

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

Friday, October 5, 2012

First-Year Med Students Receive White Coats



Freshman medical students at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine received their first white coats, the traditional dress of physicians for more than 100 years, at the White Coat Ceremony on Oct. 1, 2012.

In the past, the White Coat Ceremony was held as medical students entered their junior year. However, changes in USA's curriculum pushed up the ceremony to coincide with earlier clinic hours.

[Click here](#) to view the story on al.com.

To view more photos from the ceremony, [click here](#).

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Chaplains Provide Spiritual Healing for Patients

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The USA Medical Center is now the home to two chaplains who work with patients voluntarily through spiritual treatment and care. A chaplain's primary goal is to provide spiritual support in the hospital environment to patients, family members, and staff upon request. They are available to provide assistance for people who may be struggling with religious issues or in need of counseling during a time of crisis or death.

Although the chaplains follow their own individual faiths, their purpose is to allow the patient and family to define their own spirituality and set the agenda for the conversation. They aim to practice ministry with a non-denominational perspective in order to reach out and help as many people as possible.

Tyree Richburg, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Mobile, says he has been working voluntarily at USA Medical Center for more than 15 years. Richburg reads passages of scripture with people and many times deals with terminally ill patients or the families of someone who has recently passed. "When I am called to the hospital, I ask the Lord to give me scripture that these people need because every situation is different," he said. "I try to help them accept what has happened, not explain it, because no one fully understands the meaning of His ways."

Although he does not receive monetary payment for his work at USA, Richburg says his work is very rewarding. "Your pay comes from above and from doing what we believe the Lord would have us do," he says. "What better reward could you have?"

Richburg received training at Alabama Inter-Domination Seminary and graduated with a master's in theology and an honorary doctorate degree. He also attended the Tuskegee Institute, now known as Tuskegee University, and finished his bachelor's degree in criminal justice at the University of South Alabama in 1973. Previously, he worked in law enforcement in the Mobile area for 40 years, worked for the Justice Department under the Carter Administration and served in the United States Navy during WWII. Richburg and his wife will celebrate their 60th anniversary this year.

Walter Staggs, an ordained minister, joined the USA Medical Center as a volunteer chaplain last May. He works five days a week, eight hours a day on a volunteer basis. Although he is a C.P.A. with both a law and accounting degree from the University of Alabama, Staggs says being a chaplain is his calling.

Staggs graduated with a master's degree in chaplaincy from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He has a wide variety of experience as a hospital chaplain and is the author of *The Healing Ministry of the Church*. He is also a member of Billy Graham's Rapid Response Team, a ministry of crisis trained volunteer chaplains who deploy in the aftermath of a disaster to respond to the emotional and spiritual needs of people in crisis.

He primarily works in the ER as a trauma chaplain ministering in a wide variety of situations with patients and relatives in crisis and loss, as well as emotional strains of loneliness, guilt, and anger. "I am available here at the hospital to administer the spiritual needs of families, patients, and staff to give comfort to anyone who needs it."

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Other services provided by the chaplains include giving the Lord's Supper and performing baptism services. They have also performed marriages upon request in the hospital. Many times they are simply available to contact a patient's pastor when their services are needed and provide comfort and support until that person arrives.

"We do this because we love God and people," says Richburg. "We have to have an attitude of gratitude, and the best way you show it is through how you treat others with love, loyalty, and devotion."

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Harvard Dean for Diversity and Community Partnership to Present Lecture at USA



The University of South Alabama College of Medicine's Office of Diversity and Cultural Competence is hosting a Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural Awareness lecture.

Dr. Joan Reede, dean for diversity and community partnership and director of the minority faculty development program at Harvard University, will be the guest speaker.

The lecture, titled "Diversity Inclusion: Building Capacity for Excellence," will take place Oct. 10, 2012, at 4 p.m. in the allied health auditorium (AHP 1012) at the Health Sciences Building on USA's main campus.

Dr. Reede was appointed as the first dean for diversity and community partnership at Harvard University in January 2002. She is responsible for the development and management of a comprehensive program that provides leadership, guidance, and support to promote the increased recruitment, retention, and advancement of under-represented minority faculty at Harvard Medical School (HMS).

