



THE MICHIGAN DIFFERENCE

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UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NEUROSURGERY

NEWS AND NOTES

ISSUE 3 SUMMER 2006

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the third volume of our Department of Neurosurgery Newsletter. The department continues to do well in its pursuit of training the next generation of outstanding neurosurgeons. We have gone through the change of season that is always so difficult for the department. Dr. Keith Lodhia and Dr. Vishal Gala have completed their residency training with us and, in a gala affair at the Michigan League, were appropriately honored for their seven years of hard work. It is an emotional time and I am always struck by the fact that we spend so much time together in this process. Neurosurgery has one of the longest training programs of any specialty and I think it breeds a certain bond, not only between the residents themselves but between the attendings and residents.

With the regulation of resident work hours, we have found ourselves working diligently to make certain our residents remain in compliance at all times. We believe the residents need to have the best educational experience possible and strive to create an environment in which this can be done in a collegial fashion. Faculty and residents alike have chosen Michigan because of that collegiality, and our goal is to see that this is never altered.

We will be sponsoring our first Department of Neurosurgery golf outing. A grateful patient of Dr. Bill Chandler's has organized this event. It will allow some 30 teams of golfers to have a wonderful day of golfing at Barton Hills while raising money for resident education funds and research funds in the department.

As you can see, life remains exciting in Ann Arbor. We are all gearing up for the wonderful Festschrift for Dr. John McGillicuddy on August 18th. We hope many of you will be able to join us. Dr. McGillicuddy has been an outstanding leader in neurosurgery, a trusted colleague and friend, and an irreplaceable educator for many generations of neurosurgeons. This is a chance for us to celebrate his wonderful accomplishments with he and his family. I am personally eternally grateful that I have had John as a colleague and friend and that he continues to be one of the strong supporters of our department. He, along with Bill Chandler and Buz Hoff, remain the "three horsemen" of the Department of Neurosurgery who have shepherded through many years of outstanding growth and development. As we learned from Buz's Festschrift, it is wonderful for all of us to get together, if not often then at least occasionally, to celebrate outstanding leaders in neurosurgery and also to remember what we have all gained by being associated with this department. We look forward to your return to Ann Arbor to celebrate along with us!



Dr. Karin Muraszko

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

House Officers Update	2	Research Update	8
Faculty Update	4	Philanthropy Profile: Blaszczykiewicz Family	9
Alumni Profile: Interview with Keith Black M.D.	5	Hoff Professorship: Focus on Philanthropy	10
Faculty Profile: Teresa Smith	6	Staff Spotlight: Laura Zang	11
Retirement Reflections: Dr. McGillicuddy	7		



HOUSE OFFICER'S UPDATE

GOOD LUCK!

Dr. Vishal Gala and his wife Milen have moved to Chicago where he is doing a fellowship in minimally invasive spine surgery with Dr. Richard Fessler at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Keith Lodhia and his wife Heidi, along with their children Megan, Katie, and Tom, have moved to Omaha, Nebraska, where Keith is practicing with UM Alum Steve Doran at Midwest Neurosurgery, a practice involved with the University of Nebraska's residency training program.



Dr. Gala with Dr. Muraszko at the Chief's Dinner



Dr. Lodhia with Dr. Muraszko at the Chief's Dinner

RESIDENT KUDOS

Drs. Barun Brahma and Sonia Eden have stepped in to their new roles as chief residents. They have both been outstanding residents during their time with us and have demonstrated strong leadership qualities even before assuming this role.

