

## Blanck announces retirement

**R**onald Blanck, DO, health science center president, has announced his plans to retire from the position he has held for the past five years.

“I make this announcement with some sadness, because I love the health science center and have enjoyed being part of such a wonderful, dynamic institution,” Dr. Blanck said. “Donna and I have valued our time in Fort Worth, particularly at the health science center, with the friends we have made. We really are torn about leaving, but given my age, it’s time do other things. We’re in great health, and so it’s time to travel and to do other things that you can’t do with a full time commitment.”

Bobby Ray, chair of the Board of Regents, commended Dr. Blanck for “outstanding” service to the health science center and the UNT System. “The exciting task before us now,” he said, “is to launch the search for a new UNTHSC president who’ll continue to build on the stature and the momentum Dr. Blanck has helped us achieve.”

Dr. Blanck will continue to serve as president until a new president is named. The UNT System is in the process of putting together a search committee to help choose the next president of the health science center.

Lee Jackson, UNT System chancellor, said, “Dr. Blanck has led UNT Health Science Center to unprecedented advancement, achievement and growth.



*Ronald Blanck, DO, health science center president*

Thanks in large measure to his vision, UNT Health Science Center is more vital than ever and well positioned to rise to new levels of excellence. We will miss Dr. Blanck for his insightful leadership and his keen sense of humor.”

Patti Lloyd, executive director of the Office of the President, said she has enjoyed working with Dr. Blanck. “The most incredible thing about him is that in all the time we’ve worked together, I have never once heard him say anything negative about anyone,” she said. “His expectation is that people will do the very best they can, and he is rarely wrong. He motivates people to be the best they can be, and I know all of us will certainly miss him.”

Dr. Blanck presided over an expansion of the schools within the health sci-

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## NIH awards \$7 million grant to HSC

The National Institutes of Health has awarded UNT Health Science Center \$7.25 million to establish the Texas Center for Minority Health, Education, Research and Outreach (EXPORT Center).

“This grant will allow us to explore our strengths in terms of research, education and outreach,” said Jamboor Vishwanatha, PhD, program director for the grant and associate dean and professor in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. “We will be able to try out our ideas and find our strengths in the effort to address issues of health disparities and help eliminate them.”

The grant submitted by the health science center was one of 218 proposals from across the country, and NIH funded only six.

“This is truly exciting,” said Ronald Blanck, DO, president of the health science center. “Because NIH recognized the quality of the programs that we already have that are designed to address health disparities, we were able to forgo years of work and automatically become an exploratory center. This puts us well along the path of becoming a comprehensive center, the final step in this three-step process.”

The grant, known as Project EXPORT — Establishing

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## Blanck announces retirement

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ence center and the creation of a fourth school. During his tenure, enrollment almost doubled, research funding tripled, and the size of the campus doubled with the construction of the Center for BioHealth and the purchase of additional adjacent property.

He also increased hospital partnerships, opened a Center for Non-invasive Imaging in the Center for BioHealth, helped bring the first federally funded Community Health Clinic to Fort Worth and expanded the biotechnology incubator in partnership with the city.

“Dr. Blanck has really raised the health science center’s visibility both in the professional and lay communities, not only here in Fort Worth, but in the state and nationally,” said Marc Hahn, DO, dean of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. “We’ve seen unbelievable growth in all aspects of our missions here on the campus, bringing the right people together, giving them the right resources and allowing us to accomplish greatness.”

Dr. Blanck joined the health science center in August 2000 after his

retirement from a 32-year career in the U.S. Army. At the time of his retirement from the Army, he was a lieutenant general serving as the Army’s Surgeon General and commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command.

During his time at the health science center, Dr. Blanck has acted as an adviser on bioterrorism issues and an expert in preparing the medical community to respond to mass casualty incidents or those involving weapons of mass destruction. In addition to his many speaking engagements and advisory positions, he was chair of the task forces on bioterrorism for both the Texas Medical Association and the American Osteopathic Association.

Dr. Blanck has become increasingly active with the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services on issues dealing with healthcare and bioterrorism, and he said he has been approached about working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help prepare a plan for a response to an outbreak of avian flu in the United States.

## Professional workshops for students provide practical information

The Office Student Development is sponsoring a series of workshops this semester as a continuation of last semester’s professional workshops.

Bobbie Ann Adair, student development coordinator, said the workshops are intended to provide information in specific areas of interest to supplement the information students already receive as part of their program curriculum.

Some of the workshop topics include interviewing skills, personal statement writing, and alcoholism and addiction.

“Workshop Wednesday’s was a term coined by our very own Prudence Zavala [student development coordinator], who knew we would need a

catchy name for our professional workshops that were already in existence,” Adair said.

This semester’s workshops were kicked off Sept. 21 with a program about depression in graduate school presented by Jon Crook, PhD, a behavioral psychologist who discussed precursors and warning signs of depression.

“Dr. Crook did a tremendous job with a potentially mundane topic,” Adair said. “The Psych/Neuro Club sponsored the food and assisted with the advertisements, and with over 60 people in attendance, the program was an educational success!”

Check the Daily News for the most up-to-date information about Workshop Wednesdays. ★

## CAMPUS Connection

Campus Connection is produced 10 times a year by the Office of Marketing & Communications, UNT Health Science Center, 3500 Camp Bowie Blvd., EAD-802, Fort Worth, Texas 76107, (817) 735-5452.

