Making the case for an interdisciplinary-focused curriculum
A life-changing operation

In November, pediatric surgeons at Children’s Hospital of Richmond at Virginia Commonwealth University successfully separated conjoined twin girls, giving them the opportunity to lead independent lives. Maria and Teresa Tapia, natives of the Dominican Republic, were joined at the lower chest and abdomen and shared a liver and parts of other organs. In the first surgery of its kind at the hospital, David Lanning, M.D., Ph.D. (M.D. ’95/M; Ph.D. ’00/M; H.S. ’02/M), associate professor in the VCU Department of Surgery and surgeon-in-chief at CHoR, led a team of 45 physicians and pediatric subspecialists in the complex, 20-hour separation procedure, which took months to plan. The toddlers experienced an “excellent” recovery and returned home to the Dominican Republic in December.
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ABOUT SCARAB
In February 1952, the MCV alumni magazine was resurrected as The Scarab. The name was chosen because the roots of the healing arts can be traced to Imhotep, the Egyptian, and the origins of MCV stem from the Egyptian Building. Ancient dwellers of the Valley of the Nile viewed the scarab as a symbol of resurrection, fertility and immortality. Today, the scarab’s image can be found in the tile work of the Egyptian Building’s lobby.
Dear alumni and friends,

It is an honor to serve as president of the MCV Alumni Association of VCU. Our board is working closer than ever before with the VCU Alumni Association’s board to strategically align the alumni relations functions with Virginia Commonwealth University's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction. We hope that all alumni will become familiar with this plan and will discover ways in which you can remain engaged with the university. You can read the plan online at www.future.vcu.edu.

In the fall, I had the pleasure of helping to recognize and applaud the accomplishments of 11 university Alumni Stars. These accomplished graduates represent the "best of the best." Read about these distinguished alumni on Page 20, and learn about past Alumni Stars on our website at www.vcu-mcvalumni.org/news/alumnistars.html.

We have recently introduced an online mentoring program for our students to gain valuable advice from alumni practicing in fields of particular interest to them. This online program also provides a way for our alumni to give back to the university by sharing their knowledge with current students. Learn more about this mentoring program and other mentoring programs, such as the VCU Nursing Student-Alumni Connector Program, at www.vcu-mcvalumni.org/serve/mentor.html.

There are so many ways you can participate in the university's Quest for Distinction. We look forward to you joining us on this journey.

Sincerely,

Paula B. Saxby, Ph.D. (M.S. ’85/N; Ph.D. ’92/N)
President
MCV Alumni Association of VCU

Officers of the MCV Alumni Association of VCU

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Janica Harrison (Ph.D. ’09/M)
Diana McKinney (Ph.D. ’00/M)

DENTISTRY
Renita W. Randolph (D.D.S. ’91/D)
Kit Tucker Sullivan (D.D.S. ’83/D)
Tammy K. Swecker (B.S. ’93/D; M.Ed. ’05/E)
J. Neil Turnage (D.D.S. ’97/D)

MEDICINE
Clifford Deal III (M.S. ’95/M; M.D. ’00/M)
Robert Kanich (M.D. ’62/M)
Barry V. Kirkpatrick (M.D. ’66/M)
Melissa Byrne Nelson (M.D. ’98/M)

NURSING
Ursula Butts (B.S. ’95/N; M.S.H.A. ’97/AHP)
Kristin Filler (B.S. ’09/N)
Jim Jenkins (B.S. ’07/N)
Trula Minton (B.S. ’79/N; M.S. ’88/N)

PHARMACY
Joseph E. Hopper (B.S. ’89/P)
Tana Kaer (Pharm.D. ’04/P)
Amy L. Rudenko (Pharm.D. ’98/P)
J. Tyler Stevens (Pharm.D. ’06/P)
LEADERSHIP

Presidential inauguration

In front of a packed Siegel Center audience that included Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, federal Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, faculty, staff, students, alumni and visitors, Virginia Commonwealth University Rector Thomas G. Snead Jr. (B.S. ’76/B) and Beverly J. Warren, Ed.D., Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs, presented the presidential medallion to Michael Rao, Ph.D., installing Rao as VCU’s fifth president on Oct. 14, 2011.

While the inauguration made Rao’s presidential appointment official, his two years on campus following his nine-year tenure as president of Central Michigan University have already left an indelible impression at VCU, sparking what McDonnell could describe only as infectious enthusiasm.

In addressing the crowd, Rao demonstrated that spirit in responding to Duncan’s challenge to build on VCU’s status as one of the nation’s leading urban research universities.

“We will find the answers our state, our nation and the world so desperately need,” Rao said at the ceremony. “It won’t be about lofty abstractions. It will be about the immediate and intense needs of people.”

Already, Rao has made his mark in those areas, launching in 2011 the university’s new strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, which emphasizes academic excellence, research that enhances quality of life and contributions to the economic and cultural vitality of the community. Similarly, Rao has guided VCU and the VCU Health System to top designations by the Carnegie Foundation as well as U.S. News & World Report.

But, he said, the work to be done in distinguishing VCU among its few peers is only just beginning. With a foothold in VCU’s rich history as inspiration, Rao pointed to the future with a simple declaration — “We will be exceptional.”

Top photo: President Rao’s inauguration ceremony
Above: Monica (left), Michael (right) and Miguel Rao with keynote speaker Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education
Leadership
National support for veterans
First lady Michelle Obama visited VCU Jan. 11 to announce an initiative of the country’s top medical colleges and universities to create a new generation of doctors, medical schools and research facilities to ensure that servicemen and servicewomen receive the medical care they deserve.

The VCU School of Medicine was among 101 members of the Association of American Medical Colleges that signed a pledge to support Joining Forces, a comprehensive national initiative to mobilize all sectors of society to give service members and their families opportunities and support, specifically in the areas of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

The White House selected VCU to host the announcement because it is a national leader in TBI research and a strong partner with the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center. VCU’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation faculty members have served in physician leadership and clinical positions at the Richmond VAMC for more than 30 years. In addition, VCU’s leadership in rehabilitative science was part of the reason it was awarded a $20 million Clinical and Translational Science Award from the National Institutes of Health in 2010 to become part of a nationwide consortium of research institutions working to turn laboratory discoveries into treatments for patients.

FACILITIES
Baird Vascular Institute
The name of one of the nation’s pioneering cardiologists, Charles L. Baird Jr., M.D., lives on through VCU Medical Center’s Baird Vascular Institute, which opened to the public in October.

The institute, located in Richmond’s near West End, provides a multidisciplinary approach to vascular disease and other conditions by offering diagnosis and treatment of everything from aortic aneurysms and vertebral body compression fractures to placement of catheters and an array of cosmetic procedures. Fittingly, Jane B. Baird Hyde bequeathed the building and land in memory of her late husband, who passed away in 2008.

The space where Baird performed such groundbreaking work as the first cardiac catheterization in an outpatient setting will continue to be the site of future breakthroughs in vascular research and treatment.

In addition to patient care, the Baird Vascular Institute will be dedicated to patient and community education through the creation of a community room on the second floor, which offers a location for health lectures and other outreach efforts.

COMMUNITY
Health care for the homeless
Students and faculty members in VCU’s schools of Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy spent the Thursday before Thanksgiving helping more than 600 people at the Richmond Convention Center through a partnership with Homeward, a Richmond homeless services organization.

The event, Project Homeless Connect, featured more than 40 area service providers offering health care, employment and housing services, with dental school students providing dental hygiene advice, extracting teeth and taking X-rays, and nursing and pharmacy students analyzing patients and recommending treatments.

For someone experiencing homelessness, organizers and student volunteers say, access to routine dental and medical services can help uncover conditions and treat problems that might otherwise go unattended, while also allowing students real-world collaborative care experiences and opportunities to give back to their community.

LEADERSHIP
Trauma society headquarters
The Panamerican Trauma Society — the lead organization for the advancement of trauma care systems in the Americas — has found a new home at the VCU Medical Center. Hosted by the Department of Surgery’s Division of Trauma, Critical Care and Emergency Surgery, the society will continue to seek to improve trauma systems through educating health care personnel and emphasizing injury and violence prevention.

Rao Ivatury, M.D., professor in the Department of Surgery, and Michel Aboutanos, M.D., associate professor of surgery, serve as executive director and secretary general of the society, respectively, spearheading educational conferences, training courses, peer-reviewed publications and advocacy efforts at the local and national levels.

Along with the transition of the headquarters from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in Pennsylvania, the Panamerican Journal of Trauma will be under the leadership of Ivatury, who was voted editor-in-chief of the publication.

Michelle Obama at VCU
**RESEARCH**

### Potential treatment for preeclampsia

Recent findings by VCU School of Medicine researchers supported by grants from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute could lead to novel avenues of treatment for pregnant women with preeclampsia — a leading cause of not only premature delivery but also sickness and death of the mother and baby.

Researchers discovered that an infiltration of white blood cells into an expectant mother’s blood vessels could be responsible for the high blood pressure observed in women with preeclampsia. These white blood cells, their products and cellular effects make the mother’s blood vessels dysfunctional and more reactive to hormones that increase blood pressure, researchers contend.

Until now, the only treatment for preeclampsia was delivery of the baby, but researchers say their findings could lead to clinical studies for potential treatments, such as monoclonal antibodies that could prevent the infiltration of white blood cells.

### Genetic link in neuro disorders

VCU School of Medicine researchers have identified a gene that could play a role in causing neurodevelopmental disorders.

The findings, researchers contend, have the potential to alter the way laboratories assess the DNA of individuals being evaluated for neurodevelopmental disorders to include a more careful consideration of how the loss of just an extremely small piece of genetic material can result in a mutation.

The project revealed that alterations to the MBD5 gene, which regulates the expression of other genes and is responsible for the core clinical features in individuals with intellectual disability, epilepsy and autism spectrum disorder, could be sufficient to cause neurodevelopmental disorders. Depending on the type of mutation, researchers say it’s possible the severity of a particular disorder could be predicted and interventions started early.

This work, led by VCU and involving researchers from more than 20 institutions worldwide, was supported by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, the Developmental Genome Academy, China’s National Basic Research Program on Population and Health, the Science and Technology Council of Shanghai, the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative and the National Institutes of Health.

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**ACCOLADES**

### #49 The VCU Medical Center earned a No. 49 ranking in nephrology in U.S. News & World Report’s 2011-12 Best Hospitals rankings making it the only hospital in Richmond whose specialties were ranked by the magazine. Specifically, the medical center was noted for excellence in cancer treatment, heart and heart surgery programs, kidney disease programs and physical rehabilitation.

### 7 TIMES

The VCU Health System earned a Consumer’s Choice Award for the seventh time. The National Research Corp. presented the award after a nationwide survey of hospital consumers’ perceptions of the local health care facilities they use. Participants rated the facilities on a variety of factors, including overall quality of patient care, quality of doctors and nurses and overall image and reputation.

### 40 UNDER 40

Seven nurses from VCU and the VCU Health System were chosen for the first Virginia Nurses Foundation’s 40 Under 40 Awards, which recognize registered nurses in Virginia younger than 40 for their leadership, innovation and research, practice, advocacy, and community engagement.

The selected VCU registered nurses were Rocquel Crawley, director of ambulatory nursing; Deepa Krup, dialysis nurse clinician and newly appointed risk manager; Alison Montpetit, Ph.D., critical care clinician and associate professor in the VCU School of Nursing; Angela Starkweather, Ph.D., researcher and associate professor in the VCU School of Nursing; Chelsea Savage, risk manager; and Kevin Shimp, newly appointed nurse manager for acute care surgery. Also selected was acute care nurse practitioner Annie Medina. Joyy Intal, nurse manager, and Karin Emery, nurse clinician, received honorable mentions.

### 100 BEST

The VCU Health System was named one of the 2011 Working Mother 100 Best Companies by Working Mother Magazine, which recognizes VCU for meeting the needs of working mothers through its on-site child care facility and its flexibility in giving employees the power to create their own weekday, workplace and even their own flexible career path.