In 1990, Dr. Reede founded the HMS Minority Faculty Development Program and currently serves as faculty director of the Community Outreach Programs. In 2008, she became the director of the Harvard Catalyst Program for Faculty Development and Diversity. In addition, Dr. Reede holds the appointments of associate professor of medicine at HMS, associate professor of society, human development, and health at the Harvard School of Public Health, and assistant in health policy at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Over the past 20 years, Dr. Reede created and developed more than 20 programs at HMS that aim to address pipeline and leadership issues for minorities and women who are interested in careers in medicine, academic and scientific research, and the healthcare professions.

Dr. Reede graduated from Brown University and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She completed her pediatric residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md., and a fellowship in child psychiatry at Children's Hospital Boston. She holds an MPH and an MS in health policy and management from Harvard School of Public Health, and an MBA from Boston University. To learn more about Dr. Reede, [click here](#).

For more information about the lecture, contact Chante' Hendrix at chendrix@usouthal.edu or (251) 470-5895.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:21 AM](#) No comments:

Dr. Gerald Liu Selected to Participate in Grant Generating Project

Dr. Gerald Liu, assistant professor of family medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, was recently selected to participate in the Grant Generating Project with the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine's Department of Family Medicine.

Eleven scholars from across the country were selected to participate in the year-long program designed to equip and mentor family medicine researchers with grant writing skills.

The goal of the fellowship is to increase research capacity in securing competitive funding for grants and contracts in the discipline of family medicine.



Dr. Liu earned his medical degree from Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans in 2008. From 2008-2009, he was a resident in the surgery residency program at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, Mich. Dr. Liu conducted a residency in family medicine at USA, where he also served as chief resident of family medicine from 2011-2012. Dr. Liu joined the USA College of Medicine as an assistant professor of family medicine in July 2012.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [10:21 AM](#) No comments:

Next Week's DSS - Dr. Ravindranath



The next Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will feature Dr. Vijayalakshmi Ravindranath, professor and chair of the Centre for Neuroscience at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.

The lecture, titled "The Degenerating Brain: Mechanisms to Therapy," will take place Oct. 11, 2012, at 4 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Building auditorium on USA's main campus.

Dr. Ravindranath's research focuses on understanding pathogenic mechanisms underlying neurodegenerative disorders with a goal to discover drug targets that can be used to develop disease-modifying therapies.

Dr. Ravindranath obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Mysore in 1981. In 1986, after completing her postdoctoral training at the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health in the United States, she joined the Department of Neurochemistry at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, (NIMHANS) in Bangalore.

In 1999, the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India asked her to help establish the National Brain Research Centre (NBRC), an autonomous institution of DBT, Ministry of Science and Technology as a centre of excellence and to coordinate and network neuroscience research groups in the country. She continued as Director of NBRC until May 2009 and then accepted the position of professor and chair of the newly created Centre for Neuroscience at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.

During her tenure as Director of NBRC, she provided visionary leadership, and in a very short period attained a position of being an internationally acclaimed centre of excellence. In a short span of five years, Dr. Ravindranath established

a state-of-the-art institute in a rather remote location and created a new paradigm for research by integrating mathematical and computational science into the understanding of complex biological systems.

NBRC was granted University status in May 2002 to help promote human resource development in an inter-disciplinary manner. Dr. Ravindranath networked 45 institutions around the country with NBRC with a goal to share resources and promote neuroscience.

Dr. Ravindranath is elected fellow for all three science academies in the country, namely Indian National Science Academy; Indian Academy of Sciences; and National Academy of Sciences, India. She is also a fellow of the National Academy of Medical Sciences, India; Indian Academy of Neurosciences; and Third World Academy of Sciences. She is a recipient of the prestigious S.S. Bhatnagar award (1996), Omprakash Bhasin Award (2001), J.C. Bose National Fellowship (2006), and Padma Shri (2010).

For more information on Dr. Ravindranath, [click here](#).

To learn more about the lecture series visit
<http://www.usahealthsystem.com/DSS>

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