River research spawns revelations
RIVER RESEARCH SPAWNS REVELATIONS
Public health researchers study why fish in the Elkhorn River are confused about their sex.

LATINO TEENS HAVE HEALTHIER SUMMER
A public health research study demonstrates how youth advocacy and social marketing can shift the overall climate of childhood obesity in the Latino community.

MAURER CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH OPENS
Public health at UNMC moved into its new home in May. “Today, we have done a good thing for people,” said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D.

BACK TO PREVENTION – THE PUSH FOR PRIMARY CARE
UNMC’s nationally recognized primary care program steps forward to create a Primary Care Center.
MEDICAL TREATMENT CLOSE TO HOME
Through a first-of-its-kind program, the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center works with hospitals across Nebraska to bring clinical trials to patients in their own communities.

RUTH AND BILL SCOTT STUDENT PLAZA DEDICATED
The Scotts have transformed UNMC’s academic campus with their generosity.

BAD BUGS, NO DRUGS
The College of Pharmacy dean talks about how emerging and neglected infectious diseases have become a major health problem due to the lack of new antibacterial drugs.
Nebraskans to benefit from UNMC’s newest facility

When a patient is admitted to the hospital, health care workers should ask themselves, “How could this hospital admission have been prevented?”

UNMC’s newest college — the College of Public Health — is aimed at providing the answers to that question and many others, as the college’s faculty members are committed to understanding the causes of disease and developing prevention strategies.

In May, we celebrated the opening of the college’s new facility, the Harold M. and Beverly Maurer Center for Public Health. This facility will bring together experts to find solutions to chronic health conditions that affect citizens of Nebraska and beyond.

It also brings together faculty from diverse fields — including health promotion and disease prevention; epidemiology; infectious diseases; biosecurity; environmental, community and rural health; health policy and others — and provides the environment for essential collaboration and exchange. These health topics also will become more commonplace in the curricula of our other colleges, as these issues are central to the health and wellness of all people. They’re also central to lessening the cost of health care to society as a whole.

My wife, Beverly, and I are proud to have our name on the facility. Ruth and Bill Scott, whose generosity has transformed the academic side of our campus, provided the lead gift for the center and chose its name. (more on the Scotts on page 16.)

Other principal donors for the facility include: Eve and Fred Simon; The Carruth J. Wagner, M.D., Foundation; Dr. Gail and Michael Yanney; Richard D. Holland; and Robert D. Sparks, M.D.

Because of their generosity, our public health faculty will have the opportunity to teach the next generation of public health workers, who will translate prevention research into best practices (see page 6). These experts are needed throughout Nebraska and beyond, and we are proud to provide this necessary workforce.

Harold M. Maurer, M.D.
UNMC Chancellor
Whether you are researching cures, finding treatments, providing patient care and outreach, or restarting your healthcare career...

Grow with us.

A great place to live, work and play.
And most of all, a great place to grow a business.

You’ll find endless possibilities in Nebraska!

NEworks.Nebraska.gov
Fish in the Elkhorn River are confused about their sex.

Females are becoming defeminized and males are becoming more female.

What is it about this Nebraska river that’s causing the fish to undergo a sex change every spring and summer? That’s what Alan Kolok, Ph.D., wants to know.

A physiological ecologist and aquatic toxicologist, his research is focused on fish living in contaminated environments and the impact of agrichemical contaminants on fish.

"Like the canary in the coal mine, fish are the sentinels for our drinking water," Dr. Kolok said. "What happens to the fish is a cause of concern."

Dr. Kolok is director of the Aquatic Toxicology Laboratory at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) and interim director of the Center for Environmental Health and Toxicology in UNMC’s College of Public Health.

He is interested in biologically active compounds in water and their unusual methods of being toxic to wildlife and humans. Rather than being directly toxic, these compounds hijack cell signaling pathways and lead to irreversible changes at astonishingly low exposure, he said.

“Low levels can have a big effect,” said Dr. Kolok, whose research is funded by a National Science Foundation grant. “It’s not causing cancer, but it’s masquerading as an internal hormone.”
For the past 10 years, he has evaluated the effects of the herbicide atrazine on aquatic life along the Elkhorn River, which flows 290 miles from the eastern Sandhills to join the Platte River just southwest of Omaha. Atrazine is a herbicide commonly used on corn; its environmental and public health impacts are controversial.

Atrazine is one of the three most commonly applied herbicides in the United States with more than 75 million pounds used annually across the country. Nebraska farmers apply considerable amounts of the herbicide each year to their fields. Although this chemical can increase crop yields, large amounts often escape through rainwater runoff and enter the waterways, Dr. Kolok said.

“It’s surprising how little we know about where atrazine goes and what it does over a long period of time,” Dr. Kolok said. “I’d like to know if the fish are breeding during this annual surge.

“If the water is leading to changes in cell signaling in fish, it could lead to reproductive dysfunction in humans,” he said.

With its many tributaries, the Elkhorn watershed encompasses an area of about 7,000 miles.

To perform a large-scale inventory of atrazine in the basin, Dr. Kolok tapped his natural inventive talent and came up with a clever solution. A precise measure of the water costs $100, but he found a kit, similar to a pregnancy test, which only costs $10 and records if atrazine is present above the Environmental Protection Agency’s minimum level allowed for safe drinking water — three parts per billion.

Then he enlisted the help of “citizen scientists” — people interested in the environment such as Boy Scouts, high school students and members of the Audubon Society and Sierra Club.

They took samples at 150 different sites along the river on April 23 and 120 sites on May 21. The results were dramatic.

Once in the water, atrazine is taken up by aquatic life and can have a negative effect on reproductive organs. This phenomenon is commonly known as endocrine disruption.

In April, atrazine was detected in only two sites, both close to Omaha, but in May, atrazine lit up the map south of Norfolk.

“Norfolk became the dividing line,” he said. “Everything northwest of the city, where cattle graze and fields are full of wheat and sorghum, the water had no atrazine. But, south of town, where corn and soybean fields begin, we registered mostly positive.”

Contamination of the water is widespread.

In 2002, the U.S. Geological Society sampled hundreds of surface water sites around the country and found that 80 percent of them had trace contaminants — steroids, pharmaceuticals and personal care products. The Washington Post reported that an algae bloom created a dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico and the female fish in the area became less feminine.

For his river project, Dr. Kolok breeds fathead minnows in his lab at UNO so he can record the gene expression of the fish from birth. “Animals from the wild are different because a number of factors in the environment can affect them,” he said.

The fish are then exposed to the Elkhorn River for seven days — long enough to affect gene expression. Dr. Kolok invented a 40-pound mobile unit that can expose up to 20 fish to a continuous flow of river water.

Soon, his Elkhorn River Research Station (ERRS), an environmental research/education facility, will provide a secure, controlled environment in which students and faculty can conduct experiments. Nine holding tanks will be available at the ERRS to hold fish and other aquatic animals for experimentation. Water from the river will be continuously pumped through the tanks so that animals in the ERRS will be exposed to river water in real time.

“Next year, we’ll continuously expose fish from April through the summer over 10-day periods. We’ll be able to do a number of different studies, chemical and biological sampling in real time, over the growing season,” Dr. Kolok said.

“I want to know what’s in our water,” he said.
Small changes make big differences.

That’s one of the messages 13 Latino teens spread this summer to raise awareness of healthier lifestyle choices.

They call themselves SaludableOmaha, a health brand that stands for healthy attitude, balance, leadership and energy, and they are prepared to change the world — or at least a small part of it in South Omaha.

The group is really a public health research study that hopes to demonstrate how youth advocacy and social marketing can shift the overall climate of childhood obesity in the Latino community. The study blends the creative process with the empirical.

Terry Huang, Ph.D., professor and chairman of health promotion and social and behavioral health at UNMC’s College of Public Health, directs the study, which is funded by a $200,000 two-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The project is in partnership with Omaha South High and the South Omaha Community Care Council.

“SaludableOmaha is a social movement that seeks to empower individuals and families to adopt a healthier lifestyle and, at the same time, create a community and business environment that is more conducive to healthy living,” Dr. Huang said.

