

# GSBS NEWS

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The University of Texas  
GRADUATE SCHOOL of BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES *at Houston*

**Congratulations scientists!**



# Benefactor News

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## GSBS Advisory Council Establishes Stancel Fellowship Endowment

Council members **Diana Hawkins**, chair, and Russell Hawkins, along with members (and spouses) **Gail** and Louis **Adler**, Leslie and Jack Blanton, Jr., **William Drushel, Jr.** and Nancy Drushel, **Harry Gee, Jr.** and Antje Gee, **Jesse Heath, Jr.** and Hetta Heath, Barrett and Susan Reasoner, Beth Robertson, **Richard Schissler III** and The Schissler Foundation, **Britt** and Helen **Schmidt**, and Ralph and Bette Thomas (bolded names are pictured above) wanted to honor and thank Dean Stancel for outstanding vision, service, and accomplishments during his 12-year term. To do so they established The George M. Stancel, Ph.D., Endowed Fellowship in the Biomedical Sciences which will be used to provide fellowship awards to exceptional graduate students with a focus on the most promising area of research for a given year as decided by the GSBS Dean. In a rare moment of near speechlessness, Stancel voiced his deepest appreciation to the group. Dr. Stancel will be assuming a new role full time as vice president for research and academic affairs for UTHealth as soon as a new dean for the School is named.

At the spring Advisory Council meeting, Diana Hawkins also was honored for her years of service since 2006 as Council Chair, and thanked for spearheading many innovative activities such as the **Evening of Discovery** to engage a wider circle of the community on behalf of the Graduate School. Shown here are Diana with incoming Council Chair, Britt Schmidt. Britt graciously accepted this leadership role and noted that "Mrs. Hawkins will be a challenging act to follow."



Special thanks to Nina and Michael Zilkha for hosting the third **Evening of Discovery** at their art-filled home. A sampling of graduate students presented their research on scientific posters for the 40 guests, with dinner followed by comments from President *ad interim* Giuseppe Colasurdo, M.D., and a sharing of the **Discovery Fellowship** vision by Dean Stancel.

A few of the Evening of Discovery guests left to right: Mrs. Phoebe Tudor, Mrs. Nina Zilkha, Ms. Betsy Frantz, assistant vice president for UTHealth, Mrs. Leslie Blanton, Dr. George Stancel, MD/PhD candidate Ms. Kerry Welsh, Mr. David Minberg and Ms. Lainie Gordon.



## BACK COVER

**Message to the Alumni:**  
Jackie Peltier Horn Ph. D.  
President 2010-2011  
GSBS Alumni Association

Front Cover: GSBS graduates Sharon Way, Ph.D., Aaron Mobley, Ph.D., Anne Hart, Ph.D., and Jordan Bell, Ph.D. celebrate after the 2011 Commencement ceremony.



## A Important Question that May Not Always be Asked Aloud

The idea of Productivity (capital P) has been in the news lately in regard to state funding of public academic institutions—particularly at the undergraduate level, but also in regard to graduate degrees. In fact, at a recent GSBS event, a prominent community member asked, “What is the difference between private and public institutions, and why, as a taxpayer, if public institutions are already receiving public support via my tax dollars, should I give my private money to provide philanthropic support to a public institution?” It occurred to me that without realizing it you may know people who are wondering, if not outright asking, similar questions. The subject is both broad and deep, but I thought I might briefly point out some recent information from The University of Texas at Austin President, Bill Powers, and then I’ll circle back to GSBS and our friend’s query.

Here is an excerpt from Dr. Powers’ recent comments about the Austin campus in The Dallas Morning News: “For the citizens of Texas, we are a good investment. Last year, our faculty attracted \$648 million in research grants, more than double our current state appropriation of \$318 million. When combined with other revenue from tuition, philanthropy, and auxiliary enterprises, taxpayers received the benefit of \$5.8 billion in economic activity. All of this comes at an annual cost of \$13 per Texas resident.” A smaller total amount, but I suspect an even greater ratio, is certainly true for the Graduate School, i.e., we’re a great value for taxpayers in Texas and the US.

Most private institutions were established many years ago by individuals of prominence, financial prowess and/or religious persuasion who provided endowments that now generate revenue because they believed in the importance of an educated population. But the “private” label today is a bit of misnomer, as most large so-called private institutions receive very substantial support from

taxpayer dollars from either state or federal programs in the way of student assistance that translates into tuition and fees and federal dollars for research grants and graduate student support as well as significant funds from the investment returns on their endowments.

The long (and short) of it is that it takes more money than the 18% of tuition-driven and taxpayer-based budget support allotted to UTHealth (and a much smaller subset of that to GSBS) to run a public University and pay for a graduate student’s education—to say nothing of creating highly-rated research training programs ranked among the very best in the nation according to the National Research Council’s 2010 Report. For institutions like GSBS and our parents, UTHealth and MD Anderson, this productivity and quality can only be accomplished through an amalgam that includes state support, dollars from clinical revenues, research and training grants to our faculty, and philanthropic dollars from individuals and foundations.

Thus, even though we are a state institution, the quality of our educational and research programs is directly dependent upon all of us—as we generate revenue, educate the next generation of research scientists, produce breakthroughs, increase employment for the city, the state and beyond, originate intellectual property, save lives through our discoveries, and build the neighborhood that we want Houston to be. This takes the wisdom and efforts of our Faculty and staff, the important contributions of our students to our research discoveries and future grants, our state support, and the private gifts from our many friends in the community – it’s a family affair.

Thank you and best wishes to all these members of our GSBS Family,

*George*



## “The Unique Role of the Scientist in an Unsettled World”

Good morning and congratulations to all of you who are graduating today – your families and friends, and the faculty and administrators of your institutions – on your achievements that we celebrate today. And welcome to Rice University, one of the newest members of the Texas Medical Center. We at Rice are honored that you are holding this important event on our campus. And it is a personal honor for me to be asked to speak to you today.

Commencement is a very happy time when you can look back—a variable number of years—on a lot of hard work and sacrifice—for your families and friends as well as yourselves - to earn the advanced degrees you will receive today. But, as the word implies, commencement is also a time of uncertainty, maybe even anxiety, as you take the next step, which will be followed by many more in your professional career.

I tried to think back to my last graduation—quite a long time ago. I think I was more relieved than anxious. I was just doing my best to follow my simple plan. At about age twelve, I decided to be a physicist (not that I knew the first thing about physics) and to become a university professor, although my connection with any university was the Saturday afternoon football games in Norman, Oklahoma. A few years later, I came up with a second goal: to marry my high-school sweetheart, Joni. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last year. That was the extent of my life’s plan. And from that point on, as Joni will tell you, it has just been a work in progress, with lots of surprises along the way.

If you are clear about what you want to do with your career and have a passion for a particular direction and outcome, then by all means, fire ahead. But, if you don’t have a fully worked out career plan, I wouldn’t lose much sleep over that. You are going to be pleasantly surprised at the opportunities that come your way and experiences that you likely have not even thought about.

Those opportunities will be created for you by people - people you have worked with, studied under, and even mentored. You may not always know who is opening doors for you to help move your career along. So, take care in how you deal with people, whoever they may be.

