



Steve Cohn

Rick Caruso, left, receives the Asa V. Call Award from USC President C. L. Max Nikias.

Rick Caruso receives most distinguished alumni honor

By USC News staff

USC honored Trustee Rick J. Caruso, '80, with its most distinguished alumni honor, the Asa V. Call Award, at its 83rd annual Alumni Awards on April 22.

The Asa V. Call Award is given to alumni who have shown exceptional commitment to the university and the community by generously giving their time, energy and leadership.

"Rick Caruso's immense pride for USC is unsurpassed, and his love of the school is visible across our campuses," USC President C. L. Max Nikias, PhD, said. "That includes the Tina and Rick Caruso Department of

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— USC President
C. L. Max Nikias, PhD

Otolaryngology, the USC Caruso Catholic Center and Our Savior Parish church. With inspired generosity, Rick and his wife, Tina, are putting into practice their philanthropic vision, which will benefit Trojans for many generations to come."

"I am so honored to receive this award from USC," the honoree said. "My years at USC fundamentally changed my perspective on what it means to be part of a community, and what my responsibilities are as a member of that community. There isn't a better university that changes the lives of young people so significantly, and they have won my respect, commitment, devotion and gratitude."

The Carusos have donated more than \$50 million to USC, most recently \$25 million to endow the USC Tina and Rick Caruso Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery, one of the nation's largest and highest-ranked facilities for research and treatment of diseases of the ear, nose and throat. He is the CEO and founder of Caruso, one of the largest, privately held real estate development companies in the U.S., which has

See **CARUSO**, page 5

USC-VHH promotes patient safety with new robot named 'Luna'

By Mary Dacuma

An eighth-grade student from a local middle school has made her mark at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital, after her entry was chosen as the winner in a naming contest for a new disinfection robot at the hospital.

Chloe A. of Rosemont Middle School entered a recent contest among students in the community to name the hospital's Xenex robot, winning a \$100 gift card for her submission of "Luna."

The Xenex robot is a no-touch disinfection device that uses UV radiation to zap superbugs after a patient room has already



Courtesy Deborah Weirick

Mary Virgallito, director of patient safety at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital, teaches a class of Rosemont Middle School students about antibiotic resistance superbugs during a recent visit.

been cleaned by traditional methods. This added layer of protection lowers the risk of infection by more than 50 percent. USC-VHH is the

first hospital in the Glendale area to use the Xenex robot.

Chloe was among the dozens of local students

See **ROBOT**, page 5

Doctors pioneer robotic surgery for tumor removal

By Mary Dacuma

A surgical team at Keck Medicine of USC pushed the boundaries of clinical care by performing the first-ever robotic, minimally invasive surgical removal of a stage IV tumor thrombus — a kidney cancer tumor that extends into the heart.

The nearly 10-hour procedure, which required painstaking precision from three renowned surgeons, a critical care anesthesiologist and a radiologist, reduced the patient's risk of sudden death from the tumor breaking off into the heart and lungs.

Typically, this kind of surgery is both traumatic and risky, requiring the patient's chest and abdomen to be opened completely while the anesthesiologist monitors the patient and the thrombus. If the tumor or thrombus break from the inferior vena cava and the heart during surgery, the patient will

likely die instantly. Even in successful surgeries, patients require several quarts of blood transfusion and have a 1 in 20 chance of dying during the procedure.

The use of robotic surgery techniques significantly reduced trauma to the patient and minimized blood loss by more than five-fold. Because the surgery incisions were small, the patient's hospital stay was just six days, as opposed to the typical two to three weeks after open surgery. Overall recovery time also was reduced significantly.

Such multidisciplinary collaboration lays the groundwork for using advanced technology to build higher standards of patient care, even in the most complex cases.

"This exciting feat promises to redefine the boundaries of what is surgically possible through skill, collaboration

See **SURGERY**, page 2



Ricardo Carrasco III

A team of physicians from Keck Medicine of USC are seen, from left: Namir Katkhouda, Vinay Duddalwar, Duraiyah Thangathurai, Mark Cunningham and Inderbir Gill.

Keck Medicine partners with Amgen Tour of California

Keck Medicine of USC is the official hospital of the Amgen Tour of California, America's largest and most prestigious professional cycling event. The cycling course will cover more than 575 miles of iconic highways and coastlines through 12 host cities from May 11 to May 20. Spectators can watch the race along the course, at the finish line or live on the Tour Tracker, at amgentourofcalifornia.com/watch-live/tourtracker.

Keck Medicine will host a booth at several finish lines during the Lifestyle Festival, including in Santa Clarita, Mt. Baldy, Big Bear Lake and Pasadena. Volunteers are needed for the finish lines. Contact Danielle.Viveros@med.usc.edu for details. For more race information, visit amgentourofcalifornia.com.



Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer shares story of success at lecture

By Amanda Busick

An extensive collection of noteworthy photos from recent history were the centerpiece of a lecture by David Hume Kennerly, renowned photojournalist, at the Seventh Annual Vladimir Zelman, PhD, MD Distinguished and Endowed Lectureship, held in Aresty Auditorium on the Health Sciences Campus.

