

Nurses honored at recognition celebration

By Douglas Morino

A group of nurses across Keck Medicine of USC were recognized in May for their hard work and dedication to exceptional patient care.

The 2015 Nursing Recognition Awards were announced May 6 at a ceremony in Hoffman Café at Keck Hospital of USC.

The Nurse of the Year Award went to Victor Dimacali in recognition of his clinical expertise, commitment and outstanding patient care.

Dimacali, who works as a nurse on 6-North and

See **NURSES**, page 2



Victor Dimacali

2015 Nursing Recognition Award recipients

Nurse of the Year:
Victor Dimacali

Advanced Practice Nurse:
Kathrine Winnie

Nurse Leader:
Lori Hitomi

Preceptor:
Stephanie Johnson

Nurse Rookie:
Jerwyn Tiu

Nurse Advocate:
Maria Victoria Deras

Nurse Humanitarian:
Lisa Johnson

Care Partner:
Leonore Rodriguez



Graduates in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Global Health programs let their emotions show in a May 15 group photo with faculty.

Dreary weather doesn't dampen spirits at medical commencements

By Sharon Brock

The weather was gray outside Galen Center on Saturday, May 16, but inside it was bright with cardinal and gold as MD and MD/PhD graduates buzzed with excitement during commencement ceremonies for the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Just before 3 p.m., the 168 medical degree recipients donned red caps and gowns, exuding pride as they readied themselves to march into the arena to the tune of pomp and circumstance.

"It's an amazing day," said MD candidate TC Scotton, who will attend the psychiatry residency training program at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA this summer. "Today is the culmination of four long years of hard work and sacrifice. Seeing my classmates and their families all dressed up today puts it all into perspective."

Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA, dean of the Keck School, opened the ceremony by congratulating the Class of 2015 and acknowledging key faculty members. He also acknowledged the six staff members from the Keck School and Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center who



Dean of Diversity Affairs Althea Alexander and new MD recipients celebrate after the May 16 commencement.



Gus Ruelas

Selfies and rain gear were common, as Occupational Science/Occupational Therapy faculty marshal Sarah Bream shows.

recently traveled to Nepal to provide medical aid following the April 25 earthquake.

"These extraordinary individuals are role models

for our medical students because they show the importance of community service on a global scale," said Puliafito.

Next up was Provost Michael W. Quick, PhD. "'Fight On!' is a wonderful slogan and greeting. But, for graduates of this medical school, it is more than just that," said Quick, who is also the senior vice president of academic affairs. "For you, it is a call to action. For you, it is a call to service. For you, it is a plea from your patients. For you, it is your mission. So, I say to the Keck School of Medicine, Class of 2015: 'Fight On!'"

Charles Gibson, journalist and former ABC News Good Morning America anchor, gave the commencement address, which made parallels between the medical and journalism professions.

"Both of our professions involve a sacred trust," said Gibson. "Journalists give a voice to those who might not otherwise be heard. As doctors, you have the sacred trust of caring for people. Giving them the health they need to be as productive as possible, as contented as possible, as hopeful as possible, and as fully realized human beings."

Most of Saturday's graduates
See **2015**, pages 4-5

Brain mapping effort draws attention to researchers

ENIGMA director wins Innovations in Academia prize

By Les Dunseith

Paul Thompson, PhD, a professor at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, recently won the top prize in an international competition called Innovations in Academia.

The awards celebrate creativity and innovation between Europe and the United States, honoring individuals whose professional accomplishments have made "a sig-

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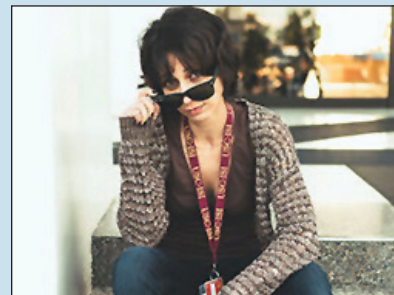
Paul Thompson talks with attendees at event sponsored by University of Kent.

Neuroscientist profiled in L.A. Weekly's People 2015 issue

By Les Dunseith

If you're a math and science whiz studying brain scans and analyzing genetic biomarkers for a living, you're not expecting to get the Hollywood treatment. But there she is, Neda Jahanshad, USC neuroscientist, peering ever so coolly over her shades as the "brain mapper" in the *L.A. Weekly's* recent People of 2015 coverage.

See **JAHANSHAD**, page 3



Neda Jahanshad was selected as one of 54 trendsetters in Los Angeles.

