

UNM

medicine

spring 2019

the new face  
of medicine

UNM-trained  
doctors share  
their stories



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In collaboration with WONCA and the National Rural Health Association, The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center is proud to host the 16<sup>th</sup> WONCA World Rural Health Conference.

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# UNM medicine

spring 2019

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## Dear Friends,

Our School of Medicine was established more than 50 years ago with the express purpose of educating physicians to serve the complex medical needs of people in New Mexico. Over the years, we have shaped our priorities to meet our patients where they are, always being mindful of their unique concerns.

Recently, we have identified three overarching challenges for New Mexico, and have prioritized new initiatives in these areas that will inform our education, research and clinical programs – and which we expect will guide our growth into the future.

It all starts with child well-being, because early investment in the health of our children is the key to preventing a host of downstream maladies. As you'll read in this issue of *UNM Medicine*, Dan Savage, professor and longtime chair of the Department of Neurosciences, plays an influential role with his longstanding research into fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. As Dan prepares to turn over the chairmanship to his colleague Bill Shuttleworth, he expects to spend more time in the lab.

Healthy aging is a timely topic in New Mexico, which is predicted to have one of the oldest populations in the U.S. within the next dozen years. Our newly formed residency program in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, led by W. Evan Rivers, MD, will greatly enhance our ability to provide acute inpatient care for patients recovering from stroke and other neurological disorders. Ten new residents will start this year.

Behavioral health, with a focus on substance abuse disorder, is at the forefront of everyone's mind, especially given the deadly toll from prescription opioid overdoses. We're fortunate to be adding a new fellowship in addiction medicine in the Department of Family & Community Medicine under the guidance of Valerie Carrejo, MD. These fellows will add critical clinical expertise at a time when it's most needed.

I am continually reminded of the intense sense of purpose that motivates our students, residents and alumni. They well understand the important role they have to play in promoting health and well-being in our state. I'm pleased to share several of their stories here.

These stories inspire me and fill me with optimism. I hope you'll feel the same way.

With warm regards,



Paul B. Roth, MD, MS  
Chancellor for Health Sciences  
CEO, UNM Health System  
Dean, UNM School of Medicine



# dean's Letter



PHOTO BY JETT LOE

# highlight on healing

## New Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Residency Underway

### at a GLANCE

The University of New Mexico's Division of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) was established a few years ago to enhance recovery for patients who have received lifesaving stroke and trauma treatment at UNM Hospital.

Now, the division is taking a major step forward with the establishment of a new residency program. "We've been working on this for about two years," said division chief W. Evan Rivers, MD, associate professor in the Department of Neurology. Ten candidates for the four-year residency have been selected from a pool of 90 applicants.

"The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education gave us our accreditation in January," Rivers said. "We were able to start recruiting people in mid-February for the match that happened in March."

Come July 1, five newly graduated medical students will start their internship year, followed by three years of residency, Rivers said. At the same time, a second cohort of five who have already completed their internships elsewhere will commence their three-year residency stint.

"The PGY 2 group includes some really stellar people," Rivers said. "They are going to be leaders in the rehabilitation field."

The new residency program director is Lawrence Horn, MD, a prominent expert in traumatic brain injury who previously led the PM&R department at the Wayne State University School of Medicine, Rivers said.

The field of physical medicine and rehabilitation dates back to the 20th century polio epidemic, when it was recognized that patients who survived the viral infection had long-term medical and rehabilitative needs, Rivers said.

Later, the scope of care grew to include people recovering from the after-effects of stroke, trauma, orthopedic injury and neuroinflammatory conditions.

"We started getting really involved in the early - but not acute - care of these patients," Rivers said.

Today, PM&R specialists work in both acute care inpatient rehab hospitals and in outpatient settings alongside physical and occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists. "We can help people become considerably more independent over the long term," Rivers said.

PM&R physicians are also skilled in pain management and they perform a variety of diagnostic and perioperative procedures, including electromyography, lidocaine and steroid injections and percutaneous spine stimulator implantation.

The creation of UNM's PM&R program was an outgrowth of the UNM Health System's investment in 2017 in the Lovelace UNM Rehabilitation Hospital, Rivers said. At the time, UNM had no in-house capacity to provide follow-up care to patients emerging from its trauma, neurosurgery and neurology services.

The unique partnership between UNM and Lovelace Health System centered around a Lovelace-owned 62-bed acute inpatient rehab facility in Albuquerque's Martineztown neighborhood. It also encompassed existing Lovelace outpatient rehabilitation clinics in the metro area.

Meanwhile, the division's ranks have grown to include faculty from the departments of Neurosurgery, Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Pediatrics and Orthopaedics, as well as colleagues at the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Rivers said.

And, Rivers said, the advent of the residency program could eventually lead to the division being promoted to departmental status within the School of Medicine.

# Changing of the Guard

## NEW CHAIR TAKES THE HELM IN NEUROSCIENCES

by Kara Leasure Shanley

A generation ago, brain research at the UNM Health Sciences Center was scattered across multiple departments – that is, until a reorganization proposed by Paul B. Roth, MD, MS, dean of the School of Medicine, led to the creation of the Department of Neurosciences.

Now, the department is writing a new chapter, as founding chair Daniel Savage, PhD (*above, right*), turns over the reins to his successor, Bill Shuttleworth, PhD (*above, left*), and makes plans to devote more time to his own research.

Savage, Regents' professor of Neurosciences, was elected by his peers as the department's first chair in 1997.

"We were really excited at the time because we were launching a new department," he says. Savage revamped graduate student education and helped develop the organ block medical student curriculum still in use today. He also encouraged collaborations among the department's faculty.

"The culture that we developed over time was to create a situation where faculty benefit from working effectively together, collaborating on grants and other kinds of tasks," Savage says.

The department won training grants from the National Institutes of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism for studying alcohol's effects on the brain, with a particular focus on babies at risk for fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

Later, it received funding to create the New Mexico Alcohol Research Center, one of just 16 such centers in the country. Savage has for many years studied the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure on how brain cells function and how that affects behavior in those progeny.

"I wanted to deal with this largely unappreciated problem as a public health issue," Savage says. "I also wanted it to be an example of how people can come together – even in a

relatively small institution – and do more than one might think they would be able to do."

Shuttleworth, a Regents' professor of Neurosciences, says that Savage's vision has been vital to the department's success.

"I don't think it's necessarily always about creating people to do what we do, but I think it's about providing the environment where people can come and learn what it is to think critically," he says.

Shuttleworth joined the department as a young researcher without much experience, but his colleagues pushed him toward a tenure track position. "Dan and all the faculty actually were really supportive when I was very unproven," he remembers.

His own work focuses on spreading depolarizations – "brain tsunamis" that leave behind a wake of inactivity after brain trauma. His research suggests these depolarizations might be involved in many conditions besides stroke and traumatic brain injury.

The Neurosciences faculty have proven their cohesiveness and they share a sense of purpose, he says.

"The brain is the last great frontier – walking in to work, I think there's still a feeling like we're picking away at one of the biggest, most interesting mysteries there is," Shuttleworth says.

Savage meanwhile is looking forward to spending more time in the lab and reflects back on his time as chair with satisfaction.

"There have been a lot of bumps in the road, there have been some disappointments, but all-in, all I feel very pleased and honored to work with the colleagues that I've had," he says. "I feel blessed that I can look back on my career and say, 'This turned out OK.'" 🍷



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE LAUNCHES

# new fellowships

Three UNM School of Medicine departments are launching new fellowships to expand their postgraduate medical education offerings and better meet patient needs.

In the Department of Family & Community Medicine, associate professor Valerie Carrejo, MD, will become program director for a new **addiction medicine fellowship** that recently won approval by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).

UNM's 12-month fellowship, which will include two slots per year, is one of the first programs approved in the U.S., said Carrejo, who also serves as medical director of the UNM North Valley Clinic.

Program fellows will gain experience at both UNM Hospital and the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Affairs Medical Center, as well as a variety of UNM outpatient clinics, Carrejo said. The program will start in July.

"It is very exciting," Carrejo said. "Our goal is to produce specialty-trained primary care physicians so that they can go out into the communities in our state to be a resource to all the other primary care providers in their area."

Assistant professor Vanessa Jacobsohn, MD, will serve as associate program director, and Karen Cardon, MD, will be the supervising physician at the VA medical center. Leah Nelson, MD, a current resident in preventive medicine, will be one of the first fellows, Carrejo added.

The Department of Neurology is adding a new **vascular neurology program** with two accredited fellowship positions, according to program director Atif Zafar, MD, associate professor and chief of the department's stroke team.

"Our first fellow starts in July," Zafar said. "He completed his residency from University of Minnesota and will do his stroke fellowship at UNM." The search is under way for a second candidate to join in 2020, he said.

The new fellowship will train neurologists in a variety of cerebrovascular diseases, including cerebral cavernous malformations. UNM is a recognized center of excellence for treating the condition, which involves a congenital abnormality that can cause dangerous bleeding in the brain. Some native New Mexicans suffer from a hereditary form of the disorder.

The Department of Surgery has created a new **fellowship in complex general surgical oncology**, said program director Ashwani Rajput, MD, the Victor and Ruby Hansen Surface Professor and chief of the Division of Surgical Oncology.

"This is a two-year fellowship that is undertaken after completing a general surgery residency, and it is a boarded specialty," Rajput said. "There are only 27 ACGME-approved programs in this specialty."

The first fellow will join the program in summer 2020. Associate professor Bridget Fahy, MD, will serve as the associate program director, Rajput said.

"This program helps New Mexico by fulfilling our mission of educating the next generation of surgical oncologists and potentially increasing the number of fellowship-trained specialists in the state," he said.