I hope some of you will win the Nobel Prize, cure a terrible disease, be a dean or president of a university, or CEO of a corporation, run a federal agency or, perhaps, serve as science advisor to a future president. At some stage of your career I encourage you to think about working in Washington. Policy making in our system of government is a fascinating business. I think you would find it both interesting and fulfilling as you use your scientific knowledge and personal skills to improve the way our government works, and there is a lot of room for improvement. But,

whatever lies ahead, this is a happy time for you and there will be many more happy times down the road.

Sadly, it is not such a happy time for many people in our country and around the world:

- The devastating natural disasters that cost lives, destroy homes and devastate communities, most recently the earthquake and tsunami (and ongoing nuclear crisis) in Japan, and here in the U.S., and the recent tornados and floods;
- The continuing turmoil in the Middle East, where people are seeing the chance to be free and live a better life for the first time in many decades;
- Armed conflicts that, at least in part, are due to our dependence on foreign oil, most of which happens to be located in unstable parts of the world;
- An ever widening gulf between rich and poor, here and throughout the world, that results in billions of people going without basic necessities for healthy lives;
- The threats of climate change and environmental degradation that will only make things worse for most of the world;
- And here in the U.S., the frustration and anger of so many Americans who have much to offer, but are without decent jobs, following the meltdown of the U.S. and world’s economies, while they read in the paper about a CEO who made over \$ 80M last year.
- And, of course, the list could be much longer.

Meanwhile, many of our political leaders seem unable to sit down together and have adult conversations about serious matters. And some of them are determined to make radical budget cuts, including health services for women, children, education, and scientific research. They are even willing to allow the nation to go into default on its loans and shut down the government if their demands are not met.

I was serving in Washington during the 22-day shutdown in 1995-96, trying to hold the National Science Foundation together. I was answering the phone: “Good morning, this is the National Science Foundation, please hold!” Shutting down the government is not a good idea, it hurts people and it wastes money.

I’m afraid my generation is handing your generation a real mess!



How to move forward? Well, I'm not smart enough to answer that question. And even if I thought I had the answers, you should be very skeptical.

So, Neal, you might ask, if that's the bad news, do you have any good news? There is good news. The good news is what I believe I can see from this podium, looking out at you graduates, and what I find when I talk with young people on my campus and campuses across Main street and across the country.

- You know the world has problems, and I think you have the courage and the will to try to do something about it.
- And just as important, you have the knowledge, skills and the technologies to make a real difference. Indeed, you are uniquely qualified to do so.
- You do believe in evidence. You do have adult conversations about serious matters. In short, you are scientists!

I have often been asked: What is so special about scientists? Sometimes I answer: "Scientists are a lot like people!" Of course, what I really mean, and hopefully make clear to my inquisitor, is that scientists are people with very special motivations and values to go along with their knowledge and skills.

One job I held many years ago was that of Chancellor of one of four campuses in the University of Colorado System. On one occasion, I was being introduced by the system President, who was an economist. The President began his introduction - "Dr. Lane is a scientist, a person who is motivated by curiosity to understand nature. I am an economist, a profession in which the motivation is greed!" Please, no offense to economists in the audience. He was only making a joke on himself.

My reason for sharing this anecdote is that there is something special about science, and it's not greed. Science is about truth, or as close as theory and observation can take us. Science is about integrity and ethical standards of behavior, where any misconduct usually spells the end of a career. Science is about humanity—the search for knowledge and new tools and methodologies, and their use to help people live healthier and happier lives here in this country and across the globe.

When people in the U.S. are asked, in various surveys, whom they respect most among various professionals, scientists rank near the top. And these data haven't changed over several decades. The American people respect you for what you do and are happy to know that some of their tax money is used to support research, particularly in the areas of health and medicine.

President Clinton often would tell me, "Neal, you need to remember that the American people always get it right!" Well, I'm not so sure I always shared his unwavering optimism; but when it comes to science, I think the American people do get it right or,

at least, they have for over 60 years.

My personal worry is that this high level of public support— moral, political and financial— may not be sustainable. Said another way, there are already hints, or symptoms, of some crumbling of our image around the edges. I'll name three:

- First, many people, particularly in the U.S., see conflicts between their deeply held religious beliefs and modern biology, e.g. evolution and medicine (stem cells) and, not too far down the road, I suspect, synthetic biology.
- Second, the recent populist movement, e.g. the tea parties, tends to reject authority and elitism, both of which can be linked to science, whether fair or not. There are at least hints of a growing anti-intellectual movement in America. There have been floor amendments in the House of Representatives to cancel specific NIH grants that had titles some members didn't like. And, as we meet today, several states are considering laws designed to push so-called "controversial" science out of the classrooms.
- Third, this country—at least our government—does have a serious long-term money problem, mainly due to the rising cost of healthcare, the costs of our national defense (particularly the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan), and the loss of revenues due to the recession and tax cuts for upper income Americans.

The pressure to reduce federal spending is rising and science will be on the table along with everything else. These three symptoms of a possible loss of public support (beliefs contrary to scientific understanding; a growing anti-elitist and anti-intellectual movement; and a "slash and burn" budget cutting fever) I believe threaten the future of science in this country, and with it, the kind of life that you will want for yourselves, your families, partners and communities.

The causes of these shifting public attitudes are many. But they include the public's lack of understanding of science and how science moves forward. Half of the American people don't know how long it takes for the Earth to go around the sun. And I doubt many of them would know how to find out—well, maybe Google? It should not be surprising, then, that when issues like embryonic stem cells or climate change come up, the science is simply too difficult for most people to understand.

So, what to do? I believe that it is our responsibility—yours and mine—to try to change the situation by reaching out to the American public and political leaders whose support we need, finding out what they think and what they expect from science. And in that conversation we can take the opportunity to help people better understand the connections between scientific research—even research that may sound esoteric—and health and safety,

# COMMENCEMENT 2010 ADDRESS

energy security, environmental protection, national defense, the economy, and all the other things people need and care about.

This is not the traditional role of scientists; but I believe that scientists are best prepared to do it. Indeed, I believe nobody else can. This is a role I have come to call the “civic scientist”—a scientist, engineer or medical or other technical professional who not only contributes to his or her field but, in addition, takes time out to communicate with the public and policy makers at all levels.

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of “civic scientists” across the country, meeting with schools, churches and communities, giving media interviews, writing books and articles aimed at the general public, advising policy makers in Washington and state houses across the land, and, in many other ways, bridging the gulf of understanding between science and the public. I want to mention a few today that have Texas connections.

Sally Ride, former Rice faculty member, was the first female astronaut going into space. Sally is using her knowledge, fame and communication skills to reach young women and girls to encourage them to consider careers in science.

Dr. Kenneth Shine, executive vice chancellor for UT Health Affairs served as President of the National Academies’ Institute of Medicine. He was recruited to leave Washington and move to Texas and has changed Texas for the better by improving access to healthcare and highlighting public health issues.

Dr. John Mendelsohn, of course, is stepping down as President of MD Anderson. He has not only led MD Anderson to become the top cancer center in the country, he also has been effective in helping to bridge the gap between research and public understanding and policy.

Dr. William Brinkley, Dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Robert Wells, Director of the Center for Genome Research at Texas A&M Medical Center in Houston, have both served as presidents of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), a national organization that lobbies on behalf of biomedical research. And both have continued to work with communities and policy makers to improve the public’s understanding of biomedical science.

There are many more “civic scientists” in Texas and on the campuses of your institutions and mine. Ask around. I think you will be impressed with what they are doing.

