

# Med School Watercooler

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

Friday, September 2, 2011

## Board of Trustees Visits USA Children's & Women's Hospital

Members of the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees visited the USA Children's & Women's Hospital this week. The tour included visits to the USS Hope and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.



Dr. Felicia Wilson (center), associate professor of pediatrics at the USA College of Medicine, gives a tour of the USS Hope, a cancer and sickle cell treatment center that uses "distraction therapy" to give young patients the feeling of traveling in a submarine during their visit. It is the only facility of its kind in the region. The USS Hope features bright and cheerful colors, comfortable seating, televisions/computers, and exotic fish tanks to help relieve patient and family anxieties. Also pictured, from left: Owen Bailey, Children's & Women's Hospital Administrator; John Peek, Board of Trustees member; and Kenneth O. Simon, Board of Trustees member.

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## Five USA Physicians Named 'Top Doctors'

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[Five USA Physicians Named 'Top Doctors'](#)



From left to right: Dr. Michael Finan, professor and chief of the gynecologic and oncology division at the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute; Dr. William Richards, professor and chair of surgery at the USA College of Medicine; Dr. Arnold Luterman, Ripps-Meisler professor of surgery at the USA College of Medicine; Dr. Johnson Haynes Jr., professor of internal medicine and director of the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center; and Dr. Eddie Reed, clinical director for the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute.

This year, five physicians from the University of South Alabama Physicians Group and USA Mitchell Cancer Institute appear in the Top Doctors directory issued by U.S. News and World Report. They are the only doctors in our region to receive this honor.

USA physicians Drs. Michael Finan, Johnson Haynes Jr, Arnold Luterman, Eddie Reed and William Richards, were each listed among the top physician specialists in the United States. In addition, the report lists Drs. Finan, Haynes and Luterman as being in the top one percent of their peers in their respective specialties.

**Dr. Michael Finan** is professor and chief of the gynecologic and oncology division at the Mitchell Cancer Institute and is a professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the USA College of Medicine. He specializes in the management of cancers of the uterus, cervix, ovaries, and lower genital tract. He is also the first gynecologist in Mobile to perform robotic surgery. Prior to joining USA, Dr. Finan served as the residency program director of gynecologic and oncology and chair of the cancer committee at Ochsner Clinic Foundation in New Orleans.

**Dr. Johnson Haynes Jr.** is a professor of internal medicine and director of the USA Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center. Dr. Haynes also serves as assistant dean for diversity and cultural competence at the USA College of Medicine. His interests are in the research and treatment of sickle cell disease. Dr. Haynes is a graduate of the USA College of Medicine and conducted his residency training at the USA Medical Center. Dr. Haynes completed his clinical fellowship in pulmonary medicine at USA, as well as a fellowship in pulmonary vascular research at the University of Colorado in Denver.

**Dr. Arnold Luterman** is the Ripps-Meisler professor of surgery at the USA College of Medicine and medical director of the USA Burn Center. He is a nationally known burn care expert, and is actively engaged in leading-edge burn and wound treatment and research. He helped establish the USA Burn Center in 1981, and has played a vital role in the care of burn victims in our region for 30 years.

**Dr. Eddie Reed** is the clinical director for the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. He directs clinical programs and continues his research that concentrates on molecular pharmacology and clinical development of novel platinum compounds. His clinical focus is on ovarian cancer and metastatic prostate cancer. Prior to his appointment at USA, Dr. Reed worked at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, where he served as Director of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control.

**Dr. William Richards** serves as professor and chair of surgery at the USA College of Medicine. He directs the Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgery Programs

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at USA and is also a Member surgeon with the USA Mitchell Cancer Institute. Dr. Richards's clinical interests focus on surgical treatment of Achalasia, Paraesophageal Hernias, Barrett's esophagus, Adrenal tumors, Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease, Type 2 diabetes and motility disorders of the gastrointestinal tract using minimally invasive surgical procedures. He has performed thousands of laparoscopic procedures since 1989 and is internationally recognized for his research and surgical expertise in these disorders.

