

# focus

## UMMS celebrates 35th Commencement 220 degrees awarded on June 1

The University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) awarded degrees to its largest graduating classes ever at its 35th Commencement exercises. Interim Chancellor Michael F. Collins presided over a ceremony in which 104 doctor of medicine degrees, including five MD/PhDs; 48 doctor of philosophy degrees; in nursing, 60 master of science degrees, two post-master's certificates and three doctor of philosophy degrees; and three honorary degrees were granted.

The 217 graduates were reminded by keynote speaker and honorary degree recipient Anthony S. Fauci, MD, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, of the importance of remaining life-long students. "Being a perpetual student is a state of mind that can be invigorating and can serve as the catalyst to continually improve yourself, meet the challenges that await you and fulfill your enormous potential," said Dr. Fauci, who oversees an extensive research portfolio of basic and applied research to prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases.

Fauci emphasized change as a constant in medicine, nursing and scientific research by recounting his own experience. Having entered the field of infectious disease to be almost immediately confronted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, bird flu and other pandemic threats (and

which became central to his distinguished career), Fauci assured students that they too would be faced with the unpredictable. He closed by saying that what will remain constant in health care are the integrity, selflessness, perseverance and inquisitiveness—with the patient as the focus and beneficiary—that are fundamental to the joy and beauty of the graduates' chosen professions.

UMMS also awarded honorary degrees to the Honorable Margaret H. Marshall, JD, and Leonard J. Morse, MD. Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, and the first female in this role, Marshall was born and raised in South Africa where she became an anti-apartheid activist after experiencing freedom as a high school exchange student in the United States. An esteemed professional, highly regarded for his medical skills and compassionate manner,



Anthony Fauci, MD, addresses the faculty, graduates and guests at the 35th Commencement on June 1.

Dr. Morse is a life-long resident of central Massachusetts who practiced medicine in Worcester for 40 years before serving as medical director of the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center; he currently serves as the City of Worcester's Commissioner of Public Health.

Adding their own perspectives as new graduates were class speakers Kelly John Holland, School of Medicine; Christian Matranga, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences; and Rosemary A. Kirusis, Graduate School of Nursing. *To see photo highlights, turn to page 3.* ■

## Life sciences bill launches new era in research

Governor Deval L. Patrick last month signed the \$1 billion life sciences bill, heralding a new era in life sciences research, discovery, development and education in the commonwealth. "We are tremendously pleased by the prominent position the University of Massachusetts Medical School has assumed in articulating the key role that life sciences research plays in Massachusetts," said Michael F. Collins, MD, senior vice president for the health sciences at the University of Massachusetts and interim chancellor of UMass Medical School (UMMS).

The new legislation calls for UMMS to receive \$90 million toward a new campus facility for the Advanced Therapeutics Cluster (ATC), for which planning has already begun.

"This is unquestionably the 'life sciences moment,' and the University of Massachusetts is uniquely positioned to assist the commonwealth in furtherance of its competitive position as a global leader in the life sciences," said Terence R. Flotte, MD, dean of the School of Medicine and provost and executive deputy chancellor. "Funds invested in our University will impact all regions of the commonwealth. In fact, there exists no single entity that is better positioned to realize the potential created by contin-

ued investment in the life sciences and the economy of Massachusetts and the region. Our planning for the new campus facility already has begun and has been facilitated by the strategic planning effort that will allow us to move forward efficiently in capitalizing on this unique moment in history."

