

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

URMC DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

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LEADING THE WAY



From left, Dr. Scott Rodig, Dr. Tamera Paczos, Dr. Luis De Las Casas.

In a true showing of tenacity and innovation in the field of pathology, the Department celebrated its 36th annual Research Day on Monday, June 13 at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

The largest and most robust event yet featured 18 oral presentations by Pathology residents, fellows, and PhD students and a juried poster presentation in Flaum Atrium with a total of 48 research projects on display.

Poster topics ranged from osteoarthritis and obesity to the regulation of maturation of embryonic erythroid cells as scientists presented their findings to an audience of peers and mentors alike.

Visiting keynote speaker Scott Rodig, director of the Tissue Biomarker Laboratory of the Center for Immuno-Oncology at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and associate professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School, presented, “Novel Tissue-based Biomarkers to Guide Immunotherapy.”

The day-long showcase was followed by an awards dinner recognizing all departing residents and fellows. Special awards included the following:

Department Faculty Awards

Chair’s Recognition Award, Dr. Tamera Paczos, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Pathology
Eric A. Schenk Award for Excellence in Teaching, Dr. Luis De Las Casas, MD, Director of Cytopathology

Residency Program

First Place, Oral Presentation, Dr. Nisha Patel, DO
Second Place, Oral Presentation, Dr. Shana Straub, MD
Third Place, Oral Presentation, Dr. Chad Hudson, MD, PhD
Chief Resident Recognition, Dr. Diana Agostini-Vulaj, DO
Associate Chief Resident Recognition, Dr. Sapna Patel, MD

Graduate Program

Academic Excellence Award, Cynthia Tang
Outstanding Research Publication Award, Allison Li
Outstanding Contribution, Zachary Murphy, MS
Travel Awards, Irina Lerman, MS, Eric Schott, MS, Melissa Glasner, Chao Xue, MS

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CHAIR'S COLUMN



Dr. Bruce Smoller

July always brings a renewed enthusiasm to the department as we welcome a new group of trainees and wish fond farewells to old friends.

This year, we are excited to welcome four new residents, five new fellows (see below), and five new graduate students, along with a bunch of new faculty members that have been introduced in past newsletters. In addition, our department welcomed a new Program Administrator, Mr. Larry Ross, in May. Larry comes to us with a wide range of administrative experiences and many years of leadership experience (below).

This truly is an exciting time for the department. Drs. Laurie Milner and Nancy Wang have announced their plans to retire over the next few months. They have been productive and tireless members of our department for many years and we will be sad to see them move on to the next phase of their lives. We wish them the very best.



The past few months was punctuated by a fun Laboratory Week that saw our departmental staff enjoy some richly deserved local publicity and attention. I delivered my annual "State of the Department" address

that highlighted many of our superb employees and their achievements.

I am thrilled to report that two of our surgical pathologists, Drs. Jennifer Findeis-Hosey and Raul Gonzalez have been selected by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) as part of the of "40 Under Forty", a list of young pathologists with the greatest potential selected from the national roster. Obviously, this bodes very well for the future

of our department! Congratulations to both of them! Plans for a partial relocation of the laboratories continue, albeit more slowly than originally planned. The Hospital Administration has presented a multi-million dollar plan to the Board of Trustees to fund a two-phase program over the next several years that would see a marked expansion and reconfiguration of our myriad laboratories. In the first phase, Molecular Pathology would be consolidated into a single large laboratory located on Bailey Road, joined by the Clinical Trials and outpatient laboratory (currently located on Ridgeland Road), and by Microbiology that is in such desperate need of new laboratory space. Other administrative functions will also relocate in the first phase of the project. Once approved, plans can begin in earnest for the move.

We continue to work with the administrations and pathology departments at some of our affiliated hospitals to develop an integrated pathology program. Currently, we are working to hire a pathologist to add to the professional staff at FF Thompson, as we tighten our working relationship with that superb regional hospital. Concurrently, we are working on purchasing new automated analyzers that will enable patients to go from one hospital to the other with easily transferable laboratory data. These types of endeavors involve many components of our team, ranging from the clinical pathologists to the information technology and finance folks.