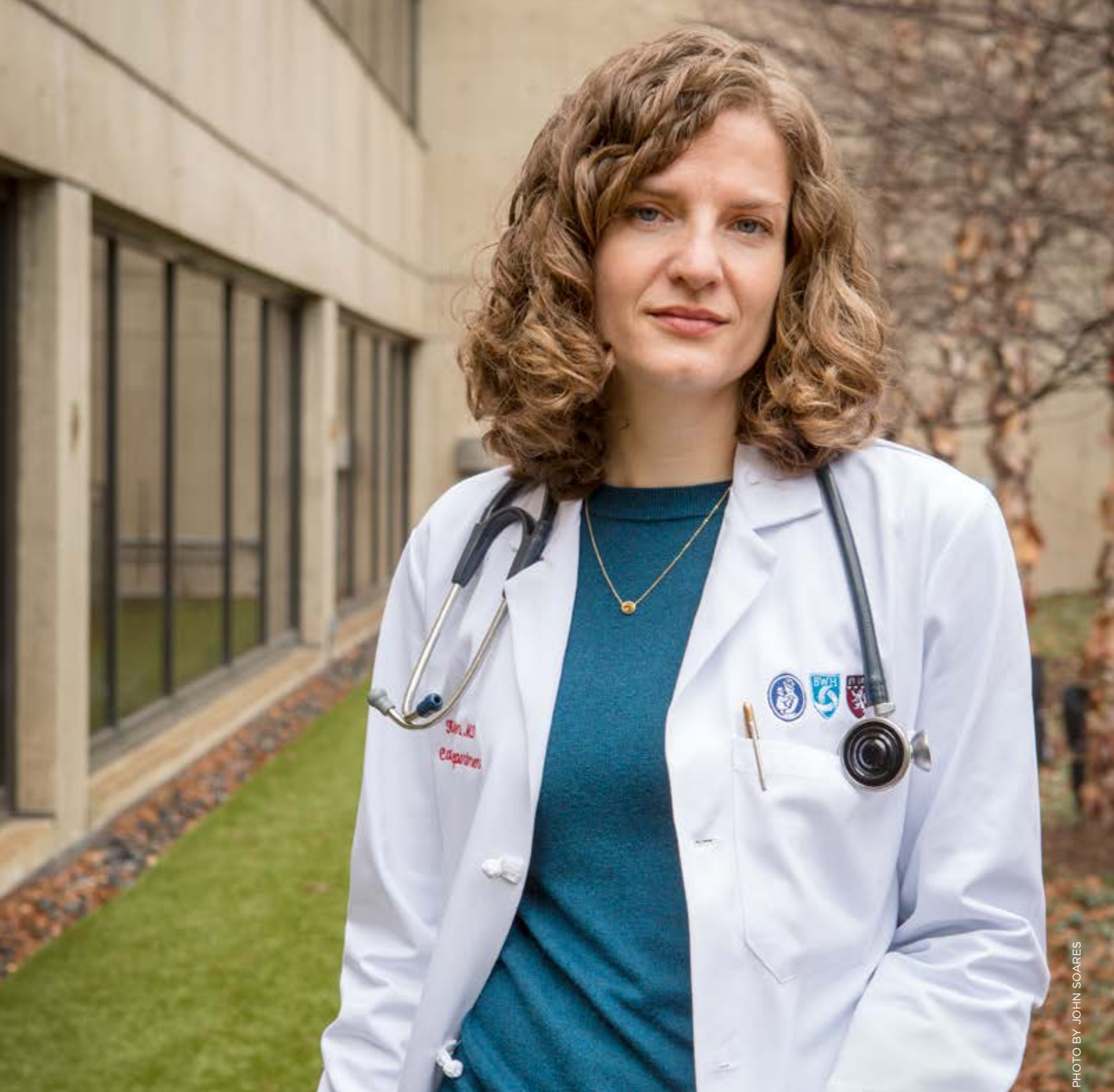


PHOTO BY JOHN SOARES

# THE VIRTUES OF SELF-RELIANCE

by Amanda Gardner

Keri Shafer, MD '06,  
Brings Her Rural New Mexico  
Upbringing to Harvard



**A**s a new intern at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, New Mexico native Keri Shafer was called on to perform a complex procedure in the ICU. She not only completed the procedure, she excelled.

“The resident supervising me was very surprised,” recalls Shafer, MD '06. “She said a lot of the students entering residency didn't have that level of skill and knowledge. I explained to her how hands-on the education at UNM is. I think it's also the personality of New Mexicans. When we get a problem we just figure out a way.”

Shafer's family has been figuring things out in New Mexico for five generations. Her grandmother's grandmother moved to Carrizozo at the turn of the 20th century and acquired a sheep (now cattle) ranch that has stayed in the family. Her entire family, save her siblings, still live in the area – her grandmother, uncle and cousin on the original spread.

And although Shafer now works in the big leagues – she is an instructor at Harvard Medical School and a staff cardiologist specializing in adult congenital heart disease at Boston Children's Hospital – she credits her New Mexico roots with her success.

“Growing up in a ranching family, hard work is the most valuable thing in our family,” she says. “If you aren't a hard worker, then you aren't respected.”

In addition to helping out at the family ranch on weekends, Shafer put her hard work into becoming a cardiologist, something she had wanted to be ever since she was a teenager and one of fewer than 200 students in Carrizozo's tiny K-12 school.

“I don't know why a cardiologist,” she says. “I didn't know any cardiologists. We didn't even have a cardiologist in my town.” But she had watched an aunt and uncle struggle with the cardiovascular effects of tobacco use.

“Growing up in a ranching family, hard work is the most valuable thing... If you aren't a hard worker, then you aren't respected.”



Keri with her father (far left), uncle (left) and cousins (right) participating in a ranch work day while home from cardiology fellowship

The dream to pursue medicine spurred her decision to go to Texas Tech as an undergraduate, rather than New Mexico State University, where the rest of her family had gone – and where her great-grandfather was at one point the oldest living alumnus.

“A girl from my high school had gone to Texas Tech and then graduated from UNM as a primary care physician,” she says. “Also, I wanted to be in a program that would allow me to do a lot of science.”

At Texas Tech, Shafer enrolled in the agricultural college, pursuing a pre-veterinary degree. That way, she could take advantage of the opportunities of an enormous school without feeling lost.

“As a student from a very small school, I was very intimidated by a large university,” she says. “The ag department felt like part of a community.”

Over the next four years, Shafer attracted a number of mentors who steered her back to UNM for medical school. “They had a really positive opinion of the UNM School of Medicine,” she says. “It wasn’t a question for me. I didn’t apply anywhere else.”



“It’s not a question of if I want to come back...it’s figuring out how to become a mature physician so that when I do move back, I can make the most possible impact.”

And at UNM, Shafer encountered another mentor, Dara Lee Lewis, MD, a cardiologist originally from Boston, who would be instrumental in developing her career. “Up to that point I liked the idea of cardiology, but when I met her and a couple of other people, I really knew,” says Shafer.

Lewis helped Shafer decide on residencies and Shafer now lives and works in Lewis’s hometown, caring for young-adult patients who were born with heart disease. That’s in addition to her teaching duties at Harvard, co-directing a continuing medical education course on exercise and congenital heart disease and being involved with the American College of Cardiology.

Shafer has noticed some differences in how medicine is practiced in Boston versus New Mexico.

“Patients in Boston, generally speaking, have the opportunity to see a doctor who is specialized in exactly what they have, as opposed to places like New Mexico, where there really aren’t enough specialists to go around,” she says.

“That’s good and bad. The good thing is that you get an ultra-specialist physician. The downside is the providers don’t get to be quite as broad-based.”

Shafer does one day expect to return to practice in New Mexico, which is seldom far from her thoughts. She has a Zia symbol on her office door and photos from home on the wall. She has also formed friendships with fellow New Mexicans working in her department.

“It’s not a question of if I want to come back,” she says. “I think it’s figuring out how to become a mature physician so that when I do move back, I can make the most possible impact.”



# PUTTING THE PATIENT FIRST

Her Medical Experiences Set  
**Beth Saltzman, MD '07**  
on the Path to Healing

by Michael Haederle

When she was 30, Beth Saltzman had two medical encounters that turned out to be life-changing.

First, she underwent an endoscopy for an acid reflux condition. “I kind of felt like a dog strapped to a table,” she recalls. “I felt very victimized having this procedure. I felt horrible afterward.”

Then, a plastic surgeon operated to remove a growth on her back. “He approached it completely differently,” she says. “He was the expert, but he wanted me to be a part of the decision-making.”

Saltzman got to wear her own pajamas in the operating room and listened to Enya during surgery. “It was lovely,” she says. “It went beautifully and it made me feel the opposite of when I was getting the endoscopy.”

These experiences sparked an epiphany: “I want to be an agent of change in health care,” Saltzman says. “That was the sentence in my head.”

That flash of insight in 1993 set Saltzman, MD '07, on an entirely different path than the one she'd been on. Today, the former software developer and medical librarian is a palliative medicine-trained hospitalist at Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque.

In that role, she tends to hospitalized adults, many of whom suffer from advanced chronic illness – and she has found an opportunity to make good on her vow.

“As a hospitalist I am full-service,” Saltzman says. “I now have a unique ability to see things farther up the track, to talk about treatment programs, work with families and provide them with enhanced education about end-stage illness. We can have more robust conversations about the futility of heroic measures in the setting of advanced illness.”

“I didn’t even have a bachelor’s, so I had a long road to get there. I was 30 years old when I had this awakening.”

Growing up, a medical career was the farthest thing from Beth Saltzman’s imagination. She was born in Philadelphia, but her parents moved the family to San Francisco in 1967. Her mother had been trained as an artist. Her father, a CPA and lawyer, had a hemorrhagic stroke when she was 8.

Although he recovered enough to resume working, he suffered some permanent brain damage, she says. Her parents separated and she saw him infrequently until she was an adult, when he was diagnosed with multiple types of cancer.

In the six months she spent with him before he died in an intensive care unit she saw first-hand the limitations of end-of-life care. “At that time they really didn’t have palliative medicine per se,” she says.

After high school, Saltzman took a stab at college, but wound up working for a family friend who owned a software development company. It was the early 1980s, and personal computers were just starting to enter the marketplace.

A few years later, Saltzman switched directions and went to work as a medical librarian at the Planetree Health Resource Center in San Francisco. Planetree had been launched in 1978 by Angelica Thieriot, wife of *San Francisco Chronicle* publisher Richard Thieriot, after a traumatic experience while hospitalized for a life-threatening illness.

“She wanted to change the way health care happens in the United States,” Saltzman says. That meant bringing the patient’s human needs into the foreground. In the pre-

internet era, Planetree maintained a medical library that was open to the public and promoted patient-centered care in a hospital setting.

In her new role, Saltzman performed medical literature searches for people from around the world. “That was the beginning of my path toward medicine, where I was opening up to things in my life,” she says.

Following her own traumatic medical experience, Saltzman decided that the most effective way to make an impact in health care was to pursue a career as a physician. The problem was, she had never completed her college coursework.

“I didn’t even have a bachelor’s,” she says, “so I had a long road to get there. I was 30 years old when I had this awakening.” She turned to the one-year bachelor’s degree completion program at the California Institute of Integral Studies, from which she graduated in 1995.