Donation funds new break room at Keck Hospital

By Douglas Morino

Nurses working long shifts in a busy unit at Keck Hospital of USC will now have a comfortable place to rest and relax before getting back to what they do best — delivering world-class compassionate care.

A new break room has opened on the seventh floor of Keck Hospital, thanks to a \$50,000 gift from USC alumna Christine Marie Ofesh, '74. 7-South is home to the neurosciences ICU, where nurses care for patients with serious head, neck and spine injuries.

The break room features new paint, doors, furniture and framed artwork. There is a new refrigerator and microwave, along with a separate room with lockers

for storage. Large clear windows overlook the Health Sciences Campus and let in natural sunlight.

Ofesh is a noted philanthropist and volunteer with a long history of giving to USC, Keck Medical Center of USC and charitable causes across Los Angeles County. She received the Alumni Service Award in 2014.

“I’ve always wanted to try and make a difference,” Ofesh said. “I deeply value the important work being done by the nurses of Keck Medicine of USC. So when I learned the new break room was an important need for them, I jumped at the chance to contribute.”

The room was dedicated during a May 6 ceremony as the Christine Marie Ofesh

Staff Lounge. Chief Nursing Officer Annette Sy, Keck Medicine of USC CEO Tom Jackiewicz and many nurses joined Ofesh in the room. The improvements to the break room coincide with an effort across Keck Medicine of USC to build a workplace environment and culture that values, engages and supports staff, Jackiewicz said.

“All of our nurses work tirelessly and exceptionally hard every day to provide the best possible care and healing environment to our patients,” Jackiewicz said. “It is only fitting that we provide an appropriate resting environment for them, where they can relax and recharge during their breaks, before getting back



Douglas Morino

CEO Tom Jackiewicz and Christine Marie Ofesh, '74, cut the ribbon to a new break room for nurses at Keck Hospital.

to their life-saving work.”

He continued, saying, “Something as simple as a remodeled, comfortable break room can make the world of difference for a nurse who has just spent nine hours caring for some

of our most critically ill patients. That is why we are so excited to unveil this refreshed break room, which of course would not have been possible without the generosity of Christine Marie Ofesh.”



Douglas Morino

Nursing Recognition Awards recipients celebrate May 6 with Chief Nursing Officer Annette Sy. From left, Nurse Rookie Jerwyn Tiu, Nurse Preceptor Stephanie Johnson, Advanced Practice Nurse Kathrine Winnie, Nurse Leader Lori Hitomi, Sy, Nurse of the Year Victor Dimicali, Nurse Humanitarian Lisa Johnson, Nurse Advocate Maria Victoria Deras and Care Partner Leonore Rodriguez.

NURSES: Event is part of National Nursing Week

Continued from page 1

joined USC six years ago, was nominated by Nurse Manager Kathy Coe. Coe credited Dimacali for his compassion, knowledge and for being a mentor to his colleagues.

Dimacali said he did not expect to earn the recognition.

“I know plenty of nurses deserving of the award,” Dimacali said. “As a nurse I always go home fulfilled and with a happy heart when a patient thanks me for taking care of their pain. I know all nurses feel the same way.”

The ceremony took place during National Nurses Week, which commemorates

the work of the men and woman on the front lines of health care. Chief Nursing Officer Annette Sy acknowledged the work of all nurses at Keck Medicine of USC.

“I am so proud of all of you, each and every day,” Sy said during the awards ceremony. “Thank you for the care that you give.”

Calendar of Events

Friday, May 22

8:30 a.m. Pulmonary, Critical Care Medicine Seminar. “A Protective TLR4-MIF Axis in COPD,” Patty J. Lee, MD, Yale University. IRD 734. Info: Elva Rubio, (323) 226-7923, elvarubi@usc.edu

1 p.m. Center for Trauma, Violence and Injury Prevention Seminar. “Integrating Trauma Informed Care While Working with Youth, Families and Communities that have Experienced Trauma,” Susan L. Hess, USC. McKibben Lecture Hall. Info & RSVP: Hope Velarde, (323) 442-0246, ctvip@usc.edu, <http://www.usc.edu/programs/ctvip>

Tuesday, May 26

5:30 p.m. Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. David Cobrinik, MD, PhD, USC/CHLA. HC4 Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: Tyaisha Christopher, (323) 409-5233, tyaischa.christopher@med.usc.edu

11 a.m. Eli and Edythe Broad

Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC Seminar. “Spatiotemporal Regulation of Normal and Cancer Colon Stem Cells,” Xiling Shen, PhD, Cornell University. Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center Auditorium.