On a sad note, the department lost a past faculty member and good friend when Dr. Raymond Felgar died suddenly while at work. He is remembered by his colleagues in a short piece within.

-Bruce Smoller, M.D.

ROSS NEW PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR



Mr. Larry Ross has joined the department as program administrator. Ross most recently worked as the executive director of Laboratory and Pathology Services at the Southeast Hospital Group in Massachusetts. He previously served at Oakwood Healthcare, a four-hospital system in Michigan, as system laboratory administrative director. He fills the role recently vacated by David Strong. "We are all very excited about his arrival and look forward to his administrative expertise as we move forward with this rapidly evolving era of healthcare change," said Dr. Bruce Smoller, department chair.

MEET THE RESIDENTS

We are pleased to welcome a new resident class this month from across the U.S. and beyond. Learn more about them here.



Name: Roula Katerji

Graduate of: University of Aleppo, Syria

What is one thing you hope to accomplish during your residency in Rochester?

I hope to have a great education and experience in both AP/CP, having the opportunity to work on research that has an impact on people in developed countries.

What is one fun fact about you?

I enjoy watching cartoons, which helps me explore my imagination to create my own art designs.



Name: Cynthia Reyes Barron

Graduate of: Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, El Paso, Paul L. Foster School of Medicine

What is one thing you hope to accomplish during your residency in Rochester?

I hope to become a competent, well-rounded pathologist.

What is one fun fact about you?

I love dark chocolate.



Name: Alexandra Danakas

Graduate of: Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine

What is one thing you hope to accomplish during your residency in Rochester?

I hope to become a better version of myself, progressing intellectually and professionally within the field of pathology.

What is one fun fact about you?

My husband and I were married this past October. Halloween is our favorite holiday and for the past five years we've transformed our basement into a haunted house for family and friends.



Name: Mushal Noor

Graduate of: King Edward Medical University, Lahore, Pakistan

What is one thing you hope to accomplish during your residency in Rochester?

To survive both the residency and the snow. And of course, to become a good pathologist, too!

What is one fun fact about you?

I grew up in Syracuse, and then my family moved back to Pakistan when I was in third grade. I remember visiting the Science Museum in Rochester on a field trip! Also, to anyone who happens to own a fluffy white cat: I will be your best friend.

STAFF HONORED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE



Seventy-seven Pathology staff were honored at the UR staff recognition dinner on June 2. The event is held annually to honor those from across the whole University who have worked 25 years or more.

David C. Allen and Donna L. Wisely, both pictured at left, were among just seven honorees who have worked 45 years at UR. David currently works in Lab Client Services and Donna works in Clinical Lab Systems Support. In the fall, the department will hold its own recognition event for staff who have served 10 or more years.

MCMAHON VOLUNTEERS IN HAITI



Loralee McMahon, supervisor of Immunohistochemistry (IHC) in Surgical Pathology, volunteered her time and expertise in Haiti earlier this year. She presented on her experiences at the NYS Histology Meeting in April. In collaboration with organizers from the nonprofit, Project Medishare, her task was to set up a full working histology lab at a hospital and train local lab technicians in IHC. McMahon spent time at National Public Health Laboratory in Port-au-Prince where she trained two young lab technicians, and at a hospital in the city of Cape Haitien. "By the end of the two weeks I saw that this is way bigger than making a histology lab," she said. "But you have to start somewhere."

REMEMBERING DR. RAYMOND FELGAR



Many were saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Raymond E. Felgar in April. He was a faculty member at UPMC from 1998-2007. He most recently worked at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. A native of Mt. Pleasant, Pa., Dr. Felgar earned his MD and Ph.D. from the University

of Pittsburgh. His former colleagues and students whom he met in Rochester were quick to share fond memories of him.

“I still can’t believe it,” said Dr. Krisztina Hanley, a former resident who remembers his professionalism and sense of humor. “He was dedicated to his profession (and) time of the day did not matter to him when it came to patient care and work.”