Please address all inquiries or complaints to April Eubanks, editor.

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After he leaves the health science center, Dr. Blanck will continue his work on various companies’ boards of directors, and he said he intends to join Martin and Associates, a loosely knit group of retired military medical officers who do consulting for the government and companies throughout the nation and the world. He said he will also continue to help the health science center and the UNT System at the capital. ★

## Faculty Promotions

The UNT System Board of Regents approved the following faculty for promotion effective Sept. 1.

**Sejong Bae, PhD**, biostatistics, from assistant professor to associate professor

**Clifton Cage, DO**, family medicine, from assistant professor to associate professor

**Barbara Harty, NP**, internal medicine, from instructor to assistant professor

**Shigehiko Ogoh, PhD**, integrative physiology, from research instructor to research assistant professor

**Elizabeth Palmarozzi, DO**, family medicine, from assistant professor to associate professor

**Jana Peretti, PA**, pediatrics, from instructor to assistant professor ★

# TCOM celebrates 35th birthday

More than \$190,000 was raised at the TCOM 35th Birthday Gala through sponsorships, ticket sales, donations, raffle income and auction sales.

“Facility and equipment upgrades, new clinical and research initiatives, and events such as our annual White Coat Ceremony are all things that our limited state allocations can’t provide for,” said Cheryl Kimberling, PhD, vice president for institutional advancement. “The generosity of TCOM’s 35th Birthday Gala sponsors and guests will help meet these growing needs.”

Half of the gala’s proceeds will go to the TCOM Dean’s Progress Fund, which supports needs such as equipment upgrades and improved facilities. The other half will go to the health science center’s President’s Progress Fund, which supports institutional needs such as student counseling, tutoring, advertising and alumni activities.

The gala program began with an introduction by Ronald Blanck, DO, health science center president, and remarks by Lee Jackson, chancellor of the University of North Texas System.

“We are here to celebrate the legacy, the people and the future of a unique medical school that first opened its doors 35 years ago,” Dr. Blanck said.

The Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine accepted its first students in 1970 and had become a state-supported medical school under the jurisdiction of the North Texas Board of Regents by 1975. The Texas Legislature re-designated the medical school as a health science center in 1993.

At the gala, Dr. Hahn introduced two new alumni recognition traditions for TCOM: the Dean’s Award for Distinguished Service and the Dean’s Philanthropy Award.

“These new traditions will recognize TCOM graduates in active medical practice who have distinguished themselves through outstanding personal and professional achievements, as

well as support of their medical school,” Dr. Hahn said.

Robert DeLuca, DO, TCOM 1984, a family physician in Eastland, received the Dean’s Award for Distinguished Service. Dr. DeLuca was one



of the first voting student members of the House of Delegates of the American Osteopathic Association in 1982 and one of the first voting members at the 1982 TOMA House of Delegates.

“In recognition of your outstanding commitment to the osteopathic profession, your exemplary achievements as a physician and as a personal role model for others, and your service to your community, your profession and TCOM,” Dr. Hahn said while presenting the award to Dr. DeLuca.

David Ray, DO, TCOM 1974, a family physician in Bridgeport, received the Dean’s Award for Philanthropy. He served as president of TCOM’s first class and was also the first president of the TCOM Alumni Association.

“For your generous support of the students who follow in your footsteps and your personal involvement in the growth and success of your alma mater,” Dr. Hahn said while presenting the award to Dr. Ray.

Kenneth Bayles, DO, TOMA president, presented Dr. Hahn with a set of 44 CDs and 26 DVDs containing TCOM’s complete oral history, the result of a joint project between the TOMA Archives Committee and the

Gibson D. Lewis Health Science Library at the health science center.

Daniel Saylak, DO, TCOM 1984, TOMA president-elect, led the effort to digitize and preserve more than 70 audio and videotape interviews of dozens of individuals important to the history and development of TCOM.

Alfred Hurley, PhD, former chancellor of the UNT system, presented a check for \$35,000 to support TCOM student scholarships on behalf of Wayne Stockseth, a member of TCOM’s founding board of directors and former chair of the UNT Board of Regents.

After a live auction, “TCOM: A Story of Pride and Progress,” a video created by institutional advancement and biomedical communications, played on two big screens.

“Thank you to everyone who has made the past 35 years possible,” Dr. Hahn said. “And as far as the next 35 years go, as they say here deep in the heart of Texas, you ain’t seen nothin’ yet!” ★



# HSC welcomes new students at White Coat

Health Science Center faculty and staff formally welcomed the 2005-2006 entering students at its Convocation and White Coat Ceremony Sept. 23.

This year's White Coat and Convocation Ceremony was flanked by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, with Hurricane Katrina taking place a few weeks before the ceremony, and Hurricane Rita making landfall a few days after the ceremony. Mandatory evacuation orders in the coastal areas of Texas made travel to and from Fort Worth challenging for some family members, and references to both hurricanes could be heard throughout the ceremony.

This year's ceremony included 135 incoming Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine students, 90 incoming Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences students, 87 new School of Public Health students and 29 new Physician Assistant Studies students.

Former health science center president David Richards, DO, keynote speaker for the ceremony, said the incoming students should "include excellence as one of your main and continuing goals. Excellence is a journey," he said to the crowd, which included faculty, staff, family and friends.