Monday, June 1

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar Series Seminar. “Deep Into the Human Immune Response in Infections and Vaccination,” Rafick-Pierre Sékaly, PhD, Case Western Reserve University. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Mary Jane Chua, (323) 442-7732, maryjane.chua@med.usc.edu

Tuesday, June 2

5:30 p.m. Ophthalmology Grand Rounds. Ben Xu, MD, PhD, USC. HC4 Conference Room, 3rd Floor. Info: Tyaisha Christopher, (323) 409-5233, tyaischa.christopher@med.usc.edu

Friday, June 5

2 - 6 p.m. USC Department of

Dermatology. “Day of Beauty,” with free consultations and discounted pricing, Karen Escobar, Healthcare Center 4, Suite 2000. Info and RSVP: Karen Escobar, (323) 442-0084, kcoba@med.usc.edu, <http://dermatology.keckmedicine.org/esvp/day-of-beauty-2015>

Tuesday, June 9

9:45 a.m. - 6 p.m. The Saban Research Institute. “20th Annual Poster Session,” Auditorium, Saban Building. Info: Harleen Gill, (323) 361-8626, hgill@chla.usc.edu, <http://cafe.usc.edu/storage/1959732736.pdf>

Friday, June 12

7:30 a.m. - Noon. USC Eye Institute — Visiting Professor Lecture Series Lecture. “Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus,” David Hunter, MD, PhD, Harvard Medical School. HC4, 3rd Floor Conference Room. Free continental breakfast will be served at 7 a.m. Info: Tyaisha

Christopher, (323) 409-5233, Tyaisha.Christopher@med.usc.edu

Monday, June 15

Noon. KSOM Research Seminar Series Seminar. “Interplay of Signal Transduction and Mitochondria in Liver Injury: a Sab Story,” Neil Kaplowitz, MD, USC. Aresty Auditorium. Info: Mary Jane Chua, (323) 442-7732, maryjane.chua@med.usc.edu

Thursdays, Sept. 10-Oct. 29

8 a.m. Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Preventive Medicine and Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “Introduction to Clinical and Translational Research Study Design” course at HSC and CHLA campuses for residents, fellows and junior faculty as an introduction to clinical research methods. Applicants must identify a research topic and faculty adviser. Tuition is \$400. Info and RSVP: Jeanne McKean, (323) 442-8281, WD@sc-ctsi.org

\$7.5 million gift to fund Hastings Center for Pulmonary Research

By Leslie Ridgeway

With the goal of enhancing research related to lung disease, the Hastings Foundation has pledged \$7.5 million over five years to establish the Hastings Center for Pulmonary Research (HCPR) at Keck Medicine of USC.

The center brings together basic and translational researchers and clinicians to create a nationally recognized center of excellence for advanced lung disease that builds on existing collaborations within and outside of Keck Medicine. Zea Borok, MD, chief, division of Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine at Keck Medicine of USC, directs it.

“We expect this generous gift from the Hastings Foundation will help us

greatly enhance pulmonary research and clinical medicine at Keck Medicine of USC,” said Borok, who is also professor of medicine and biochemistry and molecular biology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “This gift will support our efforts to recruit renowned scientists and promising young researchers in basic lung biology, epigenetics, regenerative medicine and stem cell research, complementing our current research efforts with their knowledge and expertise.”

The research will focus on lung injury, repair and regeneration in an effort to discover new treatments and cures for pulmonary diseases that affect millions of people worldwide, including cystic fibrosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

“This gift builds on the relationship between the Hastings Foundation and USC that has lasted more than 50 years,” said David Tirrell, PhD, president of the foundation’s board of directors.

The HCPR will bring together all scientists at USC currently working on lung-related investigations to create shared resources as well as opportunities for scientific interaction and collaboration, thereby expanding the scope of lung research at USC.

The center will also collaborate with clinicians in the USC Clinical Center for Advanced Lung Disease and investigators in the Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC.

“The HCPR will attract the best and brightest scientists and students studying advanced lung disease, adding to our medical school’s strength in research,” said Keck School of Medicine of USC Dean Carmen A. Puliafito, MD, MBA. “We’re grateful to the Hastings Foundation for their support of our work to cure lung disease.”

Notice: Calendar items are due at least 10 days before publication date. Timely submission does not guarantee publication in print. See more calendar entries at hscnews.usc.edu/calendar-of-events. Submit items at tinyurl.com/calendar-hsc. Include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location and a phone number/email address.

