

Gala raises \$1.1 million for cancer research



Robin Roberts

Last fall's Ambassador of Hope Gala raised more than \$1.1 million to support research at the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center.

The Oct. 18 event featured comments from the 2008 Ambassador of Hope Award recipient, Robin Roberts of ABC's Good Morning America. Roberts – who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007 – was honored for raising awareness about the disease.

More than 800 people attended the gala at the Qwest Center Omaha and several more attended a satellite gala in Scottsbluff. In addition to Roberts, previous recipients of the Ambassador of Hope Award include Tom Brokaw, Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Sam Donaldson and the late Omaha philanthropist Chuck Durham.

Student enrollment sets record high

For the fourth straight year, student enrollment at UNMC reached an all-time high with 3,189 students enrolled for the 2008-09 school year – an increase of 2 percent over last year's previous record of 3,128.

Sizable increases occurred in both the graduate college and in the professional level, which includes the colleges of dentistry, pharmacy and medicine and such programs in the School of Allied Health Professions as physician assistant and physical therapy.

Enrollment in the graduate college climbed by 45 students, or 7 percent, going from 647 to 692. At the professional level, there was an increase of 37 students, or 2.2 percent, boosting the total of professional students from 1,652 to 1,689.

Buffett autographs boots for auction

The Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska got an unexpected boost – and some unexpected boots – for its June 5-6 "Famous Boots Auction" thanks to Omaha billionaire Warren Buffett.



autographed boots

Buffett, chairman of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., autographed a pair of cowboy boots donated by The Boot Rack in Albion, Neb., and Justin Boots, a Berkshire Hathaway company in Fort Worth, Texas. In addition to his signature, the well-known

steak lover wrote "I love beef!" on one boot.

The Famous Boots Auction will be among the scheduled fundraising activities during the 11th annual Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska event near Doniphan, Neb.

Robb Feed Yard, the Platte River Whooping Crane Maintenance Trust, the village of Doniphan and surrounding communities will host this year's Cattlemen's Ball. The event's theme, "Give Cancer the Boot," reflects both the fun-filled spirit the event's organizers have created and the seriousness with which they see their cause.

To date, the Cattlemen's Ball of Nebraska has raised more than \$3 million for the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center, while 10 percent of these funds have been granted to local health care organizations. For ticket information, visit www.cattlemensball.com.

New center for humanities, ethics

The new Center for Humanities, Ethics and Society in UNMC's College of Public Health will centralize campus projects that involve issues in humanities, ethics and law.

The center, approved by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents in January, will work on programs in six critical areas: clinical ethics and patient care, humanities and the arts, interprofessionalism, research ethics, values and the environment and health care reform.

Ethics extend far beyond patient rooms, said Toby Schonfeld, Ph.D., associate professor of health care ethics and the center's director. Climate change, industrial reform and global consumerism impact our physical world, which in turn influences the health of society.

Dr. Maurer to be inducted into Omaha Business Hall of Fame



Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

The Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce will soon induct UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., and six others into the Omaha Business Hall of Fame.

The April 16 gala honors individuals whose accomplishments in business are historically significant to the development of Omaha.

"I'm tremendously honored to

receive this recognition," said Dr. Maurer, who marked his 10th anniversary as chancellor this past December.

"My induction into the Hall of Fame is a testament to UNMC's progress in becoming a world-class academic health sciences center and is reflective of our current vitality in the city of Omaha and beyond. I would not be receiving this recognition without the tremendous work of UNMC faculty and staff, as well my wife Beverly's support and tireless advocacy for UNMC," he said.

The honor is one of Dr. Maurer's many commendations that include an international Lifetime Achievement Award in cancer research, the region's Midlander of the Year honor and the King of Ak-Sar-Ben crown.

Dr. Maurer joined UNMC in 1993 as the dean of the College of Medicine. He became chancellor in 1998. A pediatric hematologist/ oncologist, Dr. Maurer is internationally known for his expertise in rhabdomyosarcoma, a fast-growing, highly malignant tumor that accounts for more than half of the soft tissue cancers in children. For 26 years, he chaired the national Intergroup Rhabdomyosarcoma Study Group, which has been credited with raising the cure rate from 20 percent to 75 percent by developing a repetitive-course, multi-agent chemotherapy treatment.

In 2003, the Children's Oncology Group awarded Dr. Maurer with its most prestigious honor – the Lifetime Achievement Award – recognizing his leadership and contributions in this important area of cancer research. In 2008, the National Cancer Institute recognized the work of the IRSG as one of the top 28 milestones over the past 60 years in pediatric oncology.

His achievements at UNMC include leading the merger of University Hospital and Clarkson Hospital to form The Nebraska Medical Center; leading the institution to new heights of excellence in education, research and clinical care, including construction of new facilities such as the Durham Research Center and Durham Research Center II, the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education, the Hixson-Lied Center for Clinical Excellence and several facilities that have yet to open.

Science Cafes draw big crowds

More than 200 young adults interested in science attended UNMC's first two "Science Cafes" in February. UNMC has teamed with the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures and Bio Nebraska to host these events in local coffeehouses and bars.

UNMC neurosurgeon William Thorrell, M.D., and epileptologist Sanjay Singh, M.D., discussed how the brain works during two initial events at the Slowdown in downtown Omaha.

"This format leads to face-to-face discussions in a more informal, fun environment," said Bob Bartee, vice chancellor for external affairs at UNMC. "We're hopeful that the Science Cafes will appeal to young adults and help re-introduce them to science."

The Science Cafes are part of an effort by UNMC and other groups to increase the population's science literacy. A more scientifically literate populace is a goal in UNMC's strategic plan, and a 17-member team comprising UNMC faculty and staff, as well as Omaha area community leaders, is addressing the issue. For more information, visit www.unmc.edu/sciencecafe.

Highly-trained MS specialist joins UNMC



Rana Zabad, M.D.

UNMC expanded the care of patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) with the hiring of Rana Zabad, M.D., the first fellowship-trained MS neurologist to practice in the state of Nebraska.

Dr. Zabad will serve as assistant professor

and director of the multiple sclerosis program in the UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences.

Her leadership will build upon UNMC's already successful MS clinic. Established in 1997, the clinic has contributed to national research and advances in MS; however, in the past, many patients have been referred to other national centers of excellence.

"Though our neurologists are appropriately trained and qualified to treat patients with MS, the challenging aspects of diagnosis and complex choices of treatments make Dr. Zabad critical to providing an advanced standard of care," said Pierre Fayad, M.D., Reynolds Centennial Professor and chairman of neurological sciences. ☺