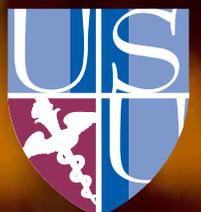


The Official USU Newsletter

# the pulse

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Photo by Thomas Balfour

**On the cover**

Parameet Kumar, PhD, is a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Roopa Biswas, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Anatomy, Physiology and Genetics at the Uniformed Services University. Kumar is part of a team conducting research in collaboration with USU's Center for Prostate Disease Research for the John P. Murtha Cancer Center. (See story, page 3)



# USU to launch new enlisted to MD program

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

For most people, the road to medical school is challenging. Mastering tough coursework with a stellar grade point average isn't enough. They also need clinical experience, strong interpersonal skills and competitive Medical College Admission Test scores.

Achieving these benchmarks while holding down a demanding, full-time job is even harder, especially for enlisted military personnel. Their unusual work schedules, routine deployments and ample service obligations add stumbling blocks to an already difficult process.

A new initiative at the Uniformed Services University, however, is leveling the playing field for exceptional troops with a strong academic prowess. The Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program (EMDP2) will place highly qualified enlisted service members in a full-time academic environment. The USU program will partner with a local college that offers premedical courses, pre-health advising and MCAT preparation. University faculty and students will also mentor EMDP2 participants.

Servicemembers selected for the EMDP2 program will maintain their active-duty status, but they won't have many additional military responsibilities. Instead, getting into medical school will be their primary job.

"The program will be intense. Only the very best will make the cut, but I know we have a large pool of talented enlisted folks to choose from," said Althea Green Dixon, director of the EMDP2 program.

Dixon, a retired command sergeant major in the U.S. Army, knows many of their stories. She spent 30 years in military units, working alongside hundreds of talented commissioned and non-commissioned troops, including Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Eric



Photo by Thomas Balfour

The Uniformed Services University is currently developing an Enlisted to Medical Degree Preparatory Program that places non-commissioned officers in full-time academic environments that prepares them for medical school.

Schoomaker, former surgeon general of the Army. Before she retired, Dixon was his senior enlisted advisor. In this role, she gained a broad view of military medicine and saw how innovative programs could make big differences for warrior care.

"The EMDP2 program is something military leaders have talked about for a long time. The enlisted community is full of bright, talented servicemembers who have a lot to offer. We want to leverage their abilities in the military health system, so they can take care of our wounded troops. But, we have to get them into medical school first," she said. "USU is giving enlisted servicemembers the tools they need to qualify. As a result, I believe the entire military will benefit."

The program is scheduled to launch in 2014, and like other USU programs, it is designed to encourage career military service. All EMDP2 graduates accepted into medical school will be commissioned, and all participants will incur a service obligation.

Contact USU's recruitment and admissions specialists, NaShieka Knight (nashieka.knight@usuhs.edu) and HMC Alexis Alvarado (alexis.alvarado@usuhs.edu), for more information about the EMDP2 program.

# USU brings education, research expertise to new John P. Murtha Cancer Center

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

The Uniformed Services University joined forces with other leading research facilities and hospitals to form the John P. Murtha Cancer Center, a Defense Center of Excellence, at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda.

The center – named for the late Pennsylvania Congressman John P. Murtha, a strong advocate for military medicine – provides full-spectrum cancer care to servicemembers and their families. These patients are seen by multidisciplinary teams who use best practices and cutting-edge technology to diagnose and treat many different forms of cancer.

The center also has a robust research portfolio and pioneering education programs that bring groundbreaking

discoveries to the forefront. USU and the National Cancer Institute lead many of these investigations, including clinical trials for new cancer medications, studies aimed at developing better diagnostics and research that finds ways to improve quality of life and survivorship for military families fighting cancer.

USU and other Murtha Center stakeholders – which include more than 300 specially-trained military, civilian and contract personnel – cross facilities and disciplines to bring new innovation to cancer treatment and research for breast, gynecological, pediatric and prostate cancers.

“Almost everyone has been affected by cancer, whether it’s a personal struggle or knowing someone – be it



a family member, friend or coworker – who has faced that challenge,” said Charles L. Rice, MD, president of USU. “That’s why USU’s role in the John P. Murtha Cancer Center is so vitally important to our university and the rest of military medicine. We are committed to this cause, and will continue sponsoring education and research programs that promote Congressman Murtha’s mission.”

## Esteemed physician delivers 2013 Packard Lecture

Courtesy of the USU Faculty Senate

Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD, founding dean and professor of the National School of Tropical Medicine and professor of Pediatrics and Molecular Virology and Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine, delivered “Blue Marble Health and the Neglected Tropical Diseases” – the Uniformed Services University’s 2013 David Packard Lecture, March 5.

