STUDENTS:
Their Lives, Their Experiences
They start as the crème de la crème, find true colleagues in the leveling experience of their first year together, work inordinate hours, learn to play to their strengths and shore up their weaknesses, and graduate to become highly competent and compassionate physicians.

Beyond those broad parameters, however, there are vast differences among the nearly 4,000 persons who have, at one time or another, carried the title “osteopathic medical student” at MSUCOM.

Over the years, their interests are eclectic: they’ve translated acupuncture texts from Chinese to English, performed classical piano, worked in small villages in Africa, achieved international ranking in gymnastics, sheared sheep, served in war zones, worked in forensics. They also find a wide variety of ways to enhance their community, whether collecting bread from bakeries for the homeless, running races for charity, … or building homes for Habitat for Humanity. Their MSUCOM organizations reflect this wide variety, including religious and ethnic associations, student chapters of professional associations, medical specialty groups, community service, and international health.

They attend classes, study, nurture spouses, practice OMM, staff clinics, drive to preceptorships and rotations, volunteer, raise children and dote on grandchildren, party hearty, … exercise and occasionally sleep – all the time twisting themselves into a position to keep their noses to the grindstone.

They’re our MSUCOM students. We’re proud of them, and we dedicate this issue of Communiqué to celebrate who they are and what they do. I hope you’ll enjoy their exploits and be reminded of your days as a student.
A New Face on the Communiqué Team

by Craig Reed

As I started working on the materials I needed for this issue of the Communiqué, collecting the stories behind what brought students to MSUCOM as well as gathering insights into the daily lives of these extraordinary individuals, it seemed a bit hypocritical as I cornered various students into telling their tales, that I had yet to do the same.

I grew up in Turkey Run State Park, a several-thousand-acre forest in west-central Indiana that is filled with deep ravines chiseled by the waters from the last Ice Age glaciers melting. The nearest “town,” if you could call it that, was five miles away from my house and had a population of 118.

Graduating from Michigan State University last winter within the English-creative writing curriculum, I found myself working for public relations at MSUCOM the following May. It has never been boring up here on the third floor with the infl ow of new adventures/projects. I couldn’t ask for a better place of work though admittedly marinating with so many projects does leave me wishing I could petition for more than 24 hours in a day.

Not surprisingly, I had a lot to learn when I walked through the doors of Fee Hall. My knowledge of osteopathic medicine was limited, to say the least, but after several months on the job and one extensively researched historical edition of the Communiqué later, I can say I’ve learned an incredible amount about the profession.

My education on osteopathic medicine, though, didn’t come primarily from books or Web sites, but from the doctors, faculty, staff and students that make up MSUCOM. It’s amazing to see students, bleary-eyed from the latest major exam they finished just hours ago, grinning with a combination of relief, achievement and a touch of dread about the next exam they have to prepare for.

Then there’s the faculty, staff and alumni who work together to make MSUCOM the best osteopathic medical school in the country. It takes more than an array of talented people to make a school the best. It takes dedication, a belief in the college and its objectives and a sense of shared pride in our ability to take eager students and turn them into proficient D.O.s.

It’s inspiring to see this within my co-workers and I’m honored to be part of the MSUCOM family.

Yet, one of the things I appreciate most about MSUCOM and the D.O.s we produce is something very small, yet important to me as a patient. Back when I was in Indiana, my understanding of the term “doctor” was an individual who walked into a room with his face buried within a clipboard full of paper and who with cool, remote efficiency, ordered you to drop your pants. I visited that doctor at least once a year for 20 years of my life and not once did he look up from those papers unless he was examining some part of my body. The holistic, patient-oriented training of MSUCOM makes an incredible amount of difference in patient/doctor relationships. As a patient of a D.O., I can say for the first time that I know what my doctor’s eye color is... blue.
“A New Walk”

The desire to go to medical school hits people at different points in their lives. For Jefferson “Reddog” Sina, that calling came after spending several years as a faculty member at MSU. Possessing a Ph.D. in English, the jump from literature to medical school wasn’t as wide a chasm as one would think. “I’ve always loved science,” said Dr. Sina. “My thesis in English was on cognitive neurological science in literature. I remember several of the panel members commenting on how they had never seen a thesis like this.”

Dr. Sina’s transition from professor to medical student was not done alone. Married with three daughters and two grandchildren, his family has been a source of strength and support. “It would be impossible to do this without my family,” said Sina. “I have to be creative with my schedule. During the time I spend with them, school does not exist.”

So how has he been adjusting so far? “Biochemistry is a struggle, but I’m holding my own. I’m so thrilled that I’m not taking gross anatomy this semester so I can spend more time with them,” he said. For Reddog, MSUCOM has proven to be the best place to train to become a D.O. “The instructors here are some of the best I’ve ever had,” he explained. “The information is presented so effectively, it makes preparing for exams almost easy.”

One curiosity most people have about Dr. Sina is how he got “Reddog” added to his name. “‘Reddog’ is a rough translation of my adult Inuit name into English,” he said. “My wife’s grandmother gave me my adult name when I had earned it.”

In fact, Reddog’s Native American heritage and spirituality are the reasons why he decided to go to an osteopathic school. “The only way I can see approaching medicine is from an osteopathic viewpoint,” he said. “I’ve been taught to see the interconnectedness of things – to work on treating the whole patient and not just the disease.”

