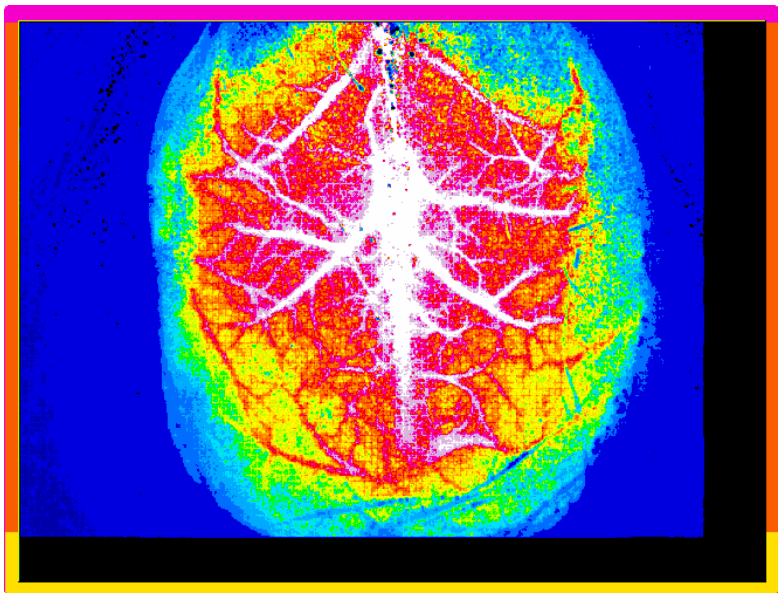
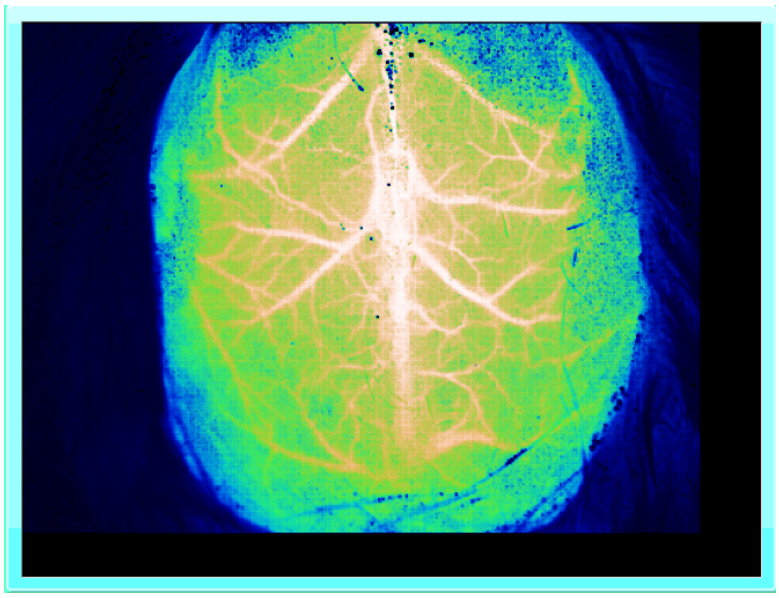
*Path*FINDER

SUMMER 2025





SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
PATHOLOGY

*Path*FINDER

Greetings and welcome to our Summer 2025 edition of *Path*FINDER, our semi-annual news magazine. Much is happening in our department and institution. The big news is the opening of the Critical Care Tower this fall: the first patients will enter on October 5th. The Critical Care Tower will house a new laboratory with a gross room for frozen sections, sixteen new OR's, a blood bank, point of care services, and an additional blood draw site for the sprawling UNM Hospital complex. The building and landscaping look beautiful. UNM has become a very modern academic medical center.

This edition of the *Path*FINDER features two recently retired faculty and professor emerita. Dr. Angela Wandinger-Ness, Distinguished Professor, tells of her decades-long career in our department and her dual outstanding efforts in research and research medical education and mentoring. Her areas of research expertise spanned diverse interests such as cellular mechanisms of autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease (ADPKD) and novel therapeutics for cancer. Dr. Wandinger-Ness has an impressive legacy of mentoring our next generation of scientists and has won prestigious mentoring awards from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), among others. Dr. Carla Wilson is another longtime faculty member in our department, who served as a TriCore Medical Director and had a distinguished career as a hematopathologist and educator in our renowned hematopathology division. Her area of expertise is in acute pediatric leukemias and, in her collaborations with Dr. Cheryl Willman and the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center, she was part of the team describing a novel high-risk subtype of acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

In this edition, we honor the recent passing of a cherished research faculty member, Dr. Dennis McCance. Prior to arriving at UNM Pathology, Dr. McCance had a distinguished research career working on human papillomavirus with a number of impactful discoveries. His role in our department included directing our Human Tissue Repository, an essential HSC shared resource utilized by researchers throughout the institution.



NANCY JOSTE, MD, MS
Professor & Chair of Pathology

As is the custom this time of year, we proudly report on our recent resident and fellow graduates and their future paths. We also commemorate the vibrant class of graduates from our Medical Laboratory Science program who are advancing to the next phase of their career. A big welcome to our new residents and fellows joining our program July 1! In the Faculty News section, we welcome our newly hired faculty and celebrate our 2025 faculty promotions as well as faculty recently retired.

Lastly, please note our newest opportunity for gifting in our department through the UNM Foundation. The Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) has a new fund initiated by forensic pathologist Dr. Corinne Fligner, a UNM School of Medicine graduate. This fund supports educational and professional development opportunities for OMI trainees. Links are provided to donate to this fund as well as the other funds in our department.

Wishing you a wonderful summer and safe travels!

SUMMER 2025

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Please follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X.

Cover image: Laser speckle images of blood perfusion in a mouse brain courtesy of Dr. Katherine Zychowski, Assistant Professor, UNM Department of Pathology.

FEATURE

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCHER AND ENTHUSIASTIC EDUCATOR

BY ANGELA WANDINGER-NESS, PHD, PROFESSOR EMERITA

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

In 1997/1998, my husband, Scott Ness, and I were both on the cusp of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. At Northwestern, I developed an interdisciplinary team of undergraduate and graduate students and laboratory technicians focused on membrane trafficking – the process whereby proteins are transported to and from the cell surface and various subcellular compartments. In line with this expertise, our group inaugurated a collaboration with physician-scientist and nephrologist Robert Bacallao, MD, on the Northwestern Medical School campus in Chicago. Together, we elucidated the cellular and subcellular impacts on kidney tubule cell functions to find opportunities to ameliorate organ damage caused by autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease. This inherited disorder ultimately causes kidney failure, necessitating dialysis or organ transplantation. Standing at the juncture of the following career phase in 1997/1998, Scott and I both felt that continued advancement of our research would greatly benefit from an appointment at a research-intensive medical school campus with opportunities to focus our research in translational and clinically relevant ways.

After numerous job interviews and offers across the country, Scott interviewed with the Chair of the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, Jac Nickoloff, PhD, who was eager to have him join the UNM Health Sciences Center. Based on UNM's commitment to supporting spousal hires, I was invited to interviews with the newly appointed Cancer Center Director, Cheryl Willman, MD, and Pathology Chair, Mary Lipscomb, MD. With the enthusiastic support of leadership and the Cell Pathology Group led by Regent's Professor and Harvey Chair Janet Oliver, PhD, and Professor Bridget Wilson, PhD, I was offered a competitive faculty appointment in the Department of Pathology. Scott and I were each offered beautiful laboratory space in the newly constructed Cancer Research Facility to develop cancer-relevant research programs -- offers we were pleased to accept. Having laboratories in the Cancer Center space was extremely attractive due to the opportunities to work near both basic and physician scientists representing different disciplines and having shared research interests.

DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AS A PATHOLOGY FACULTY MEMBER AND AS AN EDUCATOR.

From the outset, then Pathology Chair Mary Lipscomb, MD, encouraged me to seize opportunities and forge new paths. This empowered me to build and head a shared Microscopy Facility by serially securing federal funding to purchase and continuously update laser scanning and multi-photon microscopes over 15 years. The Facility, with the expert assistance of Dr. Rebecca Lee, enabled the training of students and fellows, and provided access to novel technologies not represented anywhere else in the state. The UNM Microscopy Facility remains a state-of-the-art Shared Resource that continues to innovate and support investigators campus-wide under the leadership of Pathology colleague Professor Diane Lidke and assisted by Technical Director Dr. Michael Paffett under the auspices of the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Becoming a skilled and effective educator is a lifelong journey. For me, it began with my undergraduate studies in Biochemistry at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I remember being keenly aware of and grateful for faculty who tried to engage with and ensure students' success. As a graduate student, I received training through the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of California, Los Angeles, in preparation for service as a teaching assistant. I was dedicated to facilitating student questions and problem solving and was recognized with an award based on positive student feedback. Yet, I still did not have a clear vision or toolkit for empowering students in their learning. Therefore, I applied for and received a prestigious National Science Foundation Career Development Award that enabled me to develop my research program and build a teaching and education portfolio while on faculty at Northwestern University. But only after joining the 2-year-long UNM Medical Education Scholars Program led by Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Faculty member, Stewart Mennin, PhD, I became versed in the science of how people learn. The process whereby faculty skillfully developed syllabi with clearly articulated learning objectives and roadmaps for student success was finally clarified.

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Research Lab group 2008



Research Lab group 2010

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Newly empowered, I revised graduate curricula as the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies. I developed a formal course encompassing both readings on the science of teaching and learning and formal practice in creating student-centered classrooms that support problem-solving in teams and provide authentic active learning experiences. These collective experiences also enabled Dr. Sherry Rogers and I to garner an Institutional Research and Career Development Award (IRACDA) for the formal professional development of postdoctoral scholars prepared to assume academic careers in research, teaching/education pedagogy, and leadership. Together, we trained over 60 scholars during 15 years of funding through this multi-million dollar grant.



National IRACDA network conference 2022



Jacob Agola PhD 2011



STC Innovation Award 2019

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS?

I always felt a strong sense of community within the Department of Pathology and across departments, colleges, and schools at UNM. This community willingly rallied around writing grants for new research centers, supporting research infrastructure, and cutting-edge instrumentation. Leaders were generally approachable and supportive of new initiatives. There was camaraderie between research teams that included sharing expertise and reagents and taking time to celebrate achievements, birthdays, and holidays.

WHAT DO YOU VIEW AS YOUR BIGGEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

I am most proud of engaging in translational research and engaging trainees from the high school to the postdoctoral levels in the thrill of making new scientific discoveries that have relevance for ameliorating human diseases. As a pivotal team member, Ms. Elsa Romero joined the group soon after I arrived at UNM. Her technical expertise and willingness to tackle challenging projects, establish new methodologies, and patiently train the many team members over two decades were key to the team's success. Over 17 years, our translational studies have focused intently on elucidating the functions of the polycystin-1 protein that is mutant in autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease. Team members identified key cellular defects responsible for cyst growth and progressive loss of kidney function. To do so, we established approved protocols for obtaining cystic and normal human kidneys through the National Disease Research Interchange (NDRI). We gratefully acknowledge the anonymous donors and patients and the services of the NDRI as an honest broker for procuring normal and diseased human kidneys that enabled this research. These opportunities to use primary human cells enabled lab members Tamara Roitbak, PhD, and Heather Ward, PhD, to identify a reservoir of human kidney stem cells deep in the papillary region of the kidney that could form kidney tubules in ex vivo organ cultures. Kidney tubules are central to waste excretion and urine concentration by the kidney; thus, identifying strategies for promoting organ repair through stem cells remains an active area of investigation by the broader community.

Being dually recruited to the UNM Pathology Department and the Cancer Center and losing my beloved father to an untimely death caused by cholangiocarcinoma spurred me on to develop a second, cancer-focused research program and engage in entrepreneurship. I was inspired by the heroic work of UNM Cancer Center gynecologic oncologists (Professors Carolyn Muller, MD, Kimberly Leslie, MD, Sarah Adams, MD, and Teresa Rutledge, MD), affording cutting-edge surgical and chemotherapeutic interventions to women receiving the devastating diagnosis of gynecologic malignancies. I wondered if there might be ways to develop therapeutic interventions that could further improve outcomes. And so, we embarked on collaborative studies to target enzymes called GTPases that act as on/off switches for signaling within normal cells but can also hijack normal regulatory processes and promote cancer cell growth when continuously ‘switched on’. At the same time, Pathology colleague, Professor Larry Sklar, PhD, had procured a multi-million dollar grant for a Molecular Libraries Program from the National Center for Advancing Translational Science (NCATS) to establish a small molecule screening center at UNM. Our team was competitively awarded NCATS funding to simultaneously conduct rapid, multiplexed screens of thousands of compounds against eight different GTPase enzymes. With the support of the UNM

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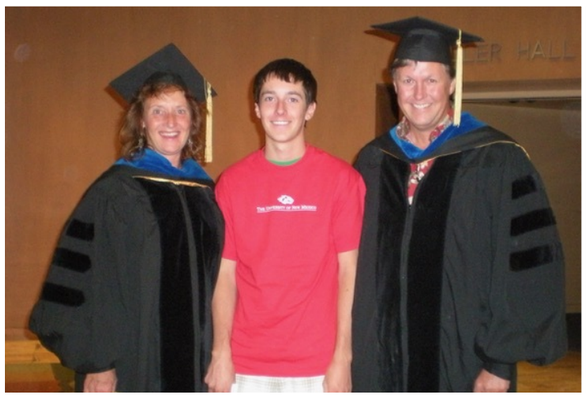
Knowledge Management Center and a Computational Bioinformatics team led by Professor Tudor Oprea, MD/PhD – including Dr. Oleg Ursu and Dr. Christian Bologa – we were able to categorize compounds that were active against select GTPase enzymes and conduct computer-aided-screening of millions of compounds to identify others relevant for further testing. Next came the challenge of validating 'putative lead compounds' through cell, animal, and human studies. The collective endeavor was a decades-long venture with longstanding colleague Professor Laurie Hudson, PhD, from the UNM College of Pharmacy, pathology trainees*, members of the above lab groups, and many valued colleagues, including pathologists, medical oncologists, statisticians, and research scientists. It was a gratifying, transdisciplinary team science endeavor that resulted in 10 peer-reviewed publications, multiple patent awards, and licensing agreements.

*Jacob Agola PhD, Soumik BasuRay PhD, Yuna Guo PhD, Charuta Palsuledesai PhD, Melanie Rivera PhD, Melina Silberberg MD, Leslie Toledo PhD, Anna Vestling MD

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TRANSITION SINCE RETIRING FROM UNM?

