Medical Alumni Weekend Offers Something for All

The Batchelor Children's Research Institute houses current and developing programs addressing solutions for childhood problems.

MILLER SCHOOL INVITES ALUMNI TO REVISIT, REKINDLE, REUNITE

The weekend will engage both mind and heart. Clockwise from top left, the Class of 1956 will celebrate its 50th anniversary reunion; students will lead tours; Raymond Woosley and Jon Cohen will be inducted into the Hall of Fame; distinguished alumni, such as Bernard Fogel, dean emeritus, and Larry Gildstrap, will be active participants; and the Clinical Research Institute, slated to open this spring, highlights the many changes at the Miller School.

Medical Alumni Weekend 2006
Alumni and Friends Honor Clarkson
Largest Alumni Gift in Med School History
Alumnus Spotlight: Dennis Agliano, MD ’68, FACS
For four decades, John G. Clarkson, MD ’68 has served the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine and has been dedicated to more than education. In his words, “One of the great joys of my years at this academic medical center has been the rewarding interaction with students.” His own academic history dates back to 1964 when he began his medical studies at the School of Medicine. While serving as chief resident, Clarkson developed an interest in teaching and has continually been active in medical education since. During his ten years as senior vice president for medical affairs and dean of the Miller School of Medicine, innovations in the school’s curriculums, including increased student and patient interaction and a generalist education program, have revolutionized the medical education program.

After stepping down as dean, Clarkson plans to continue his vision to develop new programs focused specifically on physician training, which will enhance patient care and the continuum of medical education. Highly trained physicians provide high-quality patient care, and Miller School graduates go on to renowned medical centers worldwide where they continue to share their expertise. Upon hearing of Clarkson’s decision to take a new position as executive director of the American Board of Ophthalmology, a group of colleagues, alumni and friends gathered to determine what they could do to honor this man who had spent the greater part of his life in the service of this institution. The outcome was the birth of the John G. Clarkson, MD Initiative for Academic Excellence.

“In recognition of John’s impressive leadership of the Miller School of Medicine, we are embarking on a fundraising initiative to honor his dedication to medical education,” said C. Gillon Ward, MD ’68. Priorities include sophisticated medical education facilities, such as classrooms equipped with the latest computer systems and patient simulators, as well as high-tech learning auditoriums. Current methods of clinical education and training programs will be greatly enhanced when advanced educational technologies and associated training devices are used to teach students to perform complex medical procedures confidently and safely. Enhanced facilities appeal to the best and brightest college graduates, and scholarship opportunities will enable the Miller School to attract and retain the highest caliber medical students. A scholarship program will be established for outstanding students who have achieved unique accomplishments. On an annual basis, two second-year students will be selected based on their excellence and receive the award for use during their third and fourth years. The John G. Clarkson, MD Initiative for Academic Excellence will also support the Freshman Pinning Ceremony, a tradition established during his tenure as dean. The Miller School will announce that the ceremony will be renamed in honor of Clarkson during Medical Alumni Weekend 2006 on March 3.

Gifts to the Clarkson Initiative for Academic Excellence will honor Clarkson’s many years of leadership, as well as underwrite priority programs that benefit medical students. As the school continues to develop innovative programs, build new facilities, and expand scholarship opportunities, the quality of its educational mission is strengthened. For information on the initiative, contact the Office of Medical Development and Alumni Relations at 305-243-6256.

Miller School Alumnus Operates On Vice President Cheney

Barry Katzen, MD ’70 was part of the five-person medical team that recently repaired popliteal aneurysms behind the knees of Vice President Dick Cheney. Katzen, who is medical director of the Baptist Cardiac and Vascular Institute, is nationally recognized in his field and was contacted by a member of the vice president’s medical team who was familiar with his work.

When interviewed following the procedure, Katzen noted “you have to deal with a lot of things that you don’t deal with in an ordinary patient.” Due to patient privacy issues and national security concerns, Katzen would not reveal the specifics of Cheney’s procedure. However, based upon statements released by the vice president’s office and conversations with medical experts, it is known that Cheney was diagnosed with aneurysms in both of his popliteal arteries, which run behind each knee.

In a six-hour procedure, Katzen and a team of doctors from George Washington University Hospital placed small stent grafts into arteries behind both of the vice president’s knees. Using radiology images to guide them, the doctors worked a small catheter through a blood vessel to the location that was weakened. They then placed a self-expanding stent, a small, mesh-wire tubing, into the area to reinforce the wall of the blood vessel. The stent is designed to keep the aneurysm from expanding further, ensuring good blood flow and diminishing the chance of forming blood clots.

Two months prior to the vice president’s procedure, Katzen made a courtesy call to the White House, and while he admits the patient in this case wasn’t routine, the work was, “I just focused on the job, not who the patient was,” he said.

