Dr. Marsh to Lead CCHS

E. Eugene Marsh, MD

Dr. E. Eugene Marsh III, neurologist and medical educator, was named interim dean of The University of Alabama’s College of Community Health Sciences, effective July 1. He is also serving as interim associate dean of the UA School of Medicine, Tuscaloosa. The appointments were announced by Dr. Judy Bonner, University of Alabama Provost, and Dr. William Deal, dean of the UA School of Medicine.

Since 2001, Marsh has served as associate professor in the department of internal medicine and as associate dean for academic affairs in the college. Dr. Marsh has maintained a private practice in Tuscaloosa since 1990 and has instructed UA School of Medicine students and residents for more than 10 years. He is also the medical director of the Alabama Quality Assurance Foundation.

"Dr. Marsh has a strong track record in medical teaching and practice, and we look forward to the contributions he will make as he leads the College of Community Health Sciences in serving the rural and other under-served areas of the state,” Bonner said.

“The School of Medicine is delighted to have someone of Dr. Marsh’s caliber to lead our program in Tuscaloosa as we begin the search for a permanent dean,” Deal added.

Marsh will head CCHS, a clinical branch campus of the UA School of Medicine, which is headquartered in Birmingham. CCHS provides the last two years of clinical training for a portion of the medical students enrolled at the UA School of Medicine, and it operates a three-year family practice residency program. The College also provides training sites and internships for students in clinical dietetics, health education, healthcare management, nursing, pharmacy, psychology, and social work. The mission of CCHS’s educational programs is improving healthcare in Alabama, emphasizing small towns and rural areas. The College’s programs are designed to increase the accessibility and availability of healthcare and to improve its quality through research, education, and service.

Marsh is a native of South Carolina and received his bachelor’s degree cum laude from UA in 1975. He received his M.D. from the University of South Alabama in 1979. After an internship in family medicine, he completed a residency in cerebrovascular disease. The University of the Health Sciences in serving the rural and other under-served areas of the state. Graduates practicing obstetrics (OB) have contributed to dramatic decreases in infant mortality in the State. In addition to providing quality medical care in their communities, our graduates have served as volunteer firemen, Sunday school teachers, team physicians, and community leaders.

Higginbotham to Guide Research Mission

Dr. Higginbotham is also Director of the Institute for Rural Health Research and Principal Investigator of UA’s portion of a $7.5 million Project EXPORT grant titled “Reducing Health Disparities in Alabama’s Black Belt.”

In the newly created position, Dr. Higginbotham will be responsible for facilitating research and other activities that inform public health policy, particularly as it relates to the focus of the School of Medicine/College of Community Health Sciences—the health of rural Alabama. He will work closely with the Dean in strategic planning. (See p. 3.)
**Burgess Attends Clinical Research Conference at Mayo**

Dr. Karen Burgess, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, attended the fifth annual "Current Issues in Clinical Research" conference at the Mayo Clinic. The conference format was designed to provide general and breakout sessions focused on clinical research in a local practice and national issues. The event provided a review for principal investigators, study coordinators, and other health care personnel involved in the management and coordination of clinical research. Speakers included top FDA officials Dr. Lester Crawford, Acting Commissioner, and Dr. Dan Burn Murphy, Acting Director, Pediatric Therapeutics. The UA Division of Clinical Investigations belongs to the Mayo Alliance for Clinical Trials. Membership in the Mayo Alliance is open to clinical sites throughout the nation. Currently, the Mayo and three of UA's members completed a 3-month residency training at the Mayo Clinic — Dr. Timothy Winkler, Co-Chair of Surgery, and Dr. John Wheat and Dr. Amit Shah of Internal Medicine. In addition to the annual Mayo Alliance conference, there are other issues in clinical trials, internet training, interactive satellite programs, and multicenter projects.

