Winter 2003

COM Outlook Winter 2003

College of Osteopathic Medicine

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Medicine Triumphs Over Military in Battle of Passions for Dr. Kenneth Johnson

At the tender age of 10, Dr. Kenneth Johnson experienced a life-defining moment that would play a major role in shaping what has become a standout career in the field of obstetrics and gynecology.
There’s an old African proverb that says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” It’s a philosophy that also applies to educating our medical students because it takes a dedicated faculty and staff to produce a compassionate, caring, quality osteopathic physician.

The obvious recognition that our institution is now receiving locally, regionally, and nationally is due primarily to the commitment of the people who are affiliated with the institution. The quality of an academic institution is only as high as the quality of the people who are committed to delivering the program. The success of ours is directly attributable to our faculty, staff, students, and administration.

The physicians that graduate from NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine consistently personify the profession’s tenets by providing quality care for all people and serving as compassionate patient advocates. This is not by accident. Rather, it’s the result of exposure to the people who teach and work at the college, as well as exposure to essential programs like AHEC and the various student and professional osteopathic organizations.

Each spoke in the college’s educational wheel plays a pivotal role in the students’ curricular evolution. That’s especially true of the IGC preceptors, who graciously give of their time to help introduce our first and second-year students to the clinical environment. This is where the students begin to see the important relationship between scientific foundation and the understanding of disease and health integrated with the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the patient.

Our diverse adjunct faculty network also enhances the learning experience by working with our full-time faculty in delivering lectures and assisting with other educational aspects such as problem-based learning, laboratories, clinical correlations, and standardized patients. And then there are the invaluable contributions of our adjunct faculty members, institutions, and organizations throughout the state that help train our students during their third and fourth-year clinical rotations.

Anchoring these programmatic facets are our full-time faculty and staff, who work together to coordinate and integrate the various curricula aspects to ensure that our students receive a cohesive, quality education. Our top-notch staff members, who are charged with a wealth of responsibilities, are especially essential to the college’s success. During the course of a typical week, they do everything from maintaining the records of each student’s progress to establishing and sustaining crucial communication with our students, multiple sites, and multiple disciplines.

As our college has continued to grow in both size and stature, it has become known as an institution that appeals to academically successful students who have the potential to embody certain traits such as compassion, confidence without arrogance, and a high predilection for the medically underserved. Why do these traits predominate by the time they graduate? It occurs because our faculty, staff, and administration embody and project these noble traits, which in turn encourages and guides our students on how to emulate and replicate those qualities.

Of course, these are not just osteopathic traits. Many of our staff members had no knowledge of what osteopathic medicine was before coming here, and many of our faculty members are not osteopathic physicians—they’re M.D.s, Ph.D.s, D.M.D.s, D.A.s, and D.P.M.s. The common denominator is that each embraces this philosophy that is a tenet of osteopathic medicine.

There is a culture that exists at this institution that exudes these very positive feelings. We’re not here just as employees of the college or university, whether we be faculty, staff, or administration. We’re here because we share a passion for what we do, which is to ultimately produce high-quality physicians who are committed to being caring and compassionate patient advocates, wherever and whatever they may practice.
The Health Professions Division 2003 calendar of events promises many stimulating and educational opportunities for our students, faculty, and the South Florida community.

Highlighting this agenda is the January 17-18 A Glimpse of the Future of Health Care In America symposium addressing the important health questions of our time: "Is health care a right or a privilege?" "Are we headed toward universal access to health care in America?"

There will be particular emphasis on the 42 million Americans who are without health insurance, and the economic and non-economic barriers that present the major obstacles to health care access.

A community forum on health care will allow the public to interact with a panel of state and national experts on topics concerning the affordability of health care. Affordability of prescription drugs, access to managed care, reimbursement issues, access to health care for immigrants, and liability will be among the many topics examined.

The conference program will include five concurrent sessions covering medical malpractice, universal health care, access and cost of prescription drugs, non-citizens’ access to health care, and terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

State Senator Debbie Wasserman Schultz, the conference’s planning chair, has assembled a stellar roster of participants including Senator James E. “Jim” King, Jr., president of the Florida Senate, Yank Coble, M.D., president of the American Medical Association, and Mary Alexander, J.D., president of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

In addition, we are honored to host national speakers from the American Association of Retired Persons, the Health Insurance Association of America, and the Broward Regional Health Planning Council.

The executive administration salutes the College of Osteopathic Medicine, the College of Pharmacy, and the College of Allied Health for their commitment to and enthusiasm for this important event.

While we are in the business of training physicians and other health care professionals, understanding the context in which they will practice is an obligation we have to our students.

Creating a forum in which all the parties involved in the delivery of health care can meet at the same table is the only way solutions to this monumental challenge are possible.

We wish you a healthy and productive 2003.
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FEATURES

Students Promote Osteopathic Awareness Week - 10
In October, first and second-year medical students promoted National Osteopathic Awareness Week by visiting different colleges and centers throughout NSU to give informative lectures on osteopathic medicine.

Crisis Leads to Heroism for Drs. Matthew Pinto and Chad Frank - 17
What started out as a routine Sunday afternoon of fun and football quickly turned into a crash course in lifesaving CPR for Drs. Matthew Pinto and Chad Frank, who were watching the Philadelphia Eagles play the Houston Texans at the World Famous Parrot Lounge in Fort Lauderdale.

Dr. Joel Spalter Dives in When Disaster Strikes - 19
In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, individuals like Dr. Joel Spalter have been stirred by a wave of patriotism and a profound desire to assist their fellow citizens in times of distress.

Doc Hollywood Brings His Insight and Humor to NSU - 20
In September, Dr. Neil Shulman, better known as “Doc Hollywood,” entertained and informed the audience at a special presentation coordinated by the college’s Sigma Sigma Phi student chapter and the Pediatrics Club.

Military Commitment Nearly Derails Jesse Street’s Medical Career - 24
M-1 student Jesse Street’s plan to pursue both a medical and military career was thrown an unexpected curve when the events of September 11, 2001, made the specter of war an ever-increasing possibility.

Medicine Wins Big in Battle of Passions for Dr. Kenneth Johnson - 26
At the tender age of 10, Dr. Kenneth Johnson experienced a life-defining moment that would play a major role in shaping what has become a standout career in the field of obstetrics and gynecology.

Family Medicine Department Plots Return to Marcus Welby Mindset - 30
Over the past two years, Dr. Ronnie Martin has worked diligently to reshape the NSU-COM curriculum by emphasizing a return to a more humanistic, hands-on approach to student training.

African Study Tour Provides Enduring Memories - 35
M-2 student Tyese Gaines realized a lifelong dream when she traveled to remote parts of West Africa to participate in an enriching 17-day medical mission.

DEPARTMENTS

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On December 8, NSU’s Institute for Children Services coordinated an event called A Day for Children at the university’s Library, Research, and Information Technology Center that included everything from free medical screenings to various family-oriented activities. Twenty NSU-COM students representing the Pediatrics Club and Sigma Sigma Phi were on hand to assist with the free screenings and allow the children to become familiar with various types of medical equipment.

The U.S. Public Health Service/Health Resources and Services Administration awarded a $478,213 grant to NSU-COM to establish a new pediatrics residency-training program at Palms West Hospital. This program represents the first pediatrics residency program in the Broward and Palm Beach County area. The first three residents are expected to begin on July 1, 2003.

In September, William Brooks, D.O., of Kansas City, Missouri, joined NSU-COM faculty and fellows from the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice to conduct the first phase of a study regarding the effects of head position on the ability to forward bend. The OPP fellows helped collect data and recruit subjects during the three-day study. The survey, which is part of a larger project aimed at determining the effect one area of the body has on the motion characteristics of other areas, was sponsored by a grant from the Restorative Care Foundation. Dr. Brooks and Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D., professor and assistant chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, are founders of the foundation, whose goal is to further the understanding of osteopathic principles for practice. The collected statistics are currently being analyzed to determine the next phases of the study.

Nine NSU-COM students are currently engaged in research projects in areas such as women’s health, international health, breast cancer prevention, and achondroplasia (i.e., little people). These students will be eligible for cash awards from the proceeds of the Dr. S. Kenneth Burnell Student Research Endowment.

On December 12, NSU held its annual Employee Anniversary Luncheon at the Signature Grand in Davie to recognize administration, staff, and faculty members that have reached significant employment milestones. Eight NSU-COM faculty members received recognition during the festivities. They are:

15 Years of Service
Elaine Lefkowitz

10 Years of Service
Myron Howell, D.O.
Stanley Simpson, D.O.
Joseph Stasio, D.O., FACOFP

5 Years of Service
Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O.
Brian Portnoy, D.O.
Elisa Ginter, D.O.
Eric Shamus, Ph.D.

On December, the NSU-COM Pediatrics Club coordinated its annual Holiday Toy Drive for underserved children. Working with Family Central, the club adopted three daycare centers and collected toys from students, faculty, and staff for approximately 200 children. Club members fashioned a decorative holiday wagon with a tree adorned with an ornament for each child, featuring information such as age, sex, and a gift wish list. Participants were then afforded an opportunity to purchase a gift from each child’s wish list. The presents were wrapped at a dinner function held in the HPD Dining Room and delivered to the three daycare centers the week before Christmas by Pediatric Club members.
On September 9, the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice conducted a scoliosis screening at Nova Middle School. Throughout the day, more than 500 seventh-grade students participated in the screenings, which were supervised by Eric Shamus, Ph.D., and Mark Sandhouse, D.O., and conducted by OPP fellows, physical therapy students, an OPP research assistant, and a resident from the North Broward Hospital District Family Medicine Residency Program. Following are the individuals who conducted the scoliosis screenings:

**OPP Fellows**
- Jessica Brown
- Alberto Caban
- Doede Donaugh
- Andrew Schwartz
- Alex Scheuermann

**Physical Therapy Students**
- Amy Krall
- Scott Miller
- Anke Riebau
- Aaron Santiso
- Tal Shimoni

**OPP Research Assistant**
- Khalil Carter

**North Broward Hospital District Resident**
- Theresa Goebel, D.O.

According to statistics released by the American Osteopathic Association in November 2002, there are currently:
- 49,210 living D.O.s in the United States.
- 2,865 D.O.s residing in Florida.

On October 12, over a dozen NSU-COM students participated in the Third Annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk/Run on Fort Lauderdale Beach, which raises money for breast cancer research, education, and patient services in Broward County. The students, who raised over $300 during the 3.2-mile walk, joined more than 4,000 breast cancer survivors and supporters at the event.

Plans for the Master of Science in Education Degree Program for educators in the health professions have been completed, and the first contingent of NSU-HPD faculty members will begin working toward a degree in January 2003. Faculty that completes 36 credit hours will be awarded a degree from the Fischler Graduate School of Education and Human Services. The project represents a major collaborative effort between the graduate school and NSU-COM for the Health Professions Division.

During the past year, M-2 students John Coppola and Karthik Krishnamurthy have been conducting extensive biochemical research on the role of malonyl CoA as a hunger signal with the sponsorship of K.V. Venkatachalam, Ph.D., who is an associate professor of biochemistry in the College of Medical Sciences. The duo will be presenting an abstract of its findings at an international symposium this spring. “Obesity is a major clinical problem in the United States, and there are many hypotheses that have been proposed regarding the mechanism of weight gain, feeding behavior, and the relation to obesity,” said Coppola, who serves as president of NSU-COM’s Student Dermatological Association. “Our research will be very useful in understanding the feeding behavior in obese individuals because understanding the mechanism of hunger control will allow us to come up with better therapeutic strategies.”

On October 25, NSU-COM held its annual Track Day, which allows M-2 students to mingle with representatives from the Consortium for Excellence in Medical Education (CEME) and other medical institutions to discuss third-year core rotation possibilities.
Each year, the Pembroke Pines Charter School Program for Gifted Children devotes a day of applied learning in the scientific field. This year, the school chose to gear its scientific day of learning to the field of medicine, so members of NSU-COM's Emergency Medicine Society graciously volunteered their time and knowledge to give the gifted children a day of hands-on medicine. Club members set up and ran stations that allowed the children to learn about reflexes, eyes, ears, pulse, oxygen levels, blood pressure, and EKGs. The eager young participants had an opportunity to rotate through the various stations, learn about medical tools, techniques, and terms, and ask question regarding health. “Thanks to the help of Robin McFee D.O., M.P.H., and EMS members Kevin Boehm, Stacey Cheek, Ben Lawner, and Angie Smith,” said Deanna Massimino, an ESE/gifted program teacher at Pembroke Pines Charter School, “our first medically oriented scientific day was a smashing success.”