“A Different Beat”

There are some who would say that MSUCOM rocks, but have you ever thought it raps? It has since Kamran Khan started classes last summer. Born in Detroit, Kamran has been making strides in blending the world of rap with higher education.

“My parents were always talking about how important the Discovery Channel, which produced a documentary on his blending medical school with his rapping career. Despite having to split his time among classes, rapping and sleep, Kamran is optimistic about maintaining this balance. “When I’m working on my raps, I’m not worrying over my classes,” he said. “It helps me to relax and recharge.”

Part of Reddog’s heritage is from the Inuit tribe, the native people of arctic North America.
One of the challenges faced by a larger incoming class was the limited space in the gross anatomy lab. As a facility which is shared by MSUCOM and College of Human Medicine students, the larger class required a little more creativity in how the space was to be utilized. So, for the first time since 1990, MSUCOM asked first-year students to take their anatomy course during the summer. “When we originally had summer anatomy 15 years ago, it was a 10-week course,” said Dr. William Falls, associate dean of student services. “This time, the course was taught in six and a half weeks.”

As anatomy is the most challenging course for the entering class, it was important to find a way to help the students absorb all the material in such a truncated amount of time. The solution came from the combined efforts of Dr. Gillian Bice, director of academic support, and several second-year students from Sigma Sigma Phi osteopathic honorary service fraternity who were willing to sacrifice their free time during the summer to help tutor. “The Sigma Sigma Phi students originally set up a review session after class to help the ‘first years’ with some key points,” said Dr. Bice. To the amazement of the tutors, nearly every one of the 180 students taking anatomy showed up for the review session.

Sensing they were in over their heads, the second-year students quickly asked Dr. Falls and Dr. Bice for assistance, and a more detailed strategy began to take shape. “Dr. Bice used to teach anatomy before her new position. She helped us by creating high yield overviews that she presented during the review sessions,” said Sam El-Alam, one of the second-year tutors. “Dr. Falls and I worked on creating 10-minute mini-laboratory demonstrations using the Sky Cam video system to cover the most challenging objectives, and then we burned the lectures onto DVDs for the students.”

Second-year students spent hours creating thousands of sample test questions as well as charts and diagrams to aid the first-year students. Scribes were sent into the classroom so that every lecture was fully transcribed and available for students to use as a study tool. “We had a remedial small group review session for the 20 students who did not have a passing grade halfway through the class,” explained Dr. Bice. “The ‘second years’ made themselves available for one-on-one sessions, and we reopened the anatomy lab after hours for more review sessions.”

And what were the results of all these efforts? Every single student passed. “This was really a team effort,” said Sam. “You’ve got the lecturers in class explaining all the details, then the students absorb all the material in such a truncated amount of time. The solution came from the combined efforts of Dr. Gillian Bice, director of academic support, and several second-year students from Sigma Sigma Phi osteopathic honorary service fraternity who were willing to sacrifice their free time during the summer to help tutor. “The Sigma Sigma Phi students originally set up a review session after class to help the ‘first years’ with some key points,” said Dr. Bice. To the amazement of the tutors, nearly every one of the 180 students taking anatomy showed up for the review session.

Sensing they were in over their heads, the second-year students quickly asked Dr. Falls and Dr. Bice for assistance, and a more detailed strategy began to take shape. “Dr. Bice used to teach anatomy before her new position. She helped us by creating high yield overviews that she presented during the review sessions,” said Sam El-Alam, one of the second-year tutors. “Dr. Falls and I worked on creating 10-minute mini-laboratory demonstrations using the Sky Cam video system to cover the most challenging objectives, and then we burned the lectures onto DVDs for the students.”

Second-year students spent hours creating thousands of sample test questions as well as charts and diagrams to aid the first-year students. Scribes were sent into the classroom so that every lecture was fully transcribed and available for students to use as a study tool. “We had a remedial small group review session for the 20 students who did not have a passing grade halfway through the class,”explained Dr. Bice. “The ‘second years’ made themselves available for one-on-one sessions, and we reopened the anatomy lab after hours for more review sessions.”

And what were the results of all these efforts? Every single student passed. “This was really a team effort,” said Sam. “You’ve got the lecturers in class explaining all the details, then the review sessions with Dr. Bice, help from Dr. Falls and the ‘second years’ from Sigma Sigma Phi. We gave up our weekends and our free time and it paid off.”

“Demonstrates,” said Dr. Bice, “how all of our students are capable of succeeding, even in an intensive gross anatomy course, when we provide them with the proper tools and support.”

**Anatomy**

MSUCOM faculty and staff come from all walks of life, but did you realize what a variety of hobbies they possess? See if you can guess which hobby goes with which COM member.

1. Golfing
2. Monster Trucks
3. Dog Sledding
4. Quilting
5. Riding a Harley

**can you guess the hobby?**

1. Norma Baptista, Director of Multicultural Programs
2. Tamera Cox, Administrative Assistant
3. Bill Falls, Associate Dean of Student Services
4. Cathey Pepper, Recruitment Coordinator
5. Victoria Wygant, Administrative Assistant

**by Craig Reed**
“D.O. at Heart”
When Angela Harris originally decided she wanted to join the medical profession, she envisioned something a little different than becoming a D.O. “I started out going to nursing school when I was still living in Louisiana. I was the youngest nurse in cardiology. I had to learn American Sign Language, which my sister taught me, to communicate.”

