

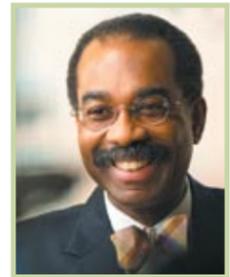


## DEAN'S MESSAGE: What's On My Mind



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What's on my mind this month is my desire for each and every one of you to feel a heightened sense of pride in the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Our bicentennial affords us many wonderful opportunities to connect and reconnect, celebrate our accomplishments and show our pride. We can do all of these things in various ways: by attending school events, by speaking enthusiastically and often to our constituents about the good things going on here, by wearing lapel pins depicting Davidge Hall, and by displaying special bicentennial license plates on our cars.



I recently put bicentennial license plates on my car. The license plate shows others that I support the University of Maryland School of Medicine and that I feel a sense of pride in this fine institution. As I drive around Baltimore, I see many other "vanity" license plates supporting schools, organizations and various causes, but it is fun to see whether I spot other faculty, staff, students and alumni who, by sporting our bicentennial vanity plates, demonstrate their own pride in the School of Medicine.

These items and activities, some of which may seem trivial, go a long way toward acknowledging publicly the School of Medicine's many contributions in science and health to the state and nation, and our rich and storied heritage. Wherever we go in the global community, if we wear our proverbial colors which signify our institutional pride, we inform and educate the public at large about the great place that is the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

In the relentless pursuit of excellence, I am  
Sincerely yours,

*E. Albert Reece*

E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA  
Vice President for Medical Affairs, University of Maryland  
John Z. and Akiko K. Bowers Distinguished Professor and  
Dean, School of Medicine

For information on purchasing a bicentennial license plate, please contact Michelle Healy in the Office of Development at [mhealy@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:mhealy@som.umaryland.edu). Faculty and staff who wish to obtain a lapel pin can contact Saifa Poole in the Office of Public Affairs at [spoole@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:spoole@som.umaryland.edu). Students interested in obtaining lapel pins can pick them up in the Office of Student Affairs. Other items with the School of Medicine's bicentennial logo can be purchased through the bicentennial Web site at [www.sombicentennial.umaryland.edu](http://www.sombicentennial.umaryland.edu).

Clockwise from the top: Jo Martin, bicentennial director, admires the bicentennial tie worn by Mike Plaut, PhD, assistant dean for Student Affairs; SOM lapel pin; bicentennial license plate, and the bicentennial license plate of an SOM staff member.

## "The Enduring Power of Leadership"

"The Enduring Power of Leadership" was the theme for the second of three lectures at the Hippodrome in celebration of the School of Medicine's bicentennial. On April 26, Bob Arnot, MD, Judith Hicks Stiehm, PhD, and Cal Ripken, Jr. spoke of the qualities that can turn ordinary people into extraordinary leaders.

Lack of fear seems to be the key to Dr. Bob Arnot's success. He's about to launch a new television show called "Dr. Danger," an appropriate title for the experiences he shared with the audience about his adventures in war-torn areas around the world. However, the key message in his presentation was not about his own accomplishments, but of the everyday heroes he's met during his journeys—men and women who may not have chosen to lead, but who stepped up to the role when the situation called for it.

Dr. Stiehm's presentation followed a similar theme. She spoke about the 12 women who have won the Nobel Peace Prize—women who were

happily pursuing careers or religious vocations or enjoying life as wives and mothers when the strife in the world around them forced them out of their comfort zones and into history.

It wasn't strife but doing what he loved that made Cal Ripken, Jr. such an enduring part of history. That was one of eight rules he credits for his success, rules he has followed both in baseball and as a husband and father. The importance of family resounded in Cal's speech, which was filled with stories of his father, Cal, Sr., and the lessons he imparted. Cal also spoke of passing on this knowledge to his own son, Ryan, and how that is important in helping to shape him into the adult he will become.

Part three of the Bicentennial Lecture Series will be held at the Hippodrome on September 24. Titled "Perspectives on the Central Nervous System" it will feature former United States Attorney General Janet Reno and CBS weatherman Mark McEwan. To obtain more information on this event, call the bicentennial office at 6.2007, or visit the Web site at [www.sombicentennial.umaryland.edu](http://www.sombicentennial.umaryland.edu).



