A day for teachers
Faculty, students and patient professors celebrated at Educational Recognition Awards

An enthusiastic, standing-room-only crowd greeted the recipients of the 2006 Educational Recognition Awards. Since its inception eight years ago, the annual awards ceremony has brought the campus community together to applaud the outstanding achievements of its faculty and student educators whose efforts to teach and mentor others exemplify UMMS’ supportive and collaborative learning environment. Welcoming this year’s attendees and recipients, Chancellor and Dean Aaron Lazare noted that such innovation in teaching is consistently acknowledged not only within our own walls, but also across the nation, as demonstrated by UMMS’ most recent U.S. News & World Report ranking in primary care education. “Fourth in the nation is an impressive position, but our faculty is not one to rest. The newest trends in medical, nursing and biological science education are constantly examined and implemented for our students,” he said.

In addition to the exemplary faculty and students who were honored for their generosity and leadership in teaching, this year’s ceremony included the inaugural presentation of the Medical School Patient-Teacher Award to the Rattey and Pratt families. Established by the Faculty Council to acknowledge individual patients and/or their families who have contributed to undergraduate medical education at UMMS over a period of years, the award honors those who are willing to share the most personal and sometimes painful information to enhance students’ learning.

With the award, Genevieve Rattey officially became UMMS’ youngest professor; she and her parents, Mary Beth and Raymond, and siblings, Mack and Marie, have participated in the Human Genetics Course since Genevieve’s infancy. Born with Down Syndrome, 11-year-old Genevieve has imparted valuable information to medical students as they relate complex science to the reality of living with this genetic condition. “The Ratteys are wonderful role models for all of us in the affirming, energetic and well-informed ways the members of this family support each other,” said course instructor Jeanne B. Lawrence, PhD, professor of cell biology, adding, “The Ratteys give our medical students an upbeat and eye-opening message that conveys the joys and challenges of how this disorder impacts families.”

Like the Ratteys, Janet and Sandy Pratt have been long-time participants in the Human Genetics Course and with the award are now patient professors. Janet suffers from Huntington’s Disease (HD), a hereditary, degenerative brain disorder for which there is no effective treatment or cure. Even as the disease continues to advance, the Pratt family members, from left to right: Raymond, Marie, Genevieve, Mack and Mary Beth

Mello receives Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize

UMMS Professor Craig C. Mello, PhD, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and the Blais University Chair in Molecular Medicine, recently flew to Germany to accept the prestigious Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize with scientific colleague Andrew Z. Fire, PhD, of Stanford University. The pair was recognized for their pioneering achievements in the discovery of RNA interference (RNAi) and will share a prize of some 100,000 euros, approximately $120,000.

According to the Scientific Council of the Paul Ehrlich Foundation — comprised of 14 nationally and internationally recognized scientists from five countries who selected Drs. Mello and Fire for the award — “RNA interference… has become an indispensable tool of fundamental research in the last few years and has already made an invaluable contribution to the understanding of how molecules work, making it relevant to medicine.”

RNAi is a natural process that works when small segments of double-stranded RNA are introduced into a cell to prevent the expression of a particular gene; working like a guided missile, this mechanism targets a given gene exclusively without damaging the host cell. Since the publication of this discovery in Nature in 1998, researchers from around the globe have been applying RNAi technology to their investigations, knocking out genes individually — and in combination — to see if they function in the process being examined — a first step toward drug discovery for diseases ranging from cancer and HIV to diabetes and Alzheimer’s disease.

“I am humbled and honored to share such a prestigious award, named for one of the world’s top scientists,” said Mello. “Our work was just one piece of a puzzle, but I think it is opening a door to a whole new frontier from which we can learn so much more about our body’s own protective mechanisms.”

The Paul Ehrlich and Ludwig Darmstaedter Prize is one of the highest awards conferred in Germany in the field of medicine. The award celebrates Paul Ehrlich’s scientific achievements in the fields of chemotherapy, hematology, clinical bacteriology, immunology, and cancer research and acknowledges Ludwig Darmstaedter, an early and faithful supporter of Dr. Ehrlich’s scientific endeavors. Since its establishment in 1952, nearly 100 of the world’s top scientists have been honored with the award for their research, bestowed each year on Ehrlich’s birthday — March 14.

