BUILDING NEW HOUSE FOR RONALD MCCONALD

Ground is broken for a new Ronald McDonald House at the corner of 17th Street and 4th Avenue South, convenient to both UAB and Children’s Hospitals. The 33,000 square-foot facility is scheduled for completion in March 2007.

More than 75% of Alabama’s children live in counties without comprehensive pediatric specialty care, according to Ronald McDonald House Charities of Alabama (RMHCA). The Ronald McDonald House provides a “home away from home” for sick or injured children and their families traveling to Birmingham for diagnosis and treatment.

The new house will feature 10 additional guest rooms (41 total, accommodating up to 400 more family stays a year). Improvements over the previous house also include elevators and facilities for visitors with mobility impairments, private baths, and small in-room kitchens for immunsuppressed children.

Designed by Birmingham-based Williams & Blackstock Architects, the home-like structure designed for its urban setting also makes a visual connection between the red brick of UAB and the playful multi-toned brick theme of Children’s Hospital, says project architect Joel Blackstock.

A Crying Need

Located in 50- to 80-year old buildings, the current facility at 17th Street and 9th Avenue South is worn out and inadequate. “The old house provided shelter and support for more than 27,000 families of children from Alabama, our region, and abroad, but the need for a new facility is pressing,” says UAB Health System CEO and RMHCA board member David Hoidal. “We are delighted by the outpouring of support for this worthwhile project.”

“UAB and Children’s Hospital are national and international referral centers,” says James Dearth, MD, CEO of Children’s Health System, which provided land on its campus for the new facility. “Offering ancillary services such as affordable housing for families with sick children is part of fulfilling our role.”

First opened in 1979 to pediatric cancer patients and in 1991 to special care unit patients, the house now accepts families of children treated at all Birmingham-area hospitals.

“Parents can spend precious time with their children as they struggle with illness, during their recovery, and as they transition to a home environment,” says UAB Neonatology Division Director Waldemar “Wally” Carlo, MD, a long-time RMHCA board member. “For situations that require frequent monitoring, such as pre- and posttransplantation, the house often is a family’s only hope to be together.”

Giving Opportunity

“The community has been very generous,” says project consultant and former
Building New House for Ronald McDonald

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RMHCA Executive Director Roberta Shapiro. “We have pledges for more than 80% of funds required to meet total goals, but need additional support to meet our construction budget and the recent Kresge Foundation challenge,” she says of a $400,000 grant contingent on RMHCA raising another $1.64 million.

Alabama’s Ronald McDonald House was fifth of 259 around the world today. Local McDonald’s owner-operator Max Cooper, a former Chicago advertising executive who came up with the maddeningly memorable McDonald’s “two all beef patties” jingle, cofounded the house with local public relations executive Marianne Sharbel. They helped persuade the national RMHC organization to open in a market it predicted could not sustain a house. “Families were sleeping in hospital lobbies,” says Cooper. “What else could we do?”

To know what you can do, call RMHCA at 205.918.4538 or see www.mhca.org.

Campaign Begins for Tinsley Harrison Chair

The University of Alabama Medical Alumni Association has launched a $1.5 million fundraising campaign to endow The Tinsley R. Harrison Chair in Medicine. Leading the endowment steering committee is Medical Alumni Association President Albert J. Tully Jr, MD. Co-chairs are Dean Emeritus and Distinguished UAB Professor James A. Pittman Jr, MD, and former UAB President Charles A. McCullum Jr, MD.

Dr. Harrison wrote these words of dedication, which have become an enduring beacon to the medical profession:

“No greater opportunity, responsibility, or obligation can fall to the lot of a human being than to become a physician. In the care of suffering he needs technical skill, scientific knowledge, and human understanding. He who uses these with courage, with humility, and with wisdom will provide a unique service for his fellow man, and will build an enduring edifice of character within himself. The physician should ask of his destiny no more than this, he should be content with no less.”

Respected and beloved as a teacher for nearly half a century, Dr. Harrison trained many of today’s prominent physicians. His name is synonymous with internal medicine because of his groundbreaking textbook. First published in 1950, Harrison’s Principles of Internal Medicine is in its 17th edition and is the number one selling internal medicine textbook worldwide.

Born in 1900 near Talladega, Alabama, Dr. Harrison returned to Alabama in 1950 to serve as chairman of medicine and acting dean of the then-struggling Medical College of Alabama. He laid the foundation for the excellent teaching, research, and patient care for which UAB is known today. On November 19, 1966, the Health Sciences Research Building was rededicated as the Lyons-Harrison Research Building, inspired by Champ Lyons’ and Harrison’s emphasis on research. “Harrison preached that any school that did not have a vigorous research program could not have up-to-date, questioning, intellectually alive, inspirational teaching or top notch patient care,” says Dr. Pittman, who is penning a biography of Dr. Harrison. UAB now receives approximately $470 million annually in extramural funding for research and research training.