"Be the best you can be," Dr. Richards said. "You have such an amazing professional life ahead of you. You're in for a wonderful journey."

Dr. Richards said told the students that he was happy to be able to attend the ceremony and provide his reflections. "It's a chance for me to share my heart," he said.

Dr. Richards discussed the need for empathy in the healthcare profession. "Whatever you do, do not be afraid to care too much," Dr. Richards said. "The goal, after all, is common to all — to better serve mankind."

This common interest in the healthcare professions was a theme in Dr. Richards' speech as he urged the crowd of students to practice better communication and work together.



He also spoke directly to the four Tulane University School of Public Health students participating in the ceremony. A total of five displaced Tulane students received temporary admission to the School of Public Health.

Dr. Richards joined the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in 1981 as associate dean for academic affairs. He was named interim executive vice president in 1984 and acting president in 1985. He was named president in 1986, and he served as president until his retirement in 1999.

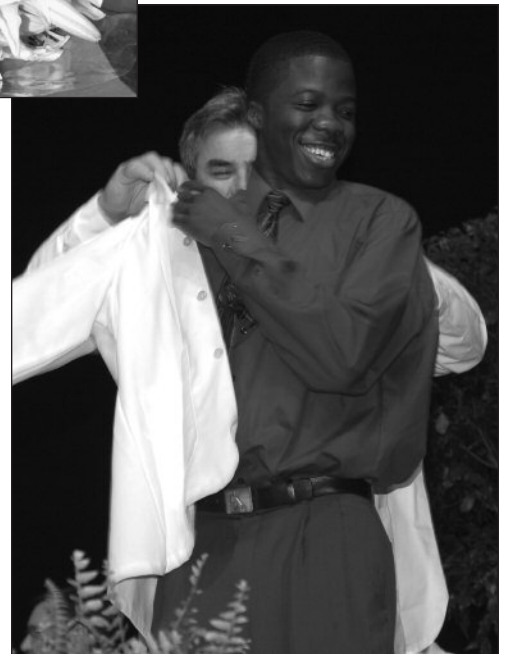
During his tenure, Dr. Richards saw TCOM grow from a medical school to a health science center. He oversaw the establishment of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in 1993, the Physician Assistant Studies Program in 1997 and the School of Public Health in 1999.

Dr. Richards and his wife, Marilyn, were awarded the TCOM Founders' Medal in 1999. The Founders' Medal is

the highest honor given to an individual by the institution.

At the ceremony, Dr. Richards was presented with the Presidential Medallion as a token of appreciation for his hard work in the creation and expansion of the health science center.

Following Dr. Richards's keynote address, Jeanette Bettes, a Physician Assistant Studies student, gave the student body response, in which she discussed the needs associated with Hurricane Katrina. Bettes also urged the students to work together and become a proud part of the white coat team.



The White Coat Ceremony is a rite of passage for students entering the academic health community. During the ceremony, new medical, physician assistant, biomedical sciences and public health students are literally "coated" for the first time. The white coat they receive symbolizes the humanitarianism and integrity required of each individual entering a health-related profession. ★



*New signs on the former OMCT property announce the health science center's intention to continue to seek the community's involvement in the planning process.*

## HSC solicits community input

New signs announcing the health science center's master planning process can be seen on the former Osteopathic Medical Center of Texas property.

The new signs, which say "University of North Texas Health Science Center: Planning with Our Neighbors," illustrate the health science center's determination to make its master planning process a collaboration between the UNT System, health science center officials and the neighborhoods surrounding the health science center's property.

The health science center purchased the former OMCT property and took possession April 14. A request for qualifications for a master planner was announced May 27. From that list, potential master planning companies were selected to submit proposals for a master plan.

To foster community participation in the master planning process, an Advisory Committee was appointed by former City Councilman John Stephenson. The Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from the community and UNT Health Science Center employees, was created to help choose a master planner and provide insight during the planning process.

The committee will recommend a master planner to Ronald Blanck, DO, health science center president, and Lee Jackson, UNT System chancellor.

After contracting with a master planner, more community input will be sought through Town Hall meetings.

So far, the Advisory Committee has met six times. The first meeting at the health science center, led by Rich Escalante, UNT System vice chancellor, outlined the duties of the Advisory Committee and a proposed schedule for the master planner recommendation.

At the second meeting, the Advisory Committee reviewed the requests for qualifications. The committee narrowed the pool to five firms that were asked to submit full proposals to the UNT System.

The five firms were interviewed at the beginning of August. The Advisory Committee then met two more times to discuss the pool and narrow it to two finalists. The committee will meet with both firms for a second time before making its recommendation to Dr. Blanck and Chancellor Jackson.

"We hope to have a master planner contracted by Dec. 1," said Greg Upp, vice president for institutional coordination. ★

## In the News

**Ronald Blanck, DO**, president, was quoted in an article about the Imaging Center opening that ran in the Aug. 29-Sept. 4 *Fort Worth Business Press*.

**Bernard Rubin, DO, MPH**, was quoted in an article in *Woman's Day* magazine about choosing the safest most effective drugs for treating osteoarthritis. The article ran in the Sept. 1 issue.

**Marc Hahn, DO**, dean of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, was quoted in a story about Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Fort Worth that ran in the Sept. 4 *Star-Telegram*.

**Kristine Lykens, PhD**, assistant professor of health management and policy, was quoted in a story about meeting the health and educational needs of Hurricane Katrina evacuees in the Sept. 5 *Star-Telegram*.