To achieve his goal, Dr. Huang enlisted the help of British documentary film writer and director Catherine Stewart, who has worked with the BBC and Disney HIT Entertainment and has focused on obesity awareness the past three years. Earlier this year, she worked with Dr. Huang to enlist students into the project, train them to be advocates and film their progress.

Since February, the group has painted a mural, held a neighborhood fiesta, hosted a dinner for community leaders, developed low fat/low sugar recipes for a cookbook, built a website and wrote and began filming a documentary and public service announcements about living healthier.

“First, we had to find the cultural connections and barriers before we determined a message,” Stewart said.

One of the challenges was to help students find their voice — to empower them to express their own ideas, Stewart said. “They learned to take ownership, pride and responsibility in this project and they’ve done a beautiful job.”

The students, all but one from South High School, were divided into teams based on their talents. With specific tasks of advertising, marketing and community advocacy, the project took on the structure of a public relations agency.

Although health messages had to be sexy, humorous and cool to appeal to their peers, the 14- to 18-year-olds clearly understood the seriousness of their mission. Several members of the group have struggled with weight issues or have family members with health problems related to obesity. They aren’t alone.

One-fourth of Nebraskans are obese,
making the state the 20th heaviest in the nation. Obesity is one of the most important factors in the development of diabetes and heart disease, Dr. Huang said.

The RWJF reports that adult obesity rates among Latinos are above 35 percent in four states (Mississippi, North Dakota, South Carolina and Texas) and at least 30 percent in 23 states. Almost 50 percent of Latino children are overweight.

SaludableOmaha students targeted restaurants and supermarkets to enact healthy changes in their business. Sponsors receive certificates to display and are featured on the website.

“If a business makes at least one policy change, such as putting calories on the menu, they receive an activist award,” Dr. Huang said. Two or more policy changes lead to a super activist award and possibly a feature in the documentary.

Individual supporters also are encouraged to join the movement online to create the demand for change.

The project started when Dr. Huang returned to academia after five years at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he was senior advisor for obesity research. He wanted to try a new approach in public health research — systems science — which seeks to connect individual health promotion to environmental and policy interventions to create the synergy for community or social change.

“This approach looks at all the contributors to childhood obesity and seeks out effective and sustainable solutions,” he said. “We involve people from the grassroots to community leaders.

“We have to make healthy lifestyles the easy default in everyday life but we also have to create the demand for a healthy community,” he said. “That’s the only way to have a strategy that is long-term and effective in combating obesity.”

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Small changes look like this:

- Change food recipes — bake instead of fry
- Drain fat off meat
- Use fresh ingredients
- Use olive oil instead of butter or other vegetable oil
- Substitute fresh fruit and vegetables
- Use low fat alternatives for butter, cheese and sour cream
- Buy whole-grain bread or cereal
- Use leaner meats such as chicken and turkey (without skin)
- More tips and information at: saludableomaha.com

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The mural on the side of a building in south Omaha provided a challenge to Michael Gray and two other artists. The mural depicts a spirit, surrounded by an assortment of fruits and vegetables, pulling a person out of a sea of unhealthy foods.
All roads lead to public health and in May, Omaha streets led hundreds to the grand opening of the building that houses UNMC’s first college since 1968 – the College of Public Health.

“Today, we have done a good thing for people,” said UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., at the opening ceremony.

The new home for the college, formed in 2007, was named the Harold M. and Beverly Maurer Center for Public Health to acknowledge the vision of UNMC Chancellor Maurer, M.D., and his wife, who saw a need to improve the public’s health.

The Maurer Center was made possible thanks to several benefactors including Ruth and Bill Scott, who made the lead gift and named the building in honor of the Maurers.

Two years ago, Dr. Maurer selected Ayman El-Mohandes, M.D., M.P.H., as dean of the new college. An energetic leader, Dr. El-Mohandes has doubled the number of faculty and students and increased research awards by 40 percent since his arrival.

An expert in the reduction of infant and maternal mortality in resource-poor nations and underserved populations, he has served as a senior consultant to the United States Agency for International Development and is a funded researcher by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development on projects in various countries and in the nation’s capital.

Dr. El-Mohandes practiced neonatology in his home country of Egypt, France and the United States for the past 30 years. He was not convinced that treating the problem was the only approach, especially after witnessing recurring health problems that could be traced back to the community “I saw that public health could provide solutions, so to that end I have dedicated my life.”

Watch a slideshow of the opening ceremony events. Download a copy of the “All Roads Lead to Public Health” poster. unmc.edu/connect
ANNUAL FACULTY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

This spring, seven UNMC faculty members were honored for their exceptional teaching, mentoring and community service.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA’S OUTSTANDING TEACHING AND INSTRUCTIONAL CREATIVITY AWARD (OTICA)

Kurtis Cornish, Ph.D., professor in cellular and integrative physiology, is lauded for his teaching practices, which include:
- Allowing students to place nasogastric tubes — an essential skill — in his nose, despite the discomfort of the process.
- Creation of “J-term,” an intense, three-day June workshop where medical students learn key diagnostic and treatment skills they need to transition from medical school to the clinical years.

UNMC SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

David Brown, Ph.D., professor of oral biology and executive associate dean at the College of Dentistry, spearheads two vital outreach programs: the annual Children’s Dental Day events in Lincoln and four panhandle communities, which have provided more than $2 million in dental care to more than 4,000 children, and services to homeless and underserved residents in and around Lincoln through the Dental SHARING Clinic.

UNMC OUTSTANDING MENTOR OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Steve Caplan, Ph.D., associate professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, says caring is the key to being a good mentor to graduate students. “Students are not — and should not be treated as — pawns who carry out research for a lab chief.” His cornerstones in caring for graduate students are:
- Spending quality time with them, even during stressful times;
- The rejection of a “one-size-fits-all” formula for working with students; and
- Setting a good example.

UNMC OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARDS

Chad Vokoun, M.D., assistant professor of internal medicine-general medicine, finds rewards in seeing the “light come on” for students when they realize where their passions are in medicine. He also enjoys the “team effort,” in which he too continuously learns from students and residents.

Richard MacDonald, Ph.D., professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, converts students’ curiosity, energy and enthusiasm into understanding how to do something and how things work. It’s satisfying, he said, when all the pieces fit together and students see “the big picture” and recognize the importance or value to them as future physicians or scientists.

Shantaram Joshi, Ph.D., professor in genetics, cell biology and anatomy, helps students understand major concepts and gain confidence in their ability to conquer difficult subjects. He also enjoys interacting with students from a variety of backgrounds and diverse viewpoints. “I am always amazed at the probing questions students come up with and love constantly updating my knowledge base to make sure I can answer their questions.”

Pamela Carmines, Ph.D., professor and vice chairwoman for graduate education in cellular and integrative physiology, chose to be a scientist – not a teacher. “Accepting my first tenure-track faculty position meant I could run my own lab, but I also had to teach. Slowly, teaching became less of a burden and more of a love.” Today, she most enjoys seeing students and trainees advance to successful careers.
Americans spend more on health care than any other country in the world. Yet, we don’t live longer and we die more often from heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes.

Each of these diseases is preventable in a health care system attuned to a primary care model that emphasizes health promotion.

“Most people do not need specialty care for the majority of their medical problems,” said Michael Sitorius, M.D., chairman of the UNMC Department of Family Medicine. “But, they do need, regardless of age, someone who delivers their primary care.”

UNMC leaders know — and research shows — primary care leads to healthier citizens and communities and lower costs of care — the principal goals of health care reform.

Ranked as one of the leading institutions in the training of primary care professionals, UNMC has long valued a strong primary care program. Now, it is strategically poised to create a Primary Care Center to improve the education of its students and spark new interdisciplinary patient care and research programs.

The Affordable Care Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama in March 2010, will expand health insurance coverage to 32 million Americans and greatly increase the need for primary care.

Fifty-one of the 93 counties in Nebraska already have a shortage of primary care providers.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) defines primary care as “the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community.”

Primary care, traditionally, has been associated with family physicians and general internal medicine, pediatricians and gynecologists, but has expanded over several years. With health care reform, the field now includes pharmacists, allied health professionals, public health officials, high-level nurses and other professions.