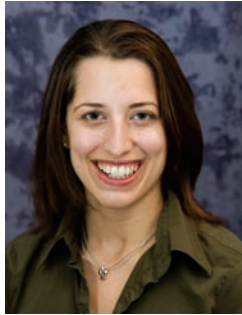
Dr. John Cowan is completing his Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship and will be coming back to the clinical service. He is the recipient of this year's Resident Award from the Congress for his abstract entitled *Changing Trends in the Utilization and Costs of Procedures performed by Neurosurgeons in the United States*. **Dr. Cheerag Upadhyaya** has recently been given a Robert Wood Johnson Fellowship for his research time and will be looking at outcomes from several neurosurgical procedures. **Dr. JC Leveque** was the recipient of the best abstract award from the Michigan Association of Neurological Surgeons (MANS) for his presentation entitled *Spinal Cord Injury: The use of biodegradable scaffolds as an aid to regeneration*. **Dr. John Cowan** also received an award at the MANS meeting for his presentation on *Contemporary Practice Patterns in Neurosurgery*. **Drs. Cowan and Leveque** also received awards for their presentations at Neurosciences Day, which was recently held between the Departments of Neurology and Neurosurgery here at Michigan.



House Officers and Dr. Muraszko at 2006 Chief's Dinner. Back Row, L-R: Drs. Orringer, Etame, Brahma, Leveque, Cowan, Patel, Ziewacz. Front Row, L-R: Drs. Song, Lodhia, Muraszko, Gala, Eden, Upadhyaya.

WELCOME NEW HOUSE OFFICERS!

Dr. Emily Lehmann started to focus on the biological sciences when she was in high school in New Orleans, LA, but always had a strong interest in computers and technology. She was able to combine both interests by participating in a dual degree program between Johns Hopkins University and Goucher College, a small liberal arts school in Baltimore. She studied biomedical engineering with a focus on electrical engineering and its application to the human nervous system. It was during this time that she received exposure to the operating room and to neurosurgery and realized that she would like to pursue neurosurgery as a career.



Dr. Emily Lehmann

Emily was able to focus on both a pre-medical curriculum and enjoy exploring her musical interests in singing and electronic music. It was in the music department that she met her partner of six years, Jeremy Welter, who is currently in his final year of law school at Georgetown University.

After graduating from Medical School at the University of Pittsburgh, Emily is excited to be here at the University of Michigan. She said that she knew on the day of her interview that this was the right program for her. She said “I was really drawn to the wonderful people here in the department, and to the priority placed on education at every level.”

Dr. Shawn Hervey-Jumper was born in Boston, Massachusetts, and is the oldest of three children. He attended Oakwood College majoring in Biology/ Pre-Med from 1997-2001. Shawn married Heather (after meeting her in their sophomore chemistry class) in August of 2001 before starting their medical school experience together at Ohio State. Heather is currently starting her residency training in the Department of Anesthesiology here at the University of Michigan.

Shawn’s interest in neurosurgery initially began at the beginning of his first year of medical school during his gross anatomy and neuroscience courses. He then completed a summer research fellowship in the Department of Neurosurgery at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, solidifying his interest in neurological surgery.



Dr. Shawn Hervey-Jumper

Shawn says he wanted to pursue residency at the University of Michigan because “they offered top notch surgical training in all areas of the field, hands-on attending physicians who were genuinely interested in the well being of their residents, a hard-working and fun group of residents, friendly support staff, and a collegial working environment.” Shawn says he is looking forward to finding a basic science lab in which to be an active member

and continue his tumor biology research, hopefully gaining funding and experience to start his own lab one day.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY!

Dr. Cormac Maher joined us in July and will add expertise in pediatric neurosurgery, having completed a fellowship not only in pediatric neurosurgery but also an additional fellowship in cerebrovascular neurosurgery with Dr. Art Day in Boston. Dr. Maher completed his neurosurgical training at the Mayo Clinic. He and his wife, Maya, have a five year-old daughter, Caroline, a two year-old son, Oliver, and are expecting their third child in the fall. They are happy to be returning to the Midwest and were attracted to the nice combination of big city amenities and small town charms that Ann Arbor offers.