Professor honored for work in sports psychology

By Les Dunseith

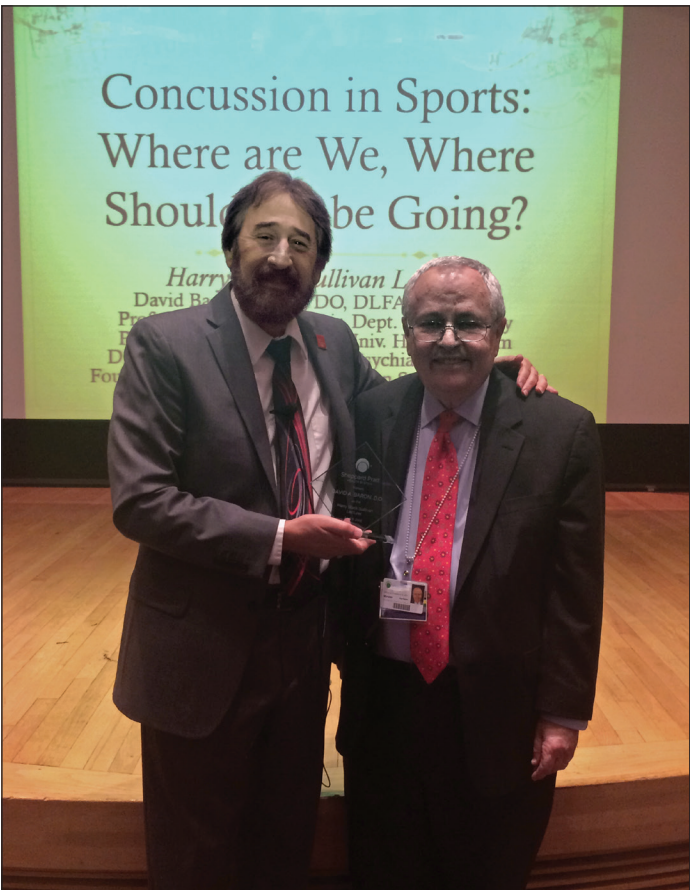
USC Professor David Baron recently received the 2015 Harry Stack Sullivan Award in recognition of his groundbreaking work in the field of behavioral aspects of concussion and the founder of the WHO/WPA Section on Exercise, Psychiatry and Sport.

Baron, who has been the vice chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the Keck School of Medicine of USC since 2010, was honored by Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Sheppard-Pratt Health System during an April 8 event in Baltimore, MD. He presented the HSS Memorial lecture to a group of more than 200 attendees on the topic, “Concussion in Sports: What We Know, Think We Know, Need to Know.”

“The award came out of the blue,” said Baron, who was gratified to receive an award named for the psychiatrist credited with establishing the field of social psychiatry 60 years ago. “Among the most influential American psychiatrists of the 20th century, Harry Stack Sullivan had a profound influence on the modern day concepts of psychiatric care and the role of community in mental health.”

The award is given annually to a recognized national leader in an emerging area of psychiatric research with public mental health implications.

While in Baltimore, Baron was invited to show a film that he wrote and produced addressing the issue of concussion in youth sports. The film is based on his 30 years of experience working in youth, Olympic, NCAA and Professional sports. The film has won numerous international film festival awards, and has been presented at major psychiatric meetings



Dave Baron, left, receives his award from Steven S. Sharfstein, CEO of Sheppard Pratt and former American Psychiatric Association president.

around the world since its completion in late 2013.

“One analogy I use to explain the health effects is to think of sunburns,” Baron explained. “You don’t die of cancer from one sunburn. But the more sunburns you get over a lifetime, the greater the likelihood of a skin cancer developing. Like sunburn, virtually all heal in about a week, but we are just discovering the possibly long-term negative neuropsychiatric effects. In addition, like sunburn, children are more susceptible to long-term consequences.”

It’s the same with concussions. “I am interested in studying the effects of ‘minor dings’ over time,” Baron said.

He was presented the award by Steven S. Sharfstein, MD the longtime CEO of Sheppard Pratt and a former president of the American Psychiatric Association and NIMH researcher. Sharfstein also announced that Baron had been elected as a Distinguished Life Fellow of the APA — the organization’s

highest honor.

Baron has more than 90 publications, authored or co-authored 12 books, and has worked extensively in the field of sports psychiatry with organizations such as the U.S. Olympic Committee and the National Football League. He is also the former deputy clinical director of the National Institutes of Mental Health and chaired the Department of Psychiatry at Temple University’s School of Medicine from 1998-2010.

He holds an MEd from USC ,and completed a residency and fellowship in psychiatry at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center from 1979-1983. He describes himself as a “proud Trojan.”