Primary care is the “logical foundation for an effective health care system,” says the IOM, emphasizing the notion that the role is not captured by any single specialty.

The health care team is like members of an orchestra, said Carl Smith, M.D., professor and chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology. “Patients need someone, like the primary care provider, to conduct the orchestra or they have fragmented care.”

America’s health care system, however, is focused more on delivering treatment than promoting wellness and prevention. Signs of a treatment-based system abound in the number of students entering specialty care, financial incentives that lure them and the level of attention given to the latest whiz-bang...
UNMC has long been a leader in primary care and consistently ranks among the nation’s top graduate schools in the annual U.S. News & World Report rankings — most recently lauded for its seventh place ranking.

“We have a long-standing commitment to training health care professionals for all of Nebraska,” said Dr. Sitorius, who leads UNMC’s efforts to develop a comprehensive center for primary care. “It’s part of the institutional mission.”

UNMC’s strength in primary care stretches across disciplines.

Faculty members who train in primary care in the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Public Health and the School of Allied Health Professions collaborate with one another, as well as with private practice colleagues, many of whom are alumni. “This is critical to the breadth of our primary care exposure and education,” Dr. Sitorius said.

Primary care at UNMC is valued and respected — not necessarily the case elsewhere — and role models can be found in all disciplines. “The clinicians we have are skilled and respected by the specialty services,” Dr. Smith said. “You can’t buy that kind of talent — you have to develop it.”

Nationally known programs, such as the College of Medicine’s Rural Training Track program, train family physicians in small, underserved rural communities on the principles of rural care. The program — one of the most extensive in the country — is based on the concept that residents tend to practice within 100 miles of where they train. As a result, family practice residents train at such key sites as Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, Grand Island and Norfolk.

Strong pharmacy and nurse practitioner programs, nationally recognized physician assistant and physical therapy programs, a new community-oriented primary care certificate program (only the second in the country and offered through the College of Public Health) and nursing divisions across the state further bolster UNMC’s commitment to primary care.

In addition, UNMC internal medicine residents train in the UNMC Physicians Midtown Clinic, which has adopted the innovative primary care medical home concept. Instead of brief encounters with their doctors, patients may see a team of providers including nurse coordinators, social workers, diabetes educators, a psychologist, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, X-ray technician and pharmacist.

“It’s one of the most unique continuity clinics for residents in the country,” said Lynell Klassen, M.D., professor and chairman of the department of internal medicine.

Everyone agrees the Affordable Care Act will greatly increase the need for primary care in the United States, as well as create incentives to change our primary care delivery model.

“Our health care system is unsustainable,” said Sarah Thompson, Ph.D., Niedfelt Distinguished Professor and associate dean of academic programs in the College of Nursing. “We have a system that pays for acute care.”

Primary care is not reimbursed at the rate of specialty care and financial discrepancies between specialty and primary care make it challenging to recruit students, particularly when they’ve amassed large amounts of debt.

“Medicine’s reward structure is for doing procedures and office visits,” Dr. Smith said. “It’s not about rewarding primary care docs for managing the health of a population.”

The United States spends more on health care than any other country in the world, but has higher rates of infant mortality, diabetes and other ills than many other developed countries.

Kyle Meyer, Ph.D., senior associate dean for allied health, says a long-term solution to the shortage of primary care providers should involve utilizing all qualified health care professionals. “More primary care physicians are necessary, however, we need to engage all of the health professions involved in delivering primary care in a dialogue about how they can effectively work together to improve access and quality for patients.”

Physician assistants, nurse practitioners and other primary care health professionals supplement the care provided by primary care physicians, Dr. Meyer said. “In recent years, the number of non-physicians entering primary care has grown faster than the number of physicians entering primary care.”

Although still evolving, Dr. Sitorius envisions a Primary Care Center at UNMC where practitioners build on their existing strengths, work together on novel approaches that use interprofessional teams, provide integrated care for those with chronic illness and implement the medical home concept — a team-based approach that focuses on prevention and disease management.

“We want to be at the forefront of innovation in health care delivery and education, as well as address the need for more and broader health care availability,” Dr. Sitorius said.

To do that, UNMC leaders will determine what type of education and training is needed to ensure the best primary care for all Nebraskans.

“Thanks to technological advances, we can really go to battle on a disease,” Dr. Thompson said. “But to truly make a difference in the quality of peoples’ lives and to save money we must look to primary care health promotion and stop these illnesses before they start.”
MaryAnn Fredrick is grateful to have had access to clinical trials close to her central Nebraska home. Here, she meets with medical oncologist Mehmet Copur, M.D., at Grand Island’s Saint Francis Cancer Treatment Center.
MaryAnn Fredrick was alone at work when the phone rang at 3 p.m. It was her doctor.

As executive director of the St. Paul (Neb.) Chamber of Commerce, she had been typing board meeting minutes on that bitterly cold Wednesday in February.

Suddenly, she found herself overwhelmed by medical lingo about treatments, side effects and prognosis for a rare type of invasive breast cancer. “I was scared to death.”

She shared the news with her two grown daughters, worried about how treatments would disrupt her work and life and sought second and third opinions in search of the best care.

She found it just 25 miles away at Grand Island’s Saint Francis Cancer Treatment Center.

Through a first-of-its-kind program, the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center works with hospitals across Nebraska, including Saint Francis, to bring clinical trials to patients in their own communities. Clinical trials are studies involving patients in whom doctors test the safety and efficacy of a drug or other treatment measure.

“These agreements allow cancer patients across Nebraska to have access to clinical trials available at UNMC,” said Kenneth Cowan, M.D., Ph.D., director of the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center. “We want to provide the best cancer diagnosis, treatment and prevention to every patient in the state.”

Fredrick, 45, could have gone to a larger city, but realized “it made the most sense to be close to home. They were caring and compassionate — I didn’t feel lost in the shuffle.”

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A native of Ankara, Turkey, Dr. Copur says the partnership with Eppley has transformed cancer care in central Nebraska. “This is the smallest town I’ve ever lived in, but we’ve accomplished something that’s not commonly done.”

Indeed, Dr. Copur’s clinic boasts clinical trial participation rates as high as 31 percent. Nationally, between 3 percent and 5 percent of patients participate in clinical trials.

Before clinical trials are offered at the sites, UNMC principal investigators visit participating communities to establish proper protocol procedures with the doctors, nurses and pharmacists. Once in place, the hospitals begin to offer clinical trials to their patients.

“Our goal is to partner with every major cancer treatment facility in the state so that every person can access our clinical trials if they are interested,” Dr. Cowan said. Already hospitals in Grand Island, North Platte, Scottsbluff, Kearney, Lincoln and Hastings participate.

During the past five years, more than 300 patients have been involved in cancer center trials through the statewide network.

“Clinical trials advance cancer care no matter where you are,” said Heather Benzel, clinical research nurse at Saint Francis Cancer Treatment Center. “We can’t move forward with treatments without the science of a clinical trial.”

Fredrick, too, is moving forward. She has completed her chemotherapy — an Eppley clinical trial comprised of six, seven-hour long treatment cycles with ctoxan and taxol — and underwent a mastectomy followed by radiation therapy. She has continued to work full time for the chamber and was present for her oldest daughter’s June wedding.

“Treatment would have been more time consuming had I not gone to Saint Francis,” she said. “I’m grateful I had that opportunity.”

“Clinical trials provide the best oncolgy care available,” said Fredrick’s medical oncologist, Mehmet Copur, M.D., who oversees her care at Saint Francis. “Through the partnership, my patients have the opportunity to receive comprehensive cancer care in a central Nebraska rural setting, but the quality of care is equivalent, or at times better, in my mind, than what they could receive in a tertiary cancer setting in any big city.”

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“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.” – Albert Pike
Ruth and Bill Scott’s selfless generosity is immeasurable.

Through their support and gifts, they have quietly transformed every UNMC college in Omaha, opened pathways to excellence and opportunity for students and ensured a better quality of life for future generations.

