Dr. Al Schweikert delivers Commencement Address in December

For thirteen graduates, the December commencement was a special time. It was also very special for the college because Dr. Al Schweikert, a 1987 graduate from the biochemistry program, gave the commencement address. Al is currently the director of product development, cell therapy for Titan Pharmaceuticals, Inc., in Somerville, N.J.

He was raised in Union County, N.J. as one of eleven children. At Union High School, Al excelled in sports and became the second highest sport-lettering athlete at the school. Subsequently, he received a track scholarship and attended Wesleyan College. After completing graduate school at West Virginia University, he pursued a career in biotechnology at the Roche Institute of Molecular Biology. Al was a significant contributor in the early research and manufacturing production of Interferon, a drug used to combat cancer, multiple sclerosis and AIDS. Hoffman La Roche wanted him to pursue doctoral training, which led Al to UTHSC and the program in biochemistry where he studied with Dr. Ed Bucovaz. While in graduate school, Al was elected president of the Graduate Student Association and chair of the Honor Council. He was recognized with a UT Leadership Award, the 1985 Sigma Xi Research Award and as an Outstanding Young Man of America by the Jaycees in 1986.

He went to work for Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals and then became manager of process development at Ortho Diagnostics, Johnson & Johnson. While there, Al received the Research Achievement award and was a significant contributor toward developing a test for AIDS, along with tests for Hepatitis B and C. He left Johnson & Johnson in 1996 to start Titan Pharmaceuticals, headquartered in San Francisco, with laboratories and offices located in Somerville. His work involves cell research for Parkinson’s disease, and he assists in experimental neurosurgery at many universities including Emory, Rush, South Florida, Heidelberg and Innsbruck.

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In his address to the graduates in December, Al challenged each to get involved in the community. The role model he has been in this regard is evidenced by his activities in public service. In 1992, he volunteered as a science teacher in Somerville’s middle school for 6th, 7th and 8th grades. In that same year he moved to High Bridge, N.J. and ran for the borough council. He was elected to this position and subsequently became Mayor in 1994. Al continues to serve in this capacity, as well as on the planning board for the town. He joined the Hunterdon Economic Partnership and Organization, which is devoted to building strong business environments, and served on its executive committee. In 1996, Al was asked to assist in the talks regarding scientific exchange during the Gore-Mubarak summit in Washington, and he contributed to the development of public health policy concerning transplantation. In 2001, Golf Digest had an article about Al’s initiative with golf legend Billy Casper to build a public golf course in High Bridge to decrease the tax structure for its citizens. The course is touted as one of the best public golf courses in America. On September 11, 2001, Mayor Schweikert was asked to set up a command post in High Bridge because of its location as a commuter rail station to New York. He also was asked to send in police, fire and rescue personnel to the World Trade Center area. These efforts continued for a two-week period.

In 2001, Al was honored as Elected Official of the Year in New Jersey by the Municipal Managers Association. He has been a member of the New Jersey State Assembly Task Force for State Planning and Fair Housing, and a member of the League of Municipalities Affordable Housing Committee. The South Branch River Watershed Association of New Jersey awarded Al its environmental award for efforts in land preservation. Most recently, he has established a curriculum in molecular biology for students at Raritan Valley College. Needless to say, actions speak louder than words, but the words Al gave to the December graduates were to get involved.

Al married Gigi Taylor of Raleigh, N.C., then Director of Childcare at the United Nations, in 1992. Al and Gigi are proud parents of three daughters, Ashley, Genevieve, and Marielle and one son, William. It was indeed a pleasure and honor to welcome Al and Gigi to campus in the early part of December.

Dr. Al Schweikert delivers Commencement Address (Continued from page 1)

Dean Alden Celebrates 90th Birthday

Dr. Roland H. Alden, former dean of the College of Graduate Health Sciences, celebrated his 90th birthday in early February. Roland lives at 6081 Golden Center Ct., # 206, Placerville, CA 95667-6262 for anyone who would like to write him. His e-mail is: raldens@ralden.com.