Electing to retire as a couple without any work commitments has been both rewarding and empowering. Scott and I have taken up sailing and enjoy traveling to destinations that have long been part of our dreams. In the 10 months since retirement, we have traveled to 10 different countries. We relish time with family, including children and grandchildren. When at home in Albuquerque, we enjoy daily walks in the beautiful desert open space with our golden retriever, Sonic, and meet-ups with former trainees, colleagues, and fellow retirees. I continue to support former trainees with transitions and have lent a hand with special initiatives when relevant. As our work lives fade into the rear view mirror, I look forward to more active engagement in hobbies such as painting, gardening, and reading.



Freshman son Gregory with Angela and Scott Ness 2009



Touring Machu Picchu Peru 2025

FEATURE

A FOCUS ON CANCER PATHOLOGY AND A CHANGE OF PACE

BY CARLA WILSON, MD, PHD, PROFESSOR EMERITA

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

I was thrilled to be selected for the hematopathology faculty position in 2001 among a pool of highly qualified applicants. This was a dream job for me as a native New Mexican, previous UNM medical student (89'), and pathology resident (94'). Unlike many more traditional medical centers, I have always appreciated the innovative teaching style at UNM and the flexibility to improve clinical services with novel approaches, as evidenced by the formation of Tricore Reference Laboratories. The biggest impact on my returning and staying at UNM has been the wonderful mentors, colleagues, and staff that I have been privileged to work with throughout my time at UNM. A medical school elective in cancer pathology with Dr. William Black influenced my decision to stay at UNM for residency. Hematopathology electives with Drs. Kathy Foucar and Wilbur (Butch) Williams, and research in Dr. Cheryl Wilman's laboratory on acute promyelocytic leukemia sparked my interest in pursuing a hematopathology fellowship at the City of Hope National Medical Center in California.



Skiing in 2025



Hiking Wheeler Peak with Dr. Mohammad Vasef

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DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE AS A PATHOLOGIST, BOTH CLINICALLY AND AS AN EDUCATOR.

My role as a faculty member in the Department of Pathology has been varied. My primary clinical responsibility has been to sign out hematopathology cases on the University Hospital (UH) and consult services, while teaching fellows, residents and medical students. Teaching responsibilities have also included medical student lectures, laboratory sessions, and trainee didactic sessions. I was fortunate to have Dr. Willman in the Comprehensive Cancer Center support a portion of my faculty salary to work in her research laboratory on pediatric acute leukemia. My medical directorships have included the UH hematology laboratory, Tricore flow cytometry laboratory, and 1-2 years at the UH chemistry and Santa Rosa NM hospital laboratories. Finally, I have signed out cytogenetic and molecular cases and have taught in a variety of formats including interesting case conferences, tumor boards, grand rounds, and journal clubs.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS?

My favorite moments have been working directly with trainees and colleagues on cases and presentations. The most stressful and tiring moments have brought some of the best laughs and camaraderie. One memorable moment was when the trainees were gone, Kaari Reichard and I covered the UH service in the hospital laboratory. Being overwhelmed with urgent bone marrow evaluations, Dr. Stuart Winter (pediatric hemeonc) hand-delivered lunch to us in the lab to keep us going! I have particularly enjoyed teaching and sometimes mentoring current colleagues including Drs. Czuchlewski, Chabot-Richards, Babu, Redemann, Mahmoud, Carmichael, and Bakhirev.



Portuguese class in Rio de Janeiro Brazil

WHAT DO YOU VIEW AS YOUR BIGGEST CAREER ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

My biggest career accomplishments include being: 1) the pathologist involved with the Arkansas multiple myeloma team who identified the pivotal role of thalidomide in the treatment of myeloma (NEJM 1999;342:1565), 2) a member of Dr. Willman's laboratory team using gene expression profiling to identify a novel high risk subtype of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (Philadelphia chromosome-like) with consideration for targeted therapies (Blood 2010;116:4874, 2010;115:1394), 3) a colleague of Dr. Foucar with contribution to >60 chapters in her Blood and Bone Marrow pathology texts, coauthor of Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) bone marrow book, and co-presenter at American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) workshops; 4) the developer of the initial Sunquest PowerPath word template (bone marrow) and the flow cytometry templates; and 5) a member of multiple national committees (American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP), College of American Pathologists (CAP), American Board of Pathology (ABP)) which improved the flow of information between UNM and pathologists at other institutions, many of whom have become life-long friends.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR TRANSITION SINCE RETIRING FROM UNM?

Full retirement has been a gradual process since I worked 25% effort for my final four years. My time has been spent traveling abroad, skiing (12 different ski areas this season), hiking, running, and making herbal products from my plants. After purchasing a condo in Taos, and reconnecting with retired high school classmates at my recent 50th high school reunion in Los Alamos, I am spending less time in Albuquerque. My hope is to slow down and reconnect with my pathology colleagues to become more involved with the group.



Las Vegas inaugural marathon 2024



Wandering in Balkans (Albania) 2024

IN MEMORY

DR. DENNIS MCCANCE

January 17, 1948 - February 5, 2025



With a heavy heart, we share with you the passing of Dennis McCance, PhD. Dennis passed at his home on Wednesday, February 5, 2025. Dr. McCance joined the Department of Pathology as a Research Professor in 2014 and has served as the Scientific Director of the Human Tissue Repository (HTR) until his death.

Dr. McCance received his science degree at Queen's University Belfast and his PhD from the University of Birmingham UK. Dr. McCance was appointed to his first faculty position at Guy's Hospital Medical School (part of the University of London) where he started to work on persistent viral infections, and was the first to use molecular pathology to show that certain polyomaviruses, such as BK and JC, persisted in the kidneys of normal healthy individuals after the initial acute infection.

From working on polyomaviruses, Dr. McCance started long-term research on human papillomaviruses (HPV) and, along with clinicians from University College Hospital, was one of the first groups to show a causative association between HPV type 16 and cervical cancer.

Dr. McCance was a classical cell biologist and virologist. His interests were cored in the differentiation of human keratinocytes (skin cells) and determining the important pathways required for controlled stratification and differentiation. Using Human Papillomavirus type 16 (HPV-16) to delineate pathways important for differentiation, his group's work supported that these viruses only infect epithelial cells and inhibit their normal differentiation. He studied keratinocyte differentiation inhibition by HPV E6 and E7 proteins from HPV-16. With Professors Lou Laimins and Elaine Fuchs, he reported a novel in vitro 3-dimensional culture system that recapitulates the morphological and biochemical changes observed in skin, which was the prescience that ultimately supported the ability to generate HPV virions in 3-dimensional raft cultures. Dr. McCance collaborated with Professors Albert Singer, Michael Campion, and Jack Cuzick in the UK and published one of the first studies supporting the psychosocial burden of receiving an abnormal Pap test result.

On the strength of this work, in 1989 Dr. McCance was recruited to the University of Rochester, NY to head up the Virology Unit in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. There he continued his work on HPV and cervical cancer and continued to publish in high impact journals.

In 2006, Dr. McCance was recruited to Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland, where he became the Director of the Centre for Cancer Research and Cell Biology. He stepped down from that position in August 2012 and joined UNM shortly after.

Over two decades, Dennis worked collaboratively with his wife, Dr. Daksha Patel, continuing to elaborate cellular de-regulation and genomic instability in cell biology studies including those to understand the influences of HPV16. He made many important scientific discoveries and made significant contributions to our knowledge of human papillomaviruses (HPV) as agents involved in the evolution of cervical precancer.

Dennis was an adventurous soul who enjoyed skiing, hiking, photography and birding. He was an intelligent and kind colleague and a fun-loving, plain-spoken scientist and generous friend to many. While driven as a family man and researcher, he never took life too seriously and always made time for laughter and fun. He gave everyone an example of how to build community and camaraderie. His family and friends will miss his humor and his upbeat attitude. His glass was always half full. He will be sorely missed by us all.