"It was a great experience and learning opportunity. I know that it will impact my participation in future clinical trials. I think this course, or a course like this one, would be of benefit to anyone who has a role in clinical trials," said Dr. Burgess. Dr. Elizabeth Cockrum, associate professor of pediatrics and a clinical trial principal investigator (PI), and Health Care Professional Coordinator Kay Fendley have previously attended this conference.

**CCHS Faculty Named to Black Belt Commission**

Two CCHS faculty members, Drs. John C. Higginbotham and John R. Wheat, both in the Department of Community and Rural Medicine, have been named to Governor Bob Riley’s Black Belt Action Commission.

Dr. Higginbotham is in CCHS Associate Dean for Research and Health Policy and Interest, the School of Public Health and Rural, and Department of Community and Rural Medicine. He is also director of the University’s Institute for Rural Health Research, which works to reduce health disparities in the Black Belt through research, education, and outreach. Dr. Wheat serves as Director of Community and Rural Medicine and Internal Medicine. He is founder and director of UA’s Rural Health Scholars Program, Minority Rural Health Pipeline, and Rural Medical Scholars Program. The group, Black Belt Action Commission on State Innovation on August 11 through an executive order. State Senator Hank Sanders, D-Selma, and state Treasurer Kay Ivey, a Republican from the Black Belt county of Wilcox, co-chair the executive understanding the programs’ work will be done largely by subcommittees on manufacturing, education, health care, skills training, and infrastructure. Dr. Higginbotham is on the Community Development Subcommittee, and Dr. Wheat will serve on the Health Care Subcommittee.

"While there has been much talk about the Black Belt in various circles, this conference seeks to bring together the various groups that are already working in this region so that we can collaborate and be more action-oriented," Dr. Higginbotham says.

**Blum Speaks to Baylor Students**

Dr. Alan Blum, who holds the The Gerald Wallace Chair of Family Medicine at CCHS, presented the Matthew A. Carter Memorial Lecture at Baylor University on Friday, September 3. Baylor College of Medicine’s Class of 2004 instituted the annual Matthew A. Carter Memorial Lecture in public health. It is open to students interested in rural health.

"The nature and the scope of the conferences’ impact are, in some respects, hard to measure, as our analyses focus on discourses of health outcomes. We cannot know the results,

Dr. Blum was accompanied by Ruby Washington, a Baylor senior from Dallas, who is a medical student “to promote, to inspire, and to equip individuals with the spirit of compassion, service and volunteerism, all of which are values that were central to Matthew’s life. The annual lecture features individuals in the health care field who do innovative work in their careers helping to improve the health of the world, and in doing so, uphold the true value of human life.”

**Sixth Annual Rural Health Conference Set for 2005**

The 6th Annual Rural Health Conference will be held April 20-22, 2005. The theme of the conference will be "Community Partnerships." Navigating the Course for a Healthy Alabama, and the deliberations at the conference will build on the work of previous conferences.

Nearly 400 people attended the Fifth Annual Rural Health Conference held April 28—30, 2004, at the Bieur Conference Center on The University of Alabama campus. The conference also included two pre-conference workshops: "Grant Writing for Community-Based Organizations" and "Rural Alabama Faith-Based Initiatives: Solutions for the Health Care Crisis."

The event was hosted by the University’s Institute for Rural Health Research, the College of Community Health Sciences, and AHPHA (the Alabama Public Health Association). The conference was supported in part by a grant to the Institute for Rural Health Research from the National Institutes of Health’s National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The keynote speaker was Claude A. Allen, deputy secretary of health and human services.

The first conference, held in April 2000, was titled “A Day in the Life of Rural Alabama: Making It Better.” Participants addressed Alabama’s lack of a coherent rural policy and sought to contrast the way professionals see rural health with how community residents do. Rural Health Scholars and Rural Medical Scholars brought their findings from rural community needs assessments to group discussions, and a video of students’ photos of rural Alabama was debriefed.

The 2001 conference, “Alabama’s Rural Health Dilemma: Getting Focus,” emphasized greater participation by community residents, government, and the business sector. Speakers addressed federal programs and routine disparities between rural and urban areas in health care and health status, and emphasized connections between rural health and economic development.