Dr. Cormac Maher

Dr. Steve Sullivan returned to the department in July and will be focusing on adult endoscopic neurosurgery as well as resident training. He will be assisting Dr. Teresa Smith in the NICU and will act as a resource for our ICU patients. Dr. Sullivan completed his neurosurgical training here at the University of Michigan and was on staff with us for a brief six months. He then joined a private practice group in Minneapolis where his wife was completing a fellowship in thoracic surgery. Steve and his wife, Dr. Vita Sullivan, are happy to be back in the promised land of the Wolverines and are expecting their first child in November.



Dr. Steve Sullivan

FACULTY UPDATE



Neurosurgery Faculty & Residents at the 2006 Chief's Dinner

Dr. Bill Chandler is completing his time as President of the American Board of Neurological Surgeons and will remain on the Executive Board in his capacity as ex-President.

Dr. Sid Farhat has continued to help the department, both in the clinical arena and also in helping host a wonderful gala honoring Dr. Hoff in which some of his patients, neighbors and friends were able to participate in a dinner at Barton Hills.

Dr. Hugh Garton has expanded the Pediatric Neurosurgical Program further this year, helping us hit an all time high in terms of cases at the Mott Children's Hospital. He is also maintaining an important and crucial role in the development of the neurosurgical operating room suites and clinic area in the new Mott Children's Hospital, which is scheduled to break ground some time later this fall and hopefully open by 2010.

Dr. Jason Heth has taken on a significant role in our Brain Tumor Program. He is working with the neuro-oncologists in a joint clinic to provide multidisciplinary care to patients with brain tumors. In addition, he is expanding our Stereotactic Radiosurgery Program, which will be an important avenue for treating many of these patients.

Dr. Frank La Marca has assumed an important role in the development of our Spine Program as the University begins plans to develop a Neuro Musculoskeletal Center which will include a Spine Center. This Center is in the development phase, and Dr. La Marca is working with the Departments of Orthopaedic Surgery, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Neurology to create this Center.

Drs. John McGillicuddy and Buz Hoff are beginning their retirement furlough year and will be decreasing their clinical practices. Dr. Hoff will maintain a strong interest in the Crosby Laboratories as he continues with his RO1. Dr. McGillicuddy will continue his work in peripheral nerve and brachial plexus, but also take on a role as an advisor for resident leadership development within the department.

Dr. Paul Park is now in full swing as our minimally invasive spine surgeon. Like all neurosurgery faculty here, he does a variety of neurosurgical procedures, but has chosen minimally invasive spine surgery as his area of expertise.

Dr. Parag Patil started full time with us on July 1st and has already begun important collaborations with the Departments of Neurology and Psychiatry, as well as the School of Engineering, to create an environment in which we will be able to have continued growth in our Functional Neurosurgery Program and expanded collaboration with our colleagues in the Engineering School. Dr. Patil is particularly interested in the brain-machine interface and will be working with Dr. Daryl Kipke on creating implants which can help individuals with disabilities more easily control their environment.

Drs. Oren Sagher and Parag Patil have begun a research project examining the use of DBS in functional neurosurgery. Dr. Sagher continues to maintain a significant role in organizing the neurosurgical residency program. In July 2007, the Department of Neurosurgery will assume responsibility for the internship year of our residents, along with the rest of their neurosurgical training.

Dr. Teresa Smith has taken on the role of organizing the internship group on the Neurosurgery Service. She continues to make the NICU experience an outstanding one, not only for residents, but also for visiting interns on our service. We will have an expanded cadre of visiting interns this year and she has developed a core curriculum for them which will be incorporated into the core curriculum she is developing for the NICU. In addition, there will be the development of a Fellowship Program in Neuro Intensive Care.

Dr. Greg Thompson will be assuming the role of President of the CV Section and is planning an outstanding meeting for the CV Section in conjunction with the American Heart Association. He has skillfully engineered the meeting to allow cerebrovascular neurosurgery to shine in this competitive environment.