The \$449 million ATC, which is slated to open in 2012, will provide research space for more than 100 faculty in the life sciences. It will have three integrated research programs: the Gene Therapy Center, RNA interference (RNAi) Therapeutics Institute and the Center for Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine. The common thread among the three elements of the ATC is that they



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Governor Deval L. Patrick signed the \$1 billion life sciences bill, in which UMass Medical School plays a key role.

all function at the genetic level of biology and have different but complementary capabilities for targeting the underlying causes of disease. "Diseases often have complex roots, not just a single genetic mutation. With the Advanced Therapeutics Cluster, we will have the ability to mix and match these technologies and apply them as appropriate for a particular disease," Flotte said. ■

### Get in *Focus*

Have a story idea, a faculty, student or staff achievement, or a campus-wide event for the calendar? Send it to the *Focus* editor at [focus@umassmed.edu](mailto:focus@umassmed.edu)



## Brown appointed chair of neurology

Robert H. Brown Jr., MD, DPhil, an internationally known researcher and physician who has led the quest to cure neuromuscular diseases like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), has accepted the appointment of chair of the Department of Neurology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) and UMass Memorial Medical Center.

“This appointment has the potential to be truly transformational to our clinical and research missions and has broad institutional implications,” said Terence R. Flotte, MD, dean of the School of Medicine and executive deputy chancellor and provost. “Dr. Brown’s outstanding international stature and vision, which bridge translational research and clinical care, are emblematic of how our academic health sciences center is capitalizing on the life sciences moment in Massachusetts.”

Brown comes to UMMS and UMass Memorial from Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, where he has been professor

of neurology and director of the Day Neuromuscular Laboratory and of the Muscular Dystrophy Association Clinic. Brown is renowned for his work on the inherited basis of neurodegenerative and neuromuscular diseases and has made significant discoveries in ALS and neuromuscular disorders, including some types of muscular dystrophy.

In 1993, Brown and colleagues defined mutations in a gene as one cause of familial ALS. He has already collaborated with Zuoshang Xu, MD, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology, in his work to develop an RNA interference-based approach that may herald a

treatment for certain neurodegenerative diseases.

“In addition to being a truly outstanding scientist who has made seminal discoveries relating to the genetics of neurodegenerative disease, Bob is one of the most dedicated physicians I have ever met,” said Craig C. Mello, PhD, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and the *Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine*. “Having identified the genetic basis for familial ALS, he could simply wait for others to develop therapies based on his discoveries. But Bob knows that his patients don’t have the luxury of time. He comes here with one clear purpose in mind, to develop advanced therapies for ALS and other devastating diseases.”

Brown graduated from Amherst College, Harvard Medical School and Oxford University, where he received



Robert Brown, MD, DPhil

a doctorate in neurophysiology. He has received many honors for his extraordinary commitment to finding cures for neuromuscular diseases, including induction into the Institute of Medicine. ■



Donald Hodes is a ten-year cancer survivor and a ten-year participant in the Walk to Cure Cancer.

## Celebrating 10 years of support for cancer research and care



was treated with radiation therapy for one month to remove the cancer. He now undergoes bone scans every six months to identify potential lesions, and receives an infusion every two months to strengthen his bones and to prevent future recurrences.

“In 1999, multiple myeloma was considered a terminal disease and life expectancy ranged from a few months to three years,” said Hodes. “Today, it is treatable with new therapies that are allowing patients like me to live productive and longer lives.”

Hodes, who is a member of the Hudson Hoagland Society, has participated in the Walk since its inception in 1999, following his diagnosis. The event has raised millions of dollars to support cancer research and care, and Hodes himself has raised nearly \$70,000 alone during the last decade. “Cancer affects everyone—either you have suffered from it or you know someone who has,” said Hodes. “The Walk is a way for me to give back to my community, my neighbors and my friends.”

*The 10th Annual Walk to Cure Cancer begins at noon on Sunday, September 28, 2008, on the UMMS campus. Attend the Kick-off Breakfast on Thursday, July 24, at the Lazare Research Building from 8 to 9 a.m. For information, call x6-5512 or visit [www.walktocurecancer.com](http://www.walktocurecancer.com).* ■

This year, the Walk to Cure Cancer will not only mark its 10th anniversary, it will also celebrate the many advances made in cancer research and care as well as the individuals who will be walking for a cure.

“I have seen first-hand the advances that UMass Medical School and UMass Memorial Medical Center have made in cancer research and treatment over the last 10 years,” said Donald Hodes, a cancer survivor and Worcester resident. “Today, cancer does not have to be a fatal disease.”