“I am so glad I was recruited back to USC,” Baron said. “The university’s commitment to excellence in all scholarly pursuits (including sports and the Arts), international education, and an outstanding diverse faculty willing to work collaboratively make this a special place to be.”

JAHANSHAD: Neuroscientists hope to crack brain’s genetic code

Continued from page 1

Much to her surprise, Jahanshad was selected among 54 actors and singers and artists and fashionistas to be profiled as trendsetters by the *L.A. Weekly* in its annual celebration of fascinating people in Los Angeles. In her case, it started with a research paper unglamorously titled, “Common Genetic Variants Influence Human Subcortical Brain Structures.”

“A reporter called,” Jahanshad said. “She had read about one of our recent studies, about the publication in *Nature*, and I was one of the co-authors.”

She was one of almost 300 authors on the *Nature* paper, which was led by Derrek Hibar, an associate professor in the Keck School of Medicine of USC. That paper built on work being done by Jahanshad and her research colleagues as part of a project known as Enhancing Neuro Imaging Genetics through Meta Analysis, or ENIGMA. Jahanshad is among the leaders of a worldwide network of neuroscientists that is sharing findings in hopes that the pooled information will crack the brain’s genetic code.

It’s a groundbreaking effort, as the *LA Weekly* story makes clear: “They’re trying to gain a deeper understanding of the human brain, mapping it and uncovering aspects of it that no one has ever understood.”

Jahanshad first became involved with the brain-mapping project while studying at UCLA for her PhD in biomedical engineering with Professor Paul Thompson, PhD, and she stayed on when Thompson and his research partner, Provost Professor Arthur W. Toga, PhD, moved their Institute of Neuroimaging and Informatics to USC in 2013.

Yes, she does endure some teasing from friends who are still at UCLA as a result, but Jahanshad is “very happy to



Neda Jahanshad

be part of the USC enterprise.”

At 30, she has assumed a leadership role in the ENIGMA

project. Building on her engineering background, she is heavily involved in the imaging aspect, building tools to look at brain scans and extract information from them.

She helps produce computer models that process the data from thousands of MRIs obtained from research partners. The goal is to establish a baseline map of a normal brain that will help in discerning patterns common to various neurological disorders.

“We see the brain as a wired network,” said Jahanshad, who is an assistant professor of neurology at the Keck School of Medicine.

A typical workday? That’s a rarity.

“People may need to consult from all over the world,” Jahanshad explained. “I might be on a conference call at 6 a.m. Or 11 p.m.”

And the project always seems to be expanding.

“When we start something, we suddenly realize there are so many other aspects of the brain that we can look into,” Jahanshad said. “A current example is looking at HIV across the world. There are various strains. But what is the common effect on the brain?”

Finding commonality from seemingly endless data sources can be challenging, but the global scope of the project is a key to its success.

“When its combined, the knowledge is so much greater than what one can find alone,” Jahanshad said. “Something that is subtle in one case may be noticed as a pattern when you combine the info with many, many cases.”

THOMPSON: Award recognizes Europeans who excel as educators in the United States

Continued from page 1

nificant and lasting impact in the field of higher education and whose work and character have earned the respect and admiration of their professional colleagues,” according to the award sponsor, the University of Kent based in Canterbury, United Kingdom. Nominations were open to those who are from or who have studied in Europe and are currently working — or have worked — in U.S. higher education.

“Working in different countries is a privilege, and helps you build lifelong relationships and opportunities,” said Thompson, a professor of neurology, psychiatry, radiology, engineering and ophthalmology. “The Greek orator Isocrates was right when he said,



Paul Thompson participated as a speaker and panelist during the April 30 celebration at Skirball Center in Los Angeles.

‘Never be afraid to travel a long distance to learn from the best.’ The Kent Awards celebrate that vision.”

The award also recognized the international scope of

the work being done by Thompson as principal investigator of the Enhancing Neuro Imaging Genetics through Meta Analysis network, or ENIGMA. This

project pools brain scans and genetic data from 33 countries to discover factors that help and harm the brain.

“We are seeing a revolution in science where people worldwide pool their talents and resources to discover better treatments for brain disorders such as Alzheimer’s and depression,” Thompson said.

During the April 30 event at the Skirball Center in Los Angeles in celebration of the award, leaders from academia, genetics, business and journalism from across the UK and the United States gathered to exchange ideas and build alliances. The ceremony was part of an initiative to celebrate the University of Kent’s 50th anniversary.