"The Time For Action: Building Connections to Improve Rural Economies and Health," the 2002 conference built upon work done in previous years through sessions on “Resources for Rural Health,” “Barriers to Rural Health,” and “Notes from the Field.” While highlighting the interplay between community economies and community health, the conference also addressed health disparities (i.e., the uneven distribution of disease and medical care among citizens), recruitment and retention of health care professionals, and rural Alabamians’ needs including food, clothing, shelter, education, transportation, and recreation.

The 2003 conference, “Culturally Competent Health Care in Rural Alabama: Overcoming Invisible Barriers,” approached the topic of barriers from four perspectives (each of which was addressed by a group discussion)—Values and Attitudes; Community/Cultural/Clinical Participation; and Resources. Each conference has drawn two to three hundred participants from among health care professionals, community leaders, government officials, academic researchers, representatives of faith-based organizations, state and federal workers, and others interested in rural health.

“Sixth Annual Rural Health Conference Set for 2005”

2004 Rural Medical Scholars: (front) Lance Smith, Baldwin County; Bert Henderson, Escambia County; Josh Bell, DeKalb County; Gabe Hester, Fayette County; (middle) Daniel York, Jackson County; Rene McLaughlin, Dale County; Rocky Lyons—who is in far right, Marion County; (back) Brandon Shigley, Butler County; Bert Thornton, Pickens County; Chuck O'Quin, Elmore County. After a year of rural medical school at UA, RMDs enter medical school in Birmingham and return to CCHS for their 3rd year of clinicals.
Higginbotham Named Associate Dean
(continued from page 1)

He will collaborate with College administrators and faculty and UA's research administration to implement the mission of the School of Medicine. In addition, Dr. Higginbotham will partner with and provide assistance to state and national policy makers, decision makers, and funding agencies.

Dr. Eugene Marsh, Interim Dean of CCHS/the University of Alabama School of Medicine, says Dr. Higginbotham is a key part of the new research infrastructure being created in the College. "Dr. Higginbotham is an outstanding researcher and administrator. His experience as Director of the Institute for Rural Health Research, his excellent record in research and health policy, his connections locally and nationally, and his personal qualities make him an excellent choice for this new position," Dr. Marsh says. "Through Dr. Higginbotham's leadership, we are creating a new research infrastructure within the College of Community Health Sciences that will position us for continued growth and expansion over the next few years."

Prior to coming to UA, Dr. Higginbotham was a faculty member in the Department of Preventive Medicine at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine and the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. He continues to hold an adjunct faculty appointment in the UTMB Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, as well as adjunct appointments in UA's Capstone College of Nursing and UAB's Center for Health Promotion. He teaches epidemiology, statistics, evaluation, and research design to both medical and non-medical graduate students. His most recent presentations and publications have focused on racial and ethnic disparities in rates of cancer and other health issues that have particular impact in rural areas.

CCHS Hosts Open House at New Medical School Building

August 23, 2004

E. Eugene Marsh, MD, in his first official appearance as interim dean at the Open House on August 23.

Blue Suite Nurse Joanne Malone with Dr. Fawad Aryanpure, R2.

Pediatric Nurse Robin Wood's daughter Brittany in clown costume.

Dr. Marsh welcomes guests for the building dedication prior to the clinic Open House.

Chief Resident Julia Boothe, MD

Anne Witt, Vicki Johnson, and Betty Shirley

Dr. Bill Owens shows off surgical equipment in procedures room.

Children greet Alabama's mascot, Big Al (microbiology major Jeremy Behling) who was clearly the most popular guest at Open House.

