

School of Medicine Dean's Newsletter



**CREIGHTON
UNIVERSITY**

Fall, 1996 Issue

Vol. III, No. 1

REMEMBERING OUR PAST, PLANNING OUR FUTURE

As the leaves turn bright colors every fall, our alumni return to visit, and this year we saw alumni who graduated five to 55 years ago. We particularly honored the classes of 1946 and 1971 during the anniversaries of their 50th and 25th years from graduation.

If alumni happened to talk to students, they would have found our students excited and challenged by the new curriculum, which is a hybrid of lectures and small-group learning. The students also are pleased with the opening of the Clinical Assessment Center, where freshmen will learn to take medical histories and conduct physical exams. Seeing the students happy with instituted changes is fulfilling to faculty and administration.

We also have been active in other areas. We completed our self-study and sent it to the LCME, and we await the accreditation visit in late February 1997.

Because alliances remain important in the development of health delivery systems, we continued our efforts by signing a memorandum of understanding with Clarkson Hospital. This will allow us to explore in depth what we can accomplish together in education, research and service.

Having seen the fiscal year-end results for 1995-96, I must give alumni a special expression of gratitude, because they gave the greatest amount ever in support of the medical school during one fiscal year. A resounding "Thank you." I promise to do my utmost to steward our medical school through the ever-changing environment.

Thomas J. Cinque, M.D.
Dean, School of Medicine

LYNCH RECEIVES \$2 MILLION NIH GRANT

Henry T. Lynch, M.D., has received a four-year \$2.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to evaluate the psychological and behavioral impact of genetic testing for hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC) and to examine the coping mechanisms people use after getting genetic information.

Information gathered from the study should provide the basis from which to develop counseling approaches that will facilitate coping and promote regular screening in persons who are at increased risk of developing colorectal cancer.

HNPCC, also called the Lynch syndrome, is the most common form of hereditary colon cancer. It accounts for about 9,000 cases of colorectal cancer each year. First-degree relatives of affected persons in HNPCC families have a 50 percent risk of inheriting a gene mutation that predisposes them to colorectal cancer.

MEDICAL STUDENTS BUILD CLINICAL SKILLS IN NEW CENTER

Instead of doctors helping patients get better, the patients are helping make better doctors in a newly established center at Creighton University.

By playing roles as patients seeking medical care, actors are helping teach medical students how to elicit information when they take medical histories, how to interact with a broad range of personality types and how to detect and diagnose disease. This twist on the patient-doctor relationship is occurring in the School of Medicine's new Clinical Assessment Center, where medical students can build their clinical skills early on in their education.

Actors have been drawn from groups of former patients, students, medical residents and their spouses. The center's program design was based in part upon the family practice department's standardized patient program.

Third-year students interviewed at the center said benefits of working in the center included better integration of basic science and clinical knowledge, building confidence in interacting with a broad range of patients and getting feedback from the actor-patients about their care.

Education in the center will allow students to develop clinical skills throughout their medical training, according to Judy Bell, Ed.D, assistant professor of family practice and the center's clinical director. She added that students probably will be required to pass a clinical competency test as part of the national board exam in several years.

The center is a key component of the School of Medicine's new curriculum, which puts more emphasis on problem-solving, small group work, computer literacy and increased patient contact. By moving away from an educational process that emphasized lectures in basic sciences the first two years and clinical settings in third and fourth years of medical school, Creighton officials hope to prepare new physicians for the changes that have occurred in providing health care.

CREIGHTON CLOSES PET CENTER

Creighton University's Center for Metabolic Imaging closed in September. The center, which opened in 1989, provided positron emission tomography (PET) scans and conducted clinical research using the scans in cardiology, oncology and neuropsychiatry. Nearly 3,500 patients received PET scans during the center's operation.

"We're very proud of the clinical research conducted at the PET Center," said Peter Doris, M.D., chair of Creighton's Department of Radiology. "Our researchers contributed to the understanding of cardiac function and of lung cancer through projects conducted at the center. In particular, the work related to diagnosing malignancy in solitary lung nodules and in staging lung tumors was important in increasing our knowledge base."