This all brings me to a request. In the coming weeks and months, as you begin the next stage of your career, give some thought to this ‘civic scientist’ notion. The fact that you are graduating today from these outstanding institutions means that you now know a lot about your subject and are able to give authoritative lectures on your specialties to technical audiences.

And, of course, you will continue to do a great deal of that. But you will also have opportunities, both formal and informal, to talk about your work with non-technical audiences—campus and community groups, K-12 schools, churches, Rotary clubs, various news media, and others. You will be very busy with your careers. But, when you can, I hope you will take advantage of opportunities to reach many audiences with your messages about science. Try to make the occasions more of a conversation than a lecture. Find out what other people think about science and about what you are doing. What are their interests and their concerns?

One of my fellow Oklahomans, the legendary cowboy-showman, Will Rogers, had some good advice when he said, “Never miss a good chance to shut up!” I sometimes used that quote in Washington, but nobody understood it. The point, of course, is that you can actually learn a lot by listening.

I have found that people are impressed—usually surprised—that you, a scientist, actually care what they think. And, they are then more inclined to listen to what you have to say.

I also care what you think. So, when you have a break in your celebration and preparation for your next adventure, send me an e-mail or just Google “Baker Institute Science” to find the e-mail contact. If you would like to chat about life in Washington and the world of policy, we’ll get together for coffee. I look forward to hearing from you.

One final comment. A few years after I returned to Rice from Washington, we had a visit from then Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Allen Greenspan, who gave a talk to our Jones School of Management. I had met Greenspan during my White House days. After his talk, a student asked a question. “Chairman Greenspan, I am an economics major looking for a job. What would you advise?” Greenspan responded something like the following: “I know that job prospects are not so good right now and that you will be impatient to line up something. But I would urge you to try to be patient until you find the job you really want. Ask yourself, “What kind of an economist or businessman do I want to be and what do I stand for? What are my values?” Greenspan concluded: “I’ve known people who cut corners, crossed over ethical lines, bent the rules, and made a lot of money. But it is my view that the majority of really successful people place a high value on their integrity and ethical behavior in their professional life.” I don’t remember much else that Greenspan said in his talk, but I do remember his response to the student’s question.

So, I will leave you with Greenspan’s message, which is good advice for all of us, even scientists, whose careers are about unraveling nature’s secrets, not emptying people’s bank accounts. As for your careers, again, I offer my very best wishes for a wonderful and fulfilling life ahead and congratulations on the work you have done and will be doing to help people have a better life in a better world. Thank you.

# COMMENCEMENT GREETINGS FROM GSBS FACULTY PRESIDENT

VARSHA GANDHI, PH.D.

Graduate Faculty President  
2010-2011

Thank you Dean Stancel. Good morning, everyone!

Dear Graduates,

The GSBS faculty heartily congratulates you on earning well-deserved graduate degrees. This milestone ends your formal academic education, bringing you to the end of a journey. Many helped you along this path; family, friends, and faculty protected and nurtured you. Now, you are beginning to tread new paths, venturing out to explore the real-world – that metaphoric real-world. So, what will you do in the real-world?

Rather than advising you on your next steps, I have decided to tell you a story. The story begins on the sandy shores of La Jolla in San Diego, California. It is an early Sunday morning, and everything is calm following a major storm that took place previous night. The water, completely serene, is grayish-blue without the sunlight. The sandy beach tells the story of the storm—seaweeds and seashells are everywhere. Facing the beach is a row of beautiful glass-front, pastel-colored houses. The only noises are the rhythmic footsteps and measured breathing of a young man out for a jog. The young man, possibly in his mid-20s, is oblivious to his surroundings; he is focused entirely on his run. He relishes the ability to train before the mid-morning heat sets in and tourists begin to crowd the beach.

As he begins to think about the crowds, the jogger sees an elderly gentleman—probably in his late 80s—coming out of a beachfront house. “He is probably just grabbing his newspaper,” the jogger thinks. To his surprise, however, the elderly, frail man limps onto the sand and begins walking on the beach. Every now and then he grimaces and slowly bends over to pick up something from the sand and toss it into the sea. The young man, still jogging, becomes curious about his newfound companion. As he passes the elderly man, the jogger asks, “Sir, what are you doing out this early in the morning?” The elderly man smiles at the jogger. Extending his palm, he reveals that he is holding a starfish. “Son,” he says, “I am picking up the

starfish that have washed up on the beach after the storm and putting them back in the water so that they can survive. I have to do this before the sun rises and the birds and people arrive on the beach.” This is not a convincing reply for the young man, who adds, “But sir, there are millions of starfish in the sea; they are not an extinct species. Plus, the task is so enormous, as there are so many echinoderms on the sand. What you are doing cannot really make a major difference.” The old man smiles and says, “I am not here to make a major difference for the starfish community, son; I am here to make a major difference for one starfish, the one right here in my hand. He hands the fish to the jogger and asks him to toss it back into the water. As the young man throws the fish back in, he realizes how profoundly the simple but timely action impacts the tiny but live starfish.

So what is the message in this story for all of you graduates who are emerging into the so-called “real world”? Even the smallest of gestures can have the most profound impacts on others’ lives. Do not (and I repeat, do not) ever think that you need to reach a certain level or a certain position to make a difference; you can do so now. Do not think you have to help many to make a difference; help one who is in need, and you will make a difference. Do not think that you will help later; help in a timely manner and you will make a difference. The world will be a better place once you start helping, even one starfish at a time.

Congratulations on reaching your destination. I hope in the real world, you enjoy, you explore, you adventure, and, of course, you help as many as you can along the way. Thank you!



## The McGovern Award for Outstanding Teaching

**The McGovern Award for Outstanding Teaching** recognizes a GSBS faculty member, **Andrew Bean, Ph.D.** who has significantly contributed to the education and training of GSBS students. Each year, students nominate faculty by writing an essay addressing these criteria and including specific examples. In 2010-2011 students admired how Dr. Bean helps “prepare first and second year students for their meetings, talks and grants application writing.” Dr. Bean is co-director of the Neuroscience program, serves on the GSBS Admissions, Executive and Curriculum Committees; serves on the Graduate Student Education Committee at the Medical School; and coordinates one GSBS course in addition to regularly lecturing in six others. He has served on 47 student Advisory/Supervisory Committees and 23 Examining Committees.