The Student Osteopathic Medical Association is seeking talented individuals to strut their stuff at its SOMA Night Live amateur competition, which will take place on March 23, 2003, at Beach Place in Fort Lauderdale. SOMA is currently looking for bands, theatrical performers, comedians, and other talented individuals to volunteer their time to this fun-filled event that will raise money for Family Central, a local nonprofit organization. To learn more about SOMA Night Live, please email Taryn Shapiro at taryn@nova.edu.

For the third consecutive year, NSU-COM students will be competing at the Eastern Atlantic Student Research Forum, an event that allows medical students from the eastern United States to share their research with peers from other area medical schools. Two NSU-COM students—John Coppola and Karthik Krishnamurthy—will be presenting a poster describing their studies that further the understanding of the control of neuropeptide Y synthesis in the brain.

Jason Zell, D.O., a class of 2001 alumnus who is currently a resident in the internal medicine department at the College of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine, was published in the October 4, 2002, issue of Life Sciences. The article, entitled “Regulation of mdm2 mRNA Expression in Human Breast Tumor-derived GI-101A Cells,” was co-authored with two other investigators.

Program-to-Practice with Career Services

Over the past year, NSU Career Services has been offering the Program-to-Practice workshop series to all second-year osteopathic students throughout the fall and winter semesters. This series targets key career planning areas for the osteopathic students.

The workshops help students assess their qualifications, skills, and accomplishments in order to choose the correct residency for their future. This series also helps students update their curriculum vitae in order to put together the right format to market their skills and qualifications. Furthermore, the series discusses the importance of cover letters, thank-you letters, and the reference page.

The Program-to-Practice series also discusses the significance of defining postgraduate medical education opportunities, understanding osteopathic rotating internships as well comprehending the difference between allopathic vs. osteopathic residency training.

Lastly, the series gives students the ability to learn how to prepare effectively for a professional employment interview. This workshop identifies the various types of interview styles and settings and allows students to gain knowledge on what to do before, during, and after the interview process. These tools give students the knowledge to effectively apply for the Match Program and additional internship opportunities.

For more information about NSU Career Services or to gain information about the Program-to-Practice series, please contact 800-541-6682, ext. 7201 or email career@nora.edu. Web site: www.nova.edu/cwis/studentaffairs/career.
Fitness Club Members Receive Osteopathic Overview

By Chelsea Jerry
President, American Medical Student Association

On Friday, November 15, the college’s American Medical Student Association (AMSA) chapter sponsored its inaugural osteopathic awareness event at Bally’s Health and Fitness Club in Davie, Florida. The event’s purpose was to promote osteopathic awareness and expose the community to the osteopathic philosophy, as well as to allow students to gain experience in treating people with true medical problems.

More than a dozen first and second-year students participated in treating over 50 community members with manipulative medicine. Osteopathic manipulative treatment tables were arranged in the fitness center’s lobby and foyer, which is where students interviewed, evaluated, and treated participating individuals. While club members waited for treatment, they were provided with information regarding osteopathy and its philosophy. Overseeing the students were Mark Sandhouse, D.O., associate professor, Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, and Andrew Schwartz, a fourth-year osteopathic fellow.

Members of the community as well as Bally’s fitness club patrons were invited to participate in the event, which was publicized throughout the local community. Bally’s graciously allowed NSU-COM students to use the fitness facility to host the event and presented each NSU participant with a free two-week membership. Students participating in the osteopathic awareness event were Ish Beloso, Lisa Bocelli, Stacey Cheek, Ulyee Choe, Carol Chung, Danielle DeGennaro, Dan Halpert, Chelsea Jerry, Edward Jones, Sarah Katta, Mariusz Rybaltowski, Iris Saleh, and Mark Scheer.

Nugent Adds New Duties to Jam-packed Agenda

In October, Kevin Nugent, REMT-P, director of the Department of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Education and Training, was elected to serve on the American Heart Association’s Broward Community Board. In this role, Nugent will help the organization in its mission to reduce disability and death for cardiovascular disease.

This new appointment was just the latest in a string of programs and projects that Nugent, who joined the NSU-COM team in 1998, is involved with on a continuum. In addition to ensuring that all Health Professions Division students receive emergency medicine instruction, Nugent has secured contracts with:

- Hospitals in Broward and Miami-Dade counties to provide nursing education and contact hours for re-licensure.
- The Florida prison system to furnish advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) training and education.
- Barry University Podiatric Medicine to deliver education and training in emergency medicine, traumatology, ACLS, and PALS (pediatric advanced life support).
- Local fire rescue departments to supply continuing education for recertification as EMTs and paramedics.

Nugent’s extracurricular organizational affiliations include serving as:

- American Heart Association regional faculty member in BLS, ACLS, and PALS.
- American Heart Association Region 9 Task Force chair.
- American Heart Association emergency cardiac care board member.
- State chair for pre-hospital trauma life support.
- Regional faculty member for pre-hospital trauma life support for South Florida.
- Program coordinator for the Advanced Trauma Care for Nurses Program at NSU-COM.
NSU Receives Family Central Award

For the second consecutive year, Family Central—a family service provider that houses daycare centers in Broward and Miami-Dade counties—honored NSU and its community-minded medical students with the Outstanding University Award. The accolade, which was presented in September 2002 at Family Central’s Volunteer Recognition Breakfast, honored the efforts of NSU-COM’s Pediatrics Club and Sigma Sigma Phi Chapter. The award is symbolic of the smiling faces that the college’s caring medical students bring to the faces of over 300 children each year through activities such as the Holiday Toy Drive and the DOctor’s Bag Program. Debbi Cohn Steinkohl, who directs the IGC College of Osteopathic Medicine in Community Service (COM²Serve) Program, also received a certificate of appreciation at the event for her contributions to the organization.

Students Launch Anesthesia Society

The list of student organizations continues to grow with the recent addition of the NSU-COM Student Anesthesia Society (SAS), which was established to serve as a source of information for those interested in this very diverse specialty. Historically, anesthesiologists primarily administered anesthesia to alleviate pain and suppress consciousness; today they serve as the perioperative physician, providing medical care to patients throughout their surgical experience. The activities of the SAS will focus on various presentations about the specialty, on-site tours, and anesthesiology related workshops and clinics. M-2 students Areg Mekerian and Angie Smith will serve as the club’s inaugural president and vice president, respectively. To learn more about the Student Anesthesia Society, please email all inquiries to nsucomsas@yahoogroups.com.

SOMA Members Enjoy Busy Semester

In addition to attending classes and studying for exams, members of the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) were involved in a number of extracurricular academic and altruistic activities. Throughout the fall semester, SOMA coordinated a series of lectures that informed the students about incisive topics like acupuncture, domestic violence and sexual assault treatment, alternative approach to mental health, and traditional Chinese medicine.

In November, 13 SOMA members participated in the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation (CCFA) Pace Setters Walk, which was held at Miami Metrozoo to raise needed funds to help find a cure for inflammatory bowel disease. “It was a great opportunity for us to make a difference in many people’s lives,” said Taryn Shapiro, who serves as co president of the college’s SOMA chapter. “We also got the chance to spread the word about osteopathic medicine as we stride toward a future without Crohn’s disease and colitis.”

Participants

Andrea Ali
Alicia Czander
Kevin Friedman
Carol Kitay
Natascha Minidis
Carol Morris
Tony Nakhlé
Aleisha Olby
Manuel Rodriguez
Iris Saleh
Hillary Saxon
Tony Shalash
Taryn Shapiro
On October 2, the NSU-COM student chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) sponsored a campus-wide event in honor of National Osteopathic Awareness Week. First and second-year medical students as well as various faculty members visited different colleges and centers throughout NSU to give informative lectures on osteopathic medicine. Throughout the day, teams of students visited the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship, the Center for Psychological Studies, the Shepard Broad Law Center, as well as Nova High School. These teams included representatives from student organizations such as ACOFP, Neuro-Psychology Club, SOIMA, AMOPS, Sports Medicine, LOG, ACOEP, Sigma Sigma Phi, UAAO, JAMS, and FOMA. NSU-COM faculty members who gave lectures included Ronnie Martin, D.O., FACOFP, Elaine Wallace, D.O., Kenneth Johnson, D.O., Michael Patterson, Ph.D., and Alan Morrison, D.O., FACP.

During these informal lectures, the history and philosophy of osteopathic medicine were emphasized, as well as the differences between osteopathic and allopathic medicine. “I really feel that the osteopathic philosophy is what is needed in medicine today,” commented a faculty member from the Center for Psychological Studies. “I believe I would refer my patients to a D.O.”

Student response was equally positive, with one student from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences stating, “I never knew about osteopathic medicine until today. Now, I think I will definitely apply to osteopathic medical schools.” The student chapter of ACOFP was happy to sponsor this important event because educating people about osteopathic medicine is a key goal for the profession as a whole. According to Dr. Martin, “The AOA national survey revealed that only about 10 percent of the country knows what an osteopathic physician is. We here at NSU-COM recognize that many of our students, faculty, and staff here at the university do not realize that they have a school of osteopathic medicine on campus, much less know what an osteopathic physician really is. All politics and all good deeds begin at home. I think it is insightful and farsighted that our students recognized this paradigm and decided to reach out to the people they come in contact with daily in an attempt to make them, if not converts to osteopathy, at least aware of its existence.”

Over 20 students represented NSU-COM at the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) convention, which was held in conjunction with the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Convention and Scientific Seminar last October in Las Vegas, Nevada. To capture a Halloween spirit, participating students dressed up to mark the closing ceremony at the SOMA Foundations reception. Standing (from l) are: Karthik Krishnamurthy; Cheryl Neely; Sarah Newburn; Ghassan Boghosian; Aleisha Olby; Christa Ambrose; Kasey Nelson; Taryn Shapiro; and Nadia Govanlu. Kneeling are Felicia Berstein and Hillary Saxon.

While much attention was devoted to both the AOA and SOMA conventions, there still was time for the students to appreciate the good food and liveliness of “sin city.” During the convention, a group of students found the time to share a meal with Bart Whitehead, D.M.D., M.Ed., director of student and administrative services. Top row (from l): Urvi Thakker; Angel Rodrigues; Tony Nahkla; Chad Roberts; Melissa Mascoli; Kevin Friedman; and Jason Nydyck. Bottom row (from l): Karthik Krishnamurthy; Hillary Saxon; Aleisha Olby; Taryn Shapiro; Karen Kobiashi; and Dr. Whitehead.
After years of adhering to a manual process for determining where students will conduct their third-year clinical rotations, NSU-COM recently converted to a computerized system that parallels the way residency slots are currently selected.

In the past, students would submit a wish list of their top five choices to Elaine Lefkowitz, director of clinical education, who was then charged with the difficult task of balancing the students' needs with those of the 14 core clinical sites scattered throughout Florida. Although the manual system worked successfully over the years, the decision was made to alter the process for a range of reasons.

"Because of the growth of our student body and the increased number of core training sites, it was determined that we were going to switch to a different process that is more blinded to meet the needs of our students and our sites," said Joseph DeGaetano, D.O., FAAFP, assistant professor of family medicine and director of clinical curriculum and graduate medical education. "We decided to implement a model that is very similar to how residency positions are selected, whereby the students will rank order all 14 of our core campuses.

"The Student Government Association, in conjunction with the Office of Clinical Education, has developed a computer program where each and every one of our students will be randomly assigned a number. Essentially, if you have 180 students in the class, each student will be assigned a number from 1 through 180. Simultaneously, we will input his or her clinical campus rank order into the program. The system then assigns the student the highest-ranked clinical spot possible based upon the number of slots available at each of the 14 sites and the student's randomly generated numeric position in the match."

To ensure an equitable selection procedure, the computerized process will be overseen by two class officers, a faculty member from the Office of Clinical Education, and a class member chosen at random. "Our goal was to take the process out of the hands of administration and put it into the hands of the student government so the students are empowered," Dr. DeGaetano said.

"In our preliminary testing of the program, we found that 75 percent of the students will probably get their first choice—and 90 percent will probably get one of their top three choices," he stressed. "So even though it sounds fairly ominous for student No. 180, the reality of it is that even the lowest-ranked student still stands a fairly good opportunity of getting one of his or her top choices."

Once the rotation selection process is completed, students unhappy with their chosen site will be afforded an opportunity to effectively "swap" rotations with another willing classmate. "After the electronic match takes place, there will be a two-week swap period where students can seek out a fellow classmate and attempt to trade sites," Dr. DeGaetano explained. "After the two-week period ends, all assignments will be final."