He is survived by his wife, Daksha Patel, his two sons, Finn and Callum, daughter in law Stephanie, and his beloved granddaughter Nyra Bonnie.

Excerpts from obituary published by French Funerals, February 13, 2025.



FELLOWSHIPS

CYTOPATHOLOGY

BY NADJA FALK, MD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR CYTOPATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Mary Torrez, MD



The University of New Mexico Department of Pathology is pleased to recognize our graduating cytopathology fellow, Dr. Mary Torrez. Raised in New Mexico, Dr. Torrez studied Biology at NMSU followed by medical school at UNM. During medical school years, she also completed a Post-Sophomore year fellowship in pathology with our Department! Luckily, we were able to keep working with her at UNM during her AP/CP Residency and her current Cytopathology Fellowship. During the previous academic year, Dr. Torrez completed a General Surgical Pathology Fellowship at the University of Michigan. During fellowship this year, Dr. Torrez was very active in the gynecologic oncologic tumor boards as well as research including three poster presentations at USCAP. Dr. Torrez has become outstanding not only at cytopathology diagnostics but also at ultrasound-guided fine needle aspiration technique. Dr. Torrez is a passionate teacher and has given many formal, as well as impromptu, teaching sessions this year for trainees and students. We wish Dr. Torrez all the best in her career and are excited that she has chosen to stay with us at UNM as an Assistant Professor in Anatomic Pathology!

FELLOWSHIPS

FORENSIC PATHOLOGY

INTRODUCTION BY DR. LAUREN DVORSCAK, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL INVESTIGATOR, DIRECTOR FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Forensic pathology fellowship is a formative, challenging year designed to build upon foundational knowledge in both medicine and pathology as it applies to cause and manner of death. This fellowship is fast-paced, experiential learning that ultimately reflects major gains in knowledge proportional to effort put in. This career is difficult on a good day, as we most often meet individuals on one of the worst days of their lives.

In reflecting on this year and the graduating class, the words patience, perseverance, and resolve come to mind. This group has inspired me to develop additional skills, applicable to my roles in leadership as a whole, with renewed appreciation that greatness truly lies in one's reaction to the situation at hand, regardless of the outcome. Further, I have learned to tap into resources I might never have considered useful before. In doing so, I came across some sage wisdom in the following quote shared below. I hope that it speaks to our team as a whole:

"I had learned early in life that we are all part of a larger society, and our work is our contribution to a free and safe life for all. If I went to a hospital and saw instruments that I had made, and knew they were being used to make life better, this gave me great happiness. The same is true for every job you do. Are you a teacher? You enrich the lives of young people every day! Are you a chef? Each meal you cook brings great pleasure to the world. Perhaps you do not love your job, or you work with difficult people. You are still doing important things, contributing your own small piece to the world we live in. We must never forget this. Your efforts today will affect people you will never know. It is your choice whether that effect is positive or negative. You can choose, every day, every minute to act in a way that may uplift a stranger, or else drag them down. The choice is easy, and it's yours to make."

-- Eddie Jaku, "The Happiest Man on Earth"

With that food for thought, my hope is that our graduating forensic pathology fellowship class reaps 10-fold what they have sown at OMI, in their future careers and wherever life takes them.

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES BY DR. EMILY HELMRICH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Christopher Cormier, DO



Dr. Cormier earned his medical degree at Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Parker, Colorado, and completed combined AP/CP pathology training here at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. During his fellowship year, Dr. Cormier never seemed to tire of taking on some of the most complex and difficult examinations, fueled in part by a surprising snack. Cheez-its (specifically the “reduced fat” variety for their extra crispiness) were never far from his desk, proving to be a main source of nutrition throughout fellowship. When he wasn't harassing FBI detectives for their scene photos – you could find him teaching our visiting rotators and trainees – which is why we are very excited that he will stay with us at the OMI and with the department as an Assistant Professor of Pathology.

Mariah Hukins, MD



Dr. Hukins received her medical degree from the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill and completed combined AP/CP training here at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. During fellowship, Dr. Hukins tackled difficult cases and had early exposure to testimony in a preliminary hearing, enhancing her fellowship with real-world experiences early on in her training. Further, her Santa Claus collection kept the fellow area festive all year. We wish Dr. Hukins well in her future endeavors, especially in her position in Raleigh, North Carolina.

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Kelly Hynes, DO



Dr. Hynes, originally from Ohio, obtained her medical degree at the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed combined AP/CP training here at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center. During this past year, Dr. Hynes took a special interest in teaching, and was mentioned specifically in thank you letters for her efforts. We are sure the rice cake thief also appreciated her unsuspecting generosity. Kelly will be missing New Mexico chile as she returns to Ohio as a forensic pathologist with the Franklin County Coroner's Office in Columbus.

Mon Miyakawa-Liu, MD, MS



Dr. Miyakawa-Liu earned their MD at the University of Queensland, Ochsner Clinical School and completed combined AP/CP residency training at Stanford University. During fellowship, they presented their project, entitled "Posttraumatic Meningitis in an Infant with Blunt Head Trauma and Severe Malnourishment: A Case Report" at the National Association of Medical Examiner's meeting in Denver, Colorado. Dr. Miyakawa-Liu also seemed to know all the good Albuquerque food spots (although ironically their best recommendation was the breakfast crunch wrap from Taco Bell, with the breakfast salsa). We wish them well as they head back to Stanford for an additional fellowship in molecular and genomics pathology.

Please welcome our new 2025-26 Forensic Pathology Fellows:



Brandon Gehris, MD

Degree: MD from The University of New Mexico, SOM, Albuquerque, New Mexico

AP/CP Residency: UTHealth, Houston, Texas

Coming from Houston, Texas



Megan Matlock, DO

Degree: DO from the Kansas City University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Kansas City, Missouri

AP/CP Residency: The University of New Mexico, SOM, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Staying here in Albuquerque, New Mexico



Daniel Nguyen, MD

Degree: MD from University of Illinois COM at Peoria

AP/CP Residency: University of California Irvine MC, Irvine, California

Coming from Garden Grove, California



Matthew Uy, DO

Degree: DO, Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Athens, Ohio

AP/CP Residency: San Antonio Uniformed Services Health and Education Consortium, San Antonio, Texas

Coming from the 99th Medical Support Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, as a Staff Pathologist



Tiffany Wang, MD

Degree: MD from University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

AP/CP Residency: Mount Sinai Icahn, New York, New York

Coming from New York, New York

FELLOWSHIPS

HEMATOPATHOLOGY

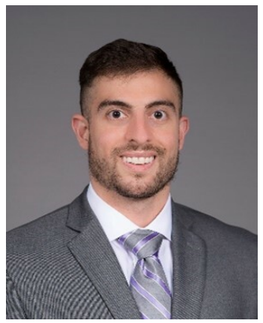
BY DANIEL BABU, MD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR HEMATOPATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The UNM Hematopathology Fellowship Program has now graduated over 100 fellows, and this year's class continues its outstanding legacy. This group carried out diagnostic care for patients both locally and nationally, often communicating with providers across multiple health systems. They were excellent consultants to our oncology colleagues and educators for junior trainees and even faculty. The fellows presented numerous conferences, performed laboratory inspections, and were engaged in research and quality improvement projects. They leave us as excellent hematopathologists, and we wish them all the best in the next phases of their careers!