The Scotts are among the most generous donors in the history of the University of Nebraska, having made significant contributions to academic programs, scholarships and facilities. In 2009, the visionary couple received the University of Nebraska Board of Regents’ most prestigious award, the Regents Medal, for their transformational gifts and service to the university.

And, they’ve done it in the most humble way — honoring exemplary medical educators and leaders — UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., and his wife Beverly, Michael Sorrell, M.D., and Frederick Paustian, M.D., and his wife Maise — by requesting that facilities be named for them.

Now, the spotlight is on them with the naming of the Ruth & Bill Scott Student Plaza, the grassy area east of 42nd Street bordered by the many academic buildings and “Hope” light tower that they helped fund.

For the Scotts, their philosophy for sharing their wealth is quite simple.

“A pile of money is a lot like a pile of manure,” Ruth Scott said when they became just the second honorees (after the late Chuck Durham) to receive the Regents Medal. “It does no good until you spread it around.”

As stewards of their generosity, UNMC is committed to building a better life and stronger economy for all Nebraskans.
Here’s a scary story:

A few years back, farmers in central China came down with a strange sickness that included vomiting, diarrhea and high fevers. Their organs rapidly failed. About a third of those farmers died.

The illness spread to six other regions of China, proving fatal in 12 percent of cases. Researchers eventually discovered that the sickness — which they named Severe Fever — was a previously unknown virus that was transmitted by ticks.

Here’s another scary story:

In 2008, about 170,000 people in the United States died from new, emerging and neglected infectious diseases such as H1N1 influenza virus, SARS and H5N1 avian influenza virus. (Emerging infections include newly identified strains of the AIDS virus, malaria, tuberculosis and MRSA, which is a drug-resistant staph infection.) Yet the Food and Drug Administration approved no new antibacterial drugs in 2008 and since 1998 has approved only 12 new antibacterial drugs.

“Bad bugs. No drugs.”

That’s how Courtney Fletcher, Pharm.D., dean of UNMC’s College of Pharmacy, describes this major health problem.

“People need to care about this,” he said. “Sure, a disease like malaria is not a major problem in the United States. But the borders that separate us as a society aren’t far anymore. We all travel. Someone from Nebraska could visit a part of the world where there’s malaria, or a person infected with malaria could come here. Microorganisms cross borders pretty easily.

“Also, we need to care because we’re part of a larger family. The numbers are staggering — one child dies every 30 to 45 seconds from malaria.”

Though a bad bug can be highly lethal, typical therapy takes just seven to 14 days. Since major pharmaceutical companies direct resources on chronic illnesses and “lifestyle” drugs, researchers in academic medical centers have a bigger role in formulating drugs to fight those “bad bugs,” Dr. Fletcher said.

Here’s a story that gives hope:

Dr. Fletcher and his fellow researchers at UNMC are on the front lines of this global battle. They work to discover new drugs and new drug delivery systems to fight the bad bugs. And their successes in drug discovery have made a difference.

Jonathan Vennerstrom, Ph.D., a chemist and professor of pharmaceutical science, has helped lead the discovery of two drugs to treat malaria. Both are now in clinical trials. His latest formulation, a single-dose cure for malaria, shows promising results in
human trials. It could be one of the biggest breakthroughs in the fight against malaria in 80 years.

Most anti-malarial drugs must be taken three times a day. A single dose would be more convenient and affordable and would help ensure patients get the right amount of medicine.

“Think about this newest anti-malarial drug Jonathan developed — if it really is a one-dose cure, it’s not going to be a big money-maker for a pharmaceutical company. Yet the potential for it is huge and the need for it is staggering,” Dr. Fletcher said.

The discovery is so significant philanthropist Bill Gates mentioned it in a speech to the United Nations in 2008.

Other pharmacy professors such as Matt Kelso, Ph.D., look for ways to treat traumatic brain injury, and Tanya Bronich, Ph.D., focuses on drug delivery to brain tumors.

“We aren’t just going after neglected infectious diseases, but other human health problems where there are significant unmet needs,” Dr. Fletcher said.

Pharmacy researchers also have developed leads for tuberculosis, food-borne infections and antidotes for toxins. Dr. Fletcher himself is a major force in HIV research. He focuses on how HIV/AIDS drugs work in people. About a decade ago, the efforts of Dr. Fletcher and his team led the FDA to approve two important HIV drugs for children about the same time they were approved for use in adults.

For the third year in a row, the College of Pharmacy ranks in the top 10 nationally among 110 pharmacy schools in terms of research dollars per faculty member.

“The message is that the College of Pharmacy and the faculty are actively involved in drug discovery and drug development to improve human health,” Dr. Fletcher said.

And they’re educating students who help solve the drug problems — about 60 percent of Nebraska’s pharmacists were trained at UNMC.

But the school has hit a ceiling, literally. Its current home on campus, which was built in the mid-1970s, is inadequate for the type of research underway today.

This comes at a time when the college has the ability to do more work, the dean said, and when there’s clearly no shortage of medical need out there for new drugs to solve new problems.

Recently, the dean gave a tour of the building to Bob Batt, co-chair of the college’s campaign committee that’s raising money to build a new facility for the college. On the second floor of the current building, Batt had to step over the legs of students sitting in the hallway. Their classroom overflowed.

Dr. Fletcher said: “I chuckled a bit and remarked to him pretty quickly, ‘Bob, this isn’t staged just for you. This is the day-to-day reality.’”

Here’s a story that just kills Dr. Fletcher:

Last fall, a young researcher Dr. Fletcher wanted to hire came to visit UNMC. He was a chemist working on ways to treat new infectious diseases. He would have come with money from major grants and fresh ideas. But there simply wasn’t any space to put him.

The college lost him.

“That’s not acceptable,” Dr. Fletcher said. “If we’re going to lose a faculty member, let’s lose them because someone offered more money, not because we couldn’t meet their needs for research space.”

Batt, executive vice president of Omaha’s Nebraska Furniture Mart, is passionate about getting the word out. He knows people would be passionate about the college, too, if they knew the exciting research happening inside its walls.

That’s why one of UNMC’s top priorities for the Campaign for Nebraska is to raise money to build a new College of Pharmacy building, for which an anonymous donor has provided the lead gift.

Campus leaders hope to break ground later this year, but more money needs to be raised before construction can begin.

The new building would include a Center for Drug Discovery, making UNMC the only academic medical center in the country to have a drug discovery program focused on infectious diseases.

The new building would take the College of Pharmacy into the future.

“The school’s got a good story to tell,” Dr. Fletcher said. “We’re something Nebraska should be proud of.”

The College of Pharmacy building project is one of UNMC’s top priorities for the Campaign for Nebraska: Unlimited Possibilities. If you would like to support this initiative, contact the NU Foundation’s Patty Sherman at 402-502-4114 or psherman@nufoundation.org.
Dr. Juliann Sebastian named dean of the College of Nursing

Dr. Juliann Sebastian, Ph.D., was named the new dean of the UNMC College of Nursing, effective Oct. 15, following approval by the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. Dr. Sebastian succeeds Virginia Tilden, D.N.Sc., who retired June 30 after serving nearly eight years as the college’s sixth dean.

“Tremendously honored and excited about the opportunity to be part of this amazing academic health science center,” Dr. Sebastian said. “I look forward to working with faculty, staff, students, alumni, colleagues from other health professions at UNMC, and community members and friends of the college, to build on the great work of Dean Tilden.”

Dr. Sebastian comes to UNMC from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where she has been dean and professor of the College of Nursing since 2006. Before that, she served as assistant dean for advanced practice nursing and professor at the University of Kentucky. Her areas of expertise are organization of care delivery systems, and in particular, care for underserved populations, academic nursing practice and nurse-managed centers, and doctor of nursing practice program curricula.

She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing and a doctorate in business administration from the University of Kentucky. She is board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center as a public/community health clinical nurse specialist and is on the editorial board of the Journal of Professional Nursing.

Dr. Jennifer Larsen named vice chancellor for research

Jennifer Larsen, M.D., the former associate vice chancellor for clinical research, is the new vice chancellor for research. She succeeds Tom Rosenquist, Ph.D., who headed UNMC’s research program since 1999, serving first as director of research development and then as the first-ever vice chancellor for research in 2002.