Moving to Michigan was not an easy choice for Angela. “It started out kind of rough because I was so far away from my family. I was used to going back to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, every couple of weeks to see them.” She remembers clearly the first time she started thinking about becoming a doctor. “One of the doctors told me I had the skills and talent to become a doctor. His confidence in me really helped me see that I could do it.”

Angela has also played an important role in Hurricane Katrina Relief efforts by helping to get 20 bags of clothing as well as food, shoes and other necessities to the displaced people now residing in Lansing.

Gathering Knowledge
Second Year at MSUCOM
by Craig Reed

Sam El-Alam (top right) with Dr. Rechtien and the first-year students Sam has mentored.

“Role Model and Mentor”
Imagine for a moment that you’re the first member of your family to go to college. You decide you want to become a D.O. and apply to MSUCOM. You get accepted, but a few weeks before you start, you have a terrible hockey accident which requires you to delay medical school and go through two facial reconstruction surgeries involving a total of eight metalloid plates and 32 screws. That’s what happened to Sam El-Alam, a second year student at MSUCOM. “I had so many microfractures after the accident that the doctors couldn’t do anything until some of the parts started healing,” said Sam. “My jaw was wired shut for eight months. I had to learn American Sign Language, which my sister taught me, to communicate.”

Born in Lebanon, Sam moved to Detroit with his family when he was seven. There, the family of seven lived in a small two-bedroom apartment above a T.V. repair shop. “My oldest sister slept on the sofa in the living room every night while the rest of my siblings and I squeezed into the other bedroom. I never thought I’d go to college. It’s traditionally the third generation in an immigrant family that gets to do that.”

After Sam healed from the surgeries, he found MSUCOM eagerly awaiting him. “Dr. Falls had saved my place so I could begin medical school as soon as I healed,” Sam said. “I had to start back part time and work my way up to full time.”

Since Sam’s arrival, fellow students find a warm smile and encouraging words whenever they walk by him in the hallway.

“Everyone who decided to come to MSUCOM wants to make a difference in people’s lives in the hospitals, but what most don’t realize is that we’re already doing that here in each other’s lives at school,” Sam said. “We all owe something for the opportunities we’ve been given and we give back what we can.”
From Classroom to Hospital Rotations

Third Year at MSUCOM

The Change to the Hospital Environment

The completion of the second year at MSUCOM is a time of reflection. Reaching this point marks the end of calling the MSU campus home and starting a transition into rotations at one of the 23 hospitals in the Statewide Campus System network. In the next two years, they will apply clinical knowledge they have acquired during their first two years. During this second phase of lessons, each person at MSUCOM begins a transformation, when he or she goes from thinking themselves as being a student of medicine to being a professional doctor and servant to the community.

“A Holistic View on Family”

If you ever have an opportunity to catch Belinda Kakos between her third-year rotations, you can learn a lot not only about the intersection of family and culture, but also understand a bit better the wonderful variety of students that belong to MSUCOM.

The oldest of 10 children, Belinda and her family are Chaldean, an indigenous people of Iraq. “We are a tiny Christian group from northern Iraq. Our language and traditions are different from other Middle Eastern peoples,” explains Belinda. The Chaldean faith is Eastern Rite Roman Catholic and the language is Aramaic, one of the oldest Semitic languages. For Belinda, culture and family are integral parts of her life. “My family is very supportive and it is only natural that I reciprocate. It is important that I be a positive role model for my younger brothers and sisters,” she says. Southeastern Michigan, where Belinda grew up, is one of a handful of spots where Chaldean immigrants tend to settle in the United States. “Some of my family is here in Michigan, but I also have family members still in Iraq as well,” she said.

Interestingly, Belinda was familiar with manipulative medicine before she started at MSUCOM. “My grandfather worked with a type of physical manipulation called ‘szotha.’ It’s a traditional form of medicine that’s been passed down through many generations. When I took my first OMM class, I thought to myself ‘Wow, what we are learning is a lot like what Grandfather did in his village.’” Despite having to adjust living away from her close-knit family, Belinda has enjoyed her time at MSUCOM and in her rotations. “I’m really excited to be learning,” she commented. “I love working with people and really feel that I am in the right place.”

“Lacing Up for a Cause”

Most students haven’t decided what they want to do when they graduate, but for Kimberly Ostrowski, the answer she’s leaning toward is neuroscience. “I have one family member with hydrocephalus,” she said. “I remember when he was first diagnosed I didn’t understand what it was and I wanted to know.”

As a third-year student, Kimberly had to adjust from being in the classroom to working side by side with doctors. “I absolutely love being in the hospital,” she said. “I learn better hands-on. It’s so much easier for me to pull all I learned from the classroom together. You’re treated as part of the team. They let you go in, be the first to talk with the patient and see what you think.”

Right before starting her fall semester rotations however, Kimberly’s mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Having caught the cancer at a very early stage, her mother’s prognosis is good, but it triggered in Kimberly a need to do more. She decided to start raising money by running in marathons for breast cancer research. “Every time I run a marathon, I have a mantra I keep telling myself when I run. I repeat to myself ‘I lace up for my mom’ through the entire 26.2 mile race,” she said.