Obianuju Mercy Anelo, MD

Dr. Obianuju (Mercy) Anelo earned her MD from Saba University School of Medicine. She brought her strong background as a medical laboratory scientist to pathology training, which she completed at the University of Tennessee in Memphis, where she also rotated at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Mercy was active in multiple pathology societies, serving as a CAP junior committee member and a presenter at national conferences. During fellowship, she collaborated on a Bone Marrow Pathology Group project with Dr. Foucar on myelofibrosis. Other scholarly activities included presentations on histiocytic/dendritic cell tumors and EBV positive B-cell lymphomas. Dr. Anelo will be moving on to community practice in Midland, Texas.



Donald Mignogna III, MD

Dr. Donald Mignogna III, originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, earned his MD from Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. During pathology training at University of Louisville, he built upon his leadership skills as an executive chief resident and as a participant in the CAP Engaged Leadership Academy course. He served as a CAP committee junior member and participated in research related to hematopathology and molecular pathology. During fellowship, Don gave presentations on atypical myeloblast phenotypes and the correlation between p53 immunostaining and TP53 mutation status in myeloid neoplasms. Don will build upon his molecular interests as he stays on another year at UNM for his molecular genetic pathology fellowship.



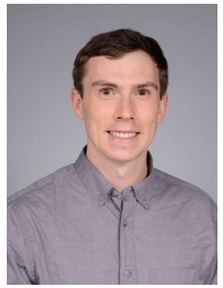
Caitlin Porter-Smith, DO

Dr. Caitlin Porter-Smith, originally from Texas, completed her undergraduate studies at Rice University and earned her DO degree from Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed pathology residency at Penrose St. Francis Hospital in Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she performed numerous bone marrow biopsy procedures, a rather uncommon skillset for a hematopathology fellow to have extensive training in! Caitlin completed *two* away rotations at UNM/TriCore during residency, a great indication she was keen on pursuing fellowship training here. During fellowship, she delivered presentations on T-LGL leukemia and flow cytometry findings related to myelodysplasia. Caitlin will be entering a private practice position in San Antonio, Texas.

Jessie Xiong, MD

Dr. Jessie Xiong completed her undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina where she also earned her MD degree. During pathology residency at University of Colorado, she served as chief resident and was active in multiple national societies, including as a CAP junior committee member. During fellowship, she submitted a case with Dr. Czuchlewski that was accepted to the upcoming Society for Hematopathology workshop. Other scholarly activities included presentations on practice patterns in peripheral blood smear reviews and the WHO lymph node cytopathology classification system. Jessie brings her cytology interests into her next phase of training back at University of Colorado, where she will be starting a cytopathology fellowship!

Please welcome our new 2025-26 Hematopathology fellows:



Nathan Hogarth, MD

Degree: MD from University of Louisville SOM

AP/CP Residency: University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

Coming from Louisville, Kentucky



Chase Hwang, MD

Degree: MD from John A. Burns School of Medicine

AP/CP Residency: University of Hawaii, Honolulu, Hawaii

Coming from Honolulu, Hawaii



Martika Percy, MD

Degree: MD from St. George's University School of Medicine, Grenada, West Indies

AP/CP Residency: The University of New Mexico, SOM, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Staying here in Albuquerque, New Mexico



Andrea Shields, MD

Degree: MD from Loma Linda University School of Medicine

AP/CP Residency: Loma Linda Medical Center, Loma Linda, California

Coming from Loma Linda, California

FELLOWSHIPS

MOLECULAR GENETIC PATHOLOGY

BY RAMA GULLAPALLI, MD, PHD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR MOLECULAR GENETIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

I am delighted to write about the 2025 graduating class of fellows of the UNM Molecular Genetic Pathology fellowship, Dr. Clay Kibler and Dr. Joseph Kaminsky. Both of them were exceptional in their efforts to provide excellent care to patients here in New Mexico. From their participation in medical/resident/fellow teaching, educational seminar presentations and CAP lab inspections, they have done it all! All the while proactively managing weekly molecular pathology case sign out. They have gained multiple skills associated with the clinical practice of molecular pathology practice including sign out of next generation sequencing cases. As the new incoming program director of the MGP fellowship, it has been a delightful experience personally to see Drs. Kibler and Kaminsky graduate as my first fellows (even though it was only for a part of the year).



Joseph Kaminsky, MD

Dr. Kaminsky earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Memphis (Biochemistry and Chemistry) followed by an MD degree from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine in 2015. He then continued at Memphis for an AP/CP residency from the UTHSC Department of Pathology. What followed subsequently was remarkable – Dr. Kaminsky then went on to complete four pathology fellowships! Dr. Kaminsky has completed fellowships in Cytopathology, Surgical Pathology, Breast and Gynecological Pathology and finally, Molecular Pathology here at UNM. He has a vast breadth of knowledge! More than that, Dr. Kaminsky has done an excellent job as a Molecular Pathology fellow at UNM. Dr. Kaminsky has participated in multiple initiatives including internal and external CAP lab inspections, presented on molecular topics and was actively engaged in teaching medical students, pathology residents and visiting fellows. He is leading an effort for a pathology outlines textbook chapter focused on multi-gene expression assays in breast cancer.

Dr. Kaminsky will be moving to the Department of Pathology, George Washington University in Washington, DC, as a faculty member (Assistant Professor). We wish him all the best on his academic journey!

Dr. Kaminsky refers to himself as a "chihuahua person." His immediate family has ten chihuahuas (including all of his siblings). On his way from Connecticut to New Mexico, he randomly met a trucker at a gas station dog park with many chihuahuas (10?) in his truck cabin... This chance encounter taught him how to locate gas station dog parks on the road!

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Clay Kibler, MD

Dr. Kibler is originally from Houston, Texas. He completed his undergraduate studies (Biology, Cell and Molecular Biology and Neurobiology) at The University of Texas at Austin with high honors and subsequently earned his MD at UTMB in Galveston, TX. He then completed his AP/ CP residency training followed by Hematopathology fellowship here at UNM. During his training, Dr. Kibler authored multiple publications including textbook chapters. Dr. Kibler has performed exceptionally during his Molecular fellowship training. He gave multiple presentations, including one focused on the bioinformatics of variant calling in Next Generation Sequencing. He is also a co-author in an ongoing chapter writing effort on multi-gene expression assays in breast cancer. This will be published in the pathology outlines web textbook soon. Keep tuned...

Dr. Kibler is also an avid gamer! He is active in Super Smash Bros. Melee, a fighting game released in 2001 for Nintendo Gamecube. He regularly attends in-person SSBM tournaments and is currently ranked 3rd in New Mexico. He is an avid piano player. Dr. Kibler will be moving to San Juan Capistrano, California, in July for a molecular hematopathologist position at Quest Diagnostics. We wish him all the best with his new position!