Nancy Langston, Ph.D., R.N., FAAN, dean of the VCU School of Nursing, received the Nancy Vance Award, the Virginia Nurses Association’s highest honor for nursing excellence. The award is meant to inspire nurses to the same leadership and selfless service that Vance practiced throughout her life. Under Langston’s leadership, the school has become one of the top nursing schools in the U.S. for National Institutes of Health-funded research, a leading graduate school for nursing education and a trailblazer in community outreach.

Kenneth Kendler, M.D., professor of psychiatry and human and molecular genetics in the VCU School of Medicine, received the 2011 ISPG Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society of Psychiatric Genetics. The award honors a scientist who has made a major contribution to the advancement of the field of psychiatric genetics. Kendler is internationally recognized for his research in the genetics of psychiatric and substance-use disorders. Also in 2011, he received the Jean Delay Prize from the World Psychiatric Association for his work in building bridges between the biological, psychological and social aspects of psychiatry, and more recently he was named one of Virginia’s Outstanding Scientists of 2012.

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**FACILITIES**

### New ENT clinic

The VCU Medical Center has opened a new state-of-the-art ear, nose and throat clinic in Colonial Heights, just south of Richmond, offering a full range of medical and surgical services for head and neck disorders and diseases for patients of all ages.

Having full-time specialists in the community will save patients the time and trouble of traveling to downtown Richmond for ENT services, officials say. Along with comprehensive care for adult and pediatric otolaryngology issues like sinonasal disorders, hearing loss and chronic ear disease, obstructive sleep apnea, and masses of the thyroid, head and neck, VCU hopes to add allergy testing and treatment to the clinic’s range of services.

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**RESEARCH**

Scientists of 2012.

### 2011 ISPG Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement Award

Kenneth Kendler, M.D., professor of psychiatry and human and molecular genetics in the VCU School of Medicine, received the 2011 ISPG Ming Tsuang Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society of Psychiatric Genetics. The award honors a scientist who has made a major contribution to the advancement of the field of psychiatric genetics. Kendler is internationally recognized for his research in the genetics of psychiatric and substance-use disorders. Also in 2011, he received the Jean Delay Prize from the World Psychiatric Association for his work in building bridges between the biological, psychological and social aspects of psychiatry, and more recently he was named one of Virginia’s Outstanding Scientists of 2012.
Naming the MCV Foundation in your will or trust is an easy way to leave a legacy on the MCV Campus of Virginia Commonwealth University. A bequest does not affect your current cash flow or assets, and it is easy to revise if your circumstances change. It may also save you estate taxes later. Best of all, you have the satisfaction that goes with leaving a legacy that will benefit you and future generations of students and faculty.

Here is some sample bequest language:

I give (____dollars OR _____ percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate) to the MCV Foundation, located in Richmond, VA, to be used for its general unrestricted purposes (OR state a specific purpose).

*For illustrative purposes only. Consult your attorney.

Talk with your attorney today. You can give a specific dollar amount, a particular asset, or a percentage of your estate after distributions and costs. And, be sure to let us know when you have completed your plan. We want to thank you for your generosity and include you in the MCV Society, which recognizes donors who have made planned gifts to the MCV Campus through bequests, charitable remainder trusts, lead trusts, retirement plan assets, life insurance, and charitable gift annuities.

Of course, if you have already included the MCV Foundation in your plans in some way, please let us know. We want to make sure your future gift will be designated exactly as you intend.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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VISIT US ONLINE
WWW.LEGACY.VG/MCVFOUNDATION
Pipeline programs show promise in preparing students for health care careers

By Michael Rao, Ph.D., President, VCU and VCU Health System

Gathered in Davos, Switzerland, in January for the 42nd World Economic Forum, some of the most acclaimed business, cultural and political leaders on earth delivered a single, familiar four-letter word by the close of business: jobs.

“Jobs should be our No. 1 priority,” declared Vikram Pandit, CEO of Citi. “Ultimately it is about growth. Nothing creates jobs better than growth.”

True enough. But growth alone will not suffice unless we put the systems in place that get aspiring students prepared for the right jobs when they emerge.

On that score, the Virginia Commonwealth University Health Sciences and Health Careers Pipeline, also called the VCU Pipeline, shows great promise, providing unique and interesting learning opportunities for students from elementary school all the way through the postbaccalaureate level.

Pipeline programs work just as the term suggests and ours began in 2005 as a project of the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute. Basically, we encourage students from highly diverse backgrounds into the flow early, moving in a specific direction, providing experiences designed to intrigue, challenge and inspire them with the potential of a career in the health sciences.

Take, for instance, Jump Rope to Stethoscope, a community outreach program offered through the Office of Workforce Development at the VCU Medical Center. Children from kindergarten through grade 12 are introduced to the health care field through a wide variety of experiences, including nursing camps, school career days, hospital tours and health care clubs.

With the “jump rope” program we also offer courses at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School and partner with the Forensic Nurse Examiners Team, an organization that conducts outreach programs on trauma prevention and safety at high schools in Central Virginia.

This effort could help address a nursing shortage in America that is expected to intensify as baby boomers age and their need for health care grows. Conversely, By getting students interested in what nurses do and how to become one, we may steer them toward an employment demand that we can see coming.

The VCU Acceleration program is another good vehicle for offering college students valuable learning experiences. Once accepted, students enter the four-week Summer Health Sciences program that exposes them to the math and science curriculum of the health sciences.

With VCU Acceleration, freshman students reside in a learning-living residence, receive a stipend while participating, take specific courses and, most importantly, participate in internships in various clinical health service provider settings. Each participant must commit to no less than 50 hours of volunteer work. The MCV Alumni Association of VCU also provides two books and supplies scholarships for Acceleration students once they have been accepted into an MCV Campus program.

Pipeline programs like these fulfill a VCU ideal by steering us in a direction that we must take as an institution. Just as a pipe connects a source with a destination, we want VCU to effectively link students with more than the theoretical basis for how the world works. We want students to see, feel and contribute to the real thing — meaning, in this case, the real work of caring, curing people and discovering new health remedies.

In turn, that requires a commitment on our part to designing multidisciplinary programs that, likewise, reflect the world as it actually functions.

While the VCU Pipeline is relatively new, many good things are happening for growing numbers of young people. From 2007 to 2011, we have increased the number of programs from 14 to 21 and grown the number of participants to 1,285.

There is a website; take a look at it. I have only described a small portion of what we are doing with the VCU Pipeline, so you can discover all the rest and many plans for the future at www.dhsd.vcu.edu.

During the closing session at Davos, Yasuchika Hasegawa, president and CEO of Takeda Pharmaceutical, said this about jobs: “We should not just be talking; we should be implementing. We are committed to improving the state of the world. We are going to do it.”

Right. And VCU will help lead the way.

-
Savoring life’s experiences

While completing his four-year oncology training at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, Brian Dorsk, M.D. (M.D. ’68/M; H.S. ’69/M), became a serious foodie and oenophile. On his Saturdays off, he would visit chefs in their kitchens and watch them work. Dorsk visited the Fulton Street Fish Market and Hudson Street meat market to witness their wholesale operations. And he frequented numerous restaurants, after which he’d get caught perusing the menu of the establishment next door.

“People would say, ‘Brian how can you do that? We just had a big meal.’ I’d say, ‘I want to know where I’m going to eat next.’”

A serious cook always willing to learn from his mistakes, Dorsk served as chef whenever he and his wife entertained. He says some friends couldn’t understand why he’d want to spend a rare day off preparing a large meal.

“I enjoy it,” he says. “It’s therapy for me.”

Since retiring from his practice in Portland, Maine, in 1998, Dorsk now shares his love of food and wine with others. He has written articles about wine for the International Sommelier Guild, Port City Life and the Quarterly Review of Wine. Dorsk has taught wine courses in Cape Elizabeth, where he now resides, and at Southern Maine Community College. And a friend who owned a local restaurant occasionally let him cook there.

“It has generated friends who share their interests in cooking and good food and wine,” he says of his culinary pursuits.

His inherent curiosity remains. While in Maine, Dorsk has sailed on fishing and lobster boats to learn about those industries.

“Maybe it has to do with the education of a physician,” he says of his inquisitiveness. “We’re always taught to understand how things work. I’ve been lucky enough to learn about a lot of these things. It doesn’t make me an expert at any of them, but I’ve had a great time doing it.”

Keeping history alive

Both positions in the nursing career of Corinne Dorsey (Diploma ’54/ N; B.S. ’65/N) brought her great fulfillment. Her first job as an instructor of practical nursing in Norfolk, Va., allowed her to engage in her love of teaching — for 24 years.

“I got a great deal of self-satisfaction by helping students to be the best nurses they could be,” she says. “I really did adore what I did. I loved every minute of it.”

Dorsey’s second position, executive director for the Virginia Board of Nursing, gave her the opportunity “to continue to be of service to others, to work effectively through public protection,” she says.

After retiring from the board in 1995, Dorsey admits she did not have much planned beyond the first two months.

“I’m not sure that was all bad because things sort of fell into place,” she says.


The Quinton, Va., resident continues writing, serving as her family’s unofficial historian. She gathers stories and other information from various family members to create a permanent historical record.

Dorsey also participates in the Nursing Connector Program set up by the School of Nursing and the alumni association. The program connects alumni with sophomore students to share experiences as well as to offer support and advice.

“I give a lot of thought and spend a lot of time in writing emails to the students,” Dorsey says. “I think it’s important.”

Dorsey, who stays busy combining all of her interests — support of the School of Nursing, history and her family — calls this phase of her life “a wonderful experience.”

By Erin Egan
Carving out a niche
The job of pharmacist demands precision. Al Schalow Jr. (B.S. '61/P), a practicing pharmacist for 40 years, knows that all too well. “If you don’t go into pharmacy as a perfectionist, you come out one,” he says. “You have to get everything right.”

Since retiring 10 years ago, Schalow spends much of his time engaged in another meticulous, detail-oriented activity: woodcarving. His father, a carpenter, introduced him to the art as a 10-year-old, betting him $5 that he couldn’t carve a wooden link for a chain. Schalow successfully finished the link and was instantly hooked. “He never paid me the $5,” he says of his father, “but it was well worth the price to get started on the carving.”

That first project sits in Schalow’s Midlothian, Va., home along with hundreds of others he’s created over the years. A Schalow family tradition includes creating hand-carved Christmas tree ornaments. Each family member receives one representative of a milestone that occurred the previous year. One Christmas, Schalow didn’t carve the usual ornaments. “I thought maybe they’d run their course,” he says. The family outcry convinced him otherwise and the tradition continues.

Schalow also carves with wood from a pecan tree that formerly stood at one of Patrick Henry’s homes. When the tree died in 1976, Schalow acquired several big pieces. From those hunks of wood, he has made several statues of Henry and numerous gavels for the Virginia Pharmacists Association, for various parliamentarians, judges and lawyers across the U.S., as well as for governors of Virginia.

As a pharmacist, Schalow’s pockets were often stuffed with notes filled with ideas for projects he wanted to complete when he had the time. Now that he does, “it has been really wonderful to add to the things I’ve wanted to do all my life and have the freedom to do that,” he says.

Circling back home
Working as an occupational therapist after World War II, Jane Trevvett Winston Ford (Cert. '46/AHP) worked to make life easier for the men returning to the U.S. with devastating injuries. At Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, she made gadgets for amputees and paraplegics to help them fasten a button, pull up a zipper and smoke a cigarette.

“When they came to the OT shop and couldn’t do certain things, we could figure out a way for them to do it,” she says.

Ford left the occupational therapy field after her son was born and her family moved to Florida. She then began a 21-year teaching career in art. A portrait painter since the age of 19, Ford “always liked doing creative things,” she says, “and I’m still doing them.”

Back in her hometown of Richmond, Va., Ford continues to paint but also lends her talents to the Manor Players, the acting group at Lakewood Manor retirement community. She creates the sets, posters, banners and signs for all the group’s productions.

Ford created sets for a Thanksgiving play featuring 10 students from Collegiate School and three Manor Players’ actors. For the set, she made a 25-pound turkey and a turkey carcass. “We had a lot of fun,” she says.