When the final list of assignments is posted in February, Dr. DeGaetano knows there will be a handful of students that will be dissatisfied with the new system's random results if they don't receive a preferred rotation site. "Unfortunately, there is no way we can make everybody happy," he admitted. "But in the end, I think the vast majority will feel the process is fair and that each and every student has an equitable chance of getting placed at one of their higher-ranked sites."
Christian Medical Association Students Provide Holiday Outreach

By Edward Jones
President, NSU-COM Christian Medical Association

For the past 22 years, on a Saturday before Thanksgiving, First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale blocks off a portion of Broward Boulevard for the entire day to feed the homeless and the needy during its Feast of Plenty festival. For the past four years, NSU-COM's Christian Medical Association (CMA) has provided students and doctors to staff part of this vital ministry outreach event. Through this outreach, CMA is able to provide medical care and health screenings to anyone wishing to receive it.

The students serve as the main health care providers during the day; in fact, the doctors are there only to address any abnormal readings or student concerns. For the patients, their day begins when they are whisked away by an eager student who takes their height and weight and checks their BMI (body mass index). Next, the student takes the patients' blood pressure and then listens to their heart and lungs before their blood sugar is taken at the next station. Finally, the students have the opportunity to counsel their patients in a quiet, private room. Here, the students are able to talk with each of their patients and give them any medical advice. More importantly, the students are able to assess their patients' spiritual condition and provide the opportunity to pray with them and answer any questions.

The first-year medical students also learned how to read a BMI chart and how to operate the glucometer. Altogether, 16 students took care of 197 patients from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. This opportunity to assist First Baptist Church in its mission of serving the needy was a blessing to each of the students that participated as well to the patients that were given care. The most important part for the patients was that the student doctors were there to listen to their concerns. Even though, as doctors, we might not always have the time to sit with patients for an extended amount of time, it is important to know that listening is vital to the patient and to the patient's medical care. Through this experience, I was able to see the difference listening makes.

Arthur Snyder, D.O., to Receive Living Tribute Award

Professor Emeritus Arthur Snyder, D.O., will be the second recipient of the NSU-COM Alumni Executive Committee Living Tribute Award, which will be presented on February 8, 2003, during the Seventh Annual Alumni Reunion and Continuing Medical Education Program. The award was established to provide graduates with a heartfelt way to honor outstanding faculty/staff members and administrators who have made significant contributions to the college and the osteopathic profession.

Thanks to the laudable efforts of osteopathic trailblazers like Dr. Snyder, the profession has made tremendous strides in terms of achieving mainstream acceptance with the general public and within the health care industry. Over the past six decades, this venerable and loyal osteopathic practitioner, who matriculated with Chancellor Morton Terry, D.O., at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM) in the early 1940s, has—and continues to—positively impact the lives of current and future generations of osteopathic physicians.

In October 1999, Dr. Snyder received the ultimate tribute from NSU-COM when he was designated as a professor emeritus for his lifelong dedication to the community, his students, and the osteopathic profession.
AHEC Program Earns Recognition for Assisting Underserved Communities

The significant role of the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program in improving health care for underserved communities was featured by the NSU Office of Public Affairs as its cover story on the fall 2002 issue of its widely distributed NSU Achievements publication that spotlights individuals and programs of note at NSU. The comprehensive five-page article showcased numerous AHEC community-based initiatives that are being conducted in partnership with faculty and students from several NSU-HPD colleges.

The NSU-COM AHEC Program will be receiving over $3.7 million in overall external funding from federal and state grants and contracts in the 2002-03 fiscal year. Since AHEC's inception in 1985, the program has received over $38 million in total yearly awards. Following are the funding sources and monies awarded for 2002-03:

**Federal Model AHEC Grant**
$229,180
Funding provided through: U.S. Public Health Service Health Resources and Services Administration

**Federal Statewide Florida Border HETC Grant**
$560,874
Funding provided through: U.S. Public Health Service Health Resources and Services Administration

**State AHEC Contract**
$2,947,600
Funding provided through: Florida Department of Health

The AHEC team recently presented two papers at the 129th American Public Health Association Annual Conference, including one on “The Impact of Managed Care Reform on Community Health Centers” and another on “The Role of Community Health Workers in Addressing Health Disparities in Cardiovascular Disease.” In addition, an article authored by the AHEC team entitled “NSU AHEC and HETC Programs Link Primary Care and Public Health” was published in the Autumn 2002 edition of the peer-reviewed National AHEC Bulletin.

AHEC continues to actively deliver training in bioterrorism preparedness to safety net health providers in its 19-county service area. During the past few months, the college's AHEC bioterrorism preparedness training specialist conducted an insightful workshop for nearly 200 nurses in conjunction with the Broward County Health Department. A separate training program was coordinated for nearly 40 rural health providers in the community of Belle Glade.

The Library Without Walls System provided numerous online searches, Internet access, computer training, and linkage to NSU's Health Sciences Library and its many medical databases. Services provided include journal retrieval and Network for Continuing Medical Education (NCME) tape loans to health providers in county health departments, community health centers, and other rural and underserved sites throughout the regional AHEC service area. In recent months, over 750 informational requests have been processed for providers from over 35 sites.

Over 50 AHEC-sponsored continuing education programs for health providers took place in 13 counties throughout the AHEC service area. These programs provided training to nearly 1,800 participants and dealt with issues such as diabetes, sickle cell disease, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, and breast cancer.
In October, Daniel E. Shaw, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, received recognition from the president of Georgia's Kennesaw State University (KSU) for his contributions to the 2002 World Conference of the International Alliance for Invitational Education, which was held on the KSU campus. Dr. Shaw, who organized and coordinated the conference's poster session component, also presented a multimedia photomontage honoring the organization's 20th anniversary and served as a workshop speaker.

On September 30, Hilda DeGaetano, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, who serves as a clinical assistant professor of pediatrics, was a guest Story Time speaker at a Barnes & Noble store in Plantation, Florida. During her presentation, Dr. DeGaetano read children's stories aloud, passed out cookies to the eager youngsters, and distributed information regarding the pediatric services available at NSU's Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center.

Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., FACOP, Leonard Levy, D.P.M., M.P.H., and Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H., coauthored an article that appeared in the September 2002 issue of the Journal of the American Osteopathic Association (JAOA). The article, entitled "Educating Health Professionals, First Responders, and the Community About Bioterrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction," summarizes the history of bioterrorism and the efforts NSU-COM has made to stay abreast of this vital issue. Dr. Silvagni also was appointed to serve as chair of the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) Clinical Research Committee and as a member of the AOA End of Life Committee.

Jean M. Malecki, M.D., M.P.H., clinical associate professor and chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine, was a deserving recipient of the 2002 Florida Medical Association Certificate of Appreciation "for performing unusual or outstanding service to the association, to the medical profession, and to the public." Dr. Malecki, who also serves as director of the Palm Beach County Health Department, has received several prestigious accolades in the past year for dealing so quickly and efficiently with the 2001 anthrax outbreaks.

Kenneth Johnson, D.O., assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of NSU's Women's Health Center, was one of the contributors to a lengthy research article that appeared in the October 2002 issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. The article, entitled "Alcohol-exposed Pregnancy: Characteristics Associated with Risk," centers around the findings of Project CHOICES (Changing High Risk Alcohol Use and Improving Contraception Effectiveness Study), which was conducted over a three-year period and funded through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc., associate professor of public health, will be presenting several papers at upcoming national conferences, including two at the 2003 Preventive Medicine Conference to be held February 17-20 in San Diego, California. The topics she will address are "The Effectiveness of a Wellness Program for People with Multiple Sclerosis—A Randomized Controlled Trial" and "Assessment of Provider and Patient Compliance with Preventive Medicine Guidelines Using a Computerized Reminder System."
As a result of a U.S. Public Health Service/Health Resources and Services Administration award, three NSU-COM faculty members are receiving significant support to develop their research skills by conducting primary care-related studies. The participating faculty members are:

- Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, who is doing a study involving people in Jamaica who are afflicted with diabetes.
- Barbara Arcos, D.O., assistant professor of family medicine, who is studying the effect of physical fitness activity on medical student performance.
- Anjali Noble, D.O., assistant professor of internal medicine, who is addressing the effect of breast cancer education and self-examination on preventing breast cancer.

Stanley Simpson, D.O., associate professor in the Department of Family Medicine, has been appointed to the AOA Site Visit 2004 Standards for Curriculum and Facilities Subcommittee. He also has been appointed to the National Board of Osteopathic Medical Examiners Level 2 New Item Review Committee that will meet this March in Chicago, Illinois, to begin the process of establishing the new Level 2 board examination.

On November, Ronnie Martin, D.O., FACOFP, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, served as a trainer for the AOA's College Accreditation Training Workshop in Chicago, Illinois. He also presented a lecture on "The Chemistry of Sex" at NSU's Institute for Learning and Retirement and provided a CME session on cardiovascular health at a Texas conference.

On September 19, NSU President Ray Ferrero, Jr., J.D., and 11 other worthy individuals were honored as 2002 Diamond Award recipients from the South Florida Business Journal. The accolade, which honors excellence in business leadership, was presented to President Ferrero at a ceremony held at the Design Center of the Americas.

It's been an eventful few months for Robin McFee, D.O., M.P.H., an assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine who has been involved in a range of bioterrorism-related activities. She was invited to write a two-part article on weapons of mass destruction preparedness in Veterinary and Human Toxicology and served as the keynote speaker at HRSA's Multidisciplinary Approach to Bioterrorism Preparedness Conference, held in December in Washington, D.C. Dr. McFee's frenzied agenda also included speaking engagements at the Florida Medical Association Annual Meeting, where she addressed the topic "Bioterrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Local Vulnerabilities: How to Enhance Preparedness," and the Broward County Department of Health Annual Clinicians Conference, where she discussed "Bioterrorism Preparedness: What the Health Department Clinician Should Know."

Over the past few months, Edward Packer, D.O., FAAP, FACOP, was involved in an array of extracurricular activities that included serving as chair of the newly formed Pediatric Chairs of Osteopathic Medical Schools Committee at the American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians national meeting and participating in a weekend Boys and Girls Club health screening program. He also organized and participated in NSU's A Day for Children event.
Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D., professor and assistant chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, recently attended a training session about conducting clinical research trials that was sponsored by Pfizer Pharmaceuticals and the American Osteopathic Association. The workshop, which was held in Chicago, Illinois, was aimed at providing new and experienced investigators with up-to-date information on the materials and procedures needed to successfully plan and execute clinical trials research in the public and private sectors. Dr. Patterson also presented two-day workshops in osteopathic clinical research design at the Canadian College of Osteopathy in Toronto, Canada, and at the College d'Etudes Osteopathiques in Montreal, Canada. These workshops were designed to help the students at these two schools begin their thesis research projects.

On December 10, a number of faculty members attended the dedication ceremony of the new West Palm Beach Health Center. The 56,000 square-foot center, which is the largest freestanding community health center in Florida, is able to serve up to 500 people daily. The center provides a broad range of medical and dental services, including adult medical family planning and birth control methods, HIV counseling and testing, immunizations, maternity, pediatrics, emergency dental care, basic restorative dental care, preventive dental care, and removable prosthetics. Pictured at the dedication ceremony are (from left): Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O., Pharm.D., FACOFP, dean, NSU-COM; Bonnie Sorensen, M.D., M.B.A., deputy state health officer, Florida Department of Health; Jean Malecki, M.D., M.P.H., chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine and director of the Palm Beach County Health Department; and James Howell, M.D., M.P.H., chair, Department of Rural Medicine.

In November, a number of faculty and staff members from NSU-COM’s AHEC Program and the Master of Public Health Program made presentations at the 130th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Listed below are the speakers and the topics they discussed:

- "Long Term Effectiveness of a Wellness Program on the Lives of People with Multiple Sclerosis"  
  Jennie Q. Lou, M.D., M.Sc.

- "Community Health Workers Addressing Health Disparities in Cardiovascular Disease"  
  Rosebud Foster, Ed.D.  
  Jessie Legros, M.P.H.  
  Gustavo Saldias, M.P.H.  
  Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed.

- "Medical Conditions of Underserved Migrant Workers Seeking Medical Care Free of Charge"  
  Jon Dodds, Ph.D.

- "Impact of Managed Care Reform on Community and Migrant Health Centers"  
  Rosebud Foster, Ed.D.  
  Jon Dodds, Ph.D.  
  Jessie Legros, M.P.H.  
  Steven Zucker, D.M.D., M.Ed.

- "Lea and HOTV Visual Acuity Tests"  
  Cyril Blavo, D.O., M.P.H.

