Pausing to Honor the Memory of our Colleagues

Every day, across the United States and all over the world, small teams of surgeons, perfusionists, surgical trainees, students, and aircraft personnel climb aboard helicopters and small jets. Together they travel from one hospital to another in order to recover organs that will be used in a life saving organ transplant. On June 4, 2007, one of these aircraft didn’t return home. It was the jet carrying our team, and six members of our Transplant family were taken from us in one horrific instant.

The donor lungs for transplantation were also lost in the crash. Fortunately, the lungs had not yet been removed from the recipient. Four days later the patient was successfully transplanted. Another life was extended by our dedicated Transplant team.

We have always known there are inherent risks involved with transporting and transplanting organs. Sadly, nothing can prepare us for the sudden loss of our colleagues. Even though we may never know exactly what happened, we can strive to honor them by carrying on their work.

The impact of the loss of our Transplant Center friends and colleagues has been enormous. We will all remember exactly where we were, what we were doing, when we were told that David, Martin, Richard and Rick would not be at work tomorrow, nor will Dennis or Bill be flying. The next day, we were indeed there at work without them. Despite almost unbearable collective pain, the Transplant programs continued the life saving work we do.

I am tremendously proud of our team’s response to the tragedy. Everyone handled the event with grace and class. We cried together. We held each other. We went to funerals. We met with experts in grieving. We supported each other and the families who suffered the direct loss. While it helped, this loss will always be a sore spot in our hearts. The University did everything in its power to support us, and the families of our friends that were lost. From around the world we heard from innumerable Transplant colleagues and friends who expressed their condolences and shared our grief. We received cards, e-mail, flowers, and works of art. The pain this catastrophe caused was truly felt throughout the entire transplant community.

And now we soldier on, as our friends would want us to. These moments help us to understand how wonderful, how precious, how valuable, how important life is. We have an even greater appreciation for the miracle that life is, and for the profound gift that every living moment represents.

~ Jeffrey D. Punch, MD
Director, Transplant Center

The final report from the National Transportation and Safety Board is not finalized. The official summary of the accident is reproduced on page 8 of this newsletter.
David Ashburn, M.D.

His role in life was to be a healer

David Ashburn, M.D., 35, of Dexter, joined the University of Michigan in 2005 as a resident in pediatric cardiothoracic surgery. He was planning to begin a fellowship at U-M in pediatric cardiovascular surgery in July.

Ashburn was born and raised in Bristol, Tennessee, a community about 100 miles northeast of the Smoky Mountains. He received his bachelor of science degree in 1993 from Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina.

In 1998, he graduated from Quillen College of Medicine at East Tennessee State University. He then completed an internship and residency in general surgery at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. In 2003, he finished a two-year congenital heart surgery fellowship at the Hospital for Sick Children, the research hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto. He then served as chief resident at Wake Forest’s Bowman Gray campus from 2004-05 and began his residency at U-M in 2005.

He was the kind of man who hung his Eagle Scout certificate as proudly as his medical diplomas, which he earned with distinction. He was confident – and complex – enough to list among his interests on his resume cardiothoracic surgery and wild turkey hunting. And he was the kind of surgeon whose keen intellect, quiet compassion and skillful hands worked together in a symphony.

“He was a very outgoing, fun-loving, enthusiastic young man who was looking forward to a bright future,” said Michael Deeb, M.D., director of the Multidisciplinary Aortic Clinic. “David always felt that his role in life was to be a healer.”

David is survived by his wife, Candice, and their children Maddie, Annabelle and David II; and his parents, Marie and Alan Ashburn.
Richard Chenault II

Knowledgeable, compassionate

Richard Chenault II, 44, of Ann Arbor, joined the University of Michigan in 1985 as a laboratory assistant for the Department of Pediatrics, and served as a transplant donation specialist with the U-M Transplant Program for 10 years. Chenault was known throughout the Health System – and the larger community – as a knowledgeable, compassionate advocate for organ donation.

