CHANCELLOR’S PERSPECTIVE

IMPROVING LIVES IS WHY WE DO RESEARCH

In this issue of Connect we will share examples of the momentum in our research enterprise.

And there have been many. Cumulatively, our UNMC researchers have been awarded a med center-record $115.1 million in funding in the past year. This has come from grants large and small.

As you will read, in early October a team led by Matthew Rizzo, M.D., professor and chair of the department of neurological sciences, landed the largest grant ever for UNMC – a five-year research award from the National Institutes of Health totaling nearly $20 million.

Later in October, we received the announcement that the National Center for Health Security and Biopreparedness will be housed right here on this very campus and will be fully supported for 25 years.

When this possibility arose just over two years ago, we were told that it would require a bipartisan majority vote in both houses of Congress for any U.S. facility to become eligible. A formidable challenge at any time, but even more so today. We were told that it would take direct action by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the White House, and clearing that, we also would have to compete with other very prestigious East Coast academic health science centers. They created a set of critically important safety and architectural considerations, and gave us less than two weeks to submit a proposal.

In the end, we received the $19.8 million award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Yet another example in which UNMC and Nebraska Medicine lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthier future for all individuals and communities.

You’ve heard me say many times before that research is not about getting a grant funded or re-funded. It is not about publications in prestigious and august journals. These are certainly worthy of celebration, to be sure. But this is not the finish line.

It is the work sustained by this research grant support that is important. It is that the knowledge heralded in these journals could someday improve lives for those who need it most.

At UNMC, research is finished only when a discovery or innovation changes a human being’s life for the better.

Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.
UNMC Chancellor

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UNMC is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (HLC-NCA) and enjoys full accreditation of all its professional academic programs.

We are Nebraska Medicine and UNMC. Our mission is to lead the world in transforming lives to create a healthy future for all individuals and communities through premier educational programs, innovative research and extraordinary patient care.

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MAY 27
Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center Community open house

OCT. 20
College of Nursing 100th Anniversary Gala
UNMC’s opioid conference called ‘unprecedented’

U.S. Attorney Deb Gilg has been fighting drug addiction and its effects on Nebraska communities for decades. In October, she called the Nebraska Opioid Summit on UNMC’s Omaha campus “the missing piece.”

The bringing together of law enforcement and the medical community, with a common purpose, to fight the problem of opioid addiction stemming from prescription medication, “is unprecedented,” Gilg said.

The summit, “Charting the Road to Recovery; Nebraska’s Response to Opioid Abuse,” was hosted by UNMC, the Nebraska Attorney General, the U.S. Attorney and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. More than 300 people from Nebraska’s public health, medical, and law enforcement communities attended.

“This is a public health issue best addressed through statewide partnerships and honest dialogue in how we treat and prevent prescription and illicit opioid abuse,” said UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.

“Boosting awareness of opioid use and abuse is one of the first steps.”

See a photo album from the conference.
Listen to Dr. Armstrong discuss opioid addiction.
Learn more about the Dose of Reality public awareness campaign.
unmc.edu/connect

Partnership to advance new drug development

UNMC and Purdue Pharma L.P., have entered into a partnership to advance graduate education and scientific research that could lead to new drug therapies for patients.

The alliance will promote, develop and expand research and educational exchange in the neurosciences related to pain, the central nervous system and other chronic diseases. One of the goals is to close the gap between academic research and drug development by shortening the lengthy path of drug development from idea to potential commercialization through workforce development and education, as well as research.

Jennifer Larsen, M.D., UNMC vice chancellor for research, said the partnership signifies a commitment to identify strategies for understanding pain and developing new approaches or therapies for pain that avoid substance abuse as well as other types of neuroscience research.

Humans of UNMC

“Humans of UNMC” is a social media feature that spotlights people within the UNMC community and their stories. Bruce Gordon, M.D., professor of pediatrics-hematology/oncology, shared this with “Humans of UNMC”:

“The majority of kids who get cancer get acute leukemia. And we are really, really good at treating and curing acute leukemia.

“So if you consider the situation of a mother who has just been told the worst thing that can possibly happen in their life, their kid has cancer, and you’re able to walk in that room and tell them, ‘If we do this right, your kid has a 90 percent chance of growing up, being happy, finishing high school, dating somebody you don’t want them to date, going off to college and having kids of their own.’… Coming to see the doctor is a scary experience, but it’s not so much if your doctor is wearing a chicken hat.”

unmc.edu/connect
Cattlemen’s Ball raises more than $800,000 for cancer research

The 2016 Cattlemen’s Ball of Nebraska, held at Trevor and Torri Lienemann’s Lienetics Ranch near Princeton, Neb., raised $805,000 for the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center.

To date, the annual event has raised nearly $13 million, with 10 percent given to local grant recipients. Last year, $89,900 went to local volunteer fire and rescue efforts, colleges and universities, and Camp Kesem, a camp for children whose parents have been diagnosed with cancer. All of the funds stay in Nebraska.

The 2017 Cattlemen’s Ball of Nebraska will be held June 2-3 on the Lonesome River Ranch in Anselmo, Neb.

The Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center, set to open in June, will place Nebraska at the leading edge of cancer care, research and education.

It features:
- A 10-story building with 98-laboratories named the Suzanne and Walter Scott Cancer Research Tower;
- An eight-story, 108-bed inpatient treatment center named the C.L. Werner Cancer Hospital;
- A multidisciplinary outpatient center;
- A Healing Arts Program that includes therapeutic programs, physical art collection, Leslie’s Healing Garden and the Chihuly Sanctuary.

Lincoln nursing, health center home breaks ground

Ground was broken in December on the 107,000-square-foot University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Health Center and UNMC College of Nursing Lincoln Division building.

The building will be built with both state and private funds and represents a partnership between the two institutions to better serve students, open new opportunities for efficiencies and expand university programming in a critical workforce area. It will be built on the UNL City Campus and will be divided between the health center and nursing college space.

One half – 54,000 square feet – will replace the current health center for students at Nebraska with a state-of-the-art clinic with programmatic capacity to expand health care services and to consolidate counseling and psychological services into one location. The other half will house the new, 53,000-square-foot UNMC College of Nursing facility, which will allow UNMC to attract more students to meet the state’s need for nurses.

The building is expected to open in mid-2018.
UNMC is living large in research this year.

Largest number of research grant dollars – $115.1 million.

Largest single grant – $24 million for the National Ebola Training and Education Center (NETEC).

Number of faculty doing research – 866.
In 2015, more than a dozen American aid workers in Sierra Leone were flown home to be monitored for Ebola. None got sick, but, for three weeks, they stayed in Omaha, Bethesda, Md., and Atlanta near hospitals with special isolation units in case they did.

Now, thanks to a $19.8 million award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, UNMC/Nebraska Medicine will play an even bigger role in helping monitor individuals who may have been exposed to a highly infectious disease.

The award enables UNMC to develop the National Center for Health Security and Biopreparedness to monitor individuals, as needed, and teach, year-round, federal health care personnel procedures in treating highly infectious diseases.

The center, which will be housed within the planned iEXCELSM facility on the Omaha campus and completed in 2018, will be “a national resource,” said Chris Kratochvil, M.D., associate vice chancellor for clinical research and one of the principal investigators on the project along with John Lowe, Ph.D., director of research for the Nebraska Biocontainment Unit, and Shelly Schwedhelm, executive director of emergency preparedness and infection prevention for Nebraska Medicine.

The National Center for Health Security and Biopreparedness will include a unique U.S. quarantine facility for individuals who may have been exposed to an infectious disease, but are not symptomatic. The center will allow for monitoring and, if needed, transport to the nearby Nebraska Biocontainment Unit, where the medical center treated patients with Ebola during 2014-2015.

University of Nebraska President Hank Bounds, Ph.D., acknowledged the teamwork necessary to make the project a reality. “Nebraskans are too modest. We don’t brag enough. We need to be bragging about this one.”
EBOLA’S LESSON — MORE RESEARCH
by Elizabeth Kumru

When the Ebola outbreak overwhelmed health care resources in Africa and challenged them in the U.S., research on the virus was quite limited.

Little was known in 2014 and there was no vaccine. Researchers were frantic to catch up.

Since then, UNMC has rewritten the book on patient care and the use of personal protective equipment. Because of that, in 2015, UNMC, along with Emory University in Atlanta, and NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue in New York City, received a $12 million grant to establish the National Ebola Training and Education Center (NETEC).

Now, that grant has been doubled to $24 million in order to create a special pathogens research network. Funds also are targeted for additional site visits and education and training courses, which the original grant supported.

The network, which will span the three partner institutions and the country’s 10 specially trained regional Ebola treatment centers, will allow investigators to conduct rapid response research when an infectious disease outbreak occurs, said Chris Kratochvil, M.D., associate vice chancellor for clinical research at UNMC, vice president for research at Nebraska Medicine, UNMC’s clinical partner, and co-principal investigator of NETEC at UNMC.

“When Ebola hit, the three institutions were independently trying to determine the best drug for treatment,” he said. “It was inefficient – we weren’t using the same protocols and there was no consistency to the research. Now we can all collaborate to develop medical countermeasures together.”

The funding, to run in tandem with the original five-year grant, is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

DISEASES OF AGING GET CLINICAL/TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH BOOST
by Tom O’Connor

Diseases of aging, including cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, are part of a new clinical and translational research (CTR) effort in the Great Plains.