Kennerly won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography in 1972 for his portfolio of subjects that included the Vietnam War, East Pakistani refugees near Kolkata and the famous “Fight of the Century” boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier. He was 25 at the time he received the award, and two years later was appointed photographer to the president for Gerald Ford.

Kennerly said that his career success stems in part from inquisitiveness about the world around us. “I’ve been extremely lucky. And it’s all about curiosity and the idea of being able,



From left, Vladimir Zelman, David Hume Kennerly and Holly Muir are seen after the Seventh Annual Vladimir Zelman, PhD, MD Distinguished and Endowed Lectureship.

with your camera as kind of a passport, to see things that you wouldn’t normally get to see. I’ve always wondered what was happening right around the corner. And I still do.”

Throughout his career, Kennerly has photographed every U.S. president since Richard Nixon, been at the forefront of documenting

important events around the world from the Jonestown massacre to the 2016 presidential campaign and received many of the top honors awarded to photographers. He has also written six books and produced several films.

The Guilford and Diane Glazer Foundation sponsored the April 19 event.

Reception at Keck Hospital celebrates donated artwork

By Douglas Morino

A reception held at Keck Hospital of USC in early April celebrated donated art from photographer Katherine Keck.

The images, taken in Los Angeles, San Francisco and other cities across the globe by Keck on her iPhone, adorn the walls of the hospital’s Cardinal Lobby.

Keck shares close ties with Keck Medicine of USC. Her son, Stephen M. Keck, is on the Board of Overseers of the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Her two other sons, William and Ted, are members of the W. M. Keck Foundation.

Keck was joined at the reception by friends of Keck

Medicine of USC, hospital leaders and staff.

The iPhone Photo Project, which hangs in the Cardinal lobby of Keck Hospital, is intended to show the versatility of the smartphone camera, Keck said, and its ability to capture clear, detailed images.

Keck said she hopes the images in her new exhibit capture the attention, if only for a brief moment, of those who walk past.

“I am hopeful that patients and staff members can look at the photographs on the wall and will have some respite,” Keck said. “These photos can broaden their perspective and take their minds off pressing problems and give them a sense of relief.”

SURGERY: Team hopes to set new standard of care

Continued from page 1

and technology,” said Inderbir S. Gill, MD, Distinguished Professor and chair of urology, and associate dean for clinical innovation at the Keck School of Medicine of USC, who led the multidisciplinary team that performed the surgery. “Our hope is that we can now propel the field at large to turn such futuristic robotic surgery into our present standard of care.”

Before the surgery, Vinay Duddalwar, MD, associate professor of clinical radiology, created three-dimensional animated maps of the patient’s chest and abdomen that allowed surgeons to pre-plan their entire surgical strategy with millimeter precision. Namir Katkhouda, MD, PhD, professor of surgery, began by performing a surgical maneuver to control blood flow to the patient’s liver. Next, Gill used the latest-generation Xi da Vinci surgical robot to completely dissect the tumor-bearing kidney through small keyhole incisions in the patient’s abdomen, through which he was able to access the inferior vena cava where the

cancer had spread. Then Mark Cunningham, MD, associate professor of clinical surgery, put the patient on a heart-lung bypass machine to create a bloodless environment and opened the patient’s heart using a minimally invasive incision through the rib cage.

Cunningham and Gill worked quickly and simultaneously from the chest and abdomen to remove the tumor thrombus from the heart and inferior vena cava, respectively, with Cunningham working from the chest downward and Gill working from the abdomen upward. All the while, Duraiyah Thangathurai, MD, professor of clinical anesthesiology and chief of critical care medicine, monitored the patient’s organ function and heart using an esophageal echo probe.

“We are proud of our ability to coordinate such complex efforts between the cardiac and urologic surgical teams with skill and dexterity,” Cunningham said. “This was the driver of our success and exactly the standard we strive for across the institution.”



Katherine Keck discusses a photo with Rod Hanners, above, and as part of a lecture, below, during a reception for her artwork held April 6.



Calendar of Events

Friday, May 5

9 a.m.-6 p.m. Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute Symposium. “Fourth Annual Zilkha Symposium on Alzheimer’s Disease & Related Disorders. From Investigation to Integration: New Basic, Translational and Clinical Efforts in Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders,” Berislav Zlokovic, MD, PhD, and Paul Aisen, MD; Christer Betsholtz, MD, PhD, Uppsala University; Kaj Blennow, MD, PhD, University of Gothenburg; Karen Duff, PhD, Columbia University; David M. Holtzman, MD, Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis; Costantino Iadecola, MD, Weill Cornell Medical College; Virginia Lee, PhD, and John Trojanowski, MD, PhD, Perelman School of Medicine; Ronald C. Petersen, MD, PhD, Mayo Clinic College of Medicine; Len Petrucelli, PhD, Mayo Clinic Florida; and Rudolph Tanzi, PhD, Harvard University. Herklotz Seminar Room, ZNI 112. Info: Emily Chu, (323) 442-3219, Emily.Chu@med.usc.edu

Noon. Research Center for Liver Diseases Seminar. “Molecular Targets of Bariatric Surgery to Treat Obesity and Fatty Liver,” Wendong Huang, PhD, Beckman Research Institute of City of Hope. Hastings Auditorium.