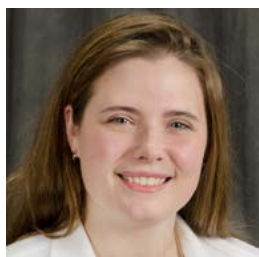
Dr. Dan Ryan, director of Central Labs, agreed. “Ray was extraordinarily committed to his patients,” said Ryan. “Many times I would pass by his office late and there he was, pencil behind his ear, poring over lab reports or on the microscope to make sure he had considered every diagnostic possibility, never satisfied that he had done enough. Ray will be missed.”

Dr. Felgar was the director of Hematopathology and medical director of the Flow Cytometry and Bone Marrow Laboratory at UPMC. According to former colleague, Dr. Steven Spitalnik – who hired Felgar and also trained him during his residency at U. Pitt. – Felgar brought “true diagnostic hematopathology” to Rochester.

“Ray succeeded in this endeavor because of his intelligence, knowledge base, diagnostic skills, professionalism, patience, perseverance, wry humor, and grace,” said Spitalnik. “The end result was that our patients received better care and our residents received better training. He was a wonderful personal friend and professional colleague, and he will be greatly missed.”

Outside of work, “Ray” enjoyed cycling, traveling, and socializing with friends. Dr. Marilyn Menegus, professor of Microbiology and a close friend, describes him as soft spoken and humble. “The cool thing about Ray is that he was always friendly to everyone,” said Menegus. “It didn’t matter whether you were a tech or a professor or secretary; he made no distinction between people he was nice to because he was nice to absolutely everybody.”

TWO NAMED TO 40 UNDER FORTY LIST



Drs. Jennifer Findeis-Hosey and Raul Gonzalez have been named to this year’s American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) 40 Under Forty List. Each year, the ASCP selects candidates from a national pool of pathologists under the age of 40 who are making a significant impact on the field.

Dr. Findeis-Hosey, 36, joined the University as an assistant professor in 2012. She is a gastrointestinal and hepatobiliary pathologist with a research focus on Lynch syndrome.

Her research at UPMC extends from

immunohistochemical markers of Lynch syndrome to the development of a multidisciplinary high risk colorectal carcinoma program. She serves as the director of pathology curriculum for the UR School of Medicine and oversees high school and undergraduate students in the Pathology Information Technology program.

Dr. Gonzalez, 34, joined the University in 2014 as an assistant professor. He specializes in gastrointestinal (GI) pathology. He has done much collaborative research in the field, with a focus on subtypes of colorectal carcinoma; he has published findings on adenoma-like adenocarcinoma and micropapillary carcinoma.

This year, he co-authored a textbook on non-neoplastic liver disease and was named the co-director of the GI pathology fellowship.



FOND FAREWELLS



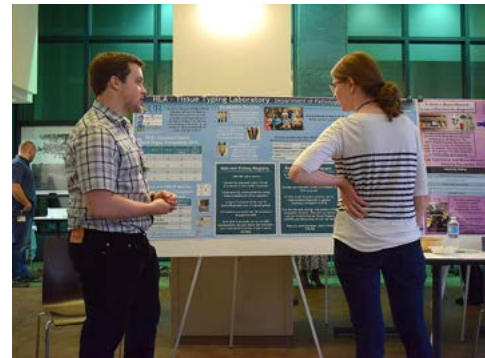
Mary Ann Rutkowski

Mary Ann Rutkowski and Joan Drader have retired from the department after more than three decades of service.

Rutkowski was 20 years old when first hired as a cytotech at UPMC and retired from that same position in May. “I blinked and here I am 38 years later,” she said. “I truly have had the time of my life here at the U of R.”

Drader worked in the department for 36 years and is retiring to be a full-time grandmother and TAR employee. Best of luck to Joan and Mary Ann!

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL LAB WEEK!



Poster Session

As part of Medical Laboratory Professionals Week, the department hosted its first ever public poster session in the North End of Cafe 601 on April 26. All were welcomed to meet faculty and staff and learn more about the work that goes on behind the scenes at UR Medicine Labs.