Dr. Lynda Yang's Brachial Plexus Program has been a success, growing faster than anyone expected. Her research is going well and she recently authored an important paper in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on her research with Ronald Schnaar, Ph.D of John Hopkins that found a treatment that helped nerve fibers in rats regrow after injury.

ALUMNI PROFILE

Interview with Keith Black, M.D.

Dr. Keith L. Black attended the University of Michigan for his undergraduate and medical school training and was then accepted into the neurological surgery residency program at U-M. Dr. Black completed his residency in 1987 and then joined the faculty of UCLA. He then joined Cedars-Sinai Medical Center as Director of the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute and Director of Neurosurgery. An internationally renowned neurosurgeon and scientist, Dr. Black pioneered research on designing ways to open the blood-brain barrier, enabling chemotherapeutic drugs to be delivered directly into the tumor. He continues to do ground-breaking research on the treatment of brain tumors while maintaining an extremely busy clinical practice. News & Notes talked to Dr. Black about his new residency program, his research and his experience at U-M.



N&N: Tell us about the residency training program that is launching this summer at Cedars-Sinai.

KB: I left UCLA in 1997 to start the Cedars-Sinai Institute, and one of my goals from the outset was to have a residency program affiliated with the Institute. As we developed the Institute over the past eight years, increasing surgical volume and adding research experience, part of our goal was to create an environment that would offer high quality resident experience. Our total volume has grown to about 3000 cases altogether. We currently have 35 full time researchers with a research budget of about four million dollars a year. This, combined with the faculty we have been able to recruit, means that we are poised to offer an excellent resident education program. Our first class includes a PGY1 along with a PGY2 and PGY3 transferring from other programs.

N & N: What are your goals for this program?

KB: Our goal is to train academic neurosurgeons. I think that given the opportunity for research in our program, combined with our focus on teaching the residents how to be academic neurosurgeons, we have the ability to do that well. Sometimes we neglect to address the issue of how you integrate the demands of clinical responsibilities with an academic research career once you have left your residency. We want to instill skills for success in academia in addition to

having excellent clinical skills. For example, we will offer formal training in clinical trial design along with formal courses in research design.

N & N: Are there any experiences from your residency at U-M that have informed you as you have been designing this residency program? Anything that stuck with you from your training that you'd like to replicate?

KB: Definitely. The ability to continue research throughout my entire training at Michigan. It wasn't that I had one year of research in the lab and then five years of clinical training; instead, research occurred throughout my residency. I would get to the labs on the weekend or in the evenings or when on a light rotation, trying to keep the research productivity going throughout my training. That training served me well because I was able to juggle the demands of starting an academic clinical practice and still make time for research.

N & N: What attracted you to the brain tumor subspecialty?

KB: One of the biggest challenges in neurosurgery is trying to treat malignant brain tumors. The median survival is still around a year for glioblastoma. So, the research potential is huge because there is a lot of upside potential. Additionally, operating on brain tumors is one of the more gratifying aspects of neurosurgery because it is so varied and so challenging.

N & N: What do you see as the most exciting front in brain tumor research?

KB: Integrating immunology into treating brain tumors. Finding ways to activate the immune system, looking at vaccines integrated with chemotherapy. For example, we have found that vaccines are actually synergistic with chemotherapy for gliomas. We are also looking at using stem cells to further activate the immune system and this research is extremely exciting.

N & N: Did you have any important teachers or mentors during the course of your training and throughout your career?

KB: One mentor during my time at U-M was Otelio Randell, a cardiologist who I worked with in the research lab, made quite an impact on me. One of my greatest mentors was Buz Hoff. I have tried (but probably not that well) to copy as much as I can from him – from his administrative style to his clinical acumen to the way that he goes about developing and growing programs. I really admire and look up to him.