Info: Dolores Mendoza, (323) 442-1283, dmmendoz@usc.edu

Friday, May 5-Saturday, May 6

7 a.m.-5:30 p.m. USC Caruso Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Continuing Medical Education. “International Surgical Sleep Society Scientific Meeting.” Trojan Grand Ballroom, USC University Park Campus. Info: Chelsea Michel, (323) 442-2555, uscme@usc.edu, https://cmetracker.net/KECKUSC/Catalog

Sunday, May 7

8 a.m. Cardiovascular Medicine. “Greater Los Angeles Congenital Heart Walk.” Griffith Park Crystal Springs Picnic Area. Info: Tiffany Andalon, (323) 442-8054, Tiffany.Andalon@med.usc.edu. RSVP: Ashley Valentino, Ashley.Valentino@med.usc.edu, http://congenitalheartwalk.org

Thursday, May 11

7:30 a.m. USC Institute for Integrative Health Seminar. “Clinical Practice: Pain Psychology,” Susan Axtell, PsyD, and Faye Weinstein, PhD. Harkness Auditorium. Info and RSVP:

Quintilia Avila, (323) 442-2638, qavila@usc.edu, http://integrativehealth.usc.edu

Friday, May 12-Saturday, May 13

All day. USC Commencement. Info: http://commencement.usc.edu

Monday, May 15

Noon. Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute. “Research Ethics Forum — How is Potential Scientific Misconduct Handled,” Jonathan Samet, MD, MS; and Alexander Capron, LLB. Norman Topping Tower (NTT) 4444. Info and RSVP: Karen Kim, (323) 442-8281, wd@sc-ctsi.org, http://bit.ly/2p7UKij

Wednesday, May 17

Noon. The Saban Research Institute Seminar. “Suppression of IgE-mediated Allergy by Oral Immunotherapy,” Wayne G. Shreffler, MD, PhD, Massachusetts General Hospital. Saban Research Institute Auditorium, 4661 Sunset Blvd. Info: Sandy Wang, (323) 361-7489
Noon-4:30 p.m. Amgen Tour of California and Keck Medicine of USC. “Stage 4 Finish Line Lifestyle Festival.” Westfield

Valencia Town Center, Santa Clarita. Info: amgentourofcalifornia.com

4 p.m. Division of Rheumatology Lecture. “David A. Horwitz Inaugural Lecture in Translational Medicine: When Nanotechnology Meets Immunity,” Tarek M. Fahmy, PhD, Yale University. Eli and Edythe Broad CIRM Center Auditorium. Info: Gabby Gutierrez, (323) 442-1946, gagutier@usc.edu

Thursday, May 18

Noon-4:30 p.m. Amgen Tour of California and Keck Medicine of USC. “Stage 5 Finish Line Lifestyle Festival.” Mount Baldy Road, Mt. Baldy. Info: amgentourofcalifornia.com

Friday, May 19

10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Amgen Tour of California and Keck Medicine of USC. “Stage 6 Finish Line Lifestyle Festival.” Big Bear Boulevard, Big Bear Lake. Info: amgentourofcalifornia.com

Saturday, May 20

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Amgen Tour of California and Keck Medicine of USC. “Stage 7 Finish Line Lifestyle Festival.” Pasadena Convention Center. Info: amgentourofcalifornia.com

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.

Stars, smiles expected at 2017 commencement



Approximately 15,000 degrees will be conferred as part of the University of Southern California’s 134th commencement ceremony, to be held on the University Park Campus on May 12. Six people will be awarded honorary degrees in recognition of their contributions to the community as civic, academic, scientific and arts leaders: social work leader Suzanne Dworak-Peck, MSW; comedy star Will Ferrell; David D. Ho, MD, founding director and CEO of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center; biomedical pioneer Gary Michelson, MD; Academy Award-winning actress Helen Mirren; and Mark Ridley-Thomas, PhD, chairman of the Los Angeles County

Board of Supervisors. Ferrell is also this year’s commencement speaker. The main ceremony will be held at Alumni Park, with more than 60,000 people expected to attend this year’s event. The annual Baccalaureate ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. May 11 at Bovard Auditorium, and will feature speaker Deepak Chopra, MD, renowned integrative medicine and personal transformation pioneer. The one-hour ceremony includes the participation of university dignitaries and campus religious leaders from a wide range of religious traditions, and concludes with a benediction over the graduating students.

Commencement 2017: Health Sciences ceremony information

The 134th Commencement at the University of Southern California begins at 8:30 a.m. May 12 at Alumni Memorial Park. Individual school ceremonies follow the main ceremony. Here is a list of times, locations and speakers for the school commencement ceremonies and receptions on May 12 and 13.