Dr. Larsen joined UNMC in 1987. She developed the Clinical Research Center in 1995 and has been chief of the section of diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism since 1997. She is the principal investigator on four grants, including two from the National Institutes of Health. Her research is focused on the metabolic consequences of organ transplantation and she has conducted clinical trials with Native Americans to create strategies to prevent diabetes in this population.

Dr. Rosenquist returns to the department of genetics, cell biology and anatomy to continue his research on congenital heart defects.

New program expands options in public health

Students who want a master’s degree in public health now have more options through a new UNMC College of Public Health program, created in partnership with the Nebraska State College System and the University of Nebraska at Kearney.

PHEAST (Public Health Early Admission Student Track) targets sophomores who are enrolled at Wayne, Chadron or Peru State Colleges or UNK.

Students chosen for the program will pay no tuition during their last two years at participating institutions and will be assigned a mentor from the College of Public Health. Partner institutions will each select up to three students, for a total of 12, to enroll in the program.

The areas of public health concentration include biostatistics, community health education, environmental and occupational health, epidemiology, public health administration, maternal and child health and community-oriented primary care.

Home Instead Center introduces wellness program

A new wellness program for individuals over age 50 or who are eligible for Medicare is available at the Home Instead Center for Successful Aging at UNMC.

Open to the public, EngAge Wellness employs a whole-person wellness approach to optimal aging through the six dimensions of wellness – social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and vocational.

EngAge Wellness features individualized fitness and wellness programming; state-of-the-art exercise equipment that is safe and easy to use; whole-person wellness education programs for lifelong learning; wellness coaching and personal training; and wellness research and educational opportunities.

For more information, contact Jeannie Hannan at 402-552-7227 or visit www.unmc.edu/homeinsteadcenter.
After serving as interim dean of the UNMC College of Medicine for the past year, Rod Markin, M.D., Ph.D., has been named to the newly created position of associate vice chancellor for business development and chief technology officer.

Among his duties, Dr. Markin will work closely with departments to plan major equipment purchases and make sure that usage justifies the cost. In the spirit of UNMC’s existing core laboratories, he will investigate opportunities for departments to better coordinate their use of equipment. He also will look for potential new uses for information systems and telemedicine and will be involved in the rollout of the new electronic health record system at the medical center.

Dr. Markin joined UNMC in 1986, and is one of UNMC’s most prolific inventors. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from UNeMed Corporation in 2009 for his innovative work in transforming the clinical laboratory through technology.

In April, the College of Nursing launched a Mobile Nurse Managed Clinic to address Nebraska’s shortage of rural health professionals who specialize in the care of older adults.

A $300,000 federal stimulus grant funds the mobile clinic — a 38-foot, custom-built vehicle. The clinic fills a critical need for comprehensive geriatric assessments for fragile older adults in rural areas whose physical or mental conditions impair their functioning. The college is working with primary care physicians in communities that have identified a need for the service.

Staffed by three geriatric nurse practitioners, the mobile clinic will initially rotate service in Norfolk and Neligh with plans to expand to other locations. It will operate six days a month, then ultimately eight days a month.

The clinic features two exam rooms, a wheelchair lift, laboratory testing equipment and an EKG machine. It also is equipped with high definition video capability, which can be used as a tool for a live telehealth connection to a patient’s care providers or to specialists for consultation anywhere in the state. The mobile clinic also will provide clinical training for 25 students enrolled in the college’s geriatric nurse practitioner program.
College of Dentistry

- The Children’s Dental Day program celebrated its 10th anniversary. Since 2001, the program has provided more than $2 million in free care to more than 4,500 needy underserved children throughout Nebraska.
- Jeffrey Payne, D.D.S., associate dean for research, is primary author of a March article in the Journal of the American Dental Association titled “Doxycycline therapy for periodontitis and biomarkers of inflammation.” The study was selected as the cover story for JADA, which has a monthly circulation of 143,000-plus.

College of Graduate Studies

- In the office of the vice chancellor for academic affairs, James Turpen, Ph.D., has been named associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. He also serves as professor and vice chairman for education in the department of genetics, cell biology and anatomy. Cheryl Thompson, Ph.D., associate professor in the College of Nursing, has been named interim assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs and chief student affairs officer.
- Terri Vadovski is the new director of graduate studies, replacing Amy Schlueter. In July, Jialin Zheng, M.D., assumed additional responsibilities as associate dean for graduate studies. He also serves as professor of pharmacology and experimental neurosciences and director of UNMC’s Asia Pacific Rim Development Program.

College of Medicine

- At the May commencement, 110 students graduated from the College of Medicine.
- Jennifer Larsen, M.D., assumed her new role as vice chancellor for research on July 1. Since joining UNMC in 1987 she has held many positions including the founding and current director of the Clinical Research Center.
- Bradley Britigan, M.D., began his tenure as dean of the College of Medicine on July 1. He has 24 years in academic medicine including 17 years at the University of Iowa, where he served as director of the division of infectious diseases, and the past seven years at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, where he served as the Taylor Professor and chairman of the department of internal medicine.

College of Nursing

- The dedication of the new Center for Nursing Science in Omaha occurred on Oct. 13, 2010. The LEED-certified building expands the college’s space by 60 percent and makes available to faculty and students state-of-the-art classrooms, clinical labs and research space.
- The college has a record number of 10 extramurally funded education and training grants underway for more than $6 million. These programs address critical workforce shortages for the state, for example, in psychiatric behavioral health, geriatric nursing, executive nurse leadership and nursing faculty.

College of Pharmacy

- Michael (Mike) Holcomb, Pharm.D., ’90, was named Preceptor of the Year at the Spring Honors Convocation. Holcomb is a third generation pharmacist at Holcomb Pharmacy in Broken Bow, Neb.
- Dennis Robinson, Ph.D., has retired from the College of Pharmacy after 25 years of service. He joined the faculty in 1986 as an assistant professor in the department of pharmaceutical sciences and later served as an associate professor and interim chair. He was appointed chairman of the department of pharmaceutical sciences in 2003. He plans to return to New Zealand.
- Clarence Ueda, Pharm.D., Ph.D., retired from the faculty on Aug. 1. He joined the faculty as an assistant professor of pharmaceutics in 1974, was appointed interim dean of the college in 1986 and subsequently dean in 1987. He served 20 years as dean. In late 2007, he left the deanship and returned to the faculty.

College of Public Health

- Five new faculty members joined the college this summer, and the College of Public Health accreditation site visit was completed May 23-25.
- UNMC has received renewal of a five year $1.3 million Science Education Partnership Award to strengthen the math and science skills among American Indian youth in Nebraska and South Dakota. The grant, through the National Center for Research Resources, a division of the National Institutes of Health, has helped 130 middle school students and 83 teachers since 2005.
- Two new master of public health concentrations launch this fall: Community Oriented Primary Care and Maternal and Child Health.

Eppley Institute / UNMC Eppley Cancer Center

- The Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer celebrated its 50th anniversary with a symposium on Sept. 9. Current and former Eppley Institute faculty shared how being a member of the faculty has shaped their careers and scientific accomplishments. James D. Iglehart, M.D., of the Dana Farber/Harvard Cancer Center, delivered the Dr. Henry Lemon Lectureship.
- Eppley Cancer Center researchers are collaborating with Henry Lynch, M.D., of Creighton University’s Hereditary Cancer Center to identify genes that increase cancer risk in families. Using state-of-the-art technology, researchers are performing whole genome DNA sequencing on samples from families. These studies aim to identify genes that increase familial breast and colon cancer risk.

Munroe-Meyer Institute

- With $500,000 in funding from the Hattie B. Munroe Foundation, MMI started a neural motor development program. A collaboration involving the Magnetoencephalography (MEG) Lab at The Nebraska Medical Center, the Motion Analysis Lab at MMI and the MMI Neurogenetic Communication Disorders Lab, this new research program develops and evaluates new therapeutic approaches for children with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders.

