Message from the Dean

The Faculty of Medicine’s second trademark, “Research that Makes a Difference™” was approved in May 2009 by the Canadian Intellectual Property Office under the Trade-marks Act. This issue of MUNMED News features a story on the work of Dr. Ken Kao, a cancer researcher in the Division of BioMedical Sciences, whose work on prostate cancer is championed by the Avalon Motorcycle Ride for Dad. This is the third year that the motorcycle club has held a ride to raise money for prostate cancer research, and this year’s event was an official parade supported by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary.

Dr. Kao is a valued team member of the Cancer Research Group and one of four researchers in the Terry Fox Cancer Research Laboratories within the Faculty of Medicine. It is work like his that is indeed making a difference to the lives of people in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Faculty of Medicine has enormous strengths in research, facilitated by our unique integrated approach. Since the Faculty of Medicine was founded in 1967 we’ve had a non-departmental administration system based on three divisions: The Division of BioMedical Sciences, the Division of Community Health and Humanities, and the growing clinical disciplines which currently include the disciplines of Anesthesia, Family Medicine, Genetics, Laboratory Medicine, Medicine, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Oncology, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Radiology and Surgery.

The benefits of this non-departmental structure are apparent in virtually all our research programs. These programs involve students, staff and faculty from a broad range of disciplines with expertise spanning all four pillars of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – biomedical, clinical, health systems and services, and population and public health. Through the work of multidisciplinary teams we are conducting breakthrough studies in areas such as genetics, health services delivery, biomedical sciences and rural and community health.

With the construction of a new six-storey building adjacent to the Health Sciences Centre, the Faculty of Medicine is poised for rapid growth. Three floors of this new building will be devoted to the expansion of genetics and genomics research. The first two floors are for the expansion of the medical education program and this will allow us to admit an additional 20 students from Newfoundland and Labrador to our class starting in 2012, bringing the total number of new medical students we admit each year to 80. A minimum of 60 of those 80 seats are reserved for our own students; others go to students from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and other qualified Canadian or international students.

The competition to get into a medical school anywhere in Canada is tough, but this will provide greater opportunities for students from Newfoundland and Labrador to become doctors. This will help the province build a strong and sustainable physician workforce. At the Faculty of Medicine we are committed to Building a Healthy Tomorrow™ for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I hope you enjoy this issue of MUNMED News. If you have any ideas for stories or photos for the next issue of the magazine, please send them to MUNMED News editor Email: sharon.gray@mun.ca.

Dean James Rourke
MD, CCFP(EM), MCISc(FM), FCFP

Cover photo:
Ken Kao and Charlie Hefford at the Motorcycle Ride for Dad. See page 3.
Dr. Ken Kao had never been on a motorcycle until June 19, 2009. That’s when MUNMED persuaded him to climb on the back of a Harley owned by Charlie Hefford of Placentia. Charlie was the honorary ride captain for the 2009 Avalon Motorcycle Ride for Dad and a prostate cancer survivor.

For the past two years, Dr. Kao’s research on prostate cancer has attracted the support of the Avalon Chapter of the Motorcycle Ride for Dad in aid of prostate cancer research and awareness, in partnership with the H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation. The money stays in Newfoundland and Labrador to support Dr. Kao’s work in the Terry Fox Cancer Research Laboratory, hidden away on the third floor of the Faculty of Medicine.

It may be hard to find the laboratory, but inside there’s a buzz of activity as Kao and colleagues Gary Paterno, Laura Gillespie and Jon Church head up various research projects to address cancer. The laboratory was founded in 1989 and since then has made numerous breakthroughs on the understanding of how cancer starts and progresses.

Dr. Kao’s current work is analyzing biomarkers, the molecular indicators that determine prostate cancer progression. This information will be used to develop new ways to help physicians navigate their patients through the available treatment options, and potentially to develop new treatments.

It’s still early days, but the generous support from the Motorcycle Ride for Dad has provided a much-needed boost to bring the research forward. Dr. Kao hopes to recruit the expertise of his colleagues in the Terry Fox Lab, as well as other doctors in the Health Sciences Centre to make prostate cancer a major focus of research at the Faculty of Medicine.
Cheque presentation

On June 11, just prior to this year’s Avalon Motorcycle Ride for Dad, a cheque for $48,707 was presented to the H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation. This represents money raised from the 2008 Avalon Motorcycle Ride for Dad. The funds are designated by the Cancer Care Foundation for a partnership with Dr. Ken Kao, a prostate cancer researcher at Memorial University. Richard Daw, board member of the Cancer Care Foundation, accepted the cheque.

From left: Dr. Kao, Deputy Chief Bill Brown, RNC; Richard Daw; Constable Paul Davis, chair of the Avalon Motorcycle Ride for Dad; and Lloyd Hussey and Robert Pike, members of the executive committee.

Terry Fox’s brother visits MUN lab

Fred Fox, Terry Fox’s older brother, visited the Terry Fox Cancer Research Laboratories in the Faculty of Medicine on Sept. 23. Dr. Gary Paterno, a lead researcher in the Terry Fox Cancer Lab, organized a lunch hour meeting with about a dozen graduate students in the Division of BioMedical Sciences. Fred, now 52, was in St. John’s to unveil a new public plaque which will be placed at what is known as 0 mile, 0 km, where Terry dipped his artificial leg into the Atlantic Ocean and set out on his Marathon of Hope.

Terry was only 18 years old when he was diagnosed with bone cancer and forced to have his right leg amputated 15 cm above the knee in 1977. While in hospital, he decided to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. His run began in St. John’s on April 12, 1980 with little fanfare. On Sept. 1, after 143 days and 5,373 km, Terry was forced to stop running outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario because cancer had appeared in his lungs. He passed away on June 28, 1981 at the age 22.

For further information on the Terry Fox Run visit www.terryfox.org.
University Research Professors receive national honour

The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) has named two University Research Professors to the society. Dr. Patrick Parfrey, Faculty of Medicine and Dr. Sean Brosnan, former head of the Department of Biochemistry in the Faculty of Science, will be inducted at a ceremony in Ottawa on Nov. 28. This marks the first time professors from biochemistry and medicine at Memorial have been named to the RSC.

Drs. Brosnan and Parfrey have a long history at Memorial and have known each other for years – they even attended the same university in Ireland. Dr. Parfrey earned his M.B. (medical degree) at University College, Cork, while Dr. Brosnan did his B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Ireland and his D. Phil. at Oxford. Dr. Brosnan joined the Department of Biochemistry in 1972 and is cross-appointed to the Faculty of Medicine; Dr. Parfrey joined the Faculty of Medicine in 1984.

The accomplishments of the two men during their careers at Memorial would fill several books. Both have a long list of research accomplishments, publications and honours. Both have devoted themselves to training graduate students and both have strong spousal partnerships. Dr. Brosnan has collaborated with his wife, Dr. Margaret Brosnan, on research on the functional organization of the liver. Dr. Parfrey’s wife, Dr. Benvon Cramer, is chair of the Discipline of Radiology in the Faculty of Medicine.

So what does this latest honour mean? “This is certainly an honour to me, but it also reflects the people I’ve worked with in the lab for the past 40 years,” said Dr. Brosnan. “My wife, Margaret, has been part of the team for the past 25 years and I had a fantastic research assistant, Beatrice Hall. Grad students, undergraduate students, post docs – they’ve all made their contribution. Without the team there is nothing.”

Dr. Parfrey is also quick to give credit to the people he works with. “Drs. Brendan Barrett, John Harnett and Rob Foley are wonderful colleagues with whom I still work, and our research teams comprise excellent people including Drs. Elizabeth Dicks and Deborah Gregory, and Elizabeth Hatfield. With other co-investigators, including Drs. Terry-Lynn Young, Mike Woods, Daryl Pullman and Jane Green, the very new field of genetics and genomics is moving ahead in Newfoundland and Labrador with the overall objective of improving health outcomes in the community.”

As a researcher, Dr. Brosnan’s work covers a broad canvas. He studies the conversion of amino acids to glucose in diabetes (which raises blood glucose levels), the role of amino acids in the function of folic acid and vitamin B12, the use of amino acids by the body to synthesize creatine (the same substance that is used by athletes to increase their strength), and the utility of amino acids in the preservation of organs for transplantation.

As a medical doctor, Dr. Parfrey is an expert in kidney disease and serves as a staff nephrologist with Eastern Health. He is also a clinical epidemiologist who heads up research teams in three major areas: clinical epidemiology in nephrology, the clinical and genetic epidemiology of inherited diseases, and health care delivery research. In the health care delivery area he has established partnerships with the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health to evaluate restructuring in acute care hospitals, needs for long-term care beds, and needs for coronary revascularization and utilization of new drugs. He heads up the Interdisciplinary Research Team in Human Genetics, which last year obtained a large grant from the Canada Foundation for Innovation to establish a genetic research centre at Memorial University.

The RSC elects members from all branches of learning who have achieved national and international recognition by publishing learned works or original research in the arts, humanities and sciences. Founded in 1882, the country’s oldest scholarly organization currently has about 1,800 fellows.

The two Memorial fellows will be inducted into the Royal Society’s ranks at a ceremony on Nov. 28. More on this can be found at www.mun.ca/honours/research/recognition.php.
At this year’s Graduation Dinner and Dance, held May 28 at the Holiday Inn, the Class of 2009 celebrated with an evening of speeches and awards. The following evening the new class of doctors assembled in the main auditorium of the Faculty of Medicine for the traditional Shingles Night.

For these 63 young men and women, the two days of ceremony marked the transition from medical student to resident. For many it was time to say good-bye to classmates and wish each other well in the future.

Dr. Nigel Rusted, age 101, attended the Graduation Dinner and Dance and took part in two presentations. One presentation was to Dr. Heidi King, left, and Dr. Alfred Goodfellow, right, who received Dr. John M. Darte Memorial Fund awards. These awards were established by Mrs. J.M. Darte and Mrs. Frances Darte McCabe in memory of Dr. John M. Darte, the first professor and chair of Pediatrics.

Dr. Sheila Lewis of Kippens, NL, received the Mary Honeygold Scholarship/Bursary, presented by Dr. Farrell, associate dean of Undergraduate Medical Studies. This award was established in memory of Mary Honeygold and her family. It is awarded to a student who has stated or demonstrated an interest in practicing medicine in rural Newfoundland upon graduation.

