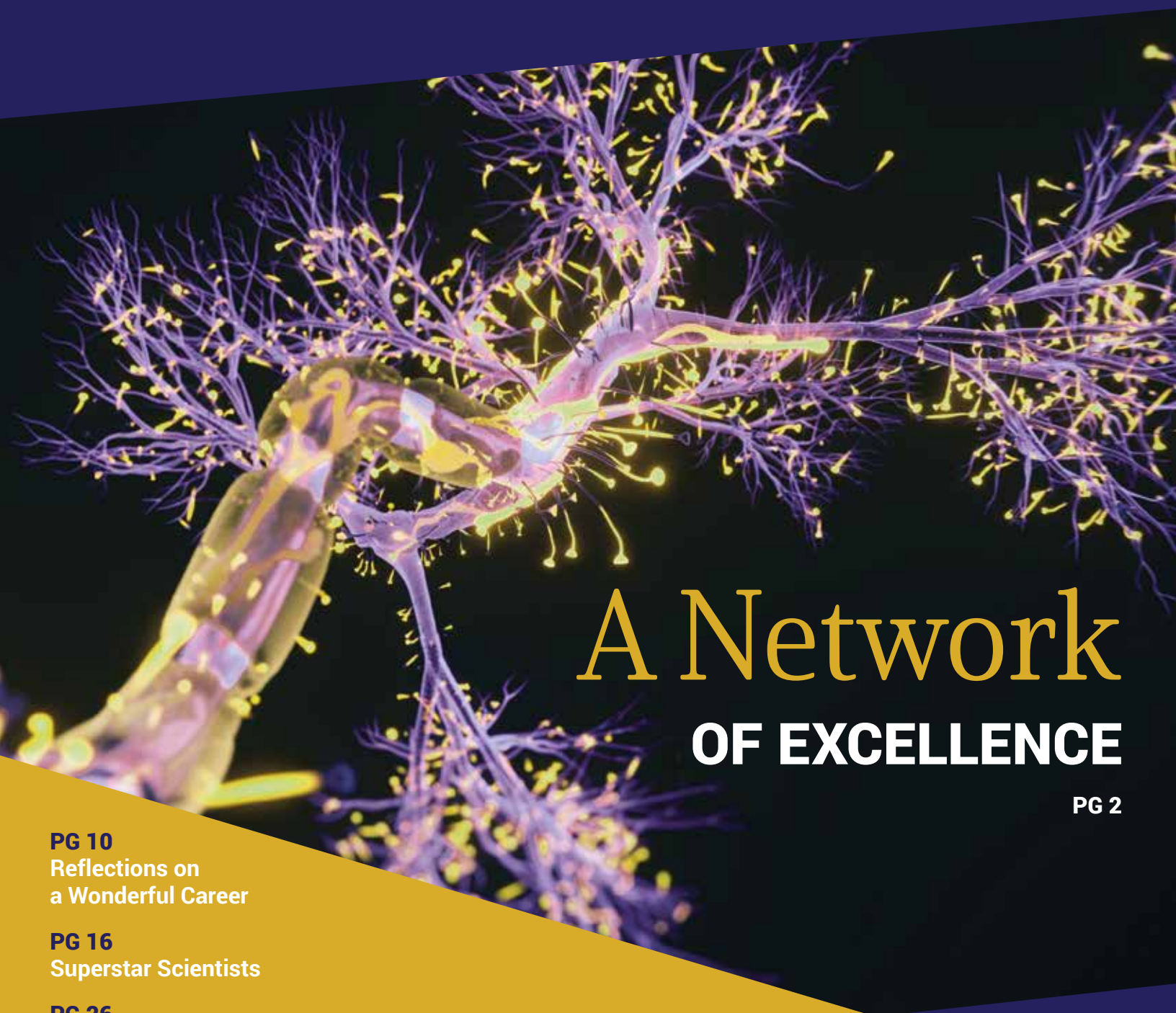


LSU HEALTH NEW ORLEANS

SCHOOL OF

MEDICINE

2022
2023



A Network OF EXCELLENCE

PG 2

PG 10
Reflections on
a Wonderful Career

PG 16
Superstar Scientists

PG 26
Lifelines of Care

LSU Health
NEW ORLEANS
School of Medicine

OUR Mission

Louisiana State University School of Medicine – New Orleans educates medical students, residents, and other learners in an environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity, and that reflects the diversity of its community.

The School of Medicine, striving for excellence in medical education, clinically relevant research, and healthcare delivery, partners with other LSUHSC schools, local healthcare systems, and community organizations, to provide a strong and supportive environment for learners and their faculty.

Medical Education Mission Objectives

The undergraduate medical curriculum enables our graduates to become knowledgeable, culturally competent, caring physicians, who can function in evolving healthcare systems, engage in life-long learning, and appreciate and evaluate medical research. Graduate Medical Education programs enable residents to become skilled and knowledgeable in their chosen discipline, and to respectfully assume the responsibilities of a practicing physician in an increasingly diverse community and nation.

We prepare students and residents to prioritize patient safety, to value interprofessional teamwork, and to improve healthcare quality for all.

Research Mission Objectives

As medical education and research are tightly interrelated, commitment to clinically relevant research within the School of Medicine heightens the intellectual atmosphere, develops new knowledge, and transmits current information for the benefit of all constituencies. The School of Medicine and LSUHSC campus provide sophisticated infrastructure for scientific investigation undertaken by our faculty and learners, including state-of-the-art instrumentation, space, animal care facilities, and computer services. The vitality of the research enterprise is sustained by the vigorous pursuit of external research funding and supported by strategic long term planning.

Service Mission Objectives

The School of Medicine promotes excellence in healthcare delivery through relationships with our clinical partners and our community. Clinical practice values and maintains the cultural competency and technical skills of faculty, and expands opportunities for undergraduate and graduate teaching and research. The school is responsive to rapidly evolving healthcare delivery models. Additionally, the school is committed to programs that enhance our relationships within the community, provide educational and service opportunities, and enhance the quality of life for constituents of our state and local communities.



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LSU HEALTH NEW ORLEANS SCHOOL OF MEDICINE MAGAZINE, 2022-2023 EDITION

This annual magazine is published by LSU Health Foundation, New Orleans in partnership with the Dean's Office. To share story ideas for the next issue, update contact information, or provide general feedback, please email SOMMagazine@LSUHealthFoundation.org.

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CHANGE IS CONSTANT, BUT SO ARE WE

When Dr. Nelson asked me to serve as Interim Dean of the School of Medicine in December 2021, I did not hesitate to say yes. It is a great honor to serve this school where I have been on faculty since 1993. Change is a constant in life—especially in medicine—but one thing that has held steady is our mission. Our recent Match Day celebration reminded me that our purpose is constant. Despite increasing competition nationwide, we had a very successful match day with many students matching at prestigious programs around the country. We are delighted that nearly 50% of this class chose to stay in Louisiana, and that 80% of those who remained in the state chose to train in our residencies. That is a testament to our training programs, our excellent faculty and our outstanding clinical leaders.

The past few years have been about growth and expansion to position the School of Medicine for excellence over the next 20 years. Our faculty has grown despite the disruption of the COVID pandemic. We recently recruited a new Department Head for Surgery, **Dr. Valentine Nfonsam**—whose incredible work you can read about on page 17—and a new Department Head in Pediatrics, **Dr. Dedrick Moulton**, who started in this role on March 1, 2022. We have successfully recruited several research faculty members who will further our efforts in cancer research, and will help us bring a NCI-designated cancer center to Louisiana. Additionally, we signed an important agreement with Xavier University that streamlines our ability to recruit some of their best and brightest students to LSU School of Medicine.

There are many developments on campus this year. We completed a 13,000 sq. ft. state-of-the-art animal care facility in the summer of 2022, opened the renovated Interim LSU Hospital building (formerly Hotel Dieu) as the Center for Advanced Learning and Simulation (CALs) and our new student housing option —The Residences at LSU Health—became available to all students of the health sciences center as of January 2023. The CALs building now houses the academic offices of the clinical departments that were in the original medical school building at 1542 Tulane Avenue. In addition to renovated office space, the building allows us to improve our clinical training through the use of standardized patients, a simulated emergency room, and additional simulation and demonstration labs. Shortly, the School of Medicine will begin another exciting project on the 40-year-old Medical Education Building. Floors 5-7 will begin major renovations in the coming months, and will be the home for state-of-the-art labs for our basic science research. This serves as an opportunity for the school to re-imagine our research operations for the next decade.

The School of Medicine continues to train the next generation of doctors for Louisiana and make scientific advances in healthcare. I am so proud of this community and look forward to seeing these new buildings and renovations bring us even closer together. Thank you to all our loyal supporters who afford us these opportunities in education and research. If you haven't already, please consider joining us in leaving your mark on campus through our Institutional Enhancement Campaign.



Richard DiCarlo, MD
Interim Dean of LSUHSC School of Medicine

A Neural Network of Excellence

FOSTERING NEUROSCIENCE EDUCATION,
RESEARCH & COMMUNITY SERVICE
SINCE 1989

The Neuroscience Center of Excellence (NCE) brings together LSU Health faculty, professional staff, and students to conduct groundbreaking neuroscience research, enrich educational experiences and participate in community activities.

Research programs at the Center further the understanding of brain function and diseases that affect the nervous system. These diseases have no cure at the present time; thus, the Center is crucial for developing new knowledge that could contribute to uncovering therapeutics for prevention and curtailing their onset or progression.

Left: Dr. Nicolas Bazan (seated) and faculty colleagues Dr. Jennifer Lentz and Dr. Song Hong. Right: Dr. Bazan holds a MALDI mass spectrometry plate used in the imaging of an Alzheimer's brain memory area.



network



GROWING A REPUTATION OF HIGH-QUALITY INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

The Founder and Director of the Neuroscience Center of Excellence, **Dr. Nicolas Bazan**, began his career at LSU in 1981 as a professor of ophthalmology, biochemistry and molecular biology and neurology. Dr. Bazan's research has revolutionized ophthalmology, neuroscience, and medicine by uncovering signaling and molecular principles of cell survival and neuroprotection. His illustrious career includes founding the Ernest C. and Yvette C. Villere Chair for Research in Retinal Degeneration, being appointed to the highest academic rank in the LSU System—a Boyd Professor—and becoming a Foreign Adjunct Professor of Neuroscience at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden.

Reflecting on his 42 years at this institution and 35 years as NCE Director, Dr. Bazan shared,

“The first thought that comes to my mind is gratitude for the encouragement and support of many, including from community members.” — *Dr. Bazan*

He continues, “The accomplishments and successes described here are because I have been very fortunate to be surrounded by unusually talented faculty, motivated and dedicated fellows, graduate students, and

by the support of our extraordinary administrative personnel. All these pieces have facilitated the creation and sustainment of an effective culture of academic and innovation excellence”.

Dr. Bazan was determined to make

increasing the visibility of neuroscience research happening at LSU a priority in his first few years in New Orleans. Along with his colleagues in the Center, he developed the Distinguished Lectureship in Neurosciences and the LSU Neuroscience Center Retreat. These

programs brought prominent guest speakers from around the world to share their research and discoveries at LSU. Speakers included Francis Crick, one of the original scientists to discover the DNA double helix, and sixteen Nobel Laureates throughout the years.

| ESTABLISHING A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

In 1989, Dr. Bazan proposed the creation of the Neuroscience Center of Excellence to be a campus-wide organization specialized in Neuroscience and focused on the mission components of Education, Research, and Community Service. He proposed and implemented that all faculty of the Center must be primarily appointed in a given Department (even when all the compensation is within the Center budget) to enhance multidisciplinary collaborations. Dr. Bazan’s proposal was evaluated and supported by an external advisory committee of distinguished neuroscientists and,

later that year, authorized by the LSU Board of Supervisors and the Louisiana Board of Regents.

Along with the creation of the Neuroscience Center, Dr. Bazan shared his vision for additional Centers of Excellence throughout Louisiana. He proposed an effort to enhance and sustain academic multidisciplinary research in a focus area – hubs that foster new knowledge, innovative research productivity, education, community activities, and positively impact economic development in the state. This remains the foundation for

the Louisiana Board of Regents Centers of Research Excellence program.

Research Centers across the state attract significant investments from the federal government and industry for discovery and innovation which make possible sustained growth in the University itself, its surrounding communities, and the state’s economy. Creation of the Neuroscience Center was followed shortly by the Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center of Excellence, and later by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence and the Cardiovascular Center of Excellence.

Dr. Bazan and the team at the Neuroscience Center of Excellence



| INCENTIVIZING COLLABORATION AMONG DEPARTMENTS

To further foster transdisciplinary research on campus, Dr. Bazan developed an innovative medical school-wide grant program in 1991 funded in part by the initial Center budget. Grants were awarded to research teams which included faculty from across departmental lines. This program successfully contributed to obtaining new NIH grants and fostering

interactions among neuroscientists from different departments. While this began as an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental endeavor, the enterprise grew and expanded to include academic institutions across the state and nationwide.

The quality of the research groups and the ease of collaborations and

interactions allowed the Center to attract major program-project type federal grants on sleep deprivation and a major EPSCoR/NSF grant on Micro-nanotechnologies in neural signaling, bringing together three other academic institutions from Louisiana along with the Neuroscience Center. Several discoveries were made that appeared in major journals.

| SECURING FUNDING FOR FLOORS 7-9 OF THE LIONS BUILDING

By 1993, the Neuroscience Center's immense growth meant a need for updated lab space and equipment. Dr. Bazan partnered with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command to assemble and lead an innovative project entitled "Neural Response to Injury: Prevention, Protection and Repair." The research

team sought to explore new strategies for the prevention and repair of neural injury using the state-of-the-art tools of cell biology, neurochemistry, neuroimmunology, neurophysiology, neuropharmacology, molecular biology, and virology. He secured \$13,860,000 in funding for this project that enabled construction of the 7th-9th floors of the

Lions Building where the Center still resides today. These funds also facilitated the acquisition of major equipment for the Departments of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Neurosurgery, Neurology, Pharmacology, and Ophthalmology to support further collaborations.

| CREATING THE SUMMER UNDERGRADUATE NEUROSCIENCE (SUN) AND ARTIST IN RESIDENCY PROGRAMS

Furthering the Center's influence in the community, Dr. Bazan began the Summer Undergraduate Neuroscience Program in 1993 as an avenue to expose younger generations to the neurosciences. The goal of this short, intensive experience is to stimulate an interest in medicine, neuroscience, and research as a career. Students attend lectures in investigative neuroscience,

molecular neurobiology, behavioral neuroscience, and cell biology. They gain hands-on experience working on research projects in faculty laboratories and participate in workshops where they share what they have learned. Since its inception, this program has educated over 700 participants, many of whom are now successful physicians and researchers.