# 2011 Commencement





# ement Ceremony





## MASTERS OF SCIENCE DEGREE

- Alvarez, Ricardo** (Janet Price, D. Phil.)  
*Effects of combined bavacizumab and paclitaxel on tumor interstitial fluid pressure in a preclinical breast cancer model*
- Blatnica, Anthony** (Geoffrey Ibbott, Ph.D.)  
*Modification and implementation of the RPC heterogeneous thorax phantom for verification of proton therapy treatment procedures*
- Choi, Hyun Ho** (Mong-Hong Lee, Ph.D.)  
*COP9 signalosome subunit 6 stabilizes COP1, a novel E3 ubiquitin ligase for 14-3-3sigma*
- Davidson, Scott** (David Followill, Ph.D.)  
*Benchmarking and implementation of a new independent monte carlo dose calculation quality assurance audit tool for clinical trials*
- Dick, Joseph** (Mohammad Salehpour, Ph.D.)  
*An implantable MOSFET dosimeter modified to act as a fiducial marker*
- Erzinger, Stephanie** (Janet Price, D. Phil.)  
*Investigating the Effects of Silencing EphA2 in Metastatic Breast Cancer Cells*
- Gabitzsch, Emily** (Michael Gambello, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Prevalence of premature ovarian failure in women with tuberous sclerosis*
- Garza, Isaac** (Peter Christie, Ph.D.)  
*Agrobacterium VIRB10 contributions to type IV substrate secretion, T-pilus biogenesis, and outer membrane pore formation*
- Gomez, Karen** (Heidi Kaplan, Ph.D.)  
*Identification of the causative bacteria in musculoskeletal infections using 16s rDNA-denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis analysis*
- Graham, Timothy** (Patrick Zweidler-McKay, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Delineating the mechanism(s) of BDNF/TRKB mediated proliferation in neuroblastoma*
- Hendon, Laura** (Kate Wilson, M.S.)  
*Physical perceptions of risk regarding mood disorders and pharmacological management during pregnancy: What is current practice?*
- Henriksen, Ashley** (Jennifer Hoskovec, M.S.)  
*Knowledge and perception of the role of targeted ultrasound in detecting down syndrome among a high risk population*
- Kerns, James** (Geoffrey Ibbott, Ph.D.)  
*Characterization of optically stimulated luminescent detectors in photon and proton beams for use in anthropomorphic phantoms*
- Kha, Diem** (Karen Vasquez, Ph.D.)  
*Double-strand break repair pathways in DNA structure-induced genetic instability*
- Kisling, Kelly** (Rebecca Howell, Ph.D.)  
*Volumetric modulated arc therapy evaluation with the radiological physics center head and neck phantom*
- Li, Alexander** (Eric Boerwinkle, Ph.D.)  
*Characterizing a novel genetic locus associated with familial co-occurrence of thoracic aortic aneurysms and intracranial aneurysms*
- Lin, Xiaofeng** (Reuben Lotan, Ph.D.)  
*The role of tyrosine phosphorylation in the functions of the tumor suppressor GPRC5A*
- Liu, Wei-Li** (Stephen Massey, Ph.D.)  
*Direct inputs to OFF and G9 ganglion cells from All amacrine cells in rabbit retina*
- Lofton, Bradley** (Richard Wendt, Ph.D.)  
*New tools for monitoring gamma camera uniformity*
- Maili, Lorena** (F. Gerard Moeller, M.D.)  
*Cocaine Dependence: The Role of Serotonin Genes in Attentional Bias and Impulsivity*
- Mull, Benjamin** (Khandan Keyomarsi, Ph.D.)  
*Specific, reversible cytostatic protection of normal cells against negative effects of chemotherapy*
- Nichols, Trisha** (Jacqueline Hecht, Ph.D.)  
*Natural history study of arthrogyrosis multiplex congenita, amyoplasia type*
- Panos, Laura** (Sarah Noblin, M.S.)  
*Effect of anchoring in perceived amniocentesis related miscarriage risk within a Latina population*
- Park, Min Sung** (Jonathan Trent, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Temozolomide and bevacizumab therapy in advanced hemangiopericytoma/solitary fibrous tumor*
- Parsons, Henrique** (Razelle Kurzrock, M.D.)  
*The effects of curcumin on body composition of patients with advanced pancreatic cancer*
- Piha-Paul, Sarina** (Razelle Kurzrock, M.D.)  
*An innovative phase I trial design allowing for the identification of multiple potential maximum tolerated doses with combination therapy of targeted agents*
- Rechner, Laura** (Wayne Newhauser, Ph.D.)  
*Risk of Second Malignant Neoplasms Following Proton Arc Therapy and Volumetric Modulated Arc Therapy for Prostate Cancer*
- Springer, Adam** (Osama Mawlawi, M.S.)  
*Evaluation of the quantitative accuracy of a commercially-available positron emission mammography scanner*
- Swain, Sarah** (Laura Mitchell, Ph.D.)  
*Evaluation of recurrence risks for left-sided cardiac lesions*
- Tseng, Jen-Te** (Pralhad Ram, Ph.D.)  
*Understanding acquired resistance to lapatinib in breast cancer cells*
- Vela, Deborah** (Heinrich Taegtmeyer, M.D., D. Phil.)  
*Dynamic remodeling of the stressed heart: role of protein degradation pathways*
- Yaldo, Derek** (Rebecca Howell, Ph.D.)  
*Evaluation of the sensitivity of the anisotropic analytical algorithm (AAA) to the commissioning dataset*
- Yennu, Sriram** (James Reuben, Ph.D.)  
*The association between cancer-related-fatigue, response to fatigue treatment, and cytokines and their receptors, in patients with advanced cancer*
- Yuan, Daniel** (Steven Norris, Ph.D.)  
*A metagenomic study of the tick midgut*
- Zamora, David** (Tinsu Pan, Ph.D.)  
*Thoracic target volume delineation using various maximum-intensity projection computed tomography image sets for stereotactic body radiation therapy*