Dr. Dawn Armstrong, right, of Grand Falls-Windsor received the Drs. James and Leslie Rourke Dean’s Convocation Award in Medicine. This award, made possible by a generous donation from Drs. James and Leslie Rourke, is awarded to a student who has made an outstanding personal contribution to bettering the lives of others through volunteer work and humanitarian acts while maintaining high academic standing. Dr. Armstrong also received the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation Scholarship, presented by Dr. Kara Laing. This scholarship is awarded annually by the Dr. H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Care Foundation to a student who demonstrated clinical proficiency and an interest in Oncology.
Dr. Susan Avery, right, of Stephenville received the University Medal for Academic Excellence, presented by Dean James Rourke. This award is made available by the university and is awarded to recognize academic excellence throughout all four years of medical school. Dr. Avery also received the Medical Practice Associates Scholarship, presented by Dr. Kara Lang; the Prize in Psychiatry, presented by Dr. Hubert White; and the Dr. Phyllis H. Madryga Scholarship, which is provided by the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association and is awarded to a student from rural Newfoundland and Labrador in their final year of medical school with plans to practice rural medicine.

Dr. Alfred Goodfellow, left, of South Esk, NB, received the Dr. Patrick J. Dobbin Memorial Bursary, presented by Dr. Farrell. This bursary is awarded by the Atlantic Provinces Medical Peer Review in recognition of Dr. Dobbins’s contribution to medicine in Newfoundland as a family physician and administrator for over 30 years.

Dr. Chris Holden, left, of Mount Pearl received the Marie T. Kennedy Bursary, presented by Dr. Farrell, associate dean of Undergraduate Medical Education. This bursary is awarded on the basis of need and academic effort.

Dr. Neil Cheeseman, left, of Mount Pearl and Dr. Sammy Khalili of St. John’s received Hunter W. Earle Memorial Scholarships in Medicine, presented by Dr. June Harris, assistant dean of Student Affairs. These scholarships are funded from proceeds of a memorial fund established by colleagues of the late Dr. Hunter Earle. They are based on the characteristics of leadership, sportsmanship and interest in student activities.

Dr. Dr. Natasha Pardy of St. John’s received the Ford Hewlett Memorial Medical Oncology Scholarship, presented by Dr. Michael Woods, Discipline of Genetics. This scholarship is funded by the Canadian Cancer Society in memory of the late Ford Hewlett of Springdale. It is given to a third-year student with an interest in oncology. Dr. Pardy also received the Dr. Henry Gault Memorial Scholarship, presented by Dr. Laing. This scholarship is made available by the colleagues of Dr. Henry Gault and is awarded to a student who has demonstrated both interest in clinical research and academic excellence within Internal Medicine.

Dr. Michael Hickey, left, of Torbay and Dr. Michael Organ, right, of St. John’s received Merck Sharpe & Dohme Award, presented by Dr. Darrell Boone, clerkship co-ordinator. This award is provided annually by Merck Frosst to outstanding students in Clerkship.

Dr. Dr. Andrea Simmonds of Fredericton, N.B. received the William and Frances Pound Scholarship, presented by Dr. Boone. This scholarship is the result of a donation by Dr. Bernard So, a graduate of MUN’s medical school, in recognition of the kindness and generosity shown to him by Mr. & Mrs. Pound during his years as a student at Memorial. It is based on scholarship standings in both years 3 and 4.

Dr. Brendan Sheehan of Grand Bay-Westfield, NB, received the Charles E. Frosst Medical Scholarship, presented by Dr. Harris. This scholarship is made available by Merck Frosst Canada; it is awarded to a student who has shown the most promise in the field of therapeutics.

Dr. Emily Rowsell of Conception Bay South, NL, received the Prize in Surgery, presented by Dr. Darrell Boone, Discipline of Surgery. It is awarded annually to the most outstanding student in surgery.
Dr. Michael Hickey of Torbay received the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) award, presented by Dr. Harris. This award consists of a one-year subscription to the SAEM Newsletter and a one-year resident/medical student membership in SAEM.

Dr. Robin Ryan, left, of Marysvale, received the Dr. Francis L. O’Dea Scholarship in Obstetrics and Gynecology, presented by Oonagh O’Dea. This scholarship was established in memory of Dr. Francis O’Dea and his work in Obstetrics and Gynecology; it is awarded to a student who has done outstanding work in this field.

Dr. Robin Ryan

Dr. Dr. Robin Ryan, left, of Marysvale, received the Dr. Francis L. O’Dea Scholarship in Obstetrics and Gynecology, presented by Oonagh O’Dea. This scholarship was established in memory of Dr. Francis O’Dea and his work in Obstetrics and Gynecology; it is awarded to a student who has done outstanding work in this field.

Dr. Michael Hickey

Dr. Michael Hickey of Torbay received the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM) award, presented by Dr. Harris. This award consists of a one-year subscription to the SAEM Newsletter and a one-year resident/medical student membership in SAEM.

Dr. Ryan Snelgrove

Dr. Ryan Snelgrove of St. John’s received the Donald and Elizabeth Hillman Prize in Pediatrics, presented by Dr. Anne Drover. This prize is made available by the Discipline of Pediatrics.

Dr. Heidi Ryan

Dr. Heidi King, left, of Mount Pearl received the Dr. Janice E. Lessard Scholarship in Geriatric Medicine, presented by Dr. Harris. This scholarship is made available from income derived from an endowment donated by Dr. Janice E. Lessard, an alumna of Memorial University. It is awarded to a student who has demonstrated a desire to improve the function and social well-being of the frail and elderly.

Dr. Douglas Mayson

Dr. Douglas Mayson, right, of Cambridge, MA, received the Prize in Internal Medicine, presented by Dr. Anne Sclater. This prize is made available by the Discipline of (Internal) Medicine to the most outstanding student in the field. Dr. Mayson also received the Cooze Keinath Scholarship, presented by Dr. Terry O’Grady, chair of the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynecology. This scholarship was established by Dr. Derek Cooze, a graduate of Memorial University, and his spouse Dr. Kim Keinath. It is based on scholarship standings in both years 3 and 4.

Dr. Andrew Hunt

Dr. Andrew Hunt of Twillingate received the Dr. David G. Greenland Memorial Bursary in Family Medicine, presented by Danielle Nichols. This bursary is awarded to a student with demonstrated financial need and in good academic standing who has demonstrated dedication to the practice of Family Medicine. Preference is given to students from central Newfoundland.

Dr. Marion Cornish

Dr. Marion Cornish, left, of Gander received the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Canada Student Book Award, presented by Hilary Vavasour.

Dr. Heidi King

Dr. Heidi King, left, of Mount Pearl received the Dr. Janice E. Lessard Scholarship in Geriatric Medicine, presented by Dr. Harris. This scholarship is made available from income derived from an endowment donated by Dr. Janice E. Lessard, an alumna of Memorial University. It is awarded to a student who has demonstrated a desire to improve the function and social well-being of the frail and elderly.

Dr. Graham Cook

Dr. Graham Cook of St. John’s received the Erika Bartlett Memorial Bursary, presented by Janet Bartlett, undergraduate program coordinator in the Division of Community Health and Humanities. This scholarship is funded through an endowment to Memorial University by donations from family and friends of the Bartlett Family as well as students, staff and faculty members of the Faculty of Medicine. The bursary is awarded to a student who is matched to a postgraduate program in oncology. Dr. Cook also received the Christopher and Donna Cox Scholarship, presented by Vera Griffin, retired student affairs officer (Medicine). This scholarship, established through a generous contribution by Dr. Donna Hardy Cox and Dr. Christopher Cox, is awarded to a graduating medical student who has a strong academic record and has an interest in specializing in oncology.

Dr. Marion Cornish

Dr. Marion Cornish, left, of Gander received the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of Canada Student Book Award, presented by Hilary Vavasour.
Student awards

These awards are particularly significant because the recipients are chosen by their classmates.

The Dr. Charles (Chip) Nardini Memorial Award for 2009 went to Dr. Dawn Armstrong, right, presented by Dr. Lynn Dwyer (Class of 1986). This award goes to a fourth-year medical student who best exemplifies the characteristics of leadership, friendliness, good humour, care and concern for fellow students and patients. Dr. Chip Nardini was a medical student who died accidentally March 1, 1986 and received his degree posthumously. Dr. Armstrong also received the Dr. Gregory Rideout Award, established by Dr. Rideout’s classmates (Class of 2003) in recognition of his heroic act that saved the life of a man who would have drowned but for his intervention.

Dr. Nigel Rusted presented Dr. Carolyn Jewer with the Dr. I.E. Rusted Award, which goes to a fourth-year medical student who has made the greatest contribution to the graduating class. Dr. Ian Rusted, the deceased younger brother of Dr. Nigel Rusted, was the founding father of the medical school: it is because of his vision and determination that Newfoundland and Labrador has a medical school. The medical school admitted its first students in September 1969.

The Gold Humanism Honour Society (GHHS) recognizes fourth-year medical students who have demonstrated exemplary humanistic qualities essential to good doctoring – integrity, excellence, compassion, altruism, respect, empathy and service. The number of honourees is 10-15 per cent of the class; the eight students selected for 2009 were Drs. Brendan Sheehan, Neil Cheeseman, Michael Hickey, Chris Holden, Dawn Armstrong, Jane Seviour, Natasha Pardy, assistant dean Dr. June Harris and Dr. Jadon Harding.
The true reward of teaching is not in compensation but in the joy and inspiration that comes from teaching and from passing on to the next generation our knowledge, wisdom, and experience. The very word “doctor” comes from the Latin docere which means “to teach.” As graduate doctors, you will be expected also to be teachers for subsequent generations of this wonderful profession.

We are all part of medicine in evolution. The medicine we practice today is very different than the medicine practiced by previous generations, and the medicine that you will practice will be drastically changed by the time you complete your careers. In human history, the pace of change was slow at first but is increasing exponentially.

In my career of over 40 years there have been tremendous changes. A lot of the knowledge and procedures that we do today did not even exist, or were even thought about, when I was a student and resident. For instance, I spent countless hours studying the relations of acid-pepsin as the basis of ulcer disease only to find out years later that ulcers were caused by a germ.

There have been many other changes including administrative ones. It may seem quaint to us now but not so long ago all patients were routinely admitted to a hospital bed for one or two days prior to surgery for preparation. Hospital stays were much longer. Changes such as pre-admission clinics and much shorter hospital stays have allowed us to permanently close hospital beds and even entire hospitals at a tremendous cost saving for the public.

All this and much more has happened in a relatively short time and changes will, of course, continue throughout your careers. Change is not always easy – the best example is that of the great Hungarian physician in the 19th century, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweiss, who went insane because he could not convince his colleagues at the time that simple hand washing before delivering a baby could drastically reduce the high incidence of peri-natal sepsis and death.

Your formal education has given you the basics but you will quickly falter if you are not open to new knowledge and ideas. It is now your responsibility to initiate new ideas and lead the changes to the medicine of the future. I urge you to set high standards for yourselves before someone else sets them for you. The practice of medicine usually implies the nuts and bolts of clinical practice. Perhaps we should think of practice as more like that of an athlete or musician, a form of continuous self improvement to attain a higher standard.