Taryn Möller Nicoll (right) was an Artist in Residency for several years. She and Dr. Bazan (left) presented to the American Neurological Association 2013 annual meeting the painting, "The constellation of events at the onset of dementia: An artistic perspective."

RECOGNITION AS THE FIRST NIH CENTER OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN LOUISIANA

In 2002, Dr. Bazan received the first Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) award from the National Institutes of Health in the State of Louisiana. COBRE grants support the establishment and development of innovative biomedical research centers. This grant was continuously funded for

15 years for over \$20 million and has exerted a substantial, positive influence on neuroscience research in the state.

Funding from the COBRE grant also allowed for further development of the culture of mentoring and collaboration amongst different disciplines. Initiatives

have helped not only LSU Health, but also many other Louisiana universities including the University of New Orleans, Xavier University, Nicholls State University, and Tulane University. Since this first COBRE, Louisiana has seen the development of many other COBRE grants using Dr. Bazan's grant as a model.

SETBACKS FROM HURRICANE KATRINA

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina was felt across New Orleans and in all parts of the LSU Health Sciences Center for years after its landfall in 2005. Citywide power outages caused all scientists at the Neuroscience Center to lose years of hard work in the form of reagents,

cell cultures and animal colonies. Many faculty members, discouraged by the substantial damage inflicted by Katrina to their homes and labs, made the tough decision to leave to lead research programs at other institutions. They were a cadre of outstanding scientist

that included **Drs. Anthony Ricci, Jeffrey Magee, Miguel Pappolla, and Rene Anand**. Fortunately a few faculty and two postdoctoral researchers, **Drs. Hamilton Farris and Sonia Gasparini**, remained at LSU Health and have flourished into successful faculty members.

EMPHASIZING A CULTURE OF MENTORSHIP, RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

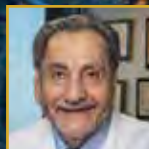
Despite setbacks, the Center is committed to mentoring junior investigators and an environment of research excellence. The NCE's investigators have become exceptionally productive and have obtained competitive federal funding.

HAYDEE BAZAN, Ph.D.



Haydee Bazan was first to define the complete architecture of corneal nerves in several species, including in humans, and the importance of bioactive lipids in corneal inflammation, dry eye and nerve regeneration.

NICOLAS G. BAZAN, MD, Ph.D.



Nicolas G. Bazan focused on understanding mechanisms to ameliorate and cure stroke, TBI consequences as well as onset and progression of neurodegenerative diseases, including age-related macular degeneration and Alzheimer's disease. His laboratory uncovered neuroprotective lipid mediators and gene regulation that preserve synaptic circuitry integrity during aging and in neurodegenerative diseases.

LUDMILA BELAYEV, MD



Ludmila Belayev uncovered that the combination of LSUHSC-patented compounds and docosahexaenoic acid derivatives are neuroprotective after experimental ischemic stroke as well as a novel class of lipid mediators, named Elovanooids, that also protect after traumatic brain injury. Additionally, she found that Avastin, a platelet-activating factor receptor antagonist (LAU-0901, also created at the NCE), and lipid mediators inhibited glioblastoma tumor growth.

JORGELINA M. CALANDRIA, Ph.D.



Jorgelina Calandria contributed to uncovering regulatory signaling for COVID entry in human lung and nasal cells and understanding of the impact of these events on long COVID. She is currently developing a project on Parkinson's where she identified cell links that participate in the rescuing of human dopaminergic neurons.

JEFFREY ERICKSON, Ph.D.



Jeffrey Erickson has discovered a novel target to limit excitotoxic brain injury. He is uncovering events for prevention of acute hippocampal damage and the microglial/astrocyte response by compounds to prevent experimental epilepsy development. He aims to develop riluzole, SKA-19 and SKA-378 as antiepileptic drugs.

HAMILTON FARRIS, Ph.D.



Hamilton Farris integrates psychophysics and neuroethology to determine the limits of sensory processing and its neural correlates in subcortical animals, with results published in several journals, including *Nature Communications* and *Science*.

SONIA GASPARINI, Ph.D.



Sonia Gasparini tackles a fascinating challenge, which is to understand how information processing and memory formation take shape. She studies neurophysiology of dendrites and the integration of neuronal signals with a focus on pyramidal cells, which mediate excitatory transmission in the circuit.

SONG HONG, Ph.D.



Song Hong found novel maresin-like lipid mediators and their roles in wound healing impaired by diabetes and aging and their roles in curbing Alzheimer's related neurodegeneration. Also, he found the exacerbation of neurodegeneration caused by a combined high fat and high sugar diet.

MINGHAO JIN, Ph.D.



Minghao Jin uncovered molecular mechanisms that control regeneration of the visual pigments mediating night and daytime color vision in physiological and pathological conditions.

JENNIFER LENTZ, Ph.D.



Jennifer Lentz has developed a comprehensive approach, including clinical studies of Usher syndrome, using a wide range of molecular, immunohistochemical, imaging, behavioral, and electrophysiological approaches. In transgenic mice with a founder mutation in the *Ush1c* gene (causes Type 1C USH in humans, *USH1C*) that Dr. Lentz developed, using antisense oligonucleotides, she was able to attain the first treatment for deafness and is currently working on long-term vision rescue.

XIAOCHING LI, Ph.D.



Xiaoching Li studies the genome of the zebra finch to bring novel insights into vocal learning on the genetic, circuit, and behavioral levels, enhancing our understanding of human language development and related disorders.

XIAOLIN TIAN, Ph.D.



Xiaolin Tian identified a role of a small population of dopaminergic neurons in regulating longevity in the fruit fly. Characterization of the aging-related dopaminergic circuits holds the key to understanding how the brain orchestrates aging and lifespan control.

CHUNLAI WU, Ph.D.



Chunlai Wu demonstrated how to dynamically control the development and structural plasticity of our neuron-neuron connections. He also discovered a novel way to protect against neurodegenerations induced by toxic protein aggregation in the brain.

YUHAI ZHAO, Ph.D.



Yuhai Zhao has contributed to the understanding of epigenetics, microbiomics and gene expression patterns in Alzheimer's. He studies a microbial link between the GI-tract microbiome and Alzheimer's.

TRANSLATING DISCOVERIES INTO NOVEL THERAPEUTICS

The next step in basic research is converting laboratory findings into drugs to treat neurological and ophthalmological diseases, a skill the Center has honed over many years. Innovations from the Center's drug-discovery program have resulted in over 130 patents or provisional patent applications; some of these innovations formed the base of startup pharmaceutical/biotechnology companies in Louisiana. Dr. Bazan has started NeuResto Therapeutics, LLC, for novel approaches to curtail the onset and progression of Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, retinal degenerations, stroke, TBI, ALS, and other brain and retina diseases; CurVir Biotech, LLC, for developing and delivering novel compounds to prevent

and treat COVID, pneumonia, other lung diseases, and particularly long COVID.

Dr. Bazan's third company, South Rampart Pharma, Inc., is developing its lead clinical candidate, SRP-001, which was discovered at the Neuroscience Center of Excellence, a groundbreaking advancement in pain management. Funded in part by a \$2.3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, the compound has undergone rigorous fundamental research that demonstrated that it may act as an alternative to traditional pain medications like acetaminophen and opioids. Moving from fundamental research to clinical development, SRP-001 has undergone comprehensive

evaluations, including in vitro and in vivo assessments of hepatotoxicity, antinociception, and antipyretic efficacy. Single-cell transcriptomics have allowed us to understand its mechanism of action, revealing that SRP-001 modulates pain-related gene expression and cell signaling pathways, including endocannabinoids paving the way for its transition into clinical trials. The compound has received FDA approval for Phase 1 clinical trials, making it the first compound discovered at LSU Health New Orleans to be approved by the FDA. SRP-001 was granted U.S. FDA Fast-Track designation (October 2023) to expedite its development, bringing it one step closer to becoming a safer alternative for pain management in the clinical setting.

DR. BAZAN'S LATEST DISCOVERY AND THE FUTURE OF THE CENTER

Brand new research led by Dr. Bazan (along with his colleagues **Drs. Marie-Audrey Kautzmann Guerin** and **William Gordon**), was published in the *Experimental Eye Research* October 2023 edition that suggests that age-related macular degeneration (AMD) decreases an essential fatty acid, preventing the formation of a class of protective molecules and reducing repair potential. They used donor eyes from AMD patients as well as

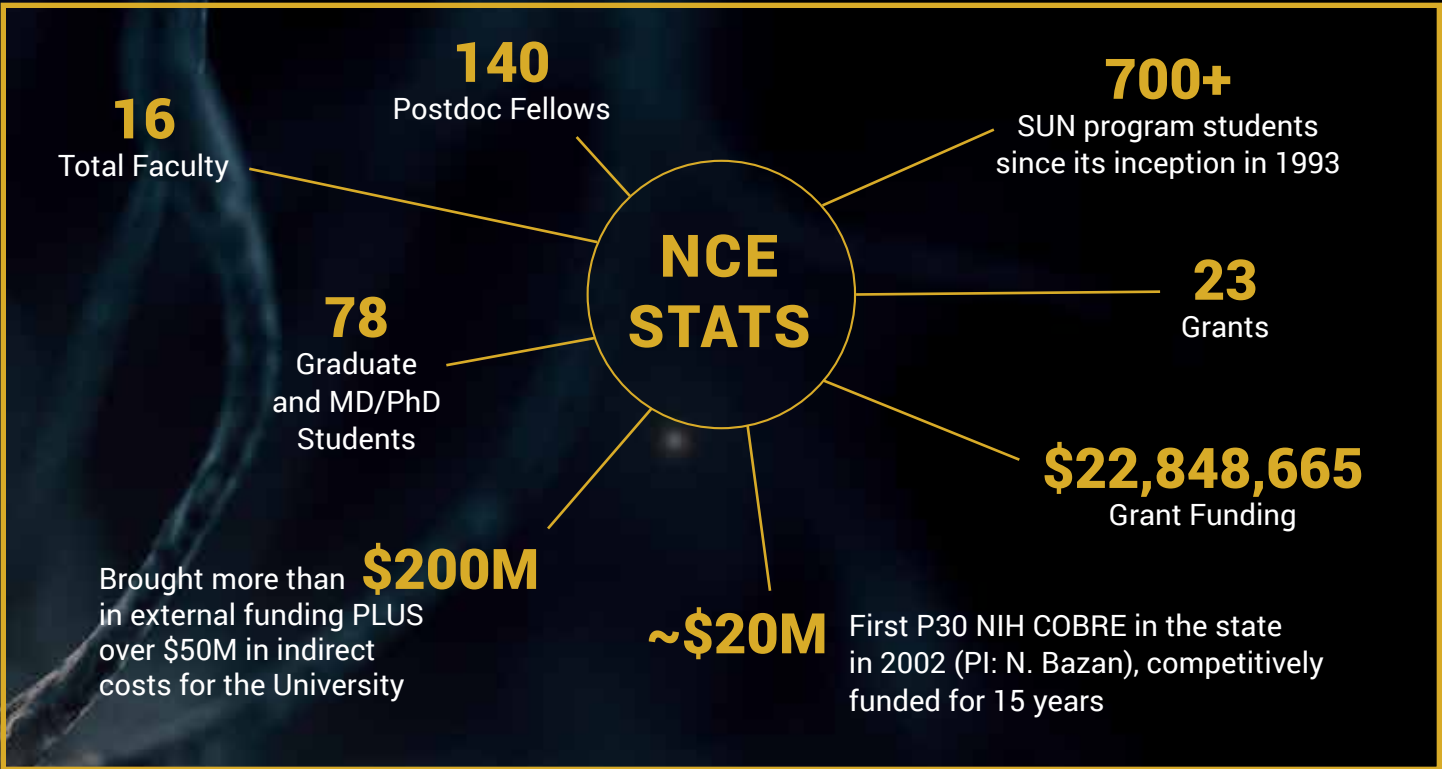
from unaffected individuals obtained from Eye Banks. The discovery may also open new therapeutic avenues for AMD. The study demonstrates that AMD decreases a pathway from docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) 22:6 in rod photoreceptor cells to form very-long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (VLC-PUFAs) and as a consequence the formation of protective elovanooids. The Bazan lab discovered the elovanooids in the brain and retina in 2017. These

findings open important immediate avenues for therapeutic exploration for AMD. The research team also found major differences between genders. According to the National Institutes of Health, 66% of AMD-affected persons are female. Females have higher DHA 22:6 than males because of estrogen effects. As they age and estrogen decreases, so does DHA 22:6, and as a result, women can become increasingly susceptible to retinal degeneration. ■



The Neuroscience Center continues to be recognized as a concentration of excellence and innovation within LSU Health, across the state and nationally almost 35 years since its inception.

(Left to right) Rostyslav Semikov, MD, Hemant Meghami, MD, Ifeanyi O. Iwuchukwu, MD, Janet Rossi, MD and Nicolas G. Bazan, MD, Ph.D.



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 NEW ORLEANS

Reflections

ON A WONDERFUL CAREER AT THE LSU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

A 36-year career at LSUHSC School of Medicine came to an end in May 2023 for **Dr. Charlie Hilton**. Most recently the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Hilton wore many hats during his tenure and impacted almost every aspect of the University. He walks away from LSU Health with one big takeaway – there is a lesson everywhere and in every experience. Whether it is while working with faculty, students or hospital partners, his time at LSU Health taught him that each major institutional challenge brought new opportunities for improvement.

Sciences Center. He had only just begun a new job at the University of Florida when he attended a medical meeting during Carnival and was introduced to **Dr. Jack Wilbur**, head of Endocrinology. Dr. Wilbur was looking for doctors to join the LSU Medical staff. That trip “taught me that when the door opens, you walk through it.”

Lesson 1: When the door opens, walk through it.