Chenault was so influential in the transplant arena that in 2006 he received the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ distinguished Medal of Honor for his efforts to increase organ donation at U-M. He was part of a team that helped U-M achieve an organ donation rate of more than 75 percent, establishing the University as one of the leading transplant centers in the nation.

Chenault attended Spring Arbor College, where he majored in chemistry, and transferred to Eastern Michigan University, where he majored in microbiology with a concentration in clinical microbiology and public health. In college, he was a member of the Beta Beta Beta professional biology fraternity and Phi Beta Sigma, where he served as president, treasurer and chaplain.

An All-American in both the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and the National Christian College Athletic Association, for 18 years he shared his love of sports with hundreds of students whom he coached in girls’ track and cross-country at Father Gabriel Richard High School in Ann Arbor.

Richard Pietroski, chief operating officer, Gift of Life Michigan, says, “Richard wore many hats – as a minister providing solace to families at the time of their loss, as an educator erasing myths about donation among the public; and as a clinical expert training the vast majority of University team members on the finer points of donation/transplant.”

Richard is survived by his wife, Janet, his two children, Kayla and Adrian; his parents and his siblings.
Dennis Hoyes

A great sense of humor, a wonderful concern for others

Dennis Hoyes, 65 and a resident of Blackman Township, was a pilot with Marlin Air, Inc., Belleville, Michigan. He worked in the insurance industry and as a professional pilot who flew executive flights on Beach Jets and King Airs aircrafts. Hoyes flew the Survival Flight Cessna periodically for 10 years.

“Dennis was a great individual, dedicated to flying with more than 4,000 hours in the air and an excellent track record. He just preferred to fly and really enjoyed flying for Survival Flight,” says Stu Dingman, owner of Marlin Air, Inc.

Hoyes also was an adjunct faculty member in aviation at Jackson Community College, served on the College’s aviation advisory committee and would give flying lessons to anyone who asked.

Hoyes was the previous owner of the Birch Insurance Agency and also owned and operated the Alf Insurance Agency. He sold his agencies to begin semi retirement in order to further pursue his love of flying.

He also worked for and operated Vector Aviation for corporate flying, and was a volunteer pilot for Wings of Mercy, which provides free air transportation to patients with limited income who need to travel far distances for medical treatment.

An avid outdoorsman who loved hunting, Hoyes relished the time he spent with his grandchildren and enjoyed taking them to Michigan State University hockey games, ice skating and on big lake fishing trips.

On the UMHS condolence page, a friend sums up what he will miss: “his wonderful sense of humor, his loving concern for others, the great games of Euchre.”

Dennis is survived by his wife of 35 years, Vanyce; his five children Brian, Brad, Robin, Tammy, and Kimberly; and his seven grandchildren Alicia, Brittney, Ryan, Jordan, Bryce, Adam, and Delaney.
Remembering Our Team

Rick Lapensee

Driven by his passion to be of service to mankind

Rick Lapensee, 48, of Van Buren Township, joined the U-M Transplant Program as a part-time transplant donation specialist in 2005. Lapensee was born and raised in Belleville, Michigan, and worked for the Van Buren Fire Department and General Motors Corporation in Security/Fire Protection before joining the Ypsilanti Fire Department in 1993.

Lt. Mike Kouba, who worked on the same shift as Lapensee, said the U-M job combined Lapensee’s passions: aviation and helping people.

“Whenever there was a flight, he wanted to go,” Kouba says. “It was the best of both worlds. It combined medical care and helping people with getting to fly planes.”

Ricky Lapensee knew at the age of three that he wanted to be a firefighter, donning a plastic fire hat and saying, “Gotta go,” each time the fire station across the street from his home would sound its alarms. One of his first jobs in high school was as a lifeguard – beginning his lifetime career of helping others.

After obtaining an associate’s degree in fire science from Washtenaw Community College, Lapensee graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a B.S. in public safety. He was pursuing a master’s degree in emergency management at EMU.

