



The Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

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Alumni Profile | Jack Bukowski, MD, PhD



Program: Immunology
Year of Graduation: 1985

When Jack Bukowski, MD, PhD, returned to the UMMS campus as a panelist for the retrospective “Look How Far We’ve Come” event in October, he did so as an alumnus of both GSBS, where he earned the School’s first PhD, and of the School of Medicine. The basic research and clinical training he received at UMMS prepared him not only for work in academia and the pharmaceutical industry, but also for

a rheumatology practice and his current focus on educating consumers about nutritional supplements and the scientific benefits of products.

“The PhD program predisposed me to immunology,” said Dr. Bukowski. “The MD program helped me find practical applications for that basic science, such as drug development.”

Although he did not originally plan to pursue a medical degree, Bukowski found that it gave him a unique perspective on how to couple basic research with human disease. “My original PhD plan was to be a professor with a lab,” he said. “Eventually, I ended up in that role. My focus never shifted away from research, it was just much more so on human disease than it would have been without the MD.”

The immunology research Bukowski conducted while on faculty at Harvard Medical School in the late 1990s led to a

discovery of flavinoids and antioxidants in “true tea,” such as black, green and pekoe teas. This discovery eventually led to his establishing the Nutritional Science Research Institute, which works to bridge the gap between pharmaceutical quality research and nutritional supplements, and scientifically validates nutritional supplements and ingredients.

“The industry is rather lax in policing it,” said Bukowski, who also indicated that consumers need reliable information about which products to take and what quantities are safe and effective. ■

Anyone with news to share is encouraged to send their class notes to alumni@umassmed.edu. You may also submit notes by visiting the [UMass Alumni Online Community at www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical](http://www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical) and clicking on “Class Notes.”

The Vibe@

Winter 2012

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Look How Far We’ve Come

FROM ITS FOUNDING MOMENTS as an outgrowth of the School of Medicine’s basic science faculty and infrastructure to its tremendous growth and recent awarding of its 500th PhD, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences has always been nourished by a unique spirit of collaboration among colleagues—both faculty and students. “Scientific and intellectual interaction is a hallmark of the school, and students and faculty sense that immediately,” said Anthony Curruthers, PhD, GSBS dean and professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology, during a panel discussion, “Look How Far We’ve Come (and How We Got Started).” The event was held in October to celebrate American Archives Month. The panel featured notable alumni, GSBS founding members and current faculty who reflected on the




School’s history and rapid expansion.

The GSBS traces its roots back to 1978 with the establishment of the doctorate of medical sciences program. George E. Wright, PhD, then a professor of pharmacology, chaired the committee studying the creation of a graduate program and subsequently was named the founding dean. Dr. Wright recruited graduate directors from within the existing basic science departments, and together they developed curriculum and served as the oversight body for the new program. Seven students comprised the graduate program’s inaugural class in 1979. Today, GSBS boasts

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▲ From left to right: Paula Grosse Collins, PhD ‘92; Susan Schiavi, PhD ‘89; Maureen Shamgochian, PhD ‘90; Melissa Auclair, PhD ‘07; Jack Bukowski MD, PhD ‘85; Robert V. Talanian, PhD ‘90; and Blake Tomkinson, PhD



GSBS Alumni Snapshot

Information collected through an institution-wide alumni survey conducted in fall 2010.

76% of respondents are currently involved in research

52% of respondents work in a university setting

2% of respondents serve in federally assisted underserved locations



▲ Brian Lewis, PhD, associate professor of molecular medicine, attends the reception, which was held in the lobby of the Medical School.

Welcome Back Reception

Faculty gathered with a large crowd of new and returning GSBS students to mark the start of a new academic year at the annual Welcome Back Reception during Convocation Week 2011. The casual, jovial atmosphere set the tone for opportunities for individuals to reconnect or to begin building collegial relationships to support learning and research. Following the reception, more than 100 GSBS students and faculty attended the UMMS-wide Convocation Address and panel discussion featuring Chancellor Michael F. Collins, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Siddhartha Mukherjee, MD, PhD (*The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*), and Charles L. Sawyers, MD, chair of the Human Oncology and Pathogenesis Program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.



▲ Dean Carruthers talks with a student.

