College of Medicine Alumni Council News

Message from the President

Dear Fellow Alumni:

I hope you are having a wonderful summer. Our alumni council has important news to share with you. We have decided to support the new Wigton Heritage Center with a $100,000 contribution that will create a named wall display. The Wigton Heritage Center, named for alumnus Bob Wigton, MD '69, will transform the center of UNMC's campus, featuring UNMC's history, including that of the College of Medicine and our alumnus. We are pleased to be a part of this project on your behalf, and look forward to the opening of this beautiful new facility in the spring of 2021.

We are approaching the start of another new academic year, when the College of Medicine will welcome 132 new medical students at the White Coat ceremony, also sponsored by our alumni. Thanks to those of you who have made contributions to the College of Medicine Innovation Fund, which directly supports the white coats and the ceremony. I will address the students and assist in the ceremonial coating. It is a highlight of the medical school journey and it is an important tradition for us to be involved in as alumni.

And, just a reminder that UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend is October 11-12, 2019, with a new and improved schedule.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with ways we can serve and engage you. Thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,
Brett Kettelhut, M.D. '82
Phi Rho For a Cause Golf Tournament on Sept. 29

Sponsorships and foursomes available

Phi Rho Sigma
Medical Society

On behalf of the Phi Rho Sigma Medical Fraternity and the Meyer Foundation for Disabilities (MFD), College of Medicine alumni are invited to partner with Phi Rho in the annual Phi Rho For a Cause golf tournament. This event benefits an Omaha institution dedicated to serving adults with disabilities and will provide needed funding for their many programs and services.

Date: Sunday, September 29, 2019
Location: Benson Park Championship Golf Course, Omaha, Neb.
Time: 2 p.m.; 18-hole scramble event with dinner to follow

Click here to download additional information or contact student Tyler Kallman.

Honor Classes to Gather During Alumni Weekend;
October 11-12, 2019

Alumni Reunion Weekend will be held October 11-12, 2019 in Omaha. The schedule will include activities on the UNMC campus on Friday, October 11, including an awards reception, and class parties on Saturday, October 12. Honor years are those ending in "4" or "9." More information about the reunion is available here. Online registration will be available very soon on our website.
Save the Date for Alumni Weekend 2020
Honor year classes for 2020 (those ending in 0 or 5); please mark October 23-24, 2020 for your reunion.

2019 College of Medicine Alumni Award Recipients

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Distinguished Alumnus Award</th>
<th>Early Career Achievement Award</th>
<th>Dedication to Student Excellence Award</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peter J. Whitted, M.D. '79</td>
<td>Sheritta Strong, MD '04</td>
<td>Kelly Caverzagie, MD '01</td>
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These awards will be presented on Friday, October 11 at 5:30 p.m. at the Living the Legacy Alumni Reception at the UNMC Truhlsen Campus Events Center. The event is open to all alumni. Registration is $20/person, please visit our website to register to attend. (Online registration coming soon).

College of Medicine Alumni Gather in Kansas City
Thanks to Lynn Roh, M.D. '84 for hosting a College of Medicine alumni conversation with Dr. Brad Britigan, Dean of the UNMC College of Medicine, at her home in Leawood, Kansas. These events bring together alumni to learn about what's new in the College of Medicine.

Thank you for supporting the College of Medicine
Innovation Fund

Our support for the College of Medicine and its students is made possible by generous donations to our Innovation Fund. Highlights of projects we supported this past year include:

- Purchase a “test bank” for M2 students. The “test bank” is a database of questions designed to help prepare medical students for important examinations to assess their understanding of the sciences basic to the practice of medicine.
- Purchase a series of short how-to videos demonstrating common medical procedures on manikins and patients.
- Support the work of the College of Medicine Student Advocate
- Support for the College of Medicine White Coat Ceremony
- Support for the people and programs of the alumni association

Later this summer, our full FY19 Innovation Fund Impact Report will be available online. In the meantime, please click the image at right above to watch this brief video from COM student Amber McMahon, who says “thank you” to the Innovation Fund Donors.
Connect with the UNMCAA through a new Blog

On January 2, 2019, the UNMCAA launched the Connections Project Blog, a place for UNMC Alumni to share real-world information and advice with students and fellow #unmcalumni. Information is in short written or video posts. All content is housed on the blog and is shared via the UNMC Alumni Association’s Facebook and Twitter.

Topics covered are well-being, professional skills, personal finance, time, talent, and treasure. If you want to see a specific topic covered or if you want to provide content for a blog post, please contact us. Alumni can participate from anywhere in the world, so connect with us today. Here are some samples from the blog:

Denny Strauss, M.D. ’68 Lessons learned on Giving Back of Time, Talent & Treasure

Jordan Warchol, M.D. ’13, MPH on the Importance of professional society involvement

UNMCAA Offers Travel Opportunities for 2020

Gaelic Inspiration
July 12-22, 2020
Dublin to Dublin
Discover the lush landscapes and fascinating heritage of Ireland aboard Oceania Cruises’ Nautica on this spectacular nine-night cruise.

Forests & Fjords of Alaska
July 30 - August 10, 2020
Seward to Vancouver, BC
Explore the forests and fjords of Alaska’s coastal cities on this unforgettable eleven-night trip aboard Oceania Cruises’ Regatta.
Cosmopolitan Havens
November 3-11, 2020
Rome to Monte Carlo
Sail to some of the most cultured cities on the western Mediterranean on this seven-night cruise aboard Oceania Cruises’ elegant Marina.