Friday, May 12

Physician Assistant Program

10:45 a.m. at Allan Hancock Foundation Building, southwest lawn, University Park Campus. A reception will follow at the same location. Info: (626) 457-4240.
Speakers: Ruth Ballweg, MPA, PA-C Emeritus; Sae Byul Ma, PharmD, assistant professor of clinical family medicine

Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

11 a.m. at Leavey Library West, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. A reception will follow in the courtyard patio at the USC Gloria Kaufman School of Dance. Info: (323) 442-2811.
Speaker: Amy Lamb, OTD, OTR/L, president, American Occupational Therapy Association

Dentistry

1 p.m. at McAlister Field, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. A reception will occur beginning at 11 a.m. at the same location. Info: keeles@usc.edu.
Speaker: Varun Soni, PhD, JD, dean, USC Office of Religious Life

Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy

11:30 a.m. at Bovard Auditorium, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. Info: lvazquez@pt.usc.edu.
Speaker: Mike Nyeholt, co-founder, Swim with Mike

Health Promotion and Global Health Programs

11 a.m. at Town and Gown, University Park Campus. Reception is at 10:30 a.m. following the USC main ceremony. Tickets are required, four tickets allotted per graduate. Info: (213) 821-1601.
Speaker: Peter V. Long, PhD, president and CEO, Blue Shield of California Foundation

Pharmacy

3 p.m. at Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad, Health Sciences Campus. A reception will follow at the same location. Tickets are required. Info: (323) 442-1369.
Speaker: Jessica Núñez de Ybarra, MD, MPH, California Department of Public Health medical officer

Saturday, May 13

PhD, MPH, MS — Medicine

9 a.m. at Galen Center, University Park Campus. Tickets not required. A reception will follow at 11 a.m. at McCarthy Quad, University Park Campus. Info: (323) 442-1607.
Speaker: Anne Schuchat, MD, acting director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; acting administrator, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry; and assistant surgeon general, U.S. Public Health Service

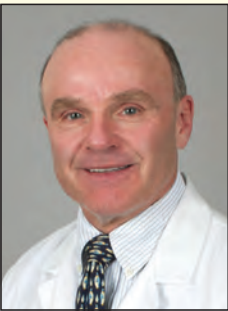
MD/PhD, MD — Medicine

3 p.m. at Galen Center, University Park Campus. Doors open at 2 p.m., tickets not required. A reception will follow at 5 p.m. at McCarthy Quad, University Park Campus. Info: (323) 442-2420.
Speaker: Leonard Schaeffer, founding chairman and CEO of WellPoint; Judge Robert Maclay Widney Chair and Professor; and senior adviser to TPG Capital

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Thomas Buchanan, MD

Thomas A. Buchanan, MD, is professor of medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, and physiology and biophysics; vice dean for research; chief of the division of endocrinology and diabetes in the Department of Medicine at the Keck School of Medicine at USC. He also is the founding director of the Southern California Clinical and Translational Science Institute.



On April 17, Buchanan was presented with the Associates Awards for Creativity in Research at the university’s 2017 Academic Honors Convocation. He recently sat down with *HSC News* to discuss his work.

Q: You’re being awarded for the creativity that you bring to your research. Can you talk a little about that? What does it mean to be creative in a scientific field? Why is this important?

A: Creativity may be different things to different people. To me, it involves the ability to think beyond conventional wisdom, imagine new explanations for research observations, and design and conduct studies that take a field in a new direction. Creativity is important because human biology and health are incredibly complex; today’s knowledge is often only partially correct and sometimes actually wrong. Only through creativity can we get to new and better understandings that let us improve health care and health.

Q: Do you get to exercise your creativity in other areas of your life?

A: I suppose the best example outside of science is photography, especially underwater photography where the creativity involves composition, lighting — and a lot of patience. I have a small gallery of my favorite pictures in my office. It reminds me that there is more than work in this world — even though I do love my work.

For the full interview, go to hscnews.usc.edu/commencement.

Read more spotlights online...

On May 12 and 13, thousands of hard-working students will celebrate their moment in the spotlight as USC holds commencement ceremonies on the University Park and Health Sciences campuses.

To read more stories behind the cap and gown, or to learn about faculty members or various programs offered by the Keck School of Medicine of USC, USC School of Pharmacy, Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC, USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, and USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, go to hscnews.usc.edu/commencement.

Here are some of the graduates you can learn more about on our website:

- Alicia Mendoza, USC Chan Division
- Delcie Strahan, Keck School
- Dixin Shen, Keck School
- Erica Lynn Harris, USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy
- Hugo Partida, Ostrow School
- Jeffrey Ryan Hill, Keck School
- Jonathan Nguyen, Ostrow School
- Joseph Ungco, USC Chan Division
- Lauren Mills, Keck School
- Nelson Poliran Jr., Keck School

- Nicole Koutsodendris, Keck School
- Shannon Meggs, USC Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy
- Wendy Hsiao, Keck School

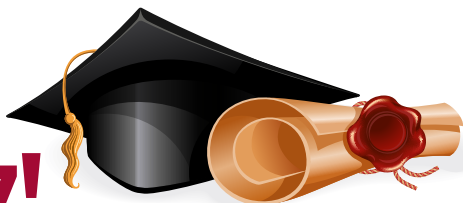
You can also learn about:

- Student wellness at the Keck School
- New minor at the USC School of Pharmacy
- Jonathan LoPresti’s work at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center
- Travel opportunities in the Global Medicine program

... and more!

CONGRATULATIONS

Class of 2017!



The class of 2017 is made up of a stellar group of health care providers from a variety of backgrounds and with a range of interests. Read some of their stories here and find more on our website, hscnews.usc.edu/commencement.

Alison Cogan

PhD, Occupational Science

Alison Cogan, MA, may be a civilian but she deeply appreciates the social and family life of military servicemembers.