NSU Fast Fact

Since its establishment in 1964, five individuals have served as president of Nova Southeastern University. They are:

- Ray Ferrero Jr., J.D. (1997-present)
Crisis Leads to Heroism for Drs. Matthew Pinto and Chad Frank

Saving lives and dealing with medical misfortunes are situations Matthew Pinto, D.O., and Chad Frank, D.O., have gradually grown accustomed to as they've progressed through their three-year NSU/North Broward Hospital District family medicine residency. However, when an unforeseen medical emergency recently occurred in a neighborhood pub instead of a hospital setting, Drs. Frank and Pinto found themselves treading in decidedly unfamiliar territory.

What started out as a routine Sunday afternoon of fun and football quickly turned into a crash course in lifesaving CPR for the physicians, who were watching the Philadelphia Eagles play the Houston Texans at the World Famous Parrot Lounge in Fort Lauderdale. However, when an elderly gentleman suddenly collapsed at the bar, the action on the television screen quickly paled in comparison to the lifeless man who sat slumped in his chair.

"Because we are regulars at the Parrot Lounge, the bartender came over to get us because he knew we were doctors," explained Dr. Pinto, who graduated from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine with Dr. Frank. "Chad ran over to the man and discovered he wasn’t breathing. We couldn’t find a pulse, so we picked him up, put him on the floor, and began administering CPR until the paramedics showed up."

Initially, when the gentleman failed to respond to their resuscitation efforts, Dr. Frank was filled with a sense of desperation and dread. "The adrenaline was flowing," he admitted. "After the first minute of CPR, when he still didn’t have a pulse, that’s when it started to get a little intense and I found myself thinking, ‘Please don’t die on us in the field.’"

Several minutes later, panic gave way to relief when the man began to register a pulse. As if on cue, the paramedics arrived a few seconds later to hook an oxygen mask onto the stricken man’s face and transport him to Broward General Medical Center—which is one of the clinical sites where Drs. Frank and Pinto happened to be performing their residency.

Because they were concerned about the man’s welfare, both Dr. Frank and Dr. Pinto visited the emergency room to check on their “patient’s” status. “After we talked to him, he revealed that this had happened to him once before because he has a heart condition,” Dr. Pinto said. "He didn’t remember anything except that he felt dizzy and weak immediately before he collapsed."

Although both doctors have been showered with well-deserved praise for their lifesaving efforts, they modestly downplay their heroism. “We were in the right place at the right time,” Dr. Frank explained. “To us, it was intense because it’s the first time we ever had to react to a medical situation in the field. But it was great that we reacted the way we did by grabbing him and immediately putting him on the floor—it was just sheer instinct.

“This is why people take CPR, to save lives,” he added. “It was a good feeling to know we saved his life, but modesty is exactly where it’s at when it comes to a situation like this. We carry our beepers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week because we’re always on call. When it happens in the hospital, we don’t talk about it because it’s just something we go to—a code blue. When it happens outside the hospital, it becomes impressive to those who aren’t doctors.”

“Intense is definitely the word I would use to describe it,” Dr. Pinto said. “I sort of felt afterward like I did after a big game when I played high school football. Everyone was clapping and people were coming up to congratulate us. When I saw the man again in the hospital, I told him it’s a good thing he was an Eagles’ fan, otherwise we might not have resuscitated him. All kidding aside, though, it was a very good feeling, exciting and scary at the same time. I felt relieved to know that when we were called to duty, we were able to do the right things at the right time.”
NSU-COM alumni, students, and faculty played a visible and viable role at the American Osteopathic Association’s 107th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminar, which was held October 7-11 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Conference highlights included:

The induction of Joseph Stasio, D.O., FACOFP, assistant professor and director of the family medicine residency program at Palmetto General Hospital as a fellow of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians. The Award of Fellow is in recognition of outstanding statewide or national contributions through teaching, authorship, research, or professional leadership to the stated purposes of the ACOFP.

Dr. Stasio (left) proudly receives his ACOFP Award of Fellow from Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.

A presentation to Michael M. Patterson, Ph.D., professor and assistant chair of the Department of Osteopathic Principles and Practice, who received the 2001 Irvin Korr Award, which is bestowed by the AOA Bureau of Research to honor a Ph.D./basic scientist who possesses outstanding personal and professional characteristics. The accolade specifically reflects excellence in research as well as communication of scientific knowledge through publication, teaching, and postdoctoral training.

Dr. Patterson (right) poses with Michael Clearwater, D.O., Chair of the AOA Bureau of Research.

A special presentation to Arnold Melnick, D.O., the founding dean of NSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine, of the AOA’s Distinguished Service Award, which is the highest honor accorded by the organization. The accolade is the 14th distinguished service honor presented to Dr. Melnick over the years by a variety of associations.

1990 alumnus Jeffrey Grove, D.O., FACOFP (left) receives his Award of Fellow from class of 1988 graduate Gregory James, D.O., FACOFP. Dr. Grove currently serves as president of the NSU-COM Alumni Association Executive Committee.

In other convention news, Ronnie Martin, D.O., FACOFP, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, served on the AOA Committee on Program as program chair for the ACOFP, while Dianna Silvagni, J.D., was installed as second vice president of the Auxiliary to the AOA. A number of faculty members contributed to the convention’s success by presenting insightful lectures to the attendees. Presenters included:

Robert Oller, D.O.
Frederick Lewis, D.O.
Anthony J. Silvagni, D.O.
Michelle Johnson, D.O.
Elaine Wallace, D.O.
Barry Doublestein
Robin McFee, D.O.
Brian Portnoy, D.O.
Joel Spalter, M.D., Dives in When Disaster Strikes

The catastrophic events that transpired on September 11, 2001, may have shaken the United States and forever transformed the majestic New York skyline, but they also showcased the American spirit at its finest as millions of citizens pitched in to ease the physical, emotional, and financial suffering of those immediately impacted by the attacks. In the aftermath of 9/11, countless other individuals, like Joel Spalter, M.D., have been stirred by a wave of patriotism and a profound desire to assist their fellow citizens in times of distress—be they caused by terrorist attacks, unprovoked sniper rampages, or unforeseen natural disasters.

Last May, Dr. Spalter, an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, decided to do his patriotic part by becoming a member of the FL-5DMAT (Disaster Medical Assistance Team) that assists regions of the United States in times of adversity. “I joined the FL-5DMAT because I believe we are at war;” he explained. “We’re at war with a lot of things that attack us. I’m too old to carry a weapon, so this is the weapon I have—medical service.”

As a member of FL-5DMAT, Dr. Spalter and the other 300 or so regional volunteers are committed to respond to both natural and manmade disasters, help reduce mortality and morbidity, and ease suffering. So when Hurricane Lili began barreling toward the Louisiana coast last October, Dr. Spalter wasn’t surprised to receive a phone call activating him into action.

“It’s just like being in the military reserve,” explained Dr. Spalter, who plays a pivotal role in NSU-COM’s medical missions to Guatemala. “On October 1, when I got the call that we were going to be activated, I went straight to Dr. Silvagni to tell him what was happening. He heard three sentences and said, ‘Go. You have administrative leave.’ He understands the importance of what we are doing.”

The membership of FL-5DMAT consists of medical personnel ranging from physicians and medics to physician assistants and registered nurses, all of who come together to deliver vital medical service in times of disaster. “We are a totally self-sustaining DMAT, which means we can be inserted into a location and do all the necessary setup ourselves,” he said. “We do it all, from setting up a treatment tent and sleeping facilities to providing MREs (meals ready to eat) and a satellite tower for communications.”

When it was time for deployment, which occurred approximately 12 hours before the hurricane was due to make landfall, the 35 members of this particular DMAT loaded up the appropriate supplies from a warehouse in Pembroke Pines, Florida, and set out in a small convoy of trucks and trailers. “As we were driving up, an announcement came on the radio that the hurricane had gone from a category 2 to a category 4 storm,” Dr. Spalter stated. “Once that announcement came, popular belief was that we were going to be there for the full two weeks of deployment.”

Fortunately, by the time Hurricane Lili came ashore, it was downgraded to a category 2 storm, which limited the primary damage to power outages and flooding in the low-lying regions. “Once we learned it wasn’t a category 4 storm anymore and we weren’t going to be dealing with a tremendous number of casualties, it was determined we would be useful helping in a shelter that had been set up in Lafayette, Louisiana, for people who normally require home medical care,” he said.

Because the patients were required to be accompanied by a caregiver—many of who were nearly as infirm as the loved ones they were caring for—Dr. Spalter and the other members of FL-5DMAT took turns serving 12-hour shifts at the shelter, which was located next to a hospital in case a major medical emergency arose.

“There was tremendous gratitude regarding the fact that outsiders had come to help,” said Dr. Spalter, who was touched by the outpouring of appreciation he and the other DMAT members received. “We were eating in a Cracker Barrel, wearing our battle dress uniforms and T-shirts, when an elderly gentleman came over to us and, with tears in his eyes, said how much it meant to him that people had come from somewhere else to help.”

All national DMATs are administered by the U.S. Public Health Service Office of Emergency Preparedness and activated in times of need by the National Disaster Medical System. “If there’s a problem someplace in the country,” Dr. Spalter concluded, “there are people who are both willing and ready to pitch in and help.”
Doc Hollywood Brings His Insight and Humor to NSU

By Fred Trayers, M-2 Student

Yuck muck! Yuck muck!

These were the cries heard echoing from the HPD Private Dining Room this past September. Such uncouth language resounding through the halls of an institution as prestigious as Nova Southeastern University would normally be uncharacteristic, but in this case it held a special significance. The cries of “yuck muck” came from participants in an ugly face contest that was part of a special presentation coordinated by the NSU-COM Sigma Sigma Phi student chapter and the Pediatrics Club.

The college was honored to host Neil Shulman, M.D., the much renowned and self-described “author, doctor, professor, comedian, brainstormer, speaker, planner of way too many projects at one time, wearer of bow ties, and basically just a really funny Jewish guy.”

Dr. Shulman is probably best known as the author of the novel *Doc Hollywood*, which came alive on the big screen in the movie starring Michael J. Fox. His list of accomplishments doesn’t end there, however, and runs as long as the incessant bell chimes of the clock tower in front of the new auditorium. He has written over a dozen fiction, non-fiction, and children’s books, written and produced movies, served on numerous health committees, worked for several charitable organizations, and been lauded by many national organizations for his work.
Although an impressive list, Dr. Shulman would probably remind you that even if you exceed your 500-copies-a-year printing out your curriculum vitae, “Life is just a dash between two numbers on a tombstone.” The key, of course, is doing what you can to make that dash count. Dr. Shulman’s formula is simple:

- Go for new adventures
- Laugh
- Discover your creative talents

There’s no question that Dr. Shulman has done a lot to make his dash count. In fact, in his visit to NSU, he delivered one of his most humorous and creative “dash-worthy” adventures entitled What’s in a Doctor’s Bag? This talk, aimed at kids, attempts to answer the age-old question of the same name. The intent is to help children overcome any fears they may have about seeing a doctor in a manner that is funny, interactive—and just plain fun!

The presentation is a wonderful combination of entertainment and education, where Dr. Shulman explains what a doctor does and the instruments that are used. This isn’t just a boring speech from a guy in a funny hat, either. His antics include having one of the kids wear an outlandish mask to become “Otis the Otoscope,” showing how a doctor uses the instrument for a physical exam. Everyone joins in the fun, too. At one point, he involves the entire audience by leading the room in chanting the rhythmic “lub-dub” sounds of the heart.

What’s in a Doctor’s Bag? was published in 1994 as a children’s book written by Dr. Shulman with Sibl ey Fleming and illustrated by Todd Stolp. Soon after, Dr. Shulman began “taking his show on the road,” acting out the book to children in schools and hospitals. In 1997, the program evolved further, as medical students began to get involved by conducting similar presentations in their local areas. Today, What’s in a Doctor’s Bag? is a nationwide program, helping demystify medicine to children all over the country. At NSU-COM, Sigma Sigma Phi conducts its own DOctor’s Bag Program at local schools several times each semester.

To see the master at work was a special treat. With a twinkle in his eye, his characteristic bow tie, and his boundless energy, Dr. Shulman quickly inspired applause and laughter, much to the delight of the crowd of children of all ages. Three-year-old Jacob DeGaetano astutely described how Dr. Shulman explained complex physiological responses with a razor-sharp wit: “He was funny…and talking about doctor things.”