Ford also supports the School of Allied Health Professions’ Department of Occupational Therapy by assisting in documenting the history of occupational therapy. She combs through and identifies old photographs. She also visits the school to speak to students in the graduate program.

“The students are facing the same kind of patients I dealt with, all the wounded from the current wars,” she says. “They are very attentive. It’s been fun to talk to them.”

Discovering a new talent
John Hodge, D.D.S. (D.D.S. ’68/D), delighted in treating patients in his rural dentistry practice in Mineral, Va., for 26 years. Often, he served as the only full-time dentist for area residents.

Not everyone understood his penchant for small-town life in and out of practice. Hodge says people often asked him what in the world he did way out in the country. “I’d say, ‘I don’t ever have time to worry about what I do,’” he says. “I’m so busy doing it.”

After retiring from his dental practice in 1998, Hodge began to devote more time to competitive trap shooting, a sport he had enjoyed as a stress-relieving hobby during his career. “When you’re out on the range and you’re shooting at clay targets, you just think about that,” he says. “It’s a way to clear your mind.”

With more hours spent pursuing his new avocation, Hodge says he fell in love with the sport. He traveled to tournaments and competitions across the country. And he began winning, bringing home trophy after trophy. “I’ve been privileged to do so well beyond my expectations,” he says.

His most memorable day came in 2007 when he won the Beretta DT10 shoot-off at the National Trap Shooting Championship in Sparta, Ill. “I’ve been very fortunate,” he says. “Trap shooting has opened up venues for me, and I hope to continue to do it for a while.”

A current member of the Virginia State Trap Team and an NRA-certified instructor for shotgun, Hodge’s winter plans included traveling south for some events with the hopes of competing in the Southern Grand Championship in March.

“It’s beyond belief that I can do this because I’m an ordinary guy and not a professional,” he says. “But it is wonderful.”

— Erin Egan is a contributing writer for Scarab.
For as long as she can remember, **Roxana Kim Anvari-Tehrani** (B.S. ’11/En) wanted to join a health care profession, having watched her father undergo and recover from multiple back surgeries.

While an undergraduate at Virginia Commonwealth University, she realized her true passion lay in dentistry. “At first, I wanted to become a physician,” says Anvari-Tehrani, who graduated from VCU with a degree in biomedical engineering in May 2011. “While I was in college, I realized that I needed an artistic outlet as well. I was able to discover how dentistry merges engineering, science and art.”

Both Anvari-Tehrani and VCU played active roles in the development of her career goals. After receiving an informational pamphlet on VCU Acceleration in the mail as a high-schooler, the Northern Virginia native signed up for the program, which prepares incoming freshmen for the rigors of the undergraduate pre-health sciences curriculum, while simultaneously giving them an inside look at the health professions. Having settled on a future in dentistry as a junior at VCU, Anvari-Tehrani then participated in RAMpS immediately after graduation. A five-week intensive summer program, RAMpS, or Reaching Academic Milestones through participation and Service, teaches pre-dental students how to succeed in dental school.

Now working as a programmer for the Advanced Orthopaedic Center in Richmond, Anvari-Tehrani volunteers twice a week for VCU associate professor Janina P. Lewis, Ph.D., in her lab at the VCU Philips Institute of Oral and Craniofacial Molecular Biology. She recently learned that she was accepted to attend the VCU School of Dentistry.

Anvari-Tehrani serves as a picture-perfect representative of the VCU Pipeline, a comprehensive cradle-to-career program model focused on increasing awareness of health careers in individuals from underserved populations. Coordinated by the VCU Division for Health Sciences Diversity, the pipeline encompasses 21 different programs, including VCU Acceleration and RAMpS, which will soon expand into a larger, interdisciplinary model. The programs target a wide range of students, from elementary schoolchildren to those preparing to apply to professional school. Ideally, once students enter the pipeline, they continue through the next levels of programming until they apply to and enroll at one of VCU’s five health sciences schools — Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. »
A pipeline program student works with a faculty member on a research project.
“The overarching goal is to increase applications to our health professions schools and to health professions schools in general,” says Kevin Harris, executive director for health sciences academic and diversity affairs and special assistant to the provost for diversity. “The emphasis is on ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds are exposed to health profession careers.”

The majority of programs, many of which are funded by VCU’s health sciences schools, are offered at no cost to participants. At their best, they provide VCU’s health sciences schools with bright, dedicated and prepared students from diverse backgrounds. For students such as Anvari-Tehrani, they offer support and resources in the quest for and attainment of a career goal.

“I think both pipeline programs really had a positive impact on me,” Anvari-Tehrani says. “One helped me discover my career goal; the other helped confirm it and gave me the confidence that I could reach it. It’s really nice to have that kind of support.”

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The VCU Pipeline starts early, reaching grade-school students in public schools in Richmond and the surrounding counties. While each program has its own distinct goals and benefits, all of them aim to educate and excite students about careers in the health sciences, to provide resources to strengthen their academic skills in math, science and verbal and written communication, and to ensure they make informed decisions while pursuing the health career of their choice.

On VCU’s Monroe Park Campus, S.E.E.D. (Science. Exercise. Explore. Develop.) exposes 40 rising fourth- through sixth-grade students to all aspects of the health and medical fields, including medicine, dentistry, occupational therapy, nursing, physical therapy, pharmacy and life sciences. The four-week, full-day summer program, sponsored by the Mary and Frances Youth Center (part of the Division of Community Engagement), the Division for Health Sciences Diversity, the School of Medicine and VCU Life Sciences, includes multiple field trips to the VCU Medical Center, where students tour the facilities, listen to speakers and take part in hands-on activities. Participants also engage in weekly sports activities and receive one-on-one tutoring in math and reading.

“Part of our mission is future orientation, exposing them to the idea of going to college, how they start planning for that now,” says Tina Carter, director of the Mary and Frances Youth Center, which runs S.E.E.D. “We want to show them that college is attainable and there’s a variety of careers out there for them.”

BROADENING HORIZONS

Pipeline programs targeting high school students assist in the college and career decision process by ensuring that participants are aware of the many career options available to them, as well as what it takes to succeed in college. VCU’s Office of Pre-health Sciences Advising and the Division for Health Sciences Diversity co-sponsor a 15-week Health Careers Exploration course for sophomores at Chesterfield County’s Cosby High School Health Science Specialty Center. The course is divided into units devoted to allied health professions, dentistry and dental hygiene, pharmacy, medicine, nursing, and other professions. During each unit, students learn about the different specialties within each field from VCU faculty members, visit campus for tours and hands-on labs and partner with student mentors to learn more about the college experience.

“The purpose of the course is to create a liaison with a mentor and the VCU faculty to give students the upper hand on what college life and expectations are going to be for them” says Cassie Rogers, the Health Science Specialty Center coordinator at Cosby. “They get a dose of reality on the work, the challenges, the competition, and it definitely opens their eyes to all of the facilities and opportunities that VCU has to offer.”

Program-specific summer camps offered by the School of Dentistry and the Department of Physical Therapy aim to get students thinking about how to gain acceptance to and succeed in a professional health sciences school before they even get to college. The rigorous, two-week Dental Careers Exploration summer program exposes high school students to different specialties and aspects of dentistry through study skills activities, reading discussions, research, hands-on workshops and public speaking exercises. Students also take reading tests, which are analyzed and explained to them by faculty members.

“Students walk away saying, ‘I’m better prepared to know what I need to do to get to college,’” says Carolyn L. Booker, Ph.D., associate dean for student and administrative faculty affairs in the School of Dentistry. “They understand why they need to take science classes early, get better grades early, start shadowing now. And they have a better picture of how to get connected with the right people to stay on track once they get here.”
CLOSING IN ON A GOAL
To ensure that students stay focused once they reach VCU, the university launched in 2005 VCU Acceleration for first-year students interested in the health sciences. Freshman participants take part in a four-week summer program that eases the transition to college by offering pre-college-level courses taught by VCU faculty members and opportunities for internships on the MCV Campus. Once school starts, the students join a living-learning community in Brandt Hall on the Monroe Park Campus, where they live, take classes and study together.

“The greatest asset of the program is the social development that you see happening within the group,” says Seth Leibowitz, Ed.D., director of pre-health advising for VCU’s University College. “It’s very powerful to have them live together. They really bond as a unit to help each other out, monitoring each other and encouraging each other.”

Students are advised to investigate different health science areas in the hopes of narrowing down their career focus.

“The program really pushed us to explore different career paths and to try and find the right one for us,” Anvari-Tehrani says. “My first year, I shadowed doctors of different specialties, worked as a pharmacy technician, volunteered in different research labs and explored anything related to health care as much as possible.”

Recognizing that students might still need an extra push once they decide on a career, VCU also offers pipeline programs for upper-level undergraduates or recent graduates who are preparing to apply to professional school. The VCU School of Medicine hosts the Academic and Clinical Skills Symposium every fall, giving students beneficial information and hands-on demonstrations so they can become competitive medical school applicants.

MOVING FORWARD
After four highly successful years of the VCU School of Dentistry’s summer RAMpS program, the model is being expanded to incorporate tracks in medicine, pharmacy and physical therapy. Like RAMpS, the new six-week Summer Academic Enrichment Program, launching this summer, will offer a heavy focus on academic enrichment activities, as well as group-based and one-on-one sessions with representatives from the health professions admissions offices.

“One of the greatest strengths participants have seen in RAMpS is that they come away with a written evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses and where they would stand were they to go through the application process at that time,” says Erika Dumke, director of the Division for Health Sciences Diversity. “Few of the students applying to the professional health sciences program have that level of evaluation and that level of exposure to the admissions processes.”

SAEP will offer general biological science courses to all participants, then branch off into discipline-specific tracks for dentistry, medicine, pharmacy and physical therapy.

“We’re starting from the concept that these students could benefit from having an understanding of what the other disciplines do,” Harris says. “We’re one of the few universities that can bring those disciplines together in a way that’s truly integrative.”

“\[The overarching goal is to increase applications to our health professions schools and to health professions schools in general.\]”
– Kevin Harris, executive director of the Division for Health Sciences Diversity

KEEPING IT ALL TOGETHER
The Division for Health Sciences Diversity, established in 2009 by the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences as the central office for VCU Pipeline, tracks student and institutional success for the programs. So far, results are good. Sixty VCU Pipeline participants are current students in health sciences programs, 43 of them at VCU, including 14 in the School of Dentistry, 10 in the School of Nursing, 10 in the School of Allied Health Professions, five in the School of Pharmacy and four in the School of Medicine.

The division has centralized recruiting and application processing for 11 of the 21 pipeline programs, strategically relieving those programs of burdensome front-end tasks and making it possible to track students’ progression through the VCU Pipeline. While the centralized efforts have produced a marked difference in application numbers, particularly for RAMpS and Acceleration, Harris is most excited about the individuals the programs bring to VCU.

“The university is benefitting from these students,” Harris says. “Some have started organizations, we’ve had a number who have been ambassadors for the university, they run for student offices. These kids are not just taking from VCU; they’re depositing something back to VCU and leaving a legacy in a number of ways.”

– Katherine Schutt is a contributing writer for Scarab.
VCU infuses educational experience with an interdisciplinary focus

In recalling the fable of “The Blind Men and the Elephant,” an important insight into one of today’s primary challenges in health care services delivery emerges. Equating a team of health care professionals with six blind men arguing wildly, each unbending in his disparate account of the description of the elephant in question based solely on the one body part he’s touched, might be a tough sell. However, the underlying values of respect, teamwork and the sharing of vital information and observations in order to see fully the elephant — or patient, if you will — remain at the heart of the health care industry. »
“Interprofessional education and interdisciplinary care have been talked about traditionally as things we need to do,” says Alan Dow, M.D., (H.S. ’04/M; M.S.H.A. ’05/AHP), assistant professor and assistant dean of medical education in the Department of Internal Medicine at Virginia Commonwealth University. “If we get health care providers to work effectively in teams, we’re going to improve quality, make things safer and decrease costs. All of these things are even more true today than they were 40 years ago when the Institute of Medicine held its first conference on the subject.”