Not only is her brother an active duty Marine, Cogan’s dissertation for the occupational science PhD degree she will receive May 12 during the 75th annual commencement ceremony of the USC Chan Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy focused on ways to optimize participation of servicemembers after mild traumatic brain injury.

“I’ve seen how families are affected by the deployment cycle, and the reintegration and readjustment process that follows,” said Cogan, who hails from Philadelphia. These issues, of course, become more complex with brain and bodily injuries.

Cogan will soon begin a two-year Veterans Affairs Advanced Fellowship in Polytrauma/Traumatic Brain Injury at the Washington DC VA Medical Center. There, she will hone her skills using large research databases, building toward her goal of becoming a funded, independent career researcher. Thanks to USC Chan, she’s well on her way.



Brandon Ortega

Doctor of Medicine

Growing up in the suburbs of Phoenix, Brandon Ortega would spend each summer at his grandfather’s ranch in Chihuahua, Mexico, the same way his father did. These annual visits, encouraged by his parents, taught him the value of hard work and to appreciate the many opportunities he had in the U.S.

The first in his family to attend college, Ortega graduated from Occidental College, playing football all four years. He took a year off before attending medical school to help with the family business, driving a semi-truck for more than a year to pay down student loans.

While at the Keck School, Ortega participated in the Dean’s Research Scholars Program, taking a full year to pursue research under Jay Lieberman, MD, chair and professor of orthopaedic surgery, which included exploring gene therapy to heal bone defects.

Ortega matched into his first choice — orthopaedic surgery at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center — and is eager to provide service to a community facing many socioeconomic and health disparities.



Chukuemeka Ogudu

Master of Science, Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine

How far would you go to provide a better life for your family or your country?

Chukuemeka Ogudu moved to America to become a doctor. He pursued his master’s degree in stem cell biology and regenerative medicine at USC with the goals of financially providing for his family and of improving health care in his hometown in Nigeria.

Ogudu was born and raised in Lagos, Nigeria. Looking for better opportunities for Ogudu and his three brothers, his parents moved the family to London, then eventually to Montreal.

Ogudu attended Texas Tech University, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in biology and shadowed doctors. Now, Ogudu plans to pursue a medical degree and complete his residency before moving back to Nigeria.

“I miss my aunts and uncles back in Nigeria,” he said. “The one thing that keeps me going is knowing that I have the opportunity to provide a better life for them and to provide better health care for the people of Nigeria when I become a doctor.”



Danielle Cortez

Doctor of Pharmacy

When Danielle Cortez accepts her doctorate of pharmacy at the 134th Commencement on May 12, her cheering section will include three of her biggest motivations for pursuing pharmacy school: Her three young children.

Throughout four years of pharmacy school, Cortez juggled family and academic responsibilities, worked at Kaiser Permanente 20+ hours/ week and served as president of the USC School of Pharmacy’s Skull and Mortar Honorary Service Fraternity.

Allison Frierson Bryant, USC School of Pharmacy’s Associate Director for Student Affairs and Financial Aid, noted Cortez’s leadership and remarkable time-management skills have made her a role model to other students.

After commencement, Cortez will remain at USC for one more year, completing the Ambulatory Care Residency Program.

“I want everyone to know that it is possible to achieve your goals,” Cortez said. “Nothing is impossible. As long as you stick to what makes you happy and dream high, you can reach the stars.”



Derek Dangerfield

PhD, Health Behavior Research

From Malaysia to Baltimore to Los Angeles, Derek Dangerfield has conducted research around the world — and can now add a PhD in health behavior research to his list of accomplishments.

It’s a long list. Hailing from a working-class, single parent home in Baltimore, Dangerfield studied sociology at Georgetown University while assisting health research at Johns Hopkins University. After graduating, he received a Fulbright Scholarship that funded his yearlong research of sexual risk behaviors among men who have sex with men in Malaysia.

In 2013, he received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, which supported his doctoral studies at the Keck School’s Department of Preventive Medicine.

With his PhD behind him, Dangerfield will continue post-doctoral training as a fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing.

“I am excited to participate in the field and see the extent to which my passion for my work impacts the field and the health of communities,” he said.



Kelsie Kaiser

Doctor of Physical Therapy

Kelsie Kaiser knew she wanted to be a physical therapist after shadowing a USC physical therapist during high school.

“The experience opened my eyes to the impact that a physical therapist can have,” Kaiser said. “A physical therapist not only improves how someone moves but also improves the patient’s quality of life.”

The Michigan native began her studies in sunny Southern California in 2014. While at USC, she earned an Academic Excellence Scholarship and a Josette Antonelli Division Service Scholarship. She also served as her class’ president and a San Gabriel Valley District Student Liaison for the California Physical Therapy Association. She graduates with USC’s Order of Areté Award, given to outstanding graduate students whose dedication to leadership and community service go beyond that of their peers.

Kaiser will next enter USC’s orthopedic residency program where she hopes to further refine her skills to become an orthopedic clinical specialist.



Mishaun Sahebi

Doctor of Dental Surgery

Mishaun Sahebi first knew he wanted to pursue dentistry while a junior in high school.

“I fell in love with the artistic intimacy and mutual trust that developed between the dentist and the patient,” said Sahebi, who served as class president for the DDS Class of 2017 all four years of dental school.