You all know that medicine is an art as well as a science. You have now learned the science but the art can be much more elusive, yet it is the basis of a good doctor-patient relationship. The proliferation of new technologies has led to a developing trend which I find somewhat disturbing. Before technology, we had to spend more time examining patients because we did not have the tools to make more precise diagnosis.

One of our greatest Canadian physicians, Sir William Osler, said, “It is much more important to know what sort of patient has the disease, than what sort of disease the patient has.” Don’t let yourselves become robots to technology. Remember, “The secret of caring for the patient is to care about the patient.”

One of the great ideas that has been underutilized in our profession is mentoring. I was very pleased to see recently a survey of faculty regarding the need for a formal mentoring program. I strongly support this initiative.

Mentor was a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus’ son and thus the word “mentor” which means to us, “trusted counselor or guide, tutor or coach.” I like to think of a mentor as a guide and counselor. A mentor is usually someone that we admire or respect, and whom we would like to emulate or model our careers after. We could have just one or many mentors throughout our careers and sometimes a different mentor for each different stage of our career.

Mentors can be a valuable asset to all of us and, I believe, would have huge benefits not only for students and residents but for graduate physicians as well; indeed for all of us. Our surgical residents tell me that one of the most difficult transitions is from resident to new staff person when they no longer have someone to fall back on for the difficult decisions and judgments and must now stand on their own. What a great time to have a mentor to help you, someone who has gone through the same process, who is there to discuss and guide...
A high point for the medical school

Dean James Rourke addressed the Class of 2009 during Shingles Night celebrations May 29. The following are excerpts from his speech.

This is a time to celebrate a significant achievement.
Your graduation as doctors is not only a high point for you individually, your families and friends, but it is also a high point for our medical school.

You worked hard to get into medical school and you have worked hard to earn your MD degree. Yesterday (May 28) I hooded each of you as you were bestowed your MD degree. With this MD comes both honour and privilege – and it is a privilege to practice medicine, not a right. That privilege is fundamentally based on trust and that trust must be continually earned by the profession and each doctor.

The trust of the public provides the profession the special place in society that enables us as physicians our unique role to probe the patient's most intimate physical and emotional aspects of their life and to do things that will make a profound influence on their health.

Why is trust so important for the practice of medicine? Aside from perhaps their mothers, there is no one else that people trust as much as their physician. Some might say that in this age of regulation and universal payment for physician services that trust is an ancient idea and perhaps no longer as important. I would put forward, however, that no amount of regulation can ensure the doctor will put the patient's interest first. And every payment system invented can be manipulated to the doctor's advantage.

You may be interested to know that Dr. Nigel Rusted, in 47 years as a physician and surgeon – most in the days before medicare – did 9,000 operations. For 1,500 of these he received no payment. Today, with more universal medical coverage, we are more likely to be paid for what we do. But I urge you still to determine your practice, procedures and activities on how you can provide the best care for your patients and not look to which practice or procedure pays more than another.

The founding dean of Memorial University’s Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Ian Rusted, did some of his training and maintained close connections with the Mayo Clinic. Dr. William James Mayo, one of the founders of the Mayo Clinic, in addressing the graduating medical class at Rush Medical College in 1910, commented: “The best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered, and in order that the sick may have the benefit of advancing knowledge, union of forces is necessary.” It seems he was 100 years ahead of his time. Both parts of his quote hold true today. The first part “the best interest of the patient is the only interest to be considered,” is what our patients hope and trust we will do as physicians.

The second part is also important, and I quote again, “and in order that the sick may have the benefit of advancing knowledge, union of forces is necessary” recognizes that we as physicians can’t do it all and the best patient care requires cooperation and collaboration and shared care. Sharing care helps us to provide better care, but also helps us to take time off to balance our professional responsibilities with our lives and family.

And now as you enter into your residency programs, you occupy a very special place. As you go forward I ask you to practice the Physician's Golden Rule. “Strive to care for others as you would want to be cared for if you were in their situation; and work to develop the knowledge, skills and attitude to enable you to do so.”
Shingles Night

With the formal graduation ceremonies over, the Class of 2009 settled in for a good time the evening of May 29 in the main auditorium. Drs. Bill Eaton and Alan Goodridge entertained the audience of graduates and their families. Dr. Chris Holden was chosen by his classmates to be valedictorian, and awards for staff and faculty valued by the Class of 2009 were presented. Each student received an individual “Shingle” to hang in their practice of the future.

Students picked two special teachers to receive this year’s Dr. D.W. Ingram Award. This award is given to the physician(s) who have provided outstanding clinical teaching, shown interest in students’ well-being and served as a positive role model. From left, recipients Dr. Mark Stefanelli, Neurology, and Dr. Michael Berman, Medicine, with presenters Dr. Megan Smith and Dr. Wally Ingram.
Wisdom of the Ages continued from page 10

you especially in times of adversity. Mentoring would also foster close bonds and friendships, which would ultimately be of benefit to our patients as well.

Most physicians, I believe, would consider it a privilege to be a mentor so I encourage each of you to start your careers by seeking out these people. Good mentoring can bring strong rewards.

You have just graduated, and I am already going to talk to you about giving back! You are very privileged students and have been given a great gift. Think about what you would be doing if you had not been accepted into medical school. Medicine is the second oldest profession and the greatest profession. It is a very serious job with a lot of responsibility. The rewards, financially and otherwise, will be great. When finished your training, it is then your responsibility to give back. This can be accomplished in many ways besides financial contributions, and there will be many requests. You can and should involve yourself in leadership roles and as volunteers both in your profession and in your communities. As new physicians, your opinions will be respected and valued.

One way to give back which is dear to my heart is through involvement in international medicine. Some of you have done this already. Canada has a long history of contribution with such people as Norman Bethune in China, the Hillmans in Africa, and more recently, Samantha Nutt and her involvement with War Child Canada in Darfur. This university can also be very proud of its contributions from Drs. John Lewis, John Ross, Bob Walley and many others.

The Department of Surgery has recently become involved in a teaching program with a small university in northern Ethiopia in the belief that “if you teach a person to fish, they will be able to fish for a lifetime.” There are many opportunities, and I strongly encourage all of you to become involved on a short term or long term basis. These are fabulous experiences that will give you a new perspective on life and the way we live.

Medicine is a vocation for most of you but it can consume you. Although you may think it is the most important thing in your lives, it is not – family is! Your family is your anchor, or rock, that will keep you stable when times get rough, and will be all that you have left when you retire.

A retired doctor recently told me when asked about his life that he was both “sad and mad.” He was sad that his life was coming to an end and mad because he had worked so hard all his life and not spent enough time with his family. Don’t let this happen to you! The responsibilities and intensity of your job means you must try to keep balance in your life. Outside interests and hobbies are important and give you respite from your work and keep you refreshed.
Valedictorian speech

By Dr. Chris Holden

Our journey through medical school started with the acceptance letters we received around this time four years ago. It was an incredible day for all of us and marked the beginning of our journey to becoming physicians. In August of 2005 we came together as a group for the first time during orientation. A collection of high-achieving unique individuals with a diverse range of backgrounds and varying degrees of life experience – that’s just a nice way of saying that I was the oldest person in the class. When I went home that day my grey hairs were much more noticeable. I was amazed at the accomplishments of those that sat around me and equally amazed at their willingness to get involved. There was no shortage of volunteers to serve on class committees and in administrative roles. This was simply a preview of what was to come over the next four years as this class has consistently shown its ability to get involved and get things done.

The next two years were filled with studying and being examined in the human body. What makes it work, what makes it sick, how to fix it and how to comfort the person living in it. During this time that we got to know each other well. Lifelong friendships were formed, relationships started and lines of credit diminished rapidly. We drank coffee – we drank a lot of coffee. I’m pretty sure I sent at least a few kids to Tim Horton’s summer camp with my coffee purchases alone.

Over the last two years we have put what we learned into practice. We put on our long white coats and started to form our identities as physicians. We cared for our first patients. We travelled all over the province working with mentors that inspired and motivated us. Individually we discovered our passion and the stage on which we shined the brightest. We also discovered some less memorable things. We discovered how a simple bowel resection can suddenly turn into an intellectual boot camp – try naming all the types of diverticulae, true and false, after standing in one place holding a retractor for more than five hours. We stood mesmerized at four a.m. as we were asked to find the apex to begin suturing a vaginal tear after a delivery. Yeah, that’s pretty much near impossible at the best of times. But in the words of Dr. Art Rideout, “It’s all good”.

During this time we became completely immersed in medicine. It pervaded all aspects of our lives. As the challenges of one rotation were conquered we were quickly met with new ones. Medical training pushed us. It challenged and changed us. It opened our eyes to the world around us. It changed the way we see people. Now when I shake hands with someone I immediately find myself noting the quality of their veins for IV placement. When I see someone with a beard my first thought is “difficult intubation.” And after I ask someone a question I have this strange compulsion to follow it up with, “and how does that make you feel?”

On a more serious note we have all experienced self doubt during this process, wondering if we have what it takes to be competent, caring physicians. Long days and nights on call and equally long hours of study have made us question, at times, whether we have made the right choice in choosing medicine as a career. As we come to the end of our journey I’ve been asked if the sacrifice was worth it and if I would do it again. I came across another graduate’s answer to this question that sums up how I think most of us feel at this time, “I wouldn’t do it twice (especially at my age), but I wouldn’t not do it once.” It’s been a great time in our lives.

So what have we gained through this experience? We have had the privilege to share and participate in some of the most intimate and emotional moments of people’s lives. We have seen the look of wonder and happiness on the faces of new parents as they hear their baby’s heart beat for the first time. We have delivered a baby. We have comforted sick children and reassured worried parents. We have seen patients in the emergency department at their sickest moments. We have told a patient they have cancer. We have held the hand of a dying patient. We have consoled grieving families with our words and sometimes simply with our presence. We were invited into people’s lives and allowed to experience...
some of the most real and genuine moments of the human experience. These were the moments for which we worked so hard. These were the moments that made all of the sacrifice and hard work worthwhile. It was during these moments that we were not only improving as physicians but also as human beings.

On a personal level we have all experienced the swell of pride as our patients introduced us to family members as their doctor. I don’t think any of us will forget the first time we were called “doctor”. We have felt the sense of accomplishment that comes from an attending saying “good pick up” or “you did well in there.” The surgeons in our group, and there are many, have experienced the excitement of being asked to “close up” for the first time. The anesthesiologists have experienced the thrill of placing their first line. The family doctors have experienced the satisfaction of establishing a relationship with a patient. In short we have all had incredible moments on our journey to becoming doctors. These are moments that few people are privileged to experience. These are moments that we will savour for the rest of our lives.

Valedictorian Speech continued from page 14

So who is the Class of 2009? If you look at our tile on the ceiling in Lecture Theatre B – man, we are a motley crew! In truth, though, it captures the spirit of this class. It is a unique group that not only made it work but made it work well. It is a group of caring, committed and passionate individuals. A group that lives hard, works hard and plays hard.