“This Chair will honor Dr. Harrison’s innumerable contributions to medicine, and his influence on the lives of those of us who learned from him,” says Dr. Tully, one of the many students Dr. Harrison inspired. “He kept telling us that we could be the best in the world, and after a while we began believing it.”

Also serving on the endowment steering committee are J. Max Austin Jr, MD, Richard E. Brown, MD, Alan R. Dimick, MD, Sara C. Finley, MD, Wayne H. Finley, PhD, MD, Ronald E. Henderson, MD, Walter G. Pittman, MD, Richard Russell, MD, and Jack W. Trigg Jr, MD.

For more information, contact School of Medicine (SOM) Senior Director of Development Rebecca Gordon at rggordon@uab.edu, 975.6149; or Medical Alumni Association Executive Secretary Elaine Chambless at eochambl@uab.edu, 934.4463.

Thomas Is Board President
American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons

James L. Thomas, DPM, associate professor, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, has been inducted as president of the board of directors of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

Dr. Thomas authors the monthly ACFAS letter on topics of interest to the organization’s 6000 members. Recent issues addressed the necessity of clinical practice guidelines and a new scoring scale in foot and ankle surgery.

His role as ACFAS president exposes him to breaking developments in foot and ankle surgery throughout the world, Dr. Thomas says. “We are employing new methods of internal fixation such as screws and plates, and external fixation with carbon rings, pins and wires. Improved biomaterials and less invasive techniques speed recovery,” he says.

Dr. Thomas serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Foot and Ankle Surgery and is Diplomate of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery.
Accolades

Fouad Tapped for Executive Leadership Program

Mona N. Fouad, MD, MPH, has been selected for the 2006-2007 class of Drexel University College of Medicine’s Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (ELAM) program. The intensive, yearlong program of personal and professional development aims ultimately to increase representation of women in academic medicine and dentistry leadership positions.

Dr. Fouad is professor of medicine in the Division of Preventive Medicine, founding director of the UAB Minority Health and Research Center, and charter chair of the UAB Commission on Status of Women. Her long-standing efforts in eliminating health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities in the United States have been recently recognized nationally by the American Medical Association and the Association of Academic Health Centers. Dr. Fouad also is principal investigator for more than $40 million in federally funded projects.

ELAM candidates are nominated by a school of medicine dean or academic health center chief executive officer. Prior UAB participants include Lourdes C. Cormann, MD (Huntsville), Nancy E. Dunlap, MD, PhD, Jacqueline M. Feldman, MD, Lisa M. Guay-Woodford, MD, Amie B. Jackson, MD, Sarah L. Morgan, MD, Kathleen G. Nelson, MD, Jane R. Schwebke, MD, and Marca L. Sipski, MD.

Meador-Woodruff Named Chair of Psychiatry

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of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan, one of the top 10 departments in the country. In addition, he directed the department’s Residency Research Track and co-directed the Residency Clinical Scholar’s Track.

He also ran a large and well-funded research laboratory, most of which moved with him to UAB, and held the rank of research professor in the Molecular and Behavioral Neurosciences Institute.

A graduate of the University of Richmond, Dr. Meador-Woodruff received his MD degree from the Medical College of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. He completed his psychiatry residency and a postdoctoral fellowship in psychiatry at the University of Michigan.

An author of more than 100 papers published in peer-reviewed journals and hundreds of other scholarly works, Dr. Meador-Woodruff’s research is supported by eight grants from the National Institute of Mental Health, the Stanley Foundation and others. He serves as a reviewer for numerous scientific journals and is on the editorial boards of the Journal of Neural Transmission, BMC Psychiatry, and Schizophrenia Research, in addition to being editor of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology’s scientific Web site.

His honors and awards include an A. E. Bennett Neuropsychiatric Research Foundation Award, a Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum Rafaelesen Fellowship Award, and a Young Investigator Award from the International Congress on Schizophrenia Research.

Dr. Meador-Woodruff’s research centers around understanding how different parts of the brain communicate via chemical signals, and how severe mental illness disrupts this communication, with a particular emphasis on schizophrenia. Specifically, he is involved in studying neurochemical circuitry and gene expression in people with schizophrenia.

“I am delighted to be at UAB and particularly excited about Dean Rich’s vision for a Comprehensive Neuroscience Center at UAB,” he says. Dr. Meador-Woodruff plans to rapidly expand the Department of Psychiatry’s research base so the department will become a key member of the neuroscience research community.

Research News

UAB Clinician-Investigators Make News With Original Research

UAB faculty continue to publish significant original research in leading peer-reviewed journals. Pediatric endocrinologist and Assistant Professor of Medicine Elaine Moreland, MD, is lead author of an article in the March 27 issue of Archives of Internal Medicine. The report finds glucose blood monitoring by patients with diabetes improves when they receive detailed information about dealing with the issues that often keep individuals from regularly checking levels: discomfort, inconvenience, uncertainty about interpreting numbers, and fear of “bad” results. Dr. Moreland and two colleagues who coauthored the Archives report designed an 18-

INFOBAHN

NIBIB Web Site Refreshed

The National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) presents a new Web site with a fresh appearance and format with more patient-oriented information on technology-based medical procedures and expanded information for prospective and current grantees.