3rd year resident Dr. Aila Sahawneh & guest

Dr. Melissa Khabbazi and her husband beside banner featuring CCHS alumn Dr. Sage Smith.
The 29th Annual Graduation ceremony for the Tuscaloosa Family Practice Residency Program at the University of Alabama School of Medicine was held June 15, 2004, at the Four Points Sheraton. The DCH Healthcare Authority and DCH Regional Medical Center hosted a dinner for graduates and their families, faculty and officials of CCHS, and special guests. The guest speaker for the graduation was CCHS alumna Melissa Behringer, MD, President of the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians. Awards and recognition of graduates followed.

Dr. Behringer is Assistant Dean for Outreach and Rural Programs and Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Alabama School of Medicine at Huntsville, where she served as Medical Director of the Family Practice Center from 2001 until 2003. She earned her B.S. and M.D. degrees at The University of Alabama and completed her family practice residency here in 1994. Dr. Behringer completed the OB Fellowship at CCHS and practiced in Bibb County for four years before joining the faculty at UASOM at Huntsville.

The William R. Willard Award, presented annually by the faculty to the first year resident who most closely embodies the mission and goals of CCHS, went to Tim Viator, MD. Departmental awards, noted below, and special recognition were highlights of the program. Chief Residents, Drs. Drake Lavender and Brian Woods, received University of Alabama chairs in appreciation for their leadership, and the class recognized Residency Director Sam Gaskins, MD, and the staff of the residency program, Katrina Stakem and Malissa Ligon, with gifts. Dr. Sam Gaskins, Residency Director, introduced the graduates; and Bill Cassels of DCH presented graduation certificates and gifts to each new family physician.

Dr. Southworth (r) receives the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine Resident Teaching award from Dr. Bob Ireland, Associate Professor, Family Medicine.

First year resident Dr. Tim Viator (right) receives the William R. Willard Award from Residency Director, Sam Gaskins. The prestigious Willard Award, named for the founding dean of CCHS, recognizes the honoree for representing the mission and goals of the college.

Graduates posed for a class picture after graduation ceremonies. Front row: David Habbs, Diep Nguyen, Stacy Horsley, Stephanie Morgan, Valerie Sloan, and Frank Lo. Back row: Jonathan Southworth, Brian Wood (Chief), Thomas Carter, Drake Lavender (Chief), Anthony Sloan, and David Moore. (More on each graduate, bottom of page 7)
Carter (r) receives Conference Presentation award from Dr. Alan Blum, Gerald Wallace Professor of Family Medicine. Lavender and Internal Medicine Chair Vijaya Sundar leave the stage after she gave him the departmental award.

Karen Burgess, Assistant Professor, and Pediatrics award winner, Dr. Southworth. Carter (center), who received the OB/GYN award is congratulated by faculty in the department, Dr. Dan Avery and Dr. Dwight Hooper, Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Ireland poured tea for graduates.

The Psychiatry Award was presented by Dr. Elizabeth Rand (2nd from right), chair of the department, to Stephanie Morgan (l), Drake Lavender, and Jonathan Southworth (r).

Tony Sloan (r) receives the Research Award from Associate Professor Dr. Nancy Rubin, who chairs the CCHS Research Committee.

Chief Residents Drake Lavender (l) and Brian Wood (holding his daughter) were recognized for their leadership with University of Alabama arm chairs.

Graduates bid farewell to staff and directors of the program, L.R. Melissa Ligon, Chelley Alexander, MD, Assistant Director; Katrina Stakem; Sam Gaskins, MD, Director.
Our family practice residents as rigorously as they would residents in their own specialties. In the Southeast, only Huntsville and Tuscaloosa provide both an “unopposed” residency program (that is, one which competes with no other residents in its training location) and a full-time faculty in all specialty areas. A dedicated group of volunteer faculty make their impact as well, teaching our residents the intricate details of private practice and giving them one-on-one, individualized teaching. Our emergency room (DCH Reg. Medical Center), one of the busiest in the state, provides exposure to a variety of clinical problems from across West Alabama. This combination results in graduates who are well trained to handle anything they encounter in practice. They have also proven their dedication to serving others by their accomplishments in their communities.