This past fall, UNMC received its largest grant ever — a five-year, nearly $20 million Institutional Development Award (IDeA) grant from the National Institutes of Health to establish the Great Plains IDeA-CTR Network.

The network spans nine institutions in four states – Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Kansas. It is designed to build infrastructure that makes it easier to conduct research in diseases of aging and brain health, increases the number of CTR investigators, and fosters collaborations across the network to connect experts, new researchers and resources.

For UNMC, it was a landmark achievement to be selected to develop and lead the regional network.

“This grant will develop early career researchers into independent scientists, and give them the time they need to develop as clinical/translational researchers,” said Matthew Rizzo, M.D., Reynolds Professor and Chair of the UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences and the principal investigator on the grant.

At UNMC, investigators from the colleges of medicine, nursing and public health will be involved.

“We will emphasize bench to bedside projects that benefit medically underserved people across rural and underserved urban areas,” Dr. Rizzo said. “We want to focus on research that connects with the community’s needs.”

Scientists at the collaborating institutions are in the process of submitting research proposals to be considered for funding.
HEALTH OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS PRIORITY FOR CS-CASH

by Elizabeth Kumru

Robert “Brent” Crandall, D.O., treats minor to catastrophic injuries due to farm machinery and livestock.

“It breaks my heart when kids come in,” said Dr. Crandall, medical director of the emergency department at the Kearney Regional Medical Center.

Many of the farm-related injuries he sees are from all-terrain vehicle (ATV) accidents – an average of 10 per year.

All too often, farmers and ranchers tip the ATV going around corners or while climbing steep hills. When the ATV flips over, the person is pinned, crushing bones and internal organs.

A 2013 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics study revealed that machinery accidents account for approximately 25 percent of all farm accidents. Other accidents are due to unsafe handling of livestock, grain hauling and storage and chemical use.

“These are the kind of stories we want to stop,” said Ellen Duysen, coordinator of the Central States Center for Agricultural Safety and Health (CS-CASH), at UNMC’s College of Public Health.

CS-CASH, one of 11 such centers funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, recently received another five-year grant for $6.9 million. The center’s projects and outreach span seven Midwestern states – Nebraska, Iowa, South and North Dakota, Minnesota, Missouri and Kansas.

“For the past 20 years, agriculture has been the most hazardous industry in the United States,” said Risto Rautiainen, Ph.D., director of CS-CASH and professor of environmental, agricultural and occupational health in UNMC’s College of Public Health.

In 2014, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 24.9 fatalities per 100,000 workers in agriculture, compared to 3.3 per 100,000 workers in all industries combined.

The center hopes to impact – and save – lives through its research, outreach, intervention and education.

“We want all of our farmers and ranchers to be safe and healthy,” Duysen said.

Read more about the center’s projects.
Learn more about CS-CASH.
unmc.edu/connect

CLINICAL TRIALS NOW AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN STATEWIDE

by Vicky Cerino

When it comes to medical treatment, children are not small adults.

But many times, pediatricians make decisions based on results from clinical research in adults, said Jessica Snowden, M.D., associate professor of pediatric infectious diseases at UNMC and Children’s Hospital & Medical Center.

“Children are very different from adults,” Dr. Snowden said. “They have different bacteria and immune systems. Their bodies and brains are still developing and they process medication differently. Many times as pediatricians we are making decisions based on studies done in adults. There’s a lot we don’t know.”

The National Institutes of Health has awarded a $157 million grant to 17 health centers to launch a seven-year initiative called Environmental Influences on Child Health Outcomes. The program will investigate how exposure to a range of environmental factors from conception through early childhood influences the health of children and adolescents.

UNMC will receive $1.6 million over four years to establish a pediatric clinical trials network that will enable children to participate across Nebraska and the United States.

“It will be wonderfully effective and helpful to be able to get information about what works for children,” Dr. Snowden said.

The focus will be on making clinical trials accessible to rural and underrepresented children statewide. “We want to make sure they have the opportunity to be part of clinical trials so they can get access to the best care,” she said.

Clinical trial enrollments are expected to begin through the Nebraska Pediatric Clinical Trials Unit within the next year.
A sudden red flag flashes onto a patient’s screen to alert Amy Stewart-Ranck, telehealth program coach and registered nurse with Nebraska Medicine, of a potential health concern.

Stewart-Ranck calls the patient, a young man with type II diabetes that she has been monitoring via a remote system for more than a month.

Through the course of their conversation, Stewart-Ranck determines his legs are overly swollen and sends him to the Midtown Clinic in Omaha, where a doctor diagnoses the young man with heart failure and takes measures to save his life.

Not all cases are as dramatic, said Geri Tyson, a registered nurse and telehealth program manager with Nebraska Medicine, but it demonstrates the effectiveness of remote patient monitoring using technology.

The telehealth, she said, “enables patients in their homes or in a rural setting to access the care they need when they need it.”

The nurse coaches work in the Telehealth Innovations Hub on the fourth floor of the new Lauritzen Outpatient Center & Fritch Surgery Center at Nebraska Medicine and UNMC. The hub houses a simulated clinic room and intensive care unit to help providers understand what the patient experience is like, as well as train them on the use of hand-held cameras, electronic stethoscopes and otoscopes, among other devices.

The almost $10 million, three-year Remote Interventions Improving Speciality Complex Care grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, is designed to improve patient outcomes for persons affected by type II diabetes post hospitalization.

And, it’s one example of how providers use telemedicine as a way to meet patient needs at their point of care, said telehealth director Mary DeVany, “and it has been very successful.”

“We are in the third year of the grant and have worked with nearly 1,500 patients so far,” DeVany said.
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Lauritzen Outpatient Center & Fritch Surgery Center Opens

Dedicated Dec. 17, the Lauritzen Outpatient Center & Fritch Surgery Center houses operating rooms, outpatient clinics, orthopaedic surgery research laboratories and educational space. The fourth floor, which houses the Telehealth Innovations Hub, is supported by a gift from Ruth and Bill Scott, and the building is named after the Lauritzen family for their generous support. The Fritch Surgery Center was made possible through a gift by Charles Fritch, M.D., and his wife, Judy. Dr. Fritch is a 1968 graduate of the UNMC College of Medicine. Other donors included Stan Truhlsen, M.D., a 1944 graduate of the UNMC College of Medicine and the lead donor on the Truhlsen Eye Institute; and Clarkson Regional Health Services.

Learn more about the Lauritzen Outpatient Center & Fritch Surgery Center
unmc.edu/connect

Of those, 900 have completed their 90 days intensive monitoring and 68 percent of those patients improved their A1C blood sugar levels.

The patient uses a cellular monitoring device with attachments to measure blood pressure, blood sugar and weight from their home. They also record blood pressure, sugar and weight on the device and those readings are automatically uploaded and transmitted to a nurse coach.

If readings fall out of range, the system signals the nurse.

“Telehealth is a tool in the delivery of care that a provider can integrate into their clinic, and many already are doing so,” DeVany said.

From psychiatry services being offered in more than 50 locations across the state, to kidney transplant follow-up care and endocrinology services, the use of telemedicine is expanding.

“Our goal is to make sure patients receive extraordinary care wherever they live,” DeVany said.
UNMC second-year medical student Sebastian Lane has long had an interest in medicine. Since age 5, in fact, when his grandfather died of cancer and Lane’s curiosity and information seeking turned into a career passion.

Still, it wasn’t until a stint in the Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP) at UNMC that he was certain. “It helped solidify that it was my goal, and what it would take to get there,” said the Hastings College alumnus, who will return to help with this summer’s class at UNMC.

Starting this summer, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is expanding its popular medical and dental program to include students interested in nursing, public health and allied health professions careers. At UNMC, the new Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) will provide academic enrichment opportunities for 90 underrepresented college freshmen and sophomores from across the country.

UNMC, one of 13 universities in the program, welcomes the expansion, said Cheryl Thompson, Ph.D., assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs and co-principal investigator of the grant which funds the program. As a result, UNMC now will accept 40 medical, 20 dental, 10 nursing, 10 public health and 10 allied health students, each of whom will spend six weeks on campus.

UNMC – one of 13 universities participating in SHPEP – has participated in the program for the past 10 years. Most of the program is supported through funding from the RWJF with matching funds from UNMC. Due to a cap on the number of students allowed through the grant, the UNMC College of Allied Health Professions is actually paying full cost to support students interested in careers as physical therapists or physician assistants.

The expansion in scope also means UNMC will collaborate more with community colleges and traditional four-year undergraduate institutions to accept students into the program, said Dele Davies, M.D., vice chancellor for academic affairs and the co-principal investigator along with Dr. Thompson and Janet Guthmiller, D.D.S., Ph.D., dean of the UNMC College of Dentistry.

Under the former program, “more than 80 percent of our alumni who applied successfully went on to medical or dental school,” Dr. Davies said. And, similar to Lane’s story, “our surveys indicate that the alumni found our program to be extremely beneficial.”

The program’s alumni, even if they don’t later enroll at UNMC, remain connected to the med center, Dr. Guthmiller said. And, they continue to reach back to participants – establishing strong support networks. “To this day I still keep in touch with some of those individuals,” said UNMC dental student Rafaila Ramirez, an SMDEP alum.

Dr. Guthmiller said the enthusiasm of other UNMC colleges in seeking to join the program was gratifying, but not surprising.