In Memoriam

Dr. Lawrence Bradham, faculty member from 1971-2000, died on September 7, 2003 from pancreatic cancer. In 1958, Dr. Bradham received his PhD in biochemistry from the UT College of Graduate Health Sciences. He was on faculty at Vanderbilt University, Rockefeller University, and University of Arkansas before coming back to UT in 1971.
Since its first degree was awarded in 1928, the College of Graduate Health Sciences has awarded 1,095 degrees. Two years ago, six 50-year graduates were identified in an article that appeared in CGHS Notes. Several have returned to campus for recognition, and the college is planning the same type of recognition event this year. Because the number of graduates was small in the college’s infancy, graduates from a three-year period are being invited to campus to be recognized. Thirteen graduates from 1953 through 1955 have been invited to return to campus for commencement on Friday, May 28. The newest 50-year graduates from the college are: Marvin M. Gibson; Anne Cole Turner; Gale Boxill; Robert Gardier; Louis Hauser; James G. Hilton; Jonathan S. King, Jr.; Thomas B. Owen; Robert L. Pollack; R. Heintzelman Shea; Moris L. Shore; Clinton B. Nash; M. Don Turner; and John H. Woychik.

**Alumni Updates**

**W. Todd Penberthy** (PhD ’97) is assistant research professor at the Genome Research Institute at the University of Cincinnati. His work address is: 2180 E. Galbraith Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45237, and his home address is: 232 Grove Avenue, Wyoming, OH 45215. His phone number is: (513) 919-3342 or e-mail penberwt@uc.edu.

**Mathew J. Edick** (PhD ’03) is a postdoctoral fellow at Van Andel Research Institute in Grand Rapids, Mich. Mathew and his wife are the proud parents of a little girl, Grace Elizabeth, born on September 8, 2003.

**Loren Martin** (PhD ’03) graduated from the anatomy and neurobiology program in December. He can be reached at lorenamartin@comcast.net.

**Diane Pace**, RN, APRN, BC (PhD ’98) was recently appointed by Governor Phil Bredesen to serve on the State TennCare Pharmacy Advisory Committee. This committee will make recommendations for a preferred drug list to govern all state expenditures for prescription drugs for the TennCare program. Dr. Pace is a family nurse practitioner and researcher for The Regional Medical Center at Memphis and Health Loop at South Third in Memphis. In addition, she is an assistant professor in the department of preventive medicine in the College of Medicine and an assistant clinical professor in the College of Nursing.

**Susan Jacob**, RN (PhD ’93) has joined the faculty of the College of Nursing at UTHSC. She is responsible for establishing and implementing the curriculum for the BSN Program that is being developed in concert with the Methodist Healthcare-UTHSC partnership.

**Roopa Andhare-Nath** (PhD ’01) writes that she just returned from a long holiday in India with baby Rohan. The trip was for business and pleasure. She has been looking at outsourcing opportunities for U.S. companies in India. She can be reached at (415) 572-3191 or roopa7@msn.com.
The college recognized Amy Cline and Yang Zong as this year’s recipients of the Hal and Alma Reagan Fellowship. Drs. Jay Callaway, Polly Hofmann, and Edwards Park served as the judges in selecting these recipients.

Ms. Cline is a native of Tennessee and completed her undergraduate training at Austin Peay State University. She matriculated into the molecular science program in 2000, and Dr. Marko Radic is her research advisor. Mr. Zong is a native of China and did his undergraduate training at Zhejiang University and Shanghai Second Medical. He matriculated into the interdisciplinary program in 2000, and Dr. Brian Sorrentino is his research advisor. Ying Shen in the molecular sciences program was renewed as a Reagan Fellow for a second year. She is a native of China, and her research advisor is Dr. Linda Hendershot.