Stay Connected via the UNMC App

The UNMC Alumni Association now has a button in the UNMC Mobile App.

Features of the UNMCAA button include: Events, Resources Alumni Directory, Alumni Councils, Social Media links, Connections blog, and much more.

You can download the official UNMC app from the App Store (Apple) or from Google Play.

Kudos...

William (Bill) Lydiatt, MD ’88, was named vice president of medical affairs and chief medical officer at Methodist Health System in Omaha, Neb. He also serves as chairman of the department of surgery.

Leo McCarthy, MD ’64 of Indianapolis, Ind., was awarded the Irving S. Cutter Medal from the Phi Rho Sigma Medical Society. The medal is the highest award of the national Phi Rho Sigma medical fraternity.

Lynne Kirk MD ’77 of Dallas, Tex., was named Chief Accreditation Officer for the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) in the summer of 2019. She comes from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Have you been recognized recently? We want to hear about it! Send us an update for class notes.
A Message from Dean Brad Britigan, MD

Ever since arriving at UNMC in 2011, I have admired what Dr. Robert Wigton has done for the College of Medicine, UNMC, and medical care in Nebraska over the past half century. He is truly a legendary figure. With the groundbreaking ceremony on June 24 for UNMC’s latest building project - the Wigton Heritage Center - it is gratifying to see Bob receive the accolades he deserves.

When it is completed in 2021, the 10,000 square-foot, four-level, $8 million building to be located in the space between Wittson Hall and University Tower will become a transformational gathering place for our campus. It will celebrate and memorialize UNMC’s history, while also serving as a campus welcome center.

It is an absolutely perfect fit for Dr. Wigton, who has long held the unofficial title of UNMC’s campus historian. He also has always been a tremendous supporter of the McGoogan Library of Medicine. The new building will allow the library to take previously hidden gems - prized collections, artifacts, archives and rare books - and showcase them to the public.

A 1969 alumnus of the UNMC College of Medicine, Bob has been an anchor in our college ever since. He served as professor in internal medicine at UNMC and held numerous academic and administrative positions in the College of Medicine, including associate dean for graduate medical education, a position that remarkably he held for more than 40 years. Read more from Dr. Britigan.
College of Medicine & Class of 1962 Present Basic Sciences Teaching Award

Congratulations to Travis McCumber, PhD for receiving the College of Medicine & Class of 1962 Basic Sciences Outstanding Teacher Award. Dr. McCumber’s wife, McKayla, is a 2011 graduate of the UNMC College of Nursing.

The award was established in 1987 in conjunction with the Class of 1962’s 25th reunion and has been given annually since 1989. The College of Medicine partners with the class on the award.

Faculty eligible for the award must be from one of these four departments -- biochemistry and molecular biology, cellular and integrative physiology, genetics, cell biology and anatomy, or pharmacology and experimental neuroscience -- and be teaching in the first two years of the basic science curriculum. The award criteria includes teaching evaluations, teaching honors, outstanding leadership in advancing learning, recognition from peers on teaching abilities, innovation and leadership. Dr. McCumber was recognized at a small luncheon hosted by the UNMC Alumni Association on July 16. Attendees at the luncheon included Jay Moore, M.D. ’71, senior associate dean for academic affairs, and two members of the Class of 1962, (pictured above) Pat O’Gara, M.D., and Bill Orr, M.D., along with their spouses.

Aviva Abosch, MD, PhD, is chair of the new Department of Neurosurgery

Aviva Abosch, M.D., Ph.D., joined UNMC July 1, 2019 as chair of the newly established Department of Neurosurgery in the College of Medicine. Dr. Abosch comes to UNMC from the University of Colorado neurosurgeon.

A native of New Haven, Conn., Dr. Abosch received her M.D. and Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh.
She completed her neurosurgery residency at the University of California, San Francisco, which was followed by fellowships in epilepsy and functional neurosurgery at McGill and Toronto Western Hospital, respectively. Following her training, Dr. Abosch has held faculty positions at three academic medical centers during her career -- Emory University (2002-2005), University of Minnesota (2005-2013) and University of Colorado (2013-present). At Colorado, she is professor (with tenure) of neurosurgery and neurology and vice chair for research for the Department of Neurosurgery.

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**UNMC News**

**For first time, researchers able to eliminate HIV from animal**

In a major collaborative effort, researchers at UNMC and the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University (LKSOM) have for the first time eliminated replication-competent HIV-1 DNA -- the virus responsible for AIDS -- from the genomes of living animals. The study, reported online July 2 in the journal *Nature Communications*, marks a critical step toward the development of a possible cure for human HIV infection. [Read more.](#)

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**Wellness Lounge Opens at UNMC for Residents**

Through leadership of the House Officers Association, UNMC recently opened a 1,900 square foot Wellness Lounge for residents. The space is located on the second floor of the Medical Sciences Building, just east of the Werner Cancer Hospital in the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center. The area formerly served as office space.

The space includes: A work area, including a conference room and computer work stations as well as a refrigerator and microwave; an exercise area with a treadmill, a stationary bike and an elliptical machine and male/female showers and restrooms; three relaxation rooms and a meditation room. [Read more.](#) [View photos from the dedication.](#)

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**Wittson Hall Renovation Underway**

The familiar Wittson Hall and McGoogan Library will look a little different come 2021. [Read more.](#) ****
It's easy to update your Email Preferences. Be sure to add alumni@unmc.edu to your address book or safe senders list so our emails get to your inbox. You may also review our Privacy Policy.