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more than 200 students and recently marked publication of the 2,000th paper by the student body.

Wright served as dean until 1984, when he returned to teaching and research full time. He was succeeded by Thomas B. Miller, PhD, now professor emeritus of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology. Dr. Miller led a two-year effort that culminated in the establishment of the GSBS, which made it easier to recruit top students. When Dean Carruthers took over leadership from Miller in 2002, he "inherited the product of the hard work of the faculty and students," he explained, and has overseen tremendous growth in the number of students, faculty and the amount of funded research.

In addition to the current and former deans, the panel included Raymond

Welsh, PhD, professor of pathology and microbiology & physiological systems, who had the singular distinction of serving as mentor to both the first and the 500th GSBS graduates. The first graduate, Jack Bukowski, MD, PhD, reflected that when he entered the GSBS, he was less concerned about the youth of the program than excited by the quality of the investigators, saying, "I felt lucky to be here." He is currently chief scientific research officer at the Nutritional Science Research Institute.

Susan Schiavi, PhD '89, who was the first out-of-state graduate, amused the audience with a reminiscence of her discovery of the existence of the GSBS. When she applied to graduate school, she thought she was applying to study in the lab of Michael Czech, PhD, at Brown

University. When she discovered that he was now at UMass Medical School, she was initially taken aback, but after visiting, she felt reassured enough to enroll here. She is currently a senior science director at Genzyme-Sanofi.

Sponsored by the Lamar Soutter Library Office of Medical History and Archives, the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and the GSBS, the discussion was moderated by Terence R. Flotte, MD, *the Celia and Isaac Haidak Professor of Medicine*, provost and executive deputy chancellor, and dean of the School of Medicine. Other panelists included: George Wright, PhD; Tom Miller, PhD; and John Sullivan, MD, current vice provost for research, director of the Center for Clinical and Translational Science, professor of pediatrics, microbiology & physiological systems and pathology. ■

Annual Research Retreat Highlights Accomplishments

AT THE 16TH ANNUAL BASIC RESEARCH Retreat held in October, presentations by more than a dozen UMMS faculty and students centered around visions in system biology, innate immunity, microbial pathogenesis and new core technologies at UMass Medical School. Michael R. Green, MD, PhD, *the Lambi and Sarah Adams Chair in Genetic Research* and professor of molecular medicine and biochemistry & molecular pharmacology, gave the retreat's keynote address. Dr. Green was named the recipient of the 2011 Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Research during Convocation in September, an award that includes the honor of giving the keynote address at the annual basic science retreat.

During his introduction, Chancellor Michael F. Collins noted how important it is to celebrate the many accomplishments of the Medical School's world-class faculty. "It is very difficult to select one recipient among so many accomplished scientists. In the instance of Dr. Green, his scholarly accomplishments are legion. They have brought a great distinction to our university and I believe it is extremely fitting that he is giving this year's keynote lecture," Collins said.



▲ Dr. Michael Green receiving the 2011 Chancellor's Medal for Distinguished Research

In his lecture before a packed auditorium of colleagues, faculty and students from the GSBS at the Hoagland Pincus Conference Center in Shrewsbury, Mass., Green used his lab's work with genome-wide loss of function screens to answer problems related to gene regulation in cancer biology to illustrate investigative techniques that can be widely used. "I believe that our general approach here can be applied to answer a number of questions about molecular biology," he said. Green went on to explain how his approach is yielding new insights into the pathways responsible for turning off natural tumor suppression genes that work to eliminate cancerous cells from our bodies. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 3
39th Commencement Ceremony
Campus Green
UMass Medical School

Visit www.NetworkUMass.com/Medical regularly for additional events.

ALUMNI PHONATHON

On four nights in October, more than 40 students from UMass Medical School's Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Graduate School of Nursing and School of Medicine manned a bank of phones in the School's Faculty Conference Room for the annual Alumni Phonathon.

Gifts from alumni are a crucial source of support for various initiatives and scholarships at all three schools. If you responded with a gift, thank you! If you would like to make a gift, you may do so online at <http://w3.umassmed.edu/OnlineDonation> or by mailing your contribution to UMass Medical School Development Office, 333 South Street, Shrewsbury, MA 01545.