That same year, she and her partner moved to Santa Fe. “We had some friends here,” Saltzman says. “We’d visited many times. As I was considering places to train, what caught my eye was that [at UNM] they were doing a problem-based curriculum.”

Saltzman found a job running the medical library at what was then St. Vincent Hospital and she started taking prerequisite courses for medical school at Santa Fe Community College and UNM, one class at a time. Along the way she also became a firefighter with the La Cienega Volunteer Fire Department. “I just kind of plugged away,” she says.



“UNM is different. UNM has had a value of the humanism in medicine, and it’s real...”

She matriculated as a first-year medical student in 2002. During her time at UNM, Saltzman conducted research on the benefits of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for first-year medical students. She also remembers doing a summer rotation in Santa Fe and an elective rotation in the ICU prior to a rotation in India.

Saltzman completed an extra elective year in Santa Fe before graduating in 2007 and matching for a residency in internal medicine at the University of Vermont. She intensively explored integrative and palliative medicine during her residency, and did a fellowship at San Diego Hospice, at the time one of the oldest and largest programs of its kind in the country.

Saltzman returned to New Mexico in 2011 to work at Presbyterian’s hospice program. She spent a year and a half there before being recruited as a hospitalist. “They saw me as an asset to add to their department, given the tremendous burden of hospitalized adults with advanced chronic illness,” she says.

Saltzman is still passionate about improving patient experience, especially at the end of life. Putting the patient’s needs first and foremost leads to better outcomes because it builds trust.

“So many people have been betrayed by medicine, betrayed by physicians and haven’t been listened to,” she says. “They don’t want to come back to the model, and so they go out to alternatives, only to die of a malignancy when it didn’t have to happen.”

She had another chance to experience the medical system from a patient’s perspective in 2016, when she underwent cancer surgery. She sings the praises of her surgeon, fellow School of Medicine alumna Sara Meltzer Jordan, MD ’06, both for her skill and her kindness.

“There is definitely a value of caring in my colleagues from UNM,” she says. “UNM is different. UNM has had a value of the humanism in medicine, and it’s real – it’s not just lip service. When I now work with my UNM colleagues we care about the patient.”

Sadly, Saltzman adds, “I have innumerable colleagues who don’t practice that way. They think that by reducing their involvement that they’re improving their own quality of life.”

But that is short-sighted, she says. “I think that actually contributes to burnout. As much as you’re limiting your ‘give,’ you’re also limiting your ‘get.’”

At the end of the day, Saltzman says, it’s important to remember where you come from.

“I went into medicine as a person,” she says. “Those experiences always form the basis of how the subsequent education has hung itself on the scaffolding of my medical knowledge. I’ve had experience as a daughter, a patient and a medical librarian. The most important thing is how you bring your compassion to this field.”



PHOTO BY JETT LOE

# coming home

Kaitlin Petranovich, MD '16, Returns to Her Roots

by Amanda Gardner

As soon as she received the news that she had been accepted into UNM's Combined BA/MD Program, Kaitlin Petranovich flew into the family room to tell her mother, who then told her mother over the phone. It was a fitting sequence, given that family and community are everything to Petranovich – and that it was her grandmother who had alerted her to the program in the first place.

“She had read about how the state was trying to start a program,” says Petranovich, MD '16. “I cannot remember a time in my life when [being a physician] wasn't what I wanted to do. It's just always been a part of me and part of the plan.”

And now the plan included UNM. Petranovich soon became one of 28 students in the second class ever to enroll in the program.

The combined degree program was started in 2006 to help ease the state's physician shortage by selecting students who wanted to practice medicine in New Mexico, especially candidates from rural communities. Students graduating from UNM's College of Arts and Sciences are directly admitted into the School of Medicine, provided they keep their grades up.

Petranovich was a natural, having grown up in Gallup and always intending to bring her medical skills back to her home state. It's something she is doing sooner rather than later.

Fresh from completing her family medicine residency at the University of California, San Diego, she will return to New Mexico this summer to take up a position as a family medicine physician at a Presbyterian Healthcare Services clinic in Albuquerque's South Valley.

Petranovich's paternal great-great grandparents came to Gallup from Croatia to work in the coal mines and on the railroad. Her maternal grandfather was a dentist with the U.S. Public Health Service whose last move was to Gallup. She herself was born at Gallup's 60-bed Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services, the same hospital where she volunteered during middle school and high school, and where her love of medicine grew.

"I was struck by how doctors really get this very intense and very privileged look at people's lives," she recalls. "I just had such a strong desire to be on the other side and to be a physician interacting with patients."

She also had a strong desire to attend UNM, which both her parents and both siblings also attended. Petranovich had originally planned to follow a conventional, science-focused pre-med curriculum as an undergraduate, but the world religions class she took during her first semester changed all that.



PHOTO BY JETT LOE



“The longer I spent in California, the more I missed some of the things I had taken for granted about living in New Mexico. In New Mexico, everyone is part of this bigger web.”

“It was one of the best classes I’ve ever taken,” she says. “I thought it was going to be a class about all the ways religious traditions are different, but [it was about] all the ways that they are the same. Every tradition at its core has this desire for connection and this belief in something bigger than themselves. That idea of unity and connectedness was unexpected.”

Petranovich double majored in Biology and Religious Studies, with a minor in Health, Medicine, and Human Values, a choice she feels has served her well.

“The religion really balanced out the science,” she says. “Having that background helps me to see that there’s more to the patients than just the diseases they have.”

Her two favorite rotations during medical school finalized her decision to pursue family medicine. The first was with Saverio Sava, MD, a professor in UNM’s Department of Family & Community Medicine.

“I was inspired by his dedication to the patients,” she says. “He’d go into a room and hadn’t seen these people for a long time and he had 30 other patients to see that day, but he would remember what was going on with their kids or grandkids or their pets or a trip they had taken recently.”

The second rotation, with Leigh Vall-Spinosa, MD ’96, at a First Choice Community Healthcare clinic in the North Valley, was similarly inspiring.

“She knew her patients so well and connected with them,” Petranovich says. “She also did a lot of the

Project ECHO work, [so] she was also taking on the role of specialist and going above and beyond for those patients. At the end of the day, I wanted to do that.”

As she prepares to start her new job in the South Valley, Petranovich is looking forward to connecting with a diverse group of patients. She also hopes to put the integrative medicine experience she gained at UCSD to work.

She had not necessarily planned on returning to New Mexico right after her residency. But, she says, “The longer I spent in California, the more I missed some of the things I had taken for granted about living in New Mexico. In New Mexico, everyone is part of this bigger web. It just feels like I’m coming home.” 🌵



# QA with Stephen Otero interview by Amanda Gardner

Stephen Otero, MD '01, is medical director of the 25-bed Lincoln County Medical Center in Ruidoso. He also serves as medical director for the Village of Ruidoso. Here, he shares a few of his thoughts on practicing medicine in a rural New Mexico community.

**Q:** Where are you originally from?

**A:** I'm a native New Mexican. I grew up in Los Lunas, and that's where I graduated from high school.

**Q:** How did you come to be in Ruidoso?

**A:** I did some moonlighting at a walk-in clinic here during my residency and they offered me a job in family practice. After a year there, I moved to the White Mountain Medical Clinic, which is associated with the Lincoln County Medical Center. Presbyterian Healthcare Services manages the clinic and the hospital.

**Q:** Why did you choose family medicine?

**A:** It gives me the opportunity to practice a variety of medicine, anywhere from pediatrics to geriatrics, as well as being able to practice in an ICU setting and an emergency medicine setting. It's more rewarding, because you are able to see many more patients.

**Q:** What kind of patients do you see?

**A:** Anywhere from being ill with the flu or pneumonia to very critical patients with sepsis. We have a four-bed ICU. Since we don't have access to the specialists that are in the bigger cities, we do a lot more specialty care. There's not an endocrinologist here, so we really have to treat patients with diabetes to the best of our abilities. We don't have a neurologist, so we have to make those types of decisions and diagnoses. We are the patient's main doctor. If we don't have the specialty care, we will transfer patients to a larger institution.

**Q:** What are the biggest challenges you face in your practice?

**A:** Recruiting and retaining quality physicians and specialists. One of the best selling points is that Ruidoso is a very pleasant place to live. Since I've been here, we've been able to recruit quality physicians and APCs not only in Ruidoso, but in our rural clinics as well - Hondo, Capitan, Corona, Carrizozo. One of the best things that has happened in the last couple of years is that we now have our own cardiologist.

**Q:** Tell us about your role as the Village of Ruidoso's medical director.

**A:** Not only am I the medical director of the hospital, but as part of being medical director of the Village of Ruidoso I'm also the EMS medical director, so I do wear different hats. My role for the village is helping them out with their the relationship between our hospital EMS and the fire and rescue.

**Q:** What new developments are in the works?

**A:** We are building a brand-new hospital that has been approved by our community and our village and county representatives here, so we are actually in the construction phase now, and hopefully will be finished by November of this year. That's very exciting, it's going to be larger than the hospital now but it's still going to maintain that 25-bed critical access and hopefully be able to provide more services, such as nuclear medicine.

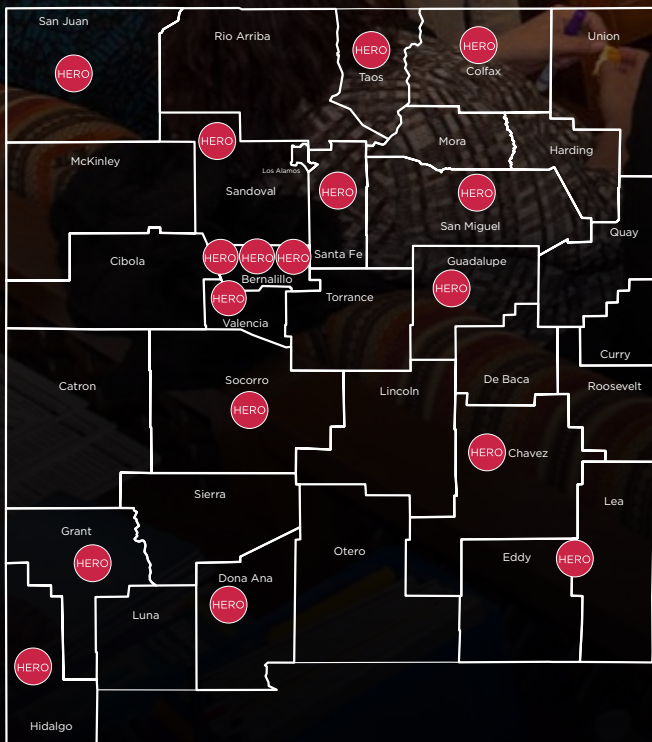


# The world needs a **HERO.**

*growing the campus-to-community network*



current & future HERO sites



**UNM**'s Health Extension Regional Officers (HEROs), a statewide network of dedicated health care problem-solvers coordinated by the Office for Community Health, are expanding their reach.