A decade ago, Hodes underwent a year-long series of tests to determine the cause of his decline in health. His primary care physician diagnosed him with an early stage of multiple myeloma, a cancer of bone marrow plasma cells. Hodes received observational care for nearly two years until the first bone lesion appeared. In 2001, he

## achievements

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

- Sonia Chimienti, MD, appointed clinical associate professor of medicine
  - Guangping Gao, PhD, appointed professor of molecular genetics & microbiology
  - Stephanie Hartwell, PhD, appointed adjunct research associate professor of psychiatry
  - Sarwat Hussain, MD, appointed professor of radiology
  - Lawrence Madoff, MD, appointed professor of medicine
  - George Siber, MD, appointed professor of medicine
  - Joel Weissman, PhD, appointed professor of family medicine & community health
- 
- Lucio H. Castilla, PhD, promoted to associate professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology and molecular medicine
  - Job Dekker, PhD, promoted to associate professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology
  - William J. DeMarco, DO, promoted to clinical associate professor of medicine
  - Suyang Hao, MD, promoted to clinical associate professor of medicine
  - Majaz Moonis, MD, promoted to professor of neurology and psychiatry
  - Judith A. Savageau, MPH, promoted to research associate professor of family medicine & community health and pediatrics



# commencement exercises

{ June 1, 2008 }



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8

- 1 GSN class speaker Rosemary Kirusis
- 2 GSBS class speaker Christian Matranga
- 3 SOM class speaker Kelly Holland
- 4 GSN faculty Rosemary Theroux (left) and Jean Boucher hood GSN graduate Kerry-Ann Williams.
- 5 GSBS faculty Ann Rittenhouse (left) and Neal Silverman hood GSBS graduate Tora Mitra Gangul.
- 6 Nap time.
- 7 & 8 Two new traditions for graduating students and their guests were introduced on campus this commencement season: a party the night before and a brunch the morning of the ceremony.

## Lending a hand outside the lab

They work day and night in the labs at UMass Medical School (UMMS), but in the last two years, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences (GSBS) students have also made a difference in the Worcester community.

As part of GSBS Cares, a sub-committee of the Graduate Student Body Committee (GSBC), GSBS students bring ideas for community involvement to the table and volunteer their time to local groups that serve Worcester area residents.

While the Graduate School of Nursing and the School of Medicine curriculums include interaction with the greater Worcester community through clinics and other service projects, such is not the case for GSBS students. "GSBS Cares gives students the opportunity to become involved in the community," said Cara Weismann, GSBS Cares chair and third-year student.

In previous years, GSBS Cares outreach focused on mentoring in area schools and serving as judges in local science fairs. Today, the committee is broadening its community activities, while its members continue to serve as mentors to high school, junior high

and middle school students. In addition to direct service, GSBS Cares is a resource for UMMS students who want to become involved in a specific community service event or recruit volunteers for a particular project.

Most recently, GSBS students expressed an interest in participating in Habitat for Humanity projects, and Christie Vriesema-Magnuson, a third-year student, initiated the process. The committee raised \$500 for the project during the GSBC's annual Cinco de Mayo celebration, and in May, nearly 30 GSBS Cares volunteers gathered on Stowell Avenue to put their carpentry, electrical and painting skills to use in building a house that two Worcester families will call home. "This was a great project for the group," said Weismann. "We had an opportunity to work with the families who will be living in the duplex, and it was fulfilling to get to know them as our neighbors and to help



Cara Weismann

GSBS Cares volunteers recently helped build a duplex with Habitat for Humanity for two Worcester families. They hope to make this an annual tradition. From left to right are Adonia Kim, Naveen Kommajosyula, Ian Love, Walter Kim and Gabriel Hendricks.

them as they become part of the community."

Weismann and other GSBS students intend to establish Habitat for Humanity as an annual event, much like their Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Worcester County Food Bank. Last year's food drive, which was organized by Weismann and fifth-year student Jessica Rocheleau, netted more than 815 pounds of food as well as cash contributions by UMMS employees and students.