Craig Mello, PhD

Fourth in the nation is an impressive position, but our faculty is not one to rest. — Chancellor and Dean Aaron Lazare

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.
Felice receives Erskine award for focus on adolescent medicine

For Marianne E. Felice, MD, professor and chair of pediatrics, the honor of being selected recipient of a YWCA 2006 Katharine E. Erskine Award — presented each year to five women who have demonstrated a dedication to making life better for their community, particularly for women and girls — is magnified by the pride she feels in being embraced by the local community.

“This award symbolizes an environment in which women are encouraged to take bold steps in their work and their lives and to do so with character and integrity.”

Marianne Felice, MD

Felice said that she was profoundly touched to discover she had been nominated by State Senator Harriette Chandler, a longtime supporter of the Medical School and clinical system. “It was quite moved to find Harriette had nominated me, knowing how highly she values both institutions for the many services we provide for her constituents.”

The Erskine Awards will be present-
ed during the 15th annual Tribute to Women ceremony on Tuesday, May 9 at Mechanics Hall.

A day for teachers

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has progressively affected her cognitive, behavioral and motor skills. Janet has courageously continued to share her story with students. Her daughter, Sandy, faced with the possibility that she too could inherit HD, offers students a unique and invaluable perspective on genetic disorders. “Janet and Sandy make an indelible impression. In this basic science course for first-year medical students, their contributions bring the course material ‘to life’, greatly enhancing the classes’ enthusiasm for learning human genetics,” said Dr. Lawrence.

Lamar Souter Award for Excellence in Medical Education
Henri F. Calkins, MD
Associate professor of medicine
Malari A. Rogoff, MD
Associate professor of psychiatry
GSBS Dean’s Award
Elliot J. Androphy, MD
The Barbara and Nathan Grogan
Chair in Biomedical Research
GSN Dean’s Award
Carol A. Bova, PhD, RN, ANP
Emeritus/Emerita Award in Medical Education
Rig K. Anand, MD
Associate professor of medicine
James Barry Hanshaw, MD
Professor emeritus of pediatrics
MS Educational Achievement Award
Angela Bealer, MD
Professor of pediatrics
John M. Cooke, PhD
Associate professor of cell biology
Roger W. Craig, PhD
Professor of cell biology
Warren J. Ferguson, MD
Professor of family medicine & community health
Michael A. Godkin, PhD
Professor of family medicine & community health
Leslie A. Soyka, MD
Assistant professor of pediatrics
Stacy Stimples, MS, RD, LD
Instructor in pediatrics
Outstanding Medical Educator Award
David M. Clive, MD
Professor of medicine
John M. Cooke, PhD
Associate professor of cell biology
Henri F. Calkins, MD
Associate professor of medicine
Susan B. Gaglardi, PhD
Professor of cell biology
Amy M. Garr, MA
Assistant professor of surgery
Linda A. Page, MD
Professor of medicine
Thomas W. Smith, MD
Professor of pathology
MS Community Faculty Educator Award
Scott L. Brownstein, MD
Milford Regional Medical Center
William J. Crooks, MD
Falkon Clinic
Sunita Goddawa, MD
Private Family Practice
Nobish J. Sadigh, MD
Berkshire Medical Center
MS Patient-Teacher Award
Patient Professor: The Rafferty Family
Patient Professor: Janet and Sandy Pratt
GSBS Distinguished Faculty Award
Mary Marson, PhD
Assistant professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology
William E. Theeuwala, PhD
Professor of medicine
GSBS Faculty Achievement Award
Janet L. Stein, PhD
Professor of cell biology
Carole G. Upton, EdD
Professor of family medicine & community health
Leslie J. Berg, PhD
Professor of pathology
Michael P. Czech, PhD
Professor and chair of molecular medicine
Trudy G. Morrison, PhD
Professor of molecular genetics & microbiology
Niall Silverman, PhD
Assistant professor of medicine
GSN Distinguished Faculty Award
Graduate Entry Pathway:
Omaraud Houl, PhD
Master’s:
Rosemary Thiersch, DNP, RN, CNS
Electoral:
Susan Sullivan-Bolyai, DNSc, RN, CNS
GSN Community Faculty Award
Jeannie M. Corso, MS, APRN, BC
Ambulatory:
Lynne B. Markinac, MS, RN, AP
Advanced Practice Nurse Educator:
Karen Aiken, RN, MS
Dual Track Geriatrics Nurse Practitioner:
Linda Satozuki, MS, APRN, BC
MS Student Educator Award
Annie Kruger, ’07
Dylan Hove, ’06
Congratulations to the following recipients of Educational Recognition Awards:

Janet Pratt and her daughter Sandy with Joanne Lawrence, PhD (center)

Janet Pratt Award to Students
David Biagio
Zhihui Cheng, PhD
Megha Ghiridelli
Jennifer Houck
GSBS Student Service Award
Gregory Tosi
GSBR Community Service Award
Nicole Carabia, BSN, RN
Jennifer Markby, BS, RN
Kathrine Nappo, BS, RN
Kristyn Napolitano, MS, ’09
Amy Podolski, MS, ’09
Hemant Pujara, BSN, RN
William Zawatski, MS, ’09
GSBR Advanced Community Service Award
Sandra Leiby, BSN, RN
Worcester Pipeline Collaborative and Outreach Programs Outstanding Mentor Award
Jeffrey W. Phillips, MS, ’08

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“Be presented an Erskine Award by a community I’ve been a part of for just eight short years means a great deal to me,” said Dr. Felice, who received the award in the category of Medicine & Science. “This award symbolizes an environment in which women are encouraged to take bold steps in their work and their lives and to do so with character and integrity.”

The Erskine Award committee lauded Felice’s work in adolescent medicine, particularly sexuality, teen pregnancy and cross-cultural health care, and her success in attracting millions in grant funding, most notably from the federal Office of Adolescent Teenage Pregnancy Programs for projects including the Worcester Teen-Tot Project, which is designed to reduce repeat pregnancies in adolescent mothers. Felice also created the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting course at UMassWorcester Medical School through which medical students tutor young women from the YWCA Young Parents Program.

Until recently, Felice served on the board of directors of the United Way. For the last three years, she has been the chair of the Worcester Children’s Mortality Reduction Task Force, a multi-agency, citywide committee established to lower infant mortality rates in Worcester. In addition to her numerous administrative responsibilities as chair of pediatrics, Felice continues to teach and mentor medical students and was one of the early volunteers in the Society for Adolescent Medicine mentoring network.

As noted by a supporter in Felice’s nomination for the award: “Whether she is presenting to a national conference, heading a search for a department chair, teaching a pediatric fellow or gently holding the hand of a frail child in the hospital, she is able to adjust her approach according to the needs of the situation. She is as confident as she is humble…serious as she is casual…strict as she is lenient…insistently as she is flexible…intelligent as she is eager to learn.”
The valuable role of postdocs

Anyone who spends any time at an academic health sciences center has most likely heard the term postdoc. But how many of us really know who postdocs are, what they do or why they are so important to a research enterprise? With the mission of answering these questions, as well as raising awareness of the role of these valued employees on campus, several postdocs have come together to initiate a formal association at UMMS.

Postdoctoral appointments are typically temporary jobs held by individuals who have received their PhD; they commonly last for periods ranging between six months and five years and are usually research-oriented. Despite the relative lack of a clear-cut definition — postdocs can have a variety of titles, positions within organizational hierarchies and forms of compensation — working as a postdoc for several years has become a necessity for gaining greater knowledge and experience, making professional connections and building a name for oneself in research circles, all essential steps in establishing scientific careers.

Julie Claycomb, PhD, and Lisa Maduzia, PhD, postdocs in the laboratory of Craig C. Mello, PhD, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and the Blais University Chair of Molecular Medicine, and Hanne Varmark, PhD, a postdoc in the laboratory of William Thetkauf, PhD, professor of molecular medicine, launched the formal UMMS postdoc organization last September with the goals of aiding postdoctoral fellows in their professional and personal development.

“We want to identify and reach the postdocs who are scattered throughout the institution,” explained Dr. Claycomb. “Nurturing a professional community of our peers not only helps us all professionally, but also reflects well on the entire institution, both with current and prospective faculty and students, as well as among peer institutions.”

With support from Professor and Chair of Molecular Medicine Michael Czech, PhD, and technical assistance from the office of GBS Dean Anthony Garruthers, PhD, the group has already implemented several initiatives: they hold monthly meetings to socialize as well as develop ideas; they have compiled an e-mail directory of all postdocs employed at UMMS to facilitate communication and collaboration amongst themselves; and they have been surveying UMMS postdocs to gather both quantitative and qualitative information about their career development needs.