Jacob was not the only one to gain insight into the complexity of the human machine. Four-year-old Hannah Sizemore summarized what she learned about the cardiovascular system more succinctly than most second-year osteopathic medical students by saying, “I learned that the heart has four rooms.” In addition to the scientific aspects of the talk, others in the audience were impressed by Dr. Shulman’s dedication to his patients. Five-year-old Danielle DeGaetano summed it up perfectly, saying, “I learned that doing doctor stuff and taking care of kids makes them healthy and strong.”

The evening was unique, allowing the NSU-HPD community to thoroughly enjoy the wit and wisdom of Dr. Shulman. His vibrancy, enthusiasm, and humor energize the minds and spirits of everyone he meets. Without a doubt, Dr. Shulman’s efforts will lead to a new generation of medical professionals dedicated to “improving the quality of their dashes.”
Geriatric OSCEs Provide Valuable Interdisciplinary Insight

Thanks to an Interdisciplinary Predoctoral Training in Primary Care Grant provided through the Health Resources and Services Administration, osteopathic medical students are getting the chance to interact with occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) students during geriatric-based Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs).

“Our goal is to develop an interdisciplinary team approach to the care of the older adult living with a disability or chronic disease,” explained Charlotte Paolini, D.O., who chairs the Division of Geriatrics. “All the standardized patient cases we’ve developed have revolved around older adults that have disabilities which affect or limit their activities of daily living (ADLs). What we do is have third-year osteopathic medicine and second-year OT and PT students encounter the standardized patients separately, which allows each discipline to see how students from the various health professions areas interact with the patients and the questions they ask that are specific to their disciplines.”

Unlike the OSCE program that was recently woven into the NSU-COM curriculum, a smaller number of students are participating in this geriatric-specific OSCE that features no formal evaluation of the students by the standardized patients. “The goal with these OSCEs is to focus on the interdisciplinary aspects of medical care,” Dr. Paolini stressed. “After the students complete their examinations, they get to talk to each other and discuss the experience. More importantly, they get to hear about how encountering a patient means different things to a physical therapy student, an occupational therapy student, and a medical student.”

The geriatric OSCEs, which are being conducted over a one-year period, feature nine reality-based cases that were collaboratively written by Dr. Paolini and College of Allied Health faculty members Ferol Ludwig, Ph.D., and Shari Rone-Adams, M.S. To ensure authenticity, the standardized patients were meticulously trained to mimic a range of ailments and situations, including congestive heart failure, elder abuse, diabetes-related peripheral neuropathy, and Parkinson disease.

After each OSCE is completed, the participating students must compose a SOAP (Subjective Objective Assessment Plan) note that details their patient findings. The students then reconvene with the OSCE faculty during a lunchtime feedback session to share interdisciplinary information and make formal presentations to the group. “I find that many of my geriatric clerkship students don’t know what PTs and OTs do,” said Dr. Paolini, who would like to incorporate geriatric OSCEs into all future clerkships. “Because I work in so many long-term care settings, I use PTs and OTs all the time.

“I may have a patient who’s having difficulty feeding himself, so I’ll order an OT consult to assess the patient and inform me if the individual is capable of feeding himself,” she added. “If he’s not, the occupational therapist will tell me what I can do to help the patient. It’s been very rewarding and revealing to see what the students are learning from each other and from the various disciplines. It just reinforces what we already know—that because we don’t train together as professionals, we don’t always work well together.”

Loretta Graham, Ph.D., the college’s medical education specialist who oversees all aspects of the OSCE program, says the experience has proven to be as educationally rewarding for her as it’s been for the students. “I’ve learned so much from it because I never knew what occupational therapists did,” she stated. “I always thought it had something to do with occupations. I’ve worked with physical therapists before, but occupational therapy was a mystery to me. Now I’ve gained this tremendous respect for what they do. I know many people who could benefit from seeing an occupational therapist because they live alone and want to be independent but have problems performing daily activities.”
Since its establishment in November 2001, the NSU Student Health Center has developed into a thriving medical entity thanks in part to the uniformly positive word-of-mouth it has received from the approximately 3,800 students who have accessed the center’s services over the past year.

“Our volume has increased significantly ever since we first opened,” said Sandi Scott-Holman, D.O., an assistant professor of family medicine who serves as the center’s director. “We have doubled our patient load since the first half of the year. And, in addition to seeing NSU students, we have treated those from Broward Community College, Florida Atlantic University, the University of Miami, Florida State University, Florida International University, and the University of Florida.”

A dedicated health care team comprising Dr. Scott-Holman, Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., April Starker (coordinator), Derin Davila (chief medical assistant), and Inez Lopez (medical assistant) run the Student Health Center, which is open Monday through Friday, 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. Two recent physician assistant graduates who are completing their elective year of postgraduate training—Sheny Barnhart and Jennifer Becker—also assist to assure thorough and expedient student health care.

In addition to operating the clinic and overseeing the patient flow, Dr. Scott-Holman and her staff provide a wide range of services to the students. “Most people aren’t aware of the large number of mandatory immunizations we provide for all the Health Professions Division colleges,” Dr. Scott-Holman said. “We provide Hepatitis B immunizations for all HPD students as well as annual screenings for tuberculosis. The perception is that all we deal with are runny noses; however, we perform annual physicals, well-woman exams, joint injections, cryotherapy, biopsies, and treat anxiety/depression on a daily basis.”

Despite its amusing overtones, the parakeet episode underscores the caring and compassionate philosophy epitomized by the Student Health Center. “We get a lot of thank-you cards and calls from students thanking us for taking such good care of them,” stated Dr. Scott-Holman, who estimates that anxiety and depression-related symptoms account for the majority of patient visits. “Our medical team is always willing to do whatever is necessary to help the patient, and that is reflected in the fact that we have adjusted our schedule to accommodate urgent walk-ins and same-day appointments.”

Because the flow of students continues to increase, Dr. Scott-Holman anticipates a day in the not-too-distant future when additional staff will need to be added. “I would love to hire a physician assistant or some other medical staff because the number of walk-ins continues to increase,” she said. “Word-of-mouth about our services is spreading, so we are obviously doing something right.”

“As is the case with most health care facilities, the Student Health Center personnel have encountered patient scenarios ranging from urgently critical to unintentionally humorous—including one totally unforeseen incident that involved the center’s first fatality.

“We did have a death in the department one time,” admitted Dr. Scott-Holman. “We received a frantic call from an undergraduate student who had just left our office. She said, ‘I’m out here in my car, and something’s wrong with my parakeet. I don’t think it’s breathing. Can I bring it in? Can you do something?’ Of course, I’m thinking, ‘What are we going to do with a bird?’ She brought it to us in a little box, and we looked in its mouth and listened for a heartbeat, but the poor thing was already dead.”
Military Commitment Nearly Derails Jesse Street’s Osteopathic Odyssey

September 11, 2001, is a day that will remain forever etched in the country’s collective memory. But if the truth be told, the events that transpired on that ill-fated September morning have continued to impact countless lives—and not always for the reasons you might think.

Take M-1 student Jesse Street, who had already mapped out a bright future for himself that included a four-year stay at NSU-COM to be followed by a lengthy stint in the U.S. Army. In the post 9/11 environment, however, with the specter of war looming on the horizon, Street’s seemingly clear career course was thrown an unexpected curve.

“When I graduated from Virginia Tech in December 2000, I was commissioned as a second lieutenant and was scheduled to go right into the army’s medical services division,” Street explained. “One of my grandfathers was a sergeant in the army who actually did three tours in Vietnam, and my other grandfather was a colonel in the air force, so I kind of knew where my destiny lay from an early age.”

During that time, the army offered a number of nationwide educational delay opportunities for recent graduates who harbored a desire to attend either law or medical school—and offer that seemed too enticing for Street to pass up. After his application for educational deferment was accepted, Street began the process of applying to medical schools—more specifically, osteopathic colleges.

Because he had been an active—and chronically injured—athlete during his adolescent years in Leesburg, Virginia, Street became a frequent patient of a local orthopedic surgeon named Raymond Lower, D.O., who left a lasting impression on the appreciative teenager. “I had undergone a number of surgeries that resulted from wrestling and playing high-school football,” explained Street, whose laundry list of ailments included a slipped disc in his neck, a couple of busted ribs, and a broken ankle that necessitated the insertion of a metal plate complete with six screws.

“At the time I had no idea what a D.O. was or that Dr. Lower was one,” Street admitted. “It wasn’t until I started looking up colleges that I even heard the words osteopathic medicine. When I looked up Dr. Lower’s name in one of the local resource books, and I saw the letters D.O. behind his name, I contacted him to get more information.”

In typical osteopathic fashion, Dr. Lower became a willing mentor to Street by offering him sagacious advice and allowing him to shadow the physician in his office. “Once I started understanding the philosophy of treating the whole person, that’s when I fell in love with the concept of osteopathic medicine,” he explained.

When the terrorist attacks occurred in September 2001, Street was already immersed in the process of applying to various osteopathic medical schools, which culminated a few months later with his acceptance at NSU-COM. However, even though he was officially on educational delay from the U.S. Army, Street suddenly received a phone call from the ROTC office at Virginia Tech, notifying him that he was being placed into the army’s armor combat unit branch.

“I had just submitted $2,000 to hold my seat at NSU-COM when they called me, so at first I wasn’t sure what was going to happen,” said Street, who could have been contacted at any time to attend basic training in Fort Knox, Kentucky. “It was extremely stressful because all my friends who had received educational delay were eventually called to serve in Kuwait and Afghanistan.”

After speaking with the ROTC office, Street was told to submit additional paperwork in order to reapply for educational delay. “At that stage I was still unsure of what to do, but I decided to come here anyway,” he said. “It was kind of a leap of faith because one week it seemed like everything was okay, and then the next week something else would happen.”

In November 2002, four months after he began matriculating at NSU-COM, Street breathed a huge sigh of relief when he received official reconfirmation of his educational deferment status. “I really have to thank Virginia senators Bill Mims and John Warner because after God, they were really responsible for turning the whole thing around because they saw me as an individual and not just as paperwork. Now I feel I can finally relax and focus all my attention on medical school.”
Hispanic Osteopathic Medical Student Association

When several community-minded students decided to relaunch the Hispanic Osteopathic Medical Student Association (HOMSA) in 2001, their goals included outreaching to their non-Hispanic classmates and establishing a reputation as a student organization dedicated to providing a strong community service focus.

Over the past year, the club—which comprises approximately 50 current members—has excelled in both areas, earning a reputation as one of the college’s most dedicated and community-geared student organizations. “Our main focus is definitely on community service,” said HOMSA President Ulisses Diaz, who helped revive the club along with fellow M-2 student Alberto Caban. “We really wanted to stand out in this area.”

One of HOMSA’s primary objectives was to cultivate a linkage with a medical clinic and provide additional outreach to an obviously needy indigent population. Fortunately, that opportunity presented itself fairly quickly thanks to the college’s IGC COMServe Program, which requires M-2 students to rotate at various COMServe partner organizations in order to fulfill the community service component of their IGC preceptorship course. “We really wanted to go out into a clinic environment, which we found through our IGC COMServe Program,” Diaz explained. “When we visited Clinica La Luz del Mundo (Light of the World Clinic), we immediately adopted the clinic as our main community service project.

“Were trying to do fundraising for them because the patients they see are well below the poverty level,” he added. “It’s also great for us as medical students to volunteer our time there because we get so much experience. On Saturdays they have a dermatologist at the clinic, and we get to see a lot of pathology and witness so many things we don’t normally get to see during our regular IGC visits. The physicians teach us how to do rectal exams and pap smears, which are procedures we wouldn’t get to do during a regular IGC session. We also help organize the clinic’s pharmaceutical cabinet and donate our time whenever possible.”

HOMSA members also can be counted on to pitch in at the last minute when a local health fair is in desperate need of assistance, as was the case at last summer’s National Council of La Raza Health Fair, which was held at the Miami Beach Convention Center. “We wanted to be recognized as a very proactive club, so it’s great that we’re being seen as an organization that’s really helping the community and being very involved in the osteopathic profession,” Diaz stressed.

In addition to showcasing its community spirit, HOMSA aims to provide its membership with a diverse array of services that includes everything from free Spanish lessons for participants in the Guatemala medical missions and clinical practicum tutorials to insightful OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) preparation.

“Many of our members have joined up to take advantage of the free Spanish lessons, and we are doing clinical practicum tutorials,” Diaz stated. “A few months ago, right before they had to participate in their first standardized patient experience, we helped a number of M-1 students prepare by going over how to perform the physical exam and reviewing what type of questions you should ask when doing a history. We also put together a clinical practicum packet that we did last year when we were M-1s. We saved all our notes, typed them up, and put them in a binder that we sold as a fundraiser for our club and for our community service project.”

