

# Med School Watercooler

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

Thursday, September 3, 2020

## Mark your calendar for grand rounds

Mark your calendar for the following grand rounds:

### Neurology Grand Rounds

"Controversies on Deep Brain Stimulation and Candidacy for DBS"  
Erwin B. Montgomery, M.D., Professor Emeritus, McMaster University, Ontario, Canada

8 to 9 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8

Zoom: <https://usahealthsystem.zoom.us/j/98589154008>

Contact: Sabrina Cabral at 251-445-8262 or [cabral@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:cabral@health.southalabama.edu)

### Surgery Grand Rounds

"Women in Surgery – The X-Factor"

Hanna Alemayehu, M.D., Associate Professor of Surgery, USA College of Medicine  
7 to 8 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11

Zoom: <https://usahealthsystem.zoom.us/j/93037021095>

Contact: Tyronda Rogers at 251-445-8230  
or [tmrogers@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:tmrogers@health.southalabama.edu)

### OB-GYN Grand Rounds

"Fetal Growth Restrictions: How Small Is Too Small?"

Carey Winkler, M.D., Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, USA College of Medicine

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 11

Zoom: [https://southalabama.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUuf-Gsrz0oH9PNDQgKTE4Fh6h\\_j4keBDJL](https://southalabama.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUuf-Gsrz0oH9PNDQgKTE4Fh6h_j4keBDJL)

Contact: Heather Glass at 251-415-1492 or [hglass@health.southalabama.edu](mailto:hglass@health.southalabama.edu)

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [1:50 PM](#) No comments:

## USA Medical Alumni Association welcomes three new board members

The University of South Alabama Medical Alumni Association (MAA) is welcoming three new members to its board of directors: Sabrina Bessette, M.D., Ashleigh Butts-Wilkerson, M.D., and Nancy Wood, M.D.

According to Ann Eleece Kouns, MPH, associate director of medical alumni relations, board members are chosen based on their active involvement in both the association and their community. "How interested they are, how invested they are – that's what makes a good board member," she said. "Working to ensure that our college is as robust as it possibly can be."

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Bessette earned her bachelor's degree in zoology from Oklahoma State University. She went on to earn a second bachelor's degree in nursing from Old Dominion University, graduating *summa cum laude*. She spent six years working as a registered nurse in Mississippi before and while a medical student at the USA College of Medicine. At USA, she was selected for the Medical Scholars Program, graduating in 2003. Bessette completed her internal medicine residency at USA and completed her nephrology fellowship training at the Medical College of Virginia.



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Bessette, who joined the USA College of Medicine faculty in 2011, is currently chief of nephrology and hypertension and associate professor of internal medicine. Since 2008, she has also served as a clinical instructor at Southern Illinois University's School of Medicine.



Butts-Wilkerson, graduated from the USA College of Medicine in 2012. Prior to medical school, she earned her bachelor's degree in biomedical science from USA, graduating *summa cum laude*. She completed her residency training in and served as chief resident in family medicine at USA.

Currently Butts-Wilkerson, who is an assistant professor in the USA department of family medicine, serves as the assistant residency program director and is a medical director for the department. Prior to joining the faculty, she worked as an examining physician for Disability

Determination Services in Mobile. In addition, Butts-Wilkerson volunteers with the Washington County Junior Livestock Association and Oak Park Church of God in Mobile.

Wood graduated from the USA College of Medicine in 2007 after earning her bachelor's degree in biological science from the University of Alabama. She completed her residency training and served as chief resident in pediatrics at the Medical College of Georgia.



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Wood worked with Pediatric Associates of Mobile from 2011 to 2020 and recently joined Mobile's Children's Medical Group in Mobile. She was awarded the Nappie Award for Best Pediatrician in 2016. Wood also was the 2019 and 2020 co-chair of Local Goodness, an annual fundraiser benefitting USA Health Children's & Women's Hospital.

The MAA's board of directors is made up of 18 elected USA College of Medicine alumni. Board members devote their time to help ensure that MAA's mission, goals and initiatives are being met. They provide leadership and guidance to medical alumni and current students.

New board members are typically recognized at the Medical Alumni Association's annual Reunion Weekend, but this year's event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both new and retiring board members will be acknowledged at the 2021 reunion.

The MAA was founded in 1976, and it exists to uphold and nurture a lifelong relationship between USA's College of Medicine and its alumni physicians. Through this connection, the College of Medicine helps alumni by providing opportunities for networking, professional advancements and furthering medical education.

Posted by Med School Watercooler at [1:27PM](#) No comments:

**Monday, August 31, 2020**

## USA College of Medicine student pursued two goals - football and medicine

Growing up in Alabama, 23-year-old Matthew Byers loved the game of football and the competitiveness that came with it. "Football was my passion."

"I consistently played the game from seventh grade to my last year of college," he said. "I've played the sport for most of my life."

Although football was his focus at the time, Byers, a second-year medical student at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, quickly realized he had another passion – medicine. "I wanted to help others and decided to take pre-med courses heading into college. Football was a big part of my life and I still wanted to play. I had to figure out a way to make it work."



Byers enrolled in the pre-med program at Birmingham-Southern College in Birmingham, Ala., and was able to continue playing football. The rigors of school and football often felt overwhelming, he said, but he was determined to do both.

With good time management and set priorities, he was able to find a schedule that worked for him. "Every day from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. I would try to get most of my schoolwork finished before or in between football activities. Then, I would have most nights available to hang out with friends."

His schedule was tight, but he said it was worth it. He also found time to join a fraternity.

Nearing the end of his undergraduate years, Byers had to make a difficult decision. He ended his collegiate football career and chose to pursue medical school instead. "Football was a major part of my life so it was strange how it just suddenly stopped," he said.

Byers explained he didn't have aspirations to become a pro athlete, but the decision to not play football was tough. He knew, though, it was important to focus solely on academics for his future career.

Eventually, he chose to attend the USA College of Medicine because of the small class sizes and its encouraging faculty members.

His competitiveness didn't end with his football career. Byers now serves as the intramural chair for his class and competes in a variety of recreational sports.

He's undecided about the specialty he'd like to pursue in school. For now, he's enjoying the moment and taking it day by day.

"I plan to help my patients by being the kind of doctor that always puts them first," he said. "I want to be able to console and inform all my patients while alleviating any issues or concerns they may have. That's my goal."

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