But that relatively simple idea of teamwork has met its share of logistical hiccups during those four decades, Dow contends, in part because of the way universities have approached education and the way students have developed professional specializations and identities.

Students train individually in their respective schools, focusing on their disciplines, and enter clinical experiences where, for example, nurses have their own “station” and physicians have their own “workroom.” Such a relatively small barrier can have larger and deeper-seated ramifications, as each provider develops his own snapshot of his role and of the patient, just as the blind men do with each small part of the elephant they touch. These lines of demarcation that exist between providers can hinder communication and understanding, making team-based health care not as effective as it could be, Dow says.

How can VCU train future providers to integrate into, and lead a health care system that promises to be more team-based and interactive? That’s exactly what Dow is trying to determine thanks to a two-year award from the Josiah H. Macy Jr. Foundation, which named him one of five medicine and nursing faculty members nationwide in its first class of Macy Faculty Scholars last summer. He says it starts with defining what it is the university wants students to learn and how educators want them to interact.

BUILDING A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM

Over the next two years, Dow, along with faculty members from the schools of Allied Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Social Work, will develop a comprehensive curriculum guided by four domains that students will complete before entering the clinical stages of their education.

The first domain deals with roles and responsibilities, ensuring that members of each discipline know and understand the fundamental building blocks of what other providers do. The second centers around the values and ethics of each discipline, while the third and fourth domains relay essential concepts and guiding principles for teamwork and communication strategies.

The curriculum will be primarily lesson-based, Dow says, and will deploy a variety of teaching methods, including lectures, panel discussions, casework, group assignments and simulations that span the different schools.

Of course, Dow admits, these efforts will be minimized if what students are taught in the classroom doesn’t jibe with what they see once they leave it.

“We want to take a new approach to how we think about work, how we think about processes of care, and then how we structure the care environments that we expose them to in order to incorporate the same principles,” Dow says. “We know that if we teach students something in the classroom, and then they go into the hospital and see behavior that’s counter to that, what dominates the way they view the world is what they see in that clinical experience. So this is really a partnership between the educational enterprise and the clinical enterprise.”

Once classroom concepts are married to clinical procedures, Dow says, the practice of how teams set goals, track outcomes and create environments that are professional and reinforce the value of each member’s contributions will become ingrained, vaulting VCU’s students and faculty members to the forefront of an industry searching for ways to improve care.

SPURRING EFFORTS THROUGH GERIATRICS

Perhaps in no other field is the emphasis on interdisciplinary care more focused than in geriatrics. With more than 70 million baby boomers set to turn 65, health systems are bracing for an influx of patients with a variety of needs that can be addressed only through a multitude of providers.

“[Older individuals] tend to move through multiple health care environments,” says Peter Boling, M.D. (H.S. ’84/M), professor, division chair and director of long-term care and geriatrics in the School of Medicine’s Department of Internal Medicine. “They get treated in the office, the hospital, nursing homes, as well as their own homes, and the people involved in that care tend to come from multiple disciplines.”

At this stage of life and in this complex care process, stronger communication and improved teamwork become imperative, Boling suggests. In that vein, thanks to a four-year, $1 million grant from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, matched by $500,000 from VCU, Boling and his team, which includes faculty members from the schools of Allied Health Professions, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Social Work and members of VCU’s Virginia Center on Aging in the School of Allied Health Professions, have implemented a four-year medical school curriculum to foster an interprofessional approach to geriatric care in each of VCU’s health sciences schools.

Boling and his team have implemented a four-year medical school curriculum to foster an interprofessional approach to geriatric care in each of VCU’s health sciences schools.

The first part of the curriculum exposes students to the unique needs of elderly patients through partnerships with Riverside Health System’s Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly and numerous assisted-living and chronic-care settings in Richmond where the geriatric program is involved in patient care. First- and second-year medical students visit elderly patients where they live, and they observe strong interdisciplinary models of care in those settings.

In addition to observing cooperative care, such visits can help address what VCoA Director Edward Ansello, Ph.D., describes as a shortage of general knowledge in geriatrics among today’s health care providers.
Ansello and his teams at the VCoA and the Virginia Geriatric Education Center (which is based at the VCoA) are working on a five-year, $2.1 million statewide interdisciplinary collaboration grant to bring practicing physicians and providers up to date on geriatric practices and principles through continuing education conferences and curriculum development. But, Ansello says, preparing the health care industry’s future providers to understand and treat the unique needs of elderly patients remains paramount.

Elderly patients create a greater need for interdisciplinary approaches, he and Boling suggest, not only because of the complicated and often chronic nature of their illnesses but also because of the higher degree of variability in life experience and environmental factors that influence care among the group.

“If you’re a clinician, you constantly have to be aware of the fact that, even if you have five elderly patients coming into your office presenting what seem like identical symptoms, you have five individuals with very different arrays of support systems, health care literacy, likelihood of adhering to a regimen you might prescribe and financial wherewithal … all of these things differentiate what happens next in the care process,” Ansello says.

Each provider who has experience with a patient sits in a position to offer unique insight into that person’s care that the other providers involved might not be able to see, and training each of these providers to understand the roles of their care-providing counterparts can reduce complications and enhance the overall effectiveness of care.

**ENHANCING COMMUNICATION REMAINS KEY**

Getting multiple prescribers and varied providers such as nurses, social workers and pharmacists to communicate with one another more effectively drives the second part of Boling’s Reynolds grant project, which tasks groups of 10 to 12 students from each of the schools to work together on a complex, virtual case of an elderly patient. Boling says they decided on the virtual case format to overcome the logistical challenges of getting 800 professional students into the same rooms for team-based care training.

Each member receives information typical for his discipline — he only gets to see his part of the elephant, so to speak — with the charge of communicating with the team and using one another’s knowledge to coordinate an effective care plan.

“We’re taking the patient for a long, downhill ride, and we’re giving students the whole menu of health care settings — outpatient, inpatient, post-acute, institutional care, home-based care [and] hospice,” Boling says. “They’ll really need to talk to each other about this case, and we’re going to ask them some really challenging questions. We will vary the questions’ content to enhance the value provided by the different knowledge and skills brought to the group by each of the professions. They’ll have to be astute to pick out what’s really important and talk to each other to figure out the best answers, and the team’s final score will depend on collaboration.”

To put the icing on the collaborative cake, while the team works on the case they will also be evaluating one another as team members. Boling says this not only can help improve the program (which is in its first semester of testing), but it also can help pinpoint where and how communications break down among the various group members, which might then effectively tie into the types of research Dow is conducting.

Boling is quick to point out, however, that while this virtual patient project focuses primarily on geriatric care, its application isn’t confined to elderly patients and could be used for any team-based patient-care initiative. After Boling and his team streamline the project, he hopes to make it available to other institutions and health systems looking to implement interdisciplinary programs.

It’s all part of the leadership role Dow and Boling believe VCU can play in fostering the growth of interprofessional collaboration.

“Health care is so complicated now, and [interdisciplinary care] is an important theme throughout the industry,” Boling says. “We’re trying to make sure it’s bedrock here at VCU, because we believe that this kind of approach is necessary for all of health care in the future, not just for certain subsets like geriatrics. As a group of health professions educators, we’re very much interested in preparing our graduates so that when they enter their fields, they’re more readily able to work together. That has historically been the case here at VCU, but we’re taking it to a more sophisticated and scientific level.”

— Andy Bates is a contributing writer for Scarab.
The World... 
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2012 and 2013 Travel Destinations

2012 Trips

May 1-8
Paris with optional Bordeaux extension

May 5-16
Mediterranean Treasures

May 12-20
England’s Cotswolds (Village Life Program)

May 22-31
Chianti and the Italian Riviera ACA

June 4-15
Changing Tides of History: Cruising the Baltic (featuring Gorbachev and Walesa – sold out in 2011)

June 4-17
Iberian Peninsula, North Africa and the Canary Islands

June 24-July 2
Along the Adriatic Sea (featuring Gen. Wesley Clark)

June 27-July 12
Discover Switzerland

July 20-28
Iceland (sold out in 2010 and 2011)

July 23-Aug. 5
British Isles Odyssey

Oct. 11-21
Radiant Reflections Cruise (Rome to Barcelona)

Oct. 15-26
Along the Rhine, Main and Mosel (River Life)

Oct. 23-31
Treasures of India and Nepal

Nov. 4-18
Legends of the Nile

Nov. 13-24

2013 Trips

Feb. 2-21
Asian Wonders Cruise (Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Hong Kong)

Feb. 12-22
Caribbean Discovery (Miami, Tortola, Antigua, Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Barts)

Feb. 24-March 14
Splendors Down Under (New Zealand and Australia)

Speak to your Travel Director for travel details and discount information on the website.

For more information, call (804) 828-3900
or visit www.vcu-mcvalumni.org/travel
Inaugural gifts establish new Rao scholarship fund

Catherine W. White, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’88/M), couldn’t make the trip from her home in Oregon to attend the Oct. 13 Inaugural Gala celebrating Virginia Commonwealth University President Michael Rao, Ph.D., but she was there in spirit.

Like many others, she made an honorary gift in support of the event, which celebrated Rao’s official inauguration as the university’s fifth president.

In total, ticket sales, table sponsorships and honorary gifts amounted to $143,650 for Opportunity VCU, which serves as an umbrella for all scholarship funds.

On Nov. 10, the Board of Visitors approved using a majority of those gifts and pledges to establish the new Michael Rao Inaugural Scholarship Fund.

White is thrilled with the way her gift will be used.

“I think education is so important,” White says. “I live near a casino, but I prefer to gamble on people.”

She was delighted to learn that the new Rao scholarships are renewable for four years, based on academic achievement.

White and her late husband, David Manning White, Ph.D., professor emeritus in the VCU School of Mass Communications, were longtime donors to the university, and she continues to support several initiatives on both campuses, including student scholarships. She has enjoyed the many letters of gratitude received from student scholarship recipients who benefited from her contributions.

“Catherine and David’s generosity supporting scholarships is a good example of how alumni continue to help deserving students,” says Tom Burke (B.S. ’79/E; M.P.A. ’95/H&S), associate vice president for university development and alumni relations and executive director of the VCU Foundation. “The Rao scholarships will enable the best and brightest to attend VCU and to dedicate a much larger portion of their time to their academic pursuits.”

The Rao Inaugural Scholarship Fund will provide merit-based financial assistance to new, incoming freshmen. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions will select recipients. Contributions to the fund, which can still be made, help create opportunities and hope for VCU’s brightest and most deserving students.

VCU Honors College student and Presidential Scholarship recipient Kunal Kapoor attended the Inaugural Gala and shared his gratitude for the support of scholarships in honor of Rao.

“From a student perspective, it is humbling to see this investment in VCU, but even more importantly, in the future of students and the future of our world,” Kapoor says. “The value of the scholarship transcends its materialistic value and, in turn, really does come to define a life. It has opened me up to the vast number of opportunities here at VCU. I cannot begin to imagine the vastness the ripple effect of donations to Opportunity VCU will have — affecting hundreds of future students who come with diverse backgrounds and life stories deserving of a chance to follow through with their passions.”

To make a gift to the Michael Rao Inaugural Scholarship Fund, use the envelope enclosed in this magazine, visit www.support.vcu.edu/RaoScholarship or contact Michael P. Andrews (M.S. ’05/E), director of annual giving strategy, at (804) 828-0236 or andrewsmp@vcu.edu.

— Nan Johnson is a writer in VCU’s Office of Development and Alumni Relations.
Tara Donovan
School of the Arts

Many artists relocate to New York to capitalize on the city’s never-ending energy and culture. A New York native, Donovan has soaked up a lifetime of benefits. Nowhere is this more evident than in the list of awards and recognitions her artwork garners. Donovan, who lives and works in Brooklyn, received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the School of the Arts in 1999. Over the course of her career as a sculptor, she has received 13 grants and awards, including the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship (often referred to as the “genius grant”) in 2008. The MacArthur Foundation described Donovan as “an inventive young sculptor whose installations bring wonder to the most common objects of everyday life.”