“The College of Nursing is delighted to participate in SHPEP and to add this new approach to the ways we work to ensure that the nursing workforce mirrors the populations we serve,” said Dean Juliann Sebastian, Ph.D.
The program also aligns perfectly with the goals and mission of the College of Allied Health Professions, said Dean Kyle Meyer, Ph.D. “Our goal is to provide opportunities for students to gain exposure to careers in the allied health professions and our mission is to provide a more diverse allied health workforce.”

And, for students interested in public health, “this is a great opportunity to explore the breadth of opportunities available for public health professionals and the interdisciplinary nature of public health,” said Jane Meza, Ph.D., interim associate vice chancellor for global and student support for UNMC and senior associate dean for the UNMC College of Public Health.

LaKaija Johnson, the new program manager for SHPEP, is passionate about addressing minority and rural health disparities.

“My academic research focused on initiatives designed to support the preparation and training of traditionally underrepresented minorities in health professions,” she said. “Pipeline programs like SHPEP contribute significantly to UNMC’s commitment to building a diverse health care workforce.”

This year’s students will arrive June 4, and Lane will be there to greet them.
Pharmacy student finds building perfect for new generation

by Colleen Fleischer

Patricia Malinowski and classmate Kristen Guilliano, third year pharmacy student, cozy up for a study session in the newly opened Center for Drug Discovery and the Lozier Center for Pharmacy Sciences and Education.
You often can find her upstairs, in one of the cozy red chairs by the windows. It’s a perfect place to study. It’s a perfect place to dream.

“The chairs look kind of weird, like half an egg, but they’re really comfortable,” said Patricia Malinowski, a third-year student in the College of Pharmacy at UNMC. “And the windows all around make it so light. Sometimes, I review my notes and then look out the windows, trying to remember what I read.

“And sometimes I just stare out those windows and daydream.”

That study area is one of her favorite places in the college’s new building – the UNMC Center for Drug Discovery and the Lozier Center for Pharmacy Sciences and Education – which opened its doors for students this past August.

This building gives students like Malinowski the high-tech environment necessary to become better pharmacists for Nebraskans and people across the nation. But this building, she said, also seems to go way beyond its blueprint in a way that’s hard to explain.

“It probably sounds cheesy, but a building like this inspires us to care more – to dream big – about what we can do within the profession.

“I think some really big ideas are going to come out of this building.”

Malinowski is a people person. She’s president of her third-year College of Pharmacy class at UNMC.

Once the building opened, she soon discovered those cozy red chairs, and that area on the second level became her favorite place to study with friends.

“There’s so many group study areas here,” Malinowski said. “I love that. I’m a big ‘group’ person, and I would not have come this far without my friends. In our old building, we didn’t have anything like this.”

For this interview she sat in another cozy space in the new building, a quiet nook on the ground floor right under the stairs. Nearby is another favorite space, the patient simulation rooms. She recently had a lab there in which she got to “mock counsel” a patient with type II diabetes and then a kid with type I diabetes.

“This place is just gorgeous,” Malinowski said, “and it’s a lot more conducive to learning. We have more space and more resources, like the patient simulation rooms. We didn’t get a lot of practice with patient interaction before, despite that it is such a large part of our job.”

Malinowski is from St. Louis, the daughter of two engineers. Their neighbors and close family friends were from Nebraska and, as it happens, were pharmacists who had graduated from UNMC. She decided to follow their path, graduating from UNL with a degree in biochemistry and then came to UNMC.

She loves the field of pharmacy. It’s a perfect fit, she said, because she loves interacting with people and helping them in practical and intangible ways. Lifesaving ways.

“I love the relationships you build. I like that accessibility and being able to explain medications in ways that don’t scare people.”

The three-floor, $35 million building – built entirely through private donations – is the length of a football field. Malinowski was present at the dedication last August and spoke to donors and other dignitaries at dinner.

She told them how the resources and advances in technology will help students move the field of pharmacy forward and help them become health care leaders. She talked about the patient simulation rooms and the building’s homey feel and some of the building’s other amazing features:

- A model pharmacy and the sterile preparation rooms.
- The two state-of-the-art Joseph D. & Millie E. Williams Auditoriums with tiered seating and recording capabilities, which may not sound that impressive, she said, “but trust me. It is something that is greatly appreciated among students.”
- Labs in the Center for Drug Discovery on the third level, where emerging infectious diseases will be studied for groundbreaking cures, and student researchers will hone their scientific techniques.

The opening of the new building, she told them, reminded her of how she felt as a kid on Christmas morning unwrapping a big gift. “My classmates and professors dreamed about how this new building would not only improve our learning, but the practice of pharmacy as a whole.”

And she thanked the crowd, on behalf of all students, for making their dreams come true.

“Big dreams turn into ideas then into outcomes.”
College of Dentistry
■ The College of Dentistry implemented a new patient-centered clinical education model this past August. In this model, students work in teams to provide comprehensive care to their patients in an environment more closely emulating a private practice experience. The feedback from students, faculty, staff and patients has been extremely positive.
■ The college recently implemented a new five-year strategic plan with nearly 100 initiatives and five major priority areas. This faculty-led process also involved staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders of the college in collecting feedback through surveys, focus groups, workshops and town hall meetings. In addition to the five-year plan, the college developed new mission, vision and values statements.
■ The dental hygiene program celebrated its 50th anniversary in September. Gwen Hiava, program director and chair of the department, celebrated 40 years as a faculty member at the college and 30 years as chair. She also received an Alumni Achievement Award.

College of Medicine
■ The college is changing its curriculum to create a better experience for students and faculty. Among the overarching goals guiding the curriculum change are integration of basic, clinical and health systems sciences, earlier clinical learning experiences and an enhanced fourth year with robust learning experiences facilitating transition into residency.
■ The department of neurological sciences landed a $20 million grant with a research emphasis on projects benefiting people in rural or medically underserved areas. This interprofessional effort includes investigators from the colleges of medicine, nursing and public health and other researchers in Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Kansas.

College of Nursing
■ Claudia Chaperon, Ph.D., is the principal investigator on one of only 16 grants awarded nationally by the National Center for Interprofessional Practice and Education. This is an IPE collaboration with the UNMC College of Pharmacy and the College of Medicine, and the Rehabilitation Center of Omaha and Ambassador Health Services.
■ The College of Nursing Lincoln Division celebrated the groundbreaking of its new building on Dec. 9. The building will be shared with the UNL University Health Center and will include world-class learning and discovery spaces, including a six-room simulation center in-the-round, a research suite and classrooms designed for active learning.
■ In May 2016, the college added the accelerated BSN nursing program to the Kearney campus as part of the expansion with the new Health Science Education Complex. The accelerated BSN option is now available in Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney and Scottsbluff.
• The Central States Center for Agricultural Health and Safety received funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health for research on the effects of worker exposure to an agricultural agent, a new study to identify the role of environmental exposures in the development of cancer, and to develop a new method for sampling personal exposure to pesticides.
• The Cancer Center has Kicks For A Cure coming up April 21-22. This will be the eleventh year for the annual event that raises funds for women’s cancer research at the Buffett Cancer Center, and the Hereditary Cancer Center at Creighton University. Kicks For A Cure has raised more than $2 million in its first ten years. Free soccer games take place at Morrison Stadium (Creighton) and Caniglia Stadium (UNO) on Sat., April 22. www.kicksforacure.org.

Munroe-Meyer Institute
■ MMI collaborated with the University of Nebraska at Omaha-based nonprofit WhyArts to hold its first Winter Theater Camp from Jan. 4-6. Children and youth with developmental disabilities, ages 6 to 24, worked together to conceive a story and perform a play. The performance was held Jan. 6 at the JP Lord gymnasium, with approximately 150 parents, MMI staff and guests in attendance.
■ Swati Surkar, Ph.D., who worked under the direction of Max Kurz, Ph.D., in MMI’s Department of Physical Therapy, was recognized with the Graduate Student of Distinction Award at the Graduate College’s December 2016 Honors Convocation. The award is given to outstanding graduate students who have excelled in their studies and have secured external funding for their research.

College of Allied Health Professions
■ Physical therapy student Jamie Straube was one of 12 students nationally to earn Scholarships of Excellence from the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions. The awards go to students deemed to have significant potential to assume future leadership roles in allied health. Straube was chosen by the ASAHP Scholarship Committee because she epitomizes academic achievement, service to her school and to the community, leadership, diversity in activities, and evidence of strong communication skills.
■ Dean Kyle Meyer, Ph.D., recently was awarded recognition as a fellow in the Association of Schools of Allied Health Professions (ASAHP). Dr. Meyer was one of four fellows selected nationally by the ASAHP board of directors. To be eligible, candidates must have demonstrated leadership, published in professional journals and shown professional creativity. Dr. Meyer presides as president of the Midwest Deans Association of the ASAHP.
When great minds come together, great things happen. That’s the driving force behind the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center. Here, scientists and doctors will work side-by-side with patients to find breakthroughs in cancer therapy. This unified approach to treatment doesn’t just redefine cancer care—it redefines cancer hope.

Discover how the Fred & Pamela Buffett Cancer Center will transform cancer care at nebraska.edu.

ONE UNIVERSITY. FOUR CAMPUSES. ONE NEBRASKA.
Andy Peck, M.D., wants us to see through the eyes of someone with Alzheimer’s disease.