“I tried to make sure we did the best job so that we’d get a great outcome, which we did.” Cheney spent the night in the hospital after the procedure. The next day, when his motorcade came to pick him up, he walked slowly out of George Washington University Hospital without assistance.

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTESTEST

Meet Christopher Dy

“Receiving this scholarship has allowed me to continue my studies at an institution full of diverse opportunities for growth. I am extremely grateful to the University of Miami and its alumni for their generosity.”

Undergraduate Degree BS in biology, with a double major in chemistry and business administration

Hometown Tarpon Springs, Florida

Interests Soccer, traveling, reading, and cooking

Medical Interests Community service and peer mentoring

Fact Nationally, over 80 percent of medical school graduates are graduating with staggering debt. Since 1984 the median debt level has increased fivefold to $100,000 for public school graduates and to $135,000 for graduates of private schools.

Meet Gizelka David-West

“Getting into medical school gave me a feeling of great achievement, while receiving a scholarship was definitely a dream come true. I am truly grateful that I was awarded a scholarship to help ease the monetary burden and allow me to pursue my dream of becoming a doctor.”

Undergraduate Degree BS in biology

Undergraduate School Eastern New Mexico University

Hometown New York City

Interests Singing, golf, community service, and traveling

Medical Interests Pathology and otolaryngology

Fact Tuition alone at the Miller School of Medicine is nearly $40,000 per year for out-of-state residents. The realistic cost of one year of medical school today— including books, supplies, fees, and room and board—is estimated at more than $50,000. Help train the next generation of Miami University physicians. Contact Rebecca Rawson, PhD, at 305-243-6256 or rawson@med.miami.edu.

IN RECOGNITION OF A LIFETIME OF LEADERSHIP

Alumni and Friends Honor Clarkson

During his tenure as dean, John Clarkson recruited some of the world’s leading research and academic talent to develop one of the nation’s top medical schools.
Students have returned from winter break and it’s now back to reality. For the Class of 2006, this is the last extended break they will enjoy for a long time. While some students, such as those participating in the military match, already know where they will complete their residency, most will anxiously await until March to find out where they have matched.

Until then, fourth-year students are busy completing their rotations and planning graduation activities, including Senior Week and the annual golf tournament in March.

While fourth-year students are wrapping-up their rotations, the Class of 2007 is just getting started with one semester of rotations under their belts. In addition to participating in direct patient care at Jackson, students attend an interactive day at the AvMed office to learn the pros and cons of managed care.

The Florida Keys Health Fair is only a few weeks away and about 150 students are preparing to make the drive for a weekend of finger-sticks, phlebotomy, and fun. For many Monroe County residents, the health fair is the only primary care they will receive this year. After the health fair, second-year students will concentrate on the last two organ systems modules before preparations for Step 1 of the board exam.

Finally, the Class of 2009 has completed their first semester and is ready for their big welcome to the Miller School of Medicine community: the Freshmen Pinning Ceremony. Last year’s ceremony was such a success that for the second consecutive year, it will take place during Medical Alumni Weekend. Alumni are invited to participate in pinning the first-year students and to join them and their families, and the rest of the UM medical community, at the barbeque that will follow the ceremony.

A Message from the President

The often hectic holidays are behind us and a new year has begun. The new year is always a time for reflection and reminiscing. We all have special memories that take us back to days gone by.

The common threads for all of us are the memories that we share from our days as medical students. As the years pass, some of the memories may fade.

There is no better way to rekindle those memories then by making a decision to attend Medical Alumni Weekend on March 3-5.

This is a particularly special alumni weekend since the first graduating class of 1956 will celebrate their first 50th class reunion at the Miller School of Medicine. We will honor that pioneer class on Saturday evening, March 4, for panning the first-year students.

There are also special reunion activities for the Classes of 1966, 1976, 1981, 1986, and 1996. However, the activities are not limited to just those classes. The weekend is filled with diverse information and continuing medical education sessions that will appeal to all.

The weekend will be capped off by the Hall of Fame Awards on Saturday evening. The Miller School of Medicine will induct Raymond L. Woosley, MD ’73, PhD, the year 2000 selection and this year’s selection, Jon R. Cohen, MD ’79.

I failed to mention the most important component of that weekend. That of course is you. Rest assured that your classmates will miss not having you there when they think back on all of those special moments that you shared.
David Perlmutter, MD '81

Association of Plastic Surgeons, and was promoted in as a member of the American Reconstructive Surgery, was President of the New York Regional Nursing Home in LaBelle.

Alan Matarasso, MD '79

was director of the Oakbrook since 1983 and is the medical director of the LaBelle, Florida, Citizen of the Year. He has been named as the LaBelle, Florida, Chamber of Commerce 2005 Business Person of the Year in 2005.