- Alexander, Angela** (Cheryl Walker, Ph.D.)  
*ATM signaling to TSC2: mechanisms and implications for cancer therapy*
- Bell, Jordan** (Henry Strobel, Ph.D.)  
*Expression and regulation of human cytochrome P450 4F isoforms in tissue samples and under TNF-alpha challenges*
- Cannon, Blake** (Lei Dong, Ph.D.)  
*Improving quantitative treatment response monitoring with deformable image registration*
- Castillo, Eliseo** (Kimberly Schluns, Ph.D.)  
*Defining the role of IL-15 trans-presentation by distinct cell-types during the development and homeostasis of natural killer and invariant natural killer T cells*
- Chen, Chiao-Lin** (Georg Halder, Ph.D.)  
*Cell polarity regulates organ growth through the Hippo pathway*
- Chen, Haoyi** (Lei Li, Ph.D.)  
*RMI1 is essential for early embryonic development and attenuation of tumor development*
- Chen, Mingming** (Xuetong Shen, Ph.D.)  
*Molecular design and function of the INO80 chromatin remodeling complex in *saccharomyces cerevisiae**
- Chen, Yulong** (Reuben Lotan, Ph.D.)  
*Loss of GPRC5A enhances survival in normal and malignant lung epithelial cells by eliciting persistent STAT3 activation induced by autocrine LIF*
- Chiquet, Brett** (Jacqueline Hecht, Ph.D.)  
*Gene discovery in nonsyndromic cleft lip with or without cleft palate*
- Cho, Min Soon** (Elsa Flores, Ph.D.)  
*DeltaNp63 regulates a complex network of target genes in limb and epidermal development*
- Courtney, Amy** (Jagannadha Sastry, Ph.D.)  
*Characterization of Alpha-Galactosylceramide as a mucosal adjuvant*
- Estrella, Jaymie** (Chinnaswamy Jagannath, Ph.D.)  
*Role of vitamin-D3 and retinoic acid in a human THP-1 macrophage model of mycobacterium tuberculosis infection*
- Flynn, Jesse** (William Klein, Ph.D.)  
*Elucidating functional roles for myogenin in adult skeletal muscle metabolism, exercise capacity, and regeneration*
- Fox, Kristina** (Danielle Garsin, Ph.D.)  
*Multiple posttranscriptional regulatory features control expression of ethanolamine utilization genes in *enterococcus faecalis**
- Ganguly, Dipyaman** (Michel Gilliet, M.D.)  
*Immune recognition of self nucleic acids driven by endogenous antimicrobial peptides: role in autoimmunity*
- Gregorio, Josh** (Michel Gilliet, M.D.)  
*Plasmacytoid dendritic cells sense skin injury and promote wound healing through type I interferons*
- Gu, Dongmin** (Pierre McCrea, Ph.D.)  
*Developmental and cellular functions of delta-catenin*
- Gully, Christopher** (Mong-Hong Lee, Ph.D.)  
*A novel function for aurora B kinase in the regulation of p53 by phosphorylation*
- Hamdan, Randala** (Eugenie Kleinerman, M.D.)  
*Stromal derived growth factor alpha (SDF-1 $\alpha$ ) induces the differentiation of bone marrow progenitor cells (BMCs) into pericytes by regulating platelet derived growth factor B (PDGF-B) transcription*
- Hart, Anne** (John Byrne, Ph.D.)  
*Role of synapsin in long-term synaptic facilitation in aplasia*
- Hayashi, Yuho** (Maria-Magdalena Georgescu, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*NHERF1-new modifier of colorectal cancer progression*
- Hennessey, Violeta** (J. Jack Lee, Ph.D., D.D.S.)  
*A bayesian approach to dose-response assessment and drug-drug interaction analysis: application to in vitro studies*
- Hong, Ji Yeon** (Pierre McCrea, Ph.D.)  
*Mechanisms regulating the P120-catenin/kaiso pathway*
- Hymel, Chris** (Khader Hasan, Ph.D.)  
*Application of signal advance technology to electrophysiology*
- JavanMoghaddam, Sonia** (Khandan Keyomarsi, Ph.D.)  
*Cell cycle regulatory roles of estrogen receptor alpha (era) in breast cancer cells*
- Kerr, Jennifer** (Peter Christie, Ph.D.)  
*Characterization of the agrobacterium tumefaciens VIRB2 PILIN of the VIRB/D4 type IV secretion system*
- Latham, John** (Sharon Dent, Ph.D.)  
*Regulation of Set1-mediated methylation of DAM1*
- Li, Hua** (Shoudan Liang, Ph.D.)  
*Network topology in human protein interaction data predicts functional association*
- Martinez, Gustavo** (Chen Dong, Ph.D.)  
*Molecular mechanisms underlying the transcriptional regulation of T helper17 and regulatory cells*
- Mobley, Aaron** (Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.)  
*Analysis of B8 integrin in neurogenesis and neurovascular homeostasis*
- Neunuebel, Joshua** (James Knierim, Ph.D.)  
*Tracking the flow of information through the Hippocampal formation in the rat*

(continued)



## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

**Nolden, Laura** (Jonathan Trent, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Patient characteristics and outcomes of 197 gastrointestinal stromal tumor patients undergoing imatinib plasma level testing*

**O'Day, Diana** (William Mattox, Ph.D.)  
*Genetic analysis of the function of the drosophila doublesex-related factor dmrt93B*

**Pedroza, Mesias** (Michael Blackburn, Ph.D.)  
*The role of IL-6 in adenosine-mediated pulmonary fibrosis*

**Pflughoeft, Kathryn** (Theresa Koehler, Ph.D.)  
*The immune inhibitor A1 protease of bacillus anthracis*

**Schaeffer, Daneen** (Ambro van Hoof, Ph.D.)  
*The domains of the catalytic subunit of the eukaryotic RNA degrading exosome, RRP44P, have distinct functions*

**Song, Hui** (Mien-Chie Hung, Ph.D.)  
*Defining the Role of EGFR Acetylation in Cellular Processes: Clinical Implications*

**Spaeth, Erika** (Frank Marini, Ph.D.)  
*Elucidating the role of CD44 expression on mesenchymal stem cells within the tumor microenvironment*

**Su, Chun-hui** (Mong-Hong Lee, Ph.D.)  
*14-3-3 Sigma negatively regulates the stability and subcellular localization of COP1*

**Su, Ying-Wen** (Jeffrey Myers, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*The role of post-translational regulation of twist expression in the tumor progression of squamous cell carcinoma of head and neck*

**Tapia, Hugo** (Kevin Morano, Ph.D.)  
*Stress-induced targeting of molecular chaperones in the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae**

**Taylor, Brian** (R. Jason Stafford, Ph.D.)  
*Dynamic chemical shift imaging for image-guided thermal therapy*

**Tchaicha, Jeremy** (Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.)  
*Analyzing the role of avb8 integrin in glioma-induced angiogenesis*

**Tonthat, Nam** (Maria Schumacher, Ph.D.)  
*Molecular mechanism by which the *Escherichia coli* nucleoid occlusion factor, SImA, keeps cytokinesis in check*

**Trinh, Bon Quy** (Honami Naora, Ph.D.)  
*The role and mechanism of the homeobox gene DLX4 in transforming growth factor-B resistance in cancer*

**Way, Sharon** (Michael Gambello, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Characterizing and treating the neuropathology of tuberous sclerosis complex in the mouse*

**Weaks, Regina** (David Johnson, Ph.D.)  
*E2F-1 and tumor suppression: The role of p21, miRNAs, and the DNA damage response*

**Webb, Angela** (Khandan Keyomarsi, Ph.D.)  
*The role of cyclin E in PKC IOTA-driven early ovarian tumorigenesis*

**Yan, Yiyi** (Randy Legerski, Ph.D.)  
*Artemis interacts with the CUL4A ubiquitin E3 ligase complex and regulates the cell cycle progression*

**Zhang, Wan** (Peng Huang, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Role of GSH Metabolism in Mediating Stromal-Leukemia Interaction and Promoting Cell Survival and Drug Resistance in Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia*

**Zheng, Dinghai** (Ann-Bin Shyu, Ph.D.)  
*Functions of deadenylation factors in mRNA decay and mRNA processing body formation*

**Zigler, Maya** (Menashe Bar-Eli, Ph.D.)  
*MCAM/MUC18 regulates melanoma progression by modulating the expression of ID-1*

## PHYSICIAN/SCIENTIST DEGREE

**Chan, Suzanne** (Sandy Chang, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Modeling sporadic tumor formation driven by telomere dysfunction in the gastrointestinal tract*

**Choe, Jennifer** (Craig Logsdon, Ph.D.)  
*Altered responses to endoplasmic reticulum stress in pancreatic cancer*

**Jung, Youngsin** (Joseph McCarty, Ph.D.)  
*Analysis of Band 4.1B in Integrin-Mediated Cell Adhesion and Signaling*

**Levin, Pavel** (Craig Logsdon, Ph.D.)  
*Role and regulation of EPHA2 in pancreatic cancer*

**Nath, Audrey** (Michael Beauchamp, Ph.D.)  
*The neural substrates of multisensory speech perception*

**Ozawa, Michael** (Wadih Arap, M.D., Ph.D.)  
*Targeting the blood-brain barrier with a non-canonical iron-mimicry mechanism*

**Patel, Chirag** (Ponnada Narayana, Ph.D.)  
*Effect of acute administration of angiopoietin-1 in experimental traumatic spinal cord injury: magnetic resonance imaging and neurobehavioral studies*