So, the first-year anesthesiology resident asked people at long-term care facilities to draw a clock set at 1:50, then arranged them on the wall to form a clock face and opened an exhibition, “10 till 2: Alzheimer’s in Omaha,” at an artist’s cooperative gallery this past fall.

The drawings are shocking and powerful.

Few of the nearly 150 drawings show the correct time. Some don’t even resemble a clock.

Some are well-drawn mantle clocks or Rolex wristwatch faces. Others just have the numbers ‘150.’ Some have writing – one in a language Dr. Peck thinks is French.

Each offers a rare glimpse into the mind of someone with Alzheimer’s disease.
“Alzheimer’s is a long slow process. First a person forgets dates and events, then names. They become confused and withdrawn and eventually they have to be put in a care facility. It can tear a family apart deciding what to do,” he said.

He knows. Over the past decade, he watched his grandfather, a dentist in Wisconsin, slowly depart.

“It’s a loss of someone who still lives with you.”

Dr. Peck was stunned when, in medical school, he saw one of the clock drawings his grandfather had done. “It was very distorted, abstract. I didn’t think he was that far along.”

Dr. Peck began his clock project last spring - one week after his grandfather died.

Clock drawing has become a practical test that clinicians use to screen for cognitive impairment in old age and as a marker to detect dementia or Alzheimer’s. “I don’t think there’s a neurologist that doesn’t use it,” he said.

In each clock, you can see the chaos of the mind. “There are stories behind these drawings. I can still see some of them being drawn,” he said. “Each piece has power in the space the clocks take on the paper, and the lines, like the Salvador Dali piece, “The Persistence of Memory.”

And, on the back of one drawing, a spouse reminds us all:

“The hands of time are wound but once, and no one has the power to know just when the hands may stop. Not the day or the hour, so live it with a will because one day the hands stop!”
This is a story about Tammy Kielian, Ph.D., whose study of staphylococcal infections in the brain prepared her for when fate stepped in and took her down a seemingly unrelated path. When her niece was diagnosed with juvenile Batten disease, a rare, fatal neurodegenerative disorder, Dr. Kielian threw herself into developing a cure. What seemed like divergent research interests became united by the role innate immunity plays in each disease.

"United by an overarching interest in the immunological aspects of each disease with a focus on the brain," Dr. Kielian said. With an emphasis for a novel therapy, Dr. Kielian’s laboratory developed, through a collaboration, a gene therapy that is now licensed by a biopharmaceutical company. A unique delivery system was designed to get this gene therapy through the blood-brain barrier with a single IV injection.

And in preclinical study of animal models, it appears to be working. "Motor defects are reduced. The degree of inflammation is reduced. There is reduced pathology of the lysosome," Dr. Kielian said. The results were published in a recent edition of The Journal of Neuroscience. Dr. Kielian hopes it is pointed toward Investigational New Drug status, with a Phase I clinical trial for kids within sight.

For a deadly, devastating disease with no treatment or cure, it would be the breakthrough heard ‘round the world.

For this breakthrough research and her work with staphylococcal biofilms, Dr. Kielian, Kommineni Professor of Pathology, was named UNMC’s 11th Scientist Laureate, the medical center’s highest honor for research.

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She continues to investigate ways we can fight MRSA, the bacteria/infection that claims the lives of some 11,000-plus people each year. And she’s doing it, again, by studying the immune response.

She’s working on a project with Pfizer, to help understand how immune responses are altered in patients undergoing hip and knee surgeries, which may make them more susceptible to infection.

And her lab identified a suppressive immune cell that inadvertently promotes Staphylococcus aureus biofilm survival. Her team was the first to link this suppressive immune cell as critical for promoting biofilm persistence. It’s now a hot topic in MRSA research.

Most scientists have one niche and mine it for decades. To have two? To start a new one?

That took support from UNMC, which offered its blessing and more. From her department chair, Steve Hinrichs, M.D., came help to promote her new work on juvenile Batten disease.

From the people in her lab, who were building careers in staph research, but then said, “We go where our work leads us.”

And at home, her husband supports her and her two boys cheer her on.

And late at night, they give her quiet time to sit in her comfy chair and work on puzzles and solutions that no one had ever thought of before.
High honors given to UNMC’s top investigators

2016 Research Leadership Award Winners

- **Robert Lewis, Ph.D.**
  - Eppley Institute
  - Colon cancer

- **Larisa Poluektova, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Immune system

- **Sarah Thayer, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Pancreatic cancer

- **Kaleb Michaud, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Rheumatoid arthritis

- **Shelby Kutty, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Myocardial function

- **Maneesh Jain, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Pancreatic cancer

- **Mark Mailliard, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Hepatitis C infection

- **Matthew Rizzo, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Brain and behavior

- **Rongshi Li, Ph.D.**
  - College of Pharmacy
  - Antibiotic and anticancer drug discovery

2016 Distinguished Scientist Award Winners

- **Larisa Poluektova, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Immune system

- **Sarah Thayer, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Pancreatic cancer

- **Kaleb Michaud, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Rheumatoid arthritis

- **Shelby Kutty, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Myocardial function

- **Maneesh Jain, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Pancreatic cancer

- **Mark Mailliard, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Hepatitis C infection

- **Matthew Rizzo, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Brain and behavior

- **Rongshi Li, Ph.D.**
  - College of Pharmacy
  - Antibiotic and anticancer drug discovery

- **Melissa Tibbits, Ph.D.**
  - College of Public Health
  - Child and adolescent health

- **Joseph Norman, Ph.D.**
  - College of Allied Health Professions
  - Chronic heart failure

- **Robert Lewis, Ph.D.**
  - Eppley Institute
  - Colon cancer

- **B. Timothy Baxter, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Abdominal aortic aneurysms

- **Jerre Tritsch**
  - Community Service to Research Award

New Investigators

- **Wanfen Xiong, M.D., Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Aortic aneurysms

- **Hanjun Wang, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Cardiovascular diseases

- **Jessica Snowden, M.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Ventricular shunt infections

- **Laura Bilek, Ph.D.**
  - College of Allied Health Professions
  - Chronic disease prevention

- **Sung-Ho Huh, Ph.D.**
  - Munroe-Meyer Institute
  - Kidney and sensory development

- **R. Katherine Hyde, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Acute myeloid leukemia

- **Kimberly Scarsi, Pharm.D.**
  - College of Pharmacy
  - HIV pharmacotherapy

- **Martin Conda Sheridan, Ph.D.**
  - College of Pharmacy
  - Nanotherapeutics

- **Mariano Sanchez-Lockhart, Ph.D.**
  - College of Medicine
  - Infectious diseases, immune response
Heiser name lives on in fitness facility

by Kalani Simpson

Nick Heiser, M.D., assistant professor of anesthesiology and 2008 UNMC graduate, remembers that his family was always active. Hiking, biking, sports were just what the Heisers did.

But among Nick’s favorite memories was watching his father drive up after work for early-evening pick-up basketball games in the driveway. His father, also a physician, would get straight out of his car to shoot hoops with the kids in his shirtsleeves. They loved it.

Their father, Tom Heiser, M.D., is a respected orthopedist and former surgeon. For many years, he served as a team physician for the University of Nebraska and assisted many Lincoln high school athletic programs.

He was a high school football hero in Columbus, Neb., and went on to play for the Cornhuskers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He was an academic All-American.

Tom then enrolled in the College of Medicine at UNMC, eventually earning his M.D. degree in 1979. He was ahead of his time in pursuing a fitness program as part of helping deal with the rigorous demands of medical school.

“My father had a true commitment to fitness,” Nick said.

Tom went on to practice at Nebraska Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine in Lincoln, where he has worked since it opened in 1987.

In 1990, he suffered a spinal cord injury while surfing in Hawaii and was paralyzed. Nick believes it was his father’s level of fitness that allowed him to survive the accident.

“Had he not lived such an active life, he simply wouldn’t have gotten through rehabilitation and recovery,” Nick said.

Though he can no longer perform surgery, Tom continues to practice, using his diagnostic knowledge and experience in managing the care of his patients.

Nick and his brother, Mark, were still young kids when the accident happened. But through the years their dad became even more of a role model to them. He was still active, still fit.

In fact, Tom helped create UNMC’s Center for Healthy Living, making a donation to the original building and – along with James Neff, M.D., then chairman of the UNMC Department of
Orthopaedic Surgery – spearheading a campaign to help raise funds for the center.

The facility opened in 1996, and its weight room was named for Tom.

As a med student, Nick made friends for life on the center’s basketball court.

He loved seeing his dad’s name on the wall.

The Heisers are a true UNMC family.

Tom’s brother, David Heiser, M.D., is a 1973 alum, as well as their father, Ervin Heiser, M.D., who was a 1943 graduate and a longtime general surgeon in Columbus, Neb.

So is Nick’s uncle, Timothy Kingston, M.D., associate professor of general surgery and 1975 grad, who married Tom’s sister, Marilyn.

UNMC celebrated the re-opening of the renovated and redeveloped Center for Healthy Living in October 2016.

The improvements include:

- Larger strength and fitness machine areas;
- Additional dedicated group fitness activity areas;
- Permanent areas for stretching and table tennis;
- Larger locker rooms with private changing areas and showers;
- New synthetic gym floor designed for user comfort and safety.

