

Prescriptives

School of Pharmacy News

UConn Students Garner USP Fellowships

By: Aloise Brewster

Each year since the program's inception in 1981, the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) grants six \$25,000 fellowships to graduate students enrolled in doctoral programs for chemistry, pharmacy, or a related field in order to fund research that could yield significant results for the food and drug industry. In the past eight years, nine of the 48 fellowships granted have been to University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy students, among them Sandra Goss, Banu S. Zolnik, Upkar Bhardwaj, Archana Rawat, and Kristyn Greco.

Sandra Goss, now a pharmacokineticist for Abbott Laboratories, graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences in 2008. When she won the USP Fellowship in 2002, she said doors opened for her to take on unique biopharmaceutical projects that otherwise might not have been funded. Working under the direction of Dr. Robin Bogner, Dr. Goss studied biological factors in the gastrointestinal tract and calcium absorption, which were unlike any other projects being conducted in the lab at the time. These opportunities led her to discover her interest in pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics (PKPD), which she has since made into a successful career.

Fellowship-funded projects led her to conduct a clinical study later in her graduate career at a center in Farmington, CT, where she sampled blood and urine for calcium levels. Like her projects in Dr. Bogner's laboratory, this study's uniqueness generated many obstacles. "No one in my department had ever done [a study like this] before, so there was no one to guide me," Goss remembered. Without a point of reference, she said, a study that could have taken less than six



USP fellows Kristyn Greco and Archana Rawat

months with the proper experience ended up taking two years to complete. Despite the learning curve, however, Goss commented that she considers it her greatest accomplishment. While the study did not yield the results she expected, she said the experience and skills she acquired by conducting it were invaluable for a career in clinical PKPD.

Beyond her experience in a clinical setting, Dr. Goss said the USP Fellowship also helped her to gain recognition throughout the university by important figures like Dean Robert L. McCarthy and former University President Philip E. Austin. She and the five other fellows were also invited to present their research to the members of USP at its Washington, D.C. office at the end of the year. "That was the first time I felt like I was educating someone else about my research," she recalled. "That was a huge accomplishment."

Dr. Goss became acquainted with UConn while still an undergraduate at the University of Mississippi, when, in 1996, she was offered a summer fellowship in pharmaceuticals led by Dr. Bogner. A few years after her

A Message from the Dean



Dear Friends:

A pharmacy school curriculum by its very nature is under perpetual revision. At no time was this more evident than as the health care reform debate continued in Washington, DC and across the country. Thomas Buckley's Public Health & Healthcare Policy course was "ground zero" for health care reform discussions on our campus. As he frequently told his students, "what I might tell you today, could change tomorrow." His knowledge of health care politics and policy at both the state and national levels served to guide our students as they tried to understand the issues and their potential impact on them as both citizens and future pharmacists. It is faculty like Prof. Buckley that is the strength of our school: practitioners and scholars who can bring their knowledge, clinical experience, and research into the classroom.

We warmly welcome Drs. Ted Rasmussen, associate professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Stefanie Nigro, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Pharmacy Practice, to our faculty family. Dr. Rasmussen's research focuses on stem cells. Dr. Nigro's area of specialty is primary/ambulatory care; her practice site will be at a community health center in New Britain. You'll read more about her as well as other "pharmacy families" in this issue.

As an important component of their introductory pharmacy practice experiences (IPPEs), our pharmacy students have been working with other

Dancing with the UConn Stars

By: Eunice Omega

On October 23rd, the Husky Headliners showcased their first event of the year, Dancing with the UConn Stars. The event featured the UConn Ballroom Dance Team and the UConn Dance Company as well as UConn's own batch of faculty stars, including President Michael J. Hogan and the School of Pharmacy's own Dean Robert L. McCarthy.

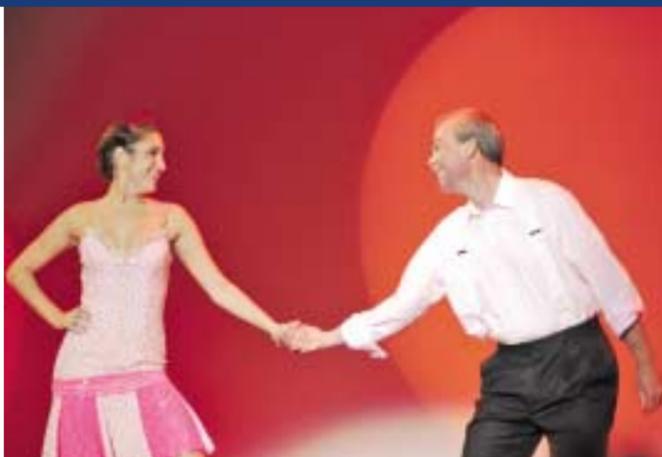
The show opened with members of UConn Ballroom Dance Team doing a dance medley to Lady Gaga's hit singles, at the end of which President Hogan was escorted to the stage flanked by dancers who acted as his own secret service dark shades and black suits included. The finale of the opening number concluded with Hogan and the dance team doing the electric slide. "As you can see I'm no Tom Delay," Hogan said, referencing the former U.S House Representative who was a contestant in the 9th season of the ABC network hit show "Dancing With the Stars." A moment was taken to remind the audience that part of the proceeds of the night went towards Huskython, a student organization that raises money for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford.

The masters of ceremony, alumnus Lauren DellaFera, vice president of UConn Ballroom Dance Club and Mick Malek, professional dancer and teacher, graced the stage in true ballroom fashion to introduce the first act. From beginning to end, the night exemplified the hard work and mastery that these students embraced for the art of dancing. Audiences were "wowed" by artful, fluid moves and dazzling and daring costumes. They moved to familiar music from artists such as Christina Aguilera, Justin Timberlake, and Ricky Martin.

Pre-pharmacy and pharmacy students as well as faculty turned out in great numbers to support McCarthy and occupied the entire lower far right seating of the Jorgensen floor. Students Colleen Teevan and Carlie Hershgordon with the assistance of Liz Anderson, director of marketing and communications at the School of Pharmacy, made masks of McCarthy's image that were mounted on wooden sticks. Every pharmacy student and supporter had the masks in hand. Sharon Giovenale, pharmacy librarian and coordinator of the Pharmacy First Year Experience courses, was proud to see the support of the pharmacy community and wished McCarthy luck on his performance. During an intermission, McCarthy came out and greeted his many fans who waved their masks and cheered in response.

McCarthy said that during the summer he was approached by Rod Rock who asked if he would be willing to participate. Afterwards he experienced months of preparation with his dance partner Kailee Donovan, president of the dance team. "I'm a runner and I consider myself to be in good shape but those practices were intense," McCarthy said. "I got a chance to see how hard these kids work."

McCarthy's family was also in attendance. His wife, Maureen, had not witnessed any of her husband's practices and was excited to see how he would perform. "I hope he doesn't fall down and doesn't drop Kailee," she jokingly said.



UConn Ballroom Dance Team President Kailee Donovan swing dances with Dean McCarthy to ABBA's Waterloo

Before each featured performance by faculty, DellaFera and Malek introduced short video clips that showed the "UConn Stars" at work with their partners. McCarthy made it known in his video diary that there are 12 deans at UConn and he was the only one who accepted the challenge.

Dressed in a soft pink shirt, black pants and white suspenders, he and Kailee danced the swing to ABBA's song "Waterloo." McCarthy kept in step with his dance partner. When Kailee danced by herself, he jokingly stood on the side and yawned showing that he wasn't impressed with her advanced moves. With an unwavering smile spread across his face, McCarthy showed that he was having a great time.