L-R: Dean Reece, Judith Hicks Stiehm, PhD, Cal Ripken, Jr., Bob Arnot, MD

# Internationally Known Scientist to Head New Institute for Genome Sciences



Claire M. Fraser-Liggett, PhD

The University of Maryland School of Medicine has named preeminent genome scientist and microbiologist Claire M. Fraser-Liggett, PhD, to direct the University of Maryland School of Medicine's Institute for Genome Sciences—a new research enterprise dedicated to the application of genome sciences for the advancement of human health. This new institute will be located at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) BioPark, a biomedical research park on UMB's expanding campus.

Dr. Fraser-Liggett comes to the School of Medicine from The Institute for Genomic Research (TIGR) in Rockville, MD, where she served as president and director since 1998. During her tenure at TIGR, federal funding to the organization tripled to \$60 million per year. At TIGR, Dr. Fraser-Liggett led research teams that sequenced the genomes of many microbial organisms and helped to initiate the era of comparative genomics. She has been the most highly cited

scientist in the field of microbiology for the past 10 years.

"Dr. Fraser-Liggett is a true pioneer in the effort to sequence and analyze the genomes of a large number of organisms, and we are thrilled to have her world-class expertise at the University of Maryland," says Dean E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA. "Dr. Fraser-Liggett is expected to bring a team of scientists and staff members with her. This major recruitment initiative will fuel the expansion of genomic research at the School of Medicine."

As an expert in the field of microbial genomics, one aspect of Dr. Fraser-Liggett's current research is to understand the communities of bacteria in the human body, especially the microorganisms that reside in the digestive tract. These bacterial cells far outnumber the human cells that make up our bodies and are vital to good health. By comparing DNA sequences from these microbes, researchers have already determined the biological function of some beneficial bacteria. The research could lead to new ways to promote health and novel vaccines to prevent disease.

"I am extremely excited about the opportunity to build a new genomics institute within the School of Medicine," says Dr. Fraser-Liggett. "The School of Medicine has a rich history in medical and graduate education and an outstanding faculty in both basic and clinical research, many of whom are current or past collaborators with TIGR."

Dr. Fraser-Liggett has overseen the genome sequencing of important human pathogens, including bacterial infections that cause cholera and anthrax, and parasitic infections responsible for malaria and other devastating diseases in the developing world. Her work also includes the study of influenza and other viruses. These studies have provided a strong foundation for the development of new diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines. At the University of Maryland, Dr. Fraser-Liggett will build on her impressive body of work while collaborating with physician-scientists in an environment that fosters translational medicine.

"One of the most important challenges over the next two decades will be integrating new insights from the past 10 years of genomics studies into the clinical environment to impact human health," says Dr. Fraser-Liggett. "There is no better place to be working toward these goals than in a large academic medical center like the University of Maryland School of Medicine."

"The University of Maryland School of Medicine's Institute for Genome Sciences will provide countless opportunities for multi-disciplinary collaboration," says Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, vice dean for Research and Academic Affairs. "Institute faculty will have opportunities for clinical research and benefit from the School of Medicine's strong international programs, such as the Center for Vaccine Development, headed by Dr. Myron Levine; the Institute of Human Virology, led by Dr. Robert Gallo; and the Department of Microbiology & Immunology, chaired by Dr. James Kaper."

Dr. Fraser-Liggett has been continuously supported by federal funding, including the National Institutes of Health. She currently serves on the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity and the National Research Council's Committee on Metagenomics. She is a member of the editorial boards of *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *The Journal of Bacteriology*. She has published more than 220 articles in scientific journals and is a reviewer for nine journals. In addition to three honorary doctoral degrees, she has received the E.O. Lawrence Award, the highest award presented by the Department of Energy; the New York Academy of Science's Diversity in Science Award for Leadership and Scientific Excellence (2005); the Society for Industrial Microbiology's Charles Thom Award (2005); and the Promega Biotechnology Award (2005). She was elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology (2005) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2005). She also received Maryland's Top 100 Women Circle of Excellence Award (2004). In 2006, Dr. Fraser-Liggett was elected to the board of directors of Becton, Dickinson and Company. 

## Researchers Test Nutritional Supplement for Parkinson's Disease

Neurologists at the University of Maryland School of Medicine are participating in a large-scale national clinical trial to learn if the nutritional supplement creatine can slow the progression of Parkinson's disease. Creatine is widely thought to improve exercise performance, but it is not an approved therapy for Parkinson's disease or any other condition. Creatine's potential benefit for Parkinson's patients emerged from earlier trials from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) that employed a new rapid method for screening potential compounds.

