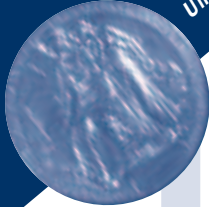


The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2006
Co-Recipient Craig C. Mello, PhD
University of Massachusetts Medical School



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Mello encourages graduates to shape the future

Reflecting on some of the ingredients for success, 2006 Nobel Laureate and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator Craig C. Mello, PhD, addressed the 178 graduates of the School of Medicine, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Graduate School of Nursing during the 34th Commencement Exercises held on June 3. “Andrew Fire (of Stanford University) and I shared the Nobel Prize for a collaboration, for a discussion, really, that spanned several years leading up to the discovery of RNA interference,” said Dr. Mello. “When you hear about discoveries and how they are made, it’s inspiration, hard work and serendipity that receive most of the attention, but there is another fundamental ingredient that has truly transformative powers and is at least as important as all the others combined—and that is discussion.”

Mello, the Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine and professor of molecular medicine and cell biology at UMass Medical School, urged the graduates to begin the “next chapter in the story of life” by collaborating and developing solutions that will impact the lives of people today and in the future. “You now embark on a future that you will try to shape, and it will push back on you, it will challenge you,” said Mello. “Embrace those challenges, and let them polish you. Work together and talk about things that matter, for together truly great things are possible.”

University of Massachusetts President Jack M. Wilson opened the event with the presentation of the President’s Medal, the University’s highest honor, to Chancellor and Dean Emeritus Aaron Lazare. Dr.

Lazare, the Celia and Isaac Haidak Professor of Medical Education and professor of psychiatry, served as chancellor and dean from May 15, 1991 to March 15, 2007, and is the only University chancellor to receive this award. President Wilson then turned the podium over to Lazare, who presided over the Commencement exercises. Lazare first acknowledged and thanked Merrill K. “Ken” Wolf, MD, professor of cell biology and neurology, for sharing his musical talent by playing the organ at the annual Commencement ceremony for 27 consecutive years.

This year, honorary degrees were awarded to David “Duddie” G. Massad and Arthur J. Remillard Jr. for their continuing support of UMMS and its clinical partner, UMass Memorial Health Care.



Additional Commencement highlights included parting words from class speakers Alfred Albano (School of Medicine), Rachel Litman (Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences) and Vicki Lepine (Graduate School of Nursing). ■

Chancellor and Dean Emeritus Aaron Lazare was awarded the President’s Medal at the 34th Commencement Exercises. Other highlights of Commencement weekend can be seen on pages 3 and 4.

Rosmarin named chief of Hematology/Oncology and deputy director of the Cancer Center

Alan G. Rosmarin, MD, has been named chief of the Division of Hematology/Oncology in the Department of Medicine at UMass Memorial Medical Center and the deputy director of the UMass Memorial Cancer Center at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and UMass Memorial. Dr. Rosmarin joins UMass Memorial and the Medical School from the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, where he was interim director of hematology, director of the hematology/oncology fellowship program and associate professor of medicine, molecular biology, cell biology and biochemistry.

“I’m very excited to be joining the UMass and UMass Memorial community,” said Dr. Rosmarin. “I look forward to supporting the ongoing coupling of the remarkable scientific resources of UMass Medical School with the clinical strengths of UMass Memorial Health Care as we continue to provide extraordinary clinical and translational opportunities.”

In his capacity as division chief, Rosmarin will provide leadership and direction supported by a widely respected team of cancer specialists. His responsibilities include planning, direction and evaluation of the delivery systems, standards and objectives.

The UMass Memorial Cancer Center, which is under the direction of Dario C. Altieri, MD, the Eleanor Eustis Farrington Chair in Cancer Research and professor and chair of cancer biology, integrates some of the most vital cancer research and treatment activities available today. As deputy director of the Center, Rosmarin will work with investigators and staff to encourage innovative collaborations and actively promote the development of projects dedicated to bringing the work of the bench to the bedside.