The *Business Press* ran a brief about the **Osteopathic Research Center** being re-funded in its Sept. 5-11 issue.

**James Hall, PhD**, associate professor and chair of psychology, was quoted in a story in the Sept. 6 *Star-Telegram* about the psychological effects of Hurricane Katrina on those impacted by the storm.

**Volunteers** from the **health science center** were mentioned in a story about Hurricane Katrina in the Sept. 6 *USA Today*.

*Hispanic Business* magazine ranked the **health science center** number five on its list of top 10 medical schools for Hispanics in its September issue.

**Anna Ratka, PhD, PharmD**, director of clinical research, Institute of Aging and Alzheimer's Disease Research and associate professor, and **Kim Brown**, clinical research coordinator, both of pharmacology and neuroscience, were quoted in a story about menopause in *The Dallas Morning News' PULSE* magazine. "The Future of Hormone Therapy," by **Meharvan Singh, PhD**, assistant professor, and **Jim Simpkins, PhD**, director of IAADR and chair and professor, both of pharmacology and neuroscience, was discussed in a side bar to the feature article, which ran in the September issue. ★

# SPH student selected as Black Caucus fellow

William Garner, MPH, doctoral student in health management and policy, has been selected for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Louis Stokes Urban Health Policy Fellows Program for 2005-2006.

Garner began the fellowship in September. As a fellow, Garner will spend two months in a Congressional office and 10 months working with the House Energy Committee, Subcommittee on Health.

The fellowship program is an educational leadership development program designed for policy professionals. Fellows will not only work on policy development while in Washington, D.C., they will also present original research in a policy paper. The purpose of the fellowship is to help address issues involved in health disparities in the United States and abroad.

"Throughout his graduate career at the School of Public Health, William has shown dedication to the issue of racial and ethnic disparities in health," said Kristine Lykens, PhD, assistant professor of health management and policy. "His participation in the fellow-



*William Garner (top row, center), MPH, doctoral student in health management and policy, has been selected for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Louis Stokes Urban Health Policy Fellows Program.*

ship program will benefit our program at the health science center as well as this significant health policy issue."

Garner is a long-time resident of Fort Worth who graduated with honors from Polytechnic High School. He attended Texas Wesleyan University and graduated from Texas A&M University at Commerce with a bachelor of arts degree in English and general business.

He earned a master of public health degree from the health science center in 2002, and he received the American School Health Association's 2002 Outstanding Student Paper Award for his master's thesis.

Garner said his interest in eliminating health disparities for African Americans led him to apply for the fellowship.

"People of color must also be at the

table where health policies are drafted," Garner said. "The Congressional Black Caucus understands this fact.

"Through the Stokes Fellowship, the caucus provides an unmatched opportunity for emerging health policy professionals to apply their knowledge of health policy development in an immediate and meaningful way. I'm looking forward to that opportunity." ★

# PACE diabetes DVD honored with national award

The Office of Professional and Continuing Education recently received the Alliance for Continuing Medical Education's annual award for Most Outstanding Industry-Supported Certified Continuing Medical Education Activity.

The award recognizes one CME activity each year that most effectively illustrates a genuine partnership between a CME provider and an industry supporter. PACE received the award for *Changing Course: Diagnosing & Treating Type II Diabetes*, a DVD-based activity released in 2005.

"This award is a great honor," said Pam McFadden, associate vice president for PACE. "To know you did a great job is one thing, but to be recognized by your peers and such a

respected organization as the ACME is on a completely different level. Each one of my staff members played a role in this project, and each person shares in this award."

*Changing Course* was funded with an educational grant from the sanofi-aventis group, a Bridgewater, New Jersey-based pharmaceutical company. "We worked closely with sanofi-aventis to make this project a reality, especially Dr. Kent Porter, a metabolism regional medical manager from medical affairs," McFadden said.

*Changing Course* is an innovative CME activity targeted to primary care offices. Some of the nation's leading experts in type 2 diabetes were interviewed about the disease for the DVD.

Their responses were compiled to help primary care offices better diagnose and treat patients with diabetes.

More than 1,000 DVD kits have been distributed around the country, with each one offering up to six hours of CME credit for an unlimited number of health professionals.

Earlier this year, the activity was awarded the bronze medal in the CME category at the international conference of the Health Sciences Communications Association in Seattle.

The Alliance for Continuing Medical Education is the international association for CME professionals. The award will be presented Jan. 25 at the Alliance's 2006 annual CME provider conference in San Francisco. ★



# *Business Press* names Franks Great Woman of Texas

Susan Franks, PhD, associate professor of family medicine and psychology, has been named a 2005 Great Woman of Texas by the *Fort Worth Business Press*.

Each year, the *Fort Worth Business Press* honors women in the Fort Worth area as Great Women of Texas. Women are nominated for the honor and cho-

sen based on their accomplishments and volunteerism.

The *Business Press* will honor Dr. Franks and its other Great Women at a banquet Nov. 16.

Check out Dr. Franks' diary about her experiences as a volunteer during the relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina at [www.hsc.unt.edu/katrina](http://www.hsc.unt.edu/katrina). ★



*Susan Franks, PhD*

## NIH awards \$7 million grant to HSC

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Exploratory Centers, will be funded for five years, from 2005 to 2010, by NIH's National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

At the end of the five years, Dr. Vishwanatha said he hopes to apply for a comprehensive center grant, further establishing the health science center as a leader in addressing minority health-care issues.