Kimberly has been deeply involved in the community in other ways, volunteering at the Friendship Clinic, traveling to Lima, Peru, to help abandoned and abused children, as well as holding several club officer positions such as the research chair position in SOMA, which focuses on increasing the number of D.O. students involved in basic and clinical research.

So where does Kimberly see herself once she is ready to start her practice? “I think I’ll end up somewhere in the Detroit area,” she said. “I realized through my mother’s battle with cancer that family is one of the most important things to me.”

Belinda Kakos (second from left), her parents and her nine siblings live in the Detroit area. Her parents emigrated from northern Iraq during the late 1960s and late ’70s.
THE COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE PRESENTS

Slavery to Freedom
An American Odyssey

THE SIXTH ANNUAL VISITING FACULTY LECTURE SERIES
THURSDAYS, FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH 23, 2006

The intent of the MSU Visiting Faculty Lecture Series is to provide opportunities for interaction with multicultural scholars from education, business, industry and government who spend time on a visiting-appointment basis at Michigan State University.

The MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine is extremely pleased to host these notable scholars who, in addition to making the presentations advertised in this publication, will also be dedicating time to teaching MSU students on campus.

Sponsors

CORPORATE SPONSORS: Ascension Health; Ingham Regional Medical Center; Pontiac Osteopathic Hospital; St. John Health

PLATINUM: College of Communication Arts & Sciences; Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health; Libraries, Computing and Technology; Residence Life; Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs & Services and the Office of the Assistant Provost for Academic Student Services & Multicultural Issues

GOLD: College of Arts and Letters; Graduate School; College of Nursing; Women’s Resource Center

SILVER: College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Office of Diversity and Pluralism; Honors College; College of Human Medicine; College of Social Science

We wish to thank the following units, without whose grant support this program would not be possible:

Affirmative Action Compliance and Monitoring; Assistant Provost and Assistant Vice President for Academic Human Resources; Office of the Provost; Office of the President

Special Thanks
to William G. Anderson, D.O., whose invaluable participation enhances the excellence of these programs.

For more information call (517) 355-4608

Dr. Julianne Malveaux
AUTHOR AND PRESIDENT OF LAST WORD PRODUCTIONS, INC.

“Shaping Public Opinion in 21st Century America”
Dr. Julianne Malveaux, economist, author and TV-radio commentator, is president and CEO of Last Word Productions, Inc., a multimedia production company. Her work appears regularly in USA Today. Black Issues in Higher Education, Ms Magazine, Essence Magazine and the Progressive. Well known for her appearances on national network programs, Dr. Malveaux is a charismatic and popular personality who has appeared on CNN, BET, PBS, ABC, Fox News, C-SPAN, MSNBC and CNBC. Most recently she was the host of the Million More March, in Washington, D.C., attended by more than one million and viewed by millions more on national TV. Dr. Malveaux is described by Dr. Cornell West as “the most iconoclastic public intellectual in the country.”
February 2, 2006, 5:00 p.m., Big Ten BC, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Reception following

Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham
PROFESSOR, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, THEOLOGIAN AND AUTHOR

“An Open Letter to Condoleezza Rice”
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Ph.D., a theologian and author, is a professor of African-American studies at Harvard University. Her work, which centers on religion, race and women, has been celebrated widely for its cultural insight and deep reach into little-known corners of American religious history. A trusted confidante of Henry Louis Gates Jr., head of the DuBois Institute for African-American Studies at Harvard, she with him is leading the largest African-American biography project ever undertaken in American history. A former professor at Dartmouth, the University of Maryland and the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Higginbotham is also the author of the widely-referenced book, Righteous Dissent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1895-1920. A graduate of the University of Rochester, Howard University and the University of Wisconsin, she is currently working on the memoir of her late husband, U.S. circuit court judge and Harvard professor, Leon Higginbotham.
February 9, 2006, 5:00 p.m., Big Ten BC, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Reception following

The Rev. Dr. Wilma R. Johnson
SENIOR PASTOR, NEW PROSPECT MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

“Uncharted Waters in the Ministry”
The Rev. Dr. Wilma Robena Johnson, senior pastor of New Prospect Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, is the first female senior pastor to be voted in as a member of The Council of Baptist Pastors of Detroit and Vicinity, Inc., a powerful and influential organization in the Metropolitan Detroit area. Dr. Johnson has master’s and doctorate degrees in pastoral ministry from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit. She is author of Giving Away My Joy, a widely acclaimed book of inspiration. Her work about Princess appears in the Women of Color Study Bible. “Pastor J,” as she is lovingly called by members of her congregation, was ordained for full time ministry by The Rev. Charles Gilchrist Adams, senior pastor of the historic Hartford Memorial Baptist Church of Detroit. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as a preacher, speaker, teacher, revivalist and leader.
February 17, 2005, 5:00 p.m., Auditorium, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Reception following

The Right Rev. Vashh Murphy McKenzie
BISHOP, AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

“Women … the Emerging Leaders of the 21st Century”
The Rev. Dr. Vashh Murphy McKenzie is the first female Bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, she is recognized as a leader in religious, social, economic and civic affairs. With academic degrees from major colleges and universities, she is well prepared to assume leadership well into this century. Bishop McKenzie brings a wealth of knowledge and experience gained from years as a pastor, journalist, radio and TV personality, preacher, teacher and author of two widely read books, Not Without Struggle and Strength in the Struggle. She was acclaimed by Ebony Magazine as “one of the 15 greatest African-American female preachers.” Her captivating style and dynamic presentations have earned her this distinction.
February 23, 2005, 5:00 p.m., Big Ten A, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, Reception following
When it comes to developing a sense of community within the student body, student-run clubs and organizations are the wellspring. Here are just a few of the great organizations at MSUCOM.