His willingness to take a chance on short notice turned into an incredible career he could have never foreseen. “I can’t believe I was able to have a career like the one afforded to me at LSU,” he shares. “It was truly the people and culture at LSU that made this possible.”

Dr. Hilton started as the Program Director for Internal Medicine and joined the Dean’s Office in 1997 where he immediately faced his first challenge – a major redesign of the medical school curriculum. The goal was to enhance integration of the basic sciences and clinical learning. It was this experience that was his first big lesson in navigating collaboration and compromise between

“I can’t believe I was able to have a career like the one afforded to me at LSU. It was truly the people and culture at LSU that made this possible.” – *Dr. Charlie Hilton*

It was a chance visit to New Orleans during Mardi Gras in 1987 that landed Dr. Charlie Hilton at LSU Health

competing interests. In later years, **Dr. Steve Nelson** would reinforce this by pointing out to him that for an effective partnership, both partners have to receive benefits.

Throughout the process of curriculum redesign, it became clear to Dr. Hilton that the key to good leadership is to find good people and get out of their way. In this instance, the team was successful beyond anything he imagined possible.

“I couldn’t have achieved this without my partners. **Dr. Richard DiCarlo**, current Interim Dean of the School of Medicine, was an expert at taking a lot of moving pieces and assembling them into a coherent curriculum with relevant themes running throughout it. **Dr. Becky Odinet Frey** coordinated this complex undertaking and smoothed ruffled feathers. **Dr. Robin English**, a master of curriculum development and implementation, was essential to the success, as were the faculty for allowing this grand experiment that was successful in the end. And, most of all, **Dean Rob Marier** had faith in the team from the start,” he reflects.

Throughout the curriculum update project, Dr. Hilton and his team uncovered a new opportunity – the need for development of an immersive, hands-on learning environment. Dr. Hilton partnered with Dr. Rob Marier, **Dr. Russell Klein** and the Committee of 100, among others, for a large fundraising effort to build the first of its kind student-centric training center. This time the lesson was “when you start in one direction don’t be surprised when you end up in a better one.”

Lesson 2: When you start in one direction, don’t be surprised when you end up in a better one.



Photo by Frank L Aymami III

The final product was the Isidore Cohn, Jr., MD Student Learning Center. This state-of-the-art center provides simulation equipment to support innovative, multidisciplinary and inter-professional education of healthcare students and professionals from across the country. Education and training activities at the Learning Center engage learners in active, competency-based, hands-on learning and provide explicit opportunities for reflective and deliberate practice and feedback.

Today, the Learning Center remains a natural laboratory for scholarly work in teaching, learning, and assessment and a vehicle for attracting and retaining outstanding medical educators at LSU Health.

In August of 2005 came the most difficult event in Dr. Hilton’s career. Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, causing widespread destruction and displacing thousands of people. In his words, “Like so many

others, we left with one change of clothes after spending a frantic day nailing up plywood on windows. We left in the middle of the night to miss the gridlocked traffic and made it to Baton Rouge 5 hours later. Bumper-to-bumper contraflow on I-10 on both sides in the middle of the night was one of many surreal memories from that experience.”

He continues, “It appeared things were better than initially expected until the unthinkable occurred – the sea walls breached. In that short period of time people lost their houses, loved ones, possessions, pets and jobs, pictures, irreplaceable documents. We lost the physical school including the School of Medicine building, the faculty practice and Charity Hospital. Due to a quirk of Medicare Graduate Medical Education funding, this meant a loss of a major source of funding too. National news broadcasted live from the elevated I-10 by the med school, the Superdome was destroyed with desperate crowds trying to escape horrid heat and conditions. And everywhere, helicopters plucked desperate people off rooftops and shuttled them to the major evacuation area at I-10 and Causeway. The whole situation was beyond comprehension and immobilized everyone.”

Dr. Hilton says, “The major evacuation site, Baton Rouge, took the brunt of the wind damage, as so often occurs. As we helplessly watched television as things unfolded, Dean Hollier called me and said, ‘Hilton, meet me at the LSU System Office – we are reopening the school.’ I asked myself what we needed to ‘start the school.’ We had no buildings, hospitals, electricity, email, important files, or faculty, and learners were scattered all over the place with no way of contacting them. In the end, we settled on some clean clothes,

a tablet and pen. Off we went to the System Office and we began.”

Despite complete personal loss, a number of individuals stepped up to help the effort that followed. The city of Baton Rouge welcomed and supported the sudden influx of frantic New Orleanians for months. The LSU System and, in particular, the Pennington Biomedical Center and their faculty and staff were critically important. The hospitals and their medical staff, despite very substantial disruption, took LSU students and residents in. LSU program directors, coordinators and faculty, many of whom drove four hours each way to Baton Rouge every day, committed to minimizing disruption for the students. The contribution of the program directors and coordinators cannot be overemphasized then, as well as now.

This critical time running the whole Health Sciences Center from one conference room was yet another lesson – if you’re going to have success you need to have a specific focus.

Lesson 3: If you’re going to have success, you need to have a specific focus.

Faculty and staff worked overtime together to build partnerships with Baton Rouge area hospitals to transfer students to provide care locally. The majority of students experienced almost no gaps in their training, a testament to the incredible hard work of the faculty despite this devastating event.

It was the effectiveness of Dr. Richard DiCarlo to assemble the curriculum

and spaces for learning, the ability of **Yolanda Lundsgaard** to reconstruct the payroll system for residents so no one missed a paycheck, and the hard work of Dr. Becky Odinet Frey to reconstitute 60+ programs and ready them for site visits that were critical factors in the ultimate success of this temporary school.

At the end of his career, Dr. Hilton attributes his accomplishments to the people and culture at LSU. In addition to all the Centers of Excellence and high achievement, LSU has maintained a culture of collaboration and support. LSU is always driven by its mission – to train the future doctors of Louisiana – and it is evident that this mission has driven Dr. Hilton throughout his career.

Dr. Lee Engel has been appointed as the new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Dr. Engel comes to the position with extensive experience within the Department of Medicine, specifically with the Internal Medicine residency program. His previous roles as Program Director for the Internal Medicine Residency Program, as faculty for the Clinical Skills Integration course and for 1st and 2nd year medical students, as a hospitalist and an infectious-disease (ID) specialist, and as a basic-science-trained researcher, provide the experience needed to affect the education of medical students, interns, residents, fellows and colleagues.

Medical education in New Orleans and Louisiana has been greatly impacted by Dr. Hilton, those mentioned above, and the other members of the Office of Medical Education (OME), who work tirelessly to make one of the largest graduate medical education enterprises in the U.S. run without difficulty. ■

2023 BOARD OF REGENTS Grants



DANIEL W. NUSS, MD, FACS

\$400,000 from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund for the Endowed Chair for Eminent Scholars

The Daniel W. Nuss, MD Chair in Skull Base Surgery honors a physician who has helped transform the field of Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery by working to foster and promote a unique interdisciplinary surgical subspecialty, now known as the field of Skull Base Surgery. For over 31 years, Dr. Nuss has been a member of the faculty of the Department of Otorhinolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and for 26 of those years, he has served as Professor and Chairman. During that time, Nuss has built a highly prestigious Skull Base Surgery program that has elevated the standard of clinical Otolaryngology care in Louisiana, and the body of work generated by this program has earned him a nationally and internationally distinguished reputation in the field, while at the same time bringing widespread recognition to LSU Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) as a center for such work.

The purpose of The Daniel W. Nuss, MD Chair in Skull Base Surgery is to build upon the contributions of Dr. Nuss and his colleagues by recruiting and retaining an eminent faculty member with outstanding scholarly and clinical accomplishments who will provide leadership to continue to enhance the Skull Base Surgery specialty, the Department of Otolaryngology, the School of Medicine, LSUHSC, and the quality of care provided to patients within the State of Louisiana.



JUZAR ALI, MD, FRCP(C), FCCP

\$75,000 from the Charles and Elizabeth Wetmore Fund for the Patient Navigator Award

This award supports a mycobacterial disease navigator to provide clinical and medical navigation services for TB and other respiratory disease patients.

\$75,000 from the Charles and Elizabeth Wetmore Fund for the 2023 CARE Program Award

This award supports personnel to continue the onerous process required to provide access to special category drugs and devices for patients with drug resistant and difficult to treat respiratory diseases.



RICHARD DICARLO, MD

\$80,000 from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund for the Endowed Superior Graduate Student Scholarship

The Drs. William G. '64 and Hannelore H. '63 Giles Superior Graduate Scholarship match award provides tuition assistance to medical students with demonstrated financial need. First preference is active or veteran members of the Armed Forces in good academic standing or the spouse of an active Armed Force member with demonstrated financial need.

Stimulating Simulations

REAL-WORLD TRAINING
IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT



The new Center for Advanced Learning and Simulation (CALs) unofficially opened on the School of Medicine campus in early 2023.

This exciting learning environment features state-of-the-art clinical simulation facilities, providing students the opportunity to learn and train in a virtual hospital setting.

Utilizing a threefold configuration of standardized patients, high-fidelity mannequins and fresh-tissue laboratories, and supported by a robust platform of AV/IT capture technology, a wide range of inpatient and outpatient clinical settings and conditions are simulated in full scale.

Dr. Peter DeBlieux was hired in July of 2023 to develop the Standardized Patient program. He has been tasked with outfitting the simulated emergency room and medical simulation area. Dr. DeBlieux will focus

on creating innovative curricula and experiences for students.

In addition to simulation technology and teaching facilities, CALs boasts a Wellness Center and a nursing simulation area. A beautiful atrium has already been the location of several receptions and promises to host many events for years to come.

The CALs building is the temporary home of offices from the Medical Education Building, the Admissions Office and the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement while their new space is under construction. CALs is also the temporary home to the Gross Anatomy Lab while new laboratory space is constructed in the Medical Education Building.

While the CALs building has opened gradually over the last year, the official ribbon cutting was held on December 7, 2023. Students and educators alike are excited to take advantage of this wonderful new learning and teaching environment. ■



Atrium



Nursing Simulation Lab



Nursing OBGYN Simulation Lab



Medical Demonstration Lab



Simulated Operating Room



Conference Center



Nursing Skills Lab

SUPERSTAR SCIENTISTS SHINE AT LSU

LOUISIANA
ATTRACTS
TOP-NOTCH
RESEARCHERS

The LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans was founded in 1931. As we grow out of our first century and look toward our second, we are feeling optimistic about the future of medicine. Technology has made huge advances, allowing researchers to collaborate (and even operate!) from across the globe. AI has proven to be a powerful ally in our research, having recently modeled the previously unimaginable complexity of proteins with impressive accuracy. But the real reason that we are optimistic about the future of medicine is because of the people.

Louisiana and LSUHSC continue to attract leaders in research and teaching. This cohort of super scientists is ready and willing to harness the latest technology and share their innovations with other researchers, clinicians, students, and patients. They are leaders in their fields of surgery, oncology and cardiology, and each of them has chosen LSUHSC New Orleans as their home.

The new Chair of Surgery at the School of Medicine, Valentine Nfonsam, MD, MS, FACS, FASCRS wasn't in the market for a job when this role opened, but something about the opportunity piqued his interest.

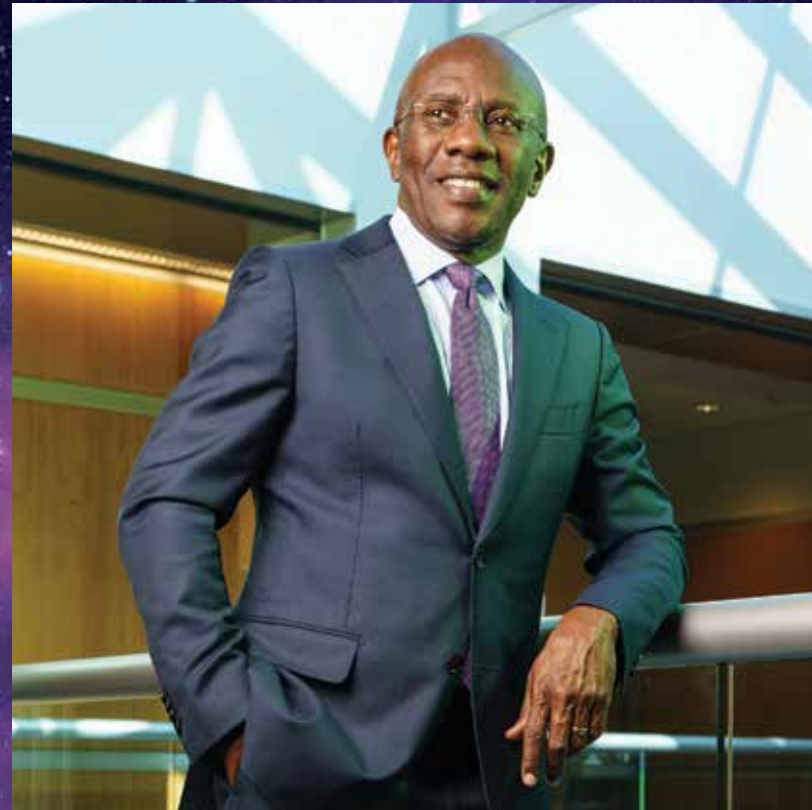
New Orleans, to Dr. Nfonsam, was the ideal place to chase his lofty goals – provide and improve patient access to excellent care, lessen healthcare disparities, and offer mentorship to students in underserved communities.

As a surgeon scientist, Dr. Nfonsam is well positioned to understand and remedy healthcare disparities. His research focuses on the increases in incidences of colorectal cancer among young patients. By studying pieces of tumors from this population, he has identified novel genes that act differently in these patients and could be the cause of early onset cancer. His relocation to New Orleans shifts the patient focus of his research from mostly Caucasian and Hispanic to African Americans, a group known to have a higher incidence of colorectal cancer. Access to the diverse population in this region allows for the comparison of tumors from multiple races, deepening our understanding of healthcare disparities. In addition, this knowledge will lead to more personalized treatment of colorectal cancer.

In his outcomes research, Dr. Nfonsam emphasizes education and increased access to early screening like colonoscopies for colorectal cancer and mammograms for breast cancer. As past President of the American College of Surgeons Arizona chapter, he has extensive experience in working with legislators and local leaders to find different sources to help fund these initiatives. Success in earlier detection of cancer means patients are seeking care before advancement.