TEAMS WIN QUALITY COUNCIL AWARDS



On April 28, the Patient Blood Management Program and URMC Lean Program were among those honored by the Greater Rochester Quality Council (GRQC). The Lean

Program, whose leadership team includes Vicki VanDeWalle, process improvement manager for Pathology, took home the Gold Award. The Cytology turnaround time project was one of three Lean projects highlighted in the award application. Contributors include Dr. Brendan Boyce, Deborah Congdon,

Dawn Costello, Mike Facik, Michelle Fuller, Kim Handley, Nathan Loria, Dr. Marilyn Menegus, John Plavnicky, Tamera Pulver, Maimoona Ramaswamy, Robyn Sage, Nicole Truax, Vicki VanDeWalle, Tonya Wyatt, and Dr. David Zhou.

The Patient Blood Management Program (PBM) won the Silver Award for its effort to reduce unnecessary blood transfusions hospital-wide. PBM core team members include William Andrews, Dr. Neil Blumberg, Christine Cahill, Amy Kievitt, Dr. Scott Kirkley, Debra Masel, Dr. Majed Refaai, Dr. Amy Schmidt, Pathology residents, and blood bank technologists.

Pictured: Patient Blood Management Program managers Christine Cahill, left, and Dr. Majed Refaai won the Silver Award from GRQC.

FOCUS ON FACULTY (CONT. FROM BACK)

Both husband and wife started residency at the same time, with Ellen at Vanderbilt University and Craig at Duke. His residency ended first, and the couple came to the University of Rochester where he completed a cardiology fellowship and she finished her residency. They then hopped around the country for work – from Cleveland, where Ellen did a fellowship in surgical pathology, to Albuquerque, N.M. where she gained further FNA experience. In 2001, the couple both took positions at URMC where they still work today.

Most of her research is collaborative with the following departments: Endocrinology, Otolaryngology, Radiology, and Oncology. She holds her Cytopathology colleagues in the highest regard. The group was recognized as a High Performing Team by URMC in 2014 for its efficiency and effective communication.

“We primarily think of ourselves as a family working together,” she said. “We know everybody’s got a job to do. Everybody has to think of the patient, and that is our primary goal.”

She enjoys working with patients at the FNA clinic, saying it helps put the work into perspective.

“It’s very helpful in the sense of keeping you grounded and knowing the importance of making correct diagnoses in an efficient manner. When you see a patient who’s scared, there’s a human aspect to it.”

In her free time, Ellen plays badminton competitively and enjoys bird-watching, trivia, and traveling with her husband. They live in Pittsford.



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FOCUS ON FACULTY: DR. ELLEN GIAMPOLI



Imagine that you can insert a needle anywhere on the body and draw a microscopic sample from which you can determine a diagnosis and a full genetic profile of a patient's disease and determine what kind of treatment it will respond to.

This might sound like a method used by Dr. Bones from "Star Trek" – a simple wave of the hand, or prick of the needle, in this case. Dr. Ellen Giampoli, M.D., cytopathologist at the University of Rochester Medical Center, says fine needle aspiration procedures (FNA) are the future of pathology and patient diagnoses.

"Everybody talks about personalized medicine," said Dr. Giampoli, "This can be done with cytology, and it is being done with cytology; it's the future."

FNA is less invasive than surgery, which means it can take the place of a core biopsy if the risks are too high in a given case. There are still limitations to FNA, Giampoli explains, but patients who can opt for this procedure instead of having tissue removed will most likely have a much shorter recovery time and a quicker start to treatment.

Dr. Giampoli became interested in medicine as a teenager, volunteering at her community clinic in White Plains, NY, north of New York City. She got her bachelor's degree in biology (summa cum laude) from nearby Fordham University and went on to medical school at SUNY Buffalo. There, she met her future husband Craig Narins, M.D. Ellen originally wanted to be a pediatrician but changed course after taking an elective course in pathology. "It was like puzzles with pieces that you have to put together, and that's fun and challenging for me," she said. (*continued inside on pg. 5*)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We have been fortunate to receive philanthropic support from many individuals, which allows the Department of Pathology to maintain and accelerate vital clinical, educational, and research initiatives. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift today, or as part of your estate plans, please visit urmc.rochester.edu/urmc-labs/pathology.aspx and look for the "Make a Gift" button, or contact Jon Sussman, Associate Director of Advancement at 585-276-4976 or jon.sussman@rochester.edu. Thank you!