Renaissance Man Dr. Hobart Wiltse Will Be Missed

by Tom O’Connor,
UNMC Public Affairs

Funeral services were held June 11th in Omaha for Hobart "Hobe" Wiltse, M.D., Ph.D., retired professor in the UNMC Department of Pediatrics, who died on June 6 from lung cancer.

Dr. Wiltse, 75, retired in 2002 after 37 years on the faculty. He was well known for his caring demeanor and for giving his time to students and patients, said Bruce Buehler, M.D., professor and chairman of the UNMC Department of Pediatrics and director of the Munroe-Meyer Institute.

"Hobe was a teacher's teacher," Dr. Buehler said. "He was a Renaissance man. He loved photography and music and even built his own organ. He had so many interests that were reflected back in his teaching."

In March, Dr. Wiltse donated 19 of his favorite photographs to the department of pediatrics. The photographs, which feature 18 photos of animals and one plant shot, are hanging in the main hallway of the pediatrics department on the fifth floor of University Tower.

Dr. Buehler said the UNMC Pediatrics Department recently created the first annual Hobart Wiltse Excellence in Medical Education Award. It will be given to outstanding educators in pediatrics. Possible recipients are nominated and then required to document their innovative Wiltsie (Continued on page 6)
From the Chairman’s Desk

by Bruce Buehler, M.D.

A hallmark of the Department of Pediatrics has been creating change to meet new challenges and to work cooperatively throughout the state in providing the best care for children. I believe the implementation of a new Clinical Trials Office will be exceptionally important to the future of Pediatrics and to our new association with Children’s Hospital. It is critical that an academic Children’s Hospital be on the cutting edge of drug and other clinical trials to provide the very best care for patients.

It is also exciting to see the addition of three new faculty members who bring in new ideas, who add to the cadre of excellent physicians we already have, and who bring in the next generation of leaders. A static Department of Pediatrics will not exist in the future and, therefore, change is necessary and critical to build the very best residency and provide direct care to patients. We are a department who sometimes forget how attractive it is to come to Omaha, Nebraska and work in a truly growing Department of Pediatrics, College of Medicine and University.

There is a tendency sometimes to not “blow our own horn” or recognize our strengths, which are many. We are a superb Department of Pediatrics and I am very proud to work with every one of the clinicians and staff every day. I receive letters and phone calls regarding the quality of our residents when they enter practice or become fellows and I receive numerous communications about the quality of our staff and how they handle patient issues, referrals, and families.

I am very proud of our Department of Pediatrics and I believe the recent events, including the development of a Clinical Trials Office, recruitment of three outstanding faculty, and the joining of resources with Children’s Hospital exemplifies how our department continues to be recognized as one of the superb Department of Pediatrics in the country. I thank each of you for your efforts and support.

Dr. Sharad Kunnath Joins Pediatric GI

Sharad Kunnath, M.D., MPH joined the UNMC Section of Pediatric Gastroenterology on July 1, 2007. This was a homecoming for Dr. Kunnath because he completed his pediatric residency from the UNMC-Creighton Universities Joint Pediatric Residency Program in 2004. Prior to completing his pediatrics training, he received his Masters in Public Health (MPH) from Loma Linda University, California.

During residency training, Dr. Kunnath notes Dr. Thomas Attard as influencing his decision to pursue fellowship training in gastroenterology. He truly enjoys the combination of clinical medicine balanced by procedural skills this specialty offers. Since he has had an interest in nutrition, this was a perfect match for him. He completed his fellowship training at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Dr. Kunnath is very interested in continuing his work with the Section of Pediatric Gastroenterology at UNMC. He believes that the opportunity to continue to contribute to the care of Nebraska children is a great honor and privilege. He is looking forward to working closely with his colleagues and the residents, fellows, and staff at the UNMC Section of Pediatric Gastroenterology.

Sharad Kunnath Joins Pediatric GI

Kunnath (Continued on page 6)
Pediatric Clinical Trials Office Operating and Expanding

by Melanie Schrack

With the recognition of the greater importance of Pediatric faculty participation in clinical trials and translational research, Dr. Buehler has authorized the establishment of the Pediatric Clinical Trials Office (PCTO), with faculty direction by Pascale Lane, M.D. This new program will provide the necessary infrastructure to enable already busy Pediatric faculty to participate in research of interest to them, as painlessly as possible. The PCTO will also help the department achieve strategic goals the College of Medicine has laid out for clinical and translational research.

The PCTO is physically housed at the Munroe-Meyer Institute; Melanie Schrack will coordinate the overall efforts of the office, negotiate budgets with sponsors, and serve as liaison to Sponsored Programs Administration.

Lorrie Palmer joined the PCTO on June 1st, 2007, as a Research Nurse Coordinator. Lorrie most recently worked for the Osteoporosis Research Center at Creighton University. Prior to that, she served as teaching faculty for the nursing program at Iowa Western Community College, in Council Bluffs. She brings pediatric clinical experience as well.