Despite wearing many hats, the most impactful part of Dr. Nfonsam's job is mentorship. He has guided over 200 students at different points from high school, onto undergrad, through medical school and to becoming surgeons. "To see their growth path for me is one of the most rewarding feelings," he reflects.

LSU and the role of Chair of Surgery offer Dr. Nfonsam the ideal combination to continue this important work. He reaches students through structured programs like summer research experiences for underserved college and high schoolers who have an interest in medical school. He also acts as a long-term mentor for students who need additional guidance in their years-long journey to becoming a surgeon.



The future for the Department of Surgery is bright with its new leader. Dr. Nfonsam wants to use the immense talent in surgery to become nationally recognized by focusing on three patient-centric areas. First, accentuating research to provide cutting-edge treatment options for their patients and the entire population. Second, providing quality treatment outcomes for patients and ensuring that the type of surgeries that they're performing are a true reflection of a nationally recognized surgery department. And finally, educating the next generation of surgeons to cultivate lifelong learners who, regardless of where they end up, will continue to learn and innovate to assure the outcomes to our patients.

VALENTINE NFONSAM



JIRI ADAMEC

Scientist, Collaborator, Co-founder, and Director are just a few titles for Dr. Jiri Adamec, new Professor of Interdisciplinary Oncology at the LSUHSC School of Medicine. Dr. Adamec obtained his Ph.D. in Microbiology in the Czech Republic before moving to the United States in 1995. In his almost 30 year career, Dr. Adamec has published more than 100 scientific manuscripts in numerous peer reviewed international journals and authored or co-authored several book chapters and invention disclosures.

First and foremost, Dr. Adamec is a scientist. He studies biomarkers which are measurables that indicate disease in the human body – think anything from body temperature to gene expression at a cellular level. Dr. Adamec spends his time identifying biomarkers that could act as early signs of cancer and neurodegenerative disease. New Orleans is an especially significant place for this type of research thanks to its diverse population.

Dr. Adamec's second area of focus, proteomics and metabolomics – or the study of the proteins and metabolites in cells – has made him a notable collaborator. He uses proteomics and metabolomics for Systems Biology, a type of biomedical research that emphasizes understanding the larger picture of organisms, tissues, or cells and putting its pieces together. Collaborating in large, multidisciplinary teams, researchers are able to gain a deeper understanding of how everything in the human body interacts. Studying these intricate details requires

expensive equipment which sparked Dr. Adamec's interest in finding ways to translate his research into applications outside of the University.

As a Co-founder, Dr. Adamec is responsible for several biotech companies whose technologies focus on solving the unique issues of collecting, storing and analyzing biological samples in remote areas. One of these companies, Novilytic, utilizes nanotechnology to monitor the quality of lifesaving medicines and provide near-real-time warnings on molecular structure changes, like a canary in an old coal mine. Another, Telimmune, develops a plasma separation device. This simple looking card separates the plasma from a few drops of blood in as little as three minutes. Once separated, these samples are stable and able to be transported anywhere for analysis. This technology is a game changer for sample collection in remote areas where sophisticated equipment is not commonplace.

In his new role at LSUHSC, Dr. Adamec will take on the responsibility as Director of Core Laboratories. Core Labs, or shared facilities and innovative technologies that faculty across campus can use to support their research, are essential to building capacity for collaborative research. Currently, LSU has over 15 operating core laboratories from Animal Care to Proteomics to Clinical Trials and Translational Research. Dr. Adamec hopes to spend his time improving each of these labs and ensuring that they are facilities that every researcher on LSU Health's campus can profit from.

Dr. David Aguilar, new Professor of Cardiology, brings a wealth of expertise and passion for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases to LSU Health New Orleans. He is a noninvasive cardiologist with specialized training in echocardiology. His patients often grapple with coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, and abnormal heart rhythms. However, it is his keen interest in the coexistence of diabetes and hypertension, commonly found in his patients, that sets him apart. Through his research, he seeks to understand the underlying reasons behind this convergence and explore effective prevention strategies.

Before joining the LSU Health cardiology team, Dr. Aguilar was a professor at the University of Kentucky. Previously, he was a faculty member in Houston at the Baylor College of Medicine, as well as the University of Texas Medical School and School of Public Health. During his time in Texas, Dr. Aguilar devoted himself to studying cohorts in a Mexican border town. In this community, he encountered alarmingly high rates of diabetes and obesity, coupled with an equally distressing prevalence of diabetes complications such as vision retinopathy, kidney failure, and heart dysfunction. Building on this experience, he aims to continue his groundbreaking research in Louisiana – a state grappling with similar challenges, including soaring incidences of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

Dr. Aguilar's mission extends beyond the confines of research, as he seeks to bridge disparities in access to care and improve outcomes for all patients, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status. One of the key areas Dr. Aguilar intends

to explore is novel care delivery models for patients with heart failure. By pioneering innovative approaches, he aims to enhance treatment efficacy and optimize the use of medications, ensuring patients receive the appropriate doses and achieve optimal targets. His commitment to patient-centered care drives his desire to revolutionize how cardiovascular diseases are managed, ultimately improving the lives of countless individuals.

As Dr. Aguilar embarks on his new role, he envisions a future where healthcare professionals collaborate harmoniously to address cardiovascular disease risks and provide equitable treatment options. By combining his passion for research, patient care, and a commitment to bridging gaps in healthcare delivery, Dr. Aguilar is a force to be reckoned with – a beacon of hope for Louisiana's heart health. With his expertise, dedication, and a genuine desire to transform healthcare, Dr. David Aguilar is poised to make an indelible impact on the field of cardiology, revolutionizing patient care one heartbeat at a time. ■



DAVID AGUILAR

“What I am most excited for here in Louisiana is working with others to begin closing the gaps in care that exist between populations, particularly as it relates to cardiovascular disease risk and treatment.”



CLOA

with Faith, Confi



A NEW CLASS RECEIVES THE SYMBOLS OF PATIENT CARE

The White Coat Ceremony is a tradition that began at the LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine in 1997. The school holds its annual White Coat Ceremony in the fall, when first-year medical students receive white coats and stethoscopes, visible symbols of patient care.

During the Class of 2027 ceremony on October 7, 2023, students were “coated” by faculty members who are committed to medical education. Once coated, each student received a cardiology-grade stethoscope from LSU Health Foundation leadership and White Coat Ceremony Sponsors, generously donated by alumni, parents, family, and friends.

The cloaking of the white coat, the mantle of the medical profession, is a hands-on experience that underscores the bonding process.

The White Coat is placed on each student’s shoulders by individuals who believe in the students’ ability to carry on the noble tradition of doctoring. It is a personally delivered gift of faith, confidence, and compassion. **Dr. Najeeb Thomas** represented the LSU Health Foundation Board of Directors as a keynote speaker, while his father, **Dr. Mack Thomas**, proudly gifted each medical student their first piece of medical equipment, a stethoscope on behalf of the LSU Health Foundation. Following the coating, the class of 2027 recited the original Oath of Ideals.

Although clinical education for LSU Health New Orleans medical students begins in their first year, the White Coat Ceremony signifies the students’ increased contact with patients and patient responsibilities, which expand during their second year. ■

Dr. Fred Lopez, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Records was the Master of Ceremonies for this momentous occasion. The welcome address was given by **Dr. Richard DiCarlo**, Interim Dean for LSU Health School of Medicine followed by a lineup of distinguished speakers to guide the class of 2027 forward with words of wisdom.

K E D dence & Compassion



Scan to get involved or to become a White Coat Ceremony sponsor.

Scoring Big

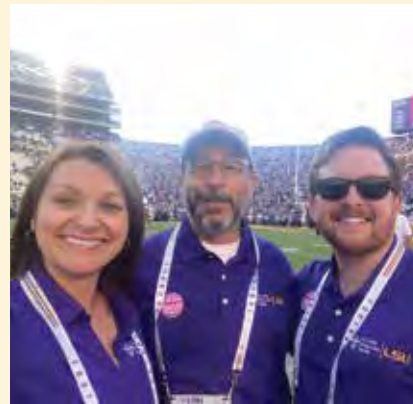
AT LSU HEALTH BATON ROUGE



Baton Rouge Residency Programs are a Win for LSU Health

The LSU Health School of Medicine-Baton Rouge Regional Campus is home to residency training programs in Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry and Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital Pediatric Medicine. In addition, the Baton Rouge campus serves as a major clinical site for various LSU Health New Orleans-based residency programs.

The LSU Medical Education and Innovation Center (MEIC) is home to several residency programs and is within walking distance to Our Lady of the Lake Hospital (OLOL), our primary clinical site. Residents and medical students also rotate through the OLOL Pediatric Residency Program which has offices less than a mile away at the OLOL Children's Hospital.



Dr. Shannon Alwood, Program Director of the LSUHSC-BR Emergency Medicine Residency Program, along with other faculty and residents, serve as LSU Football Sideline Airway Specialists and assist the LSU Healthcare Team on the field at all games in Death Valley. This is an exciting learning opportunity for our residents! ■

Photo, from left: Dr. Shannon Alwood, Dr. Michael Loewe, Emergency Medicine faculty, and Dr. Michael Cerjance, Emergency Medicine Chief Resident



Spotlight

ON LAFAYETTE FACULTY & RESIDENTS

Lafayette Campus Internal Medicine Program

Under the leadership of the Section Chief of Internal Medicine, **Dr. Karen Curry**, the faculty at the LSU Health School of Medicine at Ochsner University Hospital & Clinics (OUHC) Internal Medicine Residency Program in Lafayette play an active role in resident research. She says, "OUHC is the primary site of training during the first year. It houses a robust continuity clinic where students will follow patients over the course of training. We also have a busy inpatient service at this hospital. It provides care to a diverse population including the indigent."

Ochsner Lafayette General, the second campus, offers training in a state-of-the-art intensive care unit, houses the busiest emergency room in Acadiana, and is home to an advanced certified primary stroke center. Rotations in hospital medicine, neurology, physical medicine and rehabilitation medicine are just a few of the other elective rotations offered there.

Faculty & Resident Accolades

Lafayette faculty members worked with residents on several posters that were

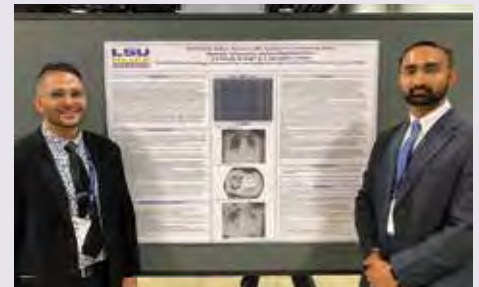
recently presented at national meetings. **Dr. Patrick Walker** worked with resident physician **Dr. Ali Yousuf** in getting a poster accepted to the 2023 CHEST conference in Hawaii, titled, "The Curious Case of Rhizobium Radiobacter."

Dr. Farha Khan also worked with Dr. Yousuf on a presentation at the 2023 American College of Gastroenterology in Vancouver. Their team received an award for Outstanding Presentation for their poster, "The Tummy's Secret: Unmasking Neuroendocrine Tumors During Gastric Bypass Surgery."



Dr. Ali Yousuf displays his team's poster: "The Curious Case of Rhizobium Radiobacter."

Dr. Melisa Harrington worked with resident physicians **Dr. Joseph Henig** and **Dr. Manpreet Singh** in getting their team's poster accepted to the American Thoracic Society in Washington, D.C. titled, "Renal Tubular Acidosis Associated with Topamax use Exacerbated by Sepsis."



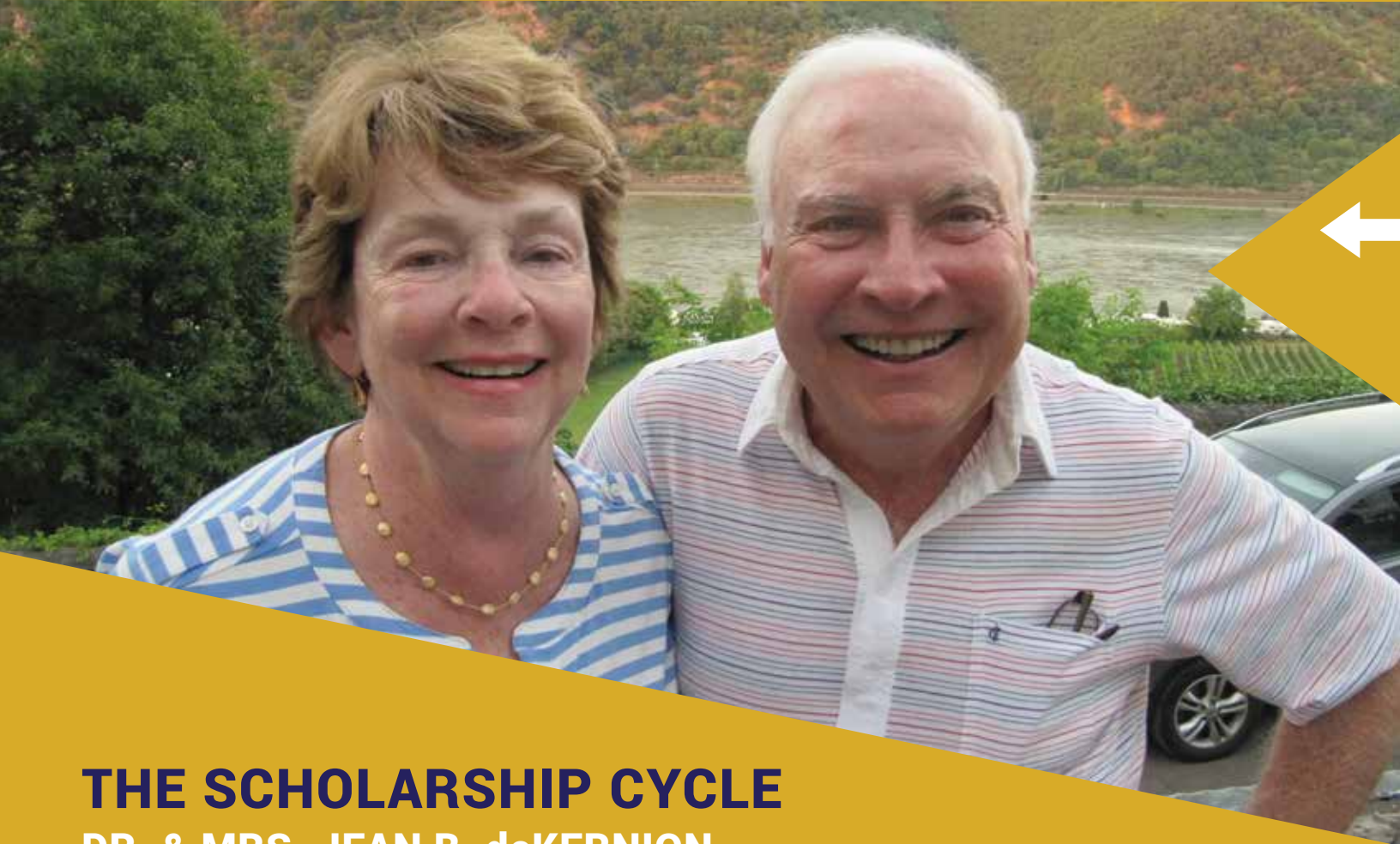
Drs. Henig (left) and Singh (right) display their team's poster: "Renal Tubular Acidosis Associated with Topamax Use Exacerbated by Sepsis."