To access a Synopsis article, visit our Web site at www.uabhealth.org/synopsis.

UAB physicians: visit MSI, the password-protected Medical Staff intranet site, at https://horizon.hs.uab.edu.

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page manual providing detailed practical advice about dealing with such barriers. In a randomized controlled trial patients who received the manual in addition to standard diabetes education and support were 10 times more likely to increase or maintain blood glucose monitoring frequency and often achieved better glycemic control compared with individuals in the control group (2006:166:689-695).

Nephrologist and Associate Professor of Medicine Denyse Thornley-Brown, MD, served as lead author for a study published in an April issue of Archives of Internal Medicine showing angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors not only slow kidney disease among African Americans, but also reduce the risk of diabetes in this population (2006:166:797-805). “Historically, people felt ACE inhibitors were not beneficial to blacks, but our analysis of the large ongoing AASK study [African American Study of Kidney Disease and Hypertension] showed the ACE inhibitor ramipril to be half as likely to be associated with the development of diabetes mellitus compared with beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers.”

Cardiologist and Professor of Medicine Suzanne Oparil, MD, is coauthor of an article appearing in the April 20 New England Journal of Medicine presenting results of TROPHY (Trial of Preventing Hypertension), which examined whether early treatment of prehypertension could delay or prevent development of established hypertension. Investigators for the 4-year multicenter trial that assigned participants to candesartan or placebo concluded that treatment with the angiotensin-receptor blocker significantly reduced incident hypertension (2006:354:1685-1697). “Considering that hypertension is the most common diagnosis recorded for outpatient visits in the United States, effective prevention, as achieved in TROPHY, has huge implications for both cardiovascular health and health economies,” Dr. Oparil says.

Urogynecologist and Professor of Medicine Holly Richter, PhD, MD, also coauthored a recent New England Journal of Medicine article. In the April 13 issue, Dr. Richter and colleagues reported on a National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development-sponsored trial, which found that combining sacrocolpopexy, an abdominal-prolapse repair routinely performed to restore pelvic floor anatomy, with Burch colposuspension, a procedure to alleviate stress incontinence, reduced risk of incontinence (2006.354:1557-1566). “Incontinence develops in nearly one third of patients who have prolapse surgery,” Dr. Richter says. “This points to the need for more thoughtful preoperative evaluation and improved treatment.”

If you would like to let your UAB colleagues know about upcoming articles in peer-reviewed journals, please e-mail Director of the Office of Medical Publications Julius E. Linn, MD, at jlinn@uabmc.edu.
8th ANNUAL SPORTING CLAYS CLASSIC BENEFITS BREAST CANCER RESEARCH AT UAB

The UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center received $47,535 for breast cancer research from the 8th annual Sporting Clays Classic in April. Over the past 8 years, the Classic has raised more than $325,500 for breast cancer research at the cancer center.

DISSECTING PLACENTAL PROBLEMS

“Often called the diary of a pregnancy, the placenta provides insights into the causes of poor pregnancy and neonatal outcomes and predicts problems for future pregnancies,” says Ona M. Faye-Petersen, MD, associate professor of pathology and obstetrics and gynecology, and head of the microdissection laboratory, which serves as a regional referral center for fetal and placental pathology.

Dr. Faye-Petersen’s new book, Hand-\textbook of Placental Pathology, Second Edition, is designed to meet the needs of busy surgical pathologists, as well as those of placental pathologists, obstetricians, neonatologists, and trainees in these specialties. Co-authored by Vijay V. Joshi, MD, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and Debra S. Heller, MD, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the book explores the myriad diagnostic challenges pathologists and obstetricians face.

The new edition contains updated sections on many conditions and their pathogeneses and sequelae, including preeclampsia, maternal diabetes mellitus, and intrauterine infection, and lesions associated with cerebral palsy, such as fetal thrombotic vasculopathy and maternal floor infarction.

In addition, the book addresses the pathologic correlates of several current clinical intrauterine interventional procedures, and use of new technologies, such as molecular genetic probes to confirm pathologic diagnoses.

The text includes more than 260 new digitized illustrations of umbilical cord, membrane, and parenchymal and maternal surface abnormalities. The updated book also contains many original diagrams.

“The goal of this book is to provide scholarly, but concise and user-friendly address of placental pathology for clinicians and general pathologists,” Dr. Faye-Petersen says.

“Correlative photographs are a key component of such an endeavor, and the majority of the images used in this reference are from cases I have examined in the microdissection laboratory. Therefore, UAB has been an integral part of the construction of this reference,” Dr. Faye-Petersen says.

Published by Taylor and Francis, the book is available in the UAB Bookstore as well as through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.