

# Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, May 5, 2016

## 'I'm Ready for My Next Adventure:' USA Medical Student Finds Opportunities to Serve Others



In her four years of medical school at the University of South Alabama, one of Olivia Butters' memorable learning experiences happened 8,000 miles away.

Butters was on a medical mission trip to the African country when she visited a home with a man dying of liver cancer. The family lived in a small hut without electricity or running water. Because of the man's illness, he could no longer work in the fields and the burden fell on his wife and children.

"Life is difficult for them, but they are an inspiration," Butters said. "They could choose bitterness – instead they choose joy. How incredible that people with so little to offer in the eyes of the world could teach me so much."

Butters, who graduates this spring, knew she wanted a career "focused on helping people." She got hooked on medicine during her junior year at USA when she took an anatomy class as an undergrad, and throughout medical school has used her resources, education and abilities to help those in need.

She's been on life-changing medical mission trips to minister to the health care and spiritual needs of people in Peru, Honduras and Rwanda. "I'm grateful that I went to a medical school that had opportunities for me to serve others," she said.

She believes it's important for medical students to be involved in volunteer work, specifically mission trips. "On trips I've been on, I've seen people who just don't have a lot," Butters said. "The trips enhanced my medical education by widening my experiences with people of different cultures and improving my ability to make medical decisions in settings with limited resources."

In Peru, Butters joined a team of medical students to provide relief to villagers

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along the Amazon River. At each village, the group set up a clinic – either under a tent or in a building in the pueblos along the river – and provided medical care, eye glasses, prayer, Bibles, gifts and a family photo.

Butters said her favorite experience in Peru was the simple act of washing the locals' feet.

"Most of them who live on the river don't own shoes, and mud gets caked on their feet," she said. "It was a growing opportunity for me to humble myself and be a servant to the beautiful people there. They were so touched that we were getting our hands dirty, and they knew we were there because we loved them."

Butters, who is pursuing a career in pediatrics, said her love for children inspired her to also become involved in "Buddy Ball," a local cause that provides athletic activities for mentally and physically challenged youth. One team in particular, the Braves, is coached by USA College of Medicine students.

Butters, a former diamond girl for USA's baseball team, serves as a "buddy" and assists the players on the field.

"I found this experience to be a wonderful break from studying and a way to enjoy time outdoors with precious children and my classmates," she said.

"If you spend just a few minutes on the field with our team, you will find that our players know the game of baseball," she said. "One thing I have learned is to not underestimate the ability of a child with special needs."

Butters, 26, is originally from Mobile but moved to Montgomery at a young age. She majored in psychology before enrolling in medical school, attracted by the small class sizes.

"It's always been a very welcoming school," she said. "I felt like I could get a more hands-on experience here, and I did."

In 2015, Butters was named to the USA Chapter of the Arnold P. Gold Humanism in Medicine Honor Society. The USA College of Medicine Class of 2016 selected those who have demonstrated excellence in clinical care, leadership, compassion and dedication to service.

After earning her medical degree this Saturday, Butters will begin residency training in pediatrics at the University of Florida-Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Fla. "I've lived in Mobile for nine years now so I'm ready to try something new," she said. "I'm excited – a little nervous, but excited."

Going into medical school, she figured that all of her time would be spent studying and that it would be hard to find time to do anything outside of school. "That honestly wasn't the case," she said. "I spent a lot of time studying, yes. But I've also made some great friendships and I got to go on a lot of adventures while here."

"I'm so grateful for the education that South has given me," she added. "Now, I'm ready for my next adventure."

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [8:41 AM](#) No comments:

Wednesday, May 4, 2016

## Pediatrics Hosting Grand Rounds May 20

Dr. Spencer K. Sullivan, assistant professor in the department of pediatrics at the University of Mississippi, will present "Gene Therapy for Hemophilia" for May's pediatric grand rounds.

The event will take place Friday, May 20, 2016, from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. in the multipurpose room on the first floor of USA Children's & Women's Hospital.

Dr. Sullivan will discuss the biology and history of the adeno-associated (AAV) gene therapy for hemophilia. He will also explain safety and efficacy of AAV gene

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therapy from published results and current research.

The event is open to faculty, staff and students. Light breakfast, coffee and beverages will be provided. For additional information, contact Katie Catlin at [kncatlin@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:kncatlin@health.southalabama.edu).

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [12:15 PM](#) No comments:

## May Med School Café - 'Stressed Out? When to See Your Doctor'

The May Med School Café lecture will feature Dr. Thomas Leytham, a family medicine physician at University Physicians Group, a primary care practice located on the University of South Alabama Commons campus.

His lecture, titled "Stressed Out? When to See Your Doctor," will take place May 17, 2016, at the USA Faculty Club on USA's main campus. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m., and the presentation begins at noon.

Dr. Leytham will lecture on the importance of recognizing the negative effects stress can have on your health and how to assess when it might be time to seek medical help when confronted with stress.



Dr. Leytham grew up in Mobile and graduated from Greystone Christian School. He earned two bachelor's degrees and his medical degree from USA. Dr. Leytham completed his residency in family practice at Eglin Regional USAF Hospital, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

The Med School Café lecture and lunch are provided free of charge, but reservations are required. For more information or to make reservations, call Kim Partridge at (251) 460-7770 or e-mail [kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:kepartridge@health.southalabama.edu).

Med School Café is a free community lecture series sponsored by the USA Physicians Group. Each month, faculty from the USA College of Medicine share their expertise on a specific medical condition, providing insight on the latest treatment available.

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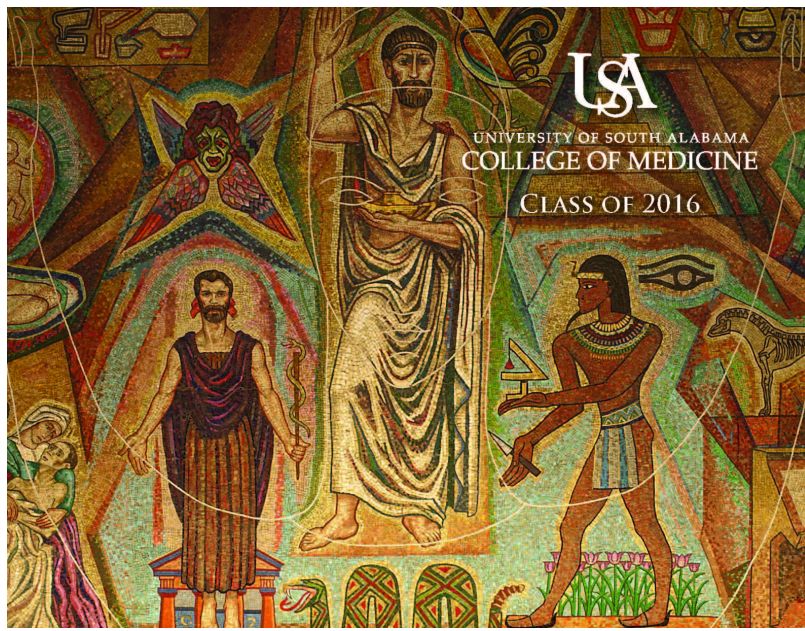
**Monday, May 2, 2016**

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

Each spring, the University of South Alabama College of Medicine recognizes students for their academic achievements at the annual Honors Convocation ceremony.

This year's College of Medicine Honors Convocation for the Class of 2016 will be held May 6, 2016, 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.



Dr. Charles Rodning, professor of surgery at the USA College of Medicine, will deliver the address to the class.

A reception for students, guests, and faculty will follow.

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