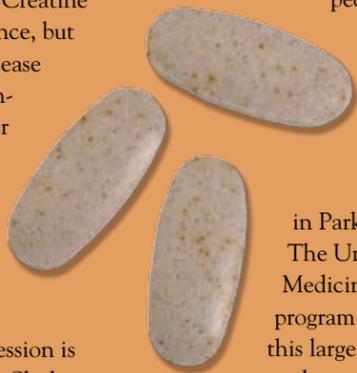
"Right now, we have many good drugs to control Parkinson's symptoms, but nothing to prevent those symptoms from getting worse. Finding a drug that can slow the disease's progression is challenging," says principal investigator Lisa M. Shulman, MD, associate professor, Department of Neurology, and co-director of the Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center at the University of Maryland Medical Center.

"For this type of research, we need to study a large group of patients over a long period of time. The NIH-funded study of creatine is a new type of study, and we are pleased to continue our participation in this unprecedented national effort," adds Dr. Shulman.

The double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase III study is one of the largest Parkinson's disease clinical trials to date. The University of Maryland School of Medicine, which participated in the earlier phases of this study, is one of 51 sites in the United States and Canada that will recruit patients as part of an effort to enroll 1,720 people with Parkinson's disease.

"This study is an important step. We are pleased to have so many sites participating in this study, which may help us move more quickly toward developing a

therapy that could change the course of this devastating disease," says Elias A. Zerhouni, MD, director of the NIH. "The goal is to improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's for a longer period of time than is possible with existing therapies."



This is the first large study in a series of NIH-sponsored clinical trials called NIH Exploratory Trials in Parkinson's Disease (NET-PD). The University of Maryland School of Medicine has been affiliated with the program since 2003. The NIH organized this large network of sites to allow researchers to work with Parkinson's disease patients over a long period of time, with a

goal of finding effective and lasting treatments. NET-PD builds on a developmental research process, from laboratory research to pilot studies in a select group of patients to the definitive phase III trial of effectiveness in people with Parkinson's disease.

Parkinson's disease is a degenerative disorder of the brain in which patients develop such symptoms as progressive tremor, slowness of movements and muscle stiffness. It affects at least one million people in the United States. Although certain drugs, such as levodopa, can reduce the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, there are no proven treatments that can slow the progressive deterioration in function.

Creatine is marketed as a nutritional supplement. Studies have suggested that it can improve the function of mitochondria, structures inside cells that produce energy. It also may act as an antioxidant that prevents

damage from compounds that are harmful to cells in the brain. In a mouse model of Parkinson's disease, creatine is able to prevent loss of the cells that are typically affected.

The study will enroll people who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease within the past five years and who have been treated for two years or less with levodopa or other drugs that increase the levels of dopamine in the brain. Many of the symptoms of Parkinson's disease result from the loss of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps to control movement. Half of the participants will receive creatine and half will receive a placebo. Neither the participants nor their doctors will know which treatment they receive.

The investigators will measure disease progression

**The double-blind, placebo-controlled, phase III study is one of the largest Parkinson's disease clinical trials to date.**

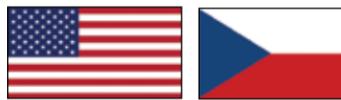
using standard rating scales that measure quality of life, walking ability, cognitive function and the ability to carry out other activities of daily living.

"For Parkinson's patients, even simple tasks like walking or getting dressed become more difficult, and sometimes impossible, as the disease progresses. Through the NET-PD trials, we hope we can find a way to stop this progression, which would have a major effect on the lives of Parkinson's patients," adds Dr. Shulman. 



Lisa M. Shulman, MD

# Scientists Discuss International Collaboration



Scientists from the International Clinical Research Center (ICRC) in Brno, the Czech Republic, met recently with leaders and top researchers at the University of Maryland School of Medicine to discuss the possibility of collaborating on cancer studies and other clinical research.

“Science without borders is the overriding goal of our new International Clinical Research center,” says Tomáš Kára, MD, PhD, the ICRC’s executive director. The ICRC opened in 2006 at St. Ann’s Hospital in Brno, with more than \$90 million in financial support from the Czech government and the European Union. Dr. Kára likens the center’s mission to that of the International Space Station, bringing together scientists from around the world.

“We hope to establish a very strong collaboration with the University of Maryland School of Medicine,” Dr. Kára says. “We believe that the ICRC platform will bring together the most talented researchers from the United States, Europe and other parts of the world, creating a scientific partnership that will ultimately provide hope and benefits to many patients.”

Dr. Kára says the ICRC initially wants to partner with the school’s surgical oncologists to conduct research into head and neck cancers and then look for possible collaborations in other areas, such as cardiology, neuroscience

and vaccine development. Researchers at the Brno center are already working with doctors at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, on cardiovascular studies.