Our graduates have also distinguished themselves as leaders in the medical community as well. Five former residents have served as presidents of the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians—prior to Dr. Melissa Behringer, president this year, and President Elect Dr. Jimmie Clark, who will be president next year. CCIS alumni have also served as state presidents elsewhere: one as president of the Georgia Academy, two as president of the Louisiana Academy, and one is now president of the Mississippi Academy. In addition, nine of our former graduates are now on faculty at the medical schools in Alabama or Louisiana. Our alumni were and are key leaders of the Rural Alabama Health Alliance, recognized across the state as a voice for rural communities in matters of health services and physician training and recruitment. They have also served on state boards, NASA task forces, medical school admissions and curriculum committees, and been advisors to legislative and government decision-makers.

As the TPPP enters its 32nd year, much is changing. The biggest change may be that Sam Gaskins is stepping down as residency director after nearly 25 years at its helm. Since most residency directors only last five years, this is quite an accomplishment. This time of change has given us a chance to reflect on the successes of this residency from training good physicians, to providing physicians to underserved areas, to providing leadership for the state. It has also given us cause to look ahead with enthusiasm and optimism.

The Challenges

As we move forward, there is no doubt that we face challenges. One challenge is to fill our program with qualified residents interested in staying in Alabama. As the state continues to move into its fifth decade, we are facing one of the most difficult recruiting years in history. Over the last six years, the number of medical students across the country going into family medicine has dropped by half. In 1996, approximately 3% of family medicine slots offered to medical students were accepted. In 2003, that number had shrunk to only 42%. (source: Fam Med 2003; 35(8):564-572) As a result, almost half of family medicine residency slots were unfilled directly after the match last year. Of the total slots that were eventually filled, only a third were filled with U.S. seniors. (from Family Practice Management, May 2003)

This drop in student interest has sent residency directors and advocates for rural Alabama scrambling to promote the specialty. Thankfully, our department of rural and community medicine has been promoting primary care and nurturing budding physicians from rural areas of our state since founding Dean William Willard made community medicine a department of the medical school in 1972. Over the past three years, the success of the Rural Medical Scholars Program has made a tremendous impact on our recruiting. Two rural medical scholars graduated from the program last year, one of whom served as chief resident. Currently, one chief resident, and nearly a third of our residents are rural medical scholars. In our intern class alone, of eight UAB graduates that joined the program, six are rural medical scholars (including one RMS who joins the class in January).

Convincing Students

It will be a continuing challenge to convince students to consider family medicine as a specialty. Students are worried that there is no way to know everything, and are concerned that they cannot provide the best care for patients. However, over 90% of patient visits in family medicine are for 25-30 diagnoses. In addition, “Care by grouping patients into several broad categories based on common diseases and treatment outcomes may decrease the number of visit-related transactions needed and improve patients’ satisfaction” (Pittinsky, 1999, p. 560). It is estimated that family physicians coordinate the care of complex patients with multiple medical problems and specialists and offer preventive care on the front lines in a way that many specialists would not want to do themselves.

How We can Help

We can support the specialty of family medicine in general, and the residency program in particular, by precepting students and residents in our offices, and joining in their enthusiasm rather than unloading our complaints about medicine in general or our specialty in particular. We can be supportive of family medicine, regardless of our specialty. In addition, we can support the Rural Medical Scholars Program.

Finally, considering that we are in the bottom half of medical schools in terms of the number of students that choose family medicine, we can encourage the admission of students to medical school who are from rural areas and/or interested in primary care.

Looking Ahead

Despite the challenges, I can’t imagine that there has been a more exciting time for the residency program. We have a beautiful new building to attract students and residents and an Electronic Medical Record system that truly puts us on the cutting edge. More students than ever are training on the Tuscaloosa Campus, and in the face of proration and budget cuts, the Rural Medical Scholars Program has won the continued support it requires to remain strong.

With your help, we can continue to build on our thirty years, continue to improve our program, and try to provide more of rural Alabama with excellent family physicians—to be your colleagues, partners, and successors.