We congratulate our graduating fellows and would like to welcome our new 2025-26 Molecular Genetic Pathology Fellows:

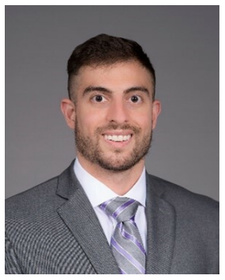


Mukul Divatia, MBBS

Degree: MBBS, Medical College Baroda, Maharaja Sayajirao University, India

AP/CP Residency: Houston Methodist Hospital, Houston, Texas

Coming from Seattle, Washington, University of Washington Department of Lab Medicine and Pathology, as an Associate Professor



Donald Mignogna III, MD

Degree: MD from Geisinger Commonwealth SOM, Scranton, Pennsylvania

AP/CP Residency: University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

Staying here in Albuquerque, New Mexico, after his Hematopathology Fellowship at The University of New Mexico, SOM

FELLOWSHIPS

SURGICAL PATHOLOGY

BY SAM REYNOLDS, MD, PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR SURGICAL PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

We would like to introduce our new 2025-26 Surgical Pathology Fellow:



Dalton Wise, MD

Degree: MD from Universidad de Monterrey, Mexico

AP/CP Residency: Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, West Carson, California

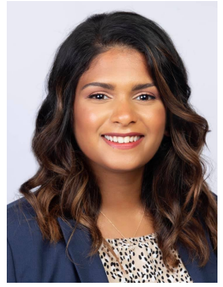
Coming from Torrance, California

FELLOWSHIPS

TRANSFUSION MEDICINE

BY JOSEPH GRIGGS, MD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DIRECTOR TRANSFUSION MEDICINE PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Welcome to our new 2025-26 Transfusion Medicine Pathology Fellow:



Neesha Siriwardane, MD

Degree: MD from Louisiana State University School of Medicine in Shreveport

AP/CP Residency: Houston Methodist Hospital, Houston, Texas

Coming from Bellaire, Texas

RESIDENT GRADUATION

EFFIE BERRY, MD

BY DANIEL BABU, MD, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



While it would be easy to simply list Dr. Effie Berry's training record and impressive list of accomplishments in medicine, I would need to preface this summary by admitting that one cannot possibly do full justice to their story in and outside of medicine, at least the parts that are publishable! When I first met Effie (and their cat who butted in) during a virtual interview, they had just completed their medical education at Oregon Health Sciences University, where they earned their Master of Clinical Research (MCR) and MD degrees and had started a surgical internship year, which was especially grueling during the initial COVID-19 pandemic stages. While many who transition from direct patient care to pathology choose to "never look back," for Effie it continued a longstanding passion for patient advocacy. During the pandemic, they volunteered much of their time to work with COVID-19 patients, impressing the medicine teams in the process.

During residency, they have been a strong advocate for their UNM colleagues, especially through their work with the Union. They have participated in multiple research or QI projects, even giving a presentation at the Department Pathology Research Day last year. They served as one of our residency representatives for CAP and as one of our chief residents for the 2022-2023 academic year. Effie has an impressive record of leadership in social and humanitarian causes and delivered multiple eye-opening seminar series presentations on transgender health issues for the Pathology department. Dr. Berry leaves their mark on the program, not just as someone who throws the best parties and can tell the most outrageous life stories (and rock many a karaoke night), but as someone who always looks out for their successors. Effie is known for creating survival guides for junior residents, helping newbies navigate the complex UNM/TriCore Labs systems, and making their peers aware of resources that could make their work lives easier. This is of little surprise given their record of selfless advocacy for others. Effie will channel this into the next phase of their career when they move to Seattle to start a Transfusion Medicine fellowship at Bloodworks Northwest with University of Washington. We wish Dr. Berry all the best in their career!

RESIDENT GRADUATION

MEGAN MATLOCK, DO

BY MARISSA TAFOYA, MD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR



We are proud to celebrate the graduation of Dr. Megan Matlock, who joined us from Kansas City University where she earned her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine. Since arriving at the University of New Mexico, Dr. Matlock has exemplified excellence in pathology, leadership, and service.

During her residency, Dr. Matlock was deeply involved in academic contributions, participating in numerous presentations and publications in both surgical and forensic pathology. Her passion for forensic pathology has been clear since the beginning of medical school, and we are thrilled that she remained dedicated to that calling throughout her training. Dr. Matlock served as Chief Resident from 2023 to 2024 and also held the role of Medical Student Liaison for the UNM Pathology program. In these roles, she demonstrated her natural ability to lead with both competence and compassion, mentoring peers, supporting students, and enhancing our community.

Outside of medicine, Dr. Matlock leads a full and vibrant life. She is a proud mother with a 20-month-old daughter, Charlotte, who was born during her third year as chief resident. Dr. Matlock also shares her home with Joseph, a loyal dog she adopted during medical school, who has proven to be a dedicated (and snack-loving) companion. Occasionally, a betta fish joins the household ecosystem. As a native of Catoosa, a small town just outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Dr. Matlock carries with her the values of hard work, humility, and heart. She has always enjoyed returning to her roots and is planning to move closer to family after completing her fellowship. In New Mexico, she has found joy in hiking the East Foothills and relaxing in the Jemez hot springs. Each year, she makes a valiant effort to grow tomatoes, spinach, peppers, and squash in her garden with varying degrees of success, but always with optimism.

Dr. Matlock is smart, ambitious, and determined. She balances the demands of a rigorous medical career with grace and resilience, setting a remarkable example for all who know her. It has been a privilege to work alongside Dr. Matlock and contribute to her training and we are incredibly fortunate that she will be staying with us to pursue her fellowship at the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI).

When most people think of forensic pathology, they picture anatomy, investigation, and maybe even a little drama (thanks to TV shows). However, when I think of a forensic pathologist, I think about the difficult phone calls they make to the spouse, to the child, and to the parent, that lost something so precious to them. They are the person who provides a much-needed piece of closure during the deep grief that we, as humans, have felt or will feel. I think about the empathy, the compassion, and the emotional resilience required each day to bring peace to those that were left behind. Dr. Matlock embodies that strength.

We are excited to see all that she will accomplish in the next chapter of her career, and we are honored to continue this journey with her as a colleague. Congratulations, Dr. Matlock!

RESIDENT GRADUATION

MARTIKA PERCY, MD

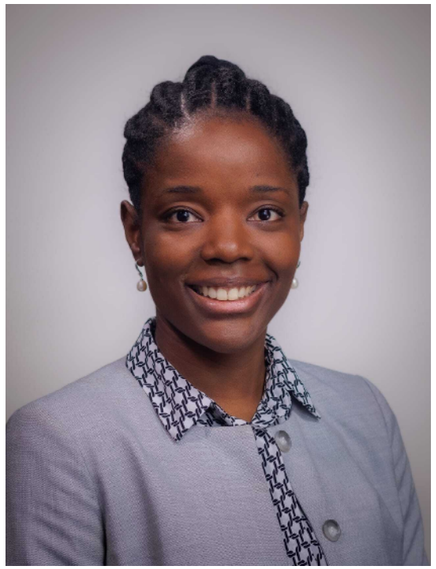
BY EMILY VOLPICELLI, PA, SENIOR LECTURER II

Martika, Martika

So proud to know and meet'cha
And for you I present this poem.

I'll never forget, your first day you said, "Hey"
To the lab staff when you entered the room
"My name's Martika," you said with a smile,
"What's yours? I'll be around for a while."

That first impression, so profound
Showed a heart that glows
You ensure everyone around
Is comfortable and knows
They're all respected and on the same team
Even the lab staff, and other non-MDs
That's just you.



You make everyone feel welcome
You make everyone feel connected
To see you not smiling is seldom
And your actions have always reflected
The UNM mission To BE KIND.

For now, let's rewind, to your early days
To the place you were raised
Where your passion grew for the sea and for sun
Where you and surrounding nature became one

A love you've integrated into your art
And created a unique style that sets you apart
Although you mainly use it for balance
It truly is an exceptional talent.

Your creativity sparks not only on paper
But through a camera lens
You're a phenomenal picture taker

At so many of our special events
You captured the action
You found great satisfaction
Snapping shots of laughter and smiles
Rewards and interactions...

I guess it's taken me a while
To realize, it takes a special soul
To find joy in a hobby
Such as art and photography

You capture the best in people
The pose of a flamingo
The elegancy of a flower

The brilliance of a scarlet ibis
The infinite bond between nature and us
And that love holds so much power
But again, that's just you.