The good doctor, Dr. Seuss, aptly described our class with the phrase, “And when they played they really played. And when they worked they really worked.”

In addition to completing our medical training we continued to be aware of the world around us. We had classmates raise money to help build a medical clinic in Africa. We helped ensure that families in need had food and gifts at Christmas. Our class raised close to $50,000 at Monte Carlo for local and provincial charities. We have all, in our own way, continued to be leaders in our communities despite the demands of our schedule. We have lived up to the legacy of the classes that preceded us with our own unique character and spirit. We have strengthened the reputation that this school has for producing outstanding physicians. I am very proud to be part of this group.
BOOKS

Visible Horizons

Memorial’s medical students have published the fifth annual Collected Works, titled Visible Horizons. A tradition started in the fall of 2004 as a new humanities initiative by the MUN class of 2007, the publication has grown to encompass writings by students, doctors and patients.

“We know it took a long time to be published,” said Nicholas Smith, who recently finished his second year of medical studies and is the chief editor of Visible Horizons. “All the credit is with the authors. They did a great job and it turned out really well.”

The Collected Works was created with the intention of giving medical students at Memorial a literary voice in a world surrounded by the hard facts of scientific pursuits. The editors this year faced the difficult task of living up to the expectations of producing the high quality work that was the standard in the first four editions.

As a unique endeavor for the anniversary edition, the publication was opened to staff and faculty at Memorial.

The book includes 39 photographs, paintings, poems and essays, such as the simple one-word Treatise on Vegetables by Nicholas Smith “yuck;” and the two-part poem from by Dr. Marshall Godwin written in June 1997 and March 2005 titled, Sarajevo. WHY?

A PDF of Visible Horizons is available at www.med.mun.ca under Publications.

Companion to Clinical Neurology

Third Edition

By Dr. William Pryse-Phillips

With over 7,000 references and at a whopping 1,214 pages, the third edition of the Companion to Clinical Neurology is the culmination of 18 months of intense work.

In 1988 Dr. William Pryse-Phillips began to compile a comprehensive inventory of words, terms and diagnostic criteria in the field of neurology. Originally conceived as a booklet of 75,000 words, the Companion to Clinical Neurology grew to a first edition of 850,000 words. The Second Edition was updated to include over 15,000 alphabetical entries, 5,000 references, 77 photographs of prominent figures in neurology and the addresses of about 200 relevant Web sites. And now the Third Edition reflects the explosive expansion of the field of neurology, including a definition of the whole vocabulary of the field.

Dr. Pryse-Phillips said the transformation of the second to the third edition of the Companion to Clinical Neurology has required not only his own full-time effort, aided by the Internet, but also the assistance of scholarly peers.

Some of the new information in the third edition includes advances in the definition of many neurological conditions and a fine tuning of the definition and diagnostic criteria of many other conditions. The author has collected 1,300 additional articles since the Second Edition in order to update many of the entries. As such, the entries have the most up-to-date definition of diseases, symptoms, diagnostic tests and pearls of wisdom.

Now retired, Dr. Pryse-Phillips was a professor of medicine (neurology) at Memorial for 30 years and is the author of three books and many journal publications in the areas of migraine, multiple sclerosis, genetic conditions and medical ethics. The Companion to Clinical Neurology, third edition, is published by Oxford University Press.
In the acknowledgements to this new book, co-author Dr. Ean Parsons, Discipline of Family Medicine, describes his father’s book as “a labour of love about a subject central to Newfoundland’s history. It is a project of remembrance and documentation to bring together diverse information, much of it collected by others and much original research.”

As the driving force behind this book, David Parsons gave his time freely to those with an interest in the subject. “We hope it helps those interested in the Naval Reserve,” writes Dr. Ean Parsons.

The book covers the inception of the Newfoundland Division of the Royal Naval Reserve during the period 1900-1922, with an outline of activities of some of the officers and men who served, and how HMS CALYPSO (later renamed HMS BRITON) was attained and converted to a drill hall and headquarters for training in St. John’s.

By 1914, more than 1,400 Newfoundland seamen had trained and were ready to serve on ships of the Royal Navy in case of war. During the First World War (1914-1918), and up until 1919, a total of 1,994 officers and men of the Newfoundland Division of the Royal Naval Reserve served on ships of the Royal Navy – 192 lost their lives. It was during the war that these Newfoundlanders earned the title of “the best small-boat seamen in the Navy.”

The Newfoundland Division of the Royal Naval Reserve was disbanded in 1922 when the British Admiralty decided there was no longer any need for a training ship and the HMS BRITON was sold.

One of Dr. Parsons’ primary sources was the notebooks of Dr. Cluny Macpherson, which are held in the Faculty of Medicine Founders’ Archive.

Mi’sel Joe
An Aboriginal Chief’s Journey
Compiled and edited by Raoul R. Andersen and John K. Crellin

Mi’sel Joe is the traditional and administrative chief of Newfoundland’s Conne River Mi’kmaq Reserve. Through a series of taped interviews with retired faculty members, Raoul Andersen (Anthropology) and John Crellin (Medicine), Mi’sel Joe tells his life story.

This story includes Mi’sel Joe’s unorthodox education through the many migratory jobs that took him as far west as Alberta. Through the taped interviews, he also speaks of a community fighting for the right to determine its own future. He tells of the struggle to revitalize traditional values in the face of racial prejudice and reveals the steps being taken by aboriginal leaders, both in this province and elsewhere, to help their people gain respect in a white man’s world without losing their own identity.

Mi’sel Joe agreed to let Anderson and Crellin tape-record his memories and reflections after a number of collaborative activities between the Conne River Community and Memorial University during the 1990s. The editors have added a few notes as historical perspective on the Newfoundland Mi’kmaq, who are the most eastern extension of contemporary Algonquian-speaking peoples in North America. Their primary historical identity in Newfoundland, as a hunting and trapping people, contrasts with that of Newfoundland’s white European people in onshore and off-shore commercial fisheries. Just how long they have been a presence in Newfoundland remains an issue of historical debate, as made clear in Mi’sel Joe’s comments.

Today the Conne River Band of over 700 occupies a small reserve about 30 miles inland from Newfoundland’s south coast in Bay d’Espoir. Band members maintain relations with other Mi’kmaq elsewhere in Newfoundland and mainland Mi’kmaq bands in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and eastern Quebec.

Mi’Sel Joe: An Aboriginal Chief’s Journey, includes 44 maps and illustrations, from a map of the Conne River Region to photographs of a trial run in a canoe with MP Roger Simmons aboard. It is published by Flanker Press. For a related commentary see Seniors’ Musings on page 28.
If you are interested in researching or learning about health issues, the highest quality independent evidence available is now available to all Canadians on a trial basis. In Newfoundland and Labrador, local help is available through the Health Sciences Library of Memorial University and the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries.

The Canadian Cochrane Network and Centre and the Canadian Health Libraries Association/Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada have joined together to sponsor a trial project to make the Cochrane Library available for free on the Internet to ALL Canadians until the end of 2009.

“The Cochrane Library is a collection of databases that contains high-quality, independent evidence to inform health care decision-making,” said George Beckett, associate librarian, Health Sciences. “It is a highly valued source of evidence-based information used by doctors and hospital administrators throughout the world. Thanks to this trial project the general public in Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador can access the Cochrane Library as well.”

Free access to the Cochrane Library is available at www.the Cochranelibrary.com. A user guide is available on the web site and more help with using the Cochrane Library can be found on the Canadian Cochrane Centre site at www.ccnc.cochrane.org/en/clib.html.

For local help with the Cochrane Library please contact the Health Sciences Library of Memorial University at www.library.mun.ca/hsl or branches of the Newfoundland and Labrador Public Libraries at www.nlpl.ca.
Dr. Wayne Gulliver is excited about his new academic appointment. He’s now chair of the Discipline of Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine. It’s certainly a big job, with responsibility for about 50 geographic full-time faculty members and more than 150 part-time faculty members located from St. John’s to Grand Falls/Windsor, Corner Brook and into New Brunswick.

Taking on a big job comes naturally to Dr. Gulliver. He recently stepped down as CEO of NewLab Life Science, the parent company of a group of three medical organizations located on LeMarchant Road in St. John’s. NewLab’s subsidiary, Newfoundland Genomics, is licensed to test for ARVC, a life-threatening genetic heart condition. The gene for that disease was discovered in February 2008 through work done in the biomolecular laboratory of Dr. Terry-Lynn Young, Biomedical Sciences.

So why would Wayne Gulliver walk away from acclaimed business success outside the university?

“I decided to step aside as CEO of Newlab Life Sciences because my degree is in medicine, not commerce,” he explained in a recent interview.

To put that remark in perspective, Dr. Gulliver notes that he started his career with a degree in chemistry from Memorial.

“Judging from the fact that I never took a biology course in my undergraduate years, perhaps I really shouldn’t be a medical doctor either,” he joked.

Dr. Gulliver’s qualifications as a Newfoundland born-and-bred specialist in dermatology cannot be disputed. He grew up poor in an area of St. John’s locally known as Rabbittown. The growing campus of Memorial University was nearby; once accepted to university, he pursued academic studies at Memorial, earning a B.Sc. (chemistry), B.Med.Sc., M.D. ’82, followed by four years of training in internal medicine at Memorial and further specialty training in dermatology at McGill. In 1989, he returned to St. John’s to take up clinical practice and an academic appointment with the medical school.

So that takes care of the first five decades of his life. Dr. Gulliver was already weighing options for his future when he was approached last spring by the university search committee for a new chair of the Discipline of Medicine.

“I’ve been involved with the medical school since I returned to St. John’s in 1989,” he said. “But when I first came back my clinical skills as a dermatologist were most needed. From the beginning I’ve held an academic appointment with the Faculty of Medicine; during the last 20 years I’ve served in various positions – until recently as head of the Division of Dermatology within the faculty, and as head of the Department of Dermatology with Eastern Health.”

The move to establish Newfoundland Genomics came from Dr. Gulliver’s research interest in psoriasis, an often-debilitating skin condition. In 1999 he identified two genes with a strong association to this disease. Newlab’s initial psoriasis work had actually begun seven years earlier in 1992, using DNA from 400 patients with 100 controls. Recent studies or international populations suffering from this disease, published in *Nature*, validate these early findings.

Dr. Gulliver has strong views on many issues, but when it comes to research he is adamant that all
Taking charge continued from page 19

Genetic research done in Newfoundland and Labrador must result in improved patient care for the people of the province as well as patients worldwide.

Of course he is the first to admit that the recent success Memorial University researchers are having in the field of genetics and genomics is based on the hard work of people who have been working in the field for a very long time – people like Dr. Jane Green, who last year received a Knowledge Translation Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); and Dr. Terry-Lynn Young, whose biomolecular genetics laboratory is making groundbreaking discoveries at a rapid pace in a very new field.