Friendship Clinic

If you’re looking to help individuates a little closer to home, you might wish to consider spending some time with Friendship Clinic, a student organization dedicated to helping a wide variety of Lansing area residents who are uninsured, students from MSUCOM and the College of Human Medicine collaborate under the supervision of their doctor mentor to help care for the patients who walk through their doors. “It’s really exciting to realize that you’re actually using what you’ve been learning in class,” said Heather Wolf, head coordinator of Friendship Clinic and second-year MSUCOM student. “Being here has given me a confidence boost. You get to realize that you’re actually using what you’ve been learning in class.”

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

One of the groups working hard to deepen the relationship between doctors and patients is the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP). This organization’s purpose is to promote family practice within osteopathic medicine by pointing out some of the major advantages to being a family practitioner. “I like family practice because you’re more involved in the community,” said Erica Austin, treasurer. “You work more on preventing problems and get to know your clients better.”

Commitment to Students

The Office of Student Services announces at the beginning of fall semester the creation of two new positions. Dr. Gillian Rice has accepted a position as director of academic support and Beth Courey has become the administrator for the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS).

As the director of academic support, Dr. Rice plays an important role in searching for and providing resources that will allow students to succeed in their classes. Some of these resources include finding tutors for classes in which a student is struggling, providing access to classrooms and laboratories students needed for additional studying, as well as tracking down any other resources requested by the students.

As administrator for ERAS, Beth Courey will be working with current and former students collecting and compiling information necessary for them to acquire the internships or residencies they will need after graduation. As part of her new position, Beth will continue her role as coordinator for Student Council where she works side by side with 32 student organizations.

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians

One of the groups working hard to deepen the relationship between doctors and patients is the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP). This organization’s purpose is to promote family practice within osteopathic medicine by pointing out some of the major advantages to being a family practitioner. “I like family practice because you’re more involved in the community,” said Erica Austin, treasurer. “You work more on preventing problems and get to know your clients better.”

"In family practice," continued Amy Curry, president, “you get to see an entire family and be involved in their lives. It’s an intimate look you can’t get anywhere else.”

The group brings in guest speakers who talk about their practices, set up mini-clinics that allow students to practice skills such as drawing blood, and most importantly, establish a sense of community. “We have a lot of passion for family practice," said Amy. “It’s great to have that network of support.”

International Health Project

Looking for opportunities to use your skills in other countries? The International Health Project (IHP) helps students travel to places like India, Guatemala, Zambiya, Costa Rica and many other locations across the world. “Mainly, we go abroad during summer, winter and spring break,” said Richard Bryce, president, who this year will be leading a team of students to Costa Rica.

While students travel to poorer nations for various reasons, often they go to offer medical assistance. “What you realize very quickly when you’re overseas,” stated Michelle Powell, secretary for IHP, “is how reliant we are on diagnostic equipment here. One doctor I worked with accurately diagnosed ulcers by simply having his patients drink a glass of water.”

“The places we go, they really have nothing,” continued Richard. “I think it’s important for everyone to go somewhere else and see how things are.

The ACOFP plays an important role in exposing fellow students to the variety of options available to doctors in family practice.
Looking Toward the Future
Fourteenth Year at MSUCOM

by Craig Reed

“Athletic Prowess”
Have you ever sprained your ankle after landing from your one-and-a-half twisting Yurchenko vault? Not only would you have to be into gymnastics to be performing such a contortion, but chances are, you’ve run into Brooke Lemmen, a fourth-year student who’s been involved in gymnastics most of her life.

“It’s a small community,” explains Brooke. “You see each other at all the meets.” While finishing her last year of clinical rotations, Brooke has managed to stay active in sports medicine, which includes Twistars Gymnastics, a local group that works with young gymnasts from age 8 to 17. “Since I spent a lot of years training in gymnastics, it’s given me an advantage whenever I work with them,” Brooke said. “I can explain to a gymnast what techniques they can perform while they are injured and which ones they need to avoid.”

Working with athletes has meant Brooke has had to hone her OMM skills over the years through volunteering at the OMM Student Clinic as well as working with researchers such as Dr. Lynn Brumm, who studies the effects of OMM on athletic injuries. “I used to work in the OMM Clinic every week,” said Brooke. “Being able to practice every day has helped develop my skills, but I also really enjoy using it, especially the muscle energy techniques.”

Brooke’s record of volunteering goes beyond the realm of sports medicine. She’s been a TA for several classes, involved in OsteoCHAMPs, volunteered for Friendship Clinic, been an active member of Sigma Sigma Phi, UAAO, and Sports Medicine Club, and according to several of her peers, she’s always been willing to help her fellow students in their studying. “I’m glad I could stay in Lansing for my rotations and still be involved with the activities I’m used to doing,” said Brooke. “It helps me stay sane.”