A quick-witted prankster who collected model fire trucks and loved flying radio-controlled model planes, he filled his barn with the model airplanes he created with his sons. A devoted son himself, he called his parents every day.

He talked all the time with his fellow fire fighters about his work for U-M, where he hoped to work full-time when he retired from fire fighting. As a former Transplant Center co-worker wrote on the UMHS condolence site, “He was totally driven by his passion to be of service to mankind.”

Rick is survived by his wife of 23 years, Claudia; his two sons, Brendan and Derrick; his parents, Lulu and Sonny Lapensee; his sister, and his extended family at the Ypsilanti Fire Department.
Bill Serra

Touched everyone he met

William Serra, or Bill as his colleagues call him, was Marlin Air’s chief pilot and check airman responsible for ensuring that Marlin Air pilots are proficient in in-house instructing, and for performing IFR checks to ensure pilots are skilled in instrument-only landings. Friends and colleagues remember the 59-year-old Macomb Township resident as a family man with a wry sense of humor who enjoyed his work and would go out of his way to help people.

Serra became a pilot shortly after serving in the U.S. military. With more than 12,000 hours of flight under his belt as a full-time pilot, including flying DC8s and 747s, he had a long track record of accomplishments. He received the Air Medal from the President of the United States for outstanding achievements while participating in aerial flights, and the 1993 Air Force Desert Storm and Desert Shield award as a civilian pilot for supplying materials and ammunition during Desert Storm.

In an interview with the Detroit News, Serra’s son, William Serra Jr., said, “He touched the lives of everybody he met and he just cared for people. That’s how he would have liked to be remembered.”

Bill is survived by his wife, Deborah; son, William Jr.; and daughters, Christine and Jennifer.
Martinus (Martin) Spoor, M.D.

A lifetime of compassion, humor, talent and selflessness

Martin Spoor was born in Media, Pennsylvania, on March 14, 1970, and moved to Holland with his parents at age one. When he was six years old, his family moved to Calgary, Canada. He excelled at school, and started playing violin. He decided at age eight that he wanted to be a doctor and insisted that his Snoopy doll be addressed as “Doctor.” At age 12, he decided to be a heart surgeon and never looked back at any other calling or occupation.

Spoor worked as a counselor for several years in the Rocky Mountains where his job was hiking, swimming, horseback-riding and conducting canoeing trips with six- to 16-year-olds. He so loved the camping experience and the children he worked with that he even went winter camping with them in minus 20 degree weather.

He met his wife Susan on the first day of his second year of University of Calgary medical school, and introduced her to the mountains. They skied, hiked, camped, listened to music, studied and fell in love.

Spoor graduated in May 1995 and moved to Edmonton to start his cardiac surgery residency while Susan finished medical school. A few days after her graduation, they got married in the Rocky Mountains.

Despite his very busy clinical and research commitments, friends and family alike describe Spoor as a natural, gentle, fun, loving father. He would do whatever needed to be done to be at his three children’s preschool graduations, music recitals, school presentations, sports games and bedtimes, and he was the official “runner” as each child learned to bike.

Stories abound from a lifetime of compassion, enthusiasm, talent, humor and selflessness. No matter how chaotic and stressful life would become around him, he never forgot to say “please” and “thank you.” He was unflappable.

In July 2003, Martin took a fellowship position in U-M’s Department of Cardiac Surgery where he always said he felt welcomed and at home.

Martin is survived by his wife, Susan Torrible, three children, his parents and a brother.
Memorial Service at UMHS on July 27, 2007

On Friday, July 27, 2007, the University of Michigan held a private memorial service to remember and honor our colleagues. During the service the team was honored and remembered in comments by Robert Kelch, MD, Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs, Michael Hagan, M.D. of Gift of Life Michigan, and Mary Sue Coleman, President of the University of Michigan. Dr. Kelch’s remarks highlighted these courageous men and the special connections that are made when one is part of an exceptional team. He noted that though individuals in healthcare deal with life and death routinely, we do not grow hardened to it. We are as devastated as anyone and mourn like everyone. Dr. Coleman shared that it is the legacy of these men to extend life through organ transplant, indicating there is no better way to honor them than to help extend human life. These men celebrated life, they lived with compassion, joy and love. They will be rooted in our memory forever and can never be replaced.