Tom’s name is on the new weight room, too.

At the grand opening, UNMC honored Tom and his family, along with the project’s lead donors, Ruth and Bill Scott.

UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D., listed several of Tom’s accolades.

“But among his greatest impacts,” the chancellor said, “has been through the Center for Healthy Living here at UNMC.”
UNMC Alumni Networking in Salt Lake City

The UNMC Alumni Association for the first time visited Salt Lake City and met with alums in the area. Traveling to Salt Lake City was College of Medicine Dean Brad Britigan, M.D., and then Alumni Director Roxanna Jokela. Alumni in the area shared dinner and conversation about exciting updates happening at UNMC, including discussion on iEXCEL™, the College of Medicine curriculum update and news about the New Era of Alumni Engagement. The UNMC Alumni Association also traveled to Scottsdale, Ariz., in February.

Latta Lecture Features Dr. Catherine Lucey

The College of Medicine welcomed Catherine Lucey, M.D., as the 31st John S. Latta Lecturer on Oct. 6. Dr. Lucey, a board-certified internist and geriatrician, is vice dean for education, professor of medicine and holder of the Faustino and Martha Molina Bernadett Presidential Chair in Medical Education at the University of California San Francisco School of Medicine. She presented on “21st Century Faculty: New Skills, New Roles and New Responsibilities.”

The Latta Lecture was established by the College of Medicine Alumni Engagement Council in 1980 to commemorate John S. Latta’s dedicated service to the college. Dr. Latta taught embryology and histology at UNMC from 1921 until 1963, and served a 20-year stint as chairman of the anatomy department. He became one of the most admired and respected faculty members of the college. He died in 1989 at the age of 94. The 2017 Latta Lecture will be held on Sept. 28 and will feature Susan Skochelak, M.D., group vice president, medical education at the American Medical Association.

The New Era of Engagement Update

In the fall of 2015, the UNMC Alumni Association embarked on the New Era of Alumni Engagement. In an effort to reach and connect with even more alumni, the Alumni Association now offers automatic membership to all graduates and has refocused its work on deeper collaborations between alumni and campus leaders. Over the first year, the Alumni Association:

- Opened the doors of the alumni association to all alumni and increased the membership base from less than 2,000 to more than 42,000 strong through elimination of membership dues.
- Welcomed, for the first time, College of Medicine residents and fellows into the alumni family.
- Created the first phase of a new, online UNMC Alumni Directory that will be ready this summer.
- Provided a way for alumni to give back with the creation of a new, comprehensive annual giving program through college-based Innovation Funds that support the colleges, students and alumni engagement activities.
- Offered 1,477 student engagement contacts between current students and the alumni association through UNMCAA-hosted or sponsored events.
- Welcomed at least 1,000 alumni to UNMCAA events both locally and across the country.

Learn how you can get involved in the New Era of Engagement at unmc.edu/alumni.
College of Dentistry Alumni Association Presents Awards

The College of Dentistry Alumni Association presented its annual awards during the College of Dentistry Alumni Reunion in September 2016. Those award recipients include:

- **Distinguished Service Award:**
  Merlyn Vogt, D.D.S., ’83

- **Alumni Achievement Award:**
  Gwen Hlava, B.S. dental hygiene ’72

- **Honorary Life Membership Award:**
  Janet Guthmiller, D.D.S., Ph.D.

- **Outstanding Educator Award:**
  Julie Marshall, D.D.S. (B.S. dental hygiene ’81, certificate in prosthodontics ’95, master’s degree in ’96)

Information about nominating a colleague for the College of Dentistry Alumni Awards is available online at unmc.edu/dentistry/alumni.

Alumni Reunion Weekend Showcases the UNMC Campus

The 2016 UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend with the theme, New Era of Engagement, welcomed 200 alumni and guests from the colleges of medicine and nursing and the Graduate Studies Program on Oct. 7-8. For the first time, alumni partnered with UNMC’s Innovation and Research Week to offer new events including:

- A student poster session where 20 students from four colleges presented their research.
- A visit to the Mind & Brain Health Labs where they took turns in SENSEI (Simulator for Ergonomics, Neuroscience, Safety Engineering and Innovation), a large, high-fidelity driving simulator.
- A tour of the iEXCELSM Visualization Hub that includes technology to be housed in the planned Global Center for Advanced Interprofessional Learning building.

The 2017 Alumni Reunion Weekend will be Oct. 20-21 in Omaha for the colleges of medicine and nursing. Honor years are those ending in “2” and “7.” Photos from Alumni Reunion Weekend are available online at facebook.com/unmcalum.

College of Allied Health Professions to Host Alumni Reunion

The College of Allied Health Professions Alumni Engagement Council and the Reunion Committee are hosting the college’s second All Alumni Reunion on June 10 in Omaha.

The event will include class parties, continuing education, program updates and recognition of distinguished alumni.

Alumni who would like to get involved may sign up to serve as a class leader by contacting Kat Hamilton in the Alumni Relations Office at 402.559.1063 or kat.hamilton@unmc.edu.

Alumni also may join the event’s Facebook group by searching, “UNMC CAHP All College Reunion 2017.”

College of Nursing Kearney Division to Host First Reunion

The UNMC College of Nursing Kearney Division will host its first All Alumni Reunion on Sept. 16 in Kearney, Neb., with the theme, 40 Years of Transforming the Future. All alumni, faculty and staff from the UNMC College of Nursing Kearney Division are invited to attend this event during UNK’s Homecoming Weekend.

Activities will include: homecoming parade, lunch and program, tours of the new Health Science Education Complex and more.

Alumni from the Kearney campus who are interested in getting involved should contact Kat Hamilton in the Alumni Relations Office at 402.559.1063 or kat.hamilton@unmc.edu.

Alumni also may join the event’s Facebook group by searching, “UNMC College of Nursing Kearney Division Alumni Reunion.”
### Alumni Association Presents Awards

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<th>ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT COUNCIL</th>
<th>AWARD NAME</th>
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| College of Medicine Alumni Engagement Council     | Distinguished Alumnus Award       | Barbara Hurlbert, M.D.  
Class of 1971                                                             |
| College of Medicine Alumni Engagement Council     | Honorary Alumnus Award             | Jim Medder, M.D., M.P.H.                                                 |
| College of Nursing Alumni Engagement Council      | Dorothy Patach Spirit of Service Award | Anita Brenneman, B.S.N., M.S.E.  
Class of 1961                                                             |
| Graduate Studies Alumni Engagement Council         | Distinguished Alumnus Award       | James (Jim) McClurg, Ph.D.  
Class of 1973                                                             |
| Graduate Studies Alumni Engagement Council         | Distinguished Alumnus Award       | Ernest (Ernie) Prentice, Ph.D.  
Class of 1976                                                             |

Full biographies of these outstanding award recipients are available on the Alumni Relations Office’s website at unmc.edu/alumni. You also can download a nomination form to nominate a colleague for a 2017 alumni award.
**RSTE & CLS Programs Implement Name Changes**

The divisions and degrees formerly known as Radiation Science Technology Education and Clinical Laboratory Science have undergone name changes that more accurately reflect the roles of these health care professionals and the contemporary nomenclature used by the accrediting body. RSTE is now the Department of Medical Imaging & Therapeutic Sciences (MITS) and CLS is now Medical Laboratory Science (MLS).

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### Allied Health Professions

#### Dianne Bahn MITS’70, ’71
Yankton, S.D., was recognized for 40 years of service as senior radiologic technologist at the South Dakota Human Services Center in Yankton. Dianne and her husband, Gerald, became grandparents in 2016.

#### Marcia Hess Smith MITS’91
Bellevue, Neb., works in the Clinical Research Center at Nebraska Medicine as a clinical trials analyst. In 2016, she was named a fellow in the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging. She recently co-authored an article titled “Radiation Safety Compliance.”

#### Jana Koth MITS’98, PH’12
Bellevue, Neb., is an assistant professor in the department of medical imaging and therapeutic sciences at UNMC. She recently co-authored an article titled “Radiation Safety Compliance.”

#### Darwin Brown MLS’81, PA’86, PH’04
Omaha, Neb., joined Nebraska Methodist Hospital in the microbiology/serology department in spring 2016.

#### Jennifer Stanton MLS’04
Osceola, Neb., joined the Columbus Community Hospital in October 2016.

#### Christina Shaw MLS’06
Dakar Senegal, Africa, is serving as a diplomat at the United States Embassy. She works as a regional laboratory scientist and supervises the Embassy’s laboratories for the western side of Africa.

#### Megan Dirks MLS’12
Omaha, Neb., joined Nebraska Methodist Hospital in the microbiology/serology department in spring 2016.

#### Meralee Byker PA’80
Blaine, Wash., has been working in the Pacific Northwest for the past 20 years, including the past 10 years as a sleep medicine specialist. She is happily married with two adult children, Kollin (24, certified EMT, anticipating becoming a PA, currently doing custom woodworkings) and Mekaela (22, completing her studies to be a certified athletic trainer). She enjoys the outdoors and is involved with music leadership/worship teams at church.

#### Todd Kielman PA’01, ’03
Kingwood, Texas, served 15 more years as a PA in the U.S. Army after completing his education at UNMC. He retired in 2015 after serving in many different positions from front-line emergency trauma care, to routine family medicine, and teaching at the trauma school. He spent 18 months with the Department of Homeland Security as a PA in immigration health services. In 2016 he began work at Baylor College of Medicine in the Scott Department of Urology.