Suzanne Cunningham-Poledna, also from Iowa Western Community College teaching faculty, will join the team on September 10th as the second Nurse Coordinator. She has experience as a surgery technician prior to going into nursing.

Lorrie and Suzanne will write IRB applications, coordinate the clinical aspects of the trials, and facilitate and monitor visits. These two nurses share combined research experience of over 25 years.

The PCTO staff would be happy to discuss any possible studies with you. Please feel free to contact them at 559-2511 or 559-6256.
Publications


- **Cowan RJ, Allen KD.** Using naturalistic procedures to enhance learning in individuals with autism: A focus on generalized teaching within the school setting. Psychology in the Schools 2007; 44(7):1-15.


- **Kaye CI; Accurso F; La Franchi S; Lane PA; Northrup H; Pang S; Schaefer GB, the Committee on Genetics.** Introduction to the Newborn Screening Fact Sheets. Pediatrics. 2006; 118(3) 1304 - 1312.


- **Kishnani PS; Hwu WL; Mandel H; Nicolino M; Yong F; Corzo D; the Infantile-Onset Pompe Disease Natural History Study Group.** A Retrospective, Multinational, Multicenter Study on the Natural History of Infantile-onset Pompe Disease. J Pediatr. 2006; 148(5):671-676.
Dr. Kari Simonsen Joins Pediatric ID

On August 1st, Dr. Kari Simonsen joined the UNMC Section of Pediatric Infectious Diseases. After growing up in western Iowa, Dr. Simonsen said it was exciting to come back to be near friends and family.

During her undergraduate training, she majored in biology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This Husker fan said that her interest in microorganisms is what drew her to medicine. “When you are a bug person, you just are,” she said jokingly. Dr. Simonsen recalled when she was a second year medical student, Dr. José Romero’s lecture on infectious disease topics helped her set her course for her career. She also noted the entire section of infectious diseases during her residency were outstanding physicians.

As a 2001 University of Nebraska College of Medicine graduate, Dr. Simonsen moved to Indianapolis for her pediatric residency at Riley Children’s Hospital. Upon completing her training, she moved to Providence, Rhode Island to complete her fellowship training in Infectious Diseases at Brown University.

Dr. Simonsen plans to continue her clinical and translational research on areas such as rotavirus, tick-borne infections such as Lyme disease, and Kawasaki syndrome. She is also looking forward to teaching medical students and residents.

In her free time, she enjoys time with her 1-year-old daughter and husband, who teaches middle school mathematics. She’s very excited about the Husker season getting underway.

Dr. Simonsen will be seeing patients in clinic at Children’s Hospital on Tuesdays.

Dr. Hari Bandla Joins Pediatric Pulmonary

If you have had a patient with some pulmonary problems, you have probably found out the section has had a new physician on staff since January. Dr. Hari Bandla came here after working at the Medical College of Wisconsin from 1999 to 2006.

After graduating from Sree Venkateswara Medical College in India, Dr. Bandla completed residency training in pediatrics at Kurnool Medical College. He completed training in the U.S. at Columbus Hospital in Chicago, then completed a pediatric pulmonary fellowship at Tulane University with additional training in sleep medicine.

Since coming to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Dr. Bandla has set up a senior elective for medical students in sleep medicine. This elective will allow students to work with pediatric and adult sleep medicine physicians. In addition to educational pursuits, Dr. Bandla is also interested in furthering his research in sleep medicine.

Dr. Bandla sees patients in clinic at Children’s Hospital. For an appointment, please call (402) 955-5570.
approaches to education, scholarship and teaching. Nominees must also get letters of recommendation from residents and students. A department committee selects the recipient based on the information submitted.

Two UNMC pediatricians, Sharon Stoolman, M.D., and Carl Gumbiner, M.D., received the award this year. Dr. Wiltse helped select the criteria for the award, which will continue into "perpetuity," Dr. Buehler said.

During his career, Dr. Wiltse focused on caring for children with inherited metabolic disorders. For 25 years (1969-1994) he oversaw the eight-week clerkship program for the third-year medical students and the electives program for fourth-year medical students.

In August, he was posthumously awarded the Children’s Hospital Pediatric Legends award.

He graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1953 and earned his medical degree (1958) and Ph.D. in biochemistry (1965) from UNMC. Dr. Wiltse was instrumental in pushing through mandatory newborn testing in Nebraska to detect metabolic disorders.

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Dr. Kunnath has clinics at Children’s Hospital in the afternoon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

basic science research. He has interests in Inflammatory Bowel Disease and Gut Motility, and he has been involved in researching the mechanisms for the incapacitating diarrhea that characterizes inflammatory bowel disease. His research regarding signal transduction pathways in IBD was presented at the American Gastroenterological Association meeting in May 2007, in Washington, DC.

His other interests include traveling and spending time with his wife and 20-month-old son.

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