FACULTY PROFILE

Dr. Teresa Smith has always loved to teach. From the ten years she spent teaching high school physics and chemistry to her role as an Instructor of Neurology at UVA, Dr. Smith has found satisfaction through being engaged in the transfer of knowledge. It was this love for teaching that drew Dr. Smith back from private practice in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she served as the Medical Director of Neurology at Bronson Hospital, and into academic medicine. After being recruited by Dr. Hoff in late 2004, Teresa Smith accepted a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery, with a joint appointment in the Department of Neurology, serving as the Director the Neurosurgery Intensive Care Unit (NICU).



Teresa Smith

The NICU is a 10 bed critical care unit which provides care for neurosurgical patients along with neurology and otolaryngology patients requiring critical care. While most academic medical centers have a dedicated Neurological Intensive Care Unit, finding a fellowship trained neuro-intensivist to staff that NICU is another matter. Up until 2005, the neurosurgery faculty did their own critical care management, each individually responsible for their patients.

While this system worked well, it put a burden on surgeons, which ultimately led the department to search for a dedicated neuro-intensivist. This is a search that many departments are currently engaged in; there are only 20 fellowship programs for neuro-intensivists in the U.S., leading to a chronic shortage. The Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Michigan was fortunate to recruit Dr. Smith, a neurologist who graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and completed her residency at UVA-Charlottesville, completing a subsequent fellowship in neurocritical care there under the direction of Thomas P. Bleck, M.D..

Dr. Smith said she was drawn back to academic medicine because she felt “compelled” to teach, saying “in academic medicine you have an option to leave a legacy; in private practice you can have

an impact on patients, but in academic medicine you are able to impact patients, students and residents.” Dr. Smith says that one of the most rewarding parts of her job is watching a medical student, intern or resident have the experience of moving from confusion to clarity, watching them understand a concept or procedure for the first time. Such moments often occur during the daily ICU rounds which Dr. Smith implemented when she came on board. Dr. Smith conducts these rounds along with the intern, med student and nursing staff currently on the floor. During these rounds the patients are evaluated and treated prophylactically. These rounds are in addition to the daily rounds conducted with the residents and another faculty member. This means that each patient is evaluated by two attendings

every day, something which sets U-M apart from other programs. Saying “two heads are always better than one,” Dr. Smith appreciates the communication and cooperation which occurs in this collaborative arrangement.

“The level and depth of care of patients within the NICU has been measurably improved. She provides expert care to patients and excellent teaching to interns and residents. We find ourselves asking how we managed without her.”

It was this sense of partnership that drew Dr. Smith to U-M. She said “this is a department where there is a real sense that everyone looks out for each other and cares about each other’s success—both personal and professional.” In addition to the chance to work with such a supportive team, Dr. Smith is looking forward to the chance to engage in research. She is particularly interested in research into some of the mundane yet crucial clinical questions such as “What is the most expedient way to extubate a patient?”

Dr. Smith’s expertise in the NICU has already made an impact on the department, and faculty and residents have expressed their appreciation for her. Dr. Muraszko summed up the sentiment when she said, “The level and depth of care of patients within the NICU has been measurably improved. She provides expert care to patients and excellent teaching to interns and residents. We find ourselves asking how we managed without her.”

RETIREMENT REFLECTIONS

By Lynda Yang, M.D., Ph.D



“Trouble brings experience, and experience brings wisdom.” With this concept, Dr. John E. McGillicuddy has made a lasting impression on generations of neurosurgeons. For me, he has reinforced the course of my career, my development as a surgeon, and he is wholly responsible for my pursuit of peripheral nerve surgery as my subspecialty. In recognition of his widespread influence, the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Michigan shall celebrate his contributions to neurosurgery and to neurosurgeons - with him, his family, and friends on August 18, 2006.

