medicine will host the second annual Women’s Health Symposium, on Jan. 26.  
The event, from 11 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., will be held at the Keith Administration Building.  
The free symposium is open to students from throughout Southern California.  
To RSVP or for more information about the schedule of events, visit <http://usc.edu/1sj> and enter code 0126.

# The Weekly NEWSMAKERS

A Jan. 7 column in *E/The Environmental Magazine* quoted **Rob McConnell**, professor of preventive medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, about the public health costs of air pollution in Los Angeles County. “Our findings suggest that there are large and previously unappreciated public health consequences of air pollution in Los Angeles County and probably other metropolitan areas with large numbers of children living near major traffic corridors,” McConnell said.  
A Jan. 7 article in *DXY.cn* (China) featured research led by **James Ou**, professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at the Keck School of Medicine, finding a trigger by which the hepatitis C virus enters liver cells.  
A Jan. 5 column in the *Los Angeles Times* mentions health care provided to the columnist by surgeon

**Daniel Oakes**, associate professor of orthopaedic surgery at the Keck School of Medicine; cardiologist **Leslie Saxon**, professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine; and **Andrew Fabella**, a nurse at Keck Hospital of USC.  
A Jan. 4 story in *The Sacramento Bee* quoted **George “Rick” Hatch**, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics at the Keck School of Medicine, about the healing time for torn tendons.  
A Jan. 4 broadcast on ABC News quoted **Tracy Zaslow**, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics at the Keck School of Medicine, about how to prevent sports injuries among children.  
A Jan. 4 article in *Everyday Health* quoted **Mark Spoonamore**, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedics at the Keck School of Medicine, about

the differences between sprains and strains.  
A Jan. 3 broadcast by ABC News quoted **James Tibone**, professor of clinical orthopaedics at the Keck School of Medicine, about the use of an anti-inflammatory drug often used for pain relief.  
Jan. 2 articles in the *La Canada Valley Sun* and *Glendale News Press* note that the Keck Medical Center of USC is in negotiations to partner with Verdugo Hills Hospital. *Becker’s Hospital Review* also covered the story.  
A Jan. 1 article in *Daily Mail* (U.K.) featured research led by **Kathleen Page**, assistant professor of clinical medicine at the Keck School of Medicine, finding that people who consumed certain sugars had a more difficult time losing weight than those who consumed other types of sugar.



# Keck School alum gift supports a physician from the next generation

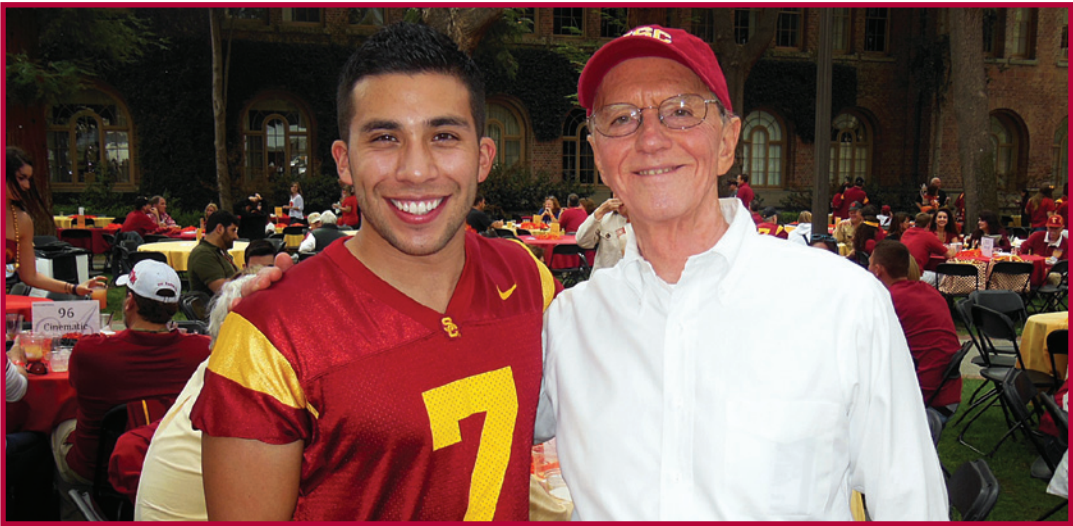
By Molly Gervais

Looking back on his own successful career, retired physician and Keck School of Medicine of USC alumnus Michael Mertens decided to try a new way of helping others through medicine: personally funding the education of a young USC medical student.

Specifically, Mertens chose to provide tuition assistance for student Antonio Olivarez during his four years at the Keck School.

Regarding the gift, Mertens said, “I feel I’m at a time in my life when I need to give back. I have had the opportunity to meet Antonio in person on several occasions, and it’s wonderful to see my gift come alive in him. I had forgotten what it was like to be so young and enthusiastic. Reconnecting with my alma mater through Antonio has been an incredible experience.”