Now that he is “back home” in the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Gulliver’s vision is firmly set on the new expansion of the undergraduate medical curriculum, the construction of a new building for research and the medical education curriculum. In particular, he will focus on developing teaching expertise throughout clinical sites in Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick.

It’s a big job, but Dr. Gulliver is happy to take it on.

Appointment

Dr. John Jamieson
Acting chair
Discipline of Anesthesia

Dr. John Jamieson was appointed acting chair of the Discipline of Anesthesia in March 2009.

A medical graduate of Memorial (Class 1977), Dr. Jamieson also did his training in anesthesia at Memorial. He became a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (RCPS) of Canada in 1983 after spending a year in pediatric subspecialty preparation. In 1983 he joined the Janeway Child Health Care Centre full-time and also became an assistant professor of anesthesia with the Faculty of Medicine.

In 1987 Dr. Jamieson was appointed acting chief of pediatric anesthesia at the Janeway; he has served as chief of anesthesia there since 1993. In 1999 he was appointed chief of perioperative services for child health, a position he continues to hold.

From 1990-96 Dr. Jamieson was an examiner for the RCPS. His interests include all aspects of pediatric anesthesia – especially cardiac, acute and chronic pain, and resuscitation of the pediatric trauma victim.

Dr. Jamieson’s research interests are in perioperative sedation, regional anesthesia and the anesthetic implications of hyperthermia.

In Memoriam

A well-respected member of the Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Harry Edstrom, died July 7, 2009 at age 67. Dr. Edstrom was a professor of medicine and chief of the Division of Respiratory Medicine with the Faculty of Medicine and clinical chief of medicine at Eastern Health.

Born in 1942 in St. John’s, he attended St. Bonaventure’s College and later studied pre-med at Memorial University. Upon graduation in 1961, he enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

On March 14, 1964 he married Grace Reeves and that same year he completed an internship at the General Hospital in St. John’s. Dr. Edstrom completed his MD two years later and went on to general practice in Stephenville. He later returned to Dalhousie to continue his residency at Victoria General where he specialized in internal medicine. In 1972, he earned his M.Sc. after completing two years as a research fellow in respirology at the University of Manitoba.

In 1977, already an associate professor of medicine at Memorial University, Dr. Edstrom was appointed assistant dean of Undergraduate Medical Studies, a position he held until 1988. In 1985, he was elected to the executive of the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges (ACMC) and was appointed chairman of the ACMC Standing Committee on Undergraduate Studies.

Throughout his career, which spanned more than four decades, Dr. Edstrom held nearly 60 professional appointments and academic committees, including clinical chief of medicine at Eastern Health, governor of the American College of Physicians, and he served on the executive of the Canadian Medical Association. In 1995, he was elected president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association. He was also the recipient of numerous awards including the Queen’s Jubilee Medal in 2002.

Dr. Edstrom was widely recognized as an advocate for Canada’s health care system and was a staunch opponent of the federal government’s cuts to medical school enrollments in the late 1980s. He was also an outspoken supporter for workplace health and safety issues, and treated workers affected by occupational respiratory disease from asbestos dust in Baie Verte, silica dust at the iron ore mine in Labrador West and crab lung in Hant’s Harbour.

Dr. Edstrom leaves his wife Grace, daughter Dr. Karen Lemcker, son Dr. John Edstrom, and three grandchildren.
The newest laboratory in the Division of BioMedical Science is quickly being occupied by Dr. Mani Larijani, assistant professor of Infectious Diseases and Immunology. In moving to St. John’s from Toronto this past spring he filled his car with donated laboratory equipment, and he’s already been successful in receiving a $100,000 research award from the Industrial Research and Innovation Fund of Newfoundland for new infrastructure.

Dr. Larijani holds a cross-appointment to the Discipline of Oncology; he’s spent much of his time since arriving at Memorial to meeting as many colleagues as possible in the Faculty of Medicine’s immunology and infectious diseases group, and the cancer research group. He’s particularly pleased to be affiliated with researchers like Canada Research Chair Dr. Thomas Michalak and Dr. Michael Grant, a specialist in HIV and infectious diseases research.

Dr. Larijani’s specific research interests are in a set of DNA-mutation processes which confer immunity by modifying human and viral genomes, particularly that of HIV. “Due to their mutagenic nature, a sub-set of these processes which act on the human genome are also implicated in cancers, notably leukemia and lymphoma,” he explained.

The biomedical researcher’s enthusiasm and sheer drive to succeed quickly were evidenced by the piles of paper in his office in mid-September. He had just finished a major grant application to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and three students had just started working in his lab.

The Medical Graduates’ Society (MGS) was so impressed with Dr. Larijani’s potential that he was awarded the 2009 Dr. Wallace Ingram Award for New Faculty at this summer’s MGS reunion. The $22,000 raised by the reunion classes has been a big help in jump-starting his career at Memorial.

In applying for the Dr. Wallace Ingram Award for New Faculty, Dr. Larijani made a strong case for receiving the bridging funding.

“I have been successful in obtaining funds from several external sources and have the same expectation for the future,” he wrote. “However in view of the fact that our current federal funding climate is particularly challenging for new investigators, the Wallace Ingram award will allow me to implement research that I believe will open up a new avenue of HIV therapy.”

Dr. Larijani’s research has three aims. “First, I want to determine the mechanisms which regulate the particular sub-set of DNA-mutating processes which I am studying. Second, I want to understand the mechanisms of HIV-inactivation by yet a separate set of these processes. And finally, I want to harness this knowledge towards novel HIV therapy.”

Dr. Larijani is also passionate about teaching in medicine. “I’ve mentored students in the laboratory and taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Last fall, I designed and taught a third-year undergraduate course called Survey Immunology at York University. It was rewarding in the end to be ranked top lecturer in the Department of Biology.”

In addition to his research and teaching interests, Dr. Larijani is also interested in the communication of medical research through what is known as “knowledge translation.” He’s worked with graduate students at York University in a Biomedical Communications Program and he’s excited about establishing similar activities at Memorial.

Mani Larijani earned his PhD in 2003 in the Department of Immunology, University of Toronto, and the Department of Genetics, Harvard University. He holds a B.Sc. (Hons) from U of T and has research experience as a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Immunology at U of T. He was a research fellow and visiting scientist from 2001-2002 in the Department of Genetics, Harvard University, and the Department of Molecular Biology, Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.
Dr. Marsha Eustace
Assistant Professor
(neurology)
Faculty of Medicine

Dr. Marsha Eustace is an assistant professor of neurology in the Faculty of Medicine and a neurologist for Eastern Health.

She did most of her training at Memorial, holding a B.Sc. ’98 with joint honours (biology and behavioural neuroscience) and an MD ’02. She did her neurology residency at Memorial from 2002-2007 followed by a stroke fellowship from 2007-2009 at Dalhousie University.

She also has a diploma in health professional education from Memorial, completed in 2009. She holds a Modified Rankin Scale certification from the University of Glasgow and a National Institutes of Health (NIH) Stroke Scale certification from the American Stroke Association. She is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

In 2008 Dr. Eustace was involved in the National Institute of Health Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams. While at Dalhousie she was a local co-investigator in the NIH-funded Albumin in Acute Stroke Trial; the Medical Research Council of England’s Efficacy of Nitric Oxide in Stroke (ENOS) Trial and the Third International Stroke Trial (IST3) of thrombolysis for acute ischemic stroke.

In St. John’s, Dr. Eustace is the local co-investigator for the Prevention of cerebrovascular and cardiovascular events of ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke with Terutroban in patients with a history of ischemic stroke or transient ischemic attack, known as the PERFORM study. She has been involved as co-investigator in numerous clinical studies on multiple sclerosis.

Dr. Eustace is the Neurology Residency Program director for the Faculty of Medicine and as a clinical skills preceptor she teaches neurological clinical skills to second-year medical students. She is a member of the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee, the Newfoundland and Labrador Integrated Stroke Strategy Advisory Committee and the Eastern Health Stroke Leadership Committee. She is the provincial lead for Newfoundland and Labrador for the Canadian Stroke Strategy Evaluation Working Group.

Dr. Michael Bautista
Assistant Professor
Discipline of Anesthesia

Dr. Michael Bautista (Class of 1981) did his residency in anesthesia at Memorial in 1982 following an internship at Dalhousie. In 1986, he joined the Department of Anesthesia at the Grace Hospital in St. John’s where he remained until the hospital’s closure in 2000; he then moved to the Department of Anesthesia at St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital.

Dr. Bautista continues to practice obstetric anesthesia at the Janeway Hospital site. He held a part-time faculty position from 1987 until 2008, when he joined the Faculty of Medicine full-time.

He has been involved in both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in the Discipline of Anesthesia and the Discipline of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

He is now the resident research director for the Discipline of Anesthesia. His areas of interest are regional anesthesia and pain management, particularly chronic pain.

Dr. Michael Hogan
Assistant Professor
Discipline of Medicine

Dr. Michael Hogan has a particular interest in the use of a human simulator in medical education. He is studying different ways to assess medical students and residents using the simulator, based on the student’s assessment, comprehension and ability to project how the simulated situation is going to go.

“We’re looking for an in-depth knowledge of where students and residents go wrong in order to improve the training,” he said. Dr. Hogan works with Drs. Darrell Boone and Andrew Furey in training and assessing students and residents with the human simulator.

Dr. Hogan did most of his training at Memorial University, including a B.Sc. (Biochemistry) in 1996, an MD (Class of 2000), and a general surgery residency from 2000-2006. He also holds a master’s of medical education (distinction) from the University of Dundee, Scotland, completed in 2004. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Canada with a certificate in general surgery. From 2006-2007 he was a clinical fellow in hepatobiliary and pancreatic surgical oncology at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Hogan has published his research on the use of situation awareness and simulation in trauma skills assessment, and continues his interest in this field. His current projects revolve around assessment of teams in trauma skills and the role of sleep deprivation in situational awareness.
The Discipline of Pediatrics has new strengths with the addition of Dr. Robert Porter as an assistant professor with the discipline. Dr. Porter is also an emergency room physician at the Janeway Children's Health Centre. His ongoing research interests include gastroenteritis, and he hopes to pursue research on pediatric pain in the ER.

Dr. Porter completed his MD degree at Memorial in 1991, followed by a rotating internship, also at Memorial. He received certification in Family Medicine from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) in 2003 and his CFPC Certificate of Special Competence in Emergency Medicine that same year.

From 1992 to 1995, Dr. Porter was a medical officer with the Canadian Forces at Canadian Forces Base Kingston in Ontario.

Dr. Porter was a general practitioner in Musgravetown, Newfoundland from 1995 to September 2001, also doing emergency room shifts at the Dr. G. B. Cross Memorial Hospital in Clarenville.