U.S. News Top Doctors was created in collaboration with Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. It draws from their database of America's Top Doctors, all recommended for their clinical skills by other doctors and individually vetted by a physician-led research team. Consumers can search for a Top Doctor by location, hospital affiliation, and a full range of specialties and subspecialties and lists nearly 30,000 peer-nominated physicians across the country.

The selection process for America's Top Doctors is based on a rigorous research process that begins with mail and telephone surveys of board certified physicians. A comprehensive review of the training and credentials of those physicians considered for the inclusion is conducted by the Castle Connolly physician-led research team.

Posted by [Med School Watercooler](#) at [10:17 AM](#) No comments: 

## Clyde Huggins Recipients Announced at 2011 Medical Student Research Day



From left: Dr. Sachin Gupte, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular biology; Zachary Simms, poster presentation winner; Jason Largen, oral presentation winner; and Dr. Richard Honkanen, professor of biochemistry & molecular biology.

The University of South Alabama College of Medicine hosted its 38th annual Medical Student Research Day on Aug. 5, 2011. Dr. Talmadge King, the Julius R. Krevans Distinguished Professor in Internal Medicine and chair of the department of medicine at the University of California in San Francisco, was the keynote speaker.

The Clyde G. "Sid" Huggins Medical Student Research Awards, honoring the memory of Dr. Huggins -- who served as the first dean of students for USA's medical school, were presented to Jason Largen and Zachary Simms.

Largen, a sophomore medical student, was recognized for the best oral presentation, titled "Antisense oligonucleotides of SER/THR protein phosphatase 5 in HELA cells enhances CHK1 and p53 phosphorylation after UV light induced genomic damage." Largen was sponsored by Dr. Richard Honkanen, professor of biochemistry & molecular biology.

Simms, also a sophomore medical student, was honored for the best poster presentation, titled "Glucose-6-phosphate-dehydrogenase contributes to phenotypic changes in hypoxic pulmonary artery smooth muscle cells." Simms was sponsored by Dr. Sachin Gupte, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular biology.

Largen's project focused on the role that an enzyme – protein phosphatase 5 – plays in a cell's response to stress, such as DNA damage. "The ultimate goal of this research is to decide if the enzyme is a potential target for fighting cancer,

but we still need to better understand what role it plays, if any, in normal cells outside of DNA repair," explained Largen.

Throughout his research project, Largen said he was exposed to many new procedures and techniques within the lab. More importantly, he learned more about how basic science research works.

"It's a very long process that requires a great deal of patience, attention to detail, and a bit of luck," Largen said. "I also learned there is no such thing as bad results. Just because the experiment didn't turn out as you expected doesn't mean you can't learn from it."

Largen's mentor, Dr. Honkanen, said the project Largen worked on was an extension of the work he conducted last summer. "He worked on a very challenging project," Dr. Honkanen said. "However, he was up to the task at hand. Like last year, his hard work was very productive."


Largen said he is interested in pediatric oncology as a possible specialty. "This can often be a research-heavy field," he said, "so having exposure to the types of research going on is very valuable."

Simms' project involved a closer look at Pulmonary Hypertension (PH), a fatal disease that is not well understood. "People with PH experience muscle growth in the arteries of their lungs, and it is this change that causes problems," Simms said. "We wanted to see what happens in cells to cause this change because this is the key to creating a medication or therapy to prevent the disease in those at risk."

According to Simms, participating in research ultimately leads to a well-rounded physician. "Since research is where we often discover the major breakthroughs in medicine, I wanted to gauge my interest in it by really getting a full experience," he said. "By taking part in research, I have a better appreciation of the work and a more complete understanding of the things we learn in class."

Simms said it was a pleasant surprise to receive the award and a great way to end a productive summer of research. "There's always going to be a drive to stay cutting-edge, and I feel like through my participation in this research project, I now have a lot more of the skills I'll need to do that."