Seven new part-time HEROs are joining the seven full-time HEROs already residing in Lea, Doña Ana, San Juan, Taos and Bernalillo counties, says Arthur Kaufman, MD, UNM's Vice Chancellor for Community Health and the originator of the HEROs concept.

"It brings the resources of the University to your front door," says Kaufman, who was inspired by the established model of agricultural extension agents affiliated with land grant universities who serve as a two-way pipeline for the exchange of knowledge between campus and community.



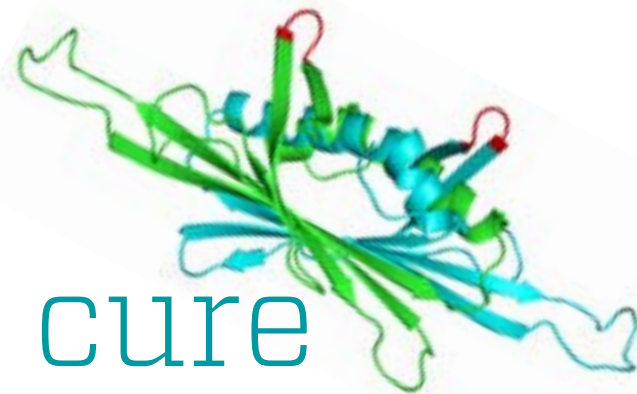
UNM's new leadership is emphasizing the statewide reach of The University of New Mexico, Kaufman notes.

"We're going to move the locus of control outside the University to the communities so that we become demand-driven," he says. "What do they need? Here's what we can deliver. We need the community to help drive our resources."

Laura Parajon, MD, executive director in the Office for Community Health, says the HEROs expansion, which adds officers in Colfax, Guadalupe, Hidalgo, Sandoval and Bernalillo counties, is a step toward locating a HERO in each of New Mexico's 33 counties.

"We believe that's the only way we can link community priorities with those of the University," she says. The HEROs gathered for a retreat in March on the UNM campus, where they discussed new ways of bringing evidence-based practices into rural health care settings.

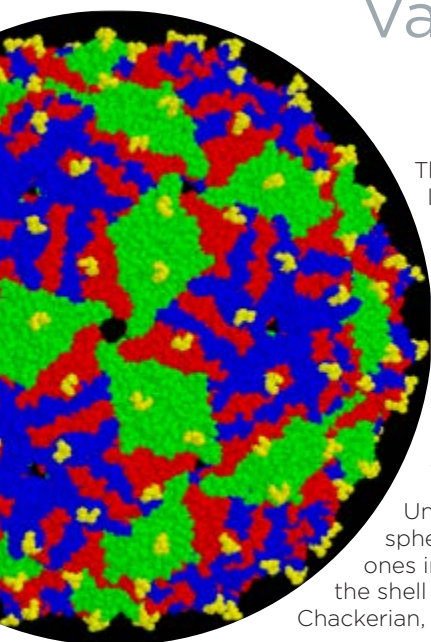
"If you think about why HEROs exist, it's really to address health inequities. If we are really putting our money where our mouth is, we need a way to systematically serve the whole state."



## shot at a cure

### Bryce Chackerian Custom-Builds Vaccines, One Particle at a Time

by Kara Leasure Shanley



The image on the screen looks like a bumpy soccer ball, studded with red, green and blue patches (and some random yellow points)

But this odd ball has nothing to do with sports. Rather, it represents a bold new way to build something you probably received from your doctor years ago: a vaccine.

Under a microscope, this bumpy sphere multiplies into many identical ones in a grayscale image. "It's just the shell of the virus," explains Bryce Chackerian, PhD.

For decades, these shells – known as virus-like particles or VLPs – have been giving him an advantage against his opponents on their own turf.

Chackerian, professor and vice chair of the Department of Molecular Genetics & Microbiology, grew up in the Bay Area, where his father worked as a chemist for NASA. Though he says science was not discussed often in their home, Chackerian went to the University of California, Berkeley, during the molecular biology revolution in the 1980s.

There, he studied bacterial genetics, and eventually went on to receive a doctorate in microbiology at the University of Washington while studying human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with Julie Overbaugh, PhD. "It was in that lab that I got interested in looking at basically host-pathogen interactions," Chackerian says.

Normally, the immune system watches for foreign invaders, including viruses. "Viruses are unique sorts of structures," says Chackerian. "They're very different from things you have in your body." It's because of their unique geometry that your immune system can recognize and fight against the virus.

Some viruses and pathogens have found ways to hide their alien qualities, using a "shield" of sugars that enable them to avoid detection or evolve, before being recognized. "These are all things that have what's called antigenic variation, so the proteins are constantly changing to evade immune responses," Chackerian says.

So, how do you beat a virus that has already outmaneuvered your immune system? Simply put, you mimic it.

Chackerian first learned this working with John Schiller, PhD, one of the researchers whose work led to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, at the National Cancer Institute. "It was an exciting time in the lab because they had developed this virus-like particle technology," Chackerian recalls.

Schiller's team found that a surplus of viral proteins could spontaneously weave themselves into a particle that looks like a virus, but lacks the infectious parts. When Chackerian started in Schiller's lab, they had started using these particles to create vaccines, including one for HPV. "Because it looks like the virus," Chackerian explains, "if you use it as an immunogen, it elicits antibody responses that can protect you from infection by the virus."

This was only the beginning of what this technology could be used for.

Wondering whether these particles could be used in vaccines for other conditions, Chackerian started adding things to the VLPs that would normally not prompt an immune response. These included pieces of our own proteins – like CCR-5, the receptor involved in HIV infection, or TNF- $\alpha$ , a protein involved in arthritis and psoriasis – that are often treated with pharmaceutically produced antibodies.

"Basically, it works," states Chackerian. "We take a little piece of TNF- $\alpha$  or CCR5, array it on the surface of the VLP and then use those VLPs as an immunogen. You can get really, really strong responses against self-antigens."

By saturating the VLPs with these self-antigens, Chackerian sees stronger antibody production by the immune system that lasts longer than other therapies. This opens the door for more effective vaccines against diseases that no one would consider as preventable.

"One of the reasons why we thought a vaccine might be a good idea is that monoclonal antibodies, in particular, are really expensive and vaccines are generally cheap," Chackerian says. A 2018 study published in the *American Journal of Managed Care* reported that the average annual cost of monoclonal antibody treatments for diseases like cancer or cardiovascular conditions was about \$100,000.

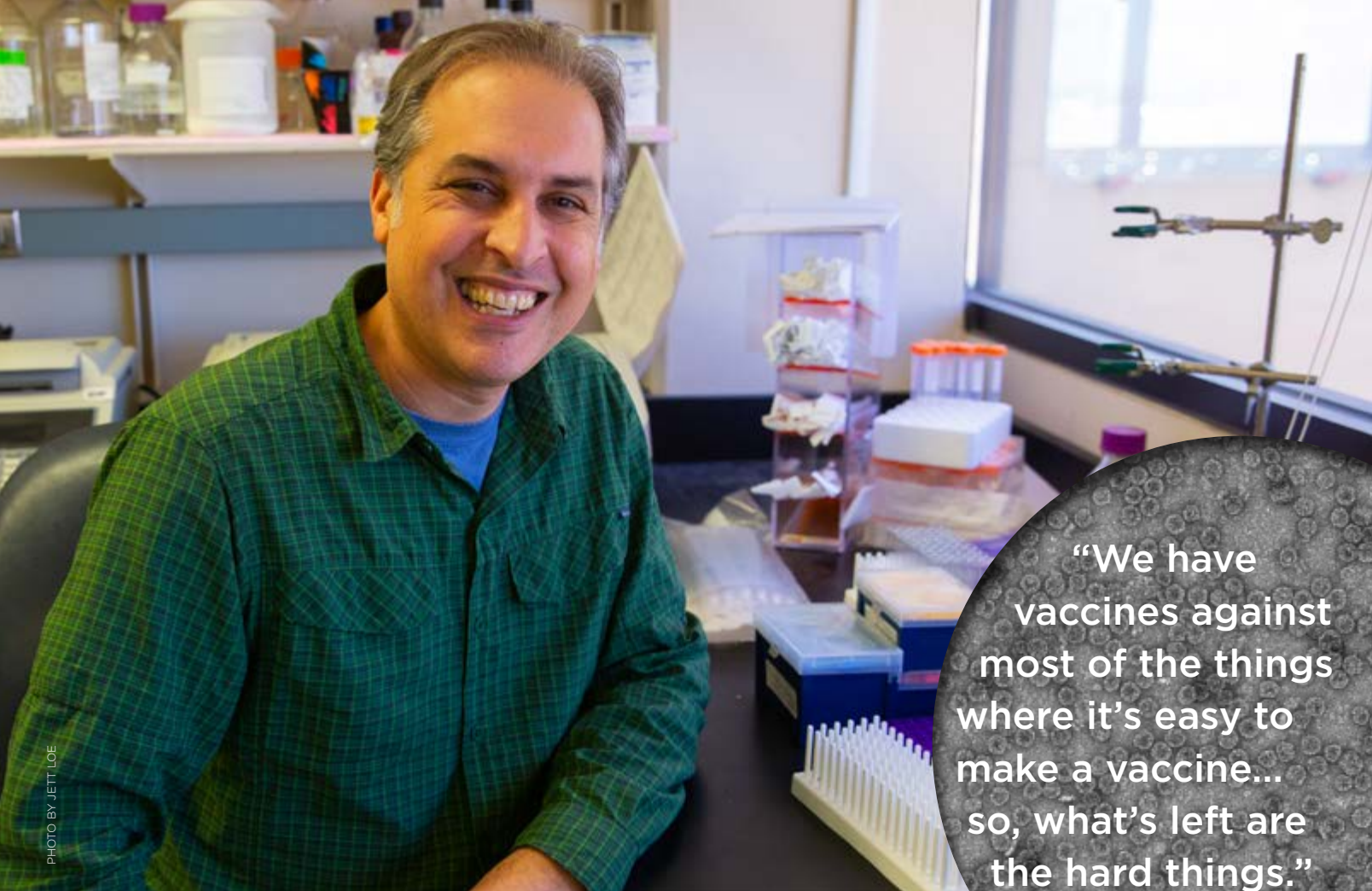


PHOTO BY JETT LOE

**“We have vaccines against most of the things where it’s easy to make a vaccine... so, what’s left are the hard things.”**

“This might be a way of providing an alternative to monoclonal antibody-based therapies,” he says.