Kai Fo Chow, MD '78 was nominated as the LaBelle, Florida, Chamber of Commerce 2005 Citizen of the Year. He has been in private practice in LaBelle since 1983 and is the medical director of the Oakbrook Nursing Home in LaBelle.

Alan Matarasso, MD '79 is president of the New York Regional Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, was voted in as a member of the American Association of Plastic Surgeons, and was promoted to clinical professor of plastic surgery at Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University in the Bronx, New York.

David Perlmutter, MD '81, recently authored The Better Boot Book, which cites clinical studies demonstrating that the right food, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and a supportive life will prevent most brain degeneration.

Andrew Grantz, MD '83 recently joined the faculty at Boston University School of Medicine as clinical associate professor of surgery and is on staff at Boston Medical Center in the general surgery, trauma surgery and critical care divisions.

Connie Michalavina, MD '83 retired from practicing obstetrics in January of 2005. She teaches anatomy at Seminole Community College in Florida.

Lou Romig, MD '84, FAAP, FACEP is medical director and medical operations chief of the South Florida Regional Disaster Medical Assistance Team with the Department of Homeland Security. Romig developed the JumpSTART Pediatric Multicounty Field Triage Tool, which is approaching gold standard status for use by EMS agencies in the US and Canada.

Nancy Sanderson, MD '90 adopted her tenth child in August. The children come from across the US as well as Ethiopia and Liberia. She also hosted five foreign exchange students from South Korea, Vietnam and Spain last year.

Ana Ceide Hodges, MD '93, a private practice pediatrician, and husband Michael C. Hodges, MD '93, have been living in Fayetteville, North Carolina, for the past five years. Michael, who served in the US Army, is writing a book chronicling his year in Iraq serving in a combat support hospital.

Hobbies Golf and tennis.

Medical School Experience/Recollection I fondly remember my medical school days over at the Veterans Hospital, now The Biltmore Hotel. We had a great class with so many of my classmates going on to distinguish themselves in a variety of fields that it’s impossible to name them all. A few that come to mind include John Clarkson, Tully Patrzowick, and Richard Elenbeiten, George Paff was one of our favorite anatomists. He was a dynamic guy and an outstanding teacher. I was fortunate to have externships in orthopedics with Dr. Augusto Sarmiento, radiology with Dr. Dave Parks, and plastic surgery with Dr. Gil Snyder.

Each summer I would rotate and do my externships. A lot of the guys would go to the Veterans Administration Hospital and draw blood. I did that for one year, along with several other medical students. In exchange they gave you room and board.

Philosophy We in medicine are a professional family, and our purpose is to serve our patients, regardless of race, ethnicity, or whether you’re rich or poor.

Why I Do What I Do I want to serve my fellow man. Physicians love their profession and truly enjoy taking care of people. However, we’re in a period when that becomes difficult as medicine is under attack. Physicians are overworked by so many groups and must contend with the multiplicity of rules from Medicare, Medicaid, OSHA, HMOs. Doctors are fearful that they may inadvertently code something incorrectly and get accused of fraud. Despite these challenges, practicing medicine is a noble profession and I can’t think of anything I’d rather do.

Jonathan D. Reich, MD '92 would like to communicate with former classmates. His wife, Shari, an alumna of the Jackson Memorial School of Nursing, passed away from ovarian cancer. He can be reached at jreich@hotmail.com.

Cecilia Valdes Morales, MD '96 is a general pediatrics at the University of Miami.

Cynthia Gyniff, MD '98 completed a fellowship in maternal and fetal medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York in June. She is assistant clinical professor at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Uzma Siddiqui, MD '98 is assistant professor of gastroenterology at Yale University Medical School, where she practices advanced endoscopic procedures and endoscopic ultrasonography.

Colleen Fitzpatrick, MD, Jeff Halter, MD, and David Lasko, MD, graduates of the Class of 1999, matched into three of the 28 available spots in the Pediatric Surgery Fellowship Match held in May. Fitzpatrick is finishing her residency on active duty with the US Air Force in San Antonio and will attend the Children's Hospital of Michigan in Detroit. Halter, currently finishing his general surgery training at Syracuse University, matched into Children's Hospital of Ohio in Columbus. Lasko is finishing his training at the University of Miami and will attend the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada.

Matthew Strange, MD '99 joined Naples Radiologists in Florida.

Stewart B. Davis, MD '03 is medical director of a biomedical device firm based in Miami. He recently published Supercharged Tips to Boost Your New SAT Score.

SHARE YOUR NEWS

Submissions should be sent to 305-243-3904 or alumni@med.miami.edu. Content may be edited for clarity and space.