Scott E. Strome, MD, professor and chair, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and two other faculty members from the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Jeffrey Wolf, MD, assistant professor, and Rodney Taylor, MD, MPH, assistant professor, toured the ICRC in February and presented

**“We believe that the ICRC platform will bring together the most talented researchers from the United States, Europe and other parts of the world, creating a scientific partnership that will ultimately provide hope and benefits to many patients”**

information about head and neck cancer and new immunotherapy research to Czech clinicians and scientists. Dr. Strome arranged for Dr. Kára and two colleagues to visit the School of Medicine in April.

“This new International Clinical Research Center has the potential to tear down many of the barriers which exist in translational medicine, improving our understanding of disease, our ability to enhance patient care and our ability to improve the education of the next generation of clinician-scientists,” Dr. Strome says. He adds that collaborating with the Czech scientists will provide the School of Medicine with an opportunity for student exchanges and technology transfer as well as new research projects.

Dr. Strome says that his department is already working with scientists at the ICRC on a project to develop antibodies in plants. He expects that the School of Medicine will send a delegation to Brno in the coming months as a move toward formalizing the school’s relationship with the ICRC.

According to Dr. Kára, the ICRC is the only medical and biotech research facility of its kind in the world. 



Jeffrey Wolf, MD, Tomáš Kára, MD, PhD, and Scott Strome, MD, pause for a photo during Dr. Kára’s visit to the School of Medicine.

## SOM Physicians Provide Service for Soldiers Returning from War

Robert Barish, MD, vice dean for Clinical Affairs, and professor, Departments of Emergency Medicine and Medicine, also serves as Medical Commander of the 10<sup>th</sup> Medical Regiment of the Maryland Defense Force (MDDF), one of four branches of the Maryland military. Along with fellow School of Medicine faculty members Charles Wiles III, MD, associate professor, Department of Surgery and Program in Trauma, who is also a Shock Trauma intensivist at Baltimore Washington Medical Center and Lieutenant Colonel in the MDDF, and Richard Colgan, MD,



Charles Wiles, MD, Robert Barish, MD, and Richard Colgan, MD, ready to conduct post-deployment health reassessments for soldiers returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

professor, Department of Family & Community Medicine, and a Lieutenant Colonel in the MDDF, Dr. Barish and other members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Medi-

cal Regiment assisted the Maryland Army National Guard with post-deployment health reassessments at the Baltimore Veterans Affairs Medical Center on February 11, 2007. Eighty Maryland Army National Guardsman from Special Forces and Aeronautical units underwent post-deployment health reassessment (PDHRA) for health issues upon their return from combat in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Dr. Barish has accomplished many firsts in taking leadership of the MDDF, which was resurrected after the terrorism event on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The all-volunteer medical regiment conducted its second screening of returning soldiers, a task never performed by the MDDF prior to this year. Other firsts include overseeing the first deployment of the 10<sup>th</sup> Medical Regiment outside the state of Maryland, when he and his team served those affected by hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. They also assisted the Maryland Air National Guard last July in providing medical humanitarian aid to survivors of the Balkan war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Drs. Barish, Colgan and Wiles plan to provide further PDHRAs in the future for those Maryland National Guardsman returning from combat. 

## Reception Welcomes IHV to the School of Medicine

The Institute of Human Virology (IHV) has been affiliated with the University of Maryland for 10 years, but it was only earlier this year that IHV became the University of Maryland School of Medicine’s first official institute. A reception was held April 25 to welcome the institute and its doctors, researchers and staff to the school.

“The University of Maryland School of Medicine is a major research engine for the state, the country and indeed the world,” said Dean E. Albert Reece, MD, PhD, MBA. “So it’s very fitting to have such a strong research institution as IHV linked so integrally to the school. I look forward to our collaborative efforts and want you to know that the landscape is ours to conquer together.”

The Institute of Human Virology is headed by renowned researcher Robert Gallo, MD, who co-discovered the HIV virus that causes AIDS and who created the test to detect the virus. Dr. Gallo is also a professor in the Departments of Medicine and Microbiology & Immunology. “We are very, very proud to have him as part of the UMB family,” said David Ramsay, DM, DPhil, president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore. “In the last 10 years IHV has blossomed and flourished under his guidance and brought enormous credit to the campus.”

Dr. Gallo is not going to let that past success detract from future efforts, however. “Without any doubt, we’re looking forward to the adventure,” he said of the institute’s partnership with the school. “We’re going to hit major sources of funding. With so much talent in infectious disease on campus, how can we miss?” 