"Although we contribute to scientific research on a daily basis, it takes weeks, months or even years until we see results," said Weismann. "GSBS Cares is an outlet for graduate students who want to be involved in the community. It is very gratifying to see a direct impact in the city and local towns and to know we've helped our neighbors." ■

## Franklin named Joy McCann Professor for Women in Medicine

Patricia D. Franklin, MD, MBA, MPH, associate professor of orthopedics & physical rehabilitation, has been named the Joy McCann Professor for Women in Medicine. Established at UMass Medical School in 2005 with an endowment from the independent Joy McCann Foundation, the professorship identifies and rewards women faculty leaders in medical education, research, patient care and community service who have mentored trainees and colleagues. Selected by their colleagues, recipients hold the professorship for three years and receive a stipend to encourage, inspire and

reward them. Dr. Franklin succeeds Linda F. Weinreb, MD, professor of family medicine & community health and pediatrics, who was the institution's first recipient in 2005.

"It is a privilege to receive the Joy McCann Professorship," said Dr. Franklin. "I am honored to be recognized by my colleagues for my contributions to UMass Medical School and my forthcoming contributions to the new UMMS initiatives to mentor the careers of our medical students, residents and junior faculty."

An academic physician for more than 20 years, Franklin, who

joined UMMS in 2004, has developed and directed a clinical and outcomes research program for the Department of Orthopedics & Physical Rehabilitation. She recently received The Knee Society's 2008 Chitranjan Ranawat Award, with colleague David C. Ayers, MD, the *Arthur M. Pappas, MD, Chair in Orthopedics* and professor of orthopedics & physical rehabilitation, for their research on total knee replacement. While at UMMS, Franklin has secured a \$1.7 million National Institutes of Health grant to evaluate strategies to improve patient function after orthopedic

surgery and two Robert Wood Johnson Foundation eHealth grants to test electronic decision support tools for adults with advanced osteoarthritis.

Franklin has also developed patient data registries, contributed to the institution-wide development of clinical and population research and is a member of the team planning clinical informatics to support research and quality at UMMS and UMass Memorial Medical Center. She serves as co-chair of the UMMS Women's Faculty Committee with Rosemary Theroux, PhD, assistant professor of nursing. ■

## employees infocus

### July Employee of Distinction Award

#### Vitals

Bing Li  
Assistant Controller  
Financial Services  
Year started: 2004  
Hometown: Shrewsbury

#### Professionally Speaking

"Focused," "dedicated" and "consistently positive" are just a few words that describe Bing Li. As an assistant controller in Financial Services, Li oversees the General Accounting Department. Li and her staff are responsible for recharge entries, invoice payments in the state accounting system, endowment income accounts held by the UMass Foundation, payroll transactions with the clinical system for cross-funded employees and physicians, and other general ledger activities. She also provides financial reports and analyses to campus

senior management, the UMass President's Office and external auditors.

Li recently assumed additional responsibilities related to the Worcester City Campus Corporation, which holds the institution's real estate.

"Bing maintains a focused commitment to achieving daily objectives, takes personal accountability for delivering high-quality results and conducts herself with the utmost professionalism at all times," said Financial Services Controller Michael Stanton, who nominated Li. "She demonstrates strong support for her direct reports and has established excellent working relationships throughout the organization."

#### Points of Pride

To meet administrators' needs for financial data, Li rebuilt the department's processes to allow for monthly reporting and reduced the quarterly closing cycle by three days. By reducing

the time needed to close the books, Li and her colleagues are now able to supply relevant financial information in a more timely manner.

Since joining UMMS, Li has volunteered her expertise to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Employee Charitable Campaign (COMECC), through which UMMS has become one of the top five state agencies to donate to charitable organizations. Utilizing her organizational skills, Li coordinates the recording and reporting of employee pledges and manages the appreciation raffle associated with COMECC.

"UMMS will continue to grow, and I'm excited to have the opportunity to grow with the institution as I encounter new challenges related to its finances," said Li.