**Welsh, Kerry** (Jeffrey Actor, Ph.D.)  
*Immune modulation of the mycobacterium tuberculosis granulomatous response*



Dr. Varsha Gandhi  
GSBS Faculty President  
2010-2011

Report includes April and  
June 2011  
Membership Committee  
Meetings

MEMBERS REAPPOINTED  
WITH COMMENDATION

Eric Boerwinkle  
Paul J. Chiao  
Gilbert J. Cote  
William D. Erwin  
Chinnaswamy Jagannath  
Guillermina Lozano  
Steven J. Norris  
William Plunkett  
Ellen R. Richie  
Anil K. Sood

MEMBERS REAPPOINTED WITH  
HIGHEST COMMENDATION

Michael R. Blackburn

NEW REGULAR MEMBERS

**Zhiqiang An**

Professor  
Institute of Molecular Medicine  
UTHealth Medical School  
Ph.D., University of Kentucky, 1991  
Research interests: antibody therapeutics; drug resistance; HER/ErbB signaling pathways; cancer targets

**Veerabhadran Baladandayuthapani**

Assistant Professor  
Biostatistics  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ph.D., Texas A&M University, 2005  
Research interests: statistical theory and methods

**Ghislain Breton**

Assistant Professor  
Integrative Biology and Pharmacology  
UTHealth Medical School  
Ph.D., University of Quebec at Montreal, 2004  
Research interests: circadian biology; gene expression; functional genomics

**Jeffrey T. Chang**

Assistant Professor  
Integrative Biology and Pharmacology  
UTHealth Medical School  
Ph.D., Stanford University, 2004  
Research interests: cell signaling; transcriptional regulation; genomics; bioinformatics

**Steven A. Curley**

Professor  
Surgical Oncology  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
M.D., UTHealth Medical School, 1982

Research interests: hepatocellular carcinoma; metastatic liver tumors; pancreatic adenocarcinoma; breast cancer; colorectal cancer; thermal tumor destruction; nanobiotechnology

**Kartik Venkatachalam**

Assistant Professor  
Integrative Biology and Pharmacology  
UTHealth Medical School  
Ph.D., University of Maryland School of Medicine, 2002  
Research interests: Drosophila neurobiology; neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric diseases; systems neuroscience; sensory transduction; molecular genetics; TRP channels; innate immunity; developmental neurobiology; endocytosis; autophagy

**Leslie A. Krushel**

Associate Professor  
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
MD Anderson Center  
Ph.D., University of Toronto, 1990  
Research interests: RNA; translation; protein synthesis; Alzheimer's disease; cancer; aurora kinases; learning and memory; amyloid precursor protein

**Nicholas E. Navin**

Assistant Professor  
Genetics  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ph.D., Stony Brook University, 2010  
Research interests: cancer genomics; human genetics; cancer biology; computational biology

**Tomasz Zal**

Assistant Professor  
Immunology  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ph.D., Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Immunology and Experimental Therapy, 1992  
Research interests: immune surveillance; tumor immunology; tumor microenvironment; immunotherapy; intravital cell motility and interactions; multiphoton microscopy; immunological synapse; gamma-delta T cells

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

**Elizabeth G. Grubbs**

Assistant Professor  
Surgical Oncology  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
M.D., Duke University School of Medicine, 1999  
Research interests: endocrinology; adrenal tumors; thyroid cancer; robotic thyroidectomy; parathyroid disease; multiple endocrine neoplasia

**Jennifer Litton**

Assistant Professor  
Breast Medical Oncology  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
M.D., University of Massachusetts Medical School-  
Worcester, 2000  
Research interests: breast cancer; breast cancer and  
fertility; breast cancer and pregnancy; breast cancer  
chemotherapy; hereditary breast and ovarian cancer;  
pre-implantation genetic diagnosis

**Marites P. Melancon**

Instructor  
Imaging Physics  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ph.D., UTHealth Graduate School of Biomedical Sci-  
ences, 2007  
Research interests: cancer nanotechnology; molecu-  
lar imaging; theranostics; image-guided therapy;  
laser ablation

**Mark A. Picus**

Training Specialist, Scientific Publications  
Adjunct Associate Professor, Genetics  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ed.D., Baylor University, 1996  
Interests: scientific writing; second language acqui-  
sition and writing; plagiarism

**Theresa A. Rich**

Clinical Instructor/Genetic Counselor  
Surgical Oncology  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
M.S., University of Michigan, 2006  
Research interests: genetic counseling

**Patricia J. Robbins-Furman**

Clinical Assistant Professor  
Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences  
UTHealth Medical School  
M.P.H., UTHealth School of Public Health, 1987  
Interests: genetic counseling

**Peter P. Ruvolo**

Assistant Professor  
Leukemia  
MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Ph.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 1989  
Research interests: signal transduction; apoptosis;  
leukemia

**KuoJen Tsao**

Assistant Professor  
Pediatric Surgery  
UTHealth Medical School  
M.D., University of Kansas Medical School, 1998  
Research interests: congenital abnormalities; clini-  
cal research; fetal therapy and medicine; pediatric  
surgery

Faculty News

**Peter Christie, Ph.D.**, was elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology on February 1, 2011. Fellows of the Academy are elected annually through a highly selective, peer-review process, based on their records of scientific achievement and original contributions that have advanced microbiology.

**Theresa Koehler, Ph.D.**, addressed the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity regarding, "Creating a Culture of Responsibility in an Academic Research Laboratory" on January 5, 2011.

**Guillermina Lozano, Ph.D.**, was inducted as a fellow in the American Association of Science (AAS) at the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., on February 19, 2011.

**Kevin Morano, Ph.D.**, received one of three 2010 Institute of Biosciences and Bioengineering Innovations Awards for his project, *The Deg-On System: Generation of a Chemical and Genetic High Throughput Assay for Proteasome Activation* in partnership with Dr. Laura Segatori, T.N. Law assistant professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at Rice University. The award's funds, provided by the Hamill Foundation and the Sid Richardson Foundation, will support the work of fourth-year GSBS student **Yanyu Wang**, and Wenting Zhao, a first-year graduate student at Rice. Now in its fourth year, the Innovator Awards program shows Rice's commitment to enhancing interactions with its partner institutions in the Texas Medical Center.

Student News

ALFRED G. KNUDSON OUTSTANDING DISSERTATION



In 1997 an annual Alfred G. Knudson Outstanding Dissertation Award was established by MD Anderson Cancer Center to honor this distinguished individual and former GSBS dean. The \$1,000 award is given to a graduate of the GSBS whose dissertation is selected as the most outstanding in cancer research, *ATM signaling to TSC2: mechanisms and implications for cancer therapy*. This year's recipient is:

**Student**  
Angela Alexander

**Advisor**  
Dr. Cheryl Walker



**Kari Brewer** won the first Shohrae Hajibashi Memorial Leadership Award. This award is given each year to a UTHealth student leader who demonstrates passion, selflessness, compassion and leadership capabilities.

**Jessica Bowser** won the MD Adnerson Alumni and Faculty Association Graduate Student Award in Basic Science in the poster competition, as well as the Trainee Choice Award for Graduate Student Basic Science Research.

**Anthony D'Amelio** won the Trainee Choice Award for Graduate Student Population/Patient-Oriented Research.

**Jason Matney** won the Trainee Choice Award for Graduate Student Clinical/Translational Research.

**Katrina Salazar** won the MD Anderson Alumni and Faculty Association Graduate Student Award in Clinical/Translational Research in the poster competition.