Medical Student Research Day is the culmination of the summer's work with the presentation of oral and poster presentations. During the 10-week program, 16 first- and second-year medical students participated in research projects with basic science and clinical faculty in the College of Medicine. A weekly seminar series introduced the students to important research related areas. The program highlights the relationship between scientific discoveries and their application in clinical medicine.

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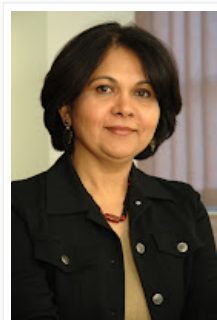
## 'We Gave Him His Life Back'

An article was recently published in the Mobile Press that featured the University of South Alabama Neuroscience Center's new epilepsy monitoring unit. To view the entire article, [click here](#).



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## Next Week's DSS - Dr. Indu Ambudkar



The next Distinguished Scientist Seminar at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine will be presented by Dr. Indu S. Ambudkar, chief of the Secretary Physiology Section of Molecular Physiology and Therapeutics Branch of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md.

Dr. Ambudkar's talk, titled "TRPC Channels: Modulators of Cytosolic Signaling and More," will take place on Sept. 8, 2011, at 4 p.m. in the Medical Sciences Building auditorium on USA's main campus.

Dr. Ambudkar's research interests include Ca<sup>2+</sup> signaling mechanisms, TRP channels, Ca<sup>2+</sup> channels and calcium transport proteins, and the role of Ca<sup>2+</sup> in salivary gland growth and disease. She is the recipient of an NIH Merit Award.

Dr. Ambudkar received her bachelor's degree in biology from Isabella Thoburn College, her master's degree in biochemistry from Lucknow University, and her Ph.D. in biochemistry from Maduraj Kamaraj University in India.

For more information on Dr. Ambudkar's research, [click here](#).

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

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## USA College of Medicine Welcomes New Ob/Gyn Chair Dr. David F. Lewis



Dr. David F. Lewis has been named professor and chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine. He is board-certified in maternal-fetal medicine with more than 20 years of experience in academic medicine.

Prior to his appointment at USA, Dr. Lewis was professor and vice chairman for the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in Cincinnati, Ohio, a position he held for close to four years.

"Dr. Lewis is an accomplished academic leader. During his career, he has demonstrated himself as an outstanding clinician, researcher and teacher," said Dr.

Samuel J. Strada, dean of the USA College of Medicine.

Dr. Lewis' clinical and research interests include maternal-fetal and perinatal medicine focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of disorders in the mother and fetus during pregnancy and childbirth.

Throughout his career, his research activities have focused largely on pre-eclampsia and hypertension, which have been funded by both the National Institutes of Health and the private sector. He is an active reviewer for a number of journals including the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Journal of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the Southern Medical Journal, The Lancet, the Journal of Maternal-Fetal and Neonatal Medicine, the Journal of Perinatology and the Journal of Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine.



Dr. Lewis earned his medical degree from the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in Shreveport, La. He completed his internship and residency training as a chief resident in obstetrics and gynecology at the Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport, La. He completed a maternal-fetal medicine fellowship at the University of California School of Medicine in Irvine, Calif. In addition, he attended graduate school at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, Ky., earning his masters of business administration degree.

In 1996, Dr. Lewis was named director in the division of maternal-fetal medicine for the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport, La. While in graduate school from 2000 to 2002, he also served as the obstetrics and gynecology residency program director for the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in Lexington, Ky. In November of 2002, he was named professor and chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the LSU Health Sciences Center in Shreveport, La. prior to moving to Cincinnati in 2007.

Currently, Dr. Lewis is vice president of the Roger K. Freeman Perinatal Society and serves on the editorial board for the Journal of Pregnancy. In the past, he has served on the board of directors for the National Perinatal Association and served on the Louisiana Perinatal Commission.

Dr. Lewis is a Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a member of numerous professional societies, including the Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the Roger K. Freeman Perinatal Society and the International Society for Study of Hypertension in Pregnancy.

He is now accepting new patients. To make a referral, call (251) 415-1496.

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