“I am not an alum of

Kent, so it is was especially nice and surprising to be honored,” said Thompson, a native of England who studied at Oxford University. “Like USC, their university prides itself on successful partnerships across Europe and across the world.”

Many of those who attended the event noted the value of exchange programs and the life-changing opportunities when students travel.

“Here at USC — and in Kent — we are always keen to help students find opportunities overseas,” Thompson said. “And we do our best to make our international students feel at home. It has never been easier for scientists worldwide to help each other to find their way in science, and in life.”



USC valedictorian Alexander Yuen, who graduated with a double major in biological science and in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program, gave the May 15 student address.

2015: It's commencement time!

Continued from page 1
ates received MD degrees, but five earned an MD/PhD degree, two earned an MD/MBA and one earned a MD/MPH.

Other health and medicine commencement ceremonies had taken place throughout the week.

On May 13, the Keck School awarded 173 master's degrees in a variety of biological and biomedical fields, 132 master's of public health degrees, 43 PhD degrees and four master's of academic medicine degrees.

Puliafito also gave welcoming remarks during this ceremony, followed by a commencement address from Keith R. Yamamoto, PhD, vice chancellor for research at the University of California, San Francisco. Yamamoto encouraged graduates to take risks.

"The conventional wisdom is to play it safe, hold back and wait until you're established to take risks, but I disagree," said Yamamoto, who is also executive vice dean of the UCSF School of Medicine. "Seek out risk. Seek out adventure with a capital 'A.'"

In the audience was Christine Hogan, an ROTC scholar who earned a master's degree in pathology while training for the military. As a soldier-student, a typical day for Hogan included early morning workouts with the Army, attending classes for both Army and USC courses, followed by evening shifts at Children's Hospital, Los Angeles, working in the laboratory of Yves DeClerk, MD. After her six-year contract with the Army, Hogan plans to attend medical school and pursue her goal to become a global leader in health care.

"People ask me why I am going into active duty rather than work in a lab or in corporate America. But I believe that nothing is more important than serving our country as a medical services officer in the United States military," said Hogan, who has been selected to be trained as a medical evacuation pilot and fly Blackhawk helicopters. "Life is too short not to pursue your dreams and do what you



Sharon Brock

ROTC scholar Christine Hogan was among those who received a PhD, MPH or MS degree on May 13 from the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

want to do."

On May 15, additional health-related ceremonies took place in conjunction with commencement at the University Park Campus. The USC School of Pharmacy awarded 182 PharmD degrees, 13 PhD degrees and five doctor of regulatory science degrees. Additionally, 52 graduates were awarded master's degrees and 44 pharmacists completed their residency training.

Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy awarded 91 Doctor of Physical Therapy degrees, four master's degrees in biokinesiology and eight PhD degrees in biokinesiology. Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy honored 45 Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree recipients, 137 who earned master's degrees and 10 who received bachelor's degrees.

The Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC awarded 174 doctor of dental surgery degrees, three PhD degrees in craniofacial biology, five master's degrees in dental hygiene, 17 master's degrees in orofacial pain and oral medicine, 45 advanced specialty degrees and 37 bachelor's degrees in dental hygiene.

Family Medicine's Primary Care Physician Assistant Program awarded 56 master's of physician assistant practice degrees. Preventive Medicine awarded 116 bachelor of science degrees to undergraduates in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and Global Health programs.



GradImages

School of Pharmacy graduates show their Trojan Pride on May 15 as they prepare to receive their diplomas.