Dr. Karen Curry worked with resident physician **Dr. Keat Ng** in submitting a presentation to the American College of Chest Physicians 2022 meeting in Nashville titled, "Lung Adenocarcinoma Presenting as GERD."



Dr. Ng displays his team's poster: "Lung Adenocarcinoma Presenting as GERD."

Drs. Yelena Magay, Lauren Beretich and Melisa Harrington won the Nephrology National Kidney Foundation annual conference Outstanding Poster award for "Impact of Genetic Testing in Nephrology: A Family's Experience with Dent disease." ■



THE SCHOLARSHIP CYCLE

DR. & MRS. JEAN B. deKERNION

Dr. Jean B. deKernion and his wife Mary hold LSU Health near to their hearts. Jean graduated from LSU Health New Orleans, School of Medicine in 1965 before continuing on with his medical education. He is Professor Emeritus of Urology and was Chair of the UCLA Department for over 25 years. Dr. deKernion did his residency at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland and his fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. That is where he was exposed to advanced clinical and laboratory urologic oncology and decided to become a urologist. Certified by the American Board of Surgery and American Board of Urology, Dr. deKernion is a world leader in urologic oncology, co-authoring the first textbook on the subject.

WHY GIVE?

Sharing is a large part of Jean and Mary's

lives and they chose to focus on giving back to children and education.

WHY LSU HEALTH?

When Dr. deKernion attended LSU Health New Orleans, he was the recipient of scholarships which enabled him to continue his education and achieve his goal as an academic surgeon. Supporting his alma mater is a must in his eyes. He also served as a faculty member at the School of Medicine for two years and was able to see first-hand the benefit of student scholarships.

WHY SCHOLARSHIPS?

Both Jean and Mary are from large families with seven siblings, and neither could have realized their professional dreams without scholarship assistance. They feel compelled to pay it forward to future physicians in Louisiana. They believe that our national educational

system is in need of an overhaul. No qualified student should be denied a college opportunity for lack of funds. They note that foreign countries manage this obstacle and so could the United States if there were a will to do so. Until this occurs, scholarships will continue to be essential to the American education system. Dr. deKernion says, "To urology residents and fellows: I hope you always place your happiness and the happiness of your family at the top of your list of goals. We need leaders in urology in all areas, but we also need excellent physicians who function in the community, organize medical systems, military, etc." ■

"Never try to be anything that you are really not in order to please someone else's pre-formed opinions of how you should be."

DR. & MRS. JEAN B. deKERNION SCHOLARSHIP IN MEDICINE

Karlee Mott was born and raised in Mandeville, Louisiana. She completed her undergraduate education at Mississippi State University in three years and majored in Biomedical Engineering. She works part-time as a waitress and has a love for art, but her passion is mental health advocacy. After experiencing both her mother's and father's battles with depression and anxiety, coupled with her father's suicide in 2008, it has been put on Karlee's heart to work to end the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Karlee is also interested in broadening access to treatment for the underprivileged, particularly those who have fallen victim to addiction and are in need of a reminder to continue. She believes that the best medicine combines the art of empathy with the objectivity of science.

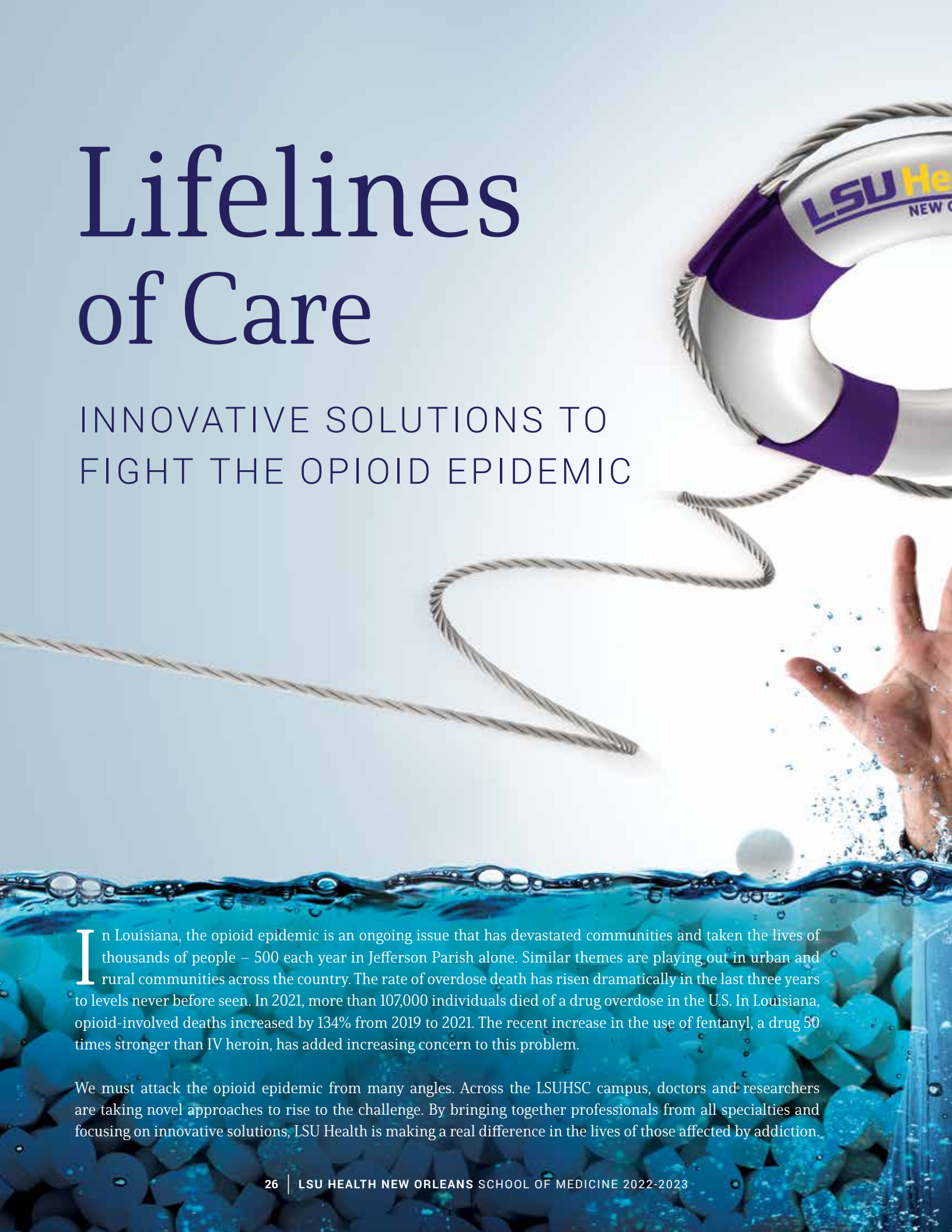
"My interview with **Dr. Ben Springgate** highlighted the resources that are needed in my own backyard. His work with at-risk communities inspired me to volunteer with the medically underprivileged," says Karlee. "Since starting school, I have worked with Dr. Springgate on the PROUD study, investigating the effects of natural disasters on Medicaid Members with Opioid Use Disorder. Some of my peers and I have started an organization called Student Run Community Clinics – Mobile Health Outreach. On Wednesdays we visit Duncan Plaza and offer first-aid, community resources, and primary care referrals to the unhoused population."

Karlee continues, "During our interview, Dr. Springgate also shared with me the many mental health resources that LSU Health has to offer their students. This topic is very near to my heart and attending a school with a solid support system was a top priority in my decision making. I left our interview with the realization that my love for Louisiana was driving me to serve the people within my own community." ■



Lifelines of Care

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS TO
FIGHT THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC



In Louisiana, the opioid epidemic is an ongoing issue that has devastated communities and taken the lives of thousands of people – 500 each year in Jefferson Parish alone. Similar themes are playing out in urban and rural communities across the country. The rate of overdose death has risen dramatically in the last three years to levels never before seen. In 2021, more than 107,000 individuals died of a drug overdose in the U.S. In Louisiana, opioid-involved deaths increased by 134% from 2019 to 2021. The recent increase in the use of fentanyl, a drug 50 times stronger than IV heroin, has added increasing concern to this problem.

We must attack the opioid epidemic from many angles. Across the LSUHSC campus, doctors and researchers are taking novel approaches to rise to the challenge. By bringing together professionals from all specialties and focusing on innovative solutions, LSU Health is making a real difference in the lives of those affected by addiction.



EDUCATING SURGEONS

The unlikely trio of an orthopedic surgeon, a gynecological oncologist and an expert in gross anatomy education recognized a huge challenge of the opioid epidemic – a lack of patient-centered curriculum and education for surgeons. The dream team, made up of **Dr. Vinod Dasa**, Professor of Clinical Orthopedics, **Dr. Amelia Jernigan**, Division Director of Gynecology Oncology, and **Dr. Jay Mussell**, Associate Professor of Cell Biology and Anatomy, are seeking to educate surgeons on techniques before, during and after surgery that will reduce the number of patients who become addicted to opioids. “We haven’t taken the time to transform our education to address this big, pressing need,” Dr. Dasa noted, “so we wanted to develop this adjunct to the traditional curriculum to address this gap in our educational curriculum.”

The extent of most surgeons’ education on opioid use disorder comes in the form of studying the science behind pain, including the physiology, anatomy and pharmacology, during medical school. Today, surgeons are required by the state to complete a few short courses on opioids each year to renew their medical licensing. Developed by the trio at LSUHSC, this new curriculum is a totally different approach. “Creating this forced us all to think in a very different way from how we learned,” Dr. Jernigan says.

“We had to look at things from the patient angle and really understand what the surgical experience is from the patient’s side.” - Dr. Amelia Jernigan

The curriculum is first and foremost patient-centered learning and mimics a patient journey starting with their preoperative experience, moving into the perioperative – or during surgery – experience and finishing with the postoperative experience.

Starting with the preoperative experience, surgeons learn about higher incidence of pain caused by depression and anxiety about an upcoming procedure. They are taught about strategies to combat these symptoms, including virtual reality and cognitive behavior therapy, that can be administered before surgery. During surgery, doctors study strategies known to ease pain and the importance of collaboration with



*Dr. Amelia Jernigan, Dr. Jay Mussell,
and Dr. Vinod Dasa*

the anesthesiologist. Postoperatively, they get a better understanding of opioid alternatives and when and if opioids are necessary. “We not only help doctors be better surgeons, but we also help them become better communicators so they can help their patients be well equipped to handle surgery with and without opioids,” explains Dr. Mussell. The curriculum includes modules on how to communicate about opioids with the patient including proper disposal, choosing the right dose and the medical and legal consequences when these guidelines aren’t followed. Students also hear talks from patients who have become dependent or addicted to opioids following surgery and the impacts it has had on their lives.

For the collaborators, the greatest unexpected benefit of this initiative has

been the opportunity to work together outside of their silos for a specific goal. “There has been a great deal of synergy in recognizing how orthopedics and OBGYN, despite their differences, really can learn and grow from one another,” shares Dr. Mussell.

This project has given professors and students an opportunity to step out of their comfort zones and work with colleagues who they may not normally interact with.

Currently, all orthopedics and obstetrics and gynecology surgical residents participate in one module every quarter. The team plans to expand the course to residents in other departments in the years ahead.

OFFERING STIGMA-FREE TREATMENT

In 2019, **Dr. Benjamin Springgate** saw a substantial gap in how opioid use disorder (OUD) was treated in the New Orleans community. While effective treatments existed, a stigma towards seeking and providing evidence-based treatment keeps the majority of those suffering with OUD from getting help. Dr. Springgate, Chief of Community and Population Medicine, set out with colleagues to build a clinic where all patients, regardless of their insurance status, could access high quality team-based care and life-saving medication for opioid use disorder in a non-judgmental environment.

Now more than four years later, the LSU Integrated Health Clinic at University

Medical Center treats over 550 unique patients annually for opioid use disorder – and has room to grow.

Overdoses represent the third leading cause of death in Orleans Parish – just behind cardiovascular diseases and cancer.* * According to the most recently available data

The clinic is a community-accessible facility that offers comprehensive care – including primary care and treatment for Hepatitis C – for patients of all backgrounds. The clinic is staffed by a team of experienced physicians, an advanced practice nurse, and a licensed professional counselor who work together to provide personalized treatment plans for each patient. It is

the only academic primary care clinic focused on care of patients with opioid use disorder in Louisiana and sees more

patients for treatment of opioid use disorder than any other ambulatory clinic in the LCMC system. One of its biggest assets, however, is the community relationships that have led to among the highest rates of patient retention of any clinic at University Medical Center and unprecedented advances in retention in treatment for referral partners who collaborate in provision of addiction

care. “Evidenced-based care for patients with life-saving medications such as buprenorphine helps people get their lives back on track – and leads to fewer emergency room visits, as well as fewer, and shorter stays in the hospital.” Dr. Springgate explains, “Our patients are able to manage this chronic health condition like any other – and resume normal lives, caring for their families, holding down jobs, and contributing in the community.”

Dr. Elyse Stevens, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Co-Director of the Integrated Health Clinic, understands the true impact this clinic is having on this patient population. “The numbers on the charts only show us a tiny fraction of the actual impact of this disease. When you sit and talk to patients you recognize the extent of the tragedy,” she shares. While the job can be challenging, she reflects that it is mostly hopeful to have the opportunity to treat so many patients in an academic setting.

