Alumni News

Class Notes

'40s At 85 years old, Roy Charles Monsour, MD '43, continues to practice family medicine full-time, still making house calls from Monsour Medical Center—the Jeannette, Pennsylvania, hospital he cofounded in 1952 with his brothers, Howard, William, and Robert Monsour (MD '43). Known as “Dr. Roy” to his patients