After McCarthy was done, the entire audience gave the dean a standing ovation. The pharmacy community was the loudest of them all, waving their masks and cheering. P4 student and pharmacy learning community residential advisor, Justine Dickson, waved her hand made sign that read, "Trading in His White Coat for Dancing Shoes." McCarthy had to re-emerge with his partner and give a second bow. He undoubtedly had the best reception of the night. ■

USP Fellows

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graduation from Ole Miss in 1997, she contacted Dr. Bogner about attending UConn for graduate school, and said that their relationship was one of the deciding factors in choosing UConn for her Ph.D.

Goss is not the only former USP Fellow who was drawn to UConn because of one professor. Banu Zolnik decided to come to UConn to earn her Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences in 1999 so that she could work under the tutelage of Dr. Diane Burgess. Dr. Zolnik graduated from Istanbul Üniversitesi in 1997 and completed UConn's Ph.D. program in 2005. Her research in Dr. Burgess' lab was focused on finding a standardized *in vitro* testing method for microspheres and in 2004, at the beginning of her final year of graduate school, she was awarded the USP Fellowship to support this research.

Dr. Zolnik now works for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the Office of Pharmaceutical Science as a pharmacologist, where she is a part of quality assurance procedures to ensure that drugs new to the market are functioning as they should be. This position ties in very closely with the research she did as a student at UConn. Dr. Zolnik said that finding a standardized *in vitro* testing method "would really fill a gap in research. It made me feel good to be involved in filling that gap," she said.

While there is still no such testing method, Dr. Zolnik could not stress enough the importance of continuing to search for one. During her research in Dr. Burgess' lab she was met with many setbacks, "probably millions," but she persevered in her research anyway. "You should never get frustrated," she advised. "Not every day is going to be bright, but in the end all the failures help to get you where you are."

In a way, she said, she considers these setbacks to be a part of the biggest accomplishment of her research, which was the experience that she gained as opposed than one singular event. "It's all small steps leading to an accomplishment over the years," she said, adding that current and future students will continue to "provide pieces to the puzzle" in a communal effort to move science forward.

Future Faculty

During the past academic year, our faculty members welcomed some new additions to their families. Send us your baby photos* and you may see them in an addition of Aspiring Alumni.



[Pictured Above] Dr. Megan Ehret and husband, Kevin, welcomed Erin Grace.

*High resolution [300 dpi at the finished size of 2 1/2 inches wide] photos should be sent to pharmacymco@uconn.edu. Be sure to include your (and your spouses if applicable) graduation year as well as the correct spelling of everyone's name.



[Pictured Above] Dr. Kate Wheeler and husband, Tom, welcomed Jacob and Jennifer.

Like Dr. Goss, Dr. Zolnik also felt very grateful for the opportunity to share her research with professionals from USP, and to ask and be asked questions in a real-life setting. Now that she herself is a professional in pharmaceuticals, Dr. Zolnik said that students should know they are considered a very important facet of science and should remember that they are a part of something great. She said students should consider themselves lucky to be a part of such "a beautiful school," with "the best teachers, the best equipment, and the best faculty," and to continue to make their own luck in science.

Upkar Bhardwaj, a 2009 Ph.D. graduate, felt the same way about UConn School of Pharmacy when he applied to the program in 2003. Dr. Bhardwaj attended the University of Delhi in India for his undergraduate career, and after graduating in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science and Master of Pharmacy in pharmacology he decided he wanted to explore pharmaceuticals, and was drawn to the UConn School of Pharmacy because of its prestigious departments, world-renowned faculty, and exciting research.

During his time at UConn, Dr. Bhardwaj worked alongside Dr. Zolnik in Dr. Burgess' lab, studying liposomes in a continued effort to find a standardized *in vitro* testing method for novelty drug forms, and was granted the USP Fellowship in 2005 to assist in his efforts. In Dr. Burgess' lab, he used a device called the USP Apparatus 4, which essentially mimics the human body to help researchers understand the performance of drug products. His research with this device yielded impressive results: Dr. Bhardwaj was actually able to design a novelty dialysis adaptor for the apparatus that would improve its release testing methods and minimize variations in data. He applied for a patent for the adaptor in March 2009, which is now being marketed by SOTAX Corporation, the company that makes the USP Apparatus 4. This kind of impacting discovery is a perfect example of the far-reaching results USP aims for in granting the fellowship each year.

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University of
Connecticut

Contributors:

Elizabeth Anderson, Aloise Brewster, Daniel Buttrey, Ellen Konspore, Daniel Leone, Michael Li, Robert McCarthy, Sara Muldoon and Eunice Omega.

Prescriptives, the official newsletter for the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy and the School of Pharmacy Alumni Association, is published semiannually. Please send comments, news and story ideas to: Elizabeth Anderson, Director of Marketing & Communications, at (860) 486-0847 or via e-mail: liz.anderson@uconn.edu.

Focus on Faculty ~ Michael J. Pikal Named AAPS Distinguished Scientist

By: Eunice Omega

Within Professor Michael J. Pikal's office there is a bookcase that is adorned with 11 empty champagne bottles, one for each doctoral thesis that he has advised. He jokingly put his fingers over his lips indicating that the little indiscretion should be kept a secret but Pikal's achievements could hardly be kept a secret, not after having received one of the most prestigious awards in pharmaceutical sciences, the AAPS Distinguished Pharmaceutical Scientist Award. "It's an enormous honor," Pikal said. "What you recognize is that someone out there appreciates what you've done over the years.

The Distinguished Pharmaceutical Scientist Award is given by the Association of Pharmaceutical Scientist (AAPS), which is the largest professional scientific society within the pharmaceutical industry.

Pikal, who has gained many honors, including being the first Pfizer Distinguished Endowed Chair in Pharmaceutical Technology, humbly acknowledges his achievements. He stated that he didn't want the recognition to change the friendly and supportive relationships that he's built with both faculty and students over the years. When asked if anything has changed for him professionally after receiving the award, Pikal replied, "If what I have been doing resulted in this award, then I probably shouldn't change what I'm doing."

Pikal received his Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from St. John's University, Minnesota. In 1966, he received his Ph. D. in physical chemistry from Iowa State University. In 1972, he became a research scientist for Eli Lilly & Company and began conducting his staple research on freeze drying technology.

Using a series of metaphors, Pikal compared pharmaceutical freeze drying to what people encounter in their everyday lives—food that is used for back packing trips are freeze dried in order to preserve quality. In the case of pharmaceuticals, freeze drying is used to preserve the

quality of a drug or a vaccine product. He said that it helps to avoid the degradation process that comes with manufacture and distribution of some unstable products. "Most of what I've done that is responsible for the award has to do with freeze drying," Pikal said.

Today Pikal is recognized as the "King of Freeze Drying." He conducts a popular graduate course on the subject and also facilitates workshops so students can gain more hands on experience. Pikal also is viewed as a "go to guy" for academics. He has become an advocate for his graduate students, mentoring foreign students from Europe and Asia not only in science, but culturally as well, helping them to adapt to life in America.

Pikal also helped to found the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Technology and Education (NIPTE) dedicated to research and education in pharmaceutical development and manufacturing. One of the NIPTE goals is to revolutionize the curriculum of pharmaceutical science and engineering by introducing the advancements of pharmaceutical technology into the classroom allowing students to become more acquainted with these technologies for future reference.

Pikal attests that changing his career path from industry to academia was a benefit to his freeze drying research. After leaving Eli Lilly & Company, Pikal joined the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences in the School of Pharmacy at UConn in 1996. In academia Pikal has had more freedom when it came to research and even more opportunities to collaborate with other scientists. "UConn had the faculty and a tradition in the kind of science I wanted to do, which was pharmaceutical technology," Pikal said.