“Serving the Country”
It was an important day in osteopathic history when the Armed Forces began commissioning D.O.s as medical officers. Since this breakthrough in the 1960s, this tradition of military service continues today through students like Dale Jackson.

“My dad was in the Army Airborne. He and my mom supported my desire to join the Army. They saw it as a way for me to learn more discipline and to go to college.” So at the age of 17, Dale enlisted, serving first as a military policeman, and then in a special forces as a trained medic.

While on tour in Germany, he was deployed on several missions. At the height of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, his unit conducted search and rescue operations in the country. Later, his unit was the first to enter Bosnia in an effort to secure Sarajevo and implement the Dayton Peace Accords.

During these years, Dale cultivated a number of friendships and mentors. One of them, his flight surgeon, approached him with the idea of going to medical school. “I laughed at the thought of medical school,” Dale said. “I had never considered it until then.” The flight surgeon left a pile of pamphlets from the D.O. school he had attended. “After I read the packet about osteopathic medicine, I realized that the basic tenets of military medicine were very similar to D.O. principles, as well as my own personal philosophy,” he explained.

Dale is currently assigned to the Michigan Army National Guard. Now that he is in his last year at MSUCOM, he is eager to join the ranks of D.O.s who balance their lives between civilian practice and serving part-time in the military. “D.O.s are making a significant contribution in the Guard, Reserve and active duty forces. About half of the military doctors in Michigan are D.O.s and every one of them has had at least one rotation in Iraq,” he said. “We do this to serve our country and because we love doing it.”

Combining her knowledge of medicine and gymnastic techniques, Brooke can treat gymnasts’ injuries and explain to them what techniques they need to avoid while the injury heals.
**Thriving in the Laboratory**

by Sandra Kao

Earning D.O. and Ph.D. degrees simultaneously is a formidable combination, but Yanny Lau does it because she enjoys research. The handful of students who are in the D.O. Ph.D. Dual Degree Training Program dedicate themselves to seven years or more of education and training to become physician-scientists.

“I like being able to answer questions, I like being challenged, and I like working with my hands,” says the fifth-year dual degree student in neuroscience.

Lau discovered an inclination for research during her sophomore year at Boston University where she worked as a research assistant in a neuroendocrinology lab. Her undergraduate research culminated in her first publication in a peer-reviewed neuroscience journal in 2000.

Five years later, her research involves the mechanisms that influence hypertension.

She is now investigating the role of superoxides and oxidative stress in endothelin-induced hypertension in the laboratory of her major professor, Dr. Gregory Fink, professor of pharmacology and toxicology. Her research examines activation of the endothelin type B receptor in blood vessels and its effects on the sympathetic ganglia.

Being in the Dual Degree Training Program means lots of hard work and focus, but Lau has found her niche and is thriving in the laboratory. “These last four years have been great,” she said. “I’ve never felt so focused. I have ... to attend national meetings to present my work and interact with senior scientists in the field. I’ve always liked it.”

**New Chairperson for FCM**

Carolyn Monson, D.O., has accepted a position as interim chairperson for the Department of Family and Community Medicine (FCM). “I’ve hit the ground running,” said Dr. Monson. Graduating from MSUCOM in 1979, Dr. Monson is a former president of the Michigan Osteopathic Medical Association, and a trustee of the American Osteopathic Association.

As chairperson, she has played an important role in developing research and establishing outreach programs such as OsteoCHAMPS, which exposes high school students from underprivileged areas to osteopathic medicine.

“We promoted Dr. Agwu to this position because of her extensive background in both clinical research and outreach,” said Dr. William Strampel, dean of MSUCOM. “As associate dean, she will be able to focus her energies on these endeavors.”

“I’m looking forward to this job,” said Agwu. “I’ll be working to expand the reach of programs like OsteoCHAMPS as well as helping to showcase the clinical research from our very capable faculty.”

**New Associate Dean**

Margaret Agwu, D.O., M.P.H., has accepted a position as associate dean for community outreach and clinical research. “This is a great opportunity to go in a new direction,” said Agwu, who has been serving as the chairperson for the Department of Family and Community Medicine since 2000. As chairperson, she has played an important role in developing research and establishing outreach programs such as OsteoCHAMPS, which exposes high school students from underprivileged areas to osteopathic medicine.

“As associate dean, she will be able to focus her energies on these endeavors.”

“I’m looking forward to this job,” said Agwu. “I’ll be working to expand the reach of programs like OsteoCHAMPS as well as helping to showcase the clinical research from our very capable faculty.”

**APOBEC**

Opening Another Battlefront against HIV

by Craig Reed

As the HIV pandemic continues to spread, new methods for fighting the disease become ever more important. Scientists like Dr. Yong-Hui Zheng from MSU’s Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics are being asked to step up to the plate to find new ways of combating the illness as the virus mutates and develops immunity to current treatments.

Dr. Zheng’s research focuses on a series of enzymes called APOBEC. “APOBEC occurs naturally in the body,” said Dr. Zheng. “Every one of us already has the gene necessary to produce this enzyme.”