The clinic is also the site of a clinical rotation for each third-year medical student at LSUHSC. Students experience first-hand the barriers to care that this patient population faces. This exposure gives these future doctors a well-rounded view of the unique needs of the patients. The combination of classroom learning and hands-on experience allows students to develop the skills and knowledge needed to become effective physicians and advocates for this patient population, key to further reducing the stigma of seeking care.

There is still much to be done. It is estimated that for every person that receives care for opioid use disorder, there are nine people who do not.

As the opioid epidemic continues to impact communities across the country,

programs like the LSU Integrated Health Clinic will play an increasingly important role in combating the crisis. “We need to continue to develop resources and partnerships to bolster our team, attract more physicians to work with these patients, conduct research, and teach our students and residents,” says Springgate.

Beyond the Integrated Health Clinic, Drs. Springgate and Stevens have also advanced vital community-partnered research and collaborations in support of people with opioid use disorder. With support of the Public University Partnership Program, Drs. Springgate and Stevens and colleague Dr. Gala True have been funded through LSU Health’s Center for Healthcare Value and Equity to work with community partners to study the experience of people with opioid use disorder during treatment disrupting events and community stressors such as hurricanes, floods, and pandemic surges. Their study, “Promoting Resilience Among Medicaid Members with Opioid Use Disorder,” (PROUD) conducted dozens of interviews with community and healthcare stakeholders to develop recommendations for policymakers on options to improve quality and continuity of care for these patients who are at high risk of adverse outcomes during these regional stressors.

Dr. Springgate notes, “It is critical for us to gather perspectives from community members about how

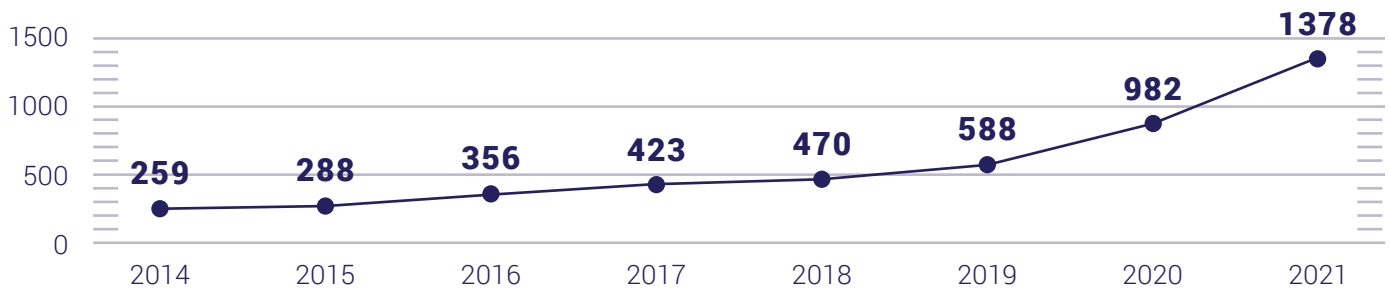
care – and how we can build more resilient health systems for the future to protect vulnerable populations. Our longstanding partnerships with community leaders from our community-partnered research network – the Community Resilience Learning Collaborative and Research Network (C-LEARN) – including the Lower 9th Ward Center for Sustainable Engagement and Development’s Arthur Johnson; the Louisiana Community Health Outreach Network’s Catherine Haywood; Anna’s Place NOLA’s Diana Meyers; and the Formerly Incarcerated Peer Support Group’s Thad Tatum – are critical to



Dr. Elyse Stevens and Dr. Ben Springgate

guiding these impactful, partnered research efforts.” The research team, including L-4 MD/MPH student **Hannah Doran**, recently presented PROUD findings to Louisiana Medicaid’s executive leadership and other stakeholders in Baton Rouge, and also shared findings at the American Public Health Association national meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in November 2023.

OPIOID-INVOLVED DEATHS OCCURRING IN LOUISIANA 2014-2021



Source: LDH Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Program

BRIDGING THE GAP IN CARE

The LSU Health Sciences Center Department of Psychiatry, led by **Dr. Rahn Bailey**, has been awarded a substantial \$7.5 million State Opioid Response (SOR) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This much-needed funding aims to bolster efforts to combat opioid addiction statewide and ensure that individuals struggling with opioid use disorder receive care, regardless of their location. The partnership between LSU and 49 other sites across the state serves as a beacon of hope in the battle against this devastating epidemic.

SAMHSA is a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services whose primary objective is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on individuals, families, and communities across the United States. To achieve this, SAMHSA provides financial support to various programs and initiatives that aim to address substance abuse and mental health disorders.

In recent years, SAMHSA has named addressing the opioid epidemic as their number one challenge. The SOR grant program is designed to aid states in expanding access to evidence-based prevention, treatment, and recovery

services to combat the opioid crisis. Through this program, SAMHSA aims to support states in implementing a comprehensive approach to address the opioid epidemic, focusing on reducing opioid-related overdose deaths and improving access to treatment and recovery services.

The SOR grant funding is a significant step forward in the battle against opioid addiction in Louisiana. This funding has enabled LSU and its collaborators to bring optimal addiction management care to individuals struggling with opioid use disorder regardless of their location. The goal of this network is to establish at least one dedicated facility in every parish of Louisiana. By expanding the network of care, the LSU-led consortium aims to provide better services to those in need and reduce the burden on existing healthcare facilities.

The SOR grant will significantly enhance the capability of the LSU Health Sciences Center Department of Psychiatry and its partnering sites to tackle the opioid overdose crisis. Currently, the participating SOR sites cater to approximately 1,200 patients daily, highlighting the pressing need for



Dr. Rahn Bailey

expanded resources and improved services. With the additional funding, the LSU-led consortium will be able to strengthen its existing infrastructure, recruit and train more healthcare professionals specialized in addiction management, and develop comprehensive prevention and treatment programs.

With the commitment and resources provided by the SOR grant, the LSU-led initiative has the potential to transform the landscape of opioid addiction management in Louisiana, ultimately saving lives and offering hope to individuals and families impacted by this devastating crisis. ■

BY THE Numbers



FALL 2023 ENTERING CLASS STATS

 **178** Louisiana Residents



119
Identify as Female

74
Identify as Male

17 Out-of-State Members 

Oldest Member **44**  Youngest Member **20**

Average GPA **3.76**



507.4 Average MCAT

LSU Med School Tuition 2022-2023 
(Louisiana Resident)

\$32,936.95



 **3,891**
2022-2023 Applications Received

 Scholarships Awarded **32**
(\$193,430)



A NEW GENERATION

DANIEL
RUPPERT
'25



BRIAN P. JAKES, SR. SCHOLARSHIP IN MEDICINE

Daniel Ruppert is originally from Florida and moved to Louisiana in 2005. He is the first person in his immediate family to attend medical school. He says, “Coming from a lower income rural community, my family and I never really had the financial ability to do things that we always wanted, but somehow my parents never complained and made sure food was always on the table,” says Daniel. “All the years that both of my mothers and my father worked their tails off to support not just me, but the rest of my family is very admirable, and I made a conscious decision to take on all the debt from medical school. This scholarship provides me the ability to not stress as much on the financial aspects of medical school and makes sure that I am able to concentrate more on my studies, rather than ‘How am I supposed to pay these off?’”

“My exposure to LSU in Baton Rouge for my undergraduate studies already cemented wanting to attend LSU Health for medical school,” says Daniel. “For those four years, I grew into the person that I am now, and seeing the possibility of what LSU Health could do for me, not only as a doctor, but as an individual, confirmed my decision to attend this school.” ■



SUPPORTING STUDENTS

BRIAN AND BEVERLY JAKES

Brian and Beverly Jakes have served the LSU Health School of Medicine for many years – most notably through Southeast Louisiana Area Health Education Center (AHEC), where Mr. Jakes serves as CEO. He has been instrumental in establishing rural care throughout Louisiana. Brian was given a medical alumni honorarium which left an overwhelming impression on him. In 2020, they wanted to expand their impact by establishing an immediate 4-year scholarship for a medical student of significant financial need. **Daniel Ruppert '25** is the recipient of the Jakes' generosity.

WHY GIVE?

Brian has spent more than 20 years on the LSU Health School of Medicine admissions committee and has consistently witnessed the

lack of scholarships within our community. “The overwhelming need for scholarships causes many quality students to attend medical school elsewhere because their scholarships are more significant,” states Mr. Jakes.

WHY LSU HEALTH ?

Having a 32-year relationship with the LSU Health School of Medicine as the CEO of Southeast Louisiana Area Health Education Center has allowed him to interface with all levels of the medical school. “I’ve seen the commitment of students at LSU Health New Orleans and it has impressed me to see the drive and motivation of the students that attend medical school here in New Orleans. I’ve had a chance to visit a variety of medical schools and LSU Health New Orleans is a wonderful place to get a graduate medical education.”

WHY SCHOLARSHIPS?

Brian and Beverly have noticed many qualified applicants choose other medical education programs because of the lack of scholarship opportunities here. Louisiana is not a state that people are traveling to for healthcare purposes, and they want to see our community expand within the healthcare provider sector.

“I’ve seen the list of financial support available at LSUHSC and I want to do my best to increase what we offer these deserving potential students.” – *Brian Jakes, Sr.*

Mr. Jakes continues, “I have dedicated my term as the LSU Health Foundation Board Chair to push for the funding of scholarships within all six schools at LSU Health New Orleans.” ■

Research

BRIEFS

Dr. Jeff Carter awarded \$4.6 million grant to develop Burn Prehospital Provider Program

Photo: Dr. Jeffrey Carter, center, and his team – Dr. Jonathan Schoen, left, and Dr. Herb Phelan, right.

In October 2022, the Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command awarded LSU Health New Orleans \$4.6 million to develop the Burn Prehospital Provider Program. Over 4 years, **Dr. Jeffrey Carter**, Professor of Surgery at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, and Director of the Burn Center at University Medical Center, and his team will develop education and training to improve burn injury care in military conflicts and civilian disasters before the patients reach a hospital.

LSU Health New Orleans is one of six members of a consortium of subject matter experts in burn care practice, burn care research and burn care education tasked with developing this program for military and civilian healthcare providers. The learning platform will address four essential skills of the prehospital provider – burn wound decontamination, burn wound debridement, burn wound dressing application, and assessing and/or performing a surgical procedure to relieve pressure that could result in circulation issues and damage or death



of tissue. Each learning module will include a brief content presentation followed by scenario-based learning and assessment. The mobile learning modules will incorporate hands-on burn procedure skills training using biometric tabletop simulators.

In addition, in partnership with the American Burn Association (ABA), a pilot study will be completed to create civilian derivatives of the program curriculum content and teaching/testing methods.



Dr. Sunyoung Kim patents new test for Necrotizing Enterocolitis

Sunyoung Kim, Ph.D. (above), Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, led a research team that invented a diagnostic biomarker test for

necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC) called NECDetect which was issued U.S. Patent 11,493,515 on November 8, 2022.

NEC is a potentially fatal disease where the tissue lining in the intestines of newborns becomes inflamed and dies. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates that NEC affects about 9,000 of the 480,000 infants born preterm each year in the United States. The population most at risk for NEC is increasing because the number of very low birth weight babies who survive continues to grow due to technological advances in care. X-rays are currently used to diagnose NEC but they can miss the disease in

over half of the cases. NECDetect is a non-invasive option and can identify 93% of true positives and 95% of true negatives with a simple stool sample.

In 2017, Dr. Kim founded Chosen Diagnostics Inc, a spin-out company, with **Rebecca Buckley, Ph.D.**, co-inventor and Chosen Diagnostics' Chief Operating Officer, **Duna Penn, MD, MS**, a member of the Neonatology faculty at the time, and **Dr. Zeromeh Gerber MD**, a former LSU Health neonatology fellow, along with **Carl Sabottke**, a medical student at the time of the initial application. In addition to this U.S. patent, patent applications are pending in Canada, Europe, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, and China.



LSU NCORP partners with Concert AI to boost Clinical Trial Diversity

Dr. Augusto Ochoa (above) and the LSU Health NCI Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) have begun a five-year partnership with healthcare tech startup ConcertAI to boost the

diversity of its clinical trials and assess minority enrollment, retention and health outcomes. ConcertAI, based in Boston, Massachusetts, provides artificial intelligence and software solutions for more than 45 healthcare and life sciences companies, contract research organizations, medical societies and regulators across the U.S., Europe and Japan, according to the company.

NCORP was created with \$19.2 million in grants from the NCI to establish a clinical trials network throughout the Gulf South region and expand the network to emphasize minority and underserved patients.

The collaboration will use ConcertAI's ERACE (Engaging Research to Achieve

Cancer Care Equality) program. ERACE uses real-world analytic and artificial intelligence-enabled software to identify cancer care disparities in Louisiana and how they can be addressed. The team hopes the partnership will lead to evidence-based strategies to reduce health inequities among populations with existing disparities. They will implement AI-based capabilities to improve patient screening, engagement and recruitment at clinical trial sites throughout Louisiana and the Gulf South.

Also key to the effort is the Louisiana Tumor Registry, which collects population-based data to support cancer research, control and prevention. ■

CELEBRATING PHILANTHROPY: Royal Court Weekend

The annual Royal Court Weekend brings together our top donors in lifetime, annual, and planned giving for induction into the Foundation's prestigious giving societies. Those of you who continue to give are the best examples of passionate generosity. We thank you for your philanthropic gift and your intent to continue to support LSU Health and the Foundation.



Scan to learn about our giving societies and make plans to attend Royal Court Weekend 2024!
For questions, contact Caitlin Strother, Associate Director of Events & Marketing, at (504) 568-5712.

FACULTY Accolades

AWARDS

Anna Cohen-Rosenblum, MD, M.Sc., Assistant Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, was named on the 2022 Castle Connolly Exceptional Women in Medicine list.

She is also the first female to be awarded the prestigious The Hip Society-British Hip Society Traveling Fellowship.

Corey Hébert, MD, Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine, was named the first King of Maternal and Child Health for Mardi Gras 2023.

Amelia Jernigan, MD, Division Chief of Gynecologic Oncology, was selected by the Medical Association of Southeast Louisiana (MASELA) as its 2023 Medical Role Model.