# Calendar

## information infocus

### ID badge exchange wraps up

Old badges obsolete on Oct. 1.

On Monday, July 7, the Office of Parking and Access Control will begin the final phase of the year-long ID badge exchange process. If you do not have the new Smart Card, which is vertical and has the picture in the center, you must visit the Parking Office in HA-531, open weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., and exchange your badge. You must bring your old ID and exchange it for your new one—you will not be allowed to keep both. If you do not have your old ID, you'll be charged \$10 for the new one.

**You must exchange your badge by Tuesday, Sept. 30; on Wednesday, Oct. 1, the old badges will not allow you to access parking and other restricted areas.**

If you have questions about the ID badge exchange, call the Parking and Access Control Office at 6-5934 or 6-3630 or send an e-mail to [parking@umassmed.edu](mailto:parking@umassmed.edu).



■ The Greater Worcester Farmer's Market is back, starting on Tuesday, July 8. Hosted by UMMS and UMass Memorial Health Care and located on the plaza in front of the new Medical School Lobby, the market runs from 1 to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays through the end of October. Participating merchants will be selling fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers, honey, baked goods and gift certificates. For information about the farmer's market, visit [www.greaterworcesterfarmersmarket.com](http://www.greaterworcesterfarmersmarket.com).

■ A Classic Car Show and Flea Market, presented by Cruzzin' Dreams, will be held on Sunday, July 20, at the Hebert's Candy Mansion, 575 Hartford Pike (Route 20) in Shrewsbury. The afternoon event, which will feature a DJ, children's activities, flea market, a raffle and refreshments, benefits the Walk to Cure Cancer and other local charities. All classes of vehicles are welcome to register and compete in the car show, and specialty awards will be presented. Participants may pre-register through July 10 for \$12 or register on the day of the event from 8 to 11 a.m. for \$15. Admission is \$3 (\$2 for seniors; free for children 12 and under). For information or to register, call Dominic Masiello at 508-839-2952, Len Marrino at 508-789-3436 or Mike Merzigian at 774-696-3479.

■ *The View from Here: Landscape Paintings in Pastels*, an exhibit of paintings, is the 12th installment of the Lamar Soutter Library's Artist in Residence Series. It features the artwork of Nancy von Hone, administrator

in the Department of Cell Biology, and will be on display on the first floor of the Lamar Soutter Library through Friday, July 18. For information, contact Nancy Harger at 6-3334 or via global e-mail.

■ The Walk to Cure Cancer Kick-off Breakfast will be held Thursday, July 24, at the Aaron Lazare Medical Research Building on the University Campus. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m.; continental breakfast and speaker's program will follow from 8 to 9 a.m. The event is hosted by WCVB-TV Channel 5 news anchor Susan Wornick. Teams will receive all the materials they need for gathering pledges for the Sept. 28 event on the UMass Medical School campus. For information, contact Tamara Hampton at 6-5512 or via global e-mail or visit [www.walktocurecancer.com](http://www.walktocurecancer.com).

■ The 16th Annual Tee Up for Tots Golf Tournament will be held on Monday, August 4, at Pleasant Valley Country Club in Sutton. The registration fee is \$350 per player and includes greens fees, golf cart, box lunch, hors d'oeuvres and dinner. Registration begins at 10 a.m., with a shot gun start at noon; reception at 5:30 p.m. and dinner and live auction at 6 p.m. The event benefits the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center. For more information, call 6-5520 or send an e-mail to [events@umassmed.edu](mailto:events@umassmed.edu). Volunteers are needed to work at this event; contact Barbara Gilmartin at 6-1299 or via global e-mail.