School of Allied Health Professions

- The Physician Assistant Education program was awarded a $924,000 Health Resources and Services Administration grant to provide scholarships and educational support to students pursuing careers as physician assistants. The funding is part of a $30.1 million allocation under the Affordable Care Act for the Expansion of Physician Assistants Training.
- The SAHP class of 2010, consisting of 173 graduates from the school’s 11 health professions education programs, had a 100 percent first-time pass rate on certification and licensure examinations.
- James Somers, Ph.D., director of the physician assistant education program, has announced plans to retire in the spring of 2012. Dr. Somers has been with the program for 30 years and has served as director since 1991.
- The medical nutrition education program has been approved to offer the master of science and/or the doctor of philosophy degrees in medical nutrition through the Medical Sciences Interdepartmental Area graduate program.
UNMC Goes to Denver: Alumni Outreach Event in the Mile High City

On April 20, the UNMC Alumni Association hosted the “UNMC Goes to Denver” outreach event for graduates of all UNMC professions in the Denver area. The event, hosted at the Embassy Suites-Downtown, drew more than 50 alumni for hors d’oeuvres, refreshments and the opportunity to chat with fellow alumni.

Also on hand were John Reinhardt, D.D.S, dean of the College of Dentistry; Kyle Meyer, Ph.D., senior associate dean of the School of Allied Health Professions; and Sarah Thompson, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Nursing, along with representatives from the University of Nebraska Foundation. Attendees heard presentations from the deans about exciting developments on campus.

Upcoming outreach events include: a Husker tailgate party in Laramie, Wyo., in September and outreach events in Phoenix in the winter of 2012.

New Alumni Chapter Grows through Endowment Fund

The College of Public Health Alumni Chapter, founded in the fall of 2009, recently received a membership boost when a generous donor created the New Graduate Endowment Fund that pays for annual memberships for students as they graduate. Starting in December 2010 and going forward, the donor will pay memberships for each graduating student who joins the chapter.

The chapter continues to grow, thanks to the December 2010 and May 2011 graduating classes, which have increased membership more than 50 percent. To capitalize on this success and bring members together, the chapter hosted its second annual new graduate brunch on April 30 at the Hilton Omaha. Twenty College of Public Health alumni and their guests attended.

UNMC Alumni Association hosts “Showdown in O-Town”

More than 100 UNMC alumni and friends gathered May 10 for the “Showdown in O-Town,” the Creighton vs. Nebraska baseball game at the new TD Ameritrade Park in downtown Omaha. The event included dinner at Goodnights, a pizza bar across the street from the stadium. The event replaces the “Blast at the ‘Blatt” which retired along with Rosenblatt Stadium. Jim Reilly M’85, won a competition to rename the event.

The Huskers rallied to score eight runs in three of the last four innings, but fell short to Creighton, 9-8.

Nominate AOA members by Sept. 30

The Alpha Omega Alpha Committee that considers alumni nominees welcomes your recommendation for membership into the society. Two alumni members may be elected each year by the local chapter and the nominee must have graduated from UNMC at least 10 years ago. Please send your recommendation and a current curriculum vitae of your candidate to Vicki Hamm, 985524 Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE 68198-5524. Deadline is Sept. 30. Please check the AOA web site, www.unmc.edu/com/aoa.htm, to see if your nominee is already a member.
College of Medicine Alumni Chapter Awards Grants & Allocations, Scholarships

To support UNMC College of Medicine (COM) education programs and student activities, the COM Alumni Chapter recently awarded $21,850 in funding for seven projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COM Class of 2011</td>
<td>Support the Graduation Week Banquet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARING Student-Run Clinics</td>
<td>Help pay salaries of essential support staff at clinics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Term for M3 Students</td>
<td>Support full day of accelerated classes during June Term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency Roundtable</td>
<td>Support the annual presentation by residency directors to M4 students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM Externship Program</td>
<td>Provide Nebraska Medical Center summer externship stipends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COM Summer Research Program</td>
<td>Provide funds for the Medical Student Summer Research program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residency Symposium</td>
<td>Help support arrangements for keynote speaker, Dr. Rajani Katta.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The College of Medicine Alumni Association also recently approved $80,000 in scholarship funds for current students. The Chapter will award four $5,000 scholarships for each class year.

Anatomy Department seeks human skull models

The Anatomy Department is seeking donations from alumni of human skull models used for education. If you have a skull model or set of bones left from student days, perhaps stored in an attic or basement, the Anatomy Department would welcome a donation. The estimated value can be provided should you wish to declare the gift for tax purposes. To make a donation, contact R.T. Binhammer, Ph.D., professor of anatomy, at rtbinham@unmc.edu.

The Financial Institution For Health Care Professionals

Created by health care professionals

Are you a Metro Credit Union member? Chances are pretty good the people you work with are. Why? Because they know a good deal when they see one. They also know that Metro was created by UNMC health care professionals over 60 years ago.

Better rates on loans, better rates on savings, fewer fees and unmatched service make Metro the better choice.

Become a Metro member today, open a new checking account with Direct Deposit, and we’ll put $50.00 into your new account.

Watch for our newest office coming to 72nd & Ames in July!
RSTE Welcomes New Grads

As part of its recruitment effort, the RSTE Alumni Chapter hosted the second annual graduation breakfast for students in May. The RSTE Alumni Chapter awarded all graduates a one-year complimentary membership in the alumni chapter. Also attending the breakfast were Kyle Meyer, Ph.D., senior associate dean of the School of Allied Health Professions, and guest speaker Troy Stockman, RSTE’93.

CLS Alumni Chapter: Get Social

In February and March, the Clinical Laboratory Science/Medical Technology Alumni Chapter hosted two social events—one each in Lincoln and Omaha. These gatherings served as an opportunity for alumni to learn more about the chapter’s activities and enjoy the company of their classmates.

PAs on the National Stage

In May, the Physician Assistant Alumni Chapter partnered with Union College and the Nebraska Academy of Physician Assistants to host a reception at the American Academy of Physician Assistants 2011 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas. More than 100 UNMC alumni attended this event, representing UNMC and the PA program with great distinction.

Nursing and Medicine Alumni Honor Health Care Professionals in Scottsbluff

As a “thank you” to health care professionals serving the Scottsbluff community, the alumni chapters for the colleges of medicine and nursing hosted receptions for physicians and nurses who live and work in the Scottsbluff area. The events, held on consecutive evenings, featured visits from then Interim Dean of the College of Medicine Rod Markin, M.D., Ph.D., and then Dean of the College of Nursing Virginia Tilden, D.N.Sc. The visit marked a farewell trip for Dr. Tilden, who stepped down from her position in July after serving eight years as dean.

Pharmacy Alumni Chapter Celebrates Students

The College of Pharmacy Alumni Chapter has established a proud tradition of supporting College of Pharmacy students. One of the many ways the chapter develops relationships with these students is through social events. This spring, the chapter hosted the P3 send-off party prior to rotations and the P4 graduation celebration. In addition, the chapter hosted a coffee bar for students at the College of Pharmacy, where students had lattes, coffee and smoothies between classes. These events provide opportunities for students to network with alumni and establish a connection to the work of the chapter. It’s not all fun though; the chapter also awards scholarships to selected students each year.
**Medicine**

*Marian Cosand M’57*
Oro Valley, Ariz., keeps indoors during the hot summer. He says, “we are in good health considering our age.”

*Carol Swarts M’59*
Crestview Hills, Ky., was awarded an honorary degree from the Board of Regents at Northern Kentucky University in appreciation of her lifetime commitment to improving the lives of countless others. For 50 years, she served as a “true medical missionary/ambassador” throughout the United States, abroad and in Third World countries.

*Joel Johnson M’61*
Kearney, Neb., received the Kearney Sertoma Club’s Service to Mankind Award.

*Robert Hamilton M’63*
Godfrey, Ill., was re-elected to the Illinois State Medical Society Board of Trustees during its annual meeting. Also, he and wife Charlene were honored by Riverbend Head Start and Family Services with the “Circle of Care Award For 2011” for their spirit of caring through their profession, volunteerism and philanthropy.

*Kathleen Bliese-Walk M’67*
Atkinson, Neb., recently became part of the West Holt Medical Services’ staff and was elected delegate of the Nebraska Academy of Family Physicians.