Sahebi believes that his respect for the profession and doing what he was passionate about helped guide him through his dental education.

During his dental school career, Sahebi was honored with the Dental Student Award from the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and the Student Leadership Award from Delta Dental.

After graduation, the Oregon-born Sahebi will leave the West Coast behind to embark on a six-year oral and maxillofacial surgery residency at Louisiana State University in New Orleans, where he will also work toward his doctor of medicine degree.

“I hope that my classmates remember me as someone who aimed to put humility above all in my thoughts and actions toward peers, faculty, staff and patients.”



Sinthu Kumar

Master of Public Health

Passionate about preventive medicine and quality health care, Sinthu Kumar knew what she wanted from her education: a 360-degree picture of public health.

“I realized that all change begins on the policy level,” she said, crediting professor of clinical preventive medicine, MPH Health Services and Policy Track Director Michael Cousineau, DPH, “who constantly challenges the way we think about health policy and motivates me to keep researching for areas of improvement.”

Her biggest accomplishment at USC was interning at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles My VOICE Adolescent Transition Program. As president of the MPH Student Association, Kumar also met peers and faculty who would become lifelong friends and mentors.

After graduation, Kumar plans to work as a health care consultant or program manager to continue addressing quality in health care.

“I consider my two years in this program one of the most exciting times of my life,” she said.



Urologic cancer foundation funds chair, endowments with closure

By Hope Hamashige

The Butch Walts and Donald Skinner Urologic Cancer Research Foundation, which has supported cutting-edge research in the urologic cancer program of the USC Institute of Urology and USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center for more than three decades, has been dissolved, with nearly \$11 million in assets transferred to the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Department of Urology at the Keck School of Medicine of USC.

Of those funds, \$5 million will establish the Shirley and Donald G. Skinner MD Endowed Chair of Urologic Cancer Surgery, \$5.58 million will establish the Butch Walts and Donald G. Skinner MD Cancer Research Endowment, and \$342,000 will complete the funding of the Gary Lieskovsky MD Endowed Fellowship in Urologic Oncology.

The foundation was the brain child of Donald Skinner, MD, who served as Professor and Chair of the Catherine and Joseph Aresty Department of Urology from 1980 to 2009. In 1981, Skinner began soliciting funds from former patients to raise money to develop the department and its research program. There was no mechanism within the university at the time that would allow donor money to accrue interest until it was spent and so he decided to start a foundation where those funds could appreciate.

Around the same time, Butch Walts, a professional tennis player who Skinner cured of advanced testicular cancer, contacted the department with an offer to help raise funds. He organized a series of celebrity tennis tournaments to raise money for the foundation that drew the sport's biggest names including John McEnroe, Bjorn Borg, Jimmy Connors, Billy Jean King, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova.

Since 1982, the foundation has contributed nearly \$9 million to support urologic cancer research at USC Norris. The money typically was used to support established research and to provide critical seed money to start promising research that led to millions more from the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute.

The foundation, Skinner said, provided great flexibility and was critically important to the development of the urology program at USC into one of the top urology departments in the country.



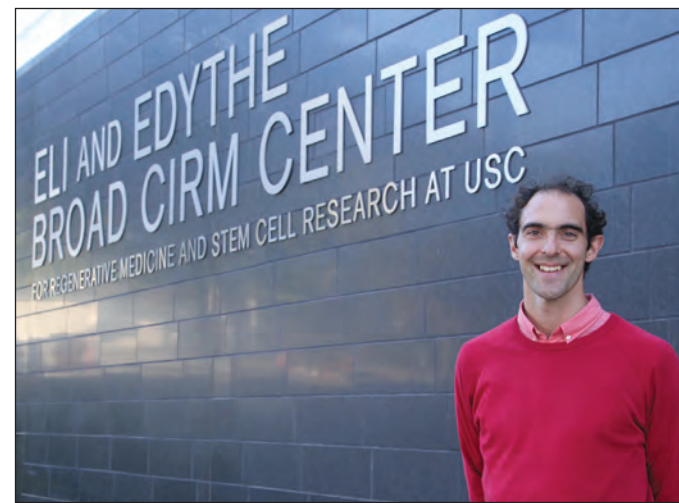
Donald G. Skinner

Student innovators sought for annual showcase competition

By Peijean Tsai

USC students with a startup idea or invention are encouraged to enter the USC Stevens Student Innovator Showcase business competition and win thousands of dollars in funding. The USC Stevens Center for Innovation currently is seeking applications from undergraduate and graduate

students in all disciplines to compete in the 11th Annual USC Stevens Student Innovator Showcase on Oct. 13 at the University Park Campus. Applications for the Showcase will be accepted online beginning April 26 at <http://stevens.usc.edu/events/student-innovator-showcase>. The deadline to apply is Sept. 5.



Leonardo Morsut

Cristy Lytal

Stem cell researcher Leonardo Morsut is at top of his game

By Cristy Lytal

For Leonardo Morsut, PhD, the word “set” refers to a collection of scientific data. “Set” is also the prelude to spiking a volleyball over the net — something he used to do for a living as a professional athlete in Italy.

“Professional volleyball was always a side project,” said Morsut, assistant professor of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. “It was science that was the main thing.”