“Dr. Rosmarin will be a particularly important addition to our efforts to accelerate clinical trials here at the Medical

School,” said Terry R. Flotte, MD, dean of the School of Medicine. “His work will enhance our focus on translational research to the benefit of the patients of the region.”

A graduate of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Rutgers Medical School, Rosmarin completed his internship and residency in medicine and a fellowship in hematology/oncology at Beth Israel Hospital/Harvard Medical School. His primary research interest is the regulation of transcription in myeloid differentiation, specifically, the study of transcription factor GABP in the growth and maturation of white blood cells.

“I look forward to applying my experience as a clinical and laboratory scientist, an educator, and a practicing physician to a place with such great promise for translating research into novel cancer treatments and excellent clinical care,” said Rosmarin. ■

News Makers online!

To learn what faculty experts are saying about the topics making today’s local, state and national headlines, visit www.umassmed.edu/pap/NewsMakers/. When appropriate, the page will also list upcoming UMMS expert appearances in print, TV and radio venues.



Gregory Pincus Medals awarded to Jordan and Brodie

UMass Medical School's Worcester Foundation for Biomedical Research (WFBR) presented two Gregory Pincus Medals—named for the WFBR co-founder and pioneer in reproductive biology—to scientists V. Craig Jordan, OBE, PhD, DSc, and Angela Hartley Brodie, PhD, at a June 14 ceremony. Renowned around the world for their innovative research into cancer treatments, Drs. Jordan and Brodie spent a formative segment of their early professional careers in the labs of the Worcester Foundation.

According to WFBR Director Thoru Pederson, PhD, the Vitold Arnett Professor and professor of biochemistry and molecular pharmacology, both recipients were chosen for their impact on science and technology and

Jordan, vice president and research director for medical sciences and the Alfred G. Knudson Chair for Cancer Research at Philadelphia's Fox Chase Cancer Center, was honored for his research into the anti-estrogen effects of tamoxifen, hailed as one of the most significant therapies in the last 20 years for the treatment of breast cancer. Following receipt of his PhD from the University of Leeds, Jordan spent two years at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, completing early investigations into the effects of tamoxifen. Today, tamoxifen is estimated to have saved the lives of 500,000 women.

An accomplished biochemist, Brodie is a professor of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. She was recognized for her discovery and development of a new class of drugs called aromatase inhibitors. Having developed a strong interest in the role of estrogens in breast cancer during her early years in research at the Christie Hospital in Manchester, England, Brodie began investigating compounds to inhibit



Left to right are: Dario Altieri, MD, the Eleanor Eustis Farrington Chair in Cancer Research and professor and chair of cancer biology; Angela Hartley Brodie, PhD; V. Craig Jordan, OBE, PhD, DSc; and C. Robert Matthews, PhD, the Arthur F. and Helen P. Koskinas Professor and chair of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology

Renowned around the world for their innovative research into cancer treatments, Drs. Jordan and Brodie spent a formative segment of their early professional careers in the labs of the Worcester Foundation.

join a cadre of prestigious scientists who have received the award since its inception in 1969. "Drs. Jordan and Brodie both started out by asking a basic biological question—can hormone-dependent breast cancer be slowed by intercepting the hormone? This idea sounds so obvious today, but it was a courageous hypothesis at the time they started their respective research paths," explained Dr. Pederson.

aromatase while at the Worcester Foundation. Now in use around the globe, these drugs help prevent recurrence of breast cancer in

postmenopausal women and are also used to treat postmenopausal women whose breast cancer has spread to other parts of the body. ■

Each advance makes life better

Progress in research and treatment make it possible to live with cancer while working for a cure



Over the past 30 years, John J. Giordano, RDH, DMD, has seen first-hand how cancer research has improved treatments and the care patients receive. Dr. Giordano was first diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 1979 at the age of 8. Today at 37, he is a five-time cancer survivor.