APOBEC is an ancient enzyme which the human species has developed over eons to target retroviruses of which HIV is a member. When a retrovirus invades the body, APOBEC works to disrupt the virus’ ability to replicate within human cells. This enzyme has shown to be extremely effective against most retroviruses except for HIV. “APOBEC produces a protein called virion infectivity factor (Vif),” explains Dr. Zheng. “This protein deactivates the APOBEC enzyme so that it can no longer interfere with the virus’ reproduction process.”

By studying the interaction between APOBEC and Vif, Dr. Zheng believes he can find a way to outsmart HIV. “APOBEC has broad application to all retroviruses,” said Dr. Zheng. “If we can design a drug to block Vif, the body’s innate immune response will be able to eliminate the virus from the body. Another way we might be able to solve the problem would be to alter the levels of APOBEC in the body so that there is so much of the enzyme present, it overpowers HIV’s ability to produce the Vif protein.”

Though Dr. Zheng’s primary focus is on HIV, he sees the potential impact his research can have on other common diseases. “The implication of this research is far reaching,” Dr. Zheng stated. “Once we better understand how this part of our immune system works, we will have a tool that is capable of protecting us not only from HIV, but from all the other retroviruses out there.”

Dr. Zheng (right) with Wang Xioujun, one of his research assistants, is studying how the Vif protein produced by HIV interacts with the APOBEC enzyme to short circuit the body’s defenses.

Yanny Lau is one of nine students currently in the D.O. Ph.D program.
The MOA-MSUCOM Partnership

MOA
MICHIGAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION

The Art of Caring: Coordinating Relief Efforts to Katrina Victims

by Craig Reed

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of individuals had to be relocated to different parts of the nation where they could have a roof over their heads, food on the table and an opportunity to look at their options and begin planning for the future.

Michigan became one of a number of states that welcomed these displaced citizens from Louisiana and Mississippi. Fort Custer, which is located just west of Battle Creek, became one of the major hubs for processing individuals as well as providing temporary housing to the hurricane victims. "When Katrina hit the Gulf Coast states, Michigan sent several hundred National Guard to help in Mississippi," said Dr. Al Joucys, a 1977 graduate from MSUCOM who is currently the state surgeon for the Michigan Army National Guard. "On Labor Day, we started receiving displaced citizens into Battle Creek Air National Guard Base," he said. Dr. Joucys, who has many years experience coordinating military medical care, served as an advisor for the Battle Creek area regional response team. "My job was to figure out potential problems and to help the citizens of Battle Creek on their side of the relief efforts," he explained.

Problems came in a variety of forms. Some individuals needed accommodations such as wheelchairs. Others needed access to lost prescription medications and urgent medical care. One unexpected challenge for Dr. Joucys arrived on the first plane.

"When the door on the plane opened up, a German Shepherd came running out," said Joucys. The dog was the first of several little surprises. In all, six dogs, four birds, two ferrets, a cat and a rabbit came with the 276 people who were flown into Battle Creek. Food and accommodations were quickly established for the pets. "I asked one how he got his dog on the plane," said Joucys. "He smiled at me and said, 'My dog's name is Elvis and nobody says no to Elvis.' "

Though Dr. Joucys played an important role in coordinating activities, he gives the bulk of the credit to the citizens of Battle Creek. "Church groups took in people. Individuals took in people. They found food and clothing for everyone. They tried to make those suffering from chronic diseases as comfortable as possible," he said. We even had veterinarians who graduated from MSU volunteering their time to treat the animals that arrived. It was a real community effort."
MSUCOM Alumni Recognized for Achievements at AOA Convention

by Craig Reed

At the 2005 American Osteopathic Association Convention in Orlando, Florida, two of MSUCOM’s alumni were recognized for their contributions to the osteopathic community. Glen Hatcher Jr., D.O., F.A.C.O.O., was recognized with the Dean’s Award for Meritorious Contribution, and Robert J. Stomel, D.O. was awarded with the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Glen Hatcher, D.O.

Robert Stomel, D.O.

Dr. Hatcher is an ophthalmologist who graduated from MSUCOM in 1975. A few of his contributions to the osteopathic community have been his 19 years of service as a member of MSUCOM’s Alumni Association Board of Directors, his 23 years of instruction as a clinical faculty member, being a former president of the Osteopathic College of Ophthalmology and his numerous articles and presentations on eye health. “I am quite honored to have received this award,” said Hatcher. “It was a labor of love for me and I didn’t expect to receive such recognition. It has endeared me to the school even more.

Dr. Stomel is a 1980 alumnus who holds fellowships in the American College of Osteopathic Internists, the American College of Medical Quality, the American College of Cardiology and the American College of Chest Physicians. He is the current president of the Michigan Osteopathic Association and former president of the ACOI. In addition to publishing more than 50 articles and abstracts, Dr. Stomel is the program director of the Cardiology Fellowship and the Director of the Chest Pain Diagnostic Unit at Botstred General Hospital and is actively campaigning to increase reimbursements for primary care physicians. “I’m very honored,” said Stomel. “It’s very meaningful to have your school honor you.”

Reflections

As the time draws close to a transition in the presidency of your Alumni Association, this column marks the end of a two-year term in which I have enjoyed serving the MSUCOMAA. It has been great fun meeting and greeting alumni at Silverfest, Seminar in the Sun, and at the MSUCOM-sponsored functions held in conjunction with the American Osteopathic Association, American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians and Michigan Association of Osteopathic Family Physicians.