True to his word, Morsut has always put research first. Even while playing professional volleyball, he found the time to attend the University of Padova, where Galileo once lectured. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in medical biotechnologies, before pursuing a second bachelor’s degree in mathematics.

At the peak of his athletic career, Morsut quit to pursue a PhD, focusing on mouse gastrulation — the early embryonic phase during which a ball of cells organizes itself into distinct layers as a prelude to organ formation. He then picked up an unrelated side project: how stem cells behave differently depending upon whether they’re on a hard or a soft surface. He and his colleagues’ research revealed that when stem cells are on a hard surface, they react by producing two signals — called YAP and TAZ — that encourage them to become bone cells. Morsut and his team published their discovery in the journal *Nature*.

Morsut then pursued a postdoctoral fellowship in

the laboratory of “synthetic biology” pioneer Wendell Lim, PhD, at the University of California, San Francisco.

“Synthetic biology is pretty much trying to bring the engineering approach of building things into biology,” Morsut explained.

He built a synthetic cellular communication system known as “synNotch,” created by co-opting a natural communication system, called Notch, in which a cell uses a sensor on its surface to recognize and trigger a particular response to a specific signal. In Morsut’s synthetic version, he swapped in a new sensor to control what the sensor recognizes, as well as what the cell does in response — a breakthrough that could have many medical applications, such as engineering cells to recognize and attack tumors.

While this breakthrough earned Morsut a position at USC Stem Cell, his wife Sabina also accepted a postdoctoral fellowship in art history at USC and the couple, who originally met when they were 12 years old in Padova, will welcome their second child this June.

At USC, Morsut plans to use synNotch to direct the differentiation of stem cells into blood vessels that can support engineered organs, as well as develop additional synthetic biology tools, and said he looks forward to collaborating with researchers at the USC Viterbi School of Engineering and the USC Michelson Center for Convergent Bioscience, slated to open in fall 2017.

ROBOT

Continued from page 1

to meet the robot as part of an educational tour during National Patient Safety Week in March. A team of hospital experts took the hospital’s new germ-zapping Xenex robot to Rosemont Middle School in La Crescenta, La Canada High School and Fremont Elementary School in Glendale.

Students learned about the development of antibiotic-resistant superbugs and what hospitals nationwide are doing to stop them. The lesson included topics like the structure of germs; how the germ membrane is broken by hand-washing, antibacterial gel and UV radiation; and why superbugs are a growing problem.

The classes were taught by Mary Virgallito, RN, director of patient safety at USC-VHH. Virgallito also is the acting president of the Greater Los Angeles chapter of the Association of Professionals in Infection Control.

CARUSO: Six other alumni recognized at annual gala

Continued from page 1

created some of Southern California’s most extraordinary destinations, including The Grove and The Americana at Brand.

The USC Alumni Association also recognized six notable Trojans for their achievements and contributions to the university:

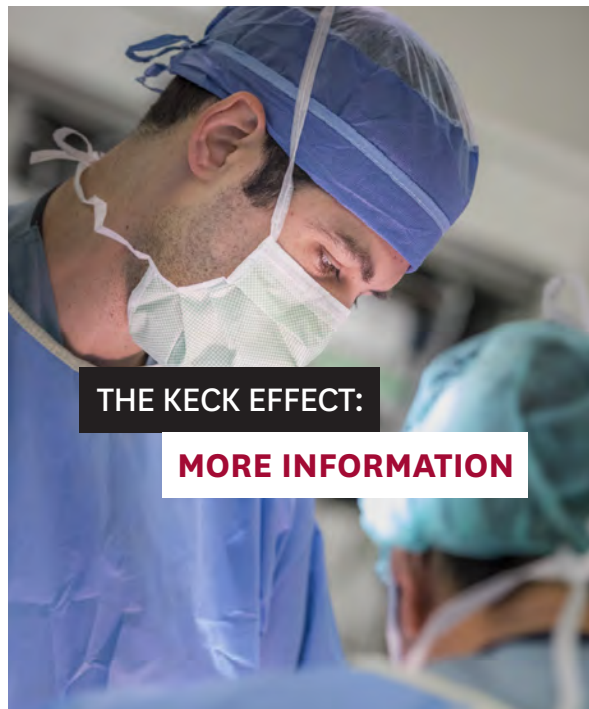
Receiving Alumni Merit Awards were Wanda M. Austin, PhD, ’88, the former president and CEO of The Aerospace Corp. and a member of the USC Board of Trustees since 2010; Grant Gershon, ’85, the artistic director of the Los Angeles Master Chorale and the resident conductor of LA Opera; and Wilfred “Fred” Uytengsu, ’83, the president and CEO of Alaska Milk Corp., the

leading milk company in the Philippines.

Allyson Felix, ’08, nine-time Olympic medalist and the most decorated woman in American track and field history, received the Young Alumni Merit Award.

Dan Cassidy, ’59, a past president and a current member of the Half Century Trojans board of directors, and Vicki McCluggage, ’76, a past president of the Trojan League of Los Angeles and longtime university volunteer, received Alumni Service Awards.

Every year since 1932, the USC Alumni Association has paid tribute to distinguished members of the Trojan Family. The annual Alumni Awards gala is the premier event hosted by the USC Alumni Association.