He noted that UConn is strategically located near one of Pfizer's research and development sites in Groton, CT. This helps provide collaborations for research and ultimately potential opportunities for students.



Pfizer Distinguished Endowed Chair in Pharmaceutical Technology Dr. Michael J. Pikal celebrated his award with current and former graduate students and colleagues. A fellowship has been endowed in his honor.

Academics has appealed to Pikal because of his nurturing skills and his well known ability to root out a problem rather than settling for a quick fix. Although Pikal has found his niche, he feels that there can be a bridge built between academia and industry that overall will help produce better products. The stronger relationship between industry and academia will also be beneficial for students, helping them to graduate with the right skill sets they need for various types of professions.

Pikal's apparent passion for science and teaching only comes second behind his dedication to his family. He married Janice Klein of Bluffton, Minnesota while he was still in graduate school. They had five children, all of whom pursued careers within the sciences.

With so much accomplished, Pikal still has his eyes set on future endeavors. He plans to focus on freeze drying process design to maximize product quality while minimizing product costs. He also is working with amorphous solids that will allow drugs, normally insoluble, to dissolve and be effective in tablet form.

Pikal's charismatic and friendly attitude, paired with his devotion to the sciences and to his students, helped him to gain the recognition he has today. With the support and many nominations from his colleagues, Pikal was able to board the plane to Los Angeles in November to receive the Distinguished Pharmaceutical Scientist Award. When asked which of his many honors is the most important Pikal stated, "The one I just received of course." He paused to further consider his answer and replied, "This one hands down; it's kind of a big deal." ■

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Dr. Bhardwaj agrees, however, that obstacles are an inevitable part of science that researchers should both expect and learn from. "If there are no obstacles, it's not research!" he laughed, stating that he had many to overcome in his studies, which he did with the help of his supportive advisors and fellow researchers.

He also agrees that the USP Fellowship grants more than just funding by giving the fellows the opportunity to present their research to the whole of the USP. "The USP interacts with the researcher," he said. "I got a chance to go to meetings, meet different people and share my work." Among those he was able to meet was William Brown, USP senior scientific liaison for Biopharmaceutics and Pharmaceutical Dosage Forms, which he said was a great experience. "It was exciting to go to USP," he remembered. "They are so prestigious and well-versed in their field."

Dr. Bhardwaj continues his research now as a senior scientist at Novartis Pharmaceuticals, the fourth largest pharmaceutical company in the world, where he works with the more traditional dosage forms of capsules and tablets. While he says this and the research he conducted at UConn are "like north and south," he saw the opportunity to really contribute to the field of pharmacy by being a part of such a far-reaching company. "I wanted to see the fruits of my labor materialize," Dr. Bhardwaj stated. At Novartis, he is working to make that desire a reality.

Archana Rawat, another student hailing from the University of Delhi, is continuing the research of her predecessors Dr. Zolnik and Dr. Bhardwaj. Rawat is currently enrolled at the UConn School of Pharmacy and expects to graduate in the fall 2010 with a Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences. Her research with microsphere formulation also aims to develop a standardized *in vitro* release testing method to be used as a quality control tool. In 2009, Rawat was granted the USP Fellowship to help her pursue this research, which she hopes will yield results applicable to the entire field of pharmacy. "If I find success, it will be useful to USP and the pharmaceutical industry, so that will give me a great sense of satisfaction," Rawat said.

Rawat has benefitted from USP's assistance in other ways beyond its financial support. USP, for example, has been an asset in helping her acquire microspheres, which are usually difficult to get without a prescription, for her research. Such assistance has helped her move forward in her research, which is a work in progress. "We are getting some positive results," she said. "I'm not towards the end of it, I'm still somewhere in the middle...but I am getting some positive feelings about this project."

Of course, as with any research, Rawat's is not without its difficulties. Her biggest obstacle, she said, is the length of time required for experiments because of the nature of microspheres, which can have releasing periods that last months. Such long-lasting experiments are at an increased risk for interruption by technical failures or power outages, which force her to restart a project she may have already been working on for weeks. When this happens, she says it can be extremely frustrating, but it is important to try again. On the other hand, sometimes when experiments do not go the way she had planned, it can be very exciting. "Sometimes it leads to more exciting and new results that nobody has found before, a breakthrough," Rawat said. For her, this is all the more reason to persist in her research, regardless of the disappointments she may face.

Rawat looked into various programs and graduate schools after deciding to pursue her Ph.D., and when she discovered the work that was being done in Dr. Burgess' lab she knew it would be a good match for her interests. "I applied here and I was very lucky to be accepted into the lab," she reflected. "I was able to pursue the project I always wanted." For other students who would like to apply for a USP Fellowship for research funding, Rawat suggests considering a project that falls under USP's areas of interest to increase their chances. The experience, she said, has been invaluable.

Kristyn Greco is no stranger to this application process. She is currently enjoying her second year of financial funding from the USP Fellowship. Greco was first granted the fellowship in 2007, which helped in her continuing research on enhanced drug solubility. She explains that drugs taken orally often have a poor solubility and

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dissolution rate, which decreases the drug's effectiveness in the body. Her goal is to find ways to increase effectiveness by increasing dissolution rates after ingestion without decreasing solubility.

Winning the fellowship in 2007 funded a wide range of research, including success in designing the dissolution apparatus that is now being used to perform this research. This great accomplishment, however, was not achieved without some setbacks. Greco explained that some of the biggest obstacles in her research resulted from malfunctions in the apparatus, especially when it was new. She was able to work through these problems and has reaped many benefits from using this equipment." Using the apparatus, we can actually view the solids during dissolution using microscopy," she explained. "We can see if a precipitation is occurring and in certain cases, we can actually use equipment to identify what is precipitating at the surface. It's unique in that way." Greco and her team applied for a patent for the apparatus in 2008, and are waiting for the results.

Because of her research success during her first year with the fellowship, Greco has been able to graduate from testing typical dissolution mediums, like water and buffers, to tests that are more relevant to the body in her second year of USP funding. She hopes for continued success in her research, as solubility is "an encompassing subject" that is useful for the entire pharmaceutical industry.

It was the prospect of becoming involved in the research being performed at UConn that drew Greco to its School of Pharmacy. After graduating *magna cum laude* from Northeastern University with a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering in 2001, Greco worked for a few years as a research engineer at Alkermes, Inc. before enrolling in UConn's Ph.D. program. "I really liked the research that was being done here," she reflected. "It was practical yet innovative, so I thought that I could really use my knowledge and what I learned here in a practical setting."

Greco said she is very grateful for the opportunities afforded to her by receiving the USP Fellowship not once, but twice.

"I'm really thankful that I was recognized for two years for my research," she said. "This is what I like to do, regardless of whether people recognize me or not, but it's always nice if someone takes notice of what I do and appreciates it."

Overall, the success of the USP fellows has brought prestige to the School of Pharmacy and has helped make the pharmaceutical sciences recognized as one of the best graduate programs on campus. ■

Dean's Message

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health care professional students at migrant farm worker clinics in the state. Recently, we have begun to pair pharmacy alumni with our students at these clinics allowing them to work together in caring for this under-served patient population.

Despite the difficult financial environment, the School of Pharmacy awarded more than \$170,000 in scholarships this spring, \$30,000 more than last year. We are very grateful for the continued support of our scholarship sponsors. This year's new scholarships include the Capuano Fund, Griebell Family Fund, William M. Hait Family Scholarship, and the Bryan F. Zembrowski Pharmaceutical Industry Scholarship.