RESIDENT GRADUATION

What makes you great for pathology
Is you find art in everything you see
Thanks for times that you shared with me
The cellular beauty in the slides that you read
I learned from you a lot, too.

Not only do you express
But you encourage others to show talent, too
Like the pieces of art in the resident room
There hangs your bison and your woman with nature
I love how you transferred her thoughts onto paper

Then there's the website featuring more
The Resident Art and Talent Showcase
Is a delight to explore

Landon and Rebbe, and Allison Hade
Clay and Yonaton, too
They've all shared their talents
And to me it's apparent
We're a gifted bunch, it's true!

So please, I ask
On Martika's behalf
If you've got talent, show it!

Nicole and your cross-stitch
Effie and your projects
Alanah, your baking takes skill!

Don't be shy or coy or modest
Share your talents, with all of us!
It's what Martika would want you to do.

We won't talk about the time you helped Yonatan triage a Whipple
When you officially realized it really isn't that simple
But you came back for more on your GI rotation
When you asked to gross one, maybe to re-live the frustration?

I admire your drive
Your courage and composure
With me as your guide
We worked shoulder to shoulder

The experience showed that where you felt weak
You recognized, committed and climbed to the peak
You did it, and now it's behind you
But then again, that's just you.

If I had to choose just one word to describe you
I'm really not sure that's something I could do

You're creative, graceful, witty and fun
Some of which you'd have to be
To do your stand-up comedy!

You're thoughtful and kind
With a radiant mind
I'd also say dedicated
Driven and focused
Thoughtful and sincere
Supportive and selfless

Insightful, analytical
Physically fit
You even joined a fitness team
To really test your grit!

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RESIDENT GRADUATION

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Definitely hard-working
You barely took breaks
Genuine and real
You've never been fake

You're sincerely caring
But not overbearing
And of course,
Intelligent, too
Without hesitation
You answered every question
Even when I was testing you!

The calmness you maintained
When the gross room was insane
Is another admirable trait

Is that too many?
Ok, I'm done....
It's too hard to choose just one!
But that's because it's you.

Thanks for liking my poems the best
Thanks for recommending Galaxy Quest
Thanks for choosing UNM from the rest
I always thought you'd be good at breast
But bone and soft tissue will do.

Martika, Martika
Guess now this is see 'ya
THANK YOU
For being YOU



Graduating residents at celebration event held June 13, 2025. Pictured from left to right: Drs. Effie Berry, Megan Matlock and Martika Percy.

OUR NEW RESIDENTS

PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING OUR INCOMING PGY-1 RESIDENTS!



Federico Di Staso, MD, PhD

Dr. Di Staso received his MD from Università degli Studi dell'Aquila Facoltà di Medicina e Chirurgia in Italy and will be completing his PhD in April 2025 from the University of L'Aquila in Italy. Dr. Di Staso worked as a general practitioner in Italy before completing his ophthalmology residency at University of Rome and ophthalmic pathology subspecialty training at the University of L'Aquila. He was elected to the Sigma Xi Honor Society as a full member in recognition of his contributions to the research community. He is a peer reviewer for several journals, including Journal of International Medical Research. Federico enjoys working on car engines and videogames in his spare time.



Theodore Muka, MD

Dr. Muka will be joining us from the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Theo completed his bachelor's degree in biology and genetics at New Mexico State University. During his time at UNM, he was trained as one of the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Scholars, participating in TeleECHO telehealth clinics, helping to provide care in underserved settings. He was awarded an ASCP Medical Student award for travel to the Medical Student Genomics Workshop at the 2024 ASCP meeting. His research interests lies in genetics, where he has studied nutrient signaling pathways in Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and the role of RUNX2 in T-ALL. Theo's interests include running, fantasy/sci-fi media, and pickleball.



Cheyenne Painter, MD

Dr. Painter will be graduating from the University of Virginia School of Medicine. Prior to this, she received her B.A. in Humanities from University of Arizona, and her M.S. in Microbiology from James Madison University in Virginia. Her research experience began with a project which took her to Panama at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute, investigating endophytic fungi from plant tissue and, later, tumor markers for tuberculosis. Her clinical experience includes working as an MLS at Sentara RMH Medical Center in Harrisonburg, VA. Cheyenne has a wide range of interests, from jiu jitsu, to racing in triathlons, to spending time with her young daughter.



Mariam Posso, MD

Dr. Posso received her MD from Universidad de Santander Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud in Colombia where she served as class president for six years as well as graduated as valedictorian. She received the Young Researcher scholarship from the Colombian Ministry of Science, an award for exceptional students interested in developing their research skills. Dr. Posso worked as a clinical research coordinator in the Foscal Clinic in Bucaramanga, Colombia, where she supervised data retrieval on the largest COVID-19 cohort in Colombia and developed clinical protocols and health initiatives related to COVID-19. Mariam is a talented dancer and has worked as a flamenco teacher previously.

CLINICAL TRAINEES 2025 GRADUATION EVENT



Congratulations to our graduating residents and clinical fellows! Group photo from celebration event held June 13, 2025.

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES PROGRAM SPRING 2025 GRADUATION



Congratulations to our MLS Program Spring 2025 graduates! Pictured from left to right: Kade Sandager, Julie Rector, Briette Mendoza, Fatima Martinez, Aileen Linares, Emma Kohl, Jessica Filpo, Maria Bueno Palacios. Commencement event was held May 17, 2025.

FACULTY NEWS

NEW FACULTY

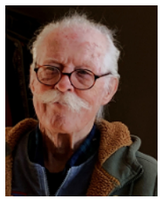




Maria Agoytia, PA, Lecturer III, Anatomic Pathology – June 1, 2025

Cheryl Batson, BS, MLS (ASCP), SBB (ASCP), Lecturer II, Medical Laboratory Sciences – March 1, 2025





Christopher Cormier, DO, Assistant Professor Clinician Educator, Office of the Medical Investigator – August 15, 2025

D. Ted Eastlund, MD, Visiting Assistant Professor, Clinical Pathology – April 1, 2025

Cassie MacRae, MD, Assistant Professor Clinician Educator, Office of the Medical Investigator – August 1, 2025





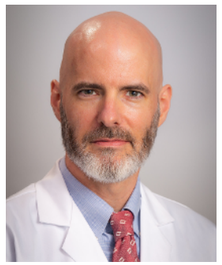
Mary Torrez, MD, Assistant Professor Clinician Educator, Anatomic Pathology – August 1, 2025

FACULTY PROMOTIONS - JULY 1, 2025

Julia Allen, MS, from Lecturer III to Senior Lecturer III

Sam Reynolds, MD, from Associate Professor to Professor Clinician Educator

Mara Steinkamp, PhD, from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with Tenure


FACULTY RETIREMENTS

Margaret Alba, DOM, MLS (ASCP), BB (ASCP), Principal Lecturer II – April 1, 2025

Edgar Fischer, MD, Professor Emeritus – May 1, 2025




CLINICAL EDUCATION AWARDS 2024-25

Marissa Tafoya, MD, received the Faculty Teaching Award this year. Voted on by Residents, this award recognizes a faculty member that demonstrates excellence in teaching and mentoring, who goes above and beyond to stimulate intellectual curiosity, excelling in patient care and professionalism in the residents they supervise, and serves as a source of inspiration as a person and physician. *Dr. Tafoya pictured with Co-Chief Residents Drs. Bilberry and Stenberg.*