Edmond F. Bowden, Ph.D.
College of Humanities and Sciences

Bowden began his graduate studies with the intention of furthering his career in the chemical industry, but left with an infectious desire to educate. After completing his Ph.D. with the College of Humanities and Sciences in 1982, he began a career as a professor in the Department of Chemistry at North Carolina State University, where he is in his 27th year. His work focuses on the electrochemistry of proteins and enzymes as he collaborates with a group of researchers responsible for publishing approximately 50 journal articles, each receiving more than 60 citations. He is a member of the American Chemical Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Electrochemical Society and the Society of Electroanalytical Chemistry.

Glenn A. Davis
School of Business

By the age of 35, Davis already had plenty to be proud of: a wife, Angela, two children, Brandon and Courtney, and his own information technology consulting company, named accordingly, BranCore Technologies (for Brandon and Courtney). But that was just the beginning. Eleven years later, Davis’ company has a presence in seven states and his career is dotted with awards and recognitions, including the Top 100 Minority Business Enterprise Award, given to outstanding minority and women business owners, and the Lasting Impression Award, presented by the Virginia Minority Supplier Development Council. Prior to forming BranCore, he earned his Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Business in 1986, then served as an account manager, project manager and senior consultant for Broughton Systems.

To read more about these Alumni Stars, go online to www.vcu-mcvalumni.org.

Little can be more gratifying for any educational institution than watching its alumni flourish. Virginia Commonwealth University honors individuals making their mark on the world through personal and professional achievements. Honorees are identified through alumni committees and faculty recommendations universitywide, and the VCU and MCV Alumni Associations designate these individuals Alumni Stars.

Photograph Ellen Labenski, courtesy The Pace Gallery 2005
Dale C. Kalkofen, Ed.D.
School of Education
Kalkofen has spent the bulk of her career improving education. Her philosophy and approach are simple — to make educational work meaningful for the teacher and student alike. She has worked on a number of national school reform initiatives, including as a member of the Annenberg Institute’s task force for building “smart education systems,” or those that draw on partnerships among the school district, other city agencies, cultural institutions, community groups and businesses. She also served on the national advisory task force for vocational education through the U.S. Department of Education. Kalkofen completed her Master of Art Education degree with the School of the Arts in 1976.

Panelpha “Penny” L. Kyler, Sc.D., OTR/L
School of Allied Health Professions
Kyler earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Allied Health Professions in 1972. Since that time, her career has expanded beyond occupational therapy to also encompass public health and the study of genetics. Presently, she works for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in San Francisco, where she assists states receiving grants for the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in the area of maternal infant and early childhood evidence-based home visiting services. Previously, she oversaw grants and contracts focused on providing access to genetic education, resources and services. Her goal is to help people make informed health decisions by translating bench science into usable information.

Paul D. McWhinney
School of Social Work
McWhinney credits the eye-opening experience of relocating from a small town in rural Virginia to downtown Richmond for inspiring a lifetime of social work and social work reform. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 1974 and his Master of Social Work degree in 1979 from the School of Social Work and currently serves as deputy commissioner for programs with the Virginia Department of Social Services. McWhinney is perhaps best known for spearheading the Virginia Children’s Services System Transformation, an effort that made marked improvements to the state’s foster care system. His current efforts include the Strengthening Families Initiative, which focuses on the formation and maintenance of safe, stable and intact two-parent families.

Tadataka “Tachi” Yamada, M.D.
School of Medicine
Few medical careers rise to the level of making a global impact. Yamada’s is one of them. After serving as president of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Global Health Program, he now fulfills a lifelong ambition by making an impact on his home country while serving as executive vice president and a member of the board of directors for Takeda Pharmaceutical Company in Japan. Yamada previously served as chairman of research and development and as a member of the board of directors for GlaxoSmithKline, where he directed a research operation with 16,000 employees and an annual budget of $5 billion. Yamada completed his residency with the School of Medicine in 1974.

Debra E. Lyon, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN, School of Nursing
Lyon received three degrees from the School of Nursing — a Bachelor of Science in 1984, a Master of Science in 1993 and a doctoral degree in 1997 — as well as her nurse practitioner graduate certificate in 1996. Her research centers on innovative symptom management therapies for individuals with cancer, and her career has elicited such awards as the Exceptional Researcher Award from the A.D. Williams Foundation and the D. Jean Wood Scholarship Award from the Southern Nursing Research Society, both in 2010. Lyon now serves as professor and chair for the nursing school’s Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, where she was appointed the Collins-Teefy Distinguished Professor in June 2011.

Ronald L. Tankersley, D.D.S.
School of Dentistry
Tankersley believes that private practice should be centered on patient care, not production. He also believes part of being a dental professional includes involvement. For this reason, his career spans a long list of service within professional organizations, including his roles as American Dental Association president and chair of the Virginia section of the American College of Dentists. Tankersley earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery from the School of Dentistry in 1968 and serves as an adjunct faculty member for the school. In private practice since 1971, he previously served on the examination committee of the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery.

Jason T. Roe
School of Engineering
Roe completed his Bachelor of Science degree with the School of Engineering in 2000, around the same time that his wife-to-be, Erin Henretta Roe (B.S. ’00/En; M.B.A. ’04/B), finished her bachelor’s. The couple decided to make Richmond, Va., their home, which led to the start of a prosperous career for Roe. He has spent the past 11 years with Richmond-based ERNI Electronics, serving in a number of capacities, including as quality manager, production manager, operations manager, applications engineer, senior applications engineer and engineering manager. In January 2010, he was appointed president of the now $16 million distribution, sales, engineering and manufacturing organization.

Jonathan C. Roberts
School of Pharmacy
Roberts aspires to create a healthier country by improving locally based pharmacy services through national technology systems. His abilities reflect a career spanning from his experience as a staff pharmacist, through all areas of store and field management, to executive roles. Since earning his Bachelor of Science degree from the School of Pharmacy in 1979, the bulk of his 30-year career lies with CVS Caremark, where he currently serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer for the pharmacy benefit management unit in Woonsocket, R.I. As chief information officer, he led the development of a new system that helps deliver pharmaceutical care to more than 10 million customers nationwide.
The Nelsons: Four generations and counting

For each member of the Nelson family, the depth and breadth of their countless connections to Virginia Commonwealth University’s MCV Campus evoke vivid memories. C.M. Kinloch Nelson, M.D. (M.D. ’69/M), recalls a time when he was a faculty member in the Division of Urology (which he’d later chair from 1993 to 1997), for example, when one of his father’s patients from three decades earlier walked in needing treatment.

His father, Charles Morris Nelson, M.D. (H.S. ’37/M), completed his residency at the Medical College of Virginia in 1937 and served as a clinical professor of urology there for many years but died before his son became a student. The fact that he connected with his father through a patient they both treated is something C.M. Kinloch says he cherishes, but that level of family continuity is one that has persisted almost as long as the institution itself.

Turn back the pages over the past century and one is hard-pressed to find any lengthy stretch of time when a member of the Nelson family wasn’t roaming the hospital’s clinics and classrooms, either as student, resident or teacher, starting with John Garnett Nelson, M.D. (M.D. 1900/M), and continuing with C.M. Kinloch’s son, Kinloch Nelson, M.D. (M.D. ’98/M), and daughter, Alice Nelson Herlihy, M.D. (M.D. ’05/M).

Another Nelson — C.M. Kinloch’s uncle, Kinloch Nelson, M.D., who served as dean of the School of Medicine from 1963 to 1971 and as a clinical professor and faculty member for two decades before his death in 1993 — lends his name to the Nelson Family Clinic as well as a host of legendary exploits and tutelage throughout campus and the city of Richmond.

“MCV is home for everybody,” says C.M. Kinloch, and that home has helped inspire four generations of doctors in the Nelson family not because that’s what was expected, but because medicine was what called to so many of its members.

“Like a lot of things, family often determines what you do,” C.M. Kinloch says. “I loved the work I did, just as my father and uncle loved their work. If your kids see you enjoy what you do, that makes a big difference.”

For his son and daughter, that passion was something they were able to witness firsthand at the dinner table or while volunteering with him in Belize, where he still travels with his wife, Mary, to aid humanitarian efforts.

“I felt that medicine was a way to connect to people with backgrounds very different from my own,” says Herlihy, who finishes a fellowship in pulmonary and critical care medicine at VCU in June 2012. “I really enjoy that, the basic humanity of the doctor-patient relationship. That’s the main reason I went into [medicine], the main reason I love it, and when I would work with my dad [in Belize], that’s what I’d see.”

Kinloch cites similar experiences and credits his father not necessarily with the decision to enroll at the university but rather the decision that must come first for any young adult.
“A lot of my discussions with my father were about whether medicine was a good option for me, whether it was the right choice,” Kinloch recalls. “So my father’s and grandfather’s principal influence on me had less to do with coming here than it did my decision to become a doctor.”

Now a member of the staff at Virginia Urology, where his father also still works as a consultant, Kinloch says the clinical exposure, not just the draw of his namesake, is what made the MCV Campus the place to be. The support of his professors and mentors is what drove home the experience for him, he adds.

Still, there are those lasting connections, Kinloch says, whether it was meeting his wife, Melissa (M.D. ’98/M), during his time here, hearing a story about his father or his great-uncle from a teacher or listening to Arnold Salzberg, M.D. (H.S. ’53/M), a man who taught his father 30 years earlier, holding court over coffee and snacks with first- and second-year students.

“He gave you a sense of how a doctor thinks, same with my dad,” Kinloch says. “They really emphasized the importance of the work, how you can’t skimp on the little things.”

Kinloch describes his third year spent here as a revelation, working on the HemOnc floor with Mary Helen Hackney, M.D. (H.S. ’94/M), resident Ken Haft, M.D. (H.S. ’01/M), as well as three interns and two other students.

“I’d never experienced anything like that,” he says. “It felt like we were doing good work, rewarding work. It was a great introduction to the best of what being a doctor is all about.”

Herlihy cites a similar engagement of her professors and mentors as the driving force behind her decision to come back to Richmond after working for a nonprofit violence-prevention agency in Boston after graduating from Dartmouth.

“The people here are very real, very driven by a mission to help people in the community,” Herlihy adds. “They’re really invested in your personal development. They want you to succeed.”

In that sense, Herlihy suggests, the hospital is really just a larger familial framework surrounding the Nelsons, one which Herlihy unfortunately would need in the face of perhaps her greatest challenge.

In 2007, Herlihy and her husband, Dan (M.H.A. ’07/AHP), endured their older son Charles’ two-week hospitalization in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at VCU Medical Center following his birth. She uses the word “phenomenal” to describe the experience, which became an affirmation of the care and expertise that has drawn generations of her family here.

“Just to be on the other side of things and feel the warmth of the nurses and doctors and everybody supporting you,” she says, “it was just amazing.”

Charles’ younger brother, Will, was born in the same room and, who knows, perhaps in these two, or in Kinloch and Melissa’s children — Kinloch, Garnett and Sarah — there will be more than one who will call VCU home.

Charles and Will already do, Herlihy says. “My children go to day care here, and they consider themselves Rams,” she says. “When people ask where they go to school, they say VCU.”

“It’s nice being part of a family tradition here,” C.M. Kinloch concludes. “That’s what MCV and VCU was and still is.”

— Andy Bates is a contributing writer for Scarab magazine.
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Frank A. Fulco, M.D. (H.S. ’01/M), assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at VCU and hospitalist at Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, received the School of Medicine’s Irby-James Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching, which recognizes superior teaching and professionalism in clinical medicine taught in the last two years of medical school and residency training.

Colleague Lenore Joseph, M.D., associate chief of staff/education at the VA medical center, describes Fulco as “one of the best and brightest internists I have ever encountered. He not only imparts great clinical wisdom to his trainees, he walks the walk of excellence in his own clinical practices.”