The University announced plans to commission artwork which will be prominently displayed on the medical campus to honor the indelible mark left behind. In addition the University is creating six endowments named for each of our fallen colleagues. The families will designate the use of the endowment funds in honor of their loved ones.

Preliminary NTSB Report

The final report from the National Transportation and Safety Board is not finalized. The official summary of the accident is reproduced below:

On June 4, 2007, at 1600 central daylight time, a Cessna 550 (Citation II), N550BP, piloted by a crew of two airline transport rated pilots, was destroyed when it impacted the waters of Lake Michigan near Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The 14 CFR Part 135 medical transport flight was operating on an instrument flight rules flight plan. Weather conditions at the time of the accident consisted of visual meteorological conditions near the surface with instrument meteorological conditions at higher elevations. The two crew members and four passengers were fatally injured. The airplane’s intended destination was the Willow Run Airport, near Detroit, Michigan. The flight originated from the General Mitchell International Airport (MKE), Milwaukee, Wisconsin, about 3 minutes prior to the accident.

Initial information from voice communications between the airplane and air traffic control revealed that the flight crew reported an emergency and their intention to return to MKE. During those communications, one of the flight crew members reported that they had experienced a run-away trim.

Initial examination of the radar data for the flight shows the airplane departing MKE and executing a climbing right turn to a northeast heading. The airplane’s initial climb lasted for approximately one minute at which time the airplane levels off for approximately 16 seconds at a pressure altitude of 3,900 feet. The airplane then begins another climb at about 1,300 feet per minute. This climb lasts for about 32 seconds at which time the airplane’s pressure altitude was 4,400 feet. The radar data then shows the airplane in a descending left turn for the remaining 69 seconds of the data. The average descent rate during this period was 2,260 feet per minute. The last radar return showed the airplane at 1,800 feet pressure altitude. The wreckage debris field was located about 0.2 nautical miles southeast of the last radar return.
Memorial Funds

If you wish to make a financial donation to support the families of the men who died on June 4, you can do so through the memorial funds listed below.

1. **David Ashburn Memorial Fund**: National City, 8123 Main St. Dexter 48130 (Please make checks payable to Candice Ashburn/Ashburn Fund.)

2. **Richard Chenault II**
   - **Richard Chenault II Memorial Fund**: Midwest Financial Credit Union, PO Box 130079 Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0079 (Please make checks payable to Janet Chenault/Chenault Fund.)
   - **My Father’s Heart Memorial Fund** (Education Trust for Kayla Chenault, daughter of Richard): LaSalle Bank, Main Office, 201 S Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 (Please make checks payable to “My Father’s Heart Memorial Fund.”)

3. **Dennis G Hoyes Memorial Fund**: Bond & Company, 113 West Michigan Avenue, Suite 301, Jackson, MI 49201

4. **Rick Lapensee Memorial Fund**: Bank of Ann Arbor, 7 W. Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197

5. **Bill Serra Memorial Trust Fund**: The Bill Serra Memorial Trust Fund will go towards lost wages, living expenses, and the completion of the education of Bill Serra’s children. To make a donation to the Bill Serra Memorial Trust Fund, please make checks payable to the Bill Serra Memorial Trust Fund and mail them to: Bill Serra Memorial Trust Fund, P.O. Box 240, Washington, MI 48094. Help save a life by becoming an organ donor.

6. **Spoor Children’s Fund**: A fund has been set up for the Spoor children’s education. Make a donation via the Spoor Family Web site: www.sitemaker.umich.edu/spoorfamily.