Hotez is an internationally-recognized clinician and investigator in neglected tropical diseases and vaccine development. He leads the only product development partnership for developing new vaccines for hookworm infection, schistosomiasis, and Chagas disease, which affect hundreds of millions of children and adults worldwide. The hookworm

vaccine is currently in clinical trials. In 2006, at the Clinton Global Initiative, he co-founded the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases to provide access to essential medicines for more than 100 million people.

In addition to his duties at Baylor, Hotez is also president and director at Sabin Vaccine Institute, president and director at Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, and a fellow in the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at the American Academy of Pediatrics, and in Disease and Poverty at the James A Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. Additionally, he is the founding editor-in-chief of the journal, “PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases.”



Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD

Courtesy Photo

In 2011, Hotez was awarded the Abraham Horwitz Award for Excellence in Leadership in Inter-American Health by the Pan American Health Organization of the World Health Organization. He currently serves as principal investigator for research grants from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Dutch government, and NIH, as well as co-principal investigator for a research grant from the Carlos Slim Health Institute.

# Beloved teacher gives back to USU



Courtesy/Photo

Kathryn "Kate"  
Lacquement

Kathryn "Kate" Lacquement grew up in the sixties and seventies. She had dreams of becoming a teacher, a nurse, a radiologist, a model, a world famous novelist, a world famous cellist, and a mom.

She was sure that the world was hers to conquer and that she could do it all.

Growing up, she was rarely sick, just the usual childhood illnesses but never anything serious. At age 31, she found her first lump. It turned out to be a benign cyst, but it frightened her and put the word "cancer" into her lexicon. It also made her religious about doing monthly breast exams.

In 1993, she found another lump during her monthly exam. This time, the lump felt different. It was hard and didn't move. It felt like a small bump on her rib at the 11 o'clock position on her right breast. She was scheduled for a regular check-up, so she mentioned it to the nurse practitioner, who had the doctor examine it. The doctor scheduled a biopsy the following week. Kate thought it would be another cyst, but by 6 p.m. that same night, her surgeon called and delivered the bad news. It was cancer.

For the next 18 years, she fought valiantly against the disease. In and out of clinics and hospitals, rounds of surgery and chemotherapy, good days, bad days, better days. Through it all, Kate was determined to find the silver lining, as evidenced in an excerpt from the blog she periodically updated throughout the last two years of her life: "If I had to come up with a list of bright spots for having cancer, this would be the start: I truly appreciate the gift of life; I have met some amazing people – cancer patients with positive attitudes; Gifted doctors, nurses, and researchers who care for me; A great excuse that is hard to

argue with about getting out of doing stuff I don't want to [do]; A motivational push to continue going for my dreams – if not now, when? (I achieved my Master's in Education during about three, living in Germany); A closer walk with God – lots of one-way heated discussions. Unfortunately, the list of cons is much, much longer."

In the fall of 2012, Kate received devastating news. She referred to it as being 'gobsmacked' – astounded, astonished, completely dumbfounded.

"The wind had been knocked out of me," she wrote in her blog. "I felt like I had been hit with a two by four." After 19 years of battling cancer, the doctor quietly told her that the cancer had spread to her brain and lower spine. She was going to die.

Her devoted family, and her many caring friends, stood beside her for the nearly two decades she fought her battle with breast cancer. In 2005, her son, Alex, then a high school senior, wrote a poem entitled "Unbeatable" for his mother, which she kept on her dresser, and which was a source of continued strength and courage for Kate:

## Kate

*Determined  
Sister of Ruthie Bacon  
Lover of Chocolate  
Her Children,  
Life  
Who feels stressed by too much on  
her shoulders,  
Every day is a gift from God,  
Compassionate about teaching  
Who needs time to relax,  
A helping hand every once in a while,  
A cup of coffee every day  
Who gives encouragement to those in need,  
A smile to the world every day,  
Unconditional love to her family,  
Who fears letting her children go,  
Battling breast cancer again,  
Nothing else  
Who would like to see a cure for cancer,  
The day her children get married,  
Her mother more often  
Resident of U.S. Army  
Lacquement*

## USU Anatomical Gift Program

Individuals or surviving family members interested in making an anatomical donation do so for a variety of reasons – some to help further medical education and research, and some simply to find something positive in the death of their loved one.

"USU has an anatomical gift program that offers individuals and families a very personal and meaningful way of contributing to the education of our next generation of health care providers," said Ronald Rivenburgh, anatomical curator in USU's Anatomical Teaching Laboratory.