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Susan R. DiGiovanni, M.D. (M.D. ’84/M; H.S. ’89/M), professor in the VCU Department of Internal Medicine, has received the Leadership in Graduate Medical Education Fellowship Director Award for her work as director of VCU’s Nephrology Fellowship Program. Her dedication to balancing the educational and clinical skills needs of fellows has helped her to transform the program by adding renal grand rounds, a board review program and a journal club. DiGiovanni’s program has become a model for others and has resulted in two successful accreditation cycles. She was named assistant dean for medical education in 2010 and has played a key role in the ongoing redesign of the undergraduate medical curriculum.

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

Jean-Venable “Kelly” R. Goode Pharm.D. (B.S. ’89/P; Pharm.D. ’94/P), professor in the VCU Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science, has received one of 25 health care grants issued nationwide by the American Pharmacists Association Foundation’s Project IMPACT, which stands for IMProving America’s Communities Together — a three-year initiative designed to help fully integrate pharmacists into health care to address challenges faced by patients with diabetes.

Goode will serve as community champion for the Daily Planet project, which will offer comprehensive interdisciplinary diabetes outreach to provide diabetes risk and prevention education, screening and management. Sallie Mayer, assistant professor at the School of Pharmacy, also received a grant and has been named community champion for CrossOver Health Care Ministry, which will also partner with Richmond’s Fan Free Clinic and the Goochland Free Clinic.

Project IMPACT is made possible by a grant from the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation’s $100 million initiative, Together on Diabetes: Communities Uniting to Meet America’s Diabetes Challenge, which targets adult populations disproportionately affected by Type 2 diabetes.

SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

The August 2011 cover of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists Journal depicted Lukeythia Bastardi, D.N.A.P. (M.S.N.A. ’10/AHP; D.N.A.P. ’11/AHP), and Jill Schroeder (M.S.N.A. ’10/AHP) demonstrating the Baricity Educational Spinal Trainer device, which they helped develop with Elizabeth Howell (M.S.N.A. ’04/AHP), assistant professor and director of professional development in the Department of Nurse Anesthesia.

The BEST device allows students to inject dyed local anesthetics into the spinal canals of human cadavers to observe how aesthetics travel through the space surrounding the spinal cord. Student registered nurse anesthetists already performed the technique at the annual Regional Anesthesia Workshop hosted by VCU’s Department of Nurse Anesthesia, and VCU is currently seeking a partner to license the device.
Lukeythia Bastardi (left) and Jill Schroeder demonstrate the Baricity Educational Spinal Trainer.
A passion for dance meets the precision of physical therapy

The office of Lisa Donegan Shoaf, PT, D.P.T., Ph.D. (B.S. ’81/AHP; Ph.D. ’02/E; D.P.T. ’09/AHP), immediately illustrates where her passion lies. Warm wishes and autographs stroked in silver pen stand out against the backdrop of a Hubbard Street Dance Chicago tour poster as Shoaf describes one of her proudest accomplishments at Virginia Commonwealth University: the partnership she helped foster between the Department of Physical Therapy and the Department of Dance and Choreography to teach aspiring young performers the science and anatomy of how they use their bodies to create art.

As director of clinical education in the Department of Physical Therapy, Shoaf wears quite a few other hats as well. She teaches, treats patients and faces the mounting challenges of securing clinical internships and keeping tabs on the roughly 150 students enrolled in the graduate program. While that variety is what drew the Harrisonburg, Va., native to the job, she says athletics and dance have always been a major part of her life.

Throughout high school and her first undergraduate year at James Madison University, Shoaf competed as a gymnast but shifted her focus to dance. After transferring to VCU and graduating with a degree in physical therapy in 1981, she returned to her hometown, performed with a small community dance company and started to get the teaching bug. By the time she returned to VCU in 1992, this time as the director of clinical education for the Department of Physical Therapy, she says connecting with the dance department here seemed natural.

“What we’ve built together has evolved into a nice niche that VCU and the dance department is known for,” Shoaf says. “It gives dancers a strong science foundation for what they’re doing.”

Through the partnership with the dance department, Shoaf co-teaches the anatomy and dance science courses, helps screen incoming dance students for potential injury risks, treats student injuries and helps performers manage and rehab the unique tolls that different dance forms take on the body. She has performed similar roles for other organizations, such as the Richmond Ballet, and adds that it’s important for any physical therapist involved in sports medicine (of which the performing arts is a subset) to have a precise grasp on the demands of that particular sport or activity. Thus, her experience as a dancer and gymnast lends itself not only to credibility but also expertise and understanding.

Juggling her responsibilities as an active member in state and national physical therapy associations and as a certified Pilates instructor, she still makes time to advise students as they line up outside her office door. With everything on her plate, however, she doesn’t have time to dillydally. She welcomes her students warmly, with a smile and a simple question: “Who’s first?”

– Andy Bates is a contributing writer for Scarab.
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

William O. McKinley, M.D. (H.S. ’89/M), professor in the VCU Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, received the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from the Arnold Gold Foundation. This award underscores the value of humanism, understanding and compassion in the delivery of care. Since 1989, McKinley has dedicated himself to advancing the art and science of rehabilitation and has been recognized for his work with patients and families facing the challenges of spinal cord injury. As a teacher and mentor, McKinley instills in his students the values and principles associated with his mission to restore hope, function and quality of life for individuals with spinal cord injuries.

SCHOOLS OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND NURSING

Sister Patricia Eck (B.S. ’72/N; M.H.A. ’81/AHP) received the papal award, Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontificia Medal, the highest honor given to a member of a religious community by the Vatican.

SCHOOL OF NURSING

Debra Lyon, Ph.D., RN, FNP-BC, FNAP, FAAN (B.S. ’84/N; M.S. ’93/N; Cert. ’96/N; Ph.D. ’97/N), professor and chair of the VCU School of Nursing’s Department of Family and Community Health Nursing, was one of 142 nurse leaders nationwide inducted as fellows during the American Academy of Nursing’s 38th Annual Meeting and Conference on Oct. 15, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

Academy fellows include nursing leaders in education, management, practice and research who serve as experts in their fields. They work with other health care leaders to enhance quality of care and strengthen delivery of service nationally and internationally, promote healthy aging and human development across the life

SCHOOLS OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND MEDICINE

The Josiah H. Macy Jr. Foundation has named Alan Dow, M.D. (H.S. ’04/M; M.S.H.A. ’05/AHP), associate professor in the VCU Department of Internal Medicine, to its first class of Macy Faculty Scholars. As one of five medicine and nursing faculty members from around the country to earn the honor, Dow will receive $100,000 per year for two years to help facilitate interprofessional collaboration efforts at VCU’s health sciences schools. Dow will examine how increased collaboration among health professionals can improve patient care and will teach team-based competencies to foster effective interprofessional practice. See the article on Page 14 to learn how he’s creating an interprofessional curriculum that other institutions can then use and providing them with a tool kit for instruction and assessment to ensure successful adoption.
continuum, reduce health disparities and inequalities, shape healthy behaviors and environments and integrate mental and physical health care.

Lyon currently serves as the Collins-T eefy Distinguished Professor in the School of Nursing.

SCHOOLS OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND MEDICINE

Kimberly Sanford, M.D. (B.S. ’91/AHP; M.D. ’01/M; H.S. ’06/M), assistant professor of pathology, and associate medical director of transfusion medicine and medical director for an outpatient laboratory at VCU, received a Mastership designation from the American Society for Clinical Pathology — an honor that recognizes members who have made significant contributions not only to the field of pathology and laboratory medicine but also to the ASCP.

Sanford has been a member of the ASCP since 1991, serving in a number of leadership roles. In 1995, when Sanford was a medical laboratory scientist, she helped launch a successful client services division for the VCU Department of Pathology, and patient-care quality continues to be a focus of her work at VCU.

SCHOOLS OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND MEDICINE

Colin Banas, M.D. (M.S.H.A. ’08/AHP; H.S. ’05/M), chief medical information officer for the VCU Health System, has been named one of the top 25 clinical informaticists in the country. Editors at health care news provider Modern Healthcare chose the honorees based on three criteria: use of patient-care data to improve his or her organization’s clinical and financial performance, willingness to share expertise with others in the field of clinical informatics and leadership in clinical informatics outside of the candidate’s own organization or company.

Banas, who has served as CMIO since 2010, is also an internal medicine physician and has worked at VCU for almost 10 years. He helped create a program that allows physicians to use smartphones to improve charge capture. He also led the rollout of the health system’s electronic health record in its outpatient clinics and spearheaded a medication reconciliation project that raised levels of discharge medication reconciliation to 90 percent.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Richard A. McPherson, M.D. (M.S. ’08/M), the Harry P. Dalton Professor of Clinical Pathology and chair of the VCU Division of Clinical Pathology, served as co-senior editor for Henry’s Clinical Diagnosis and Management by Laboratory Methods, 22nd Edition. Considered to be the premier textbook for clinical pathologists and laboratory managers, the first edition appeared in 1908 and provides guidance on lab test selection and interpretation of results. McPherson previously served as senior editor on the second edition of this same text, and this is the sixth edition for which he has been a contributor.

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

William Korzun, Ph.D. (Ph.D. ’88/M), associate professor in VCU’s Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences, received the 2010 Carl R. Jolliff Award for Lifetime Achievement in Clinical and Diagnostic Immunology from the Clinical and Diagnostic Immunology Division of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry for outstanding service in diagnostic immunology and education.

SCHOOLS OF ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND MEDICINE

Teresa Nadder, Ph.D. (B.S. ’78/AHP; M.S. ’90/AHP; Ph.D. ’98/M), was selected to become a member of the Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity, which recognizes individuals who have made outstanding professional contributions to the field of clinical laboratory sciences and who enhance the profession by providing scholarships to support educational endeavors. Nadder serves as chair of the VCU Department of Clinical Laboratory Sciences.
Domenic Sica, M.D., with his wife, Jennifer

Books, binders and an array of records fill nearly every available space in the office of Domenic Sica, M.D. (M.D. '75/M; H.S. '78), yet there isn’t a sense of clutter. Everything seems to have its place, stored in the nooks of Sica’s office in the same encyclopedic way his mind files the knowledge he’s accumulated during his 30 years treating patients as a nephrologist.

As head of the Clinical Pharmacology and Hypertension section within the Division of Nephrology at Virginia Commonwealth University, as well as a professor of medicine and pharmacology since 1981, Sica has built a reputation as a world leader in the treatment of blood pressure disturbances. But, while having an authoritative knowledge base on complex topics like drug properties and medication interactions is essential to that success, he says he stays grounded in the reality that every patient has something to teach him and that health problems aren’t simply things that need to be solved. Rather, they need to be understood.

“I’m a student of listening to every patient,” Sica says. “Appreciating what patients go through is so very critical. The fears, the apprehensions, all the untold calamities that have occurred for them … there’s a particular art to such understanding.”

It’s of little surprise then, given that line of thinking, that even as he continues to be one of VCU’s most widely published clinicians and accumulates accolades such as the man Sica describes as “the godfather” of blood pressure, Sica still manages to view his accomplishments primarily through the lens of the patients he sees every day. “When you make life better for a patient, they never forget,” Sica says. Nor does he forget as a doctor, Sica adds, that those patients, along with his wife and three children, help keep him humble, as does his philanthropic work throughout the VCU and Richmond communities.

In addition to purchasing hundreds of tickets to VCU basketball games each year so local youth can share his love of sports, in 1998, he and his wife formed the Ram Slam Scholarship Program, which supports Richmond city public high school students pursuing higher education. More recently, they endowed the Sica Family Single Mother Scholarship, to help single mothers in the Richmond area focus on their education and family rather than on the expense of education.

In all, the Sicas have supported more than 60 students with a variety of scholarships during the past 10 years, an effort that earned Sica the 2010 Caravati Service Award from the MCV Alumni Association. While he says such awards are certainly an honor, his service in the community, along with the satisfaction he gains from working with patients and supporting area youth, simply reinforces the choice he made more than three decades ago to make VCU and Richmond his home.