Several of our students participated in the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation 2010 Symposium. School of Pharmacy Urban Service Track Scholars Shamsul Arif and Vicky Liu assisted with the manning of the Connecticut AHEC/UST table and did an exceptional job engaging students. Approximately 200 students, primarily from under-represented backgrounds, attended from UConn and several other colleges. ■

The Papa Family ~ A School of Pharmacy Tradition

By: Eunice Omega

The legacy of the Papa family began in 1978 at Middlesex Memorial Hospital in Middletown, Connecticut. Joe Papa had just graduated from UConn and was working there as a pharmacist when he met Nancy, a nurse. They were married in 1983 and their son, Chris was born three years later. Two more sons Matt and Adam followed in 1988 and 1992.

Chris Papa, a P3 who received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy Studies in May 2009, and his brother Matthew, a P2, are sons of alumnus Joseph C. Papa, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Perrigo Company. Both Chris and Matt find themselves following in their father's pharmaceutical footsteps.

Nancy explained how, since childhood, both boys displayed a natural knack for math and science. Nancy remembered how Chris' pre-school teacher pointed out that he was doing math of a second grader. "He was subtracting and carrying numbers over," Nancy said. "His teachers were even talking about the possibility of him skipping a grade."

Chris fondly remembered how as a child, his principal and teachers nominated him to enter brain quest competitions. It wasn't much of a surprise when Chris chose pharmacy as his major. "Pharmacy is a good fit," Chris said. "Definitely challenging but not really boring."

It was a different story for Matt who has the natural academic talent for pharmacy but also has a great love of sports. "I wanted to be a football coach but my father gave me the logistics of making that career choice," Matthew said.

The brothers stated that their father never really pushed them to pursue a career in pharmacy but gave them a realistic point of view of what they might encounter in the future with other professions. "Joe always encouraged them to do what they want but he also informed them that health care is an industry that's always growing," Nancy said.

Joe worked in Middlesex Memorial Hospital for two years before going to Northwestern to obtain his masters in

business administration. He graduated from Northwestern in 1983 after which he worked for various pharmaceutical companies such as Ciba-Geigy, Geneva, Cardinal Health and DuPont. As a result of company mergers, the Papa family experienced a number of moves including Switzerland, Chicago and Colorado. They currently reside in New Jersey.

Not only did the Papa boys choose their father's career, they chose his alma mater as well. Coincidentally, Matt lived in North Campus his sophomore year in the same area fondly remembered by Joe and other UConn alums as "The Jungle."

Chris considered Rutgers but the fact that it was so close to home was unappealing. Both brothers are athletic and have a great love of sports and Matt took that into consideration when applying to schools. He found that UConn had the big sports factor he was looking for as well as the opportunity to connect with extended family in Connecticut.

Matt wanted to play football for Wilks University in Pennsylvania and considered that option but found the UConn School of Pharmacy to be a better option. It was a plus that his brother was attending the school as well. "The school was a good size and my brother was here. We were always close," Matt said.

It was beneficial to have the brothers attend the School of Pharmacy together. The Papa's feel the school is considerably more difficult since the time their father attended. Being there together allowed them to create a support system in order to excel. "Joe said he couldn't do it again," Nancy said. "He said it's much more rigorous now." "Our dad said it was much easier back in his day," Chris said. "I guess because the technological realm of medicine is more advanced also makes it more difficult. There's a lot more to know."

Where the two generations of Papa men may differ would possibly be in career paths. Joe only worked a few years as a retail pharmacist until he got his MBA and went to work in the pharmaceutical industry. Currently he is the CEO of Perrigo Company one of the leading global



Christopher, Joseph, Nancy, Adam, and Matthew Papa are UConn True Blue!

healthcare suppliers that manufacture and distribute over-the-counter and prescription pharmaceuticals as well as other consumer products.

With all his success, Papa has willingly given back to his alma mater by, in 2005, gifting a conference room to the newly built School of Pharmacy. He also helped to found the School of Pharmacy Advisory Board to bring together a diverse group of alumni and friends in order to provide excellent professional and graduate education and overall to improve the quality of healthcare. "Joe had humble beginnings and credits UConn for his success," Nancy said.

As for the Papa boys, the future may not be so certain. Next year Chris will start his rotations which will include working in nine different locations over a nine-month span. He is interested in working within industry but isn't sure if he wants to go further and get his MBA. He already participated in a nine-week, summer internship in Danbury, Connecticut with Boehringer Ingelheim, the largest, family-owned, private pharmaceutical company. He worked in the project management department and witnessed how the company runs and learned about the functions of each department.

Much like his father, Chris has done charitable works through his fraternity Kappa Psi. He stated that he feels it's important that pharmacy students have a support system for each other and that's what Kappa Psi provides.

Matt, on the other hand, definitely wants to go to business school but is not sure if he wants to go towards industry, like his father, or into community pharmacy practice.

Either way, the Papa family is one that is very close. Nancy and Joe Papa reside in Morris County, New Jersey three hours away from their sons, but the family does what they can in order to keep in touch. Matt plays for the UConn Rugby Team and the family drives up to see his games and, when she can, Nancy also sends her boys care packages.

There is a 3rd Papa son, Adam, who is graduating this year from high school; though it seems that Adam won't be travelling the pharmacy path like his father and brothers. "Adam most likely will come to UConn but I don't know about pharmacy," Chris said. "He's really interested in history and World War II."

Adam is also interested in business; with his negotiation skills, Nancy could see him pursuing a law career. "Joe dreams about one day having his own pharmaceutical company where all three boys could work," said Nancy. ■



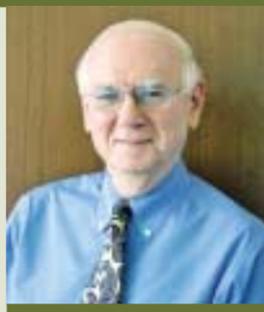
At the beginning of each year, we make promises to ourselves about what we wish to attain in the coming months. As days and weeks pass, we often fall back into old habits and suddenly we realize that spring is almost here and we need to reenergize our attempts. This year the urgency will be much greater as we embark on a new decade. The decisions and plans will carry so much more weight and importance. When we make these plans and promises to ourselves of course, there will be the usual ones of self-improvement and motivation. The goals that require the most effort and attention however are those that attempt to improve the world outside of our own small sphere.

In an effort to prepare students for the opportunities opening to them, the School of Pharmacy has partnered with the Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and Nursing. An array of outreach programs allow the students to interact with and provide service to areas of the local community. Last summer the students worked at a clinic that was set up to help the itinerant workers that come to harvest the crops in the Hartford area. Students have staffed booths at local fairs to increase medication awareness and have staffed health fairs for blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes screening. All of these events are great learning experiences for our students. The time spent in these outreach programs not only improves the student's ability to practice their profession but also provides the community with a valuable service from the university.

As the school expands these outreach and experiential programs, the need for mentors and preceptors increases. Alumni Association members have helped at the Migrant Farm Clinics along with the students providing support and insight. Opportunities are also available to mentor students within pharmacies throughout the state. These programs provide significant learning opportunities for the students and at the same time provide us, the established practitioners, a chance to see new directions in pharmacy. It is a win-win situation; both participants come away with new insight in the practice of this profession.

