

# Med School Watercooler

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

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

## USA Medical Students Make a Difference in Rwanda



The Christian Medical Ministry of South Alabama (CMMSA) returned March 12 from a medical mission trip to Rwanda, Africa. The group, including 11 University of South Alabama medical students and six physicians, spent a month working at Kibogora Hospital in Eastern Rwanda. The hospital is roughly a 230-bed self-supported facility that has two operating rooms and wards for internal medicine, pediatrics, surgery, and obstetrics and gynecology.

The physicians on the trip included Dr. Carl Albertson, retired private orthopaedic surgeon; Dr. Jon Simmons, USA general surgeon; Dr. Richard Whitehurst, USA

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neonatologist; Dr. Alana Schilthuis, USA internal medicine chief resident; Dr. Gwen DeLeon, USA surgery resident; and Dr. Jeremy Drake, USA surgery resident.

While in Rwanda, medical students were able to directly help patients in the area and receive hands-on experience. "We were able to perform about 35 operative procedures each week," said Dr. Simmons, who has previously traveled to Cameroon, Ghana and Rwanda on medical missions.

For fourth-year USA medical student Stephanie Stopka, her most rewarding experience stemmed from a frightened and timid 7-year-old boy who came to the emergency department with a septic hip. He was unable to walk and upon examination, was even more ill than they thought. "As I began taking over his care, I learned more than I expected," said Stopka, "and I think he did too."

Stopka said she had to examine her patient while encouraging him and his mother -- who never left his side -- to smile and laugh.

"I went from dreading our daily visit -- because I didn't want to scare him -- to being excited to check up on him as he began to trust me," she said. "I continually gained his mother's trust and appreciation as she saw my concern and the time I'd spend with him."

Days after visiting with her young patient, Stopka was in one of the surgical wards when she saw a boy walking down the aisle with a walker. "I didn't know of a boy on this ward who was using a walker," she said. "When I looked more closely, it was my friend! Yesterday he was bedridden on oxygen in the intensive care unit and now he was walking and putting weight on his hip we had treated," she said.

It was at that moment Stopka realized she was making a difference. "Despite all of the frustrations of language barriers, cultural differences and fears of safety, the entire trip became worth it at that exact moment. I was doing what God had called me into medicine for -- to help patients."

Dr. Simmons said each student and resident on the trip was influenced in a positive way, which he believes will translate to a more compassionate and caring physician in the future.

"A simple gesture of kindness -- such as holding the hand of a child or praying with a mother -- can be encouraging and inspire hope in otherwise dire circumstances," he said. "These types of interactions are perfect examples of the power and influence of a compassionate physician, which is exactly the type of physician that we are trying to produce at USA."

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## Faculty and Students to be Honored at Annual Honors Convocation



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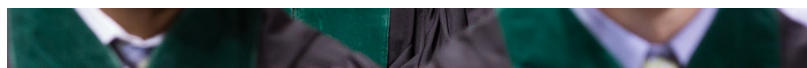
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This year's College of Medicine Honors Convocation for the Class of 2014 will be held May 9, 2014, at 7 p.m. at the USA Mitchell Center.

Doctoral hoods, along with the student honors, will be awarded to the medical students at Honors Convocation. Faculty will be honored by the students as well. The seniors selected those members of the faculty who had the most meaningful impact on their medical education, and for their positive influence, the faculty selected will wear a red sash over their academic regalia

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## Office of Diversity and Cultural Competence Host Pre-Med Advisors Conference



From left: Dr. Samuel Strada, dean of the USA College of Medicine; Dr. Karen Mitchell, senior director of admissions testing services at AAMC; Dr. Geoffrey Young, senior director of student affairs and student programs at AAMC; Chante' Hendrix, diversity coordinator at USA; Dr. Johnson Haynes Jr., professor of internal medicine at USA; and Dr. Ronald Franks, vice president for health sciences at USA.

The University of South Alabama College of Medicine's Office of Diversity and Cultural Competence hosted its first Pre-Med Advisors Conference on April 11, 2014. The inaugural event was held in partnership with the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC).

The conference theme, "Navigating a Successful Pathway to Medical School," reflects the university's commitment to strengthening communication, outreach, and access to the USA College of Medicine by way of colleges and universities across the state and region.

Conference highlights included an update on the new format of the 2015 Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) given by Dr. Karen J. Mitchell, senior director of admissions testing services at AAMC; and an update on the Holistic Review Project by Dr. Geoffrey H. Young, senior director of student affairs and student programs at AAMC. Conference participants engaged in dialog with USA College of Medicine faculty and staff on the changing trends in medical education ranging from team based learning to admission requirements, and funding a medical education.