— Andy Bates is a contributing writer for Scarab.
Jane Ingalls (B.S. ’66/N) was appointed to the Virginia Board of Nursing by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Ingalls is a registered nurse and professor emeritus at Germanna Community College in Fredericksburg, Va. [1]

Anthony D. Sakowski Jr., M.D. (M.D. ’69/M), received the Foundation Fighting Blindness Visionary Award at its annual Dinner in the Dark luncheon, which raised money for research on vision disorders. Sakowski is an ophthalmologist and co-founder of Virginia Eye Institute in Richmond, Va. [1]

Harry Simpson, D.D.S. (D.D.S. ’61/D), was recently honored by the Boys and Girls Club of the Virginia Peninsula when it announced it was naming its Gloucester club for him. Simpson’s dedication to and lifelong participation with the organization began in his youth, when he won the Outstanding Boys Award at the first Peninsula club. He has served on the regional board for 43 years and helped begin the Gloucester club in 2002. Simpson recalled that he was mentored at the old club before he attended college and became a dentist. [1]

Peter Trager, D.D.S. (D.D.S. ’68/D), was elected chair of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations of the American Dental Association. Trager practices general dentistry in Marietta, Ga. [1]

John Wyman, M.D. (H.S. ’60/M), continues to see patients full time after a career of teaching and research at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. He worked on MCV’s house staff from 1958-60 and, after serving in the U.S. Army in Germany, finished an internal medicine residency and fellowship in gastroenterology at the Mayo Clinic.


Carroll Gallagher, D.D.S. (D.D.S. ’78/D), received the Presidential Achievement Award from the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. The award is presented to association fellows and members who have made significant, long-term contributions to the specialty. Gallagher was honored for his extensive work in developing and presenting educational sessions for OMS clinical staff. He is now retired from active practice and serves as assistant professor in the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Margaret Martin (B.S. ’71/D) recently celebrated 40 years of service as a dental hygienist. Martin started her practice in Carroll County in her father’s office and at the time was the only hygienist in the area. Forty years later, she works with David Harvey, D.D.S., who took over her father’s practice in 1983. During that time, Martin saw many changes in the field. In her first 13 years of practice, gloves, masks and shields were not used. She saw the change from chemical disinfection to sterilization by autoclave. Martin is looking forward to providing care and promoting total health for her patients for many more years to come. [1]

Edith Mitchell, M.D. (M.D. ’74/M), recently received the Practitioner of the Year Award from the Philadelphia County Medical Society.

Trula Minton (B.S. ’79/N; M.S. ’88/M) was appointed to the Virginia Board of Nursing by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Minton is chief nursing officer with CJW Medical Center. [1]

Carole Pratt, D.D.S. (D.D.S. ’76/D), has been named a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellow. The fellowship is a one-year residential experience in Washington, D.C., that gives exceptional midcareer health professionals and scientists an opportunity to actively participate in health policy processes at the federal level and gain hands-on experience. Pratt has practiced general dentistry in Southwest Virginia for 32 years. [1]

Jonathan Roberts (B.S. ’79/P) recently returned to the MCV Campus to spend time with pharmacy faculty and students, including leading a discussion with the “Contemporary Pharmacy Practice” class. Roberts was recently named chief operating officer for CVS Caremark’s Pharmacy Benefits Management division in Woosocket, R.I.

Michael Styron (B.S. ’74/AHP) was appointed to the Board of Physical Therapy by Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell. Styron is a physical therapist and director of Rehabilitation Services and Sports Medicine Services at Southside Regional Medical Center.

Charles Windle, M.D. (M.D. ’71/M), and Leslie Windle (B.S. ’72/P) are enjoying life after retirement. Charles retired after five years in the U.S. Navy and 29 years practicing anesthesiology in Norfolk, Va. Leslie retired after 33 years practicing pharmacy. The couple enjoys golfing, line dancing and traveling. [1]

Joseph Zanga, M.D. (H.S. ’74/M), was recently elected chair of Live Healthy Columbus, a coalition he helped reorganize. Live Healthy is a community cooperative of 30 organizations with a goal to make Columbus, Ga., a Live Healthy city starting with a program to help citizens with obesity issues. Zanga is chief of pediatrics at Columbus Regional Healthcare System and Medical Center.

James Dudley, M.D. (H.S. ’88/M), was appointed to the Virginia State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Dudley is chief of the Emergency Physician and Service Line and chief medical officer at Riverside Tappahannock Hospital.

Robin Foster, M.D. (M.D. ’89/M), was appointed to the Virginia State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Foster is division chairman of Pediatric Emergency Services at VCU Medical Center.

Terri Gaffney (B.S. ’81/N) is senior director of new product development with the American Nurses Association in Silver Spring, Md.

M. Keith Hodges (B.S. ’89/P) was elected to the House of Delegates on Nov. 8, 2011, to represent Virginia’s 98th District.

Stephen Long, M.D. (M.D. ’86/M), was appointed to the University of Virginia and Affiliated Schools Board of Visitors by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Lang is a partner with Commonwealth Pain Specialists in Richmond, Va.

William Jacobsen (M.H.A. ’88/AHP) received the American Hospital Association’s 2011 Grassroots Champion Award and the American College of Healthcare Executives Senior-Level Healthcare Executive Regent’s Award. The Grassroots Champion Award honors Jacobsen’s exceptional leadership in generating grassroots and community activity in support of the hospital’s mission. The Senior-Level Healthcare Executive Regent’s Award is given to a recipient who has experience in the field and has made significant contributions to the advancement of health care management excellence and the achievement of theACHE’s goals. Jacobsen is CEO of Carilion Franklin Memorial Hospital in Rocky Mount, Va.

Thomas Martel, M.D. (M.D. ’87/M), received the South Carolina EMS Medical Director of the Year Award.

Nancy McFarlane (B.S. ’80/P), president and CEO of MedPro Rx Inc., was elected mayor of the city of Raleigh, N.C. [1]

Miriam Koller Pizzani, M.D. (M.D. ’80/M), joined the VCU School of Medicine as clinical professor. [1]

Bruce Rosenfeld, M.D. (M.D. ’86/M), a urologist in Tucson, Ariz., recently published “Make Every Shot Count: How Basketball Taught a Point Guard to be a Surgeon.” The book is a positive and motivational story that highlights Rosenfeld’s years at VCU.
Richard Rubenstein, M.D. (M.D. ’81/M), a board-certified dermatologist with Skin and Cancer Associates Center for Cosmetic Enhancement, was named one of South Florida’s top physicians by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., a health care research and information company. Rubenstein specializes in dermatologic surgery, excisional surgery, Botox, sclerotherapy, Radiesse, Juvederm and Restylane injections, laser for unwanted hair, brown spots, spider veins and pediatric dermatology.

John Scott (B.S. ’76/H&S; B.S. ’87/AHP) was named to the Board of Long-Term Care Administrators by Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell.

Marylinn Tavenner (B.S. ’83/N; M.H.A. ’89/AHP) was recently named by the White House as the nominee for the position of administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Gregory Taylor, M.D. (H.S. ’82/M), was promoted to chief operating officer with High Point Regional Health System in North Carolina. He had been chief medical officer for seven years. Taylor is responsible for all aspects of inpatient care with a focus on quality, service and an engaged workforce.

Gail Hicks Timberlake (M.S. ’81/AHP) has written two children’s books related to James River batteau, “The Rescue of the Lady's Slipper” and “The Tale of a Lady’s Slipper’s Son.”

Catherine Daniel, M.D. (M.S. ’93/M; M.D. ’98/M), was named president of the Roanoke Valley Academy of Medicine for 2011.

Clifton Lee, M.D. (M.D. ’94/M), has joined the staff of Children’s Hospital of Richmond at VCU as an associate professor of pediatrics and chief of pediatric hospital medicine.

Christopher Nicholson, M.D. (H.S. ’97/M), was appointed to the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Nicholson is a cardiologist with Henrico Cardiology Associates in Richmond, Va.

J. Rand Baggesen, M.D. (M.D. ’97/M), is the medical director with n1 Health and a private medical practitioner at the n1 Health flagship practice, n1 Executive Health Group in Richmond, Va.

Jo Lynne Robins, Ph.D. (M.S. ’91/N; Ph.D. ’99/N), was inducted into the American Academy of Nursing Practitioners. Robins is currently on faculty at the VCU School of Nursing.

Kimberly Sanford, M.D. (B.S. ’91/AHP; M.D. ’01/M), received the American Society for Clinical Pathology Mastership designation. The ASCP is a distinct and prestigious recognition given to a select group of members who have made significant contributions to pathology and to the society. Sanford currently serves as an assistant professor of pathology, associate medical director of transfusion medicine and medical director for an outpatient laboratory at VCU.

Cynthia Su, M.D. (M.D. ’94/M), was named to the Advisory Board of Athletic Training by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Su, of Chesapeake, Va., is a physician with AMP Spine and Sports Physicians.

James “Frank” Titch (M.S. ’94/AHP) received the Outstanding Master of Science in Nursing Faculty Award from the Duke School of Nursing. The award is presented each year to a faculty member who is an excellent teacher and mentor vested in seeing each student succeed. Titch was honored for his work on curriculum development for nurse anesthesia education and techniques of regional anesthesia.

Brian Williams, M.D. (M.D. ’95/M), opened a free-standing, acute-care center in the suburbs of Denver. He has worked in emergency departments in the Denver area since finishing his residency.

Katherine Bidwell, Pharm.D. (Cert. ’06/M; Pharm.D. ’10/P), has been named one of six Preceptors of the Year by the Ohio State University College of Pharmacy. Bidwell is completing her PGY1 residency at Ohio State University Medical Center.


Sandy Chung (M.S.H.A. ’05/AHP) was appointed to the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth by Gov. Bob McDonnell. Chung is a physician with Fairfax Pediatric Associates PC in Sterling, Va.

Terry Fairbanks, M.D. (M.D. ’00/M), was named director of MedStar’s new National Center for Human Factors Engineering in Healthcare.

Elizabeth “Beth” Hoetels (B.S. ’05/N) received a bronze star for her recent service in Afghanistan. She also received a Master of Nursing degree from Norwich University.

Dianne Jewell, Ph.D., D.P.T. (Ph.D. ’03/AHP; D.P.T. ’08/AHP), served as the keynote speaker and received an honorary degree during the commencement ceremonies at Arizona School of Health Sciences.

Kris Krishna Kishor, M.D. (B.S. ’96/H&S; M.D. ’01/M), received the Michael R. Redmond, MD Outstanding Young Ophthalmologist Award from the Florida Society of Ophthalmology. The annual award recognizes a Florida-based ophthalmologist younger than 40 who has demonstrated organizational leadership, service, competence and devotion to the high ethical and professional standards of the FSO. Kishor is an assistant professor of clinical ophthalmology at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute at the University of Miami’s Miller School of Medicine.

Bonnie Nemeth (Cert. ’05/AHP) is employed with Senior Connections in Richmond, Va., and is working toward her certificate as a long-term care ombudsman.
Vincent Roddy, M.D. (M.D. '09/M), performed humanitarian work at Hospital Bernard Mevs in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, with Project Medishare, a nonprofit that has worked with the Haitian people since the devastating 2010 earthquake. The organization set up the hospital and is actively recruiting physicians from around the world to help staff the facility and provide medical care. Roddy also works with the New York City-based nonprofit organization New York Needs You, which engages first-year college students in the most intensive mentor and leadership program in the city.

Marvin Singh, M.D. (M.D. '05/M), joined the staff at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Ellicott City, Md., as a gastroenterologist in July.

Lisa Zimmerman (M.S. '09/AHP) was named Alzheimer’s case manager with Suncoast Center Inc. in St. Petersburg, Fla. Suncoast Center’s mission was named as a gastroenterologist in July.

Robert Brandt, M.D. (M.D. '09/M), performed at the Alternative Fitness and Wellness Center in Richmond, Va. The center specializes in working with older adults in Chi Kung, better known as Tai Chi, a powerful exercise that strengthens bones and builds body mass.

Megan Stucke (Cert. '11/AHP; M.S.W. '11/SW) is now employed with the Jewish Family Services of Richmond as the public guardianship coordinator. Stucke is responsible for the overall care and advocacy for 20 public guardianship individuals. She collaborates with community resources to ensure safety and quality of life for those individuals. Stucke also coordinates with the Virginia Department of Aging, local courts and attorneys, as well as social services in the area.