During its short existence, HOMSA has fostered an undeniable sense of goodwill throughout the college and the community—and provided its members with a true sense of accomplishment and inner satisfaction. “When we participate in health fairs, go to Guatemala, or help out at the Clinica La Luz del Mundo, we actually get to see the cases we’ve read about in class,” Diaz explained. “We actually get to make a positive difference when we diagnose someone with hypertension or high cholesterol that normally wouldn’t receive health care because he or she can’t afford it. It’s not only about going to school and getting good grades; it’s actually about helping others.”

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At the tender age of 10, Kenneth Johnson, D.O., experienced a life-defining moment that would play a major role in shaping what has become a standout career in the field of obstetrics and gynecology. It began with an innocuous invitation from a friend’s father to come visit his medical clinic—and ended with an epiphany that would foreshadow his future as an outstanding osteopathic physician.

“I was always extremely interested in life sciences and the development of organisms, so embryology was a passion of mine from a very early age,” stated Dr. Johnson, who serves as an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of NSU’s Women’s Health Center. “But my interest in medicine actually began the day I visited the clinic with my friend. His dad had an aborted fetus in a jar, and when he showed it to us it was something I never forgot. So from the time I was 10, I was interested in obstetrics.”

Itinerant Existence Defines Childhood

Although his interest in science and medicine was established at an early age, Dr. Johnson also developed an intrinsic fascination with the military that was ingrained during his childhood exposure to various U.S. air force bases.” When I was a kid, my dad was still in the early stages of his career with the U.S. Air Force,” explained Dr.
Johnson, who was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, located just outside of Nashville. "As a result, we moved around a lot when I was young."

By the time he graduated from high school, Dr. Johnson and his four younger sisters had boomeranged across the United States several times, living in destinations as diverse as Detroit, Michigan, Duluth, Minnesota, Walla Walla, Washington, and Panama City, Florida. His itinerant lifestyle also led him to explore many interesting job opportunities in his high-school days, including working on a worm farm, plowing fields in Alabama, and building a bait and tackle shop from the ground up in Panama City.

With his family now ensconced in Panama City, Dr. Johnson applied for and received a scholarship to attend Florida State University (FSU), which is exactly when his father—who had recently retired from the air force—accepted a job offer back in Washington. "It was a tough decision when my family relocated back to Washington, but I decided to stay in Florida and pursue a bachelor of science degree in biology from FSU."

During his matriculation at FSU, which included an extra year conducting vision research involving light damage in rat retina, Dr. Johnson also felt a genetic pull to follow in his father's footsteps and become a military man. "During my second year of college, I attended the U.S. Marine Corps platoon leaders class for one summer but then decided to switch to the air force for several reasons," he said. "The Marine Corps did not have a medical unit, and military medicine was something I was very interested in back then. I was also very interested in flying jets, so I was toying with several passions."

Military Detour Delays Osteopathic Odyssey

After joining the air force, Dr. Johnson was subsequently invited to continue his vision science doctoral research at FSU in 1981. But his attempts to continue that research were stymied when the air force refused his request for an educational deferment. "The air force normally always grants this type of deferment, but I was denied and sent to my first assignment, which just happened to be at Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Florida," he explained. "As it turned out, it was a blessing in disguise because serving in the military was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Because he emerged as the top graduate in his class at air weapons controller school, where he learned to control fighter interceptor jets, Dr. Johnson was invited to become a member of the school's faculty—an assignment he gladly accepted. "Once you complete pilot training or radar weapons controller training, you are sent to air training commands technical instructor school to learn to be an instructor of the system you just completed. So I became an instructor who taught new officers air battle management and how to control fighter interceptors."

"I absolutely loved it," said Dr. Johnson, who was promoted to the rank of captain and master instructor during his four-year air force stint. "I had incredible mentors and thoroughly enjoyed my military career. But at the end of my tenure in 1985, I had to decide if I wanted to apply to medical school or apply to undergraduate pilot training."

After weighing the pros and cons of each alternative, Dr. Johnson decided to forego his Top Gun aspirations of being a fighter pilot and opt for a return to his first love—medicine. To prepare for the next stage of his educational odyssey, he enrolled in a post-baccalaureate premed program at the University of South Florida in Tampa and began the laborious process of applying to various medical schools.

"One of the flight surgeons in the air force who I had to see every six months for a mandatory physical was a D.O., so I started researching what osteopathic medicine was and the philosophy behind it long before I ever applied to Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (SECOM)," said Dr. Johnson, who was accepted into the class of 1987. "Because I had researched osteopathic medicine years before I ever applied to medical schools, I was sure it was a good fit for me because of its holistic perspective."

While he was interviewing for a slot at SECOM—the forerunner to NSU-COM—Dr. Johnson worked as a research assistant at the University of South Florida Mental Health Institute, where he was involved in a one-year project called DART (Day Alternative to Residential Treatment). "It was a program for chronic schizophrenics who were being treated on an outpatient basis," he explained. "So for a year I picked up 5 to 15 schizophrenics, took them into a lockdown unit, counseled them all day, and then drove them home at night."

Military Man: Dr. Johnson in 1981.
Once he arrived at SECOM, Dr. Johnson quickly knew he had made the right choice about leaving the military to pursue his osteopathic ambition. "I basically had the best time of my life in medical school," said Dr. Johnson, who was elected president of his class. "Medical school was relatively easy for me, and it was a very intimate atmosphere because we only had 90 or so students in my class."

During his matriculation at SECOM, Dr. Johnson forged an especially close bond with many of his classmates as well as with administrators like Chancellor Morton Terry, D.O., and Matthew Terry, D.O., who was dean of the college at that time. Dr. Johnson's decision to attend SECOM paid additional dividends during his senior year when he met his future wife, Michelle, during a serendipitous workout at a local North Miami Beach gym.

“My best friend and fellow classmate, Dr. Shoib Myint, used to pump a lot of iron with me at this particular gym,” he recalled. “When we walked in one day I saw this gorgeous girl teaching aerobics. As soon as I saw her, I just knew she was the one. It turned out she was board certified in fitting people with artificial limbs and braces and was interested in going to medical school. I used the fact that I had some study guides for the MCAT to get to know her and help her apply to SECOM, where she was eventually accepted.

After graduating from SECOM in 1991, Dr. Johnson performed his rotating internship at the Chicago Osteopathic Medical Center in Illinois in 1991-92 before completing his OB-GYN residency at Northwestern University Medical School’s Columbus Medical Center in Chicago in 1996. During that time, he and Michelle engaged in a long-distance relationship, which continued to deepen after she began attending SECOM in 1992.

However, after two years of flying the friendly skies to sustain their blossoming relationship, Dr. Johnson upped the ante, romantically speaking, “After Michelle completed her second year at SECOM, I knew I couldn’t stand being without her all the time, so I asked if she would consider transferring to the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine,” he recalled. “She agreed on one condition—that we get married. I said fine, so she requested a transfer and completed her D.O. degree at the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1996.”

When he completed his residency, Dr. Johnson pinned his hopes on attaining a faculty position at his alma mater, which had recently merged with Nova University to become Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine. “During my residency, I kept in touch with Dr. Matthew Terry because coming back to NSU-COM was always my goal,” he explained. “After I completed my residency, Dr. Terry flew me down, I met with Dr. Daniel Barkus, who is professor and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and they offered me a faculty position in 1996. Dr. Barkus gave me an outstanding preparation in OB/GYN. In fact, he inspired me and our entire class so much that we voted him professor of the year in 1998.”

Dr. Johnson Lands “Dream Job”

“It was the job I had dreamed about since the first day I became a student here,” admitted Dr. Johnson, who served as one of AHEC’s first summer health career camp counselors and participated in the Practice Opportunities Program (POP) when he was a student. “I fell in love with my class and the people who worked here. That was another reason I wanted to come back, because most of the people here like Dr. Cyril Blavo and Dr. Steve Zucker were, and still are, close friends.”

Not surprisingly, Dr. Johnson excelled from the start, serving as director of the university’s Women’s Health Center, teaching students, and getting involved with vital clinical research projects. “When I first started, the Women’s Health Center was located off campus at our facility on Broward Boulevard,” he stated. “I was seeing patients and delivering babies, but I also taught every course possible and let everyone know I wanted to teach women’s health to all the HPD colleges because I believe you have to love what you teach and teach what you love.”

In 1997, he also became intricately involved with a research project that is still ongoing: Project CHOICES (Changing High Risk Alcohol Use and Improving Contraception Effectiveness Study), which is a joint venture between NSU,
the School of Public Health at the University of Texas at Houston, and the Medical College of Virginia at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. The study and subsequent clinical trial phase, which are funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are designed to prevent alcohol-exposed pregnancies in women whose drinking and birth control practices place them at risk.

When the Women’s Health Center was relocated to NSU’s Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center after the Broward Boulevard office was sold to the North Broward Hospital District, Dr. Johnson began developing the women’s health program even further. During an average month, he and Renee Alexis, M.D., an instructor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, see an average of 200 patients. He also oversees the activities of the three senior residents from the college’s Palmetto General Hospital and North Broward Hospital District residency programs and mentors the NSU-COM students who rotate through the center on a monthly basis. “Our goal,” he stressed, “is to provide the best medical student and resident training possible.”

Thin Line Between Life and Death

As a practitioner of obstetrics and gynecology, Dr. Johnson has witnessed just about every conceivable scenario—from the sheer joy of delivering a healthy baby to dealing with the abject pain caused by a pregnancy gone horribly wrong. “OB-GYN is a field filled with wonderful highs,” said Dr. Johnson, who has delivered approximately 2,000 babies during his obstetrical career. “But we also deal with a lot of death or near-death situations.”

In the fall of 2000, Dr. Johnson faced one of the biggest challenges of his career when Paula Anderson-Worts, D.O., a friend and colleague who serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine, began suffering from life-threatening complications during the latter stages of her pregnancy. “Dr. Anderson-Worts was the sickest patient I’ve ever had,” said Dr. Johnson, who also finds the time to act as course director for two evening public health program classes.

During her sixth month of pregnancy, Dr. Anderson-Worts began suffering from a severe case of preeclampsia—a toxic condition characterized by a sudden rise in blood pressure, excessive weight gain, generalized edema, albuminuria, severe headache, and visual disturbances. As her condition worsened, Dr. Johnson walked a nerve-wracking tightrope in an attempt to ensure the well being of both mother and child. “That’s really what obstetricians are trained for—walking the tightrope,” he explained. “How long can you keep the baby in utero while the mom’s health deteriorates because the immediate cure for preeclampsia is delivery of the baby. But if you deliver the baby too early in an attempt to save the mother’s life, the infant dies.

“What you’re trying to do is pick the right moment when both the mother and the baby have an equal chance to survive. And that’s what we did for a week with Dr. Anderson-Worts,” he said. “The last day was extremely serious, and we had to perform an emergency caesarean because the baby was beginning to suffer severe fetal distress. Thankfully, mom and baby survived, but it was an extremely emotional situation because I realized I might lose them both. Needless to say, we prayed a lot.”

In terms of future goals, Dr. Johnson plans to “continue to do what I’m doing now, which is grow the Women’s Health Center, expand teaching opportunities for our students and residents, and work with Rita Silverman, the college’s director of clinical research, on various clinical trials related to women’s health,” he stated. “Rita is the most dedicated research professional I have ever observed. She is the key to our huge success in clinical trials. She inspires me.

“The need for holistic obstetrics and gynecology is growing because of the malpractice crisis and the fact that many doctors are leaving the field,” he added. “It’s actually enhancing our volume here at the center because patients have fewer options. That’s why I truly admire our administration for allowing us to continue to offer these services.”

However, as passionate as he is about his career at NSU-COM, Dr. Johnson is equally committed to being a hands-on father to his six-year-old daughter Brittney and his four-year-old son Matthew. Both he and Michelle, who currently serves as a clinical assistant professor at NSU’s Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center, place special emphasis on spending quality time with their children, especially during their crucial formative years.

“The key to life is sharing as much love with people as possible, whether they be your patients or your family, because that’s what they really need in life,” he stressed. “I’m absolutely convinced of that.”
Department of Family Medicine Aims to Recapture Marcus Welby Mindset

By Scott Colton
Director of Education Communications

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when a visit to your family physician evoked warm memories of the Marcus Welby, pre-managed care era of medicine—a kindler, gentler age when the doctor-patient dynamic was defined by a true sense of mutual caring, concern, and respect.

Thanks to the advent of managed care, diminished interpersonal interaction, and remarkable scientific advances over the past several decades, the practice of medicine has changed significantly—and not always for the best depending on who you ask. That’s why Ronnie Martin, D.O., FACOFP, professor and chair of the Department of Family Medicine, has worked so diligently to reshape the NSU-COM curriculum by emphasizing a return to a more humanistic, hands-on approach to student training.