7. **U-M Transplant Team Assistance Fund**: The University of Michigan has established this fund to help the families of the six courageous men who devoted their lives to helping others. You can make a donation by calling 734-998-8851 or toll-free: 1-800-468-3482.

**Share your tributes**

The outpouring of support in the wake of the Transplant/Survival Flight crash has been overwhelming and heartwarming, and demonstrates that community is about so much more than an address or zip code. We’ve heard numerous poignant stories about acts of kindness large and small in tribute to the lives lost on June 4, and we’d like to share some of these stories with our Health System community as well as members of the public who are mourning with us. If you’d like to share a story about a tribute you or someone you know have made, please e-mail your story to kgazella@umich.edu. Please note that your story will be published on our public Web site.
We Thank You!

We have been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support we received during this difficult period. More than a thousand communications of support came from local, national and international sources. The support was received in a variety of forms, including cards, letters, flowers, food, offers of assistance, expressions of concern, and moments of silence at meetings. The support came from friends and colleagues, from hospitals, from organizations, from transplant centers, from transplant patients, and from strangers who felt empathy for our tragedy. Your words of support touched us deeply. Although they are too numerous to list, we want to share with you some expressions of support we received.

Thank you for your support! Although this has been a very challenging period in our program, please know that the knowledge of your support is assisting us in healing, and in hope.

The Transplant Center Team
These men celebrated life; they lived with compassion, joy and love. They will be forever in our memory and can never be replaced.
## Transplant Center’s Mission

The Transplant Center’s clinical mission is to provide our patients with the best possible medical care in a setting that emphasizes excellence, compassion, accessibility, responsiveness and prompt delivery of care.

### University of Michigan Transplant Center Contact Information

#### Liver Transplant Programs

**Adult**
- Liver Transplant Clinic - Gastroenterology Division
- 1500 E. Medical Center Drive
- 3868 Taubman Center, SPC 5391
- Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5391
  - Phone: 734-936-7491 (Local)
  - Phone: 800-395-6431 (Toll Free)
  - TTY: 800-649-3777
  - Fax: 734-936-2464

**Pediatric**
- Liver Transplant Program - Pediatric
- Medical Professional Building
- 1500 E. Medical Center Drive
- Room D3256, SPC 5718
- Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5718
  - Phone: 734-615-2462 (Local)
  - Phone: 877-543-7789 (Toll Free)
  - Fax: 734-763-7359

#### Kidney and/or Pancreas Transplant Programs

**Adult**
- Kidney and Pancreas Transplant Program
- 1500 E. Medical Center Drive
- 3868 Taubman Center, SPC 5391
- Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5391
  - Phone: 734-936-7491 (Local)
  - Phone: 800-333-9013 (Toll Free)
  - Fax: 734-647-3417

**Pediatric**
- Kidney Transplant Program - Pediatric
- C. S. Mott Children’s Hospital
- 1500 E. Medical Center Drive
- Room F6865, SPC 5297
- Ann Arbor, MI 48109-5297
  - Phone: 734-615-2040 (Local)
  - Phone: 877-543-7789 (Toll Free)
  - Fax: 734-615-2042

#### Heart Transplant Programs

**Adult and Pediatric**
- Cardiovascular Center
- 200 North Ingalls Building, 8B02
- Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5477
  - Phone: 888-287-1082

#### Lung Transplant Program

**Adult**
- Lung Transplant Program
- 1500 E. Medical Center Drive
- 3862 Taubman Center, SPC 5391
- Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-5391
  - Phone: 734-936-7491 (Local)
  - Phone: 800-333-9013 (Toll Free)
  - Fax: 734-936-6671

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**United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS)**

The United Network for Organ Sharing provides a toll-free patient services line to help transplant candidates, recipients, and family members understand organ allocation practices and transplantation data. You may also call this number to discuss a problem you may be experiencing with your transplant center or the transplantation system in general. The toll-free patient services line number is 1-888-894-6361.