The objectives of the newly created center, located at the health science center, will be to foster existing relationships and develop new relationships with underrepresented minority institutions by providing opportunities for minority students and faculty from these institutions to perform health disparity research, Dr. Vishwanatha said.

The grant will also promote educating students, healthcare practitioners and policy makers on the existence of health disparities and the need to combat the problem, he said. The EXPORT Center will also serve as a resource for minority communities in North Texas by disseminating health information, promoting community participation in health education and research, and implementing disease prevention activities.

Dr. Vishwanatha said the center will focus on research in areas where

health disparities exist for minorities in North Texas, such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, stroke and HIV.

The center will have four administrative cores headed by investigators at the health science center. Dr. Vishwanatha will lead the administrative core that oversees the entire grant.

Michael Smith, PhD, professor and chair of integrative physiology, will serve as director of the research core. He will also work with an external research advisory committee to help determine what research projects should be funded with the \$7.25 million.

Adela Gonzalez, PhD, MPA, vice president for community affairs and institutional diversity, will serve as director of the community outreach and information dissemination core.

Robert Kaman, PhD, JD, associate dean in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and director of outreach, and Bruce Dubin, DO, JD, associate dean for academic affairs in the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, will serve as co-directors of the training and mentoring core.

A call for applications for pilot projects to be funded through the EXPORT Center is scheduled to go out in early November. The first round of funded projects will likely begin

immediately thereafter, Dr. Vishwanatha said.

A conference that will address health disparities among minorities is tentatively scheduled for the summer of 2006, and the first group of researchers from underrepresented minority institutions will begin training in the spring of 2006, along with the first group of minority students.

Dr. Vishwanatha said he hopes that the EXPORT Center will provide much needed research opportunities on health disparities and an opportunity to recruit minority health professionals in an effort to understand and eliminate health disparities among minority populations.

Since the combined minority populations of Texas surpassed the non-Hispanic white population in 2004, the issue of health disparities among minority populations will continue to be an issue. By the year 2026, the Hispanic population is projected to become the majority population in Texas.

"Here at UNT Health Science Center, we've worked throughout Tarrant County to help eliminate health disparities and recruit more underrepresented minority students into our student body," Dr. Blanck said. "This center will expand on the work that we've already been doing." ★

# Vroman exhibit brings art, science together

Few people can claim as long and prolific a career as Leo Vroman, PhD. The Dutch poet, research scientist, artist, sculptor, illustrator and cartoonist has spent most of his 90 years making his mark, and he still continues even today.

The health science center's Atrium Gallery will feature some of Dr. Vroman's works Oct. 31 through Nov. 30. The exhibit, "Connections: Art, Poetry, Science and Religion," reflects Dr. Vroman's belief that all of those subjects are interconnected. A reception for Dr. Vroman will take place Saturday, Nov. 5, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Atrium.

When Dr. Vroman began studying biology and "doodling" as a young man in the Netherlands, he never thought it would take him where he has been. As a young man during World War II, Dr. Vroman fled his home and left his fiancée, Tineke Sanders, who was a medical student at the time, to escape Hitler's German invasion.

Little did he know that his life in Indonesia, where he became a lab assistant at a medical school and wrote cartoon strips, would result in incarceration when he became a prisoner of the Japanese. He did not see his fiancée again for more than seven years.

Some of his works that will be on display in the Atrium Gallery include tiny carvings he made for his fiancée using a small piece of wire while he was in the Japanese prisoner of war camp. His carvings show great detail and thought, as complete worlds come to life on a tropical nut, no larger than a nickel.

Later, when Dr. Vroman moved to New York, his fiancée joined him; they were married, and she assisted him in his research until their first daughter, Geraldine, was born. Dr. Vroman continued his research, his art and his poetry.

Many of his scientific ideas are expressed in poems and are best illustrated in some of his original drawings,



*The Atrium Gallery will exhibit the works of Leo Vroman, pictured above holding one of his smallest sculptures, Oct. 31 through Nov. 30.*

including the Vroman Effect (the sequential absorption of blood proteins), which has motivated and influenced how scientists and physicians view blood and material interactions ever since its inception.

During that time, Tineke Vroman earned her doctorate in medical anthropology.

A few years before moving to Fort Worth, Dr. Vroman took the opportunity during his daily commute between Brooklyn and Columbia University to draw surrealistic scenes using a ballpoint pen.

Dr. Vroman has presented several lectures throughout the United States as an artist and a scientist, but he is best known as a research scientist in the United States. Among his native Dutch, he's best known for his poetry and prose, as well as his art. Some of his poetry has been translated into several languages.

Today, Dr. Vroman makes his home near his daughter, Peggy Gracy, wife of Robert Gracy, PhD, associate

vice president for research alliance development and professor of molecular biology and immunology at the health science center.

Some of Dr. Vroman's cartoon strips, latest computer-generated artwork, and works published in several books, including some books of poetry, will be featured in the Atrium Gallery.

Dr. Vroman's views about life can be summarized in the conclusions he wrote for his exhibit:

"I am aware of at least seven times that my life was saved in most amazing ways, all of them too involved to print here, and I know that my few discoveries were made by amazing serendipity. I have no right to call these events miracles until I can prove that my life and works benefited mankind, and that we humans have benefited this earth since we evolved."