Patricia Molina, MD, Ph.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Physiology and Director of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence, is the Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology's 2022 Distinguished Service Awardee.

Augusto Ochoa, MD was selected as the 2022 recipient of the National Cancer

Institute's Harry Hynes Award for Outstanding Contributions to Clinical Trials and Community Research.

Benjamin Springgate, MD, MPH, Chief of Community & Population Medicine, is one of 14 members of the 2022 Class of Health and Aging Policy Fellows at the Columbia University-based national program and the only Fellow from Louisiana.

Ronja Tripp-Bodola, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Research, received two awards from the national Association for Academic Psychiatry (AAP), "Best Poster, Innovations in Psychiatric Education" and "Best Poster, Overall" for Graphic Psychiatry-Teaching the Iconography of Mental Illness. She also received the annual Chairman of Psychiatry Award, "Excellence in Education".

Jovanny Zabaleta, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Oncology, was awarded a Fulbright Award to Colombia University for 2022-2023.

LEADERSHIP

Wayne Backes, Ph.D. was inducted

as a fellow by the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET).

Rahn K. Bailey, MD, Professor and Chairman of Psychiatry, was awarded the 2022 Ernest Y. Williams, MD Clinical Scholars of Distinction Award by the National Medical Association for his outstanding contributions and tireless commitment to the mission of its Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences section.

Nathan Brown MD, DMD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, was elected as a Director for the Louisiana Psychological Association in 2022 and also serves as Chair of the Convention and Continuing Education Committee.

Sebastian Del Corral-Winder, Psy.D., Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, accepted a position to serve as the Advisor to the Latino Health Scholars program for the medical students.

Stephen Hernandez, MD was elected a member of the NASBS Membership Committee.

Cathy Lazarus, MD, FACP has been reelected as Treasurer of the National Residency Matching Program Board of Directors for a second two-year term.

Paul LeLorier, MD was appointed to serve on the Editorial Board for the *Heart Rhythm Case Reports*. *Heart Rhythm Case Reports* provides rapid online publication of the most important current case reports, illustrations, and educational vignettes in the field of cardiac arrhythmias and electrophysiology.

Rahul Mehta, MD, FRCS has been elected Co-Chair of the NASBS Surgical Education Committee, and serves as Co-Director of the NASBS-LSU Summer Workshop in Skull Base Surgery.

Michelle Moore, Psy.D., ABPP, Chief of the Section of Psychology, was appointed Vice Chair of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists in July 2022.

Daniel Nuss, MD, FACS was elected member of the NASBS Surgical Education Committee and Co-Director of the NASBS-LSU Summer Workshop in Skull Base Surgery.

Efrain Reisin, MD, FACP, FASN, FASH was recently invited back to serve as a Section Editor for the “Hypertension and Obesity” Section for 2023.

RESEARCH

Allison Augustus-Wallace, Ph.D., MS, MNS, DEIC presented her abstract, “Equity & Inclusivity in STEM Environments: What Does it Mean & How Do We Achieve It?” at the 2022 IForE Meeting powered by Sigma Xi, the international scientific research honor society.

Ronja Bodola, Ph.D. and **Jay Mussell, Ph.D.** presented their medical humanities talk, “Posthumanism and Ethics of Care” as part of a panel on “Care

Ethics in Literature and Film” at the annual SAMLA conference in November.

Kody G. Bolk, MD, Stephen Hernandez, MD, Rahul Mehta, MD, FRCS and **Daniel Nuss, MD, FACS** presented “Outcomes of Patients with Advanced Cutaneous Squamous Cell Carcinoma involving the Skull Base, Treated with Cemiplimab Immunotherapy: An Institutional Review” at the North American Skull Base Society annual meeting.

Kody G. Bolk, MD and **Rahul Mehta, MD, FRCS** presented “From Ear to Ear: Fungal Skull Base Osteomyelitis Traversing from One Temporal Bone to Another via the Central Skull Base” at the North American Skull Base Society annual meeting.

Rajesh Mohandas, MD, MPH, FASN presented a talk at the American Heart Association Meeting in Chicago entitled “CRRT in the Cardiac Critical Care Setting: An Overview for the Cardiologist.”

Hollis O’Neal, MD, Critical Care Physician at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine Baton Rouge Campus and Medical Director of Research at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, was the national principal investigator that led to the creation of an FDA-cleared test for sepsis.

The National Cancer Institute has awarded WayPath Pharma, a spin-out company founded by **Krzysztof Reiss, Ph.D.**, a \$225,000 Phase I Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) award to advance the development of a new class of anticancer drugs for glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer for which there are currently only limited treatment options.

Regina Zambrano, MD presented two posters at the American Society of

Human Genetics annual conference in Los Angeles. Her posters were titled “Expanding the Phenotypic Spectrum of SMARCA5-related Neurodevelopmental Disorder” and “Maternally Inherited Novel SUMO2 variant Associated with a Complex Phenotype.”

PUBLICATIONS

Research led by **Suresh Alahari, Ph.D.** has shown for the first time that a tiny piece of RNA deregulates energy metabolism, an emerging hallmark of cancer. The finding identifies a new target for therapeutic intervention in breast cancer. The research is published in *Molecular Cancer*.

Serena Auñon-Chancellor, MD, MPH is one of two physician-NASA astronauts recently interviewed on the *New England Journal of Medicine’s* podcast, *The Curbside Consult*, about aerospace medicine.

Two faculty members, **Sebastian Del Corral-Winder, Psy.D.** and **Amy Rinner, Psy.D.**, along with psychology postdoctoral fellow, **Chanelle Batiste, Psy.D.**, published a book chapter entitled “Reducing domestic violence in the community” in the *Encyclopedia for Child and Adolescent Health*.

A study led by **Christopher Marrero, MD** published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* reports that the net loss for treating acute firearm injuries at one Level I Trauma Center was \$20.3 million over a four-year period.

Three faculty members, **Michelle Moore, Psy.D., ABPP**, **Rahn Bailey, MD** and **Amanda Raines, Ph.D.**, along with medical school alumni, **David Yang, Ph.D.**, recently published an article in the *Frontiers of Psychology: Section*

Psychopathology on the findings of their survey aimed at understanding the mental health needs of Asian American medical students, entitled “Intersection of anxiety and negative coping among Asian American medical students.”

Michelle Moore, Psy.D., ABPP, Chief of the Section of Psychology, recently published a narrative article in the American Psychological Association journal *Families, Systems, & Health* entitled “A journey through loss and shifting perspectives.”

Research led by **Yuhai Zhao, Ph.D.** and **Walter J. Lukiw, BS, MS, Ph.D.** at the Neuroscience Center and the Departments of Cell Biology and Anatomy, Neurology and

Ophthalmology, published in *Frontiers in Neurology* reports for the first time a pathway that begins in the gut and ends with a potent pro-inflammatory toxin in brain cells contributing to the development of Alzheimer’s disease.

Orthopedics faculty **Robert Zura, MD** and **Jessica Rivera, MD, Ph.D.** participated in a study comparing two antiseptic aqueous solutions in reducing the risk of infection in patients requiring surgery for open fractures. In the largest known randomized-controlled trial, the research team found that contrary to current international recommendations, chlorhexidine gluconate was not superior to povidone-iodine in an alcohol or aqueous solution in

preventing surgical site infection. The results suggesting healthcare practitioners can select either aqueous-based antiseptic solution when treating open fractures on the basis of solution availability, patient contraindications, or product cost are published in *The Lancet*.

A study led by **Lucio Miele, MD, Ph.D.** describes a novel therapeutic strategy to overcome tumor-induced immunosuppression. For the first time, the research team identified a critical immunosuppressive pathway and a promising approach to intervene, protecting the ability of T-cells to attack cancer cells. Results are published in *Frontiers in Immunology*, available at www.frontiersin.org. ■



A DAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

On Wednesday, March 27th, we’re calling on the entire LSU Health New Orleans community to unite and donate to whichever cause matches your passion. Whether you support research that revolutionizes treatments, community health strategies or scholarships that change the lives of students, your gifts elevate opportunities within the LSU Health Sciences Center.

Will you give **GOLD** *geaux purple*?

Questions? Please contact Caroline Skinner at 504-568-2278 or cskinner@lsuhealthfoundation.org



Bringing



Dreams Within Reach

A HISTORIC GIFT HAS MADE THE DREAM OF ATTENDING MEDICAL SCHOOL ATTAINABLE

The LSU Health Foundation New Orleans has received a \$7.5 million gift from the estate of Marcia and Billy Beer. This is the largest gift in the Foundation's history. The endowed donation will support tuition scholarships to LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine. The scholarships will be funded by the interest earned on the gift, leaving the principal intact to grow for new scholarships forever. They will allow qualified students who would otherwise be unable to afford medical school to become physicians.

"This transformative gift will allow the Foundation to provide ten full medical school tuition scholarships to the LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine in perpetuity," notes **Dr. Steve Nelson**, Interim Chancellor of LSU Health New Orleans.

The donation was jointly announced by **Mr. Michael Flick**, Executor and long-term friend and colleague of Marcia and Billy Beer, **Brian P. Jakes, Sr.**, Chairman and Interim CEO of the LSU Health Foundation New Orleans, Vice Chairman **Al Bienvenu**, Dr. Nelson, and **Dr. Angela McLean**, Associate Dean of Admissions at LSU Health New Orleans School of Medicine.

The gift agreement contains a unique request from the Beers: *"...that upon completion of their medical school and residency training and upon the beginning of their medical practice that each scholarship recipient demonstrates an appreciation of their gift by offering, when practical, one day of free medical care each month to a patient unable to afford care."*

The Beer scholarships will become effective for the 2024 incoming class. Applications will be reviewed by the LSU Health Foundation New Orleans Development Committee,

and the scholarships will be awarded by an independent Scholarship Committee.

"These scholarships will permit the admissions department to attract Louisiana applicants who are offered scholarships by out-of-state medical schools that often have greater scholarship resources," says Dr. McLean.

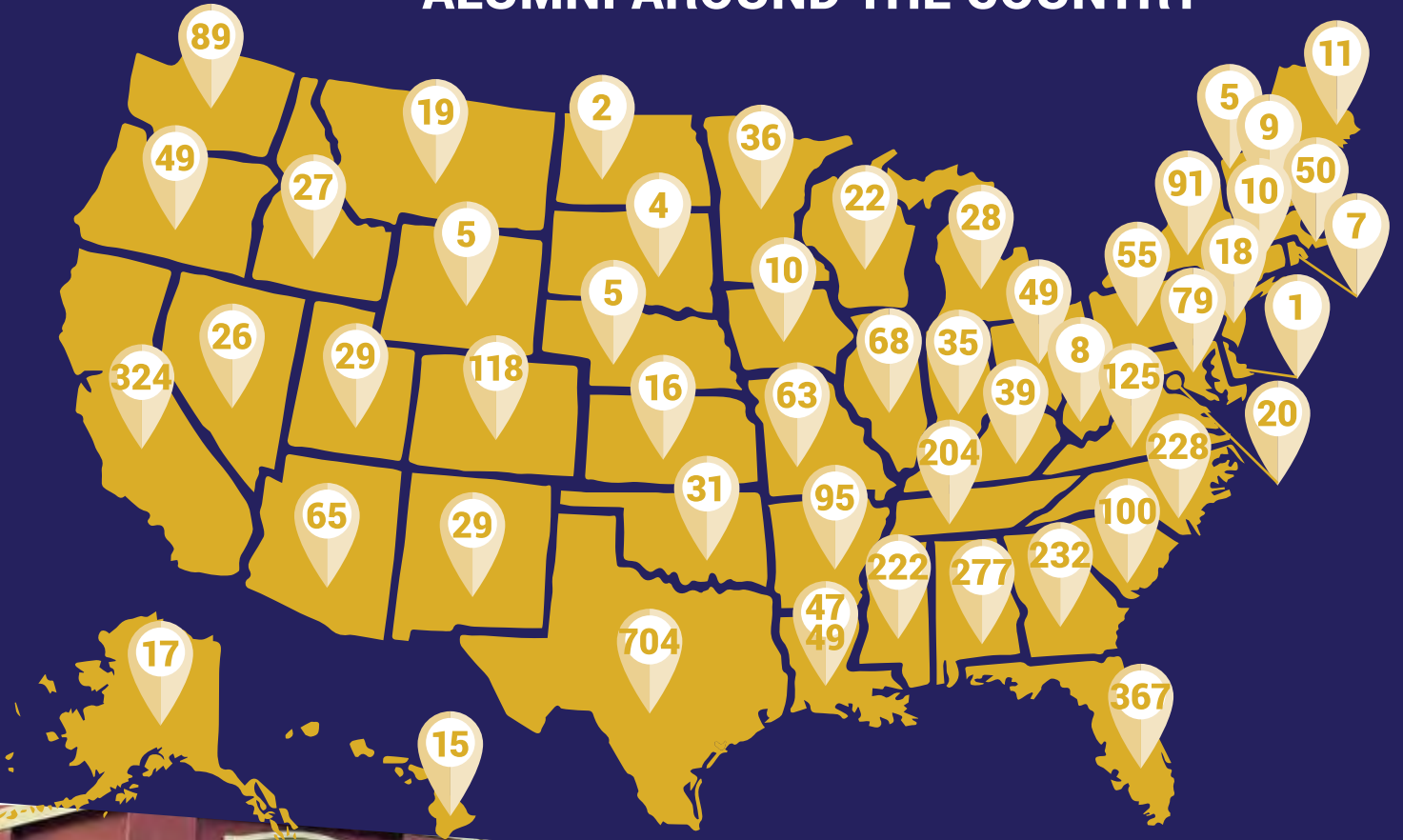
"This gift helps level the playing field, and the Marcia and Billy Beer legacy will live through the talented medical students fortunate enough to receive this extraordinarily generous scholarship gift." – *Dr. Angela McLean*

Billy Beer had a career in finance, and Marcia Beer was an Executive Vice President of a major local bank before Billy's illness connected him to LSU Health New Orleans. The excellent care Billy received from LSU Health physicians throughout his adult life managing his polio and post-polio syndrome inspired the couple to name the LSU Health Foundation as a beneficiary of their estate.