In 2004, after Chackerian took a faculty position at UNM, he quickly found a partner in David Peabody, PhD, who shared an interest in this work and had been studying bacteriophages – viruses that target bacteria – for decades.

Chackerian explains that Peabody’s phages were not only able to organize into VLPs, but that these particles were easier to produce and attach short antigen pieces onto. He says that this collaboration has been essential to where their work is today.

“It’s been great – we basically run a joint lab,” explains Chackerian. “It’s always good to have people to throw ideas off of.”

His collaborative mindset has extended to several other laboratories in other departments on campus. “It’s been a really nice thing about working at UNM – to set up those collaborations was easy,” he says.

They also collaborate with universities across the country studying vaccines for malaria, chlamydia and Zika, as well as high cholesterol and cancer.

The work by Chackerian and Peabody has produced multiple patents, as well as a new approach to the use of VLPs: discovery of immune targets using a library of potential targets.

“The idea behind this other system is that it basically eliminates that whole (trial-and-error) process,” he explains.

“We can create these random libraries and then see which sticks the best to whatever we want to target.”

Their target-driven VLP platform became the basis for a new biotechnology company called Agilvax, which Chackerian and Peabody helped found and for which they serve as advisory board members. The company is currently using the platform to develop a breast cancer vaccine.

In spite of his multi-faceted career, Chackerian believes that his legacy also resides in the next generation of researchers. He passes on the knowledge and passion that he learned from his mentors to his own students and technicians.

“I’ve been really lucky that I’ve had so many great people working in the lab,” he says, adding that watching them move on to their own careers has been just as rewarding as his own.

Chackerian’s present goal is to get a vaccine to clinical trials, though he knows it will be challenging. “We have vaccines against most of the things where it’s easy to make a vaccine for,” he explains, “so, what’s left are the hard things.”

This doesn’t seem to bother him though – instead, it drives his desire to learn as much as possible from the experts he collaborates with in order to use his VLPs for better treatments.

“I like being in academics,” he says. “I like being the R&D person – well, more the R person and not the D person – that’s the stuff that I like doing.”

# STUDENT affairs

## Bringing the Image into Focus a student's journey to finding her passion by Francesca White



**W**hat makes someone want to return to college after seven years of being in a career they love? Just that - I love what I do, and I want to do more! My name is Francesca White, and I am a registered diagnostic medical sonographer specializing in OB-GYN and fetal echocardiology. I started my college education at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in 2004. I earned four associate degrees there, one of which was in diagnostic medical sonography. In that program, we learned about the different diagnostic imaging modalities aiding in the medical field.

We were taught detailed human anatomy and pathophysiology. We learned how to identify the smallest of vascular structures using Doppler ultrasound. We also learned about different illnesses and how they affect organs in the human body. And, we studied MRI, CT and sonogram, and became proficient in identifying structures in axial, sagittal and coronal planes.

At CNM we were told that UNM was accepting sonography students from our program to complete an undergraduate degree in Radiologic Science. This was something I kept in the back of my mind, for future use.

Today, I work with one of New Mexico's most recognized perinatal groups. These doctors, advanced practitioners, nurses and sonographers are committed to our patients all around the state. I have visited many underserved communities throughout New Mexico, helping serve those who do not have local access to maternal fetal medicine specialty care.

I have enjoyed getting to know the different cultures and hearing my patients' stories. I get to experience one of the most exciting and memorable moments in these families' lives, and for that I am thankful. My patients are the reason I decided to invest in myself, my education and my career.

I was accepted into UNM's Radiologic Sciences program in 2018. Program coordinator Stevee McIntyre has been a huge help and a great informational resource. She made entry into the program a simple one.

Program director Rebecca Blankley has taken us through the different imagining modalities, building and sharpening our diagnostic imaging skills. It is important that we keep up with ongoing advances in this technology, as we are an important part of the medical team, aiding in the diagnosis and treatment of our patients. In this program I have become proficient in reading MRI and CT imaging, which also helps me in my current position as a sonographer.

Elizabeth Greer, Principal Lecturer III, has guided us on how to effectively research medical topics and how to recognize when the information is beneficial and valid. She has also taught us how to write research papers worthy of submission to medical journals. Currently, we are researching and reflecting on medical ethics and other issues in the health care system.

I have enjoyed my experience in the School of Medicine's Radiologic Science program and look forward to a future in medical imaging. This truly is one of the greatest advancements in medical technology, and I am excited to see what's next.



photos by Raymond Mares

# Cause for Celebration

## RESIDENCY MATCH DAY 2019

Cheers and applause filled the UNM SUB Ballroom on Friday, March 15, as graduating School of Medicine students eagerly tore open envelopes to discover where they matched for residency.

Match Day is an annual rite of passage, in which students across the country learn – at the same instant – where they will spend the next three to five years of their lives completing their medical training.

This year, 36 of 96 graduating students – a record 37 percent – matched at UNM. That bodes well for the future physician workforce in New Mexico, because physicians typically decide where to practice based on where they performed their residency.

Nationally, more than 32,000 graduating medical students matched for first-year residency positions, with nearly half in primary care specialties, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges.



# President's Letter

by Mario Pacheco, MD '86

Dear Alumni & Friends

It is hard to believe this is my last year as president of the Alumni Association. It has been such an honor to work with our board, students and faculty. I am excited about the momentum that we have generated and look forward to moving initiatives forward this year.

Our mission has always been to support the medical students, residents and alumni from the School of Medicine. As a board we are always striving to do this by working with the leadership at the medical school and identifying the areas of greatest need.

Scholarships are always at the top of the list, along with various other opportunities for student and resident support, including wellness initiatives, white coats, Match Day, convocation and other signature occasions along the path of medical education.

I was pleased to hear from so many of you after our digital newsletter hit your email inboxes in January. I encourage you to continue to reach out to me or the Alumni Office and let us know how we can better support you and share your stories.

Along those lines, I am especially thrilled with this issue of *UNM Medicine*. The redesign and the wide array of diversity and storytelling makes this issue our best yet.

We are gearing up for our third Coming Home Campaign, which will be dropping in the mail this month to all graduates who are in residency out of state to remind them that there are plenty of opportunities and needs for them to return to New Mexico to practice medicine.

The Alumni Office staff is in full swing preparing for this year's Alumni Reunion, which I know will once again be a sold-out event. I hope you will come back and join us.

Thank you for all you are doing for the profession of medicine!





# snapshots from our most recent ALUMNI EVENTS

New Mexico's Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> fellow at the 71<sup>st</sup> meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Scientists in Baltimore this past February.



Left to right: UNM's 2<sup>nd</sup> OMI fellow, Patricia McFeeley, MD '72, Chief Medical Investigator Kurt Nolte, MD, and UNM's 100<sup>th</sup> OMI fellow, Andrew Guajardo, MD



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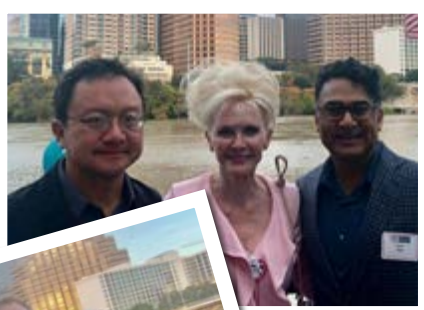
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Ashley Hatcher

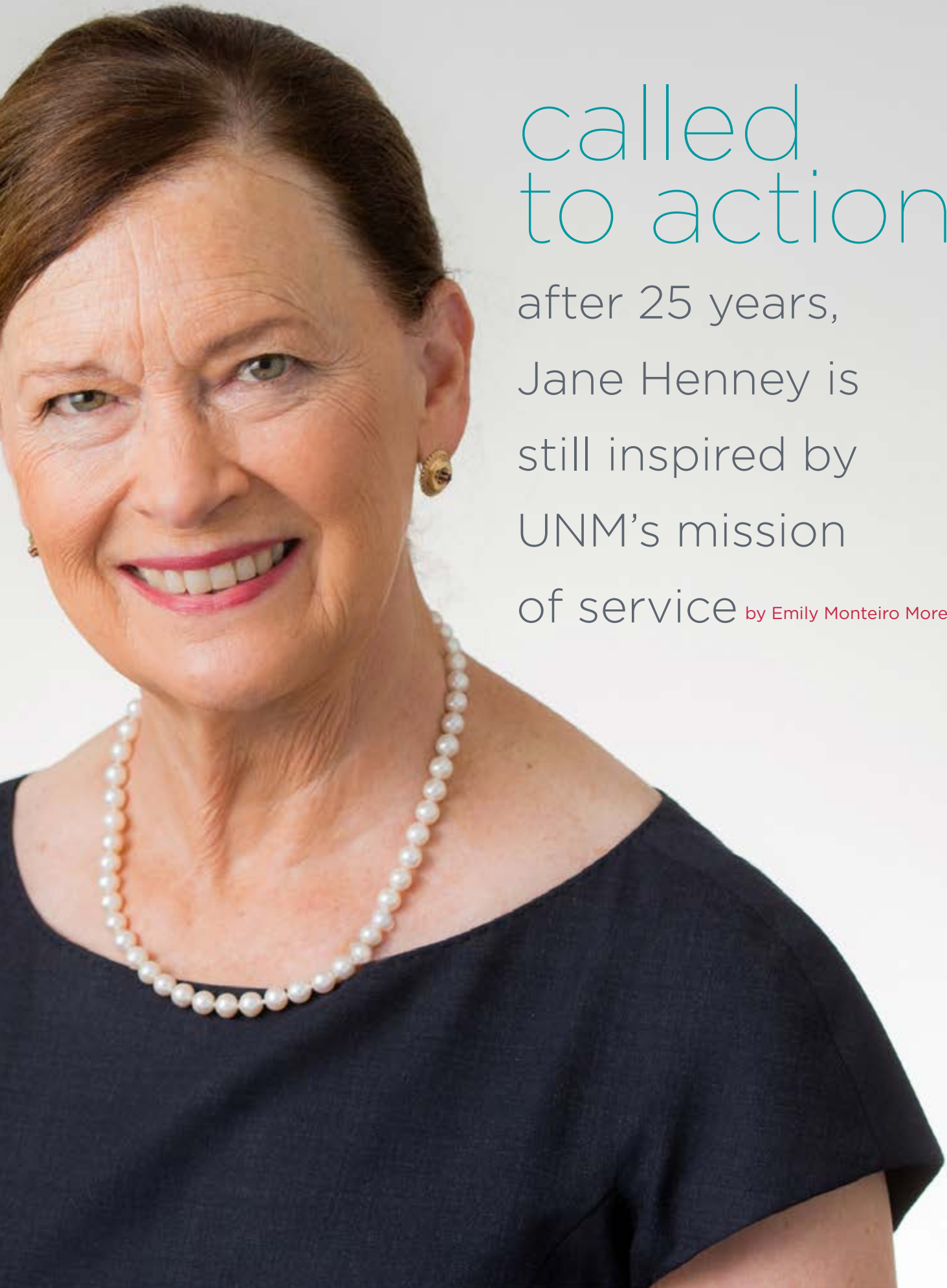
## CONTACT

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Alumni Relations  
MSC 08 4720 • Fitz Hall #182B  
1 University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001  
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UNM's Family  
Medicine alumni  
reception during  
the New Mexico  
Academy of  
Family Physicians  
Winter Refresher  
in Albuquerque.