2004 New Residents

Front: Zynia Pua-Vines*, Jennifer White, Matthew Freeman*, Ananda Chunduri, Alan Perrick, Gita Agrawal, Frannie Sider

**The Future of Family Medicine Project, which issued the Future of Family Medicine Report (FFMR), is sponsored by the American Academy of Family Physicians, AAFP Foundation, American Board of Family Practice, Association of Departments of Family Medicine, Association of Family Practice Residency Programs, Commonwealth('.'s Health Frontiers Group, and the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.
Notes from Alums

Newest CCHS Alumni Leave the College to Establish Family Practices of Their Own

Residency Director Sam Gaskins' always entertaining introductions of his residents at graduation continued this year and are reprinted here for his final class of CCHS.

Dr. Thomas Carter is from Kosciusko, Mississippi. He attended Mississippi State University where he graduated cum laude with a BS in Biological Sciences. Dr. Carter concentrated his medical studies at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Thomas and his wife, Sharon, are the proud parents of William Thomas Carter born May 17, 2004. He received the Williard Award as an intern, the DeShazo Award as a third year resident, and the OB Award as well. Thomas will join Kosciusko Medical Clinic after graduation. [Thomas arrived in camouflage, causing Dr. Gaskins to remark on dress code violations. He did change into a dark coat for the ceremony.]

Dr. Stephanie Morgan is from Cedar Bluff, Alabama. She holds a BS in Biology from Jacksonville State University and a Masters in Public Health from UAB. Stephanie attended medical school at UASOM. Stephanie is a Rural Medical Scholar and has an impressive volunteer background. Included in this list are AMA Fund raising committee, AAFP Leadership Tract Participant, and Hospice Care Team. Her husband, Todd, is a member of the National Guard and is currently deployed in Afghanistan. Post graduation, Stephanie is returning to Cherokee County, her home county, to enter private practice in Centre, Alabama.

Dr. Diep Nguyen was born in Vietnam and then he moved to Atlanta at age six. Dr. Nguyen received his BS in Biology from Emory University, and she attended Medical School at Emory University School of Medicine. Diep has six other siblings and all have pursued careers in medicine. One sister is still in medical school and the remaining five are either in residency or practicing physicians. She plans to join her brother in Atlanta where they will establish a family practice office.

Dr. Valerie Sloan is from Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. She received a BS in Biological Sciences from Arkansas State University and attended medical school at the University of Arkansas College of Medicine. Valerie received numerous honors in medical school. She is also an accomplished classical pianist. Her great-grandfather was a physician in rural Arkansas. She will return to Arkansas after graduation to practice emergency medicine.

Dr. Jonathan Southworth is from Birmingham, Alabama. He has a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree in Biology from UAB. Jonathan graduated from the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine. He holds a BS in Biology from University of South Alabama. He received his degree in 2004 and immediately assumed the practice of a retiring family physician. He is a Chiefs Resident this year. Brian is married to Jina, who recently graduated from law school. They are parents of a four-year-old daughter named Devlin. Brian and his family will be relocating to Vermont where he will practice Family Medicine.
Third Year Medical Students

CCHS, 2004

Christina Bemrich graduated from UAB where she earned her B.A. in Political Science with a minor in Chemistry. Her husband, John Strait, is a plumber. Christina is in the Honors Program, and the Student Leadership Program. She worked at Bosch, Americorps VISTA, and Camp Newtok.

Jacodl Brooks is a rural medical scholar from Marshall County, graduated from Birmingham Southern College and earned his B.A in Sociology in 2001. He worked at Capstone during his first year in the Rural Medical Scholars program. Clay enjoys the outdoors, especially fishing and hiking.

Abby McGough Carroll, a 2002 graduate of Sanford University, earned her B.S. in Biology. She ran cross-country and track at the University and was in the Alpha Delta Phi Sorority. She was also a camp counselor and hospital volunteer. Her husband, Warren, is an Air Force pilot.