After moving to St. John's in October, 2001, Dr. Porter worked as an emergency room physician at the General Hospital and St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital as well as the Janeway Children’s Hospital. Since 2003, he has practised Pediatric Emergency Medicine full time at the Janeway. He has a medical staff appointment with Eastern Health in the Child Health Program, Division of Ambulatory/Emergency Medicine, with a cross-appointment to the Emergency/Ambulatory Care Program. He took over as division chief of Emergency Medicine for the Janeway on May 17.

Dr. Porter is a member of the Pediatric Critical Care Division Committee of Eastern Health and a faculty-at-large representative on the Faculty of Medicine’s Admissions Committee.

Dr. Ed Kendall joined the Discipline of Radiology in the Faculty of Medicine in the fall of 2007 and holds a joint appointment in Eastern Health. His appointment involves research, teaching and consulting in medical physics. His research is supported by national granting councils and by the Department of Defense. His immediate goal is to acquire a high field magnetic resonance research system to carry out animal-based biophysical investigations that will complement the new Positron Emission Tomography facility planned for Health Sciences.

Prior to joining Memorial, Dr. Kendall was the research director of the Academic Department of Medical Imaging at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon where he taught courses related to the physics of diagnostic imaging and the use of magnetic resonance technology in physiological research.

Dr. Kendall remains an affiliated faculty member of several departments at the University of Saskatchewan, including Physics and Engineering Physics, Biochemistry, and Biomedical Engineering. In addition, he is an executive member of the Canadian Light Source Biomedical Beamline Development Committee. Prior to joining the University of Saskatchewan in 1995, he spent seven years with the National Research Council of Canada studying the use of magnetic resonance for characterizing agricultural materials.

Dr. Kendall’s academic background includes B.Sc.(Hon) and M.Sc. credentials from Dalhousie University and a PhD in biophysics from the University of Guelph. His basic sciences and clinical research interests include: detection and characterization of neuropathology associated with seizures; the development of non-invasive imaging technology for medical and veterinary medical applications; and semi-automatic analysis of medical images. His laboratory specializes in developing animal models of human neuropathology. Key advancements have been achieved in nerve gas (soman) research, in the development of specialized instrumentation and in the automated classification of survey breast images.
Residency news

Anesthesia residents present record number of posters

Residents in the Discipline of Anesthesiology had a busy summer making their work known nationally and internationally through poster presentations.

Dr. Michael Bautista, residency program research director for the Discipline of Anesthesia, noted that four of the residents presented at the Canadian Anesthesiologists’ Society meeting in Vancouver, BC held in June. “This is the first time we have sent so many of our residents to the national meeting.”

Dr. Susan Galgay, a fourth-year resident, presented a poster on the benefit of transesophageal echocardiogram in penetrating cardiac trauma. Dr. Lesley Johnston, also a fourth-year resident, presented a poster on the role of intraoperative transesophageal echocardiography in the surgical removal of intracardiac thrombus. Dr. Sonia Sampson, a fifth-year resident, presented two posters – Bispectral Index (BIS) influences anesthesia responses to simulated awareness risk; and responses to simulated cases of impaired anesthesiasts. Dr. Heather Ting, a third-year resident, presented a poster on epidural hematoma after bone anchored screws.

At the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society meeting held in Las Vegas in June, third-year resident Dr. David Holt presented a case report titled Probable Arterial Gas Embolism during Emergence from Anesthesia.

Best Poster Award at international conference for anesthesiology resident

A poster presentation by an anesthesiology resident at Memorial University drew major attention at a recent international conference. In fact, it was named Best Poster at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeon’s 2009 International Conference on Residency Education (ICRE), held Sept. 24-26 in Victoria, B.C. More than 1,400 participants from 25 countries attended this conference.

Dr. Sonia Sampson, a fifth-year anesthesiology resident, was first author on the poster, titled Staff and resident responses to simulated cases of impaired anesthesiasts. Co-authors were anesthesiologists Drs. Ken LeDez and Susan O’Leary, first-year anesthesiology resident Dr. Jason Chaulk, and statistician Dr. Yanqing Yi.

Dr. Sampson is pleased with the award and is in the process of writing up the results of the simulation study for submission to a major journal. The study has previously been presented regionally and nationally, and took first place at Memorial’s Anesthesia Resident Research Day in January 2009. The study was done through the facilities of the Faculty of Medicine’s Surgical Research Laboratories and Medical Simulation Unit using a simulated patient and actors.
Dr. Anne-Marie Beaudet, a fourth-year diagnostic radiology resident, received the 2009 Roentgen Resident/Fellow Research Award from the Radiological Society of North America. It was presented to her by Dr. Benvon Cramer, chair of the Discipline of Radiology. This award recognizes and encourages outstanding residents and fellows in radiologic research. Dr. Beaudet has participated actively in research during her residency, presenting at the local and national levels, and receiving the first-place Resident Award at the 2008 Annual Scientific Meeting of the Canadian Association of Radiologists.

Internal Medicine Resident Research Day

There were six presentations at this year’s Internal Medicine Resident Research Day, held May 22. The first-place Dr. David Hawkins prize went to Dr. Lisa Duffett for her presentation on a study conducted with Dr. Kerry Arnold on “Diagnosing pulmonary embolism in the emergency department.” Second place went to Dr. Anan Joshi for his presentation on “GI cytoprotection in persons greater than 60 years old in the setting of antiplatelet therapy after deployment of a drug-eluting coronary stent.” Third place was awarded to Dr. Teresa Pun for her presentation on “A new diagnosis of thymoma and common variable immunodeficiency in a patient with inflammatory bowel disease.”

Two other prizes were awarded. The Dr. John Simpson Memorial Award went to Dr. Anan Joshi. This award is given to the internal medicine resident, chosen by his or her peers, who demonstrates excellence in teaching other members of the internal medicine housestaff and medical students. The award is a tribute to Dr. Simpson, a former medical internist at St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital, who died in 1998 at the age of 46.

The Dr. Cameron Raffard Award was presented for the second time. The award is in memory of Dr. Raffard, a second-year internal medicine resident who died Jan. 13, 2008. The award is given to a resident who reflects Dr. Raffard’s values and exhibits an aptitude for health advocacy. This year’s winner was Dr. Krista Noonan for her essay on health advocacy and how to promote the health of patients.

Dr. Krista Noonan, left, received the Dr. Cameron Raffard Award, presented by Dr. Kirsty Tomkins at Internal Medicine Resident Research Day.

Radiology Resident Research Day

The Discipline of Psychiatry held its annual Resident Research Day May 22. There were five presentations and two prizes were awarded. The adjudicators for the event were Drs. Sharon Buehler and Paul Dancey.

Dr. Matt Lilly was awarded first prize, the Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Excellence in Research 2009, for his presentation “Does Cognitive Testing Predict Driving Assessment Outcome in Cognitively Impaired Adults?” Dr. Lilly’s supervisor was Dr. Howard Strong.

Dr. Gil Walsh received second prize, the Research Prize in Psychiatry 2009, for his presentation “Metabolic Syndrome in First-Episode Psychosis Patients.” Dr. Walsh’s supervisors were Drs. Kellie LeDrew and Kevin Hogan.

Discipline of Psychiatry Resident Research Day

The Discipline of Psychiatry held its annual Resident Research Day May 22. There were five presentations and two prizes were awarded. The adjudicators for the event were Drs. Sharon Buehler and Paul Dancey.

Dr. Matt Lilly was awarded first prize, the Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Excellence in Research 2009, for his presentation “Does Cognitive Testing Predict Driving Assessment Outcome in Cognitively Impaired Adults?” Dr. Lilly’s supervisor was Dr. Howard Strong.

Dr. Gil Walsh received second prize, the Research Prize in Psychiatry 2009, for his presentation “Metabolic Syndrome in First-Episode Psychosis Patients.” Dr. Walsh’s supervisors were Drs. Kellie LeDrew and Kevin Hogan.
New directions in privacy legislation

Just how important is privacy to people in Newfoundland and Labrador? That’s a question that a group of researchers at Memorial University are trying to answer. The study, headed by Dr. Daryl Pullman, professor of bioethics in the Faculty of Medicine, is titled Privacy Protection and Biobanks: A Conjoint Analysis of Priorities and Preferences of Stakeholder Groups.

In particular, Dr. Pullman and his colleagues are looking at the type of information stored from genetics research. “The project will examine whether individuals would be willing to provide easier access to some of the personal health information contained within biobanks in order to facilitate various kinds of health research,” he explained.

The study is funded by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada in an amount of $50,000; it’s part of overall awards of $454,000 to 11 Canadian research groups for privacy research and awareness.

The research will be conducted on the Avalon Peninsula, where about half of the province’s population lives. A total of 300 people taken as a random sample will be involved in this study.

Dr. Pullman and colleagues recently published a paper in Healthcare Policy titled “Sorry You Can’t Have that Information.” That study, funded through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, assessed the level of awareness, perceptions and concerns of health care providers, health researchers, data managers and the general public about the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information for research purposes.

“The results indicated a poor understanding generally with regard to privacy rights and responsibilities,” said Dr. Pullman.

Other researchers involved in the former study included Dr. Sharon Buehler, honorary research professor in the Division of Community Health and Humanities, Faculty of Medicine; Dr. Katherine Gallagher, Faculty of Business Administration; Jeannie House, director of Advocacy and Information with the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Boards Association; T. Montgomery Keough, senior researcher with the Health Research Unit in the Faculty of Medicine’s Division of Community Health and Humanities; Lucy McDonald, director of Privacy and Corporate Services with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information; Angela Power, a senior privacy analyst with the provincial Department of Justice; Ann Ryan, manager of the Health Research Unit in the Faculty of Medicine; and Dr. Roy West, professor emeritus in the Faculty of Medicine.

Dr. Gallagher, Ms. McDonald and Mr. Keough are involved in Dr. Pullman’s most recent privacy study. Dr. Holly Etchegary, a clinical research professor in the Faculty of Medicine, and Catherine Street from the Population Therapeutics Research group of the Faculty of Medicine, round out the current research team.
The Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association with the Peggy Lewis Memorial Walk Committee has committed $110,000 over six years to support idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) research at Memorial University.

Drs. Bridget Fernandez and Mike Woods, genetics researchers in the Faculty of Medicine, accepted a cheque for $6,250 on Sept. 17 from representatives of Lung Association and the Peggy Lewis Memorial Walk Committee (PLMWC) as one installment on this overall commitment.

Pulmonary fibrosis causes abnormal formations of fibre-like scar tissue in the lungs – as the disease progresses lung tissues thicken and become stiff and breathing becomes difficult. The term idiopathic means “of unknown origin.” To date there is no cure; the only treatment is a lung transplant.

Dr. Fernandez and Woods are working with local pulmonologists, radiologists, pathologists and laboratory scientists to identify the gene for inherited pulmonary fibrosis. Their hope is that by discovering the gene’s role in lung physiology it will eventually lead to more effective therapy.