In the past eleven years, the college has awarded 22 fellowships to 13 students. The initial fellowships were awarded to two students, Robert Fischer and Cynthia Pawlik, with the award to each continuing in 1994. In 1995, Jian Feng received an award, which was continued in 1996. Similarly, Sourav Ghosh received an award which carried over to 1997. In 1998, two students, Zhong Wu and Sizhi Gao, received awards, which continued in 1999, along with two new awards to Brian Bothner and William Valentine. These awards were continued in 2000 along with an initial award to Shilpa Oak. No award was made in 2001 because of the low amount of interest in the fund. In 2002-2003, Felicia Lewis, MD and Ying Shen were awarded fellowships. Amy Cline and Yang Zong now join this list as initial recipients for 2003-2004, with Ying Shen having the award continued.

Nina Sublette, a second-year PhD student, was awarded one of the annual competitive “HIV-Related Anemia Nursing Case Study Awards” from the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care. Nina received conference registration and $625 for travel expenses to the association’s annual conference, and she attended an awardees’ luncheon at the association’s meeting in New York. The award was sponsored by Ortho Biotech.
Amanda Tamburrino has joined the UT Health Science Center as director of development for the College of Graduate Health Sciences. She also has responsibility for various programs in the College of Medicine, including cardiology, ophthalmology, vascular biology and neurology.

Amanda comes to UT from the American Heart Association where she worked as the American Heart Walk Director.

A native of Missouri, Amanda earned her bachelor’s degree in English from Rhodes College. Prior to working for the Heart Association, Amanda was with WKNO TV & St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital. She was recently recognized as the American Heart Association’s Outstanding Fundraiser for the 2002-2003 campaign and as a 2003 recipient of Memphis Woman Magazine’s “50 Women Who Make a Difference.” Dean Peppler stated that “Amanda’s appointment to the Health Science Center and, in particular, with the college is a perfect fit. She has already hit the ground running and will be very instrumental as the college expands its development efforts.”

Leadership Changes: Dr. Joe Johnson Serves As Interim President; Bill Rice Returns As Interim Chancellor

Former UT president Dr. Joe Johnson will serve until a permanent president is named later this spring or early summer. An Alabama native, Dr. Johnson earned his master’s and doctorate degrees from UT. He has served the university for 40 years, during which time he has held almost every top administrative position, including vice president for development, chancellor of the Health Science Center and executive vice president.

Bill Rice was appointed interim chancellor of the Health Science Center in December. Bill had stepped down in October 2002 to assume the position of executive director of the University Medical Center Alliance. He has served the university for more than 35 years and was chancellor of the Health Science Center from 1992-2002.

Student Phonathon in April

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) will conduct a phonathon in early April to contact graduates of the college. Under the leadership of GSA president Nico West, students will provide an update on the happenings within the college and solicit contributions for the Autian Student Enrichment Fund. Dr. John Autian, Dean Emeritus of the College of Graduate Health Sciences, has pledged $5,000 to match contributions generated by students during the phonathon.
Can you believe it is March 2004 already? This issue is chock-full with items of interest. Al Schweikert and his wife, Gigi, were back on campus in early December when Al gave the commencement address. His message is appropriate for us all: get involved in your community. He certainly leads by example. I know the 13 graduates from the college were especially proud to have him here on their special day, and I hope you enjoy reading about him. Also I know you will enjoy reading about our new director of development, Amanda Tamburrino. Already, she is planning a phonathon by the students in April, and Dr. Autian, Dean Emeritus, has given us another challenge whereby we can increase the endowment fund for student travel. (Speaking of former Deans, Roland Alden celebrated his 90th birthday early last month, and I know he would enjoy hearing from many of you.) Amanda is also planning an event in May to honor our 50-year graduates. How wonderful it is to have had a degree from our college for fifty years! I hope all will return to campus to be recognized and see the changes in the physical plant of the Health Science Center, as well as in the skyline of Memphis. Always of interest is the information from alumni – I wish more of you would send us information to pass along to other graduates – and student awards, both internally with the Reagan Fellowship and externally from the Association of Nurses in AIDS care. Finally, leadership changes have occurred again, both at the Health Science Center and in Knoxville, and we have the same stable forces back at the helm in Bill Rice as interim chancellor and Joe Johnson as interim president.

I hope this issue of CGHS Notes finds you well. The students and I are looking forward to chatting with you during the phonathon. Please share your personal and professional updates along with your pledges!