As the decade begins and we individually plan to make changes in our lives let us resolve to work communally toward the greater good. Our profession affords us many opportunities to have a positive impact on the lives of others. We, at the Alumni Association, work toward the goal of helping the school prepare students for pharmacy practice. As members of this group, we ask you to participate in our work on these projects. Please contact the School of Pharmacy and arrange to mentor a student, become a preceptor or participate in a community program. Dan Leone can provide you with the contacts and introductions needed to begin the process. Please do not wait until you read about the events in the next newsletter. The students, the community and the school need your help now. Let us work together to achieve our goals. ■

From the Executive Secretary ~ Daniel C. Leone '53



Save the Date for Homecoming!

Join the School of Pharmacy Alumni Association as we join with the UConn Alumni Association to celebrate homecoming on Saturday, October 2, 2010. The Huskies will face the Commodores of Vanderbilt University at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, CT.

I would like to add my voice to that of President Konspore in asking alumni to participate in the school's outreach programs. Our students can learn a lot working with pharmacists at migrant worker health clinics and health fairs. Alumni can get satisfaction in knowing that they are helping people who would otherwise not be receiving health care.

In the same theme, the Pharmacy Alumni Association, in cooperation with Associate Dean Andrea Hubbard and Pharmacy Student Government President Carlie Hersh Gordon, is starting an alumni/student mentoring program. Called "Take a Pharmacy Student to Lunch," the program will connect PI students with alumni who would meet a student for lunch and converse with the student about their pharmacy career. PI students are just beginning their education as pharmacy students and are eager to learn more about the profession and the options that they have. Here again, it's an opportunity for alumni to give students the benefit of their experience. All it will cost you is an hour of your time and the cost of a lunch. You will be hearing more about the program in the near future. If you are interested, in either the outreach program or the mentoring program, send me an e-mail at daniel.leone@uconn.edu.

Four of our alumni were honored at the 40th annual awards and reunion banquet on April 10th. Receiving a Distinguished Alumni Award for industry was Susan M. Cady. Susan received her MS degree in pharmaceutical sciences in 1977 from the school and is currently a senior scientist in the Formulation Department

at Merial, LTD. She has spent her career in the animal health industry, working for several companies in a variety of pharmaceutical development roles. She has published numerous articles and is a co-inventor on more than 20 patents. She has been actively involved in the Controlled Release Society holding several committee chair and office positions.

Marion F. Ehrich received a Distinguished Alumni Award for her career in academia. Marion received a PhD in pharmacology and toxicology from the school in 1975. She is the co-director of the Laboratory for Neurotoxicity Studies and professor of pharmacology and toxicology at Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. She is board certified by the American Board of Toxicology. Marion has done extensive research on the toxic effects of pesticides and mycotoxins and is an internationally recognized expert in the field. She has served on several editorial boards and national committees on toxicology.

Karol G. Wollenberg was presented a Distinguished Alumni Award for pharmacy practice. She graduated cum laude with a BS in pharmacy from the school in 1975. She then completed a residency in hospital pharmacy administration at Lenox Hill Hospital in 1976 and received an MS in Clinical Pharmacy in 1998 from St. John's University. From 1998 to 2000, she held various pharmacy positions at the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center. In 2000, she became vice-president and apothecary in chief at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. In this position,

she is responsible for drug utilization policies and pharmacy services at several hospital sites and develops and maintains annual drug budgets of approximately \$140 million. Karol has made many presentations at pharmacy meeting and been the author or co-author of articles in several pharmacy publications. She has been an active member of the American Society of Health System Pharmacists.

Sherman R. Gershman was presented the first School of Pharmacy Exceptional Service Award presented by the Pharmacy Alumni Association. In the future, the award will be presented periodically to an alumnus/a who has provided exceptional service to the school and, especially, to the education of the students. Sherman has volunteered as an adjunct clinical instructor in both Dr. Facchinetti's counseling course and Dean McCarthy's communications course. He has participated in Dr. Fitzgerald's class on pharmacy practice and has worked with students at the migrant farm workers health clinics. He also served for several terms as a member of the UConn Pharmacy Alumni Association Board of Directors and as an organizer of his 1951 class reunions.

Specials thanks to all those alumni who have paid either a life membership or 2010 annual dues. If you have not yet sent in your dues payment, please use the dues form in this newsletter. ■

University of Connecticut Pharmacy Alumni Association

Officers 2009 -- 2011

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Ellen Konspore '79

Vice President
Donald Zettervall '79

Secretary
Karen B. Rubinfeld '87

Treasurer
Austin Bebyn '86

Executive Secretary
Daniel C. Leone '53

Board of Directors

Term Expires May 2010

Martha L. Asarisi '81
Thomas Buckley '82
Margherita Giuliano '75
V. Michael Guertin '66
Jennifer Judd '04
Jill Loser '07
David St. Germain '98 '03

Term Expires May 2011

Edgar Albuja '93
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David J. Cooper '75
Alicia A. Gudaitis '01
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Term Expires May 2012

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Robert Dana '63
Sandra J. Grillo '84
Keith Lyke '92
Edward Sklanka '74
Peter Tyczkowski '78
Elliott Tertes '62

Student Representatives

Brian Bachyrycz '10
Carlie Hersh Gordon '11

Richard B. Laschever '52 returned to pharmacy practice after 20 years as a consultant for Optimus.

Kenneth G. Hermann '60 retired at the end of 2009 after a long career that includes 20 years of service in the Air Force Medical Service Corps, CEO of Creighton University Medical Center, vice president of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Centers and as a Joint Commission senior consultant in hospitals throughout the world. He has been married to his wife, Camilla, for 47 years and they have 4 grown children and 2 grandchildren.

Richard Gannon '77 received the 2009 NASPA Innovative Pharmacy Practice Award at the CPA annual meeting.

Peter Tyczkowski '78 has been named the 2009 Bowl of Hygeia recipient for his service to the community.

John Dobbins '79 received the 2009 Professional Pharmacy Performance Award at the CPA annual meeting.

Sheila Dorval '81 was presented with the Special Recognition Award at the 2009 CPA annual meeting.

Mukhtar Shihabeddin PhD '84 e-mailed a Happy New Year wish to all alumni from Amman, Jordan where he is director general of ACDIMA.

Matthew Carrano '85 sends his best wishes for health, happiness and joy to the 25th anniversary class of 1985. He says he appreciates and values the profession of pharmacy.

Sandra Betterini Popp '88 writes from Pennsylvania that she misses UConn a great deal, watches every game she can to keep connected, and appreciates receiving e-mails from the school.

You can get e-mails, just like Sandra, by sending your e-mail address to the School of Pharmacy at: pharmacymco@uconn.edu.



Catherine Ulbricht '94 is Natural Standard CEO and senior attending pharmacist at Mass General Hospital. Natural Standard provides evidence based information about complementary and alternative therapies.

Maria Summa '94 was named the 2009 Daniel C. Leone Pharmacist of the Year and presented with the award at the CPA annual meeting.

Brad Curtis '99 has been board certified in oncology. He is employed at Eastern Maine Medical Center.

David Crosby '06 and **Brandon Brodeur '06** have become Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialists. They are employed by Eastern Maine Medical Center.

Aaron P. Hussey '07 completed his pharmacy practice residency at UMass Memorial Medical Center in June 2008, has moved to Boston and works at Brigham and Women's Hospital as a senior clinical pharmacist. He has also achieved BCPS status from the American College of Clinical Pharmacy.

Meghan Wilkosz '03 and **Emmett Sullivan '93** were installed as president and vice-president, respectively, of the Connecticut Pharmacists Association in October.

Leslie Matthews '09 was elected chief PGY1 pharmacy resident at West Virginia University Hospital.

Sharad Murdande PhD '10 won the Pfizer Global R&D Achievement Award (PGRD's highest honor). Dr. Murdande commented that the educational and research training that he received at our institution and from Drs. Bogner and Pikal contributed significantly in making him a better scientist. ■

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our alumni and friends.