This past year has been particularly meaningful as it overlapped my presidency of MAOFP. Leading such closely allied organizations, I had two platforms from which I work with students and residents. I have interacted with MSUCOM students at convocation, graduation, local events, state meetings and at national forums. I’ve listened to their articularly expressed concerns about overwhelming debt and specialty career choice, but there is also the concern for improving our health care system and an activism to step forward and have their ideas heard by policy makers. As a program director for residency training, I’ve had the opportunity to interact with our recently graduated alumni, now in MSUCOM Statewide Campus System training programs. Their concerns surround the challenges of governmental regulation, liability insurance, and the declining reimbursements they will face as they enter practice in today’s complex medical arena. Not a one looked back with any regrets on the decision to attend MSUCOM and to become an osteopathic physician.

The AA board has always been supportive of student activities, but two significant events took place at our September meeting. We voted to allow the president of Student Council to sit on the board with both voice and full voting privilege. The board also moved a line item in our budget to officially finance student activities. Both decisions signal a firm commitment to the students, our future alumni.

These two years as president have provided me with an opportunity to channel my interest in enhancing alumni association membership with the benefits of supporting MSUCOM to our present and future alumni. Your AA board has a group of dedicated directors with a forward looking focus. I wish the best to my successor, Michael Weiss, in whose capable hands your board will continue to provide the best in alumni relations. Thank you for a great time. It has been my privilege.

Myral R. Robbins, D.O. President, MSUCOM Alumni Association

Phyllis and Walter Dell with Kelly Janis, recipient of their named scholarship

Such assistance comes from individuals like Phyllis and Walter Dell who, through the creation of their endowed scholarship, were able to help recipients like Kelly Janis, a second-year student who grew up in East Lansing.

The creation of a scholarship is not only an opportunity to assist future generations of D.O.s, it’s also an opportunity for donors to reward students who focus their energies on things like community service. The Kay E. White Scholarship, for example, was established by the former associate dean of student services to assist students with an extensive history of volunteering at non-profit organizations with the hope of encouraging recipients of the award to continue their involvement in the community well into their professional careers.

While many of the scholarships were created through individual donations, groups and organizations have stepped up to the plate as well. The Ingham County Osteopathic Auxiliary Scholarship is one such example. This particular scholarship is given to Michigan residents, strengthening the commitment of a scholarship is not only an opportunity to assist future osteopathic medicine as well as an opportunity to reach out to current students who will one day be in a position to reach out to future students of MSUCOM.

Kris Jacobs, Erica Amini, recipient of the Ingham County Osteopathic Auxiliary Scholarship. Lee Strange, Shelley Welting

As the cost of a medical education continues to grow, endowed scholarships will continue to be an important source of assistance which students at MSUCOM will be able to utilize for generations to come.

Reflections

by Craig Reed

Students face a number of challenges when they become part of the MSUCOM family, and one of the problems that inevitably comes up is how can they afford the approximately $40,000 needed to attend medical school. Thanks to the donors concerned about this issue, a number of scholarships are available to the students to offset some of the expenses they face.
**February**

2,9,16,23  

5-12  
CME: “Topics in the Tropics” – Allergro Papgayo in Costa Rica. Learn how to apply newer treatment modalities in the management of difficult disease states. 20 hours of Category IA credit; tuition is $350 in addition to the cost of travel. Chairperson is Jayne Martin, D.O. Questions about the program: Jan Falls, (517) 353-9714 or toll-free (800) 437-0001; jan.falls@hc.msu.edu. Questions about the travel or resort: Classic Travel, (517) 349-6200 or (800) 643-3449. For detailed information see http://www.com.msu.edu/cme/short.html.

19-21  

24-25  

25  
MOCF Ball: “Puttin’ on the Glitz” – Ritz Carlton, Dearborn. Proceeds from this Michigan Osteopathic College Foundation fundraiser ball will support the goals and mission of the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine. For information contact Colleen Kniffen, kniffen@msu.edu, (517) 355-9616.

**March**

4-11  

19-23  

26-30  
CME: “Craniosacral Technique: Level I” – MSU, East Fee Hall, East Lansing, MI. 36 hours of Category IA credit; Early Bird tuition is $1,000, full tuition is $1250. Chairperson is Barbara Briner, D.O. See http://www.com.msu.edu/cme/index.html.

**April**

12  

17-21  
CME: “Advanced Muscle Energy with Clinical Correlation” – TownePlace Suites and East Fee Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI. 36 hours of Category IA credit; Early Bird tuition is $1,000, full tuition is $1250. Chairperson is Carl Steele, D.O., M.S., PT See http://www.com.msu.edu/cme/index.html.

**May**

For a complete listing of MSUCOM events check out our Web calendar: www.com.msu.edu/calendar
Topics in the Tropics
Department of Neurology and Ophthalmology
February 5-12, 2006
Costa Rica

Including educational programs in:
- Epilepsy
- Dementia
- Optic neuropathies
- Parkinson's Disease
- Migraine
- Stroke
- Alternative therapies in headaches
- Stroke imaging
- Brain imaging for dementia

This course is approved by Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine for 20 hours of AOA category 1A credit.

Questions? (517) 353-9714 or toll free (888) 437-0001 or e-mail: jan.falls@hc.msu.edu, www.com.msu.edu/cme/short.html