Signed copies of some of Dr. Vroman's works will be available for sale to benefit the UNTHSC Foundation Art Fund and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation. ★



# PA thrives on caring for patients, students, family

One of Laurie Hill's main priorities each day is to make sure that everyone around her, including her patients and students, are comfortable and at ease.

Hill, PA-C, MHS, said her office, often described as comfortable and homey, sometimes becomes a haven for students who are stressed out about school or having personal problems.

"The box of tissue is always close at hand in my office," she said.

And her caring nature toward others is one of the reasons she received this year's Health Care Heroes award given by the *Fort Worth Business Press*.

Hill, an assistant professor of physician assistant studies and a PA in surgery, splits her time between teaching and working at the health science center and providing care at The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders as part of a collaboration between the cancer center and the health science center.

She said she rarely has a free moment to herself between seeing patients and students.

"If I wake up in the morning before everyone else in the house does, I have a little bit of time to myself, but that doesn't happen all the time," she said. "I know that it's going to be a good day when I wake up and my husband has a pot of coffee made for me."

Hill said she always had an interest in medicine but thought she would be a physical therapist until she talked to a PA while living in Connecticut.

After listening to the PA talk about his job and the things he got to do every day, she decided that she would pursue a career as a PA.

"I listened, and I just knew that was what I wanted to do with my life," she said.

Hill attended Texas Tech University for some undergraduate work and earned a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from Southern Connecticut State University. She earned a dual master's degree in health sciences and physician assistant studies and received



Laurie Hill, PA-C, MHS

her PA license from Quinnipiac College in Connecticut.

Hill was certified by the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants in 1996 and completed a PA residency in surgery at Norwalk Hospital in the Yale University School of Medicine's program.

When Hill first moved to Fort Worth, she provided pre-and post-operative care for patients and assisted neurosurgeons in the operating room at the Center for Neurological Disorders.

Hill began working at the health science center in 2002.

One of her favorite parts of the week is when she gets to work with cancer patients at The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders.

Located at 800 W. Magnolia in Fort Worth, the center offers community cancer care through a multidisciplinary team of medical oncologists, radiation oncologists, hematologists, pathologists, radiologists, researchers,

nurse specialists, dieticians and social service professionals.

In addition to providing health care to the patients at the center, Hill can often be seen giving them hugs or talking to them about her family. Some of them even call her endearing titles, such as "baby" and "honey."

"Working with the cancer patients is probably one of the best parts of my job," she said. "They really appreciate anything you can do to help them, because basically, after you tell them they have been diagnosed with cancer, you are now taking their life away from them and putting them on a different course. Instead of being able to go on that vacation next week like they might have

planned, they now have to go see more doctors and take more tests."

Hill is also involved in community service and has served on committees for charities and professional organizations, such as the American Cancer Society and the Texas Association of Physician Assistants.

When she does get a spare moment during the day, Hill can be found knitting scarves for her students, reading, weaving and making her own jewelry.

"I made these myself," she said, showing off her turquoise earrings.

After leaving work, Hill returns home to prepare dinner and spend time with her 4-year-old son, Ryan; her 2-year-old daughter, Sydney; and her husband, Lee.

She said her life can be a little stressful sometimes, but it's the stress of juggling her job and spending time with her family that keeps Hill going.

"At the end of the day, I wouldn't have it any other way." ★

# Hurricane Katrina: A medical student's perspective

*Matt Jones, TCOM 2006, predoctoral fellow in manipulative medicine, shares his experiences and observations as a disaster relief volunteer in Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina.*

There are very few programs that allow as much student-directed learning as I have experienced as a predoctoral fellow in the Department of Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine.

The most recent case-in-point was provided by the devastation and consequential medical needs brought by Hurricane Katrina. When the call went out for medical personnel at all levels to assist in Louisiana, my recent training in disaster relief meant that I could assist without hesitation.

The government has worked with the Salvation Army and the Southern Baptist Convention of Texas to train volunteers for disaster response according to federal guidelines. Since I have been through both the basic and managerial levels of the Southern Baptist Convention of Texas' disaster relief training, I have been given a government issued ID to enter disaster areas. This meant that I could pass checkpoints on the road to New Orleans when others were turned back.

First of all, it is important to note the chasm between what I expected to find in Louisiana and the reality.

I anticipated serving under physicians trained in disaster relief as they addressed the healthcare challenges of evacuees, as well as the civilians who stayed behind. I pictured something akin to a MASH-style emergency department.

However, by the time I arrived in Louisiana on Sept. 7, there were few survivors left in the worst hit areas, and many evacuees had left Louisiana altogether. I was assigned to oversee the health needs of the hundreds of volunteers who prepared, transported and served thousands of meals daily in New Orleans and the surrounding areas.



*Matt Jones, pictured above with Captain Brinkley (left), learned some unexpected lessons during his experiences in Louisiana.*

The first day my duties included several blood pressure checks, a few skillfully placed adhesive bandages, and many rumors of death and disease successfully extinguished. All in all, I was ready to come home. I didn't think this work justified my absence from my studies at TCOM.

However, that first evening, I was asked to participate in a Southern Baptist Convention of Texas/Salvation Army leadership meeting that revealed the most important reasons for my presence in Louisiana.