Jerome S. Bender '59
June 19, 2008

Beverly A. Euerle '63
July 20, 2008

Richard O. Walsh '55
December 10, 2008

Robert F. Woodworth '61
January 11, 2009

Walter T. Walsh Jr. '60
February 18, 2009

Alan E. Pressman '55
April 2009

Herbert O. Sable '49
October 1, 2009

Ruth P. Summers '49
October 7, 2009

Charles A. Lavin '52
October 31, 2009

John J. Iacurci '63
October 31, 2009

Jonathan E. Kachila '75
November 18, 2009

Harry L. Savitt '49
November 23, 2009

Katelin Raye Zaslow '05
November 22, 2009

Karen A. LaCasse '82
December 22, 2009

Barry Harvey '88
December 28, 2009

James J. Haversat '48
January 8, 2010

William A. Wieler '52
January 2010

Gordon McGuire '52
January 31, 2010

Ralph Berger '44
February 6, 2010

Norman A. Powers '53
February 27, 2010

Frances J. McGrath '54
March 19, 2010



James T. Malaney '10
January 1, 2010

Sadly, 2010 began with the loss of P4 student, Jim Malaney, on New Year's Day. Jim had been fighting a valiant battle against bone cancer for the last two years; he was just months away from graduation. In his eulogy, Dean McCarthy remarked, "The late Senator Ted Kennedy in eulogizing his nephew John said that he had every gift except the gift of years; the same can be said about Jim Malaney. In my 25 years in pharmacy education, every once in a while a student comes along who combine an engaging personality, great intelligence, and, most importantly, a genuine sense of caring about others; Jim was such a student. In his personal statement in his application to the School of Pharmacy, Jim gave us a sense of the kind of individual

we were admitting: "For my first job, I worked at a summer camp for dysfunctional children sponsored by Bridges Community Support System. This was my first real experience helping others. From mentoring children to mediating families, I found that the thanks I received for my efforts were both rewarding and self-fulfilling. I further went on to help others through key club and a Natural Helpers program. I enjoyed helping people, but was now looking for a way to help others through my knowledge of science." In his 3 1/2 years in our school, Jim helped and inspired many people: patients at the VA in West Haven and at CVS Pharmacy, his faculty & classmates in the School of Pharmacy, and his many, many dear friends." The university will grant Jim his Doctor of Pharmacy degree posthumously at Commencement in May. A scholarship fund will be established in Jim's name.

Marra's - Keeping it in the Family

By: Sara Muldoon

In 1931, James V. Marra started Marra's Pharmacy next to his family's fruit store in upstate New York. Throughout the decades, the pharmacy has been passed down, remaining as a family owned and run business. Today, Marra's daughter Barbara Marra McDonald, and her son John T. McDonald and niece, have become part of the business and continue to serve the community that James Marra built.

McDonald, a 1958 graduate of the UConn School of Pharmacy, has been working in her father's pharmacy since she was thirteen years old. "I don't really know why my father started the pharmacy," she said, "but I could guess that he too loved serving the community and was a very imaginative business man."

Having been with the pharmacy for so long, McDonald has certainly seen some changes since it all began. When McDonald was a freshman, her pharmacy professor questioned her about her beliefs about the future of pharmacy. Although she was unable to recollect what she said at the time, she did note that "there was no way I could ever have predicted the changes I have seen in the last 51 years."

When she began working in the pharmacy prescriptions sold somewhere between \$0.75 and \$1.95, and payments were made in cash. It wasn't until the 1960s the insurance prescription plans became popular. Today, less than 20% of prescriptions are paid in cash. "Today the insurance plans and the drug formularies, controlled by manufacture rebates in many cases, drive the dispensing of pharmaceutical drugs. The PBMs, Medco, CareMark, Express Scripts, and others control the reimbursement schedules and mail order pharmacy plans," she explained, "They present a struggle for the independent pharmacy to run a business and in some cases eliminate the ability to fill prescriptions."

Another thing that has changed is the drugs themselves. When McDonald was in school they studied pharmacognosy because most of the drugs used were from plants. Penicillin G was also popular until Penicillin VK came out, and the Achromycin. Now, McDonald says, "these are barely used because they have been replaced by 'bigger drugs' to fight infection." Another huge difference is that barbiturates used to be the drug of choice for abuse and cocaine was used as an anesthetic for the eye, and there were no legal generic drugs.

Since then, Marra's pharmacy has added a medical equipment department as well as mastectomy fittings. "When we added the medical equipment it was because I saw a need for our customers. It was a good thing to do," said McDonald, who realized this when a friend came in needing a breast prosthesis that at the time she was unable to help with. She took this case to heart and today the pharmacy now serves this need. "If a customer wanted something I would always try and get it for them, not because of the profit I could make but to please them," McDonald explained. "I would conclude that ultimate customer service has always been my goal."

While drugs and service areas may change, the same great service and community have not. McDonald and her family have noticed a lot of the same families continuing to come into Marra's through the generations. "We have customers that I have known since I was a young girl, and some since they were infants," she said.

McDonald, in consideration of being prompt for her customers, has been unable to fill prescriptions for a few years now since her legs gave out and the computer went too far ahead, but hopes that she has "minded her own business" as her father told her to do and provided the best service possible. She looks forward to retirement within the next year, but can rest assured that Marra's is to remain in good hands with high standards with the current and upcoming generations of the family. ■

Career Change is the Focus of a Lunch & Learn by UConn Alumnus Richard Minoff

By: Eunice Omega

On November 11th, managing partner of I Global Partners, LLC, Richard T. Minoff brought a message about climbing the ladder of success to pharmacy students at the weekly interactive series, Lunch & Learn. Although Minoff does not have a traditional pharmaceutical background he was happy to share his experience with pharmacy students. "I enjoy doing this," Minoff said. "I've made some career mistakes so I like to mentor people to not make those mistakes or if they have, how they could learn from them."

Minoff, who graduated from UConn in 1975, began the discussion by reminiscing about the intimidating position he was in his senior year. He graduated with a degree in political science and international affairs and initially wanted to obtain his Ph.D. in political science but couldn't afford the tuition. Instead he decided to go to the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. His company, I Global Partners, is a pharmaceuticals and life sciences consulting firm.

"Eight-five percent of graduating students will change their careers at some point in the future," Minoff stated. He stressed that students shouldn't be discouraged by this fact and that they should consider any opportunity handed to them. Minoff's PowerPoint presentation documented the journey he took to find his ideal career. The titles of each chapter, such as chapter two, "Can't I Find Something to Maintain My Interest," showed how Minoff constantly evaluated each move he made. At each point on his career path he learned about what he didn't like and what his interest were. "It's really important to find out what you like to do and what you don't like to do," Minoff said. "If you're not having fun, get out of that field of work."

After a series of diverse jobs, Minoff discovered he had an interest in science and from that he began marketing drugs. In 30 years, Minoff said that he worked for nine companies, had 25 job assignments, launched over 75 brands, and worked for two Fortune 500 companies and two global communications agencies; but most importantly he felt that he's touched lives. He shared a story about a woman who brought him to a cemetery where she should have been buried after battling leukemia; but due to a drug Minoff helped to brand and market, she is still alive today.

Kim Widmann, a PI student, took Minoff's message about hard work and self discovery to heart. After high school she worked for seven years before she decided to pursue pharmacy. "I enjoy attending the Lunch & Learns, it's nice to get a perspective from those working in and outside of pharmacy," Widmana said. "Its true what (Minoff) said, you have to constantly challenge yourself and reevaluate yourself."