#### Charles Thompson PA’03
Houston, Texas, is a semiretired physician assistant, involved in locum tenens work.

#### Bert Lepel PA’11
Sidney, Neb., joined Dr. Rajohn Karanjai’s practice at the Sidney Health Center in July of 2016. He has 25 years of experience in the medical field serving area residents in the MonDak region of the Great Plains.

#### Laurie Thomas PT’84
San Clemente, Calif., joined Consonus Healthcare in July of 2016 as its vice president of strategic development. For the past 20 years, she has worked in both hospital and post-acute services including management of operations, sales and administrative support departments.

#### Denise Johnson PT’94
Spring Hill, Kan., has lived in Kansas since 2010. She worked fulltime at an acute rehab hospital for six years and in August of 2016, began teaching in a physical therapist assistant education program at a local community college. She has four grandchildren.

#### Casey Cortney PT’95
Sidney, Neb., completed his Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Montana-Missoula in July 2016.

#### Betsy Becker PT’99

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### Medicine

#### Karen Clark PT’99
Omaha, Neb., is pursuing her Ed.D at Clarkson in their doctoral program of health professions education and leadership. She anticipates completion in 2019.

#### Megan Frazee PT’09

#### Kelly Djemes PT’12
Omaha, Neb., is the director of physical therapy at Essentials Natural Family Health where she offers outpatient and women’s health physical therapy services.

#### Rashelle Hoffman PT’15
Omaha, Neb., completed a geriatric residency at Creighton University in 2016 and will sit for the GCS Exam in 2017. In fall 2016, she began a Ph.D. program at UNMC’s Munroe-Meyer Institute.

#### Adam Liess PT’16
Kearney, Neb., joined Kearney Physical Therapy in July 2016. He works in the outpatient clinic in the Medical Office building at CHI Health Good Samaritan and specializes in orthopedics, balance and sports medicine.

#### Rebekah Sobotka PT’16
Kearney, Neb., joined Kearney Physical Therapy in July 2016. She is part of the joint CHI Health at Home team providing home health physical therapy services.

#### Gail Walling-Yanney M’61
Omaha, Neb., and her husband Michael Yanney received the 2016 Perry W. Branch Award for Distinguished Volunteer Service by the University of Nebraska Foundation in recognition of their years of volunteer leadership for the University of Nebraska.
Rowen Zetterman M’69
Omaha, Neb., has been appointed chair of the governing board of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education. He has served as vice chair, chair elect, and a member of the ACGME board’s executive committee. He will serve two additional years as chair. He is an internist, gastroenterologist and hepatologist, as well as a professor of internal medicine at UNMC, where he is director of faculty mentorship programs and associate vice chancellor for planning. He is dean emeritus, Creighton University School of Medicine, and a former chief of staff for the Nebraska-Western Iowa VA Health Care System.

William Origer M’73
Albany, Ore., has been in Oregon for 40 years, spending 20 years in family medicine practice and 20 in administrative work for medical groups and hospitals. He is half retired and works part time as faculty for the Family Medicine Residency at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, Ore. He is chair of the Oregon Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, which makes evidence-based decisions for Oregon Medicaid drug coverage.

Thomas Williams M’73
Omaha, Neb., was appointed chief medical officer and director of the division of public health for the State of Nebraska by Gov. Pete Ricketts in August 2016. Prior to his appointment, he served as the laboratory medical director and chair of the department of pathology for Methodist Hospital.

Eugene Herbek M’75
Omaha, Neb., recently was honored as the College of American Pathologists Pathologist of the Year. He serves as medical director of the Methodist Women’s Hospital laboratory and medical director of the transfusion and coagulation services for The Pathology Center at Methodist Hospital.

Frank Cockerill M’77
New York, N.Y., recently was presented with the Annual Halfpenny Lab Innovation Award at a national meeting of laboratory providers. He also presented a keynote on the changing telehealth landscape, the consumerization of health care and the future of diagnostic testing. He is the CEO of Analyte Health and is board certified in internal medicine and infectious diseases and clinical microbiology.

Tom Heiser M’79
Lincoln, Neb., and his wife, Nancy, received the Lyell Bremser Special Merit Award from the Nebraska Football Hall of Fame in October 2016. The award honors individuals with a background of interest in and support of intercollegiate football and have made a sizeable contribution to society through public service and/or self-sacrifice. Later that month, he was recognized when UNMC rededicated their newly renovated fitness facility: the Thomas M. Heiser, M.D., Strength and Fitness Facility.

E. Lloyd Hiebert M’80
Salem, Ore., anesthesiologist and prolific inventor, is founder/president of HUG-U-VAC Surgical Positioning Systems Inc., Epik Medical Innovations Inc., and Veterinary Warming Solutions Inc. He designed patient positioners for orthopedic, cardio-thoracic, urologic, neurologic procedures as well as the first Steep Trendelenburg patient positioner that “married” with the da Vinci Robotic Surgery System. He also designed six veterinary positioners for surgery, dental procedures, ultrasounds, X-ray, myelograms, CT and MRI scans. HUG-U-VAC veterinary positioners are now in use in the majority of US veterinary schools, hospitals and clinics.

James Thayer M’80
Sidney, Neb., was awarded the Volunteer Clinical Faculty Award by the honorary organization Alpha Omega Alpha of UNMC.

Douglas Throckmorton M’85
Potomac, Md., is the deputy director for regulatory programs at the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. He shares the responsibility for overseeing the regulation of research, development, manufacture and marketing of prescription, over-the-counter, and generic drugs in the United States. Recently, he testified in a congressional hearing on the Mylan EpiPen case.

Joel Travis M’92, Residency ‘95
Albion, Neb., a physician at Boone County Health Center, received a Distinguished Volunteer Faculty Award for the College of Medicine from the Office of Academic Affairs at UNMC. The award honors volunteer faculty who exemplify excellence in education and service. He has served as a volunteer faculty member in the UNMC Department of Family Medicine since 1992 and has instructed students and residents every year since his initial appointment.

Renee Engler M’95
North Platte, Neb., was elected president-elect of the Nebraska Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians in July. She will become president in two years.

Heather Taggart M’96
Papillion, Neb., received the 2017 Silver Anniversary Award from the NCAA on Jan. 18 in Nashville, Tenn. The annual award recognizes six distinguished former student-athletes on the 25th anniversary of the end of their intercollegiate athletics eligibility. She joined the University of Wisconsin-Madison women’s soccer team in college. As a four-year starter, she led her team to the Division I tournament four years in a row. She works for two CHI Health clinics in Omaha, volunteers at the CHI Health Creighton University Medical Center, is a contributing services faculty member at the Creighton University School of Medicine, and sits on the CHI Health Alegent Creighton Clinic Board of Directors.

Supriya Bhatia M’08
Omaha, Neb., joined Boys Town Child & Adolescent Psychiatry in August 2016. Prior to that, she completed a fellowship at Oregon Health & Science University. Her psychiatry residency was at the University of California, Davis.

Curtis McKnight M’09
Phoenix, Ariz., was named one of the 505 Top Doctors of Phoenix for 2016 in April’s issue of Phoenix Magazine. He is a psychiatrist with the St. Joseph Hospital and Medical Center.
Residency

Ashish Sharma, Psychiatry Residency’05
Omaha, Neb., received an Outstanding Teacher Award in April 2016 from UNMC.

Lindsey McClintick, Pediatric Residency’16
Neosho, Mo., joined the Freeman Neosho Physicians Group-Pediatrics. She is originally from Minnesota and did her undergraduate and medical field training in Lawrence, Kan., and Kansas City.

Danielle Kuzela, Pediatric Residency’16
Omaha, Neb., joined Boys Town Pediatrics in August 2016. She earned her medical degree at the Chicago Medical School.

Nursing

Sharon Redding N’68
Omaha, Neb., spent the 2016 spring semester as a volunteer visiting professor at Wuhan HOPE School of Nursing, Wuhan, China, under the auspices of Project HOPE. This was her second time in Wuhan, having spent the 2014 spring semester teaching at the school. Prior to her most recent arrival, she spent two weeks touring India. She was elected president of the Project HOPE Alumni Association at an October meeting in Washington D.C., where she was the keynote speaker for the reunion dinner and shared reflections on her experience in Wuhan.

Carol Bradley N’74, ’77
Lake Oswego, Ore., is the senior vice president and system chief nursing officer of Legacy Health. She recently was elected chair-elect of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

Linda Lazure N’75, ’79, GS’93
Omaha, Neb., was inducted as a fellow in the American Academy of Nursing in Washington D.C., in October 2016. In July 2015, she retired as associate professor emerita from Creighton University College of Nursing.

Janet Toomsen N’75
Shubert, Neb., retired from UPS in May after 16 years in occupational health nursing.

Mary Moller N’82
Gig Harbor, Wash., left teaching at the Yale School of Nursing in Connecticut in the summer of 2014 to return to the Northwest to develop and become the coordinator of the new psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner DNP program at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. The move also brought her close to grandchildren.

She lectures nationally and internationally on issues related to psychiatric disorders and psychiatric-mental health nursing. She is involved with professional organizations and is the president-elect of the Association of Advanced Practice Psychiatric Nurses in Washington State and is a consultant to the revived state chapter of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association.