Disasters are inherently dramatic; so are our reactions to them. Our leadership meeting revealed just how dangerous rumors and exaggeration can be in a disaster.

Though I had come expecting the rush of emergency medicine, I found the greatest need among the disciplines of public health, preventive medicine and the simple but solid education that takes place between a primary care physician and his or her patient.

For instance, the media's mistaken claim that cholera had overtaken New Orleans (*vibrio vulniferus* did kill three) had the SBC and Salvation

Army taking expensive and time-consuming measures to sterilize the tires of our trucks as they returned from New Orleans, while the area for food preparation lacked adequate toilet and hand-washing facilities.

I discovered individuals among our ranks who were volunteering despite congestive heart

failure, out-of-control diabetes, and even one very recent round of chemotherapy! To make matters worse, we didn't even know where to find the nearest hospital.

As a result of the meeting, I instituted some immediate rules for our facility, and submitted a six-page report, including recommendations, to the SBC and Salvation Army.

In disaster relief, there are so many essential tasks that need full attention; the SBC welcomed the opportunity to have someone devoted to health concerns.

Our leadership meeting uncovered another misconception that would become a theme of my trip. No matter how often I corrected my colleagues in disaster relief, they insisted that I was "Dr. Jones." Many among the SBC and Salvation Army volunteers in particular were enamored with the novelty of having "their own doctor." So much so that they insisted that I take a trip, at my earliest convenience, to "assess the medical situation in New Orleans."

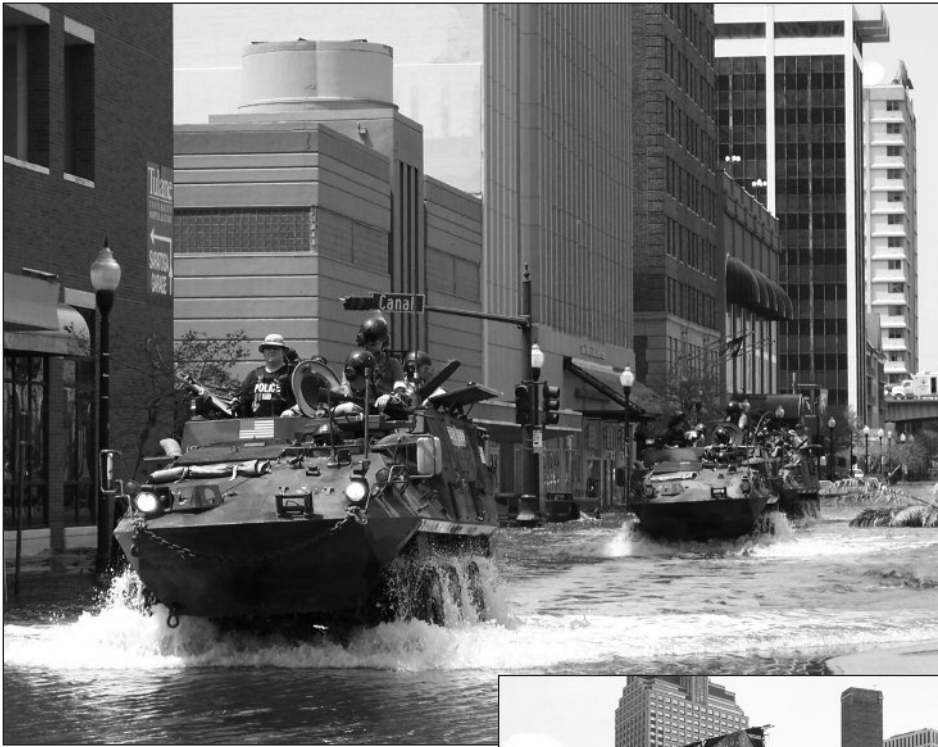
As ridiculous as this sounds, I complied, desperate to work under a physician's authority.

*Continued on page 11*



# Hurricane Katrina: A medical student's perspective

*continued from page 10*



There is very little that I can say about New Orleans that has not already been said. However, from a medical perspective, the rumors and hyperbole were all the more grandiose. I even had New Orleans police ask if people were really dying of Ebola, and I heard reports of 30,000 dead.

It was in New Orleans that I found my most exciting medical opportunities of the trip. As you may have seen, the Sheraton downtown was the staging ground for many of the New Orleans relief efforts.

On the first floor of that hotel, the gift shop and café had been transformed into a medical clinic and pharmacy. This quickly became my favorite place to volunteer in my almost daily trips to New Orleans.

On Friday evening, Sept. 9, as the United States Public Health Service took over the Sheraton clinic from civilian volunteers, I was approached by Captain Brinkley, the officer in charge.

A nurse practitioner himself, he was expecting a physician from the USPHS to take over the operation, but a physician had not shown up. A replacement

medical technicians were all at my disposal (many of them with decades more experience than me!) for support.

So with a “Your country thanks you,” from Brinkley, the “ship” was mine.

My new post warranted my own room in the Sheraton and a ride to meet the medical crew aboard the USS Iwo Jima. In this case, even the doctors called me “doctor.”

Over the next 48 hours, I treated dog bites and volume depletion, which were eventually sent to the Iwo Jima; sprains and strains; rashes; and diarrhea, and I oversaw hundreds of vaccinations. In short, I had the time of my life.

As I look back, I am still struggling with the role I was asked to play

and the pedestal so many placed me upon, even as a student. I am wrestling with the realities of a new position in society with profound responsibility and expectations.