In 1970, Dr. McGillicuddy commenced training in Neurosurgery at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, after graduating from Harvard Medical School and preparing in general surgery at the Medical College of Virginia. While under the tutelage of Dr. Richard Schneider, he investigated the implications of cervicomedullary trauma in athletes. He subsequently joined our faculty and, with Drs. Glenn Kindt, Jim Rasis, Carol Miller, Michael Pritz, and Steve Giannotta, published seminal articles on cerebral blood flow and cerebral vasospasm while still a young neurosurgeon. As he progressed to the rank of Professor under the chairmanship of Dr. Buz Hoff, his interests and publications expanded to encompass all areas of neurosurgery including skull base, pediatric, vascular, tumor, spinal and peripheral nerve surgeries.

Despite his active surgical practice he has represented our specialty by serving on local, national, and international committees within educational, research and public policy organizations, not solely in the field of neurosurgery. His grounded common sense provided him the basis to serve in roles ranging from Chairman of the American Heart Association of Michigan and Vice President of the Neurosurgical Society of America, to the President of the Society of University Neurosurgeons.

The subsequent generations of neurosurgeons will continue to benefit from the leadership of Dr. McGillicuddy.

The local leadership of Dr. McGillicuddy with his trainees is legendary. He has always been the faculty member residents turn to. “He will give you the shirt off his back” said one former resident, as another said “talking to Dr. McGill is good for the soul.” He teaches by example: at the bedside, in the OR, and in the clinic. His bedside manner is compassionate, and his patients are fiercely loyal. Residents vie for the opportunity to work with him and his “double-ended ganglion knife” in the operating room. In the clinic, his trainees strive to emulate his meticulous neurological examination and patient assessment. In all arenas his unique style, which evolves from his acute sense of humor, has made him invaluable as a teacher.

Dr. McGillicuddy’s successes as an educator reflect his reputation as a “good man” who always “does the right thing”. His integrity is grounded in his faith, his family and his friends. He is extremely proud and caring of his wife, Bridget, and his children, John, Margaret, Daniel, and Nora. His sincere personality allows lifetime friendships to form in any and all circumstances. I have barely begun to tap the depth of sentiment that his former residents, friends, and family will express more eloquently at his celebration. Echoing the words of Colonel James W. Stemple, under whom he served in Vietnam in the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Marines, Dr. John E. McGillicuddy is “Absolutely the Finest.”

“Absolutely the Finest.”

RESEARCH UPDATE

Crosby Neurosurgical Laboratories Continues to Blossom

We have moved in to the Basic Science Research Building. As we moved into this new facility, we nearly doubled the research space for the department and purchased a series of new equipment that will allow us to keep the Crosby Lab as the cutting edge research arm of the department. There have been some wonderful successes in the Laboratory with respect to funding. Dr. Chia-Ying Lin has recently received an R21 entitled *Designed Degradable Interbody Cages*.

New Home for Crosby Lab

The research effort in the Department of Neurosurgery moved into new space in the Biomedical Sciences Research Building (BSRB) this spring. Situated on the corner of East Huron as it turns into Washtenaw Avenue, BSRB is a new state-of-the-art 470,000 square foot research building (complete with the pringle chip-shaped auditorium in front). If you would like to see photographs or take a virtual tour, both are available on the University of Michigan Medical School website at <http://www.med.umich.edu/buildings/bsrb/index.htm>. Neurosurgery is situated on the top (5th) floor, occupying the East Tower. It comes with the best view in town. If you would like to tour the new laboratories, please contact Amy Wilson at aewilson@umich.edu.