Lee R. Carter, a Rural Medical Scholar from Autaugaville, was a Varsity Football player at UAB, where he received his B.S. in Biology with a minor in Chemistry. He was nominated for and won the highly competitive NCAA postgraduate scholarship. He plans to attend the University of Alabama in 2004. Lee’s wife, is busy at home with their 2-year-old son, Ford Carter. Lee was a part of UAB’s R.O.A.R. (Reaching Out As Role Models) mentoring program.

Anne-Laura Cook attended high school in Tuscaloosa as well as college at The University of Alabama. She received her Premedical degree in 2001. Anne-Laura worked at the Alabama Grill, and enjoyed biking, hiking, and traveling. Anne-Laura said that she decided to become a physician after shadowing Ashley Evans at a High Risk clinic.

Shannon Craig graduated from UAB in 1993 with a major in Biology and minor in Chemistry. Stevenson is married to Nice Shindo, a researcher, and they have an 8-year-old son, Stevenson Craig II. Stevenson has experience as a tree surgeon, a lab tech, and a soldier.

Travis Evans is from Jacksonville, Alabama. Mentioned his B.A. in Psychology from the University of Georgia in 2002.

Amanda E. Dailey graduated from Auburn University in 2002 with a B.A. in Sociology. Amanda is the daughter of Al and Lindsey Evans. A Rural Medical Scholar from Bear, is a University of Alabama graduate. She earned her degree in Spanish with a minor in Biology in 2002. Lindsey enjoys running, fly fishing, and reading.

Miranda Gillispie is from Mobile, Alabama, and graduated from UAB where she majored in Anthropology and minored in Chemistry. She is a part of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), Family Medicine Interest Group, and Med students for Choice. Miranda served as a midwife in Canada for a year. Miranda decided to go to Med school after working one summer with rural health care in Kentuckiana’s Appalachian Mountains.

Melissa C. Gray of Tuscaloosa County graduated from The University of Alabama in 1899 with a B.A. in Journalism. She worked as an editor/reporter for the Tuscaloosa News before she became a Rural Medical Scholar and entered medical school. She has two daughters, Lauren, 11, and Amanda, 10.

Megan Grillist is from Greenville, OH, and attended Bluffton College in Memphis, Tennessee, where she majored in Biology.

William R. Gwin III attended Auburn University in 2002 and graduated with a major in Anthropology and a minor in History. There he was a part of the Student Government Association, Student Government, the Alumni City Council, and Cancer Research. Williams enjoys volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.

Anne D. Hall, from Tuscaloosa, graduated from Boston College, with an AB in English. She was in the Presidential Scholars Program, a member of the university’s Varsity Crew team, and a “4 Vostuctor.” Anne volunteered with the homeless at the Mary Star of the Sea Harper Center at Bryce and did volunteer work with the St Francis House homeless shelter and Project Bread Food Source hotline in Boston. She was also team leader on a UA Museum of Natural History Archaeological Expedition.

Front: Bryan James, Melissa Gray, Abby Carroll, Anne-Laura Cook, Amanda Dailey, Brooke Shepard Orr, Anne Hall, Emily Natrela, Shakra Thomas, Miranda Gillispie, Adrienne Robertson, Lindsey Evans.


Jerry James, a Rural Medical Scholar from Winnsboro County, went to the University of North Alabama and earned his degree in Chemistry in 2001. He played football for UNA, was in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, and active in the Baptist Campus Ministries. He was awarded the first Alpha Rural Medical Scholarship in 2002.

Amanda Johnson, from Birmingham, graduated from Rhodes College where she received her B.S in Biology. Amanda loves the outdoors where she enjoys backpacking, traveling, and white-water rafting.

Bryan Jones attended the University of North Alabama where he earned his degree in Chemistry in 2000. Bryan enjoys hunting, fishing, cooking, and water sports.