**Matthew White** was selected to join the 2011-2012 class of Houston-Galveston Schweitzer Fellows who will spend the next year addressing health disparities throughout Houston-Galveston while developing lifelong leadership skills. The Houston-Galveston Schweitzer Fellows Program was initiated by Healthcare for the Homeless—Houston and is a collaboration of area academic institutions and non-profit service agencies.

The John P. McGovern Award for Presentation Skills was designed and conducted by the Student Affairs Committee, who believed that students need to be encouraged to develop presentation (oral and written) skills. The winners this year:

<b>Student</b>	<b>Advisor</b>
Anu Rambhadran	Dr. Vasanthi Jayaraman
Aman Mann	Dr. Ferrari Mauro
Jacob Verghese	Dr. Kevin Morano



GSBS Students at the March of Dimes March for Babies on Sunday, May 1, 2011. From left to right: Sanchaika Gaur, Sarah May, Julie Allen, Brittany Parker, Monica Gireud, Curtis Neveu, Jacob Verghese and Sarah Klein.



GSBS students toured the Lexicon Pharmaceutical offices on Friday, June 17, 2011 with Mr. Eric Solberg, Associate Dean of Management.

## Graduate Student Association Officers

*Thank you!*

**2010-2011  
Officers**



**Ana (Ale) Klauer**  
Secretary  
UTHealth,  
Microbiology  
& Molecular Genetics

**Liem Phan**  
President  
MDACC, Molecular  
& Cellular Oncology

**Edward Wang**  
Vice President  
MDACC, Molecular  
& Cellular Oncology

*Welcome!*

**2011-2012  
Officers**



**Kausar Riaz Ahmed**  
Secretary  
MDACC,  
Molecular Pathology

**Christine Shiang**  
President  
MDACC, Breast  
Medical Oncology

**Ryan Bosca**  
Vice President  
MDACC,  
Imaging Physics

# Student Awards



## AARON BLANCHARD RESEARCH AWARD IN MEDICAL PHYSICS

Named in memory of Aaron M. Blanchard, a GSBS student in the Medical Physics Program who succumbed to brain cancer in 1998, this \$500 cash award recognizes a Medical Physics graduate (M.S. or Ph.D.) for completion of an outstanding thesis or dissertation judged to make a significant contribution to cancer therapy or diagnosis. This year's recipient is:

**Student**  
Brian Taylor

**Advisor**  
Dr. R. Jason Stafford



## HARRY S. & ISABEL C. CAMERON FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

The Cameron Foundation provides a fellowship to an exceptional post-candidacy student working in research fields related to Alzheimer's or cardiovascular diseases. The Foundation gift of \$15,000 is matched by GSBS and Faculty. The 2010-2011 recipient is:

**Student**  
Yanyu Wang

**Advisor**  
Dr. Kevin Morano



## MICHAEL FARLEY MOYERS ENDOWED HEAVY PARTICLE THERAPY TRAVEL AWARD

In 2006 GSBS Alumnus Michael F. Moyers, Ph.D. (1991/Horton) created this award for an exceptional Medical Physics student who has had a paper accepted at the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) to attend the annual meeting. Ming Yang was a finalist in the John R. Cameron Young Investigator Competition for his dissertation titled *Comprehensive Uncertainty Analysis of Proton Stopping-Power-Ratio Estimation Using a KV-MV Dual Energy CT Scanner (DECT) for Margin Reduction*.

**Student**  
Ming Yang

**Advisor**  
Dr. Lei Dong

## ANDREW SOWELL-WADE HUGGINS ENDOWED SCHOLARS, PROFESSOR AND FELLOWS CANCER ANSWERS/SYLVAN RODRIGUEZ SCHOLARS

The Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Scholars, Professor and Fellow, and the Cancer Answers/Sylvan Rodriguez Scholars represent the culmination of 20 years of determined support and growth of the Cancer Answers charitable organization through two founding mothers, Joann Sowell and Marcia Huggins Jahncke, their families, cancer survivors, and contributing foundations including the Vivian L. Smith Foundation, Sylvan Rodriguez Charities, and especially Bobby Sue Smith Cohn and Bo and Amy Huggins. Originally started as the fundraising entity to support the Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Endowment which generates support for all of these awards to fund graduate education in cancer research, it has gained in size and prestige. Since 1991 over 50 scholars and 4 sets of professor/fellow teams (renewable up to three years) have been honored with awards ranging from \$3,000 scholarships up to \$20,000 in stipend support. The 2010-2011 Sowell-Huggins Endowed Scholars receiving \$5,000 are:

**Student**  
MyLinh Duong  
Denise Kellar  
Alessandra Di Lorenzo  
Wei-Lei Yang

**Advisor**  
Dr. Khandan Keyomarsi  
Dr. Laurence Cooper  
Dr. Mark Bedford  
Dr. Hui-Kuan Lin

The 2010-2011 Professor/Fellow team is:

**Student**  
Angela Alexander

**Advisor**  
Dr. Cheryl Walker

The 2010-2011 Cancer Answers/Sylvan Rodriguez Scholar is:

**Student**  
Hillary Caruso

**Advisor**  
Dr. Laurence Cooper



Endowed Scholars pictured here with Ms. Joann Sowell (center, left) and Mrs. Marcia Huggins Jahncke (center, right) are Hillary Caruso, Denise Kellar, Wei-Lei Yang, Alessandra Di Lorenzo, and MyLinh Duong.

## JACQUELINE T. HECHT FOUNDING DIRECTOR SCHOLARSHIP

The Jacqueline T. Hecht Founding Director Scholarship was created to honor Dr. Hecht's vision in establishing the Genetic Counseling Program, the first and only one of its kind in the state of Texas, as well as her many contributions as Program Director, 1989-2006, and as faculty in the field of both genetics and genetic counseling. Its purpose is to benefit graduate students in the Genetic Counseling Program and may be used to help recruit exceptional new students or award outstanding current students. The first awardee for this \$1,000 Scholarship is incoming student **Nicole Mohrbacher**.

## BARBARA L. KENNEDY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

This \$1,000 scholarship was established in 2002 for a student in the Specialized Masters Program in Genetic Counseling. The winner is selected by a review committee appointed by the WINGS Chapter of the American Business Women's Association. The recipient for 2010-2011 is:

**Student**

Emily Gabitsch

**Advisor**

Dr. Michael Gambello



Shown here, Tom Goka, Ph.D., assistant dean for outreach, Emily Gabitsch, Michael Gambello, M.D., Ph.D., Ms. Anne Kennedy, Ms. Grace Perry, president of WINGS.

## P.E.O. SCHOLARSHIP

The P.E.O. National Scholarship Awards were established in 1991 with a focus on assisting women of the United States and Canada who are pursuing a graduate degree, or undertaking advanced study or research. Since that time over 1,000 women have become P.E.O. scholars. Each year the "A.C." Chapter of the group, from Houston, nominates a student to follow in the footsteps of several earlier GSBS recipients of this highly competitive, prestigious, and valuable (\$15,000) award. Previous GSBS students who were named P.E.O. Scholars include Raegan Hunt, Pamela Yang, Ruth Ann Barkley and Cameron Jeter.