*Loren A. Olson M’68*
Des Moines, Iowa, is a psychiatrist in private practice. He recently published a book titled “Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight.”

*Alvin Lee Schlichtemeier M’69*
Bryan, Texas, was inducted as a Fellow in the American College of Radiology in May. He is the medical director of radiation oncology at St. Joseph Regional Cancer Center.

*Joseph P. Drozza Jr. M’70*
Chesterfield, Mo., was elected to the Board of Trustees of the American College of Cardiology. He is director of outcomes research at Sisters of Mercy Health System, a four-state regional hospital system headquartered in St. Louis. He retired from Centene as chief medical officer three years ago, but couldn’t turn down the research job. His wife says he is “flunking” retirement.

*Van Vahle M’70*
Seward, Neb., received the 2010-2011 Marion D. and Theodore H. Koeffel, Jr., M.D. Outstanding Preceptor in Rural Family Medicine Award from UNMC for outstanding teaching and mentoring of medical students while also serving as an exceptional community physician.

*Gary Conell M’71*
North Platte, Neb., was honored by UNMC with the J.G. “Jack” Elliott Award for his student mentoring and advocacy to improve the quality of health care in Nebraska. Conell has been a family physician in North Platte for almost 40 years and is the director for the community’s UNMC Rural Family Residency Training Program.

*Jose Rodriguez II M’74*
Quincy, Ill., was inducted as a Fellow in the American College of Radiology in May.

*Harry Salyards M’74 and Phylis Salyards M’74*
Hastings, Neb., after practicing together in the Hastings area for 33 years, the couple recently retired and is eager to pursue their hobbies.

*J. Michael Adams M’75*
Fremont, Neb., was inducted as a Fellow in the American College of Physicians in April.

*Gene Stohs M’75*
Lincoln, Neb., was inducted into the Nebraska Baseball Hall of Fame Class of 2011.

*C. Stratton Warden M’76*
Elizabethtown, Ky., retired from general surgery in 2005 and was recently re-elected to his third term as chairman of the board of directors for ZirMed, Inc., a healthcare IT company.

*Peter Whitted M’79*
Omaha, Neb., will take over as chairman of the University of Nebraska Foundation Board of Directors in October.

*James Linder M’80*
Omaha, Neb., was appointed senior associate to the president for innovation and economic competitiveness and president of the University Technology Development Corp. by the University of Nebraska. He is CEO of UNeMed, UNMC’s technology transfer arm.

*Harris A. Frankel M’86*
Omaha, Neb., received the eHealth Physician Advocate of the Year Award from the eHealth Initiative. He was cited for his leadership and commitment to technological advancements leading to the implementation of the Nebraska Health Information Initiative, Nebraska’s statewide integrator for health information exchange.

**Nursing**

*Ken Vettel M’89*
Grand Island, Neb., partnered with Tim Jones, D.D.S., as co-founder of Doc’s Wildlife Blends, LLC., to create a line of minerals, feeds and food plot blends to attract and grow healthier animals.

*Patrik Johansson M’97*
Omaha, Neb., was appointed by President Barack Obama to the Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, Integrative and Public Health. The advisory group is part of the National Prevention Council, which was created through the Affordable Care Act. He is director of UNMC’s Rural Health Education Network.

*Michele Mulligan-Witt M’98*
Valentine, Neb., received the Supervising Physician of the Year Award from the Nebraska Academy of Physician Assistants at their annual awards ceremony in Kearney.

*David Weeks M’99*
Austin, Texas, has been appointed to the faculty of the School of Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Branch.

*Amanda McKinney M’01*
Beatrice, Neb., received the Young Alumnus Award from her undergraduate alma mater, Doane College, for her commitment to excellence in her career. Since 2006, she has practiced at the Women’s Health Center in Beatrice.

*Marcus Snow M’02*
Omaha, Neb., joined Westroads Medical Group in 2009 and works in the new rheumatology clinic in Columbus, Neb.
Chandra (Boshart) Kuhl N’04
Omaha, Neb., received the DAISY Award (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) for the month of April at the UNMC wound clinic in Omaha.

Sabrina Reed N’08
Lincoln, Neb., joined Lancaster Manor Rehabilitation Center as the director of Nursing Services.

Pharmacy

Patrick Woster P’87
Charleston, S.C., has been named professor and South Carolina Center for Economic Excellence Endowed Chair in Medicinal Chemistry at the Medical University of South Carolina College of Pharmacy. His appointment is in the department of pharmaceutical and biomedical sciences.

Troyn Ruffner P’98
Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy.

Troy Ruffner P’98
Plattsmouth, Neb., was honored by the Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce as 2010 Businessman of the Year. In 2003, he opened Ruffner Pharmacy in Plattsmouth, Neb., and in 2007 added another location in Glenwood, Iowa.

Dentistry

Richard Schilling D’57
Loveland, Colo., published “Portraits of the Prairie: the Land that Inspired Willa Cather,” a collection of his watercolor paintings and ink sketches depicting Nebraska scenes that relate to Catherland. Selected by Publishers Weekly as one of the top 10 books of 2011 (art and architecture category), the book’s paintings and sketches are now part of a traveling exhibit in Nebraska and Colorado. The book can be purchased through the University of Nebraska Press.

George Schlothauer D’69
Gering, Neb., now retired from private practice, was honored by the Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska for helping start its dental center. The center served more than 3,000 patients in 2010.

Sami Webb D’00
Scottsbluff, Neb., owner of Webb Orthodontics, has been named the 2011 Nebraska Dental Association Outstanding Young Professional.

Tim Jones D’02
Aurora, Neb., joined Ken Vettel, D.D.S., as co-founder of Doc’s Wildlife Blends, LLC, which blends science and wildlife nutrition to attract and grow healthier animals.

Matthew Ames D’07
Fargo, N.D., taught orthodontics at UNMC before he joined Harvey Orthodontics of Moorhead and Detroit Lakes, Minn.

Physical Therapy

Patricia Hageman PT’79
Omaha, Neb., was appointed to a three-year term on an external advisory committee for the Health Resource Services Administration by Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of Health and Human Services.

Mike Bartels PT’88
Papillion, Neb., recently was certified in postural restoration.

Jeffrey Creal PT’88
Lincoln, Neb., earned his doctorate in physical therapy from the University of South Dakota. He has worked for Lincoln Physical Therapy Associates since 1994.

Erika Lee PT’95
Omaha, Neb., in July 2010, founded Prestige Premium Homecare which provides companionship and personal services to individuals in their homes.

Jason Paladino PT’96
Peoria, Ariz., moved to Peoria to start a church six years ago. He is clinical director for Physiotherapy Associates in central Phoenix. He has three children, ages 12, 10 and 7 and likes to bike, hike and swim.

Lana Svien PT’02
Vermillion, S.D., received the Dr. Ronnie Leavitt Award for Leadership in the Promotion of Social Responsibility in Physical Therapy by the Global Health Student Interest Group in recognition of her work as professor and chairwoman of physical therapy at the University of South Dakota.

Physician Assistant

Douglas Hadden PA’95
Bridgeport, Neb., joined the staff at Garden County Health Services in Oshkosh, Neb., in addition to working at Quick Care Medical Services in Scottsbluff, Neb., as a physician assistant and clinic manager.

Diane Fitch PA’02
Sioux City, Iowa, recently became a part of Siouxland Community Health Center’s medical staff.

Amanda Bond PA’10
Bellevue, Neb., is an orthopedic surgery physician assistant with Nebraska Orthopaedic Associates.

April Hansen PA’10
Omaha, Neb., joined Adult and Pediatric Urology.

Linnea Hopp PA’10
Omaha, Neb., upon graduation, accepted a position in Marinette, Wis., at the Bay Area Medical Center Heart and Vascular Center.

Kelly Shackey PA’10
Lee’s Summit, Mo., began her career as the new physician assistant with the Johnson County Medical Center and Johnson County Hospital in Tecumseh, Neb.

Lea Wells PA’10
St. Paul, Neb., recently joined the Oakland Mercy Hospital staff as a physician assistant. She sees patients in the Mercy clinics both in Tekamah and Hooper.