I am also realizing that the most enduring work of my trip will probably prove to be my six pages of simple recommendations to the SBC and Salvation Army for future disaster preparation. I was honored to have worked with them. This trip will

stay with me for a very long time.

There are lessons to be learned from so many dimensions, much like the entire Hurricane Katrina experience. Like many others, I am seeking answers about my responsibility among the poor, so that they do not get left behind again. These are lessons and challenges that may never leave me. This was certainly the opportunity of a lifetime. ★



*Photos taken by Matt Jones while volunteering in New Orleans.*

would arrive on Monday. Until that time, he observed that I was the most highly trained individual in the clinic. Would I be willing to run the clinic for him until Monday?

He met my every objection: the pharmacy has everything you need; no need to panic, the USS Iwo Jima is right down the street if you need to transfer cases to their hospital; the USPHS nurses and civilian emergency



# Faculty Advances

**Alakananda Basu, PhD**, professor of molecular biology and immunology, is senior author of the paper “Enhancement of Cisplatin Sensitivity of Cisplatin-Resistant Human Cervical Carcinoma Cells by Bryostatins 1,” published in the September issue of the journal *Clinical Cancer Research*. **Sanghamitra Mohanty, MS**, GSBS 2000, is first author, and **Jie Huang**, senior research assistant in molecular biology immunology, is co-author.

**Roberto Cardarelli, DO, MPH**, assistant professor of family medicine, has been selected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

**Daisha Cipher, PhD**, assistant professor of biostatistics, is co-author of the paper “Assessing Dysfunctional Behaviors in Long-term Care,” published in the September issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*.

**Alberto Coustasse, MD, DrPH, MBA**, research associate in the dean’s office, School of Public Health; **Adela Gonzalez, PhD, MPA**, vice president for community affairs and institutional diversity and assistant professor of health management and policy; and **Fernando Treviño, PhD, MPH**, dean of the School of Public Health, presided over sessions at the Second Conference on Aging in the Americas: Key Issues in Hispanic Health and Health Care Policy Research held Sept. 22 at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin. **Drs. Treviño and Coustasse** presided over “Health Insurance and Access to Acute and Long-term Care Services Among Hispanics,” and **Dr. Gonzalez** presided over “Exploring the Health Consequences of Hispanic Mortality.”

**John Licciardone, DO, MS, MBA**, professor of manipulative medicine and director of clinical research for the Osteopathic Research Center; **Angela Brimhall, DO/MS** student and predoctoral clinical research fellow in family medicine; and **Linda King, MLS**, former reference librarian at the Gibson D. Lewis Health Science Library, published the paper “Osteopathic manipulative treatment for low back pain: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials” in the Aug. 4 open-access journal *BMC-Musculoskeletal Disorders*. The paper, which has received BioMed Central’s “highly accessed” designation, can be viewed at <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2474/6/43>.

**Francisco Soto Mas, MD, PhD, MPH**, assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences, is co-author of the paper “Assessing the readiness and training needs of non-urban

physicians in public health emergency and response,” published in the October-December issue of *Disaster Management and Response*, the journal of the Emergency Nurses Association. **Chiehwen Ed Hsu, PhD, MPH**, former assistant professor of health management and policy, currently with the Department of Public and Community Health, University of Maryland, College Park; **Holly Jacobson, PhD**, former research assistant professor of social and behavioral sciences and director of the HIMAL Program; and **Ella Nkhoma, MPH, SPH 2004**, doctoral student in epidemiology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, are co-authors. Richard Papenfuss, PhD, associate professor of health promotion at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and James Zoretic, MD, MPH, medical director of the Texas Department of State Health Services, Region 2 and 3, are also co-authors.

**Robert Wordinger, PhD**, professor and chair of cell biology and genetics, is co-author of the paper “Influence of cyclical mechanical stress on extracellular matrix gene expression in human lamina cribrosa cells in vitro” published online Sept. 23 in volume 11 of *Molecular Vision*. Ruaidhri Kirwan, MD, and Colm O’Brien, MD, of the Conway Institute of Biomolecular and Biomedical Research and the Institute of Ophthalmology, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland, are co-authors. Abe Clark, PhD, director of glaucoma research, Alcon Research Ltd., is also a co-author.

**Thomas Yorio, PhD**, vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, has been awarded a five-year grant for almost \$2 million from the National Eye Institute for “Glucocorticoids, Ocular Hypertension and Glaucoma.” **Xinyu Zhang, PhD**, research scientist in pharmacology and neuroscience; Abe Clark, PhD, director of glaucoma research, Alcon Research Ltd.; and Lee Alward, MD, vice chair, professor of ophthalmology, University of Iowa, are co-investigators. **Dr. Yorio** was also a keynote speaker at the Ninth International Conference on Endothelin, held Sept. 11-14 in Park City, Utah. He presented “Endothelins and the Eye, Emerging Concepts.” **Dr. Yorio** was the first ocular researcher invited to speak at this annual conference. He has also been asked to be on the organizing committee for this international meeting. In addition, **Dr. Yorio** spoke at the 39th Turkish Ophthalmology Society Meeting, held Sept. 17-21 in Antalya, Turkey. He spoke in a special symposia co-sponsored by the European Vision and Eye Research group, the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology and the Turkish Ophthalmology Society. ★