Minoff ended his lecture by sharing this advice with students, "Start early, seek guidance and learn who you are. Challenge yourself and don't be afraid to fail." ■



UConn Alumnus Richard T. Minoff shared his story with School of Pharmacy students.

We're Wishing on a Star

Once upon a time in a Disney film, a little cricket named Jiminy was wishing upon a star with a puppet named Pinocchio. In the film, the Blue Fairy granted some wishes and Pinocchio became a real boy. We're looking for some real stars who might grant the similarly deserving wishes of our talented faculty. If you are interested in becoming a School of Pharmacy Fairy Godmother, and fulfilling one of these, or another wish, you can contact Lisa Brown, assistant director of development, at 860-486-9342 or lbrown@foundation.uconn.edu

I'm Wishing...

Estimated Cost: Varies

Dr. Robin Bogner is wishing for compounding equipment and prescription packaging supplies like bottles and vials. In-kind donations are welcomed.

Going Supernova...

Estimated Cost: \$300,000

Dr. Robin Bogner needs HPLC and Mass Spectrometry equipment to monitor drug and degraded concentrations. In-kind donations are welcomed.

Exploring the Stars...

Estimated Cost: \$20,000

Dr. Robin Bogner needs dissolution equipment to monitor drug release from pharmaceutical dosage forms. In-kind donations are welcomed.

Reaching for the Stars...

Estimated Cost: \$1000 each

Pharmacy Librarian Sharon Giovenale wishes that she could replace 10 computers each year in the Hait Family Computer Lab. The 30 computers get a rigorous workout from students reaching for the stars.

Shooting Stars...

Estimated Cost: Varies

Students participating in School of Pharmacy Study Abroad Programs could use some help defraying the cost of shooting across the globe.

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Film Star...

Estimated Cost: \$20,500

Dr. Jill Fitzgerald wishes to upgrade the video taping capabilities used in the Pharmacy Practice Lab. Students and volunteer "patients" are taped during mock counseling sessions to improve student skills.

How I Wonder...

Estimated Cost: \$12,000

Dr. Jill Fitzgerald is wondering what CE program participants really think. She is wishing for an audience response system to allow for more interactive continuing education programs.

Star Studded Computing Power...

Estimated Cost: \$96,000

Researchers Bodhi Chaudhuri, David Grant, Davy Kalonia, and Olga Vinogradova all process enormous amounts of data and need more computing power than that required to send the first rockets into space. They are wishing for an IBM Blade Center H with 6 Blades (2.80GHz processors; 25GB of RAM), an IBM Data Back-Up Storage System N3300 Model A10, and associated support to run their sophisticated software systems. ■

Super Star Alumni Support APhA Student Travel

Special appreciation is extended to the following alumni who supported student travel to the APhA convention in Washington, DC. You are super stars!

George F. Kirkpatrick Jr. '71
John A. Capuano '73
Janet Thomason '83
Christopher R. Fortier '03
Rachel S. Meyers '05
Sandra E. A. Popp '88
Richard T. Carbray Jr. '75
Cynthia E. Huges '75
V. Michael Guertin '66
Allan D. Anderson '62
Bryan F. Zembrowski '07
Jacqueline M. Murphy '78
Wennis Demetrius-Wilson '07
Renee S. Larouche '09
Karl A. Nieforth
Edward Schreiner Jr. '82
Daniel C. Leone '53
José Manautou
Michael T. Moore '94
David J. Cooper '75
Ellen S. Jennings '88
Robert L. Dana '63
Lois Reynolds '74
Edward Silver '49

Kappa Psi Graduate Chapter Reorganized

The Connecticut Graduate Chapter of Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity has been reorganized and the new officers are seeking Kappa Psi alumni to join. The officers have set goals for this year including supporting the brothers of Nu Chapter by helping obtain supplies need for pledge related ceremonies. They are also planning an alumni reunion of Kappa Psi brothers and a golf tournament in the summer. Elected officers were Regent David St. Germain, Secretary José Manautou, Treasurer Kevin Sweeney and Nu Chapter Student Representative Will Anctil. Kappa Psi alumni who want to join the graduate chapter and support their goals can send a check made payable to "Kappa Psi" for the annual dues of \$50 to Kappa Psi Grad Chapter Dues, c/o Kevin Sweeney, 32-7 Upper Pattagansett Road, East Lyme, CT 06333. You can get further information from David St. Germain. E-mail him at: dasrx@hotmail.com.

Alumni Association Dues Bill ~ 2010

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other _____

Name: _____ Class Year: _____

Address: _____ Is this a new address? _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Employer / Business Name: _____

Annual Dues \$25.00 Life Membership \$250.00 [Certificate to Follow]

Please make checks payable to UCONN PHARMACY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and send with this form to UConn Pharmacy Alumni Association · 69 North Eagleville Road, Unit 3092 Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3092

What's New With You?

We want to hear from you! Please use this form to tell us about address changes, personal and professional honors, or everyday events that we can use for the Alumni Update column. Mail To: University of Connecticut, School of Pharmacy Alumni Association, 69 North Eagleville Road, Unit 3092 ~ Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3092, or e-mail us at: daniel.leone@uconn.edu

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other _____

Name: _____ Class Year: _____

Maiden/Former Name: _____ Spouse Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: () _____ Work Phone: () _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Green Mel

Employer / Business Name: _____

Title: _____

Business Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

News: _____

A New Season for Stefanie Nigro

By: Sara Muldoon

This is a big season for Stefanie Nigro. Not only is she a new pharmacy practice faculty member at the School of Pharmacy, she is also a newlywed. Stefanie and Neil Tejwani (who met in college) tied the knot on October 24, 2009. For those “The Biggest Loser” fans, yes, that is Neil Tejwani from season four. In fact, it was Nigro who encouraged him to go on the show. Nigro says, “Being in the health profession, I was worried that he may not make it to age 30 as he had been previously diagnosed with high blood pressure and pre-diabetes. I heard of “The Biggest Loser” and encouraged him to at least send in an application...well the rest I guess is history.” Television and marriage aside, the couple remains busy and successful, especially Nigro who is taking on a new role here at UConn.

Only a few years out of college, one might wonder how this woman managed to accomplish so much in so little time, and how she got where she is today. Originally Nigro had not intended to enter the field of pharmacy. In fact, she had entered Northeastern University with the intention of majoring in criminal justice, but realized that this was not the career choice for her. “I could not envision what I would do with that degree,” explains Nigro. It was a pharmacist with whom she had previously worked that told her she could make a good pharmacist because she was “a quick learner and very personable.”

During her residency training Nigro took a teaching course that opened her eyes and pushed her towards an academic position at UConn. “To be honest, I was nervous to teach future pharmacists. What could I possibly teach them with only two years of experience?” The class, as Nigro says, was “the highlight of my training.” It taught her a new methodology of teaching and what it means to be an effective teacher. “It was there that I saw teaching and learning as a shared responsibility between teacher and student.”

Now, Nigro holds a Pharm.D. from Northeastern University. She graduated in 2006, and then pursued a full time community pharmacy position at CVS pharmacy in New York. “A residency was always part of my long term plan, but due to financial reasons, I decided to push it back almost two years,” she says. After this she completed post graduate training at Northeastern in affiliation with Harbor Health Services, Inc. which had an emphasis on ambulatory care and adult teaching. Awards are no exception to her accomplishments. As a student in 2006, she won the APhA One-to-One Patient Counseling Award, which is given to 20 pharmacists and five student pharmacists who demonstrate excellence in patient counseling and care. She also won a 2009 AACP/Wal-Mart Scholarship. This allowed Nigro and her faculty mentor to attend the AACP Annual Meeting and AACP Teacher’s Seminar in Boston, Massachusetts.