School of Medicine alumni  
in and around Austin,  
Texas, enjoyed  
a river cruise during the  
UNM Health Sciences  
alumni reception.



# called to action

after 25 years,  
Jane Henney is  
still inspired by  
UNM's mission  
of service by Emily Monteiro Morelli

Even during the employment recruitment process in 1994, Jane Henney, MD, had an inclination that The University of New Mexico would prove a special place.

“The mission to serve the people of New Mexico was mentioned over and over, at every point, by everyone,” Henney recalls. “There was so much buy-in, it was almost hard to believe.”

That inclination turned to certainty once she accepted the job.

Serving as the first vice president of the newly formed UNM Health Sciences Center from 1994-98, Henney saw its mission in action. Her first task was to gather up a group of providers and traverse the state on a listening tour.

“I went everywhere, from Hobbs to Roswell to Farmington,” she says. “We just piled into vans and went out and listened.” It was a vastly different experience from her previous position as deputy commissioner for operations at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in Washington, D.C.

She’s now retired and living in Kansas City, Mo., but Henney’s recollections of her early days in New Mexico underscore why she was so moved to make a generous personal donation to the Health Sciences Center this year.

When she arrived at UNM, Henney soon found herself living and breathing the mission through the collaborations she formed with community partners and faculty.

At the time, the School of Medicine was in the forefront of the development of problem-based teaching, and Henney, with the help of talented faculty, pushed to build that into the curriculum at the College of Nursing and the College of Pharmacy, so that all disciplines could work holistically to maximize the outcome of a patient’s case. During her time at the HSC, she also established the now-thriving *locum tenens* program to relieve rural and isolated practitioners.

Henney remembers the job as singular in her life experience.

“In retrospect, my time at UNM was really time spent at a dream job,” she says. “I am always reminded of a quote in a colleague’s office down the hall when I was working in D.C.: ‘A vision without a task is a dream. A task without a vision is drudgery. A vision and a task is the hope of the world.’ I was able to fulfill that while working with fun, creative and smart people like Art Kaufman and Paul Roth. We had our challenges, but we really enjoyed our work.”

Kaufman, now UNM’s Vice Chancellor for Community Health, recalls the same spirit of innovation.

“Dr. Henney was a strong supporter of pioneering efforts of our Department of Family & Community Medicine and University Hospital,” he says. “We ventured out together to rural communities to design collaborative innovations that met local crises. She supported the decentralization of our residencies into rural areas, and we created the first managed care plan for the uninsured – the UNM Care Plan.”

Both warmly recall the story of when Guadalupe County Hospital, the smallest in the state and sitting midway along the 200-mile stretch of I-40 between Tucumcari and Albuquerque, was threatened with closure.

The governor called UNM. UNM Hospital sent administrative staff, and the Department of Family & Community Medicine sent medical residents to Santa Rosa to keep things afloat. For that month, all hospital employees were paid in \$2 bills, a conspicuous form of currency that circulated and surfaced all over the local economy as a tangible reminder of how important the hospital was to county residents.

Kaufman recalls that local residents ultimately voted to support the hospital with raised taxes, and observed that it has become a favored frontier training destination for health professional students.

So when Henney got the call for donations to support UNM’s Health Extension Regional Officers (HEROs) program, she jumped at the opportunity to provide generously. The HEROs, based in communities throughout the state, serve as an important two-way conduit to the Health Sciences Center.

“I feel that the continued expansion of HEROs, which is a really important program in the state, fits nicely with those ideals,” she says. “I wanted to give back.” Kaufman says Henney’s gift will enable expansion of the HERO network across the state, starting with sites in Santa Rosa, the southern pueblos and Raton.

The gift also coincides with the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Henney’s inaugural position at UNM. “I didn’t intend it that way,” she says, “but it’s a nice happenstance.”

It should be noted that at the time, Henney was one of only a handful of female academic medical executives – another story of being at the vanguard. In fact, she left the Health Sciences Center in 1998 to serve as the first female Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration under President Bill Clinton.

### **Honor someone’s legacy or make an estate gift.**

Please contact Bonnie McLeskey,  
Associate Vice President of Planned Giving,  
at 505.313.7610 or  
Bonnie.McLeskey@unmfund.org

# 2019 spring business luncheon

by Tanya Oates



PHOTO BY B.W. JONES

Spring is about growth and change, and it's a great time to make a difference, accomplish a goal or contribute to your community. La Tierra Sagrada Society, and its newly elected president and board members, are doing just that.

The La Tierra Sagrada annual luncheon was held April 4<sup>th</sup> at Embassy Suites in Albuquerque. President Linda Novy-Doll opened the event by welcoming more than 85 members and guests.

Former scholarship recipient Levi Maes, MD '11, medical director for La Clinica del Pueblo in Tierra Amarilla, served as the guest speaker.

Maes grew up in the small northern New Mexican town of Canjilon, which influenced him to return to his community and practice medicine. "Working in a rural community as a medical provider allows you the opportunity to practice medicine like no other place," he said. "I'm thankful for the support that I received during my education, and especially to La Tierra Sagrada for the financial support that allowed me to pursue my dream."

Novy-Doll began her address with an update on the activity of the board of directors and introduced the new slate of candidates: Beth Moody Jones, PT, DPT, EdD, Zita Pitcher, RN, Art Weinstein, MD, and Laura Wylie, PA.

Novy-Doll and Paul B. Roth, MD, MS, dean of the School of Medicine, presented retiring board members with a token of appreciation for their services. They included Chuck North MD, MS, Martha Cole McGrew, MD, Betsy Swan, Pug Burge, Corey Ford, MD, and Cristina Beato, MD.

Novy-Doll passed the gavel to incoming president Diane Harrison Ogawa, JD.

**To become part of this organization, or learn more about it, contact Tanya Oates, [toates@salud.unm.edu](mailto:toates@salud.unm.edu), 505.272.5879**

## Get to know your newly elected president Diane Harrison Ogawa

### What traits do you admire in your family members?

While I love their intelligence, sense of the possible and commitment to being part of the solution, I most value the kindness I see in my family. Kindness is one of our family's core values. I see it in the way my husband, Dr. Greg Ogawa, takes extra time and care to rebuild the eyes of his patients. I see kindness in the way our daughter, Dr. Katie Ogawa Douglas, works with people experiencing homelessness, and in the way our younger daughter, Allison Ogawa, works to raise issues of equity, justice and dignity for the elderly during her medical school studies.

### What is your definition of success?

Eleanor Roosevelt said that great leaders inspire people to have confidence in themselves. To me, success is what happens when people shine with that confidence and work with the belief that collectively, anything is possible.

### If you could do anything, besides what you are doing now, what would you do?

I have the great good fortune of working at CNM, where the vision is Changing Lives, Building Community. I can't think of anything I would rather do than work to support that vision.

### Why La Tierra Sagrada?

As a parent of a graduate, I saw firsthand the exceptional quality of education provided at the School of Medicine. For our family, there is no better investment we can make than providing greater access to that education for more New Mexicans.

# in MEMORIAM

## house staff

### Roy Abbott, MD

**Donald Earl Bedingfeld, MD**, died Feb. 8, 2012, in San Clemente, Calif., at the age of 84. He previously practiced in Gallup.

**John M. Casebolt, MD**, died Feb. 2, 2017, in Lincoln, Neb., at age 87. He was born in Kansas City, Mo., and received his bachelor's degree from William and Jewell College. He served as a pediatrician in Albuquerque for more than 30 years. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Louise, three children and six grandchildren.

**Judy Dyan (Williams) Ewing, MD**, died May 17, 2018, in Durango, Colo., at age 78. She grew up in Enid, Okla., graduated from the University of Oklahoma School of Medicine and moved to New Mexico to pursue a residency in pediatrics. She was the first full-time emergency room doctor in the Southwest at Lovelace Hospital, where she served as director of Emergency Services for 10 years. She was the first MD to train emergency medical technicians for the UNM School of Medicine. She then managed the Department of Clinical Medicine and Psychology at Sandia National Laboratories for 15 years. She was the first woman to hold that position. She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Ronald I. Ewing, a retired Sandia research physicist, two children, a step-daughter and four grandchildren, all of whom live in Durango.

**Heidi Katherine Bowles Kenney, MD**, died on Sept. 10, 2018, in Marshfield, Wisc., at the age of 46. A native of Peoria, Ill., she earned a BS in biology from Washington University in St. Louis and an MA in molecular biology from St. Louis University. She received her MD from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. An internship in internal medicine and a residency in diagnostic radiology followed at the UNM School of Medicine. She continued her training with a fellowship in cardiothoracic imaging at the University of California, San Diego. She dedicated her entire career to Marshfield Clinic as a radiologist. She is survived by her husband, Charles Kenney, and two sons, Charles and Nicholas, as well as her parents, two sisters, three nieces and three nephews.