Douglas Coffey N’83, ’84, ’94
Amarillo, Texas, retired from the Army Reserves as a colonel in 2014. In the fall of 2016, he moved from a chief nursing officer position in Enid, Okla., to one in Amarillo. He works at Northwest Texas Healthcare System, a 495-bed facility.

Lisa Hullinger N’94
Gretna, Neb., and her family recently moved back to Gretna, where she is the assistant director of nursing for Altitude Health Care at Ridgecrest Rehabilitation Center. During her 25-year career, she has worked in Omaha, Gothenburg, Neb., and Kearney, Neb. She is excited to be back in the Omaha area where she started her nursing career. She has three children; the oldest is in the process of applying to the UNMC nursing program in Omaha.

Karol Johnson N’94
Savannah, Mo., has been employed by Mosaic, formerly known as Heartland Regional Medical Center, for almost 22 years.

Barbara Sittner N’94
Eagle, Neb., serves as the chair of the International Nursing Association for Clinical Simulation in Nursing (INACSL) Standards Committee (term: 2015-2017). She led a team of simulation experts on the revisions to INACSL-Standards of Best Practice: Simulation. These standards are used worldwide to provide educators, researchers and practitioners with guidelines to design, implement and evaluate simulation-based experiences.

Michaela Sherbeck N’95
Kearney, Neb., graduated in December 2016 with a master’s in nursing – adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialist with oncology specialty from Loyola University Chicago.

Stacie Watkins N’96
Lone Tree, Colo., is a clinic/infusion nurse for oncology at the University of Colorado Hospital.
Rebecca Burns N’97 ’09
College Station, Texas, was awarded the degree of doctor of nursing practice from Loyola University New Orleans in May. During her tenure, she maintained a full-time assistant professor faculty position at Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Nursing, where she continues to be an active member of Sigma Theta Tau International, National League for Nursing, Brazos Valley Nurse Practitioner Association, Texas Nursing Association and the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses. She plans to publish her capstone research findings in 2017. Most recently she was appointed the RN-BSN program coordinator. She is an active member of TAMU Faculty Senate and was awarded the “Daisy Faculty Award,” for her exceptional impact on students. She and her husband Todd have been married 23 years and have three children, Taylor (21), Noah (19), and Matthew (16), as well as two boxers and a pit bull.

Christopher Contonis N’97
Omaha, Neb., joined Streck as the sales and marketing vice president. Most recently, he served as director of North American Sales at IntegenX in Pleasanton, Calif., where he pioneered market development and the commercialization of sample-to-answer DNA-based systems for human identity testing.

Elizabeth Beam N’00, ’04, GS’14
Omaha, Neb., is an assistant professor in the UNMC College of Nursing and serves as an education researcher for the UNMC Interprofessional Academy of Educators.

Doug Penington N’03
Elkhorn, Neb., recently joined Bellevue Primary Healthcare, PC as a full partner. He works with Kelli Pavlish N’04, ’11 to implement holistic treatments for patients. He and his wife have two sons.

Shannon Monheiser N’04
Dix, Neb., and her family moved to Dix in 2016. She has served as the director of nursing at Kimball County Manor since 2007. She and her husband, Roger, married in 2005, and have two sons, Dawsen and Kamden.

Kelley Wanda N’06
Lincoln, Neb., recently became the vice president, clinical informatics for Praesidio Healthcare Consulting.

Julie Petsche N’07
Nicoeville, Fla., has been a nurse for 19 years. Upon graduating from UNMC, she was commissioned into the U.S. Air Force as a registered nurse and was selected by the Air Force Institute of Technology to attend the highly competitive process of attending the U.S. Army Graduate Program in anesthesia nursing to complete the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Master’s Degree Program. She graduated in 2013 from the highest-rated CRNA program in the nation. While working as an active-duty U.S. Air Force commissioned officer/CRNA, she completed a full-time doctorate program from Chatham University in Pittsburgh, and graduated in May 2016.

Douglass Haas N’09, ’15
Kearney, Neb., is a cardiology nurse practitioner with the Nebraska Heart Institute in Kearney. He also is the president-elect for the Nebraska Nurses Association.

Kelli Pavlish, N’04, ’11
Omaha, Neb., will celebrate (in February 2017), the fourth anniversary of Bellevue Primary Healthcare, PC, which she owns and operates. Doug Penington N’03 recently joined the team as a full partner. They are in the process of building an esthetics practice which includes skin revitalization, vein therapy, as well as many other treatments. With the focus on wellness, they are rebranding with a trade name: Remedy Health, PC. Kelli and her husband have four children.

Karen Bagnewski N’12
Bennington, Neb., works for Methodist Women’s Center as a nurse practitioner in OB-GYN.

Suzanne Lux N’13
Lincoln, Neb., worked in psychiatric nursing, but is now a traveling nurse. Her first contract was in Minnesota during the nursing strike. She now travels with Pharmaceutical Nursing Consultant and works at home 10 percent of the time.

Kassandra Chick N’13
Elkhorn, Neb., works at Nebraska Medicine in the cardiovascular intensive care unit.

Katie Speer N’14
Lincoln, Neb., was promoted to charge nurse in October 2016. In January, she became co-chair of Bryan Health’s Nursing Professional Practice Council.

Pharmacy

Daniel Hughes P’68
San Diego, Calif., and his wife, Patty, have retired to San Diego after he worked 31 years with Hoffmann LaRoche. They enjoy the weather and travelling internationally.

Dennis Kime P’76
Colleyville, Texas, is mostly retired, but works occasionally for Market Street. He and his wife LuAnn P ’77 moved from Amarillo just over two years ago. They had been in Amarillo for 36 years. They have a son, Tyler, who lives in Columbus, Neb., and a daughter, Rachel, who lives in Grapevine, Texas, and four grandchildren. He keeps busy volunteering, woodworking and making things on a laser engraver.

Lori McClintock P’81
The Villages, Fla., is retired and, with her husband, Dave, enjoys the beautiful weather and activities in The Villages.

Sonja Loar P’83
Newton, Mass., is a consultant to pharmaceutical industry companies. She specializes in clinical drug development and regulatory affairs, preparing strategies for FDA interactions regarding requirements for new drug approval. She consults to both large and small “start-up” companies, primarily in Cambridge, Mass., although some clients are elsewhere, including overseas. Her pharmacy training at UNMC and her residency at the University of Kentucky both prepared her well for this career.
James Rybacki P’87
Melbourne, Fla., completed a seven-month interim director of pharmacy engagement at JPS Health in Ft. Worth, Texas. He relocated his company, The Medicine Information Institute, to Melbourne, and released two new diabetes medicine-related eBooks in February.

Dianne Garside P’03
Ashland, Neb., celebrated daughter Kara’s May 2016 graduation from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in Coral Gables, Fla. Her daughter earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree.

Austin Farnstrom P’11
Byron, Neb., is a clinical pharmacist for Cardinal Health at Brodstone Memorial Hospital in Superior, Neb.

Amanda Champ P’11
Fremont, Neb., was promoted to senior health outcomes and pharmacoeconomics specialist for Amgen in December 2016.

Ellina Seckel P’13
Madison, Wis., is the primary care pharmacy manager and clinical pharmacy specialist at William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital, West Annex Clinic, in Madison. She helped create and manages a patient-aligned care team that was named one of 13 finalists in a national “Shark Tank” style VA competition of innovative ideas to improve access. The program is now considered one of the VA’s “gold status” projects to be replicated by other centers.

Mark Kampe P’71, D’79, GS’10
Rapid City, S.D., has lived in Rapid City since 2010 after selling his private practice in 2009. He is involved in organized dentistry through the South Dakota Dental Association as a trustee to the board from the Black Hills District, member of the SoDak D PAC committee, Council on Membership, Council on Legislation, and American Dental Association’s Council on Membership. He works part time as a contract dentist through the state of South Dakota Department of Health-Department of Corrections as well as a contract dentist with Horizon Health Care Inc. in Faith, S.D. He and his wife, Jane, enjoy living in “the Hills” of West River, South Dakota.

James Jenkins D’84
Lincoln, Neb., received the Woody Varner Award from The Lighthouse organization, an after-school program for middle and high school at-risk youth in Lincoln. Dr. Jenkins has been involved in helping contribute to the organization’s capital campaign events for the past 20 years.

Jeffrey Lowe D’97
Hays, Kan., is practicing at Lifetime Dental Care where he offers experienced Temporomandibular Joint treatment options. He has completed continuing education courses in sedation dentistry, orthodontics, sleep apnea, dental implants, TMD/migraine and more.

Sarena Dacus PH’13
Omaha, Neb., was named to the 2016 Midlands Business Journal’s 40 Under 40 list. She serves as the executive director of FAMILY, Inc., which provides public health and family support services to women, children and families in Southwest Iowa.

Leah Frerichs PH’14
Chapel Hill, N.C., accepted and began a tenure track faculty position in the department of health policy and management at the Gillings School of Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in September 2016.

Ernest Prentice GS’76
Omaha, Neb., associate vice chancellor of academic affairs at UNMC, was elected to the Association of Clinical Research Professionals board of trustees. He has extensive experience and tenure in the ethics and regulation of human research. He is the institutional official for both the UNMC Human Research Protection Program and the UNMC Animal Care and Use Program.