Clinical Laboratory Science

Gerard “Jerry” Klein BMT’72
Rock Springs, Wyo., took over as CEO at Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County in January.
Rachel Hippen CLS’10
Crete, Neb., began work at Crete Area Medical Center in May 2010. She helped start a microbiology department in CAMC’s laboratory.

Radiation Science Technology Education
*Troy Stockman RSTE’93
Papillion, Neb., became the CEO of the Nebraska Spine Hospital in 2010.

Public Health
*Molly Schlife PH’10
Omaha, Neb., upon graduation began work at CityMatCH, the national membership organization for urban Maternal and Child Health professionals. She works on two major projects: the development of online learning modules focused on “data USE” and a new project in the area of substance-exposed pregnancy prevention, which she will discuss at her first national conference presentation.

In Remembrance…
Robert Ellsworth Lovgren M’39
Harlingen, Texas, Feb. 11, 2011
*Guy Matson M’41
Lincoln, Neb., March 16, 2011
@Helen (LeBaron) Eastlack N’45
Lincoln, Neb., March 6, 2011
William Graham M’45
Omaha, Neb., June 15, 2011
Roger Boudlen M’46
Mesa, Ariz., April 3, 2011
Richard E. Geesaman M’46
Boulder, Colo., May 23, 2011
Charles “Chuck” F. Heider Jr. M’47
North Platte, Neb., March 30, 2011
Samuel H. Perry M’47
Omaha, Neb., Jan. 3, 2011
*Donald B. Keyser P’51
Omaha, Neb., March 12, 2011

Colin B. Schack M’51
Omaha, Neb., April 2, 2011
James E. Thayer M’51
Sidney, Neb., Feb. 10, 2011
Carl Aschoff M’52
Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April 2, 2011
*Yloene Ione (Black) Joselyn N’53
Crystal, Minn., Feb. 18, 2011
Leslie Grace M’54
Blair, Neb., Oct. 15, 2010
Marilyn McConnell N’54
Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 27, 2010
Harold E. Most D’55
Littleton, Colo., Dec. 24, 2010
Thomas M. Moriarty D’56
Omaha, Neb., Feb. 15, 2011
Raymond L. Sprecher D’56
Pittsburgh, Pa., Feb. 19, 2011
Donald Wilkinson M’56
Minatare, Neb., April 16, 2011
Mark E. Crawford M’57
Omaha, Neb., Sept. 17, 2010
Robert K. Fenster D’57
Richmond, Va., Jan. 26, 2008
*Lila Moffat N’57
Oshkosh, Neb., April 25, 2011
Henry Cech D’58
Lincoln, Neb., June 20, 2011
Verlyn Anderson N’60
Concord, Neb., March 11, 2011
Donald R. Otis D’61
Pueblo, Colo., April 12, 2011
Franklin Pratt M’64
Temple, Texas, April 30, 2011
David J. Weingart M’64
Paradise Valley, Ariz., June 19, 2011
Fredrick William Kottmeyer D’65
Broken Bow, Neb., Feb. 21, 2011
Arthur Croft D’68
Omaha, Neb., May 28, 2011

UNMC alumni at Balad Airbase in Iraq, from left, Capt. Casey Bowen (USAF), M’08; Col. John Aita (US Army), M’01; and Maj. Amber Tyler, (USAF), M’03. Col. Aita is the son of Virginia Aita, Ph.D., associate professor in the UNMC College of Public Health.
Births

Elizabeth Hermsen P’01
Omaha, Neb., and husband Michael welcomed son Garrison Paul to their family on March 15, 2011.

Maria Michaelis M’01
Omaha, Neb., and husband Mark welcomed Leyton Paige on Jan. 17, 2011. She joins big sisters Lexi, 6, and Laini, 2.

Dana Jensen P’03
Bennett, Neb., and her husband, Clark, welcomed a son, Austin Reid, on Aug. 4, 2011. He joins big brothers Christian and Tyler.

Josh Gortemaker M’04
Grand Island, Neb., and wife, Julie, welcomed son, Jacob John, on Feb. 4, 2011.

Joshua Hite P’06
Omaha, Neb., and wife, Shannon, welcomed son, Harrison Wesley, to their family on Jan. 20, 2011.

Tessa Wells PT’06
Kearney, Neb., and husband, Nate, welcomed daughter, Katie, to their family on Oct. 10, 2010.

Marriages

Stacy Heller DH’09 and Steven Benne
Pender, Neb., were married May 21, 2011.

Sarah Janecek PT’09 and Jed Droge PT’10
Cozad, Neb., were married July 3, 2010.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Welcome receptions introducing Bradley E. Britigan, M.D.
New dean of the College of Medicine
Sept. 22
Scottsbluff Country Club, Scottsbluff, Neb.
6 – 7:30 p.m.

UNMC Alumni Husker tailgate party
Nebraska vs. Wyoming
Sept. 24
Laramie, Wyo.

College of Nursing Interdisciplinary Guest Speaker
Larry K. Michaelsen, Ph.D., University of Central Missouri
Oct. 19
Getting Beyond Covering Content: A Key to Student Motivation and Success
Oct. 20
Designing Group Work that Really Works & Turning Good Group Assignments into Great Ones
Continuing nursing education available
www.unmc.edu/motivation2011

Latta Lecture
Oct. 21
Brian Druker, M.D., director of the Oregon Health and Science University Knight Cancer Institute and chairman of leukemia research.
“Imatinib as a Paradigm of Targeted Cancer Therapies”
Eppley Science Hall Amphitheater
Noon
Continuing education available

UNMC Alumni Reunion Weekend
Oct. 21 – 22
UNMC Campus & Embassy Suites Downtown/ Old Market, Omaha
Reunion - Welcome Back Lunch with the Deans
Oct. 21
1 p.m.
Storz Pavilion

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31% of donors supporting UNMC during the campaign are UNMC graduates.

12,273 individuals have made donations to UNMC during the campaign. Approximately 54% are first-time donors to UNMC.

95% of UNMC students apply for financial assistance.

new funds have been established during the campaign to support students, faculty, facilities and programs at UNMC.

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School of Allied Health Professions

University of Nebraska Foundation
Several years ago, Sue Pope waited in a clinic room to be seen by a physician. When the doctor walked in the room, Pope took one look at him, shook her head and laughed.

The doctor was a former UNMC student whom Pope remembered as being quite the joker in his medical school days.

“In my job, you get to know the students on a pretty personal level,” Pope said. “It can lead to some interesting interactions when we see each other in the real world.”

In her more than 40 years in the College of Medicine, Pope’s known all kinds of students — jokers, ultra serious types and thousands who fall in somewhere in the middle.

“It’s to the point that I have seen former students retired and their children are coming through medical school now,” Pope said. “That makes me feel old.”

Her official title is academic affairs program coordinator but her de facto role is as the “den mother” of the college.

From the students’ first day in the gross anatomy lab all the way through to Match Day and commencement in their fourth year, Pope makes sure their important paperwork and procedural activities are completed.

“Sue was great,” said Michael Schafer, M.D., an Omaha area gastroenterologist and a 2002 College of Medicine alumnus. “She took good care of us and made sure we got all our I’s dotted and T’s crossed.”

Pope has seen a lot change at the college since 1970.

About 5,000 students have become physicians. She has worked under eight full-time deans, including UNMC Chancellor Harold M. Maurer, M.D., and the recently arrived Bradley Britigan, M.D.

She remembers when fourth-year medical students used to attend a champagne breakfast before Match Day.

“Everyone was, should I say, ‘very relaxed’ when the ceremony began,” Pope said.

In 2008, she helped move the college into its first full-time home, the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education.

In fact, it could be argued that Pope is one of the few constants in the college and she wants it to stay that way for quite a while.

“I’m having fun and I still find my job rewarding,” Pope said. “To know that I play a part in helping these students become doctors is still important to me.

“I’ve made it past 40 years and I think it would be neat to go ahead and make it 50.”
UNMC Alumni Weekend

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- Welcome Back Luncheon
- Evening Class Parties

Saturday Activities:
- “Prescription for a Legacy” Lunch
- Awards Banquet & Celebration

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