“After years of functioning in infrastructures with established guidelines and requirements as graduate students, but not yet within a permanent position, postdocs can feel isolated because they essentially have no formal framework to address their special situation,” said Dr. Varmark.

“By instituting this organization, we hope to foster scientific and social interactions among postdocs, faculty and students, in order to build a scientific community with a strong sense of collaboration and communication for the mutual benefit of all.”

The group has also recruited Sean Ryder, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular pharmacology, who is himself a fairly new faculty member and former postdoctoral association participant, to serve as its faculty liaison. Dr. Ryder, who credits his postdoctoral experience at The Scripps Research Institute with helping him obtain his faculty appointment at UMMS, isled Dr. Maduzia, Claycomb and Varmark for their grassroots efforts. Ryder is especially enthusiastic about the bi-weekly seminar series the group has established to allow postdocs to present their data to their colleagues in a setting outside of their own lab.

“It takes more than just going to your bench and conducting experiments to be a good scientist,” concluded Maduzia. “Postdocs need to interact with and learn from others.”

UMMS ranks #4 in U.S. News & World Report’s primary care category

UMMS was again ranked fourth in primary care among the nation’s 125 fully accredited medical schools and 19 schools of osteopathic medicine by weekly news magazine U.S. News & World Report in its annual review, “America’s Best Graduate Schools.” UMMS, which has held a spot near the very top of the category since the magazine began its rankings in 1994, is the only school in the top 50 that accepts no out-of-state students into its medical degree program.

“Through unparalleled service and education, our outstanding faculty has a lasting and profound impact on the health of the state and nation,” said Chancellor and Dean Aaron Lazare. “It is gratifying to see public affirmation of our efforts to provide a high quality primary care education to tomorrow’s physicians.”

Members of the UMMS class of 2006 were accepted into some of the most competitive residency programs in the country, with 34 percent of graduates entering primary care (68 percent including obstetrics/gynecology and emergency medicine).

In addition to the Medical School’s standing, the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences ranked highly on the listing of nationwide PhD programs, as chosen by deans and department chairs. “National recognition of the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences is an aggregate measure of many individual efforts, but especially reflects the work by students and faculty to push the envelope in almost every field of research,” said GBS Dean Anthony Garruthers, PhD. “I am privileged to enjoy this very public acknowledgment of our success.”

In its listing of top research schools, U.S. News ranked UMMS 80th. The institution also ranks near the top among public medical schools in the Northeast in the amount of funding awarded by the National Institutes of Health. To read more about the U.S. News & World Report rankings, log on to www.usnews.com.
Ready, Set, Quit Results

During the month-long Ready, Set, Quit smoking cessation program, nearly 1,250 Worcester residents and employees of UMass Memorial, UMass Medical School, the City of Worcester and Polar Beverages stepped forward to “kick the habit.” Of the UMass Memorial employees who participated in the program, 126 were eligible to receive a two-week supply kit of nicotine patches; at the Medical School, 85 were provided kits.

Ready, Set, Quit, launched by UUMS, UMass Memorial Medical Center, the City of Worcester and Spectrum Health Systems in January, was designed to encourage adults who work or live in Worcester to call the state’s Smokers’ Helpline at 1-800-Try-to-Stop to receive counseling and, if eligible, the nicotine patches. Kits were distributed to roughly 70 percent of all those who applied.

The Class of 2009 will hold a memorial service to honor the donors to the Anatomical Gift Program and their families on Saturday, May 6 at the Haaglund-Pincus Conference Center, Shrewsbury Campus. The service begins at 10 a.m. in the amphitheater, followed by a reception in the Worcester Room. For more information, call Dianne Person at x82460.

As part of its commitment to biodefense research, UMass Medical School, one of five Cooperative Centers for Translational Research on Human Immunology and Biodefense, will host “Health Applications of GIS: Data Visualization and Spatial Pattern analysis,” a three-day workshop based on geographic information science scheduled to begin May 9. The event will open with a keynote address by San Diego State University’s Arthur Getis, the Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation Endowed Chair of Geographical Studies. Investigators and researchers will then have the opportunity to learn more about GIS, including its use for mapping and modeling vulnerability to disease. The event will continue on May 23 with an all-day workshop focused on GIS mapping methods, while the last day of seminars, May 21, will feature a watershed risk assessment, community intervention study, and the use of GIS to model and forecast HIV/AIDS ratios in Africa and the investigation of epidemic and endemic waterborne disease.