Hemant Vishwasrao GS’16
Lexington, Ky., works at Catalent Pharma Solutions as a product and formulation development scientist at one of their largest oral drug delivery sites in the U.S.

Kathleen Brandt MPH’04, Brandon Grimm MPH’05, Ph.D. ’13, Justin Frederick MPH’11, and Caryn Vincent MPH’14 attended a reception sponsored by the College of Public Health Alumni Engagement Council at the annual Nebraska Public Health Conference.
In Remembrance…

Helen Nelligan N’41
Thornwood, N.Y., Aug. 28, 2016

Claudia Hartz N’42
Omaha, Neb., Nov. 19, 2016

Alice Roth N’46
Richmond, Va., Aug. 31, 2016

Paul Crellin M’47
Billings, Mont., Sept. 14, 2016

Doran Goll N’47
Tekamah, Neb., Oct. 5, 2016

Donald Johnson D’47
Lemon Grove, Calif., July 28, 2016

Josephine Macias N’51

Milton Plucker M’51
Caryville, Tenn., Dec. 18, 2015

Kenneth Stout M’52
Benkelman, Neb., July 21, 2016

Paul Barry P’53
Georgetown, Texas, Dec. 12, 2016

Betty Rundlett N’54
Omaha, Neb., July 12, 2016

Gene Slichter M’54
Spokane, Wash., Sept. 18, 2015

L. Lee Bosley M’56
Palm Desert, Calif., July 11, 2016

Robert Hall M’62
Green Valley, Ariz., Nov. 22, 2016

John Platz D’62

Surendar Lamba M’63

Bruce Hutson M’64
Fort Collins, Colo., Aug. 23, 2016

Linda Stacey MLS’64
Battie Lake, Minn., July 2, 2016

Kenneth Laughlin D’65
Rockport, Texas, Sept. 16, 2016

Ransom Varney P’65
Broken Bow, Neb., Jan. 8, 2017

Sheridan Anderson M’66
Grand Island, Neb., July 29, 2016

Carl Boschult M’66
Omaha, Neb., July 22, 2016

Dudley Mack D’66
Madison, Ala., Sept. 16, 2016

Roger Jacobs M’67
Woodland Park, Colo., Sept. 1, 2016

James Wells P’68
Albion, Neb., Sept. 20, 2016

Ann McCord D’69
Fairbury, Neb., Sept. 16, 2016

Kathie Perez N’70
Omaha, Neb., July 22, 2016

Milton Johnson M’71
Scottsbluff, Neb., Aug. 29, 2016

Jene Pierson MLS’72
Peoria, Ariz., July 1, 2016

John Krick P’73
Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 31, 2016

David Meadows M’75
Melbourne, Fla., July 28, 2016

Debra Campbell MLS’77
Denton, Neb., Nov. 26, 2016

Joseph Mullen M’78

Mary Premer MLS’88
Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 14, 2016

Christine Sommer N’90

H. Kevin Happe, GS ’91
Omaha, Neb., Feb. 26, 2017

Alice Didier N’93

Dana Hlavinka N’94
Sidney, Neb., April 19, 2015

Kerry Johnson M’99
Gretna, Neb., Sept. 21, 2016

Brady Smith N’09
Lincoln, Neb., Aug. 29, 2016

Births

Christina Gregg MITS’06
Omaha, Neb., and husband, Bob, welcomed a son, Evan Thomas, on Dec. 28, 2016.

Jena Depue MITS’07
Gretna, Neb., and husband, Jeff, welcomed a daughter, Nora, on Oct. 15, 2016.

Katherine Miller P’09
Omaha, Neb., and husband, Zach, welcomed a son, Luca Philip, on Sept. 27, 2016.

Tracy Muehling MITS’09
Omaha, Neb., and husband, Matt, welcomed their second daughter, Kaylee Lynn, on Aug. 8, 2016.

Suzanne Dougherty PT’10
Omaha, Neb., husband, Nick, and daughter Grace (2) welcomed a daughter, Adeline Beth, on May 5, 2016.

Megan Frickel PT’10
Rifle, Colo., and husband, Mark, welcomed a daughter, Adeline Vonda, on June 15, 2016.

Amanda Champ P’11
Fremont, Neb., and husband, Tim, welcomed a daughter, Caroline Margaret, on Sept. 17, 2016.

Karen Bagniewski N’12
Bennington, Neb., and husband, Nick, and daughter Grace (2) welcomed a daughter, Adeline Beth, on May 5, 2016.

Amanda Dolen DH’12
Lincoln, Neb., and husband, Parker, welcomed a son, Henry Marilyn, on Sept. 14, 2016.
Jillian Fickenscher M’13, PH’14
York, Neb., and husband, Brady (M’13), welcomed a daughter, Brynnlee Adaire, on Jan. 24, 2016.

Chad Schock MITS’13
Grand Island, Neb., and wife, Bethany, welcomed a son, Jayden Roman, on Dec. 27, 2016.

Morgan Meissner PA’14
Hospers, Iowa, and husband, Steve, welcomed their first child, Samuel Steven, on May 11, 2016.

Sarah Meissner MITS’14
McCook, Neb., and husband, Nick, welcomed a son, Gideon Reid, on Jan. 4, 2017.

Jayne Ellenwood MLS’15
Lincoln, Neb., and husband, Evan, welcomed their first child, Olivia Laine, on Dec. 17, 2016.

Marriages

Elizabeth Hopkins PT’12
& Alex Gac
Omaha, Neb., June 4, 2016

Kassandra Parr N’13
& Adam Chick

Ellina Pisetsky P’13
& Cole Seckel
Omaha, Neb., July 18, 2015

Laura Heuermann M’14
& Donn LaBonte
Omaha, Neb., Oct. 1, 2016

Katie O’Brien N’14
& Nathan Speer
Kearney, Neb., May 21, 2016

Shayla Bigley P’16 & Justin Lane P’15

For more information about these events, please visit us online at unmc.edu/alumni.
To attract and prepare the best students to become Nebraska’s frontline health care professionals, investments are needed now. Providing financial support to lessen education-related debt, encouraging students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to consider health care professions and investing in cutting-edge teaching and learning techniques will solidify UNMC as the best choice for highly qualified and motivated students.

In 2015, the University of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska Foundation launched Our Students, Our Future, an initiative to raise $200 million by the end of 2017 to support NU students, including those at UNMC. Your generous gifts today will touch the lives of students now and long into the future. Please help us transform young lives and invest in Nebraska’s future.

To learn more contact Amy Volk at amy.volk@nufoundation.org or at 800-432-3216.
There was the time - during our science night at Werner Park – that a young boy who stood waist high to a cardiologist, lobbed question upon question about the heart surgery he once had. All while the two walked through a giant inflatable heart.

Another time, there was a pint-sized girl whose white coat hinted at her career interest in being a scientist, or at least of dressing up.

Then, there were the school-age inventors who scurried out of the path of Memento-fueled soda rockets that blasted across the parking lot at the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum.

The days of the Nebraska Science Festival open a window on all things science, and each year I am privileged to watch the quizzical looks of children (and yes, even adults) gradually turn into whispers of “wow, that’s awesome.”

I see and hear it time and again, and smile.

It’s during each of these moments of awe and curiosity and discovery that the months of planning dissipate and the rewards stand tall.

This year, we celebrate our fifth year of the Nebraska Science Festival, dubbed SciFest for short, and I encourage you to join us April 20-29 to discover your own “wow” moment. Or moments.

While spearheaded and administered by UNMC, the festival involves the entire state and a number of organizations and individuals interested in the advancement of science literacy. This year, we’re excited to announce our keynote speaker, Kari Byron, best known as a host on Discovery Channel’s “Mythbusters” and “The White Rabbit Project” on Netflix.

Returning will be our hands-on, free, family-friendly science expo, along with numerous activities across the state.

Yes, each year gets bigger and better and 2017 will be no different. For a glimpse of the festival growth, I am proud to report that the 2016 festival:

- Grew with more events (from 56 in 2015 to 88 in 2016), venues (36 to 48), cities (12 to 16) and attendees (13,699 to 17,676).
- Added more programming highlighting women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM), including a “Women in Science” panel discussion.
- Extended across the state with the inclusion of the Riverside Discovery Center in Scottsbluff and a statewide social media science scavenger hunt.

The festival wouldn’t be possible without the dedication and support of the many volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors, teachers, students and sites sharing their passion for science.

So, as we celebrate the state’s 150th anniversary, let us also celebrate Nebraska’s many strengths in science. I know you’ll join me in saying, “Wow, that’s awesome.”

Get involved in the 2017 NE SCIFEST.
unmc.edu/connect

Find your ‘wow’ moment at the Nebraska Science Festival
by Kacie Baum

Students see what the inside of a colon looks like at last year’s Nebraska Science Festival.
New Era of Alumni Engagement

Mark Your 2017 Calendar

UNMC Alumni Reunion Events

- College of Allied Health Professions Alumni Reunion
  Omaha, Neb. | June 10, 2017

- College of Dentistry Alumni Reunion
  Lincoln, Neb. | September 15-16, 2017

- College of Nursing Kearney Division Alumni Reunion
  Kearney, Neb. | September 16, 2017

- College of Medicine Alumni Reunion
  College of Nursing Alumni Reunion
  Omaha, Neb. | October 20-21, 2017

For more information about these reunions and other alumni events, please visit: unmc.edu/alumni