Work begun by Dr. Fernandez has already identified 11 Newfoundland families with a strongly genetic form of the disease. In these families, disease susceptibility is conferred by an autosomal dominant, incompletely penetrant gene. “Therefore, family members who have IPF inherited a mutated copy of the IPF gene from one of their parents,” she explained.

Dr. Woods added, “Fortunately, in some cases, just because an individual has a mutated IPF gene does not necessarily mean they will get pulmonary fibrosis. Once the gene(s) are identified that cause IPF in these families, physicians should be able to provide more informed clinical care for family members. Without the gracious co-operation of these families none of this work can be performed.”
A conference on the Future of Indigenous Healing in the 21st Century was hosted by the First Nations Trust Fund at the Mi’kmaw Reserve, Conne River, June 30-July 2, 2009. MUNMED columnist John Crellin attended the conference and discussed it with fellow columnist Raoul Andersen for the benefit of our readers.

RA: I’ve been fascinated by the challenges First Nations’ peoples face ever since my early studies on the Alberta Stoney people. I’m sure many long-standing and new challenges were discussed at the conference.

JC: It was a thought-provoking time, and I felt privileged to attend. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal participants probably saw different issues as they listened to healers from across Canada discuss and debate among themselves. Opportunities also existed outside the formal sessions to ask the healers to amplify their thoughts.

RA: Given that so much discussion exists nowadays on integrating complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) into conventional care, was integration considered?

JC: Yes and no, though I think we must avoid seeing aboriginal healing as part of CAM. The lack of integration was raised indirectly. One healer pointed out that, “there is a role for regular medicine within aboriginal healing,” but not vice versa. I also felt that uneasy relationships between aboriginal healers and conventional physicians were implicit in many challenges indigenous healers face from both within and outside their communities.

RA: You say challenges from within?

JC: Various threats to traditional knowledge were identified. For example, young people commonly lose initial interest in the healing role of ceremonies, sometimes since abstinence from alcohol and drugs is demanded. Elders, who do not understand the ways of the young, become reluctant to talk about traditional practices. And there are difficulties for sustaining herbal traditions due to problems such as identifying a plant only known to elders by a native name, or a failure to appreciate that a compounded remedy may change the properties of individual herbs.

RA: From what you say, perhaps one challenge relates to the importance attached to the respective roles of ceremonies and of medicines?

JC: Differences of opinion seemingly existed among healers over how far a healing ceremony – be it acknowledging the spirit of a plant or sweet grass smudging – contributes to the effectiveness of a herbal medicine used at the same time. There are differing views on who is a healer. For some people, a “healer” merely enables the spirit world (the ancestral spirits) to facilitate healing. Therefore, a healer should not take personal credit for a patient’s recovery, or even payment.

RA: I wonder about outside challenges. One must be the way indigenous healing traditions can be melded into a mélange of New Age practices. Another is different meanings CAM practitioners give to such concepts as balance, energy and spirits. I suspect that when indigenous healers use the word energy, it is understood as the energy of the spirits.

JC: I agree. In fact much concern existed over the absurdity of two-day shaman courses that are obviously far removed from what a traditional healer acquires – unconsciously or through active teaching – from preceding generations via parents and grandparents. Much of the healers’ discussion on outside challenges focused on the inability to get liability insurance, a particular issue when practicing off a reserve. But concerns were also raised over, for example, the possibility of rocks exploding during sweat lodge ceremonies. Other issues were the worries of physicians over their own potential liability when referring a patient to unlicensed practitioners and widespread public expectations of getting a pill for a quick fix, whereas herbal treatments commonly work slowly. Limited conference time prevented any reflection on whether it would be necessary to define the scope of aboriginal healing practices if aboriginal healers want a greater role in the pluralistic health care of today.

RA: Was there any consensus among healers about the future?

JC: A key purpose of the conference was to decide whether a network of aboriginal healers should be established. This was agreed to, while an appreciation undoubtedly existed of the challenges facing such a network. As a non-aboriginal participant, I sense that the work of such a network might well be aided by promoting discussions between conventional health practitioners and aboriginal healers to gain greater mutual understanding not only of the philosophy of different practices – evidence-based medicine is one problematic concept. There are also the difficulties each type of practitioner faces. Looking at the concepts of aboriginal healing can be an important way to challenge medical students to examine critically the concepts of conventional medicine that they absorb, often unconsciously.
New research paper from the laboratory of Dr. Guang Sun, professor of genetics, shows that body mass index (BMI) measurement is not accurate for over 30 per cent of men and women. The paper, published in the journal *Obesity* compares the classification of obesity by BMI to dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) in the Newfoundland population. The first author is Aaron Kennedy (Class of 2009), and is co-authored by graduate student Jennifer Shea and Dr. Guang Sun, Mr. Kennedy’s supervisor and professor of genetics.

The incidence of obesity has increased substantially over the past three decades and is now one of the most important public health concerns, contributing to chronic health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and certain types of cancer. This paper analyzed 1,691 adult volunteers from Newfoundland and Labrador to evaluate the accuracy of BMI compared to DXA. Differences between the two methods were compared within gender and by age groups. The overall discrepancy between the two methods for women was substantial, at 34.7 per cent. In men, the overall discrepancy was 35.2 per cent between the two methods.

The findings from this study have revealed solid evidence that there is a large risk that BMI may provide false safe information about individual obesity status if a person is classified to the lower obesity ranking group by BMI but actually has more fat in their body.

“This is the major problem when BMI is applied in the population,” explained Dr. Sun. “On the contrary, some people are born big with a lot of muscle. These people tend to have larger BMI values that classify them as overweight or obese because of the weight from bone and muscle. A lot of athletes are wrongly classified by BMI as well. This may force them to lose the so called "phantom fat" if they try to reach their ideal BMI category.”

The study, involving a large sample from the Newfoundland population, demonstrates the limited ability of BMI to accurately estimate body fat.

The Dr. Abdalla M. Hanna Memorial Bursary in Medicine

A new entrance bursary for medicine has been established, thanks to a generous gift from Mrs. Sylvia Hanna and her family.

Named in memory of Dr. Abdalla M. Hanna, a well-known surgeon in St. John's, this new bursary is awarded to a student entering first year studies in the Faculty of Medicine who is a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador and who is in financial need. The first recipient of the Hanna Bursary was Eugenia Khorochkov of the Class of 2013. It was presented at the Oct. 6 scholarship luncheon by Sara Hanna, daughter of Dr. Abdalla Hanna.

Research paper reveals defects in standard body fat measure

The study, involving a large sample from the Newfoundland population, demonstrates the limited ability of BMI to accurately estimate body fat.
GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Cancer and Development Grad Symposium

There were two award winners at the annual Cancer and Development Graduate Student Research Symposium, held at the Fluvium June 5. Mandy Peach received the Mary O’Neill Award for her master’s research presentation; Trina Butler received the Mary Pater Award for her PhD research. Both students are supervised by Dr. Daniel MacPhee, and their research focus is in reproductive physiology.

The Mary Pater Award is sponsored by the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. The Mary O’Neill Award is supported by a private endowment to the cancer and development faculty.

Nobel laureate speaks with grad students

It’s not every day that the winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine is available for career advice. On Oct. 26, Dr. Elizabeth Blackburn spent time with members of the Faculty of Medicine in hearing what she had to say about career opportunities in science. Her basic advice was to “follow your interests.” She also spent time talking about the need for universities to provide part-time opportunities for women who want to combine family and academic pursuits.

Dr. Blackburn is the Morris Herzstein Professor of Biology and Physiology at the University of California, San Francisco. In October 2009 she and colleagues Carol Greider and Jack Szostak were awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for their discoveries. The Karolinska Institute in Sweden, the steward of the Nobel Prize, said the trio was honoured for solving a major problem in biology: showing how chromosomes can be copied in a complete way during cell divisions and how they are protected against degradation. The Nobel Laureates have shown that the solution is to be found in the ends of the chromosomes – the telomeres – and in an enzyme that forms them – telomerase.

For her contributions as an ethical role model and a distinguished scientist, Dr. Blackburn received an honorary doctor of science degree from Memorial University at the Oct. 23 convocation in St. John’s.
Graduate Student Awards

The annual Graduate Student Awards ceremony was held May 20, 2009. Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett, associate dean of Research and Graduate studies (Medicine), emceed the event. She thanked the co-ordinators of the graduate programs in the Faculty of Medicine: Anne Kearney, Applied Health Services; Jules Doré, Cancer and Development; John Smeda, Cardiovascular and Renal Sciences; Gerry Mugford, Clinical Epidemiology; Diana Gustafson, Community Health and Humanities; Roger Green, Human Genetics; Thomas Michalak, Immunology and Infectious Diseases; Cathy Donovan, Master of Public Health; and Xihua Chen, Neuroscience.

The following awards and achievements were acknowledged for 2008-09.

Nicole Whittle, supervised by Dr. Sheila Drover, received the University Medal of Excellence for her M.Sc.

The Colman PhD Award went to Matt P. Parsons, supervised by Dr. Michiru Hirasawa.

The Burness M.Sc. Award was received by Matt S. Parsons, supervised by Dr. Michael Grant.

The Deans’ Fellowship went to PhD student Yingchun Han, supervised by Dr. Ed Randell. There were two M.Sc. Deans’ Fellowships to Keon Hughes, supervised by Dr. John McGuire, and Kristian Green, supervised by Dr. Guang Sun.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Awards went to four students. Patrick Fleming, supervised by Dr. Maria Mathews, and Rebecca Daniels, supervised by Dr. Bruno Stuyvers, received Banting and Best Canada M.Sc. Graduate Scholarships. CIHR’s Interdisciplinary Health Research Team M.Sc. award went to David Harnett, supervised by Dr. Patrick Parfrey. The National Canadian Research Training Program in Hepatitis C PhD Award was received by Mohammed Sarhan, supervised by Dr. Thomas Michalak.

Four students received Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council awards. M.Sc. scholarships went to Meighan Kelly, supervised by Dr. Dale Corbett, and Mandy Peach, supervised by Dr. Daniel MacPhee. Chris Corkum, supervised by Dr. Sheila Drover, received a M.Sc. Alexander Graham Bell Canada Graduate Scholarship. The PhD scholarship went to Jennifer Shea, supervised by Dr. Guang Sun.

Kenny Hammond, supervised by Dr. Diana Gustafson, received the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Award Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate M.Sc. Scholarship.
Grad student awards continued

There were three Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research awards. Patrick Fleming received a M.Sc. Fellowship; Fang Liu, supervised by Dr. Peter Wang, received a Healthy Aging Research Program M.Sc. research grant. The NLCAHR post-doctoral award in the Healthy Aging Research Program went to Jared Clarke, with Drs. Maria Mathews, Wendy Young and Michele Ploughman.