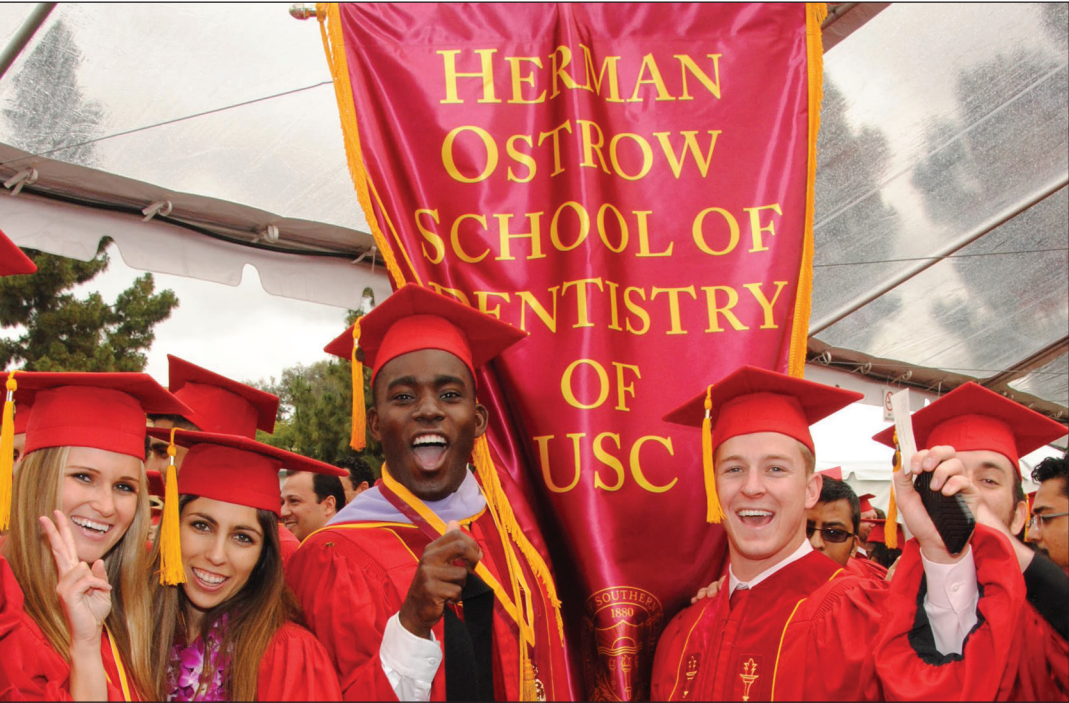


GradImages



GradImages

Left, Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy Division graduates circle up to celebrate. Above, Lt. Col. Ghia P. Simmons conducts an Air Force commissioning ceremony during the Primary Care Physician Assistant commencement.



GradImages

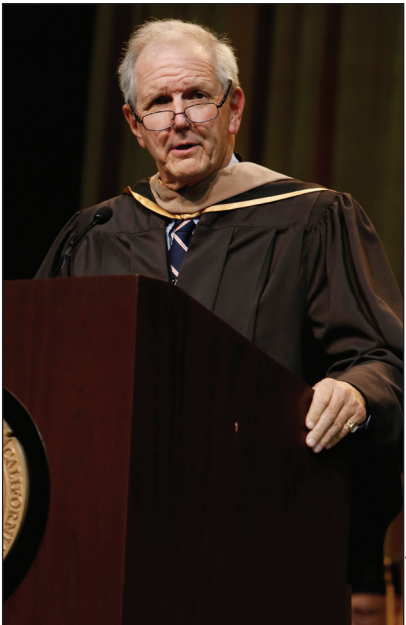
The Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry granted a total of 281 degrees at its May 15 commencement.



Les Dunseith



Les Dunseith



Steve Cohn

Above, co-class president Reem Itani delights the crowd with observations about a medical education while giving the student address at the MD and MD/PhD commencement for the Keck School of Medicine of USC. Far left, a parade of new doctors received diplomas and congratulations from Vice Dean Henri Ford, Dean Carmen A. Puliafito and Provost Michael Quick. Left, keynote speaker and broadcast journalist Charles Gibson said new graduates are seeing sweeping technological changes as they begin their careers.



Steve Cohn



Steve Cohn



Steve Cohn



GradImages

Far left, Nick Saade shows off his “Dr. Nick” statuette. Above left, new doctors Miriam Lassiter and Meredith Laird share a hug. Left, T.C. Scotton and Megan Early chat after receiving their MD degrees. Above, Mariya Kalashnikova beams as she is recognized for her academic achievements during the commencement ceremony on May 16.



GradImages

Soon-to-be MD Jazmin Cole is all smiles during the Keck School commencement.



Les Dunseith

Prior to the commencement procession, Kevin Platt snaps a photo of classmates Allison Woo, Grant Meyer, Amanda Sandoval and Ryan Kobayashi.

HSC Newsmakers

A roundup of news items related to Keck Medicine of USC, which may include philanthropic donations, research grants, publication in academic journals and mentions in the news media:



Sunny Jones

Acoustic neuroma proclamation

LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMAN Jose Huizar, second from right, and Keck Medicine of USC grateful patient Kevin McCarthy, third from left, were among the special guests on hand May 12 for the official proclamation of May 10-16 as Acoustic Neuroma Awareness Week in Los Angeles. — **Alison Trinidad**

New fellowship program seeks exceptional stem cell researcher

THE HEARST FELLOWS AT USC, which was recently established by a gift from the Hearst Foundations, is now accepting applications. The annual award of \$65,000 includes one year of salary and benefits to be made to an exceptional junior postdoctoral researcher within USC’s stem cell research community. The Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at USC is seeking postdoctoral fellows who have already engaged in stem cell-related research at USC or plan to do so within six months of the July 15 application deadline. Contact Program Director Qing Liu at qliumich@med.usc.edu for information or to submit an application.