According to Thomas J. Cinque, M.D., dean of Creighton's School of Medicine, the center was closed because patient volume did not reach a level that would fully fund the center. Few research grants were available to support the center's clinical research focus, and insurance reimbursement was not universal. In addition, neuropsychiatry, the original focus for the center which guided the decision for locating it next to the Saint Joseph Center for Mental Health, was not the area in which the greatest applications for the technology had developed. Creighton officials are exploring options related to the building and equipment at the center.

Faculty News & Notes

Richard F. Murphy, Ph.D., associate dean for research in the School of Medicine, will assist with the disbursement of funds from the U.S. Army Breast Cancer Research Program. Dr. Murphy also has been appointed to serve as a state representative at the National Science Foundation's EPSCoR colloquium in Washington, D.C.

Plinio Prioreschi, M.D., Ph.D., professor of pharmacology, was awarded the Capire International Prize for a Creative Future by the ECO-CREA International Institute for his work in the history of medicine.

Christine C. Sanders, Ph.D., and **W. Eugene Sanders, M.D.**, professors of medical microbiology and immunology and codirectors of the Center for Research in Anti-Infectives and Biotechnology (CRAB), have been granted a U.S. patent "Using Limonen-10-OL to kill bacteria, yeast and fungi." This is their ninth patent related to discovery of new anti-infectives and disinfectants.

Roderick Nairn, Ph.D., chair of medical microbiology and immunology, has been invited to serve three years on the Peer Review Committee on Cancer Immunology of the American Cancer Society.

Robert P. Heaney, M.D., John A. Creighton University Professor, gave the keynote address on "The Role of Calcium and Vitamin D in Skeletal Development and Maintenance" at the FAO/WHO first World Congress on Calcium and Vitamin D in Human Life in Rome.

CREIGHTON AND CLARKSON SIGN AFFILIATION AGREEMENT

Creighton University and Clarkson Hospital signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a new affiliation relating to health professions education and research programs at both institutions.

The agreement is intended to serve as the outline or "umbrella" affiliation agreement with respect to the coordinated teaching and research programs at Creighton and Clarkson and serve as a foundation for additional affiliation opportunities.

In general, the agreement provides training at Clarkson for Creighton's Graduate Medical Education Program and for students in nursing, pharmacy and allied health professions programs; faculty teaching services by Creighton for Creighton students training at Clarkson; special medical services by Creighton at Clarkson; joint research agreements; the coordination of existing and new rural outreach programs; and clinical teaching appointments for Clarkson medical staff at Creighton.

Creighton and Clarkson have agreed to coordinate educational and research programs in family practice, psychiatric service, radiology, surgery, pathology, burn care, medicine programs and pediatrics.



NAGENGAST RECEIVES MERIT AWARD

During the Alumni Reunion, the School of Medicine recognized Delwyn J. Nagengast, M.D., with its Alumni Merit Award.

For most of his professional life, Dr. Nagengast has been the only physician in Bloomfield, where he has practiced 37 years. He was instrumental in establishing an ambulance service and a nursing home in Bloomfield and his work gained him statewide recognition in 1991 when he was selected by the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians as the Family Physician of the Year.

Dr. Nagengast grew up in Howells, Neb., where friends nicknamed him "Smiley." He enrolled at Creighton University and earned his bachelor of science in 1952 and continued as a medical student. This year he celebrated his fortieth anniversary of graduating from Creighton's School of Medicine.

Dr. Nagengast served on Creighton's School of Medicine Alumni Advisory Board and was president from 1987 to 1989. He is a charter member of the Edward and Mary Lucretia Creighton Society. Earlier this year he and his wife, Josephine, established the Nagengast Endowed Scholarship in the School.



GAINES HONORED BY UNION PACIFIC GROUP

Ray D. Gaines, M.D., associate professor of surgery, was recognized as one of Omaha's extraordinary Black men during the Union Pacific Railroad Black Employee Network's first Salute to Black Men Awards Banquet. The event honored accomplishments of men in the professional fields of business, communications, community service, education, entertainment, government, law, medicine, religion and sports.

Creighton University
School of Medicine
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 227
Omaha, NE