Mertens is a retired diagnostic radiologist who practiced in Reston, Va., before retiring. Mertens graduated from the Keck School in 1965, and after completing his internship in radiology, he joined the Air Force and became a flight



George Stoneman

USC alumnus Michael Mertens (right) is supporting student Antonio Olivarez during his four years at the Keck School.

surgeon. Mertens currently lives in McLean, Va.

Olivarez, a second-year medical student at the Keck School, grew up in San Jose with his parents and three younger sisters.

“I come from a culturally traditional Mexican-American family,” explained Olivarez. “My parents immigrated to the United States from Michoacán, México, and I’m the first in my family to go to college—and medical school for that matter.” Olivarez received a Bachelor of Science degree in neurobiology, physiology and behavior from the University of California, Davis.

Olivarez added, “Many of my personal, family and college experiences shaped my desire to pursue the career of medicine. I’m attending medical school because I have an internal obligation to serve low-income Latino communities

in dire need of medical assistance. In today’s society, there’s a cultural and economic gap that plagues patients who are either economically disadvantaged or are immigrants from other countries.

“As a Spanish-speaking

Latino who grew up in a Mexican household, I feel that I can be an asset in the promotion of accessible health care assistance to underrepresented minorities,” he continued. “As a future physician, I plan to practice clinical medicine as a primary care physician with an emphasis in working within underserved communities.”

Olivarez is a member of the Chicano/Latino Medical Student Association at the Keck School, which has fulfilled his desire to mentor young Latinos interested in a career in medicine. “If it weren’t for the support system and inspiration of my medical student mentors, I wouldn’t have gotten to where I am today,” he said. “I’m exceedingly grateful and appreciative.”

## WILDER: Estate makes key gift to CHLA

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build our world renowned neurosurgery division.”

Billy and Audrey Wilder were longtime supporters of Children’s Hospital Los Angeles and Mrs. Wilder managed the family’s philanthropic activities. She was especially interested in the hospital’s undertakings and passionate about giving back to children’s causes and the arts.

Audrey Wilder, who passed away in June, was married to Billy Wilder for 53 years. She was a singer with the Tommy Dorsey Band and appeared in several films in the 1940s.

In 1944, she met her future husband on the set of *The Lost Weekend*, a film that garnered Billy Wilder the first of his two film directing Oscars.

They wed five years later.

The Austrian-born Billy Wilder received international recognition as one of the world’s great filmmakers. His Hollywood career as a writer, director and producer spanned five decades, and his work included such

popular classics as *Sabrina* and *Some Like It Hot*, and Oscar-winners like *Sunset Boulevard*, *The Apartment* and *The Lost Weekend*. Renowned for his ability to cross film genres, Wilder became the first individual to win three Oscars in one night when *The Apartment* (1960) earned the filmmaker awards for directing, producing and co-writing.

In all, he won six Academy Awards and also earned the Academy’s Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award in 1988. He won the National Medal of Arts in 1993, nine years before his passing in 2002.

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## Calendar of Events

**Tuesday, Jan. 15**

**Noon.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Impacts of DSMV Changes in Substance Related Disorders Upon Clinical Care Delivered in Public Healthcare Systems,” Roderick Shaner, County of Los Angeles, DMH. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

**Thursday, Jan. 17**

**12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.** USC Institute for Integrative Health Seminar. “Interactive Entertainment for Healing: the Art and Sciences of Imagination, Somatic Gratification and Presence,” Marientina Gotsis, USC. UPC: SCA 465. Info: (323) 442-2638

**Tuesday, Jan. 22**

**Noon.** Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Treating Multi-traumatized, Socially Marginalized Youth: The USC Adolescent Trauma Center,” John Briere, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-4065

**Wednesday, Jan. 30**

**8 a.m.** Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Cold Case Investigations – the LA County Coroner Experience,” Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, USC & UCLA. NOR Topping Tower 7409. Info: (323) 442-1180

**Noon.** Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Seminar. “VAAST: A Probabilistic Disease-Gene Finder for Personal Genomes,” Mark Yandell, University of Utah. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

**Thursday, Feb. 21**

**Noon.** USC Global Health Lecture Series. “Entrepreneurial Approaches to Global Health Challenges,” Jacqueline Novogratz, Acumen Fund. UPC: TCC 450. Info: (323) 865-0419

**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 email to [eblaauw@usc.edu](mailto: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.

## ONLINE EXTRAS

Read more HSC news online:

• **Rehabilitation expert Alan Jette discusses skills needed to meet changing demographics**  
<http://usc.edu/1ba>

• **USC’s occupational therapy program holds 70th anniversary celebration**  
<http://usc.edu/1s5>

• **Artists Commended**  
<http://usc.edu/1sn>

• **Red meat may increase bladder cancer risk, especially in people with specific genetic variation, USC study says**  
<http://usc.edu/1sb>

• **USC faculty member is coauthor of international consensus on teaching evidence-based practice in health care**  
<http://usc.edu/1sp>

## 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.