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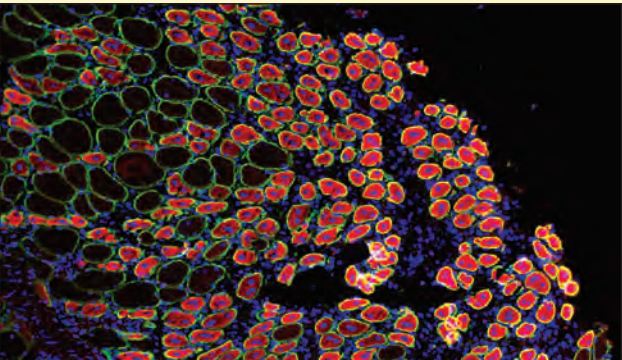
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Newly regenerated muscle fibers

Courtesy Joseph T. Rodgers

Study: Enzyme can help speed recovery from injuries

ACCELERATED HEALING ISN'T JUST FOR SUPERHEROES. A new study in *Cell Reports* suggests a way that mere mortals can potentially speed their recovery from a wide variety of injuries, according to lead author Joseph T. Rodgers, PhD, assistant professor of stem cell biology and regenerative medicine at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. This recent study builds upon Rodgers' previous finding: when one part of the body suffers an injury, adult stem cells in uninjured areas throughout the body enter a primed or "alert" state. Alert stem cells have an enhanced potential to repair tissue damage. In this new study, Rodgers and his colleagues identified the critical signal in blood that alerted stem cells: an enzyme called Hepatocyte Growth Factor Activator (HGFA). — **Cristy Lytal**



Students from the Keck School of Medicine of USC line up to receive an In-N-Out lunch as part of the Keck School's Student Appreciation Luncheon, held March 29 on the Broad Lawn.

Steve Cohn

Students feel appreciation at annual luncheon

STUDENTS FROM THE KECK SCHOOL of Medicine of USC enjoyed Southern California favorites during the Keck School's annual Student Appreciation Luncheon, held March 29 on the Broad Lawn. Students could choose from an array of food choices, including tacos, In-N-Out burgers and Pinkberry.



From left, Raymond Hah, Frank Acosta and John Liu are seen during the 2017 USC Spine Symposium, held April 8 at the Ritz Carlton in Marina del Rey.

USC Spine Center

Physicians, patients learn about the spine at symposium

MORE THAN 170 PHYSICIANS AND PATIENTS attended the 2017 USC Spine Symposium recently, to learn about the management of spinal disorders. Coordinated by the USC Spine Center and the Keck School of Medicine of USC Continuing Medical Education Office, the course was held April 8 at the Ritz Carlton in Marina del Rey and was directed by Christopher Ornelas, MD, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedic surgery; Frank Acosta, MD, associate professor of clinical neurological surgery; and Raymond Hah, MD, assistant professor of clinical orthopaedic surgery.



Gus Ruelas

STAYING HEALTHY: Boyle Heights residents descended on Hazard Park on April 8 for a free community health fair and toddler run. The event, which included health screenings and giveaways, was sponsored by the HSC Community Partnerships, the USC Office of Civic Engagement, Keck Medical Center of USC, the American Heart Association and the Hazard Park Recreation Center.

Latest Visions and Voices event examines notion of a 'good death'

By Sara Reeve

It's not every campus presentation that begins with the question, "How many people here have seen a dead body in person?" But that is exactly how USC medical librarian Megan Rosenbloom opened a discussion titled, "Doctor's Orders for a Good Death," on April 6 in the Mayer Auditorium on the Health Sciences Campus.

The presentation, part of the USC Visions & Voices arts and humanities initiative, featured a panel discussion with Caitlin Doughty, a mortician and spokesperson for death acceptance, and Lindsey Fitzharris, PhD, a medical historian and creator of the website, *The Surgeon's Apprentice*.

When Rosenbloom asked that provocative question, she seemed surprised at the large number of hands raised in the affirmative.

"Over the course of the 20th century, Americans, in particular, have become more and more detached from death," she said. "And they had fewer interactions with corpses in particular. And that lack of interaction — that sort of detachment — has led to some pretty big impacts on our culture."

Those impacts featured heavily in the program, which began with readings from upcoming books from both Doughty (*From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death*) and Fitzharris (*The Butchering Art — Joseph Lister's Quest to Transform the Grisly World of Victorian Medicine*) before transitioning into a panel discussion with Rosenbloom. Topics ranged from the birth of antisepsis and surgical hygiene, to cultural practices surrounding death around the world, to the benefits of medical students being taught with donated cadavers.

"It's the emotional experience of cutting into that cadaver that is the thing that sticks with medical students, because it is a rite of passage," Fitzharris said. "It's much more than just the training of the doctor. There's



Ricardo Carrasco III

Caitlin Doughty, left, speaks while Megan Rosenbloom looks on during the Visions and Voices event, "Doctor's Orders for a Good Death."

something else there ... I think to kind of take that away from medical students would also make it more difficult for them to accept the realities of death with patients."

Doughty noted that a "good death" is really one in which a person has been clear about

their priorities with their loved ones. "If you don't lay that out, none of it's going to happen. You're not going to stumble into a good death. You're not going to stumble into a well-rehearsed, organized, painless death. It's just not going to happen."

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