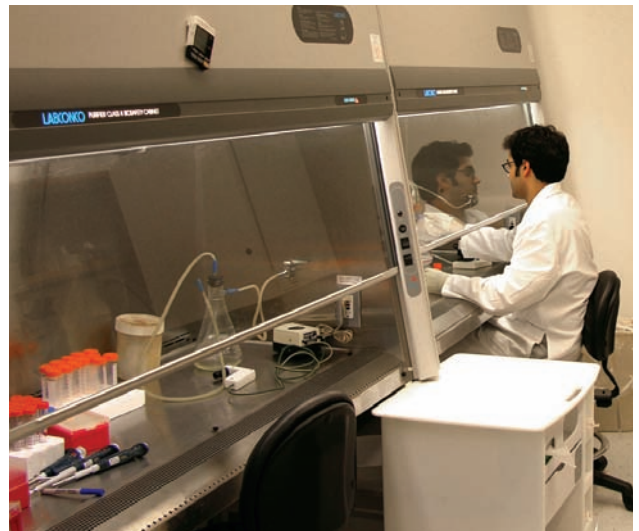
The move has enabled us to increase our laboratory space compared to the old facilities in Kresge I. The new space will help facilitate our efforts to expand the Department's research program, building on current strengths and allowing us to move in new directions. There will be a dedication ceremony to rename the laboratories in Dr. Elizabeth Crosby's name during the Festschrift in Professor McGillicuddy's honor in August.

Crosby Publishing House

Need a holiday gift? What that 'significant other' in your life has been waiting for — a copy of *Brain Edema XIII*. The book, based on the very successful XIII International Symposium on Brain Edema and Tissue Injury that was hosted by the Department of Neurosurgery last June, is now in available. The book is edited by Drs. Hoff, Keep, Xi and Hua and has appeared in record time. It beat the proceedings from *Intracranial Pressure XII*, held a year earlier, to the shelves! If you are interested in a copy (gift wrapping free of charge), contact Richard Keep at rkeep@umich.edu.

Neurosurgery Visiting Fellows

We have had several visiting international Fellows with us over the last year. Dr. Trinh Dinh Loi from Vietnam has spent ten months with us. Dr. Talles Caixeta from Brazil is here for six months. Dr. Kookhee Yang from Korea has joined us for a little over a year in Pediatric Neurosurgery. Dr. Toshihiko Kuroiwa is here for one year working in the Crosby Laboratories.



PHILANTHROPY PROFILE



Kristen Blaszcykiewicz, months away from receiving her driver's license, got in a car crash that may have saved her life. Kristen, a sophomore from Buffalo, New York, was driving with her mom when she felt her vision blur, her hearing fade, and before she knew what was happening her car had hit a tree. Since 8th grade Kristen had been having episodes like this; her vision

would blur, hearing would fade and everything would seem to go into slow motion. She had never told anyone about them because she wasn't sure what exactly was happening. However after the accident, which she and her mom both walked away unharmed, Kristen told her mom about these episodes. They immediately went to a doctor, and after Kristen's MRI, she was told she had a brain tumor.

While the doctors assured Kristen that the tumor could be removed through surgery, the prospect of brain surgery was certainly a scary thing. Kristen and her family decided to come to the University of Michigan to see Dr. Muraszko for her surgery. Kristen's uncle, Dr. Bill Kuzon, Section Head of the Department of Plastic Surgery at U-M, highly recommended Dr. Muraszko. Kristen said that in the months leading up to the surgery she was extremely anxious although she tried to maintain a smiling face. She said "I'd be going through my day like everything was fine, doing well in school and with friends, and then my mom would say something and I'd just lose it completely."

However, when she met Dr. Muraszko and the team at U-M, Kristen says she knew she was in good hands. Kristin's Mom was focused on finding the best facility for her daughter. The combination of talented people and advanced equipment at the U-M made

the family's choice of hospital clear. The surgery went extremely well, and Dr. Muraszko was even able leave Kristen's long hair intact — the shaved area was completely hidden with some creative parting! The tumor was successfully removed and Kristen has enjoyed a full recovery. While the surgery did mean she couldn't compete in swimming or field hockey because her head is still "soft," she has been able to resume most normal activities.