"When I was first diagnosed, they were still unsure how to treat children with cancer, and treatments were limited," said Giordano. "Today, care and treatments have evolved, and life with cancer is more manageable." Although Giordano's early treatments caused acute nausea and discomfort, he never allowed his disease to slow him down. He experienced his first relapse in 1985 as a teenager, but he graduated from high school on schedule in 1988, and, despite suffering a second relapse in 1991, earned his bachelor's degree in biology in 1992. He enrolled in Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in 1992 and completed his doctoral degree in 1996.

Giordano joined a general dentistry practice in 1996, and it seemed like life was going to be normal, until, in 1999, he had another recurrence. This time, though, his treatments were more targeted, which allowed him to

continue to care for his own patients. After this relapse, his physicians told him that he could expect recurrences every five years, and, at some point, might need a bone-marrow transplant. His last recurrence was in 2005 and was treated with the drug Rituxan.

"I'm prepared for the next treatment I will need, whether it is radiation, chemotherapy or a bone-marrow transplant," said Giordano. "Research will continue to enhance cancer treatments and care, which will allow me to live my life a little better until there is a cure."

The Ninth Annual Walk to Cure Cancer begins at noon on Sunday, September 23, 2007, on the UMMS campus. Attend the Kick-off Breakfast on Thursday, July 19, at the Lazare Research Building from 7:30 to 9 a.m. For information, call x6-5520 or visit www.walktocurecancer.com. ■

achievements

■ The *Worcester Business Journal* recently chose several members of the UMMS community for their annual roster of Health Care Heroes. **Richard Aghababian**, MD, founding chair and professor of emergency medicine and associate dean for continuing medical education, was recognized for his leadership in local, national and international advances in emergency medicine. **David Kaufman**, MD, clinical associate professor of medicine and surgery and associate dean for medical education, was singled out for his dedication to improving critical care. Also recognized were UMass Memorial Medical Center veteran nurse Cheryl Killoran, RN, of the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at the Memorial Campus; Anne Marie Kaune, NP, a nurse with UMass Memorial Health Care Community Healthlink's Homeless Advocacy and Outreach Program; Joanne Raymond, the founder and executive director of the Caitlin Raymond International Registry, which is operated by UMass Memorial Health Care; and Robert Hoover, a UMass Memorial Medical Center hospice volunteer.

■ **Caroline McGrath**, BSN, co-director of the UMass Adolescent Treatment Program at Westborough State Hospital, was one of 19 recipients statewide of the Department of Mental Health Distinguished Service Award, which honors leaders for advocacy, public education, treatment, research and rehabilitation in connection with National Mental Health Month.

Following are faculty who have joined UMMS as professors or associate professors or who have been promoted to those positions, as documented by the Office of Faculty Administration:

Antonio Campos-Neto, MD, PhD, adjunct professor of medicine

James H. Chesebro, MD, professor of medicine

James F. Keaney, Jr, MD, professor of medicine

Luigi Pacifico, DO, promoted to clinical associate professor of medicine

Elise H. Pyun, MD, promoted to clinical associate professor of medicine

IMPAACT on maternal, pediatric and adolescent AIDS

Remove an “A” from “IMPAACT,” the acronym for the National Institutes of Health’s newly reorganized International Maternal Pediatric Adolescent AIDS Clinical Trials group, and you have the word that describes what this far-reaching network of clinical trials units has had on a generation of mothers and children affected by HIV/AIDS. Now, with a funding renewal of nearly \$1 million per year for seven years—continuing funding they have received since 1992—UMMS Principal Investigator Katherine de Ruiz Luzuriaga, MD, professor of pediatrics and molecular medicine, and the UMMS IMPAACT team will continue their vital work.

“The PACTG [Pediatric Aids Clinical Trials Group] and now IMPAACT are examples of NIH dollars well-spent. Through PACTG trials, we have developed effective measures to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission (MTCT); new HIV infections are now rare here in the U.S., and trials are focused on maintaining and improving long-term quality of life for HIV-positive women and children,” said Dr. Luzuriaga who, along with Vice Chancellor for Research John L. Sullivan, MD, professor of pediatrics, earned international acclaim in the 1990s for breakthrough clinical trials that pioneered methods to diagnose, prevent and treat HIV infection in infants and children in

ways that have dramatically altered the HIV/AIDS landscape. “It is the NIH that has by and large supported the research that has allowed us in just 15 years to make mother-to-child transmission extremely rare in the United States,” Luzuriaga explained. And for children who do become infected, HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence but rather a chronic infection that can be managed over many decades.