Randy C. Long double majored in Neuroscience and Psychology at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he also volunteered at Tour Medical Center. Randy is from Fairhope, Alabama.

Quinton Matthews, from Anselmo Alabama, attended the University of Alabama where he majored in History and Minored in Business. He was a part of the Pathways program where he worked with rural family practitioners, and he worked in the CCHS Dean’s office while in college. Quinton enjoys fishing, hunting, rafting, being with his family, attending church, and playing sports.

Emily Natrela graduated from The University of Alabama in 2002 with a B.A. in Anthropology. She also earned her M.A. in German Literature at UA. Emily’s husband Mike is a teacher at The Capitol School. She was a manager at the Independent Living Aids of Alabama. Emily decided to become a physician while on a trip to Austria where she realized that “Restoring a person’s health and functional capabilities helps a person to help themselves.”

Adrienne C. Robertson, from New Orleans, graduated from Auburn University in Montgomery in 2000 with a major in Biology and minor in Chemistry. At AUM, she was in the Alpha Epsilon Delta Sorority. She has worked as a Missionary at Forest Park Baptist Church in the summer, and she also worked for the Alabama Agricultural Statistics where she conducted an agricultural census.

Sponsor E. Roemer of Cullman, attended Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where he majored in Biological Anthropology and Anatomy and Minored in Psychology. He was on Duke’s Varsity Football team.

Stephen Sanders went to The University of Alabama where he majored in History and minored in Chemistry and graduated in 2001. He has been a Hospice volunteer, and he was also a part of the Juvenile Judicial Program. Stephen’s wife, Alison, is a 4th grade teacher at Vestavia Elementary.

Brooke Shepard Orr majored in Biology and minored in English at UA, where she was in the Honors Program and a member of Crew Team. She was inducted into Alpha Epsilon Delta (the premier honor society) and did research for Dr. Sloan in the Microbiology Department, A Rural Health Scholar in high school, she served as a summer counselor in the UA Rural Science Programs. Her husband, Lance, is a Journalism Graduate student at UA.

Shakira Nicola Thomas, a Rural Medical Scholar from Evergreen, Alabama, and a 2002 graduate of The University of Alabama, where she majored in Chemistry and minored in Biology. Shakira enjoys sports and reading.

Joseph Walker, a Rural Medical Scholar from Brilliant, Alabama, graduated from The University of Alabama in 2002 with a major in Biology. As an undergraduate Joseph worked as a student assistant in the CCHS Department of Community & Rural Medicine. Joseph enjoys spending time with family, running, and playing with his dog.

Ty Warren, from West Plains, Missouri, played football at the University of North Alabama, where he earned his degree in Biology, in 2001.

Josh Wharton, a graduate of Arab High School, graduated from UA with a major in Biology and minor in Manage­ment. In college Josh enjoyed playing basketball, softball, and flag football. He also was a lifeguard. His wife, Natalie, is a counselor at Albert Elementary School.

Net Cameron Yeager, a Rural Medical Scholar from Hot Wells, Alabama, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from The University of Alabama with a B.S in Biology in 1999 and earned an M.A. in Health Studies during his first year of the residency program. At UA, he was named to the National Dean’s List and Who’s Who Among College Students.

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OnRounds
The University of Alabama College of Community Health Sciences

The College of Community Health Sciences is a clinical branch campus of the University of Alabama School of Medicine. Established in 1972, CCCHS emphasizes family practice and the other primary care disciplines and provides a sound foundation in medical education for all medical students assigned to this campus. CCCHS also trains family doctors through a three-year family practice residency program to meet the urgent need for family physicians. A primary focus of the CCCHS mission is seeking solutions for rural health care problems in Alabama.

OnRounds is published quarterly by CCCHS. Send information to the Editor, Box 870326 Tuscaloosa, AL 35487. (205) 348-1302, ljackson@ccchs.ua.edu

E. Eugene Marsh, MD, Interim Dean
Linda Jackson, Editor

The University of Alabama
College of Community Health Sciences