The ordeal that Kristen has gone through has changed more than just her status on the team roster; Kristen says it has given her a completely new perspective. She said "this has made me appreciate how precious life is and the fact that you never know what is around the corner." She said the experience has also increased her compassion for others going through difficult times and this has led her to volunteer with her mom at her local hospital. She said the first time she walked into a hospital after her surgery she "just started to cry — it was so hard to see these other people in pain because I knew what that felt like."

Family support was critical. Sisters Jenna and Grace were worried for their big sister. Family members joined in as a team to do whatever they could to make sure the family had the proper care, emotional support, and love to get through this difficult challenge.



Kristen isn't the only member of her family who has been affected by this ordeal. Kristen's parents, Tom & Debra Blaszcykiewicz, have become generous supporters of the U-M department of neurosurgery. In June of this year, Tom, CEO of Accumed Corporation in NY, summited Mt. Ranier, raising over \$25,000 in the process. This is addition to generous contributions the family has made over the course of the year which have benefited resident education. Kristen

said she is very proud of her Dad and she looks forward to seeing the impact of the funds he raised as it is used to help pediatric neurosurgery patients. The department is so thankful for the support of the entire Blaszcykiewicz family, and look forward to using their gifts to benefit the Kristens of the future.

Julian T. Hoff PROFESSORSHIP

FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

We continue to work diligently on the Julian T. Hoff Professorship in Neurosurgery and are now only \$270,000 away from our goal. An endowed chair is a two million dollar endowment which provides annual funds to the faculty member who holds the chair. Professorships honor both the person after whom they are named, and the person who holds the chair, as chairs are reserved for scholars of national and international distinction.

Professorships are crucial to institutions like U-M, and they are crucial to the communities which those institutions serve because they impact all three areas of academic medicine—patient care, resident education, and academic research. A Julian Hoff endowed chair will honor Dr. Hoff in perpetuity while helping the department attract and keep surgeons who follow in his footsteps; compassionate clinicians, innovative researchers, and dedicated teachers.

We hope you will join us in helping to bring this Professorship to completion. Your gift is vital to our success. We hope you will join us in honoring Dr. Hoff, and help advance the causes which he has championed for so long. Please contact Amy Wilson, Director of Development, with any questions.

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Dr. Julian "Buz" Hoff

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STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Laura Zang

In 1971 while working as a nursing assistant during nursing school, Laura Zang was assigned to 9 West—the Neurosurgery floor. After she graduated, wanting to stay in a familiar area, she requested to stay on 9 West; little did Laura realize 35 years later she would still be a part of the Neurosurgery team! After completing her Masters in 1976, Laura worked as the Head Nurse/CNS in the Neuro ICU.

She joined the pediatric neurosurgical division in 1984, working with Dr. Joan Venes and was part of the development of a new service at Mott; Laura continues to work with the pediatric neurosurgical service today as a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

“Working with such bright and motivated people is a stimulant” Laura replied when asked what has kept her working in Neurosurgery for so many years. She added “the nervous system is so complex that the work is thought provoking and never boring. And I love the kids—their courage and motivation to be well is inspiring.” While there is much that Laura appreciates about

working in Neurosurgery, she acknowledges that “the inability to cure injuries and witnessing the life-changing consequences of damage to the nervous system” can be quite difficult.

It is Laura’s appreciation of the devastation caused by injury to the nervous system that has led to her heading up the ThinkFirst chapter sponsored by the Department of Neurosurgery, serving Southeast Michigan. ThinkFirst is an award-winning public education effort which works to educate children. The message is that you can have a fun-filled, exciting life without hurting yourself if you “ThinkFirst” and use your mind to protect your body.

Laura began working with ThinkFirst in 1984. She says “you only have to work with one 17 year-old who went from being a care free college freshman on football scholarship, to a ventilator-dependent-quadruplegic because of a split-second bad decision, to understand why prevention must be our mandate.” Laura’s commitment and passion for her patients is evident to all who have worked with her over the past 35 years. The Department of Neurosurgery is so grateful to the person responsible for assigning her to 9-West all those years ago!



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