Darrell Horton, MD, PGY-3, received the Resident of the Year Award! Voted on by Faculty and Fellows, this award recognizes a resident that demonstrates excellence in provision of high quality patient care, depth of medical knowledge, demonstration of practice-based learning, communication skills, professionalism, and systems-based practice. *Dr. Horton pictured with Dr. Evelyn Lockhart.*

Nathan Lickteig, DO, PGY-3, received the Resident Educator Award. Voted on by Residents, this award recognizes a resident who demonstrates excellence in teaching their peers and other learners, who goes above and beyond to support the educational mission of the program, and who is a wise mentor for colleagues and junior residents. *Dr. Lickteig pictured with Dr. Evelyn Lockhart.*





Mary Torrez, MD, Cytopathology Fellow, received the Fellow Educator Award. Voted on by Residents, this award recognizes a fellow who demonstrates excellence in teaching the residents, who goes above and beyond in spending time with all learners, excels in patient care and professionalism, and serves as a mentor and role model to residents. *Dr. Torrez pictured with Dr. Evelyn Lockhart.*

USCAP MEETING 2025 PRESENTATIONS



UNM Pathology was well represented at the USCAP 2025 meeting, held in Boston, MA, from March 22nd - 27th. **Aysha Mubeen, MD** presented a platform session on "Risk-Reducing Surgery for Non-BRCA Cancer Predisposition Gene Mutations" with resident Darrell Horton, MD, and fellow Mary Torrez, MD.



Third-year Pathology Resident **Dr. Darrell Horton**, mentored by **Dr. Aysha Mubeen**, also presented two posters at the USCAP25 Annual Meeting. They are titled "Estrogen and Progesterone Receptor Expression across Molecular Subtypes of Endometrial Carcinoma: A Single Institution Experience," (nominated for the Stowell-Orbison Award) and "Implementation of the Molecular Classification of Endometrial Carcinoma in Routine Practice: A Single Institution Clinicopathologic and Molecular Study."



A poster by Cytopathology fellow **Dr. Mary Torrez,** mentored by **Dr. Aysha Mubeen**, entitled “Histopathologic Outcomes of p16 INK4a /Ki-67 Dual Stain Cytology Including Unsatisfactory Results: A Single Institution Experience” was also accepted for presentation.

PATENT AWARDED

Congratulations to our inventors! U.S. Patent Number 12,298,305 was recently issued for the invention titled “Activated GTPase-Based Assays and Kits for the Diagnosis of Sepsis and Other Infections.” This groundbreaking work is a testament to the innovation and dedication of our research team and reflects the growing impact and strong reputation of our pathology department in advancing diagnostic medicine.

We recognize **Tione Buranda, PhD, Angela Wandinger-Ness, PhD,** and **Virginie Bondu-Hawkins, MA,** who spearheaded this achievement.







THE ANNUAL GEORGE D. MONTOYA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD



The Montoya family along with our 2025 Montoya scholarship award recipients, Parisa Nikeghbal and Megan Tuineau.

Thank you to the record number of Montoya family members for attending this year’s award presentation on Monday, May 12, 2025! The Department of Pathology is grateful for their continued support of the department’s research and training initiatives by providing scholarship opportunities to graduates and undergraduates pursuing careers in biomedical research.

Congratulations to this year’s George D. Montoya scholarship award recipients Parisa Nikeghbal and Megan Tuineau. Both are outstanding students who continue to excel in their fields of study. Parisa is a Biomedical Sciences Graduate Program student in Dr. Mara Steinkamp's lab in Pathology; her dissertation is "Patient-Derived Ovarian Cancer Models Provide Insight into Cancer Cell-Intrinsic and Immune Cell-Dependent Effects on Therapeutic Response." Megan is a PhD candidate in Dr. Nikki Jernigan's lab in Cell Biology & Physiology; her dissertation is "The pathophysiological role of mitochondrial acid-sensing ion channel 1a in hypoxic pulmonary hypertension."



On the left, Dr. Mara Steinkamp with Parisa Nikeghbal, and on the right, Megan Tuineau with Dr. Nikki Jernigan.

FEATURE

THE OMI FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

BY MAGGIE SCHOLD, UNM FOUNDATION



Established in 2024 by Corinne Fligner, MD, the OMI Forensic Pathology Fellowship Professional Development Fund supports the education and professional development of OMI Forensic Pathology Fellows.

Dr. Fligner, UNM School of Medicine class of 1976, credits the UNM Office of the Medical Investigator with a strong, positive influence on her choice of a career in forensic pathology. A New Mexico native who also completed her undergraduate studies at UNM, Fligner went on to residency at the University of Washington, Seattle, and fellowship at the King County Medical Examiner's Office, also in Seattle. She was on faculty at the University of Washington from 1984 until 2017, serving as the Director of Autopsy and After-Death services from 1993 to 2017. She is Professor Emerita.

Her career focused on forensic and autopsy pathology, with emphasis on the education of forensic pathology fellows and anatomic pathology residents, and promotion of the autopsy as an important component of medical care and education. Other areas of expertise include perinatal and fetal pathology, placental pathology, and maternal mortality. She has been an active member of the Maternal Mortality Review Panel of the Washington State Department of Health since 2016.

"The purpose of this fund is to provide resources to supplement the training of forensic pathology fellows by allowing them to attend courses and/or training programs that might otherwise not be available to them. I hope that others who have had the opportunity to train and/or work at OMI will consider donating to this fund to support the OMI mission," Dr. Fligner said.

Dr. Lauren Dvorscak, Deputy Chief Medical Investigator and Director of the Forensic Pathology Fellowship Program, shared: "We cannot thank Dr. Flinger enough for her generosity in starting the forensic pathology professional development fund, which will serve as a direct benefit to the fellows at the Office of the Medical Investigator. As a state-funded medical examiner's office, funds to supplement fellow development in leadership skills, to support attendance at national toxicology seminars, or to enhance other educational experiences are limited. The flexibility of this endowment allows us to annually tailor fund usage to the needs of the forensic pathology fellowship class. We are wholeheartedly gracious of Dr. Flinger's generosity and will enthusiastically use these funds to support fellows in furthering our dedication to both excellent patient care and training of the next generation of forensic pathologists."

MAKE A GIFT

Your gift today impacts health care and research for tomorrow. Please consider making a recurring, one time, or legacy donation to one or more of the following funds:

THE PATHOLOGY EDUCATION FUND

Advance the education and research missions of the department.
VISIT: The Pathology Education Fund

THE CHEN HEMATOPATHOLOGY LECTURE SERIES

Support the Department of Pathology annual Hematopathology Lectureship and the education and training of future pathologists.
VISIT: The Chen Hematopathology Lecture Series

THE FOUCAR ENDOWMENT

Invest in future Pathologists. Recruiting and training highly proficient Pathology residents and fellows is a top priority.
VISIT: The Foucar Endowment

THE GEORGE D. MONTOYA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Encourage UNM students to pursue a career in biomedical research.
VISIT: The George D. Montoya Research Scholarship Fund

THE HARVEY FAMILY ENDOWED CHAIR AND PROFESSORSHIP

Invest in Pathology research faculty. Endowed professorships attract and retain expert faculty who teach passionately and lead innovative translational research.
VISIT: The Harvey Endowed Chair and Professorship

OMI FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Enhance the education and professional development of OMI Forensic Pathology Fellows.
VISIT: OMI Forensic Pathology Fellowship Professional Development Fund

THE THOMAS M. WILLIAMS & MARGARET G. WILLIAMS ENDOWMENT FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Support the greatest educational and training needs within the Department of Pathology.
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