Tours of the College of Medicine Clinical Skills Lab and the Health Sciences Simulation Lab were provided, and a medical student panel was assembled to allow pre-med advisors to gain insight from a student's perspective on the journey and transition from undergraduate to medical school.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at 3:25 PM No comments:

## Med School Café - Expert Advice for the Community



Last week, Dr. Clara Massey, professor of internal medicine and director of the division of cardiology at the University of South Alabama, presented the April Med School Café lecture. The lecture, titled "Advancing Cardiovascular Care in Women with Breast Cancer," had a total of 32 attendees.

Dr. Massey gave an update from the American College of Cardiology's 8th Annual Heart of Women's Health Symposium that took place in January.

Watch the video below or [click here](#) to view the lecture in its entirety.

The next Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Anne-Marie Kaulfers, assistant professor of pediatrics at the USA College of Medicine and a pediatric endocrinologist with USA Physicians Group. The lecture will take place May 20, 2014.

If you are interested in attending, email [kepartridge@usouthal.edu](mailto:kepartridge@usouthal.edu) for more details. To learn more about the lectures, [click here](#).

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[Advancing Cardiovascular Care for Women with Breast Cancer from USA Health System on Vimeo.](#)



Posted by Med School Watercooler at [12:22 PM](#) No comments:

**Tuesday, May 6, 2014**

## Dr. Hattie Myles Appointed to Alabama A&M University Board of Trustees



In March, Alabama Governor Dr. Robert Bentley appointed Dr. Hattie Myles to the Board of Trustees for Alabama Agriculture and Mechanical University in Normal, Ala.

Dr. Myles joined the University of South Alabama College of Medicine in 1992 and currently serves as assistant dean for student affairs and educational enrichment at the USA College of Medicine. A champion of higher education, she has worked for the past 34 years at various university administrative posts to inspire students and reduce educational disparities - especially those for underrepresented and disadvantaged students.

"I was the first in my family to go to college," said Dr. Myles, who grew up in rural Mississippi. "With the encouragement and support of my family, higher education transformed my life."

According to Dr. Myles, she's enthusiastic about being part of the leadership at Alabama A&M. "As I have at each step in my career, I look forward to using my

passion for education to help and inspire students while advocating on their behalf.”

At USA, Dr. Myles has been an integral investigator for the Pipeline Program at the Center for Healthy Communities, as well as principal investigator for the Summer Research Apprenticeship Program grant and the Health Careers Opportunity Program grant.

Early in her life, Dr. Myles made a personal decision to improve her life through education – a lesson she shares with passion with her students. After graduating from high school as the class valedictorian, she earned her associate’s degree from Southwest Mississippi Junior College in Summit, and her bachelor’s degree from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Miss.

Her educational career continued in 1978, as she earned her master’s degree in education from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La., and her doctorate in higher education administration and student personnel in 1988 from the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

Between 1979 and 1989, Dr. Myles held multiple positions at Louisiana State University, including assistant coordinator of university relations and community outreach, director of the health careers opportunity program, and academic counselor and veterinary health career development officer.

While living in North Carolina, Dr. Myles served as associate director for health manpower development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also was a grant project consultant for Project Reach to Teach in Durham, N.C., and serves as a grant project evaluator for the Health Careers Opportunity Summer Youth Program at Pembroke State University in Pembroke, N.C., as well as PI for several grants at UNC.

Dr. Myles has been recognized on numerous occasions for her contributions and achievements. She was recognized in 2013 as an outstanding community leader with the Health and Humanitarian Award given by the Gulf Region Organization of Nigerians and Americans. She is also a graduate of both Leadership Mobile and Leadership Alabama.

She has also volunteered her time to local charities, serving on the Allocations Board for the United Way of Southwest Alabama; President of the Greater Mobile Big Brother Big Sister Board; Quality assurance board of Mobile DHHR; and board member of the Mobile YMCA.

Dr. Myles, an “elevational” speaker, markets herself as a steward of humanism, a merchant of hope and a peddler of common sense, delivering motivational and inspirational talks in the areas of education, humanism and spirituality. She speaks across the country at workshops and as a conference key note. She also consults for grant proposal development, implementation and evaluation, as well as project development. She is God-inspired, heart-led and people-motivated.

Alabama A&M University operates in the three-fold function of teaching, research, extension and other public service. It offers baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral level degrees that are compatible with the times to all qualified and capable individuals who are interested in further developing their technical, scientific, professional, and scholastic skills and competencies.

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