**Toby Merlin, MD**, died in August 2018. He was director of the Division of Preparedness and Emerging Infections in the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Disease at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An Atlanta native, he earned a degree in philosophy from Yale University, received his medical education at the University of Florida, and specialized in clinical pathology through additional training at Stanford University and UNM. He spent

two decades in Albuquerque, where he built a successful career as a tenured professor in the UNM School of Medicine and as chief medical officer of Lovelace Health Systems. He began his CDC career in 2003 as the associate director for Laboratory Medicine in the Division of Laboratory Systems. He went on to serve as director of the Division of Partnerships and Strategic Alliances in the National Center for Health Marketing from 2004 to 2007 and as deputy director of the Influenza Coordinating Unit in the CDC's Office of Infectious Diseases from 2007 to 2011. He also served as incident manager for several emergency responses, including the H1N1 outbreak in 2009, the ricin response in 2013, the Ebola outbreak in 2014, the DoD Sample Investigation in 2015, and the Zika response in 2016.

**Harlan Clay Pannell, MD**, died on May 7, 2018. He was born in Tucumcari and grew up in Lovington, where his parents were educators in the local school system for more than 25 years. He received his bachelor's degree at UNM and his medical education at the University of Colorado Medical School. He went on to perform a medical internship at the Bernalillo County Medical Center, and opened a general medical practice in Lovington in 1961. Later, he worked for the Central Intelligence Agency, providing medical care to agency personnel and dependents in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Okinawa and Taiwan. He also served as associate professor of family medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and worked as a medical officer for Bechtel Corp. in Saudi Arabia. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Trang T. Pannell, and his sister, Ruth Pannell Robertson, his six children and their families - including 11 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

### Robert Patterson, MD

**Kenneth Raymond Roth, MD**, died on March 19, 2019, at the age of 83. He grew up in Danville, Ill., where he graduated from high school. He graduated from Florida Southern College, and was the first person in his family to attend college. He obtained his MD from Marquette University School of Medicine (now the Medical College of Wisconsin) in 1963. While completing his internship at St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix, he met and married his wife, Patricia Ann Miller. He fulfilled his orthopedic surgery residency at UNM and at the Baylor College of Medicine. He was in private practice in the California communities of Redlands, Mt. Shasta and Escondido. He was also an assistant professor at Loma Linda University Medical School, where he taught residents in pediatric orthopaedic surgery. He continued to teach, consult and assist in surgery after his retirement. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, two children and two grandchildren.

# in MEMORIAM

## house staff

**William Eric Sohr, Jr., MD**, died March 15, 2012 at the age of 69.

**Sparks P. Veasey III, MD**, died Dec. 3, 2018, at age 67. A Texas native and former U.S. Air Force flight surgeon, Veasey worked as a staff pathologist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He later worked as a pathologist in the Texas cities of Odessa, Amarillo, Lubbock and Galveston before serving as Montgomery County Forensic Services director from 2010 through 2015. Veasey, who had graduated with a law degree from South Texas College of Law in 2002, also worked as an assistant district attorney in Brazoria County between 2006 and 2009 and was a clinical professor at Sam Houston State University.

**William D. Weaver, MD**, died Jan. 11, 2019, at the age of 66. He was born to William and Helen (Urquhart) Weaver in Fairview Park, Ohio. An Eagle Scout, he attended The Ohio State University, where he earned his MD. He then completed his general surgery residency at UNM. He practiced in the Denver area until 1993, when he moved to Walla Walla, Wash., where he was chief of general surgery at the Walla Walla Clinic. He retired in 1998 due to a physical disability and went on to divide his time between homes in Almont, Colo., Coffman Cove, Alaska, and Baranof Hot Springs, Alaska. He is survived by his sister, and was preceded in death by his parents and his wife, Vicki.

**David Williams, MD**, peacefully passed away at home on Dec. 16, 2018, at the age of 82. He was born Sept. 21, 1936, in Okmulgee, Okla., and was raised in Hobbs. He received his bachelor's degree from The University of New Mexico in 1958 and his MD from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis in 1962. Following internship at UNM Hospital, he served two years in the U.S. Public Health Service in Gallup and on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in northern Montana. After four years of diagnostic radiology residency at the University of Washington in Seattle, he practiced radiology at the Los Alamos Medical Center for more than 37 years. He married his wife, Luella Predoehl, in 1961. He is survived by his wife, their two sons and their families, a sister and many nieces and nephews.

## medical school



**Katherine Ann Ganz, MD '81**, died May 8, 2018. She was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of New Mexico State University. After completing her medical studies at UNM, she did her internal medicine residency at the Mayo Clinic, followed by a master's in health science administration at the University of Denver. She practiced in clinics on the Navajo Nation and for eight years served as director of the New Mexico Health Policy Commission under Governors Bruce King and Gary Johnson. She also spent a decade as the clinical compliance officer for First Choice Community Healthcare. Friends remember her for her love for the Southwest, caring for the underprivileged and her love of animals.



**Frederick Norman Hagedorn, Jr., MD '76**, died on Aug. 5, 2018, in Spokane, Wash., at the age of 72. He was born in Los Angeles to Frederick, Sr., and Betty Hagedorn and graduated from Loyola University in Los Angeles. After earning his MD at the UNM School of Medicine, he enlisted in the U.S. Public Health Service, then spent a 30-year career in emergency medicine, most of it at University Medical Center in Lubbock, Texas. He was also an associate clinical professor in the department of surgery at the Texas Tech University School of Medicine, and, for about 20 years, the Lubbock County EMS medical director. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Elaine, three children, four grandchildren and six siblings.

**Sharon Martha (Sibbitt) Kettwich, MD '76**, died on June 10, 2018, in Albuquerque. She was a physician, a commercial pilot, an artist, a businesswoman, an Arabian horse enthusiast, a wife and a mother. Born Dec. 4, 1949, in Lafayette, Ind., she spent her childhood in Los Alamos. In 1968 she was working as a researcher at Los Alamos National Laboratory when she was accidentally covered with plutonium dust and inhaled radioactive particles, resulting in massive radiation exposure that later led to her death from a rare, aggressive cancer. After completing her BA and MD at UNM, she did her internal medicine residency at University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas. She worked in emergency rooms throughout New Mexico and served as medical director of Memorial Hospital in Albuquerque. She is survived by her husband, Donald Kettwich, MD, four children, three grandchildren and five siblings.



**Randall Knott MD '84**, died unexpectedly on July 15, 2018. He graduated Del Norte High School in Albuquerque, earned his undergraduate degree at UNM, and completed both his MD and pediatric residency at the UNM School of Medicine. He spent five years in private practice in Santa Fe before joining the UNM Hospital Pediatric Clinic. He enjoyed spending time with family, gardening, playing tennis and following the stock market. He is remembered for passion for promoting childhood vaccination in New Mexico. He is survived by his wife, Guadalupe, and daughters Eriqaa and Danira.

**Joseph Henry Saiers, MD '70**, died Feb. 13, 2019, at his home in Mayhill at the age of 74. He was born in Hondo, Texas, to Edward and Mary (Bader) Saiers. Following his graduation from the School of Medicine in 1970, he interned at Kaiser Hospital in San Francisco and served a residency in oncology/hematology at UNM. He spent much of his career at the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albuquerque, where he retired in 2004 as chief of medicine. He also served on the UNM School of Medicine faculty. In his retirement, he became one of the inaugural train engineers for the ABQ BioPark's narrow-gauge railroad. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Sheila, two children, four siblings and five grandchildren.



**Erich P. Marchand, MD '80**, of Santa Fe, died unexpectedly on Nov. 1, 2018, in Denver. He completed his undergraduate and medical studies at UNM, and after his residency at McGill University in Montreal, he returned to New Mexico, where he practiced as a neurosurgeon for 30 years in Albuquerque, Farmington and Santa Fe. He relocated to Denver in 2017 to join the neurosurgery team at Denver Health. He was a pediatric specialist who summoned immense compassion and love for his patients, no matter what their age. He spent countless hours fixing, driving and learning about anything with an internal combustion engine, including cars, motorcycles and airplanes. He found solace in the great outdoors skiing, hiking, fly-fishing and mountain biking. He is survived by his wife, Meryl, daughters Zoe and Kate and sister Heidi.



**Brent Allan Smith, MD '87**, died June 2, 2018, at the age of 60. He spent his early years in Tonasket, Wash., and attended the University of Montana, while working as a smokejumper for the U.S. Forest Service. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army in 1983 and attended medical school at UNM on an Army scholarship. A residency in emergency medicine followed at Darnall Medical Center at Fort Hood, Texas. He later was assigned to Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, and served as head of medical services for the FBI hostage rescue team during the Branch Davidian siege in Waco, Texas. During his military career he was also deployed to Operation Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan. He is survived by his wife, Lori, their two daughters and his three siblings.



**Michael M. McGonigle, MD '68**, of Fountain Hills, Ariz., died July 9, 2018. He graduated from St. Joseph's Academy in Prescott, Ariz., in 1959 and majored in physics at Santa Clara University. In 1964 he became a member of the UNM School of Medicine's first class. After receiving his MD degree in 1968, he spent a year as a surgical intern at Stanford. He later served two years as a U.S. Navy medical officer. He continued his training with a general surgery residency at UNM, followed by three years of residency in head and neck surgery at the University of California, San Francisco. He relocated to Joplin, Mo., where he ran a private ENT practice for 29 years. He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Jeanne (Cooper) McGonigle, three children and five grandchildren.

# classacts



Presbyterian Medical Group has hired new urology providers for Presbyterian Hospital, including three physicians with ties to the UNM School of Medicine. **Jonathan Lackner, MD '93**, completed his residency in urology at the University of Texas at San Antonio. **Peter Headley, MD**, completed his urology residency at UNM and **Damara Kaplan, MD '96**, completed urology and general surgery residencies at UNM.

**Angela Bradley, MD '06**, writes, "I married last summer and my new legal last name is Nusloch. I now go by Dr. Angela Nusloch. I am attaching a photo of my wedding day. A few UNM alumni and dear friends attended, including Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott, my mentor."



from left: School of Medicine Class of 2006 alumnae Dulcinea (Candelaria) Quintana, Angela (Bradley) Nusloch and Erika Solis-Gilmore



**Alisha Parada, MD '08**, is interim chief for UNM's Division of General Medicine & Geriatrics. Parada, a native New Mexican, completed her residency at UNM in primary care and integrative medicine and served as the Department of Internal Medicine's FY 2012 chief resident. "Dr. Parada places a strong emphasis on inter-professional education and has a passion for the work of diversity and inclusion," said department chair Mark Unruh, MD, MS, in announcing her appointment.