Lifetime members

What’s new with you?
Scarab welcomes updates on marriages, family additions, job changes, relocations, promotions — whatever you think is newsworthy. Help us keep track of you by completing and returning this form, or make your submission online at www.vcu-mcvalumni.org.

Name/degree/class

Spouse’s full name (if applies)/degree/class

Children (if currently attending VCU)

Address

Phone number

Email address

News items (Please attach additional sheet if necessary.)
Nobel Prize winner Baruj Benacerraf, M.D. (M.D. ’45/M), died Aug. 2, 2011, of pneumonia in Boston at the age of 90. A Venezuelan-born immunologist, Benacerraf received the Nobel Prize in medicine for his groundbreaking work in exploring why diseases such as multiple sclerosis affect some people but not others. His research extended to understanding immunological reactions in organ transplants, explaining why the body would often reject a foreign organ and offering insights on the likelihood of success in transplantation.

Benacerraf studied medicine to the chagrin of his parents, who had hoped he would join the family textile business instead. Every medical school he applied to rejected him because, he suspected, he was both foreign-born and a Jew, as he wrote in his 1998 autobiography — until he obtained an interview at MCV through a personal connection: The father of a friend was an administrator there. The school admitted him in 1942, and he received his medical degree in 1945.

After being drafted into the Army Medical Corps and completing assignments in Germany and France during World War II, Benacerraf rotated through a number of positions at prestigious U.S. institutions: a fellowship in immunology at Columbia University; an academic appointment at New York University, where he began the research that would lead to the Nobel Prize; and chairmanship of the department of pathology at Harvard Medical School. After 10 years at Harvard, he served as president of the Harvard-affiliated Dana-Farber Cancer Institute until he retired in 1991.

John Frederick Harlan Jr. (M.H.A. ’51/AHP) passed away Sept. 19, 2011, in Charlottesville, Va., at the age of 85. Before enrolling in the health administration program at MCV, Harlan served in the U.S. Army during World War II, receiving the Combat Infantry Badge, the Bronze Star and the Good Conduct Ribbon. After returning home to Virginia, he earned his master’s degree at MCV in 1951 and began a long career at the University of Virginia Hospital, starting as an administrative assistant and ultimately retiring as assistant vice president of allied health sciences after 39 years of service. Harlan also served on the board of directors of many organizations, including United Way, Blue Cross of Virginia and the MCV Alumni Association.

Cardiologist William Holland, M.D. (M.D. ’62/M), of Richmond, Va., died Oct. 1, 2011, at age 75. Holland taught at MCV before taking his cardiology practice to Norfolk, Va. He later co-founded Virginia Cardiovascular Associates and started the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Henrico Doctors’ Hospital. He was a fellow in the American Heart Association, a governor of the American College of Cardiology and received the Distinguished Service Award from the Academy of Medicine. Holland also served on the VCU Board of Visitors for nine years and volunteered with numerous medical mission trips to Honduras.

“No matter where we were — on the golf course or at Home Depot — somebody would come up to my father and thank him,” says his son, Mark Holland. “People would remember he had treated them or treated a family member. He had an incredible bedside manner. He put people at ease, made them feel comfortable in the hospital. That was a part of his job that he loved.”

When Holland retired in 1998, he continued serving others, volunteering at CrossOver Health Care Ministry, which provides health care for the needy, and with the Bon Air Baptist Church prison ministry team.

Eugene Vaden White, R.Ph. (B.S. ’50/P), of Berryville, Va., died Dec. 9, 2011, at the age of 87. A 1950 graduate of MCV’s School of Pharmacy, White became known as a visionary in pharmacy. Thanks to his refusal to accept the status quo, he began the shift of pharmacy from a product-oriented to a patient-oriented profession, instituting practices that influenced the way pharmaceutical care is administered today. In 1960, he created the patient medication profile system, an innovation that became the legal standard of pharmacy practice when Congress made its use mandatory in 1990.

“Gene White is, unquestionably, one of the fathers of modern pharmacy. The practices that he initiated elevated our profession and formed the foundation of clinical pharmacy. That is quite a legacy in itself,” says Victor Yanchick, Ph.D., dean of the VCU School of Pharmacy.

Before enrolling at MCV, White served in World War II. He received his “wings” as a U.S. Army Air Corps cadet pilot in 1945 and was training as a B-25 bomber pilot when the war ended. In 1966, he received an honorary Master of Pharmacy degree from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science.
and in 2001, an honorary Doctor of Science from the Shenandoah University Bernard J. Dunn School of Pharmacy. White practiced pharmacy for 48 years, spending the last 42 years in Berryville, where he retired in 1998.

In 2008, White and his wife, Laura, established the Eugene V. White Scholarship at VCU to support a Pharmac.D. student with a commitment to practicing office-based clinical pharmacy in a community setting.

Memorial contributions in honor of White can be made to the Eugene V. White Scholarship, c/o VCU School of Pharmacy, PO. Box 980581, Richmond, VA., 23298-0581.

Harold E. Wilkins, M.D. (M.D. ’47/M), passed away April 23, 2011, in Downey, Calif., at the age of 87. A cardiologist in Downey for 34 years, Wilkins spent some of his younger years in Virginia, graduating from Randolph-Macon College and MCV. He retired as a major after serving three years in the Air Force. He was an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Southern California and past president of California’s Board of Medicine and the U.S. Federation of State Boards of Medical Examiners.

Faculty and friends

Thomas Comstock, Pharm.D., died June 4, 2011, at age 57. Comstock taught in the VCU School of Pharmacy from 1982 to 2004. His teaching, research and patient-care activities focused on pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of drugs in patients with renal impairment, with the goal of improved patient outcomes. He was an active member of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy-Nephrology Practice Research Network. In 2004, he moved to California and worked as a clinical scientist for Amgen Inc. until his death.

“Dr. Comstock was a talented and well-respected professor and colleague,” says Donald F. Brophy, Pharm.D., M.S., professor and chairman of the Department of Pharmacotherapy and Outcomes Science. “He was a renaissance man who could talk about anything from fly fishing to fine wine. He loved life and will be dearly missed.”

John E. Jones, M.D., former vice president for health sciences and special assistant to the president at VCU, died Dec. 2, 2011, in Cary, N.C. Jones’ leadership in strategic planning during the 1990s helped lead to the establishment of the VCU Health System in 2000. His work significantly enhanced academic programs and research in health sciences and secured the future of the patient-care mission at VCU. In 2002, Jones was awarded VCU’s highest honor, the Presidential Medalion, for his extraordinary service.

“John Jones was a gentle senior executive with VCU — someone who deserved, and received, respect and admiration from all who knew him,” says Sheldon Retchin, M.D., M.S.P.H., who currently serves as vice president for health sciences at VCU. “He was a role model and someone who was masterful at gaining consensus. He left an indelible impression and legacy at the university.”

Jones received his medical degree from the University of Utah. He served in the U.S. Navy for 13 years and was honorably discharged at the rank of lieutenant commander. From 1961 to 1991, he worked at West Virginia University, where he rose from instructor in the department of medicine to vice president for health sciences. He was hired in 1991 as vice president for health sciences at VCU.

J. Doyle Smith, Ph.D., died May 22, 2011, at age 90. A Charlottesville, Va., native, Smith attended the University of Virginia where he received B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in chemistry and organic chemistry. In 1946, he began his teaching career in the MCV Department of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry in 1962 and served in that capacity until 1974.

“Dr. J. Doyle Smith was the gentlemen’s gentleman,” writes Richard A. Glennon, Ph.D., the Alfred and Frances Burger Professor of Medicinal Chemistry in the VCU Department of Medicinal Chemistry. “I knew Doyle for more than 35 years and never heard him utter a discouraging word about anyone. Shortly after I was hired, he became the interim chair of medicinal chemistry. I went to him with ideas (as did others) and he never stood in the way of what would benefit the students or our graduate program.”

In 1980, Smith received the Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Section of the American Chemical Society for outstanding contributions in the advancement of the profession of chemistry. The J. Doyle Smith award was established at VCU, through gifts made by faculty members of the Department of Medicinal Chemistry, at the time of his retirement. The annual award recognizes outstanding research by a medicinal chemistry Ph.D. student.

Memorial contributions can be made to the J. Doyle Smith Award, c/o VCU School of Pharmacy, Department of Medicinal Chemistry, PO. Box 980581, Richmond, VA., 23298-0581.


Maleda Tate Cox (’61/St.P), of Silver Spring, Md., May 14, 2011, at age 70.


William Dawson, M.D. (M.D. ’1/M), of Cary, N.C.


Patricia Small (B.S. ’63/AHP) of Richmond, Va.

Archie Bruns (M.H.A. ’73/AHP), of Canby, Minn., May 5, 2011.

Barbara Clark (M.S. ’74/N), of Raleigh, N.C.


Robert Lassiter Jr., Ph.D., of Radford, Va., June 19, 2011, at age 85. He was professor emeritus in the Department of Rehabilitation Counseling.

Richard Pearson, of Richmond, Va., June 8, 2011, at age 85. Pearson served as clinical photographer and cameraman for the closed circuit television teaching program in the School of Dentistry and later provided dental photography and audiovisual support for the Office of Continuing Medical Education.

Warren Rule, Ph.D., of Richmond, Va., July 3, 2011, at age 67. Rule was professor emeritus in the VCU Department of Rehabilitation Counseling.

David Wiecking, M.D., of Columbia, Va., July 22, 2011, at age 78. Wiecking served as chief medical examiner for the commonwealth of Virginia and also taught at the university.
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A conversation between Gene White (B.S. ’56/P) and Lauren Lakdawala, a Pharm.D. candidate in the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy, spurred discussion about VCU's Alpha Delta chapter of the Phi Delta Chi Professional Pharmacy Fraternity. Lakdawala is the chapter's current president. As a former member of the fraternity, White helped support the start of its diversity. Later, as its adviser and an associate professor and associate dean of students in the school, he ushered in the fraternity’s coed status.

White: When I was a junior, the School of Pharmacy accepted its first African-American student. At that time, the fraternity decided it wasn’t willing to accept African-American pledges. Those who had just come into the fraternity, myself included, did not like that, but we didn’t have the votes to overturn that decision. When we became juniors, we then had the majority and we voted the first African-American member into the fraternity.

Lakdawala: These days, I believe the best part about the fraternity is its diverseness. I think that presents a more welcoming and open door. It’s up to an individual whether or not they want to join, because we won’t deny access. As long as you meet the requirements, in terms of GPA and successful completion of the pledge process, we’re happy to provide pharmacy students with the opportunity to join our brotherhood, to grow professionally and to develop as leaders.

White: As the fraternity’s adviser I went to a national meeting where an attorney explained that in professional schools you could no longer discriminate by gender. He said, “I suggest you go home and let the boys know that this is the law now.”

Lakdawala: Ten to 15 years ago, there were more male members; but now we have more female members. I’m not the first female president. We actually have a rich tradition of female presidents.

White: How about that? That’s good! That didn’t used to be the case at all. We got the gals in and look at the fraternity now. It is far and away the biggest fraternity here. I remember the first six girls to pledge. All six of them were something to behold. They really knew what they were doing and they decided they were going to join the fraternity and get things straight. They did a magnificent job.

Lakdawala: People want to be part of the fraternity and want to do good things. For instance, each year we organize DiscoBowl, which is a 1970s-themed bowling party and charity event that’s now in its eighth year. Last year we raised just over $5,000 for our national philanthropic efforts for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

White: For communication purposes — and let me clarify that I’m talking about something I know absolutely nothing about — but, do your members use the face page … or whatever they call these things to get communication out quickly about these sorts of things?

Lakdawala: Facebook? Oh yes! We use it not only for communicating with our brothers, but also our alumni. When alumni join [our page], we share pictures, tell them what we’re doing and we try to get them involved. I think it makes some people reminisce and it makes them feel a bit like they did as active members.
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