The event is sponsored by the UUMS Center for Infectious Diseases and Vaccine Research, National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and ESRI, which produces GIS and mapping software. To register for the workshop and for a complete syllabus, visit www.cctrhib.org. For more information, e-mail Irene Bosch via global e-mail.

As part of its “Meet the Author Series,” the UUMS Lamar Soutter Library and Worcester District Medical Society will sponsor a reception, lecture and book signing beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 9 in the Hunt Auditorium and library. In addition to a formal dedication of the library’s Women in Medicine Collection, Ellen S. Moore, PhD, head of the library’s History and Archives, will give a presentation titled, “Women Physicians and Sex Education: The Case of Dr. May S. Calderone.” Dr. Moore will also sign copies of her book Reviewing the Balance: Women Physicians and the Profession of Medicine, 1850 – 1995, following the talk.

Faculty Administration will host a “Faculty After Hours” on Friday, May 12 from 5 – 7 p.m. in the Faculty Conference Room.

The UMass Memorial Lincoln Child Care Centers will hold their annual plant sale on Friday, May 12 from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. in the old Medical School Lobby. Offerings will include hanging flowering baskets and potted plants.

UMass Medical School’s First International Festival will take place on Friday, May 19 in the old and new Medical School lobbies from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The Festival, sponsored by the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office and the Human Resources Department, will celebrate the more than 60 nations representing the Medical School’s diverse student and employee population. Highlights will include entertainment and exhibits, an International Tea; and a menu of international foods available in cafeterias at the University Campus hospital and at the Laure Research Building.

The Role of Oncogene/Tumor Suppressor Interaction with the Centrosome Protein Pericentrin in Prostate Cancer Cell Growth: Stimulatory Role of Chromatin Pathology in Cerebral Cortex of Schizophrenics, National Institute of Mental Health, one year, $206,656; recommended for one year, $172,656.

Alan C. Banas, MD/PhD student in the laboratory of Patrick Emero, PhD, assistant professor of neurobiology: Temperature Entrainment of Drosophila Circadian Rhythms, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, $28,809; recommended for three more years, $77,223.

Robert E. Camouwy, PhD, professor of physiology: Prostate Cancer Cell Growth: Stimulatory Role of Neurotensin and Mechanism of Inhibition by Flavonoids as Related to Protein Kinase C, U.S. Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity, three years, $908,854.

Chun-Ting Chan, PhD student in the laboratory of Stephen J. Doxsey, PhD, professor of molecular medicine: Related to Protein Kinase C Neurotensin and Mechanism of Inhibition by Flavonoids as Related to Protein Kinase C, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one year, $328,556; recommended for four more years, $1.1 million.

Marc R. Freeman, PhD, assistant professor of neurobiology: The Draper Signaling Pathway in Drosophila Glial Immune Functions, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, $365,063; recommended for four more years, $1.5 million.

Reid Gilmore, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: Protein Translocation Across the Endoplasmic Reticulum, National Institute of General Medical Studies, one year, $324,500; recommended for three more years, $975,000.

Edward L. Greens, MD, PhD, professor of pediatrics: A Novel Orally Administered Macrophage Delivered Gene Therapy for Gaucher Disease, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, $328,556; recommended for four more years, $1.1 million.

Kendall L. Knight, PhD, associate professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology, Biocenter TJH, National Center for Research Resources, one year, $320,000.

Alonso H. Russ, PhD, professor of biochemistry & molecular pharmacology: EGFR/ERK and Pten Loss Transform Neural Precursor Cells, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, one year, $365,063; recommended for three more years, $1.1 million.

William Schwartz, MD, professor of neurology: Endogenous Neural Precursor Cells and Metylation During Pregnancy, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, one year, $44,000.

William E. Theurkauf, PhD, professor of molecular medicine: Mitotic Response to DNA Damage, National Institute of General Medicine, one year, $338,652; recommended for three more years, $1.2 million.

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