New Mexico State University honored alumna **Rebeccah La Nan Brown, MD '90**, as one of the University's 2018 Distinguished Alumni. She returned to campus in October 2018 to speak as part of the College of Arts and Sciences "Alumni Connections" series during Homecoming Week. Brown, a pediatric surgeon at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, delivered a talk entitled, "A Pediatric Surgeon's Journey: Paying it Forward - Propelled by Compassion and Driven to Make a Difference." She graduated with honors from NMSU and received her MD from the UNM School of Medicine. She is the associate director of trauma services, director of the pediatric trauma fellowship and co-director of the Chest Wall Center, as well as a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Cincinnati.







**Patricia Combs, MD '88**, obstetrician/gynecologist at the Lincoln County Medical Center, has expanded her hours at Socorro General Hospital, where she will be available two days a week. Combs earned her medical degree from UNM, where she also completed her OB/GYN residency, then remained on as an attending physician for five years. She was previously in private practice in Los Alamos for 17 years and served as an employed physician in Hobbs for three years.

**Daniel Duhigg, DO, Former House Staff**, recently joined the Alliance for Community Health Plans in Washington, D.C., to present new research featuring Presbyterian Healthcare Services and other integrated systems. The report highlights the benefits of health plans collaborating closely with health systems and communities to accelerate adoption of evidence-based care.



**William Kwan, MD '15**, has completed a residency in family medicine at Valley Medical Center in Renton, Wash. He recently joined the family medicine practice at Presbyterian Kaseman Hospital in Albuquerque.

**Leslie Johnson, MD '83**, has retired after nearly three decades of practice in her hometown of Socorro. She earned an undergraduate degree at New Mexico Tech and completed both her MD and pediatric residency requirements at UNM. In an interview with *El Defensor Chieftan*, she spoke of the “exquisite privilege” of practicing medicine in her hometown: “We meet people on such an intimate level. That’s something few people have the opportunity to do with a broad spectrum of people.”

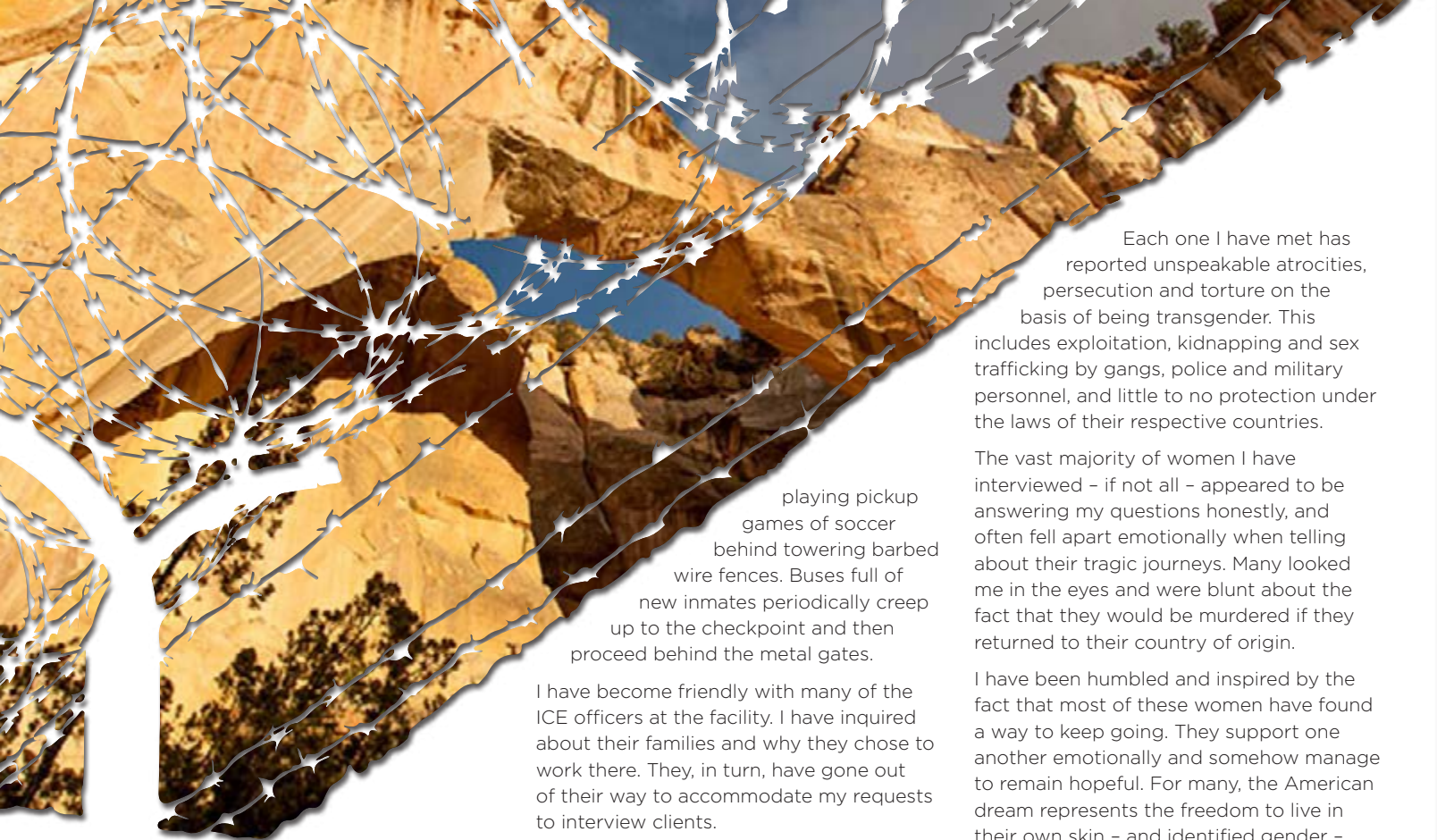
**Malcom Keith Piatt, MD '85**, retired in August 2018 as chief of the medical staff at the Raymond G. Murphy Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Albuquerque.

**Lonnie Alexander, MD '82**, received the Distinguished Service Award from the Eastern New Mexico University Alumni Association in October 2018 during the university’s Homecoming celebration. Now retired, the Española native moved to Portales in 1972 to study agriculture at ENMU. He went on to graduate with an MD from the UNM School of Medicine and completed his family practice residency at the University of Colorado. He returned to eastern New Mexico in 1986 and played a prominent role in the opening of the new Roosevelt General Hospital in 2001 after an earlier version was closed in 1998.



**Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD '92**, Vice Chancellor for Diversity at the UNM Health Sciences Center, was among the 2019 Women of Influence recognized by *Albuquerque Business First* at a luncheon in February. This is the 15th year that the publication has honored women in the community who have made a positive impact on New Mexico business.

**Elizabeth Ward, MD '01, PhD, '89**, is an internal medicine physician and a medical director for Presbyterian Healthcare Services. She received a bachelor’s degree in biology from UNM and a doctorate in medical science immunology and her medical degree from the UNM School of Medicine. She completed a fellowship in immunology at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver and completed an internal medicine residency at John Hopkins University.



Each one I have met has reported unspeakable atrocities, persecution and torture on the basis of being transgender. This includes exploitation, kidnapping and sex trafficking by gangs, police and military personnel, and little to no protection under the laws of their respective countries.

The vast majority of women I have interviewed – if not all – appeared to be answering my questions honestly, and often fell apart emotionally when telling about their tragic journeys. Many looked me in the eyes and were blunt about the fact that they would be murdered if they returned to their country of origin.

I have been humbled and inspired by the fact that most of these women have found a way to keep going. They support one another emotionally and somehow manage to remain hopeful. For many, the American dream represents the freedom to live in their own skin – and identified gender – without having to fear torture, persecution and exploitation.

Physicians seldom get to participate in giving someone their freedom. The sheer exhilaration I feel when I learn one of these women has been granted asylum is unmatched in the other areas of my work, and it is what has kept me going back all this time.

Interstate 40, I'll be seeing you again soon, my old friend.

Shawn S. Sidhu, MD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences.

# I left my heart at the border.

by Shawn S. Sidhu, MD

BACK STORY

playing pickup games of soccer behind towering barbed wire fences. Buses full of new inmates periodically creep up to the checkpoint and then proceed behind the metal gates.

I have become friendly with many of the ICE officers at the facility. I have inquired about their families and why they chose to work there. They, in turn, have gone out of their way to accommodate my requests to interview clients.

The harsh reality is that apart from the detention center, some gas stations and a few casinos, there is little to no meaningful employment in this part of rural New Mexico. For-profit prisons are highly controversial for many reasons, but in Grants, it can be hard to find other jobs that pay well enough to put food on the proverbial table.

As a child and adolescent psychiatrist, my role is to provide pro-bono mental health evaluations for the transgender women held at the facility. I spend a few hours interviewing them, then write comprehensive forensic reports that attorneys use in their cases.

Those of us who practice in New Mexico are quite familiar with even the severest forms of trauma, abuse and neglect. Yet nothing in my training or career to date could have prepared me for the stories I have heard from these women.

The drive out to the Cibola County Detention Center by Grants has grown quite familiar. At first, I noticed common landmarks, such as the Route 66 Casino, signs for the world-famous Laguna Burger, or the Acoma Sky City Casino. Nowadays, I count red sandstone and limestone outcroppings, vast desert valleys and the curves of Interstate 40 itself as my companions.

Many New Mexicans might not know that the detention center, a for-profit private prison run by Core Civic, is also home to an ultra-specialized U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) unit for transgender women.

These women present at the border and request asylum, often reporting torture and persecution in their home countries on the basis of their gender. If they pass an initial screening by a U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officer and another Credible Fear Interview by an immigration officer, they are then transferred to Cibola County to await a hearing with a federal immigration judge.

I've always found the detention center's physical appearance to be quite the paradox. Endless skies, billowing white clouds and picturesque desert mesas surround what is unmistakably a federal prison.

Inmates wearing distinctive orange jumpsuits can be seen walking laps or

# Planned Giving on a Global Scale



Warren & Rosalie Heffron  
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Warren Heffron is a longtime UNM faculty member and former chair of the Department of Family & Community Medicine. He and his wife, Rosalee, have devoted their lives to healing, both in the United States and abroad.

Today, they are building a legacy of international outreach that will span lifetimes with the Warren and Rosalie Heffron Faculty and Graduate Fellowship for International Health.

**“Healing and education have been paramount in our lives and we created our fellowship to share these values with UNM residents to work internationally, and for global faculty to have an opportunity to come to UNM to enhance their skills.”**

The couple explain it in simple terms: “Our participation in creating a UNM Foundation endowment for an ongoing fellowship through the UNM School of Medicine is a perfect way for us to continue our relationship with UNM in a manner that is consistent with our life’s values.”

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