Dean Reece, UMB President David Ramsay, Robert Gallo, MD, and Stewart Greenebaum at the reception welcoming IHV to the School of Medicine.

# Students Take a Day Off to Give Back to Baltimore

**M**ore than 600 medical students fanned out across Baltimore to help others in the first Student Service Day at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. Medical students cleaned and painted schools, helped build a house for Habitat for Humanity, gave presentations at the Maryland Science Center and conducted a Mini-Med School for high school students interested in the health field.

"We wanted to give back to the community that has supported the school for 200 years," explained Dean Reece of the unprecedented decision to devote an entire school day to volunteering during the school's bicentennial year.

"We're really delighted," raved Patti Rosso, a teacher for Sollers Point Technical High School's Allied Health program, who brought a group of juniors to Mini-Med School. "It's been a fun time for the kids. Some of them dream of becoming doctors, but I don't think they had a real idea of what it entailed, so being able to talk with medical school students and learn about their medical school experiences has been very worthwhile."

"That was part of the purpose of today," added Alicia Loper, another Sollers Point teacher and the mother of a second-year student at the School of Medicine, "so they could see realistically what they would be getting into. They visited the gross anatomy lab, where they saw dissected cadavers and organs, and they were all fascinated."

Loper wasn't able to catch up with her son on campus, as he was busy volunteering at the Maryland Science Center.

The biggest service site of the day, the Science Center had 75 medical students manning a variety of kid-friendly presentations.

In "Grossology," medical student Amy Andrus was helping third graders understand why swallowing air



Medical students unload supplies at the Habitat for Humanity service location.

makes you "toot." "Students get to see their bodies in a whole different way, and that inspires curiosity," said Andrus, who believes their community service makes science more accessible and less intimidating.

After months of intense study, Student Service Day was a big change of pace for the medical students, but one they greatly appreciated. "It's an opportunity to share our excitement for science," said fourth-year medical student Michelle Cohen. Cohen, who organized the Science Center outreach, hopes the experience will encourage more young people to consider careers in science or medicine.

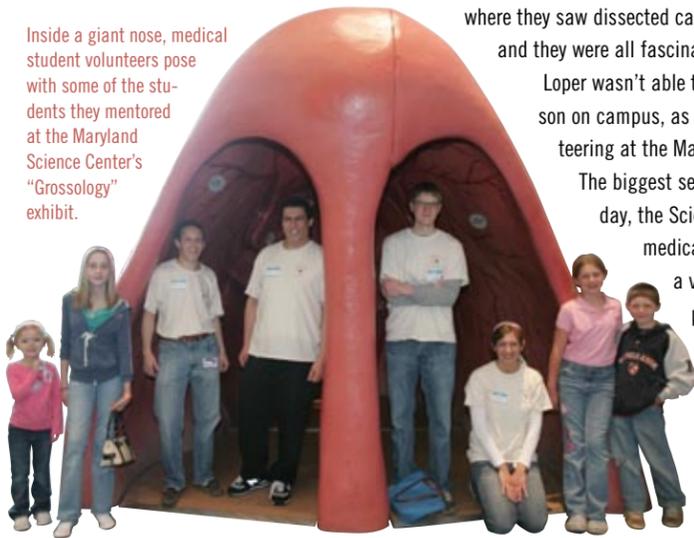
The Science Center staff was thrilled to have the medical students onsite answering questions. "The synergy is great," said Anne Myers, the Science Center's director of development. Myers agreed with Cohen that activities like Student Service Day can

provide the kind of one-on-one contact vital to stimulating a child's interest in science.

That certainly seemed to be the case back at the School of Medicine's gross anatomy lab. After fidgeting through lectures on AIDS and influenza, the Sollers Point students found their enthusiasm there. They were able to get hands-on with plastinized models of diseased organs, while peppering their tour guides with questions about science and the ups and downs of medical school.

Student Service Day was presented as a special event for the School of Medicine's bicentennial year, but many of those involved hope to see it become an annual tradition. "The students are very enthusiastic about this," said Joseph Martinez, MD, assistant dean for Student Affairs, and an assistant professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine. "I think it would be difficult to find a day every year when we could cancel classes so everyone could go volunteer, but I'd like to see this continue on some scale in the future." 

Inside a giant nose, medical student volunteers pose with some of the students they mentored at the Maryland Science Center's "Grossology" exhibit.



Samantha Smith, MSI, reviews anatomy specimens with students from Sollers Point Technical High School.

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