“When I first came here in May 2001, the major weakness I identified in our department was our lack of input into clinical education,” said Dr. Martin, who served as chair of the Department of Family Medicine at Des Moines University Osteopathic Medical Center in Iowa prior to joining the NSU-COM faculty. “We were not doing enough as a department to train our clinical students and residents. Up until two years ago, we did not have third
and fourth-year medical students rotating in our own clinic, which records 60,000 patient visits a year. We also had two residencies affiliated with the college, yet we were barely involved in the family medicine residents training except in the clinic. Now, we’re actively involved in providing didactic as well as clinical education to our students and residents at all sites.”

A Tom Cruise Connection to Quality Health Care

Because he’s a fan of the 1986 Tom Cruise movie Top Gun, Dr. Martin enjoys drawing a parallel between the film’s plot and NSU-COM’s philosophical shift toward emphasizing clinical evaluation skills. “I give the students my big speech about why I feel hands-on training and evaluation such as OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations) and clinical problem solving opportunities are analogous to the problem the U.S. Navy was dealing with in Top Gun,” he explained.

“In Top Gun, the problem was the fact that in the Korean War the U.S. fighter pilots shot down 10 planes for every plane they lost. However, by the time of the Vietnam War, they only shot down five planes for every plane they lost. The reason? They became too dependent on technology and lost their dog-fighting skills, which is equivalent to losing your physical diagnosis and clinical skills in medicine.

“We’ve graduated a generation or two of students that could tell you exactly what tests to order and what the results meant, but they couldn’t properly examine a patient,” he added. “That’s why we have placed a major emphasis on clinical skills and the clinical involvement of the students. We are teaching them additional patient interaction and clinical skills in the clinical practicum course. We’re teaching them additional clinical problem solving skills in clinical medicine with their OSCEs. And we’re making them responsible for their clinical examinations and patient interactions by evaluating them with the OSCEs.

“We’re planning to do the same thing with the third-year students by incorporating a high-stakes clinical examination consisting of not only end-of-rotation examinations but also clinical skills evaluation using OSCE examinations at the end of their core clinical year. And we’re also planning on implementing a similar procedure with the residency program, where we will do behavioral evaluations on the residents regarding their clinical skills.”

While the mammoth scientific advances that have occurred over the past 25 years have played a significant role in lengthening life expectancy and improving treatment modalities for a range of diseases, the doctor/patient relationship has eroded exponentially as the concentration on knowledge and technology has increased and third parties began dictating a patient’s choice of physician.

“The patient population wasn’t happy,” Dr. Martin explained. “Our patients came back and told us, ‘Hey, we don’t like these doctors. They don’t know how to examine me, they don’t listen to me or communicate with me, and they don’t touch me.’ This is reflected in the growth of contemporary and alternative medicine that has been seen in the United States in the last 20 years.”

An increased knowledge base, coupled with superior medical and technological advances, clearly benefits the profession as whole. But when it comes to the actual physician visit, patients want more than a cavalier “just the facts, ma’am” approach to their health care needs. “There was a period of time a few years ago when all you read about was how all we really needed to do as a profession was plug a patient’s symptoms into a computer to obtain a diagnosis,” said Dr. Martin, who ran a private family medicine practice in Oklahoma from 1980 through 1999.

“Computers contain great knowledge, but they don’t practice medicine,” he stressed. “Most students going to medical school today have a scientific mindset, so all they want to know are the facts. The art of medicine and the clinical skills needed to examine and treat a patient were being shortchanged in their education. That’s why there’s such a push toward standardized patient examinations, clinical labs experiences, and clinical problem solving opportunities in education today.”

Another benefit of incorporating OSCEs and
clinical evaluations is that it provides the college with additional methods of assessing overall student performance. “One thing we haven’t done in medicine until recently is place measured value on and objectively evaluate the clinical education that our students receive during their clinical years.” Dr. Martin said. Our students get no grades after they leave here in their second year and begin their rotations. Their evaluation is pass/fail and based primarily on the subjective assessments of their preceptors. This type of evaluation has great value and has been proven by time, but it also possesses deficiencies. By incorporating objective clinical evaluations such as end-of-rotation examinations and simulated patient examinations, we can better evaluate the progress of the students as well as the quality of training they are receiving at our clinic sites. It will also reward the students that are good clinicians as well as those that excelled didactically.”

Diversity Defines Family Medicine Department

As chair of the college’s largest and most diverse department, Dr. Martin is responsible for overseeing much more than just the shift from a didactic to a more interactive, clinically geared curriculum. Because his broad-based department encompasses aspects of everything from clinical research and geriatrics to AHEC and medical outreach, Dr. Martin must adeptly deal with an onslaught of ever-changing issues.

“We are a diffuse department that is involved in the college’s various medical outreach programs, whether they are our missions to Guatemala or Jamaica or our rural outreach programs that we do in Belle Glade and Clewiston,” he explained. “Those all tend to be motivated and stimulated by our department, with tremendous help and input from other divisions of the college such as AHEC, rural medicine, and the IGC programs as well as energized by our student organizations. Programs like the tobacco cessation project, AIDS awareness, domestic violence, and ethno-cultural medicine utilize the talents and resources of this department because family medicine at osteopathic medical schools tends to be the core department.

“Of course,” he added, “our most important job is to provide clinical care for our patients. This basic function then allows us to provide clinical education for medical students, interns, and residents. That’s our most important job. But the Department of Family Medicine also provides a very important aspect in the pre-clinical years. We still teach the basic physical diagnosis and skills courses, but we are also emphasizing family medicine faculty involvement in the teaching of the systems courses. For example, medical students need to see that a cardiologist is not the only person that treats hypertension. If we pay more than lip service to the fact that we train primary care physicians, then primary care physicians have to be seen in the role of treating the sick patients along with advocating for wellness and health. They have to be shown performing their role in the treatment of the diabetic, the obstetrical patient, the hypertensive patient—and throughout the gamut of medical care.

“I don’t want to get our department locked into the role of strictly teaching histories and physicals. I want our students to understand that family medicine physicians actually practice medicine,” Dr. Martin continued. “I’ve delivered 2,400 babies over the years. I did caesarean sections, and I still perform vasectomies. I performed OMM on my patients daily in the office and took care of them in the hospital, ER, and ICU. I did colonoscopies, personally administered joint injections, performed dermatological procedures, and was involved with medical education, community activities, and medical organizations to give back to my profession and community.

“I also spent time advocating for and educating my patients about preventative medicine and healthy lifestyle. I made the effort to be sure I was qualified to perform these procedures because I sought out and gained the training and experience to do these procedures,” he added. “That’s why I don’t want students to think that just because they’re in primary care, they can’t do anything more than triage the patient. If that’s all we’re going to do, we don’t need primary care. We might as well just have nurse practitioners or physician assistants.”
Preserving a Primary Care Tradition

While all medical and surgical specialties are represented within the osteopathic medical profession, approximately 70 percent of NSUCOM graduates practice in the primary care disciplines of family medicine, general internal medicine, and general pediatrics—a trend Dr. Martin is adamant about perpetuating as future generations of students graduate from the hallowed halls of NSUCOM.

“I think it’s critically important for osteopathic medicine to remain a primary care profession because that’s really where our history is based, where we are strong today, and where we have the most growth potential in the future,” Dr. Martin stated. “Our students aren’t going to stay in primary care unless they have good role models both in the pre-clinical and clinical years. Our challenge is to graduate well-rounded physicians who have a solid foundation of knowledge, good problem-solving skills, and the ability to continue to grow, learn, and adapt. Postdoctoral training will refine them into specialists over the next three to seven years. We cannot and should not concentrate on developing specialists during medical school; we are challenged to train generalists with the foundation to become specialists. That has always been one of the strengths of osteopathic medicine—the holistic attitude of our graduates along with their diverse knowledge and skills base.

“I truly believe that primary care physicians—not specialists—can and should treat most medical conditions in day-to-day practice, including the cases of hypertension, asthma, diabetes, depression, and other disorders,” he stressed. “That’s why we are positioning our primary care physicians to be role models and mentors through involvement in the didactic education and lectures the students receive during their system education. The students need to have a vision of how we treat these problems in the clinic every day since in the real world we do treat most of them. Of course, we don’t claim to be specialists in these areas. I would never try to teach students how to do an angioplasty and put a stent in, nor would I claim to know of the utilization of stem-cell research in the search for a cure for diabetes. But we can teach them about the proper evaluation of a patient with chest pain and the prevention of the metabolic syndrome. We want to give the students a primary care viewpoint of medical care of their patients and not just a specialist viewpoint, because if all they get is the specialist viewpoint, we cannot be surprised when they all become specialists.”

In addition to implementing a new model of medical education for the students, Dr. Martin has been equally as proactive when it comes to encouraging the faculty to stay abreast of the latest medical advances and take an extracurricular interest in professional activities that benefit the college and the osteopathic profession. “I want to get our faculty members more involved in what medicine has to be in this millennium,” he said. “Members of the department are becoming more involved with scholarly activity because they recognize that if you don’t read and stay up to date, you will not be able to practice scientific-based, state-of-the-art medicine demanded today by our patients and the payers. Dr. Joseph DeGaetano has had an article published in this past year and other members of the department have submitted research and review articles that are pending. It’s estimated that medical knowledge doubles every seven years, so it doesn’t take a whole lot of time before you’re 100 percent behind unless you do acquire that ongoing education.

“I also think giving back to the profession is very important,” Dr. Martin noted. “I have stressed to our faculty members the importance of becoming more involved in professional activities, and they are clearly doing just that. For example, Dr. Joseph Stasio recently became an ACOFP fellow and is involved with the state of Florida Drug Utilization Committee. Dr. Elisa Ginter is involved with domestic violence issues, while Drs. Paula Anderson-Worts and Michelle Powell-Cole are involved through their church into reaching out to underserved minorities. Dr. Camille Bentley is very active with DOCARE as well as our missions and outreach efforts, while Dr. Steven Zucker excels as a leader in the state and nation in the advancement of AHEC educational efforts.

“I am personally honored to serve the osteopathic profession and family medicine...
Implementing Progressive and Pragmatic Change

When Dr. Martin came on board in 2001, he did so with a progressive but eminently practical three-year plan in mind: to restructure the clinical practicum courses in year one, to modify the clinical medicine curriculum in year two by incorporating OSCEs and clinical problem-solving challenges, and to revamp the clinical procedures courses and other curricula aspects in year three. Many of the changes he initially envisioned have already been implemented. In fact, since his arrival, the students have already benefited from the establishment of the Student Health Center at the Sanford L. Ziff Health Care Center and a modification of the domestic violence and ethno-cultural courses that replaced didactic instruction with dynamic, interactive learning.

"The first thing I ask myself when considering a new project is how will this benefit the medical student?" stated Dr. Martin, who is currently working with Dr. Daniel Shaw to restructure the behavioral education the students receive in their first and second years at NSU-COM. "Second, will it benefit our patients? Third, how will it benefit our faculty and the people that work with us? The final consideration is what will it do for the school? But if it doesn't show me that it's going to benefit the medical students, that's as far as it goes."

With an eye toward the future, Dr. Martin has a number of departmental goals in mind he would like to see come to fruition, including becoming more actively involved in the students’ education once they are doing their third and fourth-year rotations. "Whether it's by distance education or by going out physically and helping teach clinical medicine, providing lectures, or procedures workshops, we want to take this show on the road," he explained. "One of our major goals is to increase faculty development, not just for our full-time faculty here but for the 300 or so physicians out there that help train our students. As a longtime adjunct clinical educator for medical schools, I know they are invaluable to our educational effort and can benefit from additional support and resources from the medical school."

"When the topic turns to our clinical faculty members, our objective is to help them become better teachers and better evaluators of our students," he added. "We hope to establish ongoing continuing medical education programs for our clinicians that provide them with additional skills and serve as a way for us to thank them for their efforts on behalf of our students. Our intent would be to teach our clinical faculty members how to interact with our students and their patients, with an emphasis on the ultimate goal of making the students become better problem solvers and clinically skilled practitioners. When they are involved with a complicated case, we want the students to research, read, and study because we know that active learning helps them retain information better than passive learning. We need to help our busy and skilled clinical faculty members stay scientifically and procedurally current just as much as we need to emphasize it to our full-time faculty because they are an integral part of the education of our students and residents."