## grants infocus

□ Mark Alkema, PhD, assistant professor of neurobiology: *Analysis of Tyraminergetic Signaling in Caenorhabditis elegans*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, \$325,000; recommended for four more years, \$1.3 million

□ Victor Ambros, PhD, professor of molecular medicine: *Genetic Control of Development*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, \$536,177

□ Elliot J. Androphy, MD, the *Barbara and Nathan Greenberg Chair in Biomedical Research* and professor of medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology: *Functional Genomic Screens for Regulators of SMN2 Expression*, Families of Spinal Muscular Atrophy, three years, \$152,073

□ Daniel Bolon, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular pharmacology: *Molecular Analysis of Hsp90: A Specialized Chaperone in Signal Transduction*, American Cancer Society, four years, \$720,000

□ Anthony Carruthers, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology and physiology and dean of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences: *Metabolic Control of Sugar Transport*, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, one year, \$325,000; recommended for four more years, \$1.3 million

□ Joseph DiFranza, MD, professor of family medicine & community health: *Imaging of Nicotine Sensitization in Humans: A Translational Application of fMRI*, National Institute on Drug Abuse, one year, \$243,750

□ Francis A. Ennis, MD, professor of medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology: *Cellular Immunity to Category A-C Viruses in Humans*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$3.2 million

□ Richard A. Fenton, PhD, associate professor of physiology: *Adenosine Transport in the Aged Heart*, National Institute on Aging, one year, \$66,625; recommended for one more year, \$66,625

□ Laura L. Gibson, MD, assistant professor of pediatrics & medicine: *Cytomegalovirus (CMV)-specific Cell-mediated Immunity in Infants with Congenital CMV Infection*, Thrasher Research Fund, three years, \$327,463

□ Douglas T. Golenbock, MD, professor of medicine and molecular genetics & microbiology: *Group B. Streptococci and Toll-like Receptors*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, \$381,861; recommended for four more years, \$1.7 million

□ Deborah Harmon Hines, PhD, professor of cell biology: *NIH Summer Research Program to Increase Diversity Among Biomedical Researchers*, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, one year, \$165,888; recommended for four more years, \$663,552

□ Melissa J. Jungnickel, PhD, instructor in cell biology: *Mechanism of the Sperm Acrosome Reaction*, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, one year, \$81,250; recommended for one more year, \$81,250

□ Wenjun Li, PhD, research assistant professor of medicine: *Neighborhood Risk Factors for Falls in the Elderly*, National Institute on Aging, one year, \$380,405; recommended for three more years, \$1 million

□ C. Robert Matthews, PhD, the *Arthur F. and Helen P. Koskinas Professor* and chair of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Folding Mechanisms of TIM Barrel Proteins*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year,

\$365,625; recommended for three more years, \$1 million

□ Stephen C. Miller, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Near-IR Bioluminescence Imaging*, National Cancer Institute, one year, \$182,813; recommended for one more year, \$219,375

□ Kenneth L. Rock, MD, professor and chair of pathology: *Immunobiology of MCH Restriction of T Cells*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$81,198

□ Alan Rothman, MD, professor of medicine: *Flavivirus Infections: Pathogenesis and Prevention*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$2.2 million; recommended for four more years, \$9.1 million

□ Sean Ryder, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *RNA Recognition by Maternal Gene Silencers in Nematodes*, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, \$308,750; recommended for four more years, \$1.2 million

□ Lawrence J. Stern, PhD, professor of pathology and biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: *Structure and Function of MHC Proteins*, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one year, \$274,041; recommended for four more years, \$1.6 million

□ Gyongyi Szabo, MD, PhD, professor of medicine: *Alcohol and Monocyte Signaling*, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, one year, \$462,704; recommended for four more years, \$1.8 million

focus

Editor: Ellie Castano  
Editorial staff: Andrea Badrigian, Lisa Dayne, Alison Duffy, Jim Fessenden, Sandra Gray, Lanny Hilgar, Mark Shelton, Nicole Soucy  
Photography: Professional Event Images (Jim Gillooly); Robert Carlin Photography; UMMS Technology and Media Services

Office of Public Affairs and Publications  
University of Massachusetts Medical School  
55 Lake Avenue North, Worcester, MA 01655-0002  
508-856-2000  
[Focus@umassmed.edu](mailto:Focus@umassmed.edu)