Over the years, the structure of the NIH-sponsored HIV clinical trials networks has changed to reflect the reality that nearly half of new infections worldwide occur in women and that most new infections in women and children occur in limited-resource set-

tings. “We have the science and have successfully translated it in the U.S., but not yet internationally,” Luzuriaga noted. “The challenge now is to find ways to translate the science to prevent MTCT and treat pediatric HIV in limited-resource settings.” New and ongoing clinical trials will advance IMPAACT’s mission to decrease HIV-related morbidity and mortality in pregnant women, children and adolescents by developing and evaluating safe and cost-effective approaches to interrupt MTCT; evaluating treatments for HIV-infected children, adolescents and pregnant women; and developing a neonatal vaccine to prevent MTCT. As a member of the IMPAACT Scientific Oversight Committee, Luzuriaga has been instrumental in setting the scientific agenda for IMPAACT units in the United States and internationally.

IMPAACT simultaneously addresses differences and commonalities in the HIV/AIDS landscape in the developing, resource-poor world, as well as the United States and other developed



Katherine de Ruiz Luzuriaga, MD, in her lab with Michelle St. Fleur, SOM '10

countries. “The power of the NIH centers is that we can generate a protocol that can enroll kids from multiple centers to complete studies much more rapidly than a single site acting alone could. Our participation in the new IMPAACT network will allow us to translate the most promising scientific advances to patients around the world,” concluded Luzuriaga. ■



Joel Gore, MD, the Edward Budnitz, MD, Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine and professor of medicine; Deborah DeMarco, MD, professor of medicine; Julia Andrieni, MD, assistant professor of medicine; and Robert Phillips, MD, PhD, professor of medicine, were all inducted as fellows of the American College of Physicians at the 2007 annual meeting.

employees infocus

July Employee of Distinction Award

Vitals

Robert E. Layne, MEd

Director of Outreach Programs and the Worcester

Pipeline Collaborative
Office of School Services

Year started: 1996

Hometown: Millbury

Professionally speaking

July Employee of Distinction Robert E. Layne joined UMMS in 1996 as the program coordinator for the newly-formed Worcester Pipeline Collaborative (WPC), a K-12 outreach program that seeks to motivate and prepare students from disadvantaged backgrounds and underrepresented minorities for careers in the health sciences. Layne has overseen the evolution and success of the WPC ever since.

“Robert is a role model for K-12 students and the quintessential professional,” wrote nominator Deborah Harmon Hines, PhD, professor of cell biology and associate vice chancellor for

school services. “He represents UMMS to the Greater Worcester community in ways we can all be proud of.”

Beyond budgeting, hiring and supervising staff and writing grants, annual reports and evaluations, Layne’s primary role is to develop new programs and strengthen existing partnerships with institutions throughout Worcester and beyond. “Teaching students to set high academic standards and expectations for themselves is at the heart of what we do, and do well,” said Layne, who has helped shepherd some students from middle school to medical school at UMMS.

“The students are number one,” stated Layne of his commitment to the many responsibilities of his directorship, expanded in 2004 beyond WPC to include other Office of School Services K-12 outreach programs.

Points of pride

“I am most proud when I see our students get into college,” said Layne, who takes a personal interest in each WPC participant he encounters. During its first decade, WPC’s flagship pro-

gram, the North High School Health Science Academy, saw substantially increased test scores, attendance and students going on to four-year colleges. “I’m also proud of the ones who stay in school,” he added, noting that the WPC benefits all students, not just those at the top.

“I have had the privilege and honor of charting the course for this project during its first ten years. While making changes in the educational system is a long-term process, our success has paved the way to continue to expand this partnership into the next decade.”