The newest professional step for Nigro is right here at UConn as an assistant clinical professor for the School of Pharmacy. She will be co-coordinating both the Non-Prescription Medications course and the Introduction to Pharmacy Practice lab. She is also in the process of starting a clinical pharmacy services at the Community Health Center of New Britain, Inc. Her interests include promoting patient self advocacy through health behavioral change/education, utilizing motivational interviewing techniques, delivering medication therapy management to under-served populations, diabetes care and management, increasing medication adherence rates, and utilizing various educational techniques to foster active learning in the classroom. She says, “I am passionate about promoting patient self-advocacy for their own health-care. I feel that this comes from being a caring pharmacist who has the ability to educate patients to give them the tools/knowledge to become their own health care advocate.”

In the next few years Nigro hopes to be “fully integrated at her practice site promoting the need for pharmacy expertise in the primary care setting,” and “to prove how valuable a pharmacist can be.” ■



From White Dress to White Coat

Dr. Stefanie Nigro, assistant clinical professor of pharmacy practice, enjoys her wedding day with husband Neil Tejwani. In her white coat, promoting pharmacy in the primary care setting is the focus of her practice.

First Year Experience Benefits Freshmen

By: Eunice Omega

Sharon Giovenale, FYE program coordinator and pharmacy librarian, proudly sat in the back of the class and watched the students of the Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community present the culmination of all they had learned that semester. Their final project was to work in groups and interview one faculty member with different backgrounds in pharmacy. Milanel Perez’s group interviewed an assistant clinical professor and learned all about her background in clinical pharmacy. Perez said that often professionals come to class and speak about different aspects of pharmacy. “You get to learn more in depth about other fields in pharmacy,” Perez said.

The Pre-Pharmacy FYE course is designed to assist pre-pharmacy students with the transition to higher education at UConn. “We really try to acclimate the students to the university and pharmacy and help them get used to the intense classes that they’ll be taking in the future,” said Giovenale. She felt that the students not only develop great relationships with each other but also with the faculty.

A few years after Giovenale acquired the position as FYE program coordinator, the class grew to three sections available to pre-pharmacy students living within the Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community. When asked how she felt this partnership was beneficial for the students, Giovenale stated, “I think there’s a lot of teamwork involved in classes these days, even pharmacists must be involved in group work. They need to have the skills to interact with people.”

Rachel Merson, P3 and a mentor for the FYE class, also lived in the Pre-Pharmacy Learning Community and said that most of the friends that she has now she met in the community and her FYE class. “I think living in the community and taking the FYE course gives students a leg up for when they apply to the School of Pharmacy.”

The soul purpose of the FYE course isn’t to only prepare students to enter into the School of Pharmacy. Giovenale has

Student News Briefs

Graduate Students

Priscilla Encarnacao, a UConn MSP graduate student in Dr. Brian Aneskievich’s laboratory, won 3rd place in the poster session competition at the Northeast Chapter of Society of Toxicology.

Igor Gurevich, an American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education (AFPE) fellow in Dr. Brian Aneskievich’s laboratory, was awarded the 2nd place prize in the graduate student poster competition at the Mid-Atlantic Pharmacology Society (MAPS) meeting taking place in Philadelphia, PA.

Ekneet Sahni, a graduate student of Dr. Bodhi Chaudhuri, presented a podium presentation on “Estimation of Optimal Coating Performance Via Optimal Mixing Conditions in a Pancoater” in the session of “Agglomeration and Granulation” at the Annual Meeting of American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) held in Nashville, TN.

Sudhir Verma was one of five winners of IPEC Foundation’s Excipient Graduate Student Award at the AAPS Annual Meeting Award in Los Angeles.

structured the course so that students can explore all types of career options before they make a definite choice. She encourages students to shadow a pharmacist or work at a local pharmacy to help them discover if pharmacy is something that they really want to do. “They get a chance to explore a little bit. Some students decide to do something else and that’s fine,” she said.

The FYE sections are taught by both faculty and staff within the school. Sometimes faculty and staff members teach as teams. Each brings with them a different perspective to the class, but the common bond is a concern for the students and their transition to university life. ■

Doctor of Pharmacy Students

P3 student, **Sabina Alikhanov**, served as the coordinator for the APhA-ASP Midyear Regional Meeting held in Hartford, CT. The UConn chapter recognized Sabina for her dedication and exceptional work.

P3 student, **Janet Cho**, after her summer research in Dr. Bodhi Chaudhuri’s lab presented a poster titled, “Non Intrusive Characterization of Powder Mixing using Image Processing Algorithms” in the Undergraduate Summer Research Symposium held at UConn.

Dr. Diana Sobieraj and P4 student, **Craig Freyer**, presented a poster, “Probable Drug Interaction between Prickly Pear Cactus, Glipizide, and Metformin in a Patient with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus,” at the ASHP Midyear Meeting.

P4 student, **Nicole Jordan**, will be part of the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center team at the Clarion Root Cause Analysis Competition.

P3 student, **Kelly Sullivan**, was elected as the APhA-ASP Regional Delegate for Region I. She will serve as the voice of region and work towards promoting the regions ideas and policies so that they may be represented at the APhA-ASP Annual Meeting.

P3 student, **Danielle Voisine**, was appointed to a national committee within ASCP, the Geriatric Academic Roundtable. She is the first student representative to ever be appointed to this committee. ■



Ten students attended SNPhA’s National Conference in Downtown Chicago supported in part by Walgreens Pharmacy. Members met with student chapter co-founder Ketyisia Amboise, who is now a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



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It's Rhyme Time...

If you are a poet,
 I'm sure you know it.
 Now is the time,
 You really must show it.

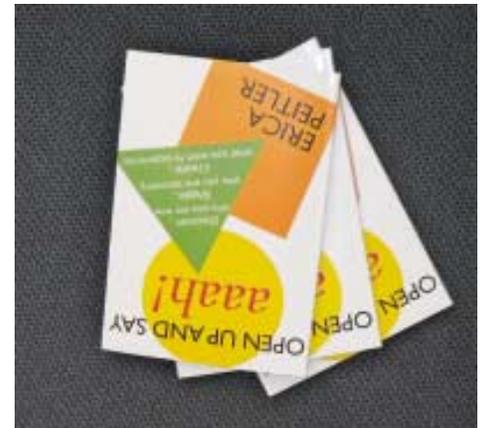
Take out your pen,
 It's time to begin.
 A poem you see,
 About UConn Pharmacy!

The best of the lot,
 We're sure to judge.
 You never know,
 You might win fudge...

Or a t-shirt or two,
 For prizes might do,
 Or a mug, or a cap,
 Might be on tap.

I'm sure you will see,
 The best of the lot.
 They might appear,
 In this very spot!

Send your poems to Liz Anderson at
 pharmacyco@uconn.edu or at the School of
 Pharmacy, 69 North Eagleville Road, Unit 3092,
 Storrs, CT 06269-3092. Entries must be
 received by July 31, 2010.



The winners...



Bruce Daniels and
 Andrea Morgan

OPEN UP AND SAY

aaah!

Calling All USP
 Fellowship Recipients

Did you receive a USP fellowship
 while you were a student at
 UConn? Let us know so we can
 add you to our growing list!

2009-2010
 Kristyn Greco & Archana Rawat

2007-2008
 Kristyn Greco

2006-2007
 Shmnet Hailu & Atul Saluja

2005-2006
 Upkar Bhardwaj & Atul Saluja

2004-2005
 Bann S. Zolnik

2002-2003
 Sandra Goss