**Student**

Sara Scarboro

**Advisor**

Dr. Stephen Kry

## THE SCHISLER FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIPS

This dynamic family foundation has been a major benefactor to the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences for over ten years and has a sincere commitment to graduate education. The Schissler Foundation Fellowships foster collaboration with the emphasis on basic science projects with the greatest likelihood of translational application to human health. The Fellowship requires that all students receive a broad exposure to the biomedical sciences and ethical concepts that underlie their research. These prestigious awards give significant help to research studies that will seek to make major contributions to the therapies and cures of common human disease through genetics. In 2010-2011 The Schissler Foundation provides \$25,000 stipend funding for four Schissler Foundation Fellowships with at least one expressly designated for a student working on cancer research with faculty at MD Anderson Cancer Center. The 2010-2011 recipients are:

**Student**

Julie Allen

Eun Ah Kim

Andria Schibler

Taylor Schoberle

**Advisor**

Dr. Anil Sood

Dr. Sharon Dent

Dr. Sharon Dent

Dr. Gregory May



Shown here, left to right, Schissler grandson Stewart Red, Andria Schibler, Taylor Schoberle, Julie Allen, Mrs. Nan Schissler, Mr. Dick Schissler, Mr. Rick Schissler, Eun Ah Kim, Mrs. Lynn Red, George Stancel, Ph.D.



Congratulations to **Heike Allgayer, Ph.D.** (Boyd/1999) on the birth of her daughter, Celestine.



**Daniel Babcock, Ph.D.**, (Galko/2010) received the 2011 Sandler Lecturer Award, given for the best dissertation in the area of Drosophila research during the previous year. Daniel gave the Larry Sandler Memorial Lecture on the opening night of the 52nd Annual Drosophila Research Conference, March 30, 2011, in San Diego, CA.

**Joan Breuer-McHam, Ph.D.** (Duvic/1999) earned the Paul C.

Boyle Award for Excellence in Student Research for her paper titled, *User Interface Design from Medication Allergies in an EMR* from UTHealth School of Biomedical Informatics.



Congratulations to **Marya Chaney, Ph.D.** (Fidler/2002) on the birth of her son, Lucas, who was born on Sunday, June 12, 2011.

**James Martin, Ph.D.** (Olson/1995) was named the Vivian L. Smith Chair in Regenerative Medicine II at Baylor College of Medicine, where he is a professor of molecular physiology and biophysics.

## Career Day

Saturday, June 11, 2011



## Alumni Spotlight

## Joye Purser, Ph.D. (Norris/2002)



The road in search of one's calling can sometimes be a circuitous path. When I earned my Ph.D. in 2002, studying Lyme disease, I could not have envisioned that I would hold jobs like nonprofit coordinator, congressional staffer, lobbyist, campaign staffer, or federal employee.

My dad always said to pursue my passions, even if the work was challenging. After graduate school, I did some soul-searching and decided to take a leap into the world of science policy. Through networking, I landed a job at a nonprofit, moved to Washington, and started out as an intern. But I enjoyed the work and kept taking on work that I loved. I've never looked back.

Here is what I think are key elements in pursuit of a successful career:

1. Be likeable. People who are likeable as well as competent are best-positioned for success. Show you're a team player by being flexible, leading when needed, and helping others succeed.
2. Take risks. Once I worked for six weeks on a political campaign, knocking on more than 3,200 doors and making thousands of phone calls. It later led to a terrific career opportunity.
3. Work hard.
4. Do what you love. It's ok to switch careers once or twice. Switching more than that will delay your upward mobility. Find what you love and stick with it.

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.

-Winston Churchill

# Special Thanks and Gratitude

March 1, 2011 - July 1, 2011

## Our Benefactors

Gail and Louis Adler  
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Beth Robertson

Rick Schissler and the Schissler Foundation  
Helen and Britt O. Schmidt  
Bette and Ralph B. Thomas

## Our Contributors

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Mary Yehle

### All gifts at any scale and to any category:

- Will be acknowledged.
- Are tax deductible.
- May be matched by a corporation to enhance the value of your gift.
- May be used for memorial gifts to honor a favorite faculty, family member or friend. A notice will be sent to inform the family of the honor (not the amount) of your gift, and you will be acknowledged individually.

Consider a charitable gift annuity to increase your retirement earnings. The easiest way to give is to designate the Graduate School as beneficiary of all or part of the balance of your estate. All bequests and beneficiary designations should be made to "Board of Regents of the University of Texas Stsem for the benefit of The University of Texas Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston. This gift shall be used for the further benefit of the School and shall be used to \_\_\_\_\_."

## Staff News

### Melva S. Ramsay Award

**Karen Weinberg** (right), Admissions, is the 2011 Recipient of the GSBS **Melva S. Ramsay Award** for outstanding service to faculty, students and staff. The award of \$500 (and plaque) is presented by George Stancel, Dean, in memory of Melva Ramsay, long time beloved employee of GSBS.



### New GSBS Staff Member: Michelle Steiger, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of Admissions

Michelle Steiger joined GSBS in June 2011 as the Assistant Dean of Admissions. Previously, Michelle taught undergraduates as a faculty member at the University of St. Thomas and University of Houston. She has a total of nine years of experience in higher education. Michelle was born in Rochester, NY and has been living in the Houston area since 2002. She is looking forward to a great year for GSBS admissions.



The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

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**Deadline for news to be included in the next newsletter is February 1, 2012**

Hello Alumni,

Please plan to join us for the annual Alumni Reunion on **Friday, October 21**. We will be honoring our newest GSBS Distinguished Alumnus, **E. Antonio Chiocca, M.D., Ph.D.** (1998/Stein). He is renowned as a neurosurgeon and researcher with a focus on glial tumor biology and translational therapeutics. Read more about Dr. Chiocca on the GSBS Alumni web pages, <http://www.uthouston.edu/gsbs/alumni/distinguished-alumni/>.

The Commencement on May 7 honored 56 new MS, PhD, and MD/PhD graduates. It was my pleasure to welcome them to their new elite status as GSBS alumni. Several were recipients of named scholarship and fellowship awards. Others received recruitment awards provided through our alumni annual gifts—special thanks for your help in continuing to attract the best and brightest to the Graduate School.

Career Day brought 45 graduate students and postdocs to meet with our 12 speakers. Thank you very much to the alumni (plus a few other experts) who gave helpful, insightful information about their career paths and experiences. Thanks to Joy Marshall, Nicole Pinaire and Hannah Wingate, along with yours truly, who represented academia; Dianne Hammond and Ed Miller in government; Sol Bobst with industry; Peter Seferian and Andrew Dennis in patent agent and tech transfer respectively; Ben Thomas and Karen Adler Storthz addressed startups; Marya Chaney in pharma; and Scott Merville discussed scientific writing. Special thanks to Orlando Saldana who discussed entrepreneurial government grants. It was an energetic, interactive, informative day.



Finally, welcome to BethLynn Maxwell, Ph.D. (1980/Hsu) as a member of the Alumni Steering Committee. She is our first long-distance member and attends our meetings via conference calls. We appreciate her ideas and insight and are happy to have her with us.

I hope each of you has the opportunity for a summer holiday to renew, refresh, and restore your spirits for the year ahead. I'll see you at the reunion in October!

Best wishes,

*Jackie Peltier Horn*

Jackie Peltier Horn, Ph.D. (1981)  
GSBS Alumni Association Steering Committee President  
2010-2011