The USU Anatomical Gift Program is administered in the ATL and works in conjunction with the Maryland State Anatomy Board (MSAB) for whole body donations. Rivenburgh also works with individuals, family members, case managers, executors and others to guide them through the process of anatomical donation.

Each year, USU personnel are invited to the MSAB's annual memorial service, held in Sykesville, Md. The state invites all donor families and school representatives to participate in the service commemorating the donors and recognizing the participating universities.

For more information on USU's Anatomical Gift Program, visit [www.usuhs.mil/mdl/agprogram.html](http://www.usuhs.mil/mdl/agprogram.html), or call (301) 295-3301.

In December, 2012, she lost her valiant struggle with breast cancer.

Kate was a teacher. She loved to educate, so it came as no surprise to her family that she would choose to donate her body to science when she died. As a military spouse, she chose the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) Anatomical Gift Program so that, even in death, she could contribute to the education of future uniformed doctors and other health professionals.

Her family carried out her wishes for anatomical donation to USU. They had one request: to share her story with the USU community.

The note on the photo they sent simply said, "This is our favorite woman; please take care of her and learn lots from her. --- The Lacquements."

# USU alum named chair of newly established Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department

By Sharon Willis, managing editor and deputy vice president of External Affairs



Courtesy Photo

*Paul Pasquina, M.D., is the founding chair of USU's new Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.*

Paul Pasquina, M.D., director of the Center for Rehabilitation Science Research at the Uniformed Services University and chief of the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, was selected to chair the newly-established Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in the F. Edward Hébert School of Medicine at USU.

As the founding chair, Pasquina will develop a new USU department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation tailored to meet the specific needs of the military population, both in education and research.

"Dr. Pasquina is a gifted and trusted physician, researcher and educator with a solid history of contributions to our wounded, ill and injured troops, military and civilian medicine, and to the University," said Dr. Larry Laughlin, then-former dean of USU's School of Medicine in his announcement of Pasquina's selection. "He is the perfect choice to lead our new department."

Pasquina, a retired Army colonel, has achieved many significant accomplishments in the military health system, which he'll leverage in his new position. He is a 1987 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and earned his medical degree from USU in 1991. Pasquina completed his internship at Eisenhower Medical Center in Augusta, Ga., and his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. in 1995. In addition, he is board certified in electrodiagnostic medicine and pain medicine. Pasquina completed a fellowship in primary care sports medicine and remains interested in all aspects of musculoskeletal medicine, especially as it applies to individuals with disabilities. He currently serves as a consultant to numerous federal and non-federal agencies including the National Institutes of Health, Department of Veterans Affairs, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, Institute of Medicine, U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command and the University

of Pittsburgh School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Pasquina served as the specialty consultant to the Army Surgeon General and as the Medical Advisor to the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command for quality healthcare. He has authored multiple textbooks, book chapters, journal articles and policy papers. He has received multiple military awards, as well as awards for teaching and mentorship, including the U.S. Army's "A" Proficiency Designation for academic excellence, the Order of Military Medical Merit, Legion of Merit, da Vinci Lifetime Achievement Award, Partners in Progress Heroes of Military Medicine Award, Lewis Aspey Mologne Award, Alfred Mann Foundation Scientist of Year Award, and Honorary Fellow of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America.

His leadership in amputee care contributed to Walter Reed being the first institution in the world to introduce the clinical use and evaluation of the first motorized lower limb prostheses, most sophisticated upper limb prostheses, and the first of its kind implantable microelectrodes to drive a prosthetic device. Pasquina also helped shape WRNMMC's sports and recreational program, driving rehabilitation program, brain fitness lab, service animal program, creative arts in healthcare, interdisciplinary amputee and TBI clinics, satellite interventional pain suite, vocational and community reintegration programs, Computerized Rehabilitation Environment, Wheelchair and Seating Clinic, and musculoskeletal ultrasound clinic. He was a principal planner in the programming and design of the WRNMMC America Building and the National Intrepid Center of Excellence for TBI and Behavioral Health on the Bethesda campus.

# Faculty member fosters dog to help wounded vets

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

In 2011, U.S. Navy Capt. (Dr.) Mark Stephens, chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the Uniformed Services University, and his wife, Patty, began fostering a black Labrador retriever named Freedom. They quickly formed a strong bond, mainly because they share many of the same hobbies – running, socializing and helping people in need.

Even though Stephens loves Freedom, he'll need to say goodbye soon. His dog is part of the Warrior Canine Connection (WCC), and he'll be given to a military veteran with mobility impairments when he is approximately two years old.