Refining something as well entrenched as the Department of Family Medicine could have been fraught with obstacles, but the process has been a smooth one thanks primarily to the willingness of the faculty to embrace and adopt the vision Dr. Martin has for taking the department to yet another level of excellence. "I’m very proud of our faculty," he stressed. "These are good people that work extremely hard. I've challenged them and given them the opportunity for change and improvement—and they have responded admirably. Together, we are working to make people understand and value primary care, especially family medicine, as the specialties they are and the essential part of the practice of medicine they always have—and always will be."
African Study Tour Provides Enduring Memories
By Tyese Gaines, M-2 Student

Images of health care neglect and pervasive poverty greeted Tyese Gaines during her unforgettable African study tour.

Africa was a figment of my education and imagination. On the flight to Ouagadougo, the capital of Burkina Faso, I prepared for either a great fulfillment or a great disappointment. As an African American, my need to connect with my lost heritage was intense.

In a conversation with the African gentleman sitting next to me on the plane, which we struggled to maintain between his broken English and my broken French, he managed to tell me that even though I was born in America, that I, my parents, their parents, and their parents were from Africa. That made me smile.

As a rising second-year medical student, the study tour was an opportunity to assist an underserved country. For the following 17 days, the West African country was home to 11 medical students and the director of Tropical Medicine Study Tours. Our group members dedicated their time, effort, and funds to learn about tropical medicine and aid a country with only 450 doctors for 12 million people.

The ride to Pacific Hotel provided my first glimpse of “Africa.” Streetlights, billboards, and lighted storefronts illuminated the rows of low-rise concrete buildings. Internet cafes, call centers, banks, and female street vendors were visible along the paved road. On the main roads, mobylettes—or mopeds—outnumbered cars. The side roads were made of uneven concrete dusted with red clay and pebbles.

Monday morning, dressed in our white coats and smelling of insect repellant, we stood ready for patients at the Centre Hospitalier National Yalgo (National Hospital). Clusters of single and multistory buildings—the colors of brick and red clay—resembled a campus, each housing a different department. Three students and I shadowed pediatric physicians while the remaining students rounded with medicine and OB/GYN practitioners.

In pediatrics, we worked with an older African male physician. The patient room was the size of a small living room and extremely hot. The doors and windows were open and a ceiling fan circulated air over the doctor, 10 nursing students, and the four American students who surrounded each mother and tiny patient. Our first patient—lying limp in his mother’s arms, eyelids low—presented with fever, diarrhea, and malaise. We listened to his lungs and pinched his belly for malnutrition or dehydration. The diagnosis? Malaria. The treatment? Chloroquine.

We continued to see cases of malaria, along with pneumonia, malnutrition, anemia, and dehydration. One nursing student appeared confused by our purpose and interest in visiting the National Hospital. She watched us for some time and disturbingly commented to her colleague in French, “They came to see dying children?”

Poverty in Burkina Faso affects children the most, with a mortality rate of 1 in 10 children under the age of 5. As one of the poorest countries in the world according to the United Nations and World Bank, the country has a gross domestic product of $70 million in U.S. dollars, with only 9.5 percent designated to health. This results in 55 cents per person for health care annually and many unassisted citizens.

Much like the United States, which features a wide gap between the insured and uninsured, there is a disparity in Burkina between the health care of those with money and those without. In addition to paying for care, patients at the National Hospital must purchase their medications, thermometers, intravenous needles, and gloves—everything
crucial to their basic care. When the family cannot afford such items, treatment becomes limited.

Since the National Hospital is at the third level of a pyramid health system, the patient has visited two centers beforehand and usually arrives with an initial diagnosis, prescription, medication, or lab results; if not, a pharmacy on site at the hospital sells the necessary items. Sometimes, patients who cannot afford medicine from the pharmacy will purchase them from the black market drug trade or street vendors. The dosages received from these sources are often too low, too high, or the wrong medication altogether.

Our first road trip began five days after our arrival. Away from the comforts of our hotel, we experienced a wide variety of restrooms—sometimes a hole in the floor surrounded by four concrete walls without a roof, and sometimes a bush, with my back turned to my other crouching members. As we rode away from the capital, we saw less and less concrete and more vegetation, green hills, animals, and huts.

Bobo-Dioulasso (Bobo), 200 miles west of the capital city, is home to a major research institution, Centre Muraz. Created in 1939, the center is known for its malaria research and improvement of diagnostic techniques. Stocked with well-trained researchers and elaborate equipment from donations like PCR machines, Centre Muraz provided a setting for the next phase of our education. We learned to make thin and thick blood smears on microscope slides to identify parasites.

Our next clinical exposure came at the CMA in Koupela, Seventy miles east of Ouaga. The District Sanitaire de Koupela was our selected relief site. The rural town is Burkina Faso’s national pilot site for maternal and child health. My group selected labor and delivery. On our first day, we watched a sixth-day post-partum examination. The midwives checked the patient’s breasts and uterus externally. They also checked the development and growth of the baby.

Following our tour of the clinic, the head midwife sat seven new mothers together on one bench in front of her desk. In her pink and white-striped nursing uniform, hands folded on top of the desk, she began to speak very motherly in Mooré—the language of the Mossi tribe. She instructed the women not to accept co-wives—a man taking more than one wife is common in some areas—and to ensure healthy breast milk by taking iron pills and chloroquine and eating healthy diets. The mothers were instructed to provide exclusive breast feeding instead of water for the first six months due to lack of water sanitation. The midwife then held a board with pictures and words and described various contraceptive options. She later mentioned to us that no woman had returned for contraception to date.

We arrived the following morning to witness a woman in labor with an eight-centimeter dilated cervix. The staff explained a graph used to plot cervical dilation and blood pressure. When a patient entered the “danger zone” on the graph, she needed surgery. The patient in labor was on her way to surgery when we walked in. As the nurses and midwives waited to transport the patient, they tended to other duties. Soon after, the woman began to crown. Only one nurse was nearby. She grabbed gauze and held it against the baby’s head. Shaking the other hand in the air, she yelled for help getting her glove on.

With each contraction, the baby emerged even more. The delivery was quick, but the mixture of anxiety, heat, the patient’s screams, and visible labor fluids caused myself and one other colleague to spend the remainder of our day outside of maternity on the sitting ledge. We sat beside about 20 men, and I noticed how none of them—young or old—were inside with the women or the infants.

On our last day in Koupela, several women brought their newborns into the clinic to receive oral polio vaccines. The health center operates an active vaccination program for pregnant women and newborns. When mothers do not bring children to the center, the staff often travels into remote areas to vaccinate for BCG, tetanus, polio, measles, diphtheria, and whooping cough. Our mission ended with a major relief donation of supplies to the center, a quick lesson in how to tie babies on our backs, and cordial farewells.

Upon returning to this side of the world, words initially escape me when asked, “How was it?” My thoughts turn to snapshots—red clay streets, intense sun, foreign languages, smiles from strangers, baobab trees, green taxis, and men kneeling outside of businesses for prayer. They also turn to the feeling of hands being tied when treating a patient that lacks money, seeing children with enlarged bellies and brownish-red hair, and the pride and happiness of a people who have little by American standards.

As a distant look paints my eyes followed by a smile across my lips, more snapshots flicker in my memory, and all I can muster in a light tone is, “It was an awesome experience.”
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Join the NSU-COM Listserv
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You may also access Listserv at the alumni Web page by clicking on the “Join Our Listserv” link.

The Executive Committee of the NSU-COM Alumni Association, at the suggestion of President Elect Glenn Moran, D.O., FACOFP, would like to create an alumni speakers list. It has been noted at previous alumni reunion CME programs that we have a diverse and distinguished graduate network that possesses the ability to speak on a range of topics. We are constantly searching for additional speakers for our future events. If you present educational lectures, please send in your CV and the subject matter you speak on to Dr. Moran in care of Dr. Howard L. Neer, NSU-COM Office of Alumni Affairs, 3200 South University Drive, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33328.

Upcoming Events
For additional NSU-COM related information regarding the following events, please call (954) 262-1029 or email immacula@nova.edu.

NSU-COM Alumni Reunion and Seventh Annual CME Program
February 7-9, 2003
The annual alumni weekend extravaganza will commence with a reception on Friday, February 7 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. CME sessions will be presented on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, February 8, the social events will begin with a 6:30 p.m. reception followed by a gala banquet at 7:30 p.m. The hotel: Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty Six in Fort Lauderdale, FL. For reservation information, please contact the hotel at (954) 525-6666.

Florida Osteopathic Medical Association (FOMA) Annual Convention
February 20-23, 2003
The 2003 FOMA Convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty Six in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. An NSU-COM alumni reception will be held at the convention. Please refer to the program for specific time and place.

American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) Annual Convention and Exhibition
March 19-23, 2003
The 40th Annual ACOFP Convention and Exhibition will be held at The Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. An alumni reception will be held at this event, so please refer to the program for specific time and place. To obtain hotel and convention information, please contact the ACOFP.
Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

2002 Donors

Heritage Circle
Represents donors who have made a significant deferred gift to the college via life-insurance policies, inheritances, or trusts.

* Dr. Melissa Broadman (1998)
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Alumni Association Fund Honor Roll

$500,000 life insurance policy donated by Dr. Jeffrey Grove (1990) and his wife, Karen.

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Dr. Todd Trites
Alumni Spotlight - Class of 1986
Elizabeth Pepe Hancock, D.O.

Over the past decade, Elizabeth Pepe Hancock, D.O., FACOFP, has established a reputation as a well-liked leader in the osteopathic profession—a fact illustrated by her election as president of the Florida Society of the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (FSACOFP) in 1998 and her most recent accolade as 2002 FSACOFP Family Physician of the Year.

However, Dr. Hancock’s résumé is brimming with far more than just academic and professional achievements. In fact, a glimpse at some of her extracurricular pursuits—which include karate, ballroom dancing, weightlifting, white water rafting, and participation in various bodybuilding competitions—clearly qualifies her as one of NSU-COM’s most colorful and charismatic graduates.

As a child born into a military family, Dr. Hancock quickly grew accustomed to the itinerant lifestyle and excitement of the military milieu. After receiving her D.O. degree from Southeastern College of Osteopathic Medicine (the forerunner of NSU-COM) in 1986, Dr. Hancock returned to her military roots and accepted an emergency medicine general internship at Darnell Army Community Hospital in Fort Hood, Texas.

During her stint in Texas, she was trained as a military flight surgeon and became skilled in all aspects of combat casualty care as well as desert and chemical warfare, medical evacuation missions, and crash investigations. After completing her training as a flight surgeon, Dr. Hancock—who is a certified Federal Aviation Administration Class 1, 2, and 3 medical examiner—became a member of the Apache Training Brigade, serving as primary care physician for the crewmembers and their families.

In 1989, Dr. Hancock, who holds a brown belt in karate, returned to Florida to launch a solo private practice specializing in family medicine in a rural setting called DeLeon Springs and work as an independent contractor in the emergency department of Peninsula Medical Center in Ormond Beach. However, while she was building up her medical résumé and becoming certified by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Practice, Dr. Hancock was also enhancing her reputation as an acclaimed weightlifter.

In addition to capturing five women’s world powerlifting titles, she has won awards in several other athletic disciplines. In 1992, she earned the distinction of becoming the oldest female contestant on the American Gladiator TV show. In 1996, she reached a career-high No. 11 world ranking among all lifters, male or female, in the deadlift division. Three years later, at the Pan American Games, Dr. Hancock set a new national and Pan American record in the WBFPF powerlift, bench press, and deadlift competitions.

Because she is such an ardent proponent of physical fitness and the benefits that can be derived from adhering to a basic fitness regimen, Dr. Hancock hosts a local weekly educational radio show called Health and Fitness with Dr. Hancock and a local monthly television program entitled The Health and Fitness Show.

Always hungry to embrace new challenges, Dr. Hancock—who currently lives in Indian Harbor Beach, Florida, with her husband, Steven—established The Centre for Family Medicine and Wellness in nearby Indialantic. The facility serves as a private solo family practice that blends traditional Western medicine and osteopathic manipulative treatment with complementary/alternative treatments such as acupuncture, massage, Reiki, exercise, and nutritional counseling in a holistic setting.

In her “spare” time, Dr. Hancock, who harbors an ambition to become an astronaut one day, also serves as a flight surgeon consultant for DynCorp. In this role, she provides inspections of remote forward operating locations in South America involved in the anti-narcotic spray activities of the U.S. State Department.

“Dr. Hancock has skillfully blended her intense interest in competitive physical fitness with a truly holistic approach to the practice of osteopathic medicine,” said Howard Neer, D.O., FACOFP, professor and associate dean of alumni affairs. “We can all be proud of her contributions to our profession.”