"Over the years, **Christina South**, Chief Development Officer for the LSU Health Foundation, New Orleans, and Dr. Nelson became close friends with Julie and me and with Marcia and Billy Beer," Mr. Flick explains. "They were instrumental in ensuring that the wishes of the Beer gift were fulfilled, and their legacy of giving would improve the health of many." ■

Where Y'at?

ALUMNI AROUND THE COUNTRY



The mission of the LSU Medical Alumni Association is to provide educational, charitable, and scientific support to the LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans. The modern Association began in 1985. The first general meeting was held in June 1986, when Julius Mullins '36 was elected President and a set of by-laws was adopted. Meetings of the Board of Directors are held throughout the year, along with outreach programs and a general membership meeting every June. Funds raised support various projects, such as student activities, advanced medical education technology, and community outreach efforts.

► Save the Date

June 6, 2024 – Committee of 100 Dinner

June 7-8, 2024 – Reunion Weekend

Has your contact information changed?
Email roar@lsuhsc.edu or scan the code:



A LEGACY OF HOPE

RICHARD P. DICKEY, MD, PH.D.

Dr. Richard Dickey was an inspiring man who was generous with his time and talents. Dr. Dickey married his wife of 65 years, Wilhelmina Kuehn, after graduating from The Ohio State University in 1956. Over the next fifteen years, they had four children: Jeffery, Lorelei, Suzanne and David.

Dr. Dickey earned degrees in Medicine and Pharmacology, becoming a N.I.H. Fellow in Gynecology-Endocrinology and Neuro-Endocrinology. But it wasn't until after he and his family moved to Louisiana that he started making babies.

Dr. Dickey began his career at LSU as Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1972, climbing the ranks to Chief of Reproductive Endocrinology where he stayed until his retirement in 2019. Over the decades, he mentored thousands of residents of LSU's School of Medicine OB-GYN department.

Dr. Dickey was fascinated by the science of fertility. In 1983, he achieved the first

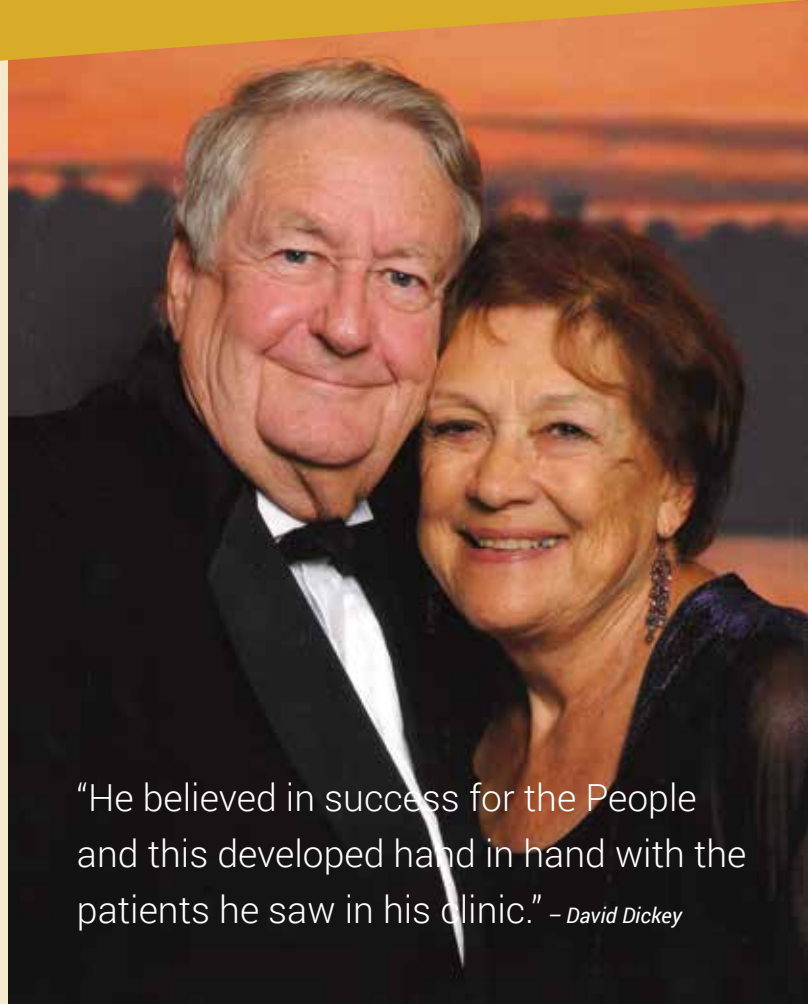
successful in vitro fertilization (IVF) in the Gulf South and introduced many innovations in infertility treatment in the years that followed. He published hundreds of articles in journals and several books – even after retiring – specializing in the treatment of recurrent early pregnancy loss. But his most profound impact was with his patients.

Dr. Dickey's job was equal parts teaching, research, clinical medicine and counseling. And it is in this last part that he may have done his greatest work. The field of reproductive science is emotionally charged. But at the heart of all of the treatments, therapies, frustrations and failures is a seed of hope. Dr. Dickey carried that hope with him everywhere he went. You could see it in his face when he walked into the room. His friends and family felt it. He lifted your spirits. He raised you up. Most importantly, he shared that hope – his optimism – with his patients, giving them the strength and confidence they needed to succeed. And succeed they did.

Dr. Dickey's Fertility Institute of New Orleans has helped create more than 19,000 pregnancies since 1976. His staff and colleagues carry his optimism, confidence and expertise with them today. That seed of hope is the foundation of Dr. Dickey's legacy. It lives on in the generations of families that have grown with his help and in the learning and research that will continue in his name thanks to his generosity to the LSU Health Sciences Center and his funding of the Richard Dickey Chair in Human Embryonic Development. ■



Dr. Dickey with his wife and children, from left, David, Suzanne, Lorelei and Jeffery



"He believed in success for the People and this developed hand in hand with the patients he saw in his clinic." – David Dickey



NOT EASILY DETERRED

DR. GENE & BARBARA BARRIE

Dr. Gene Barrie (74) was a young boy living in a rural farming community in Saskatchewan Canada, when he fell ill with a high fever, a rash on his upper torso and face, and later kidney and upper back pain. No one realized that he had contracted scarlet fever. When he was admitted to the 2-bed hospital twenty miles away, Gene was amazed that the doctors could diagnose and “CURE” him.

Looking back, Gene says that this experience was what really impacted his desire to be a doctor. He reflects, “I didn’t have a basic education in public school or high school. I took a lot of it by correspondence because I attended a one-room school where grades 1-12 were taught by a single teacher. I didn’t

think I was smart enough to be a doctor, but I think now that it may have been that experience that made me want to become one all my life.”

When Gene met his vivacious future wife Barbara in the 1960s, she had just been selected as the teen star in the Canadian version of *American Bandstand*. By then, Gene was working as a journeyman engineer in a small Winnipeg TV studio. Smitten by Barbara’s charming personality and fiery red hair, Gene was immediately drawn to her exuberance, and they started dating. It wasn’t long before Gene sold his car to buy Barbara a ring.

Barbara was raised in a family with means who understood the importance

of a college education. She told Gene that she would only marry him if he went back to school and completed his education. The next years were hard ones for Gene and Barbara, as Gene worked to raise enough money to finish his degree in engineering while earning a modest living for his family.

Because many of the high-paying engineering jobs were in the South and the Barries were tired of the long, blizzardy conditions of Winnipeg, they moved down to Ruston, Louisiana so that Gene could take his remaining classes in electrical engineering at Louisiana Tech University. Soon, they were living in a small trailer, raising a 2-year-old with very little money.

“There were times when we ate watermelon for dinner!” laughs Barbara and Gene.

Dean John Finerty of the School of Medicine came up to LA Tech to recruit interested students. Barbara encouraged Gene to follow his dream of applying to medical school, but Dean Finerty thought otherwise. Barbara recalls, “Dean Finerty said that Gene was married, had a young child, and was too old, none of which he saw as positives to be a successful medical student.”

Barbara was not so easily deterred. She had just read a feature article in *Time* magazine that stressed that the maturity of older medical students who already had families make them more focused, determined, and successful medical students. Encouraging Gene to apply anyway, Barbara went on a letter writing campaign to elicit support for his application. Article in hand, she wrote to the governor of Louisiana, to **Dr. Edgar Hull**, and to whomever she thought could assist her in this mission.

The day before classes were scheduled to begin, Gene was accepted into the program. Gene and Barbara recall those early days with much humor. Barbara

says, “Gene needed a microscope to begin his classes and we had to take out a loan from a local bank for \$700 to buy him a microscope. We didn’t pay it off until he was into his first year of internship.”

While Gene worked a variety of odd jobs throughout his medical school education, the Barries still have wonderful memories of those years and LSU Health continues to hold a special place in their hearts. Barbara worked as a secretary for the nationally renowned neurosurgeon, the late **Dr. Peter Jannetta**, who is known for his groundbreaking surgical technique to treat trigeminal neuralgia, in his early years when he served as a neurosurgeon at LSUHSC. She recalls, “I would have laid down my life for that man, he was so kind and spoke with such gentleness to his students.”

Gene got his earliest OB training as a third-year medical student rotating at Charity Hospital in New Orleans, where the service was so busy the students said, “See one, do one, teach one.” He went on to an OB/GYN internship in Fresno, California and residency in San Joaquin General Hospital and UCSF in San Francisco, California.

Both Barbara and Gene credit his later success as an OB/GYN delivering over 5,000 babies in the Bay Area because he was able to go into a field that to him was so meaningful. Gene reflects, “I liked surgery. I am good with my hands and it’s a happy field.”

Because of the riches the Barries feel were bestowed on them due to Gene’s medical education, they have decided to establish a scholarship that will fully fund a medical student interested in going into primary care or family medicine through yearly IRA rollovers and a bequest from their estate.

Gene explains, “We have a shortage of primary care and family physicians and people can’t get in to see a doctor. We just want to be able to help someone who wants to become a family medicine physician but hasn’t the means to afford medical school tuition today.”

Barbara adds, “We were lucky because Gene was able to find jobs during medical school, so we were debt free. We want to be able to give back to the community. We all worked hard and had good lives.” ■

“We have a shortage of primary care and family physicians and people can’t get in to see a doctor. We just want to help someone who wants to become a family medicine physician, but hasn’t the means to afford medical school tuition.” – *Dr. Gene Barrie*



MARCH WITH OUR Second Line



LSU HEALTH FOUNDATION'S PREMIER LEADERSHIP ANNUAL GIVING SOCIETIES

Gifts from January 1 to December 31, 2022

The LSU Health Foundation, New Orleans, is deeply grateful to our LSUHNO School of Medicine alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who have generously given \$1,000 or more. The donors recognized in the following pages have donated cash gifts supporting LSUHSC New Orleans through the Foundation. Your generosity upholds and advances our fourfold mission of patient care, education, research, and community outreach. It is an honor to partner with you to continually improve healthcare, treatments, and breakthrough cures.

\$10,000 + KREWE DE PLATINE

Anonymous

3i Implant Innovations, Inc.

Acera Surgical, Inc.

The Al Copeland Foundation

Joyce Bagnetto Trust

Baptist Community Ministries

Gene M. Barrie, MD and Barbara Barrie

Marcia H. Beer*

Cancer Crusaders, Inc.

Drs. Linda Cao and Phuong Nguyen

Capital Area United Way

Drs. Michael Carey and Betty Oseid*

Dr. Lisa Jaubert and Mr. Daniel Casey, Sr.

Charles and Elizabeth Wetmore Fund

Children's Hospital New Orleans

Richard A. Culbertson, Ph.D.

and Susan M. Leary

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EDUCATION EMPOWERS



OUR MEDICAL STUDENTS NEED US

At the heart of the LSUHSC School of Medicine are our students. No matter the specialty, they are committed to becoming physicians who practice with compassion, depth of knowledge, and critical thinking.

Upon graduation, as students embark on this mission, they are often met with crushing debt, with **the average medical student owing more than \$200,000!**

By contributing to scholarships through our Education Empowers initiative, you are generously supporting current and future students at the LSU School of Medicine.





9 ways to give

Cash Gifts and Pledges
Stocks & Securities
Planned & Estate Gifts
Annual Giving
Endowed Giving

Real Estate & Personal Property
Corporate Matching Gifts
Corporate & Foundation Giving
Tributes: Memorial and
Honorarium Giving



why give?

www.lsuhealthfoundation.org

A gift to the LSU Health Foundation makes an immediate impact and changes lives. Whether the gift benefits life-saving research or our future health care providers' education, your gift leaves a legacy of hope and health.

Our goal is to connect your passions with important programs, so you can best decide on the impact your gift to LSU Health will make. We want to know what you really care about – what would give you the most satisfaction.

FOUNDATION Highlights



Pinkies UP at the 2023 Royal Teal Tea

The second annual Royal Teal Tea raised \$39,544 for ovarian cancer awareness. Our Jade Ring Tea sponsor, the AI Copeland Foundation, and the generous donations support the Gynecologic Oncology Section at LSU Health New Orleans, helmed by **Dr. Amelia Jernigan**. The purpose of this fund is to elevate patient care, research and education for women's cancers. To learn more, visit give.lsuhealthfoundation.org/tealtea. Save the date for next year – September 18, 2024!



Celebrating Sullivan

The first “Celebrating Sullivan” event was a smashing success, raising \$236,200! This event supports the LSU Health Department of Neurosurgery in honor of the late **Honorable Henry G. Sullivan, Jr.** The Henry G. Sullivan, Jr. Board of Directors and Committee leaders made magic happen with an exquisitely curated evening of music, food and libations. These funds specifically support efforts to eliminate financial barriers that may prevent our community members from getting the best neuro-care in the region. Save the date for next year – August 9, 2024!



KBFBTI Stomps Brain Tumors

The Kelsey Bradley Favrot Memorial 5k Race is an annual event for the The Kelsey Bradley Favrot Brain Tumor Initiative (KBFBTI), supporting the treatment and research of brain cancer in New Orleans so that patients do not have to travel to receive care. Proceeds from the 5k race go towards the Kelsey Bradley Favrot Chair in Neuro-Oncology at LSU Health New Orleans. **The 2023 race raised \$66,242!** Visit www.kelseysgoal.com for more information.



To learn more about these key initiatives, please reach out to Christina South, Chief Development Officer, at csouth@lsuhealthfoundation.org or (504) 568-3712.

LSU Health
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