Varma joins national committee to assess and promote eye health

ROHIT VARMA, MD, MPH, director of the USC Eye Institute, attended a May 19 meeting of the Institute of Medicine (soon to be renamed the National Academy of Medicine) as a member of a committee that will assess public health approaches to reduce vision impairment and promote eye health in the United States. The meeting in Washington D.C. was the first step in a two-year study that will guide national policy on this issue. Varma is also the chair of ophthalmology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Academic Senate honors Gomer for Distinguished Faculty Service



Gomer

After nomination by his peers, Charles J. Gomer, PhD, was selected for the 2015 Distinguished Faculty Service Award by USC’s Academic Senate. The honor recognizes Gomer, professor of pediatrics and radiation oncology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, for his exceptional service to the faculty and to the university as a whole. He has long been actively involved in academic governance at the university, serving as vice president (2012-13), president (2013-14) and immediate past president (2014-2015) of the USC faculty. At Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles, he is vice chair of faculty affairs in pediatrics and a cancer research scientist at the Saban Research Institute. His pediatric translational research led to the development of the laser-chemotherapy procedure used nationally to treat retinoblastoma. “Chuck Gomer exemplifies the best qualities of the academic scientist and colleague, and is well-deserving of this very special honor,” said Brent Polk, MD, vice president of academic affairs, chair of pediatrics at CHLA and director of the Saban Research Institute. — **Jennifer Jing**



Ramona Paolim

SCENES FROM NEPAL: A team of six medical professionals from the Keck School of Medicine of USC has returned from Nepal, where they provided care at Nepal Orthopaedic Hospital in Kathmandu and at Ampipal Hospital in Gorkha to victims of the April 25 earthquake. Above, team leader Kenji Inaba and his colleagues look at images from post-operative patients during rounds in a trauma center in Kathmandu. Below left, Ramona Paolim and Shihab Sugeir sort through supplies the team brought to Gorkha from the Keck School and L.A. County + USC Medical Center. Below right, Ed Newton examines a patient in Kathmandu.



Lydia Lam



Lydia Lam

Surgeons use balloon to decrease blood loss during robotic surgery on kidney tumor

By **Leslie Ridgeway**

A procedure intended to decrease blood loss during removal of a kidney tumor that had grown into a major vein via robotic surgery was recently performed successfully for the first time in the world at Keck Medicine of USC. The procedure has the potential to decrease the length of surgery from five hours to three hours.

Using a 3-centimeter balloon to block blood flow during the surgery, a team of surgeons led by Inderbir Gill, M.D., executive founder of the USC Institute of Urology, isolated a 6-centimeter tumor growing into the inferior vena cava (IVC), a critical vein bringing deoxygenated blood from the legs to the heart. The balloon cut off blood flow within the vessel while the tumor was removed and minimized the amount of blood loss during the operation. The tumor posed specific challenges solved by the balloon, Gill said.

“About 10 to 15 percent of kidney cancer patients are diagnosed with an IVC tumor thrombus, which is a tumor that grows into the inferior vena cava,” said Gill. “In this case, the tumor was attached to the patient’s liver by many small blood vessels. This required us to control the vessels delicately, which we could do more safely with the balloon than with standard clamping and without the need to separate the vena cava from the liver.”

The intra-IVC balloon was used to isolate the tumor thrombus in the part of the

IVC close to the heart, at a section where the liver was attached to the vena cava. A clamp controlled the blood flow at the end toward the patient’s legs. Gill said the balloon would have applications for other types of robotic and IVC thrombectomy surgery. Patient Nestor Martinez, 57, of Bakersfield,

CA, was discharged the day after surgery, Gill said. Kidney cancer is among the 10 most common cancers in the United States. Nearly 14,000 Americans are expected to die of kidney cancer in 2015, according to the American Cancer Society. Kidney cancer tends to affect older people.

USC Health Sciences
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Editor: Les Dunseith

Director, Internal Communications: Virginia Baca

Contributors: Sharon Brock, Tania Chatila, Cristy Lytal, Carol Matthieu, Douglas Morino, Sara Reeve, Leslie Ridgeway, Talar Shahinian, Sherri Snelling and Alison Trinidad

Phone: (323) 442-2830
Fax: (323) 442-2832
Email: hscnews@usc.edu
Web: hscnews.usc.edu | kecknet.usc.edu

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