The following Program Prizes were awarded during 2008-09. In Applied Health Services, Amanda Hancock, supervised by Dr. Diana Gustafson, received a M.Sc. Award. In the Cancer and Development Program, the Mary O’Neill M.Sc. Award went to Neva Fudge, supervised by Dr. Chris Kovacs. There were two Mary Pater PhD awards to Maria Licursi, supervised by Dr. Ken Hirasawa, and Mark Kennedy, supervised by Dr. Ken Kao.

In Clinical Epidemiology, the PhD Award went to Pietro Ravani, supervised by Dr. Brendan Barrett. In Community Health and Humanities the Jorge Segovia Scholarship Health Services Research M.Sc. Award went to Patrick Fleming. The PhD Award went to Sylvia Reitmanova.

In Human Genetics, the M.Sc. Award was received by Fady Kamel, supervised by Dr. Michael Woods. The PhD Award went to Lance Doucette, supervised by Dr. Terry-Lynn Young.

In Immunology and Infectious Diseases, the PhD Award was received by Ahmed Mostafa, supervised by Dr. Sheila Drover. The M.Sc. Award went to Panayota Kolypetri, supervised by Dr. George Carayanniotis. The Zetta Tsaltas Award went to Chris Corkum.

A Master in Public Health went to Samantha Brenton, supervised by Dr. Martha Traverso. In the Neuroscience Program the M.Sc. Award went to Jeremy De Jong, supervised by Dr. John McLean. The PhD Award was received by Dr. Sherri Rankin, supervised by Dr. Karen Mearow. The Best Overall Prize went to Matt P. Parsons.

TRAVEL AWARDS

The Dean M. Ian Bowmer Graduate Travel Award went to Pia Elustondo, supervised by Dr. Daniel MacPhee.

In Applied Health Services and Community Health, the Applied Health Services Travel Competition was won by Kara Roberts, supervised by Dr. Barbara Roebothan.

Barrowman Travel Awards in the Division of Community Health and Humanities were received by Patrick Fleming, supervised by Dr. Maria Mathews, Jill MacEachren, supervised by Dr. Daryl Pullman, and Fang Liu, supervised by Dr. Peter Wang.

The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease travel award went to Sylvia Reitmanova; the Canadian Association of Neuroscience Travel Award went to Mandy Peach and Chris Corkum.

Mostafa, supervised by Dr. Sheila Drover. The M.Sc. Award went to Panayota Kolypetri, supervised by Dr. George Carayanniotis. The Zetta Tsaltas Award went to Chris Corkum.

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Grad student awards continued

went to Michael King; the Canadian Physiological Society Travel Award went to Yudan Liu; the Ovarian Cancer Canada Travel Award went to Nicole White; the Society for Gynecological Investigation Travel Award went to Pia Elustondo; and the Canadian Diabetes Association/Canadian Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism Travel Award went to Neva Fudge.

OTHER DISTINCTIONS

Chris Shortall received the Sceptre Investment Counsel Bursary. The Primary Care Researcher Team Award went to Creina Twomey, with Drs. Brendan Barrett and Chris Way. Jeff Kellan received the Canadian Mental Health Association Award. Pam Ward received the Canadian Federation of Nurses Union Scholarship. Patrick Fleming won the Medical School Essay Graduate Students Award.

Sylvia Reitmanova received three awards—the Muslim Association of NL Award for Excellence; Knowledge in Motion Conference Subsidy Contest; and the Graduate Student Union Award for Excellence in Research. Sue Ann Mandville Anstey, supervised by Dr. Diana Gustafson, received the Ann C. Beckingham Scholarship (Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association); the Health Care Foundation Staff Scholarship; the Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador Scholarship; and the Newfoundland and Labrador Nurses Union Scholarship. Ms. Mandville also received a CIHR Summer Program in Aging Award.

Diana Deacon, supervised by Dr. Gustafson, was awarded a CIHR Institute of Gender and Health Summer Institute Award, taken up at the University of British Columbia.

The following PhD Comprehensive Distinction were received: Pam Elliot, supervised by Dr. Doreen Neville; Kathy Watkins, supervised by Dr. Chris Way; and Sylvia Reitmanova, supervised by Dr. Diana Gustafson.

PhD Dissertation Distinctions went to Dr. Lisa Barrett, M-PhD, supervised by Dr. Michael Grant; Shashi Gujar, supervised by Dr. Thomas Michalak; Darren O’Reilly, supervised by Dr. Chris Loomis; and Sherri Rankin, supervised by Dr. Karen Mearow.

Gairdner lecture draws large audience

An overflow crowd gathered Sept. 28 at the Faculty of Medicine’s Lecture Theatre B to hear the 2009 Gairdner Lecture. Preeminent Canadian scientist and researcher Dr. Tak Mak spoke on Cancer Metabolism: Back to the Future.

Dr. Mak presented the Gairdner Foundation Lecture as part of the 50th anniversary of the Canada Gairdner Awards. Dr. Mak is among the world’s top medical researchers. He won a Canada Gairdner International Award in 1989 for his work in the genetics of immunology. He is director of the Campbell Family Institute for Breast Cancer Research and a professor at the University of Toronto.
Six medical classes gathered together for reunions this summer at the medical school.

For the classes of 1974, ’79, ’84, ’89, ’94 and ’99 it was a chance to catch up on news, have some fun and take time for some continuing medical education. Medical Graduates’ Society (MGS) president Dr. Bridget Picco relates all the activities of the weekend in her blog on page 36. Just over 100 people attended the reunion, and 82 attended the continuing medical education (CME) event on Saturday, the largest number to ever attend a reunion CME. Here’s a photographic highlight of weekend events.
Dr. Wallace Ingram Award
A special award for new faculty

A highlight of the opening reception of the MGS reunion has become the annual presentation of the Dr. Wallace Ingram Award for New Faculty. The money for this award is raised solely by members of the graduating classes attending reunions. This year $22,000 was raised and awarded to Dr. Mani Larijani, a biomedical sciences researcher. For more on Dr. Larijani’s research, see page 21.

From left: Dr. Wayne Gulliver, past president of the MGS, Dr. Mani Larijani, Dr. Bridget Picco, president of the MGS and Dr. Wally Ingram.

The 2009 Dr. Ian Rusted Golf Tournament attracted some dedicated players.

Dr. Herb Boro, left, Class of 1974 and Dr. Bill Marshall, one of the original faculty members hired by the late Dr. Ian Rusted, founding dean of Memorial’s medical school.

Members of the Class of 1979 (from left): Drs. Wayne Boone, Alan Goodridge and Ramona Kearney, who flew in from Edmonton for the reunion.

Members of the Class of 1999 and family: Dr. Lisa Kieley, right, and Dr. Daniele Wiseman.

Mrs. Helen Ryan, retired staff member of the medical school and Dr. Alan Goodridge.

Dr. Sonny Collis, Class of 1994
Dr. Mercedes Penton, Class of 1984

Dr. Shakti Chandra, professor of anatomy, spent some time talking with Dr. Chris Loomis, president and vice-chancellor pro tempore.

The Dean Ian Rusted Golf Tournament 2009

The 2009 Dr. Ian Rusted Golf Tournament attracted some dedicated players.

Members of the Class of 1984 (from left): Drs. David Manning and Rick Hu, Paul Wadden (B. Comm ’77) and Dr. Mark Allen.

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The 2009 Med Grad Reunion went off without a hitch. Fellow alumni started off Friday night with a reception in the main foyer of the medical school and screams of joy were heard periodically heard as grads arrived. Some alumni had not seen each other in over 25 years – imagine that!

My 25th reunion was this year; hearing about our kids’ plans was a major topic. Sadly, some of our classmates are quite ill and could not attend. Our thoughts are with you.

Dr. Christopher Loomis, president of Memorial pro tempore, addressed the gathering of alumni and friends celebrating the accomplishments of the medical school. Dean James Rourke spoke about the exciting future of the medical school and the wonderful accomplishments of MUN Med grads.

Dr. Brian Payton brought wishes from Dr. Tomlinson, former anatomy professor, who invited all MUNMED alumni to keep in touch. Email me at bmp@nl.rogers.com for details on how to contact Dr. Tomlinson.

Dr. Wally Ingram then presented the Dr. Wallace Ingram Award for New Faculty to Dr. Mani Larijani, a recent faculty appointment to the Division of BioMedical Sciences. The award of $22,000 was raised by donations from this year’s reunion classes of ’74, ’79, ’84, ’89, ’94 and ’99. The MUN Med Alumni Board, consisting of seven medical alumni, chose Dr. Larijani’s proposal to fund. His research investigates an enzyme that mutates and inactivates the genome of HIV. We wish him every success in this field as he begins his research career at Memorial.

On Saturday morning Dr. Wayne Gulliver chaired the MGS annual general meeting and the CME event. Dr. Bill Eaton presented an entertaining lecture on “DNR” (do not resuscitate). Dr. Alan Goodridge further spiced up the morning with a discussion of medical education at Memorial. Dr. Nancy Wadden enlightened us about breast screening in Newfoundland and Labrador and the positive predictive value of mammograms. Macular degeneration was discussed by Dr. Jim Whalen and then Dr. Stephen French enlightened the audience about being an Olympic team physician. The next talk was on familial pulmonary fibrosis research by Dr. Bridget Fernandez. The audience was bright and alert and much discussion ensued.

A well-attended family lunch was hosted Saturday by Dean James Rourke at the Hatcher Dining Hall. The weather was not great for golf but many persisted. Paul Wadden was the men’s winner of the golf, and Anita Pushpanathan, a first-year resident, was the female winner. Saturday night class celebrations were a chance for everyone to really let their hair down (some of us don’t have hair, I guess!) and just have a yarn. Thanks to everyone who came back to the medical school to celebrate, and to all the local physicians who made the reunion the success that it was.

Now for more good news. On May 28, the graduating Med School class of 2009 celebrated in great form (see pages six to 10 of this issue of MUNMED). The formal dinner and dance was held at the Holiday Inn in St. John’s, and I had the pleasure of attending and speaking to the new graduates to welcome them to the Medical Graduates’ Society. Numerous awards were presented for stellar academic, research and humanitarian accomplishments. Students and families were beaming with pride. Dr. Al Felix, a well-known local surgeon, spoke about the importance of the physician-patient relationship, the place of technology, and the need for mentoring in med school (see page 10 for highlights of Dr. Felix’s speech).

Kudos to all alumni who ran or walked the Tely Ten on July 26. My time shall remain secret, but I was not carted off to the Emergency Department! The Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) put together a team and held a barbecue that afternoon.

This will be my last year as president of the MUN Med Alumni. It’s been a very interesting and rewarding time for me. If you would like to participate in exciting times at the medical school and keep in contact with all alumni, this is the job for you! Please contact me if you are interested at bmp@nl.rogers.com.

Cheers for now,