Although he's attached to Stephens, Freedom was born to help wounded warriors. From the time he was a small puppy, a large network of people, including Stephens, have been training Freedom to open doors, turn on lights, shut cabinets and complete other routine household tasks that can be difficult for people with amputations and other physical disabilities.

Besides helping around the house, Freedom will also be a loyal companion for his new owner. The Warrior Canine Connection breeds and raises golden retrievers and Labradors like Freedom to be calm, affectionate and socially engaging.

"Freedom is sweet. He is a very even-tempered dog and brings joy to just about everyone he meets," said Stephens.



Photo by Christine Creenan-Jones

From left to right: Navy Capt. (Dr.) Mark Stephens, chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the Uniformed Services University, Patty Kennedy, director of Communication and Government Relations at Warrior Canine Connection, Rick Yount, executive director at WCC, and Marshall Peters, service dog program instructor at WCC, train dogs like Freedom, Valerie, Gabe, Rob and Abby to help veterans with mobility impairments at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence.

This includes servicemembers with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder at the National Intrepid Center of Excellence (NICoE) at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Stephens brings Freedom to the NICoE every Monday, Wednesday and Friday so professional handlers, behavioral health specialists and military patients can train him to become a certified service dog.

The innovative WCC program has multiple benefits. It can be therapeutic

for people with social anxiety and communication difficulties – side effects of TBI and PTSD – because Warrior trainers learn to give clear commands and use a lot of praise to successfully shape the dogs' behavior. The WCC mission – to enhance the lives and independence of disabled combat veterans by providing them with well-trained service dogs – also resonates with patients at the NICoE, because many of them feel a strong desire to give back.

"Our program taps into the warrior ethos of helping others," said Rick Yount, executive director at the WCC. "They're taking tiny puppies and shaping them into working service dogs for other vets. It's a powerful program that starts a fire in a lot of people."

The WCC mission is close to Stephens' heart as well. He has spent his entire Navy career taking care of military families, so sharing Freedom – his beloved dog – with an injured servicemember is more honor than sacrifice.

"When you see the joy he brings to others, and the good he will do for a wounded American hero, it's inspiring to think about the journey Freedom is on," said Stephens.



## SAVE THE DATE

The Uniformed Services University will celebrate the Special Emphasis Observances on April 16. The event, which honors the diversity that strengthens our country, will be held in USU's cafeteria at 9 a.m. The Honorable Jonathan Woodson, assistant secretary of defense for Health Affairs and director of TRICARE Management Activity, will be the keynote speaker.

# Word on Campus

By Christine Creenan-Jones, editor

Since April is the month of the military child, Pulse staff members asked medical personnel at the LTC David E. Cabrera Family Health Center at the Uniformed Services University what they enjoy most about taking care of military families, especially children. Here are their answers:



“The cool thing about taking care of military families is watching people change and grow. I try to take care of families the way I’d want someone to take care of my kids, and I think USU provides the best care around.”

**Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Sherman,**  
*medical technician*



“I enjoy working with military kids and their families because they are well mannered. Military kids are usually well behaved because they learn good discipline from their parents.”

**Adama Guyton,** *medical support assistant*



“I enjoy the continuity of seeing military children and watching them grow.”

**Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kimburly Davis,**  
*non-commissioned officer-in-charge*

“Military families are a very unique population. Most people recognize the noble sacrifices each of our service members make for our country, but they sometimes forget the equally significant sacrifices family members make. This includes our children, who endure frequent moves, the process of making new friends at each location, and separation from parents during deployments. It is important to me to recognize that they serve in their own way, something of which I am keenly aware as a father. For these reasons and more, the opportunity to care for military children is an important, satisfying part of my job.”



**Navy Cmdr. Adam Saperstein,** *physician (pictured with Fatima Bashir, clinic nurse manager)*

# USU alum wins prestigious award

By Sharon Willis, managing editor and deputy vice president for External Affairs



Courtesy Photo

The Military Health System’s “Building Stronger Female Physician Leaders in the MHS” award program, now in its fourth year, selects up to six female physicians - one senior and five junior winners - from each service: Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Public Health Service, who have made significant contributions to military medicine and served as exemplary role models to female military doctors. This year’s senior winner of the fourth annual MHS award is Air Force Col. (Dr.) Kimberly A. Slawinski, USU class of 1984.

Slawinski is a vice commander assigned to the Air Force Medical Operations Agency in San Antonio, Texas. She is an ophthalmologist and is trained as a flight surgeon. Fellow USU alum, Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Tom Travis, class of 1986, Air Force Surgeon General, presented the award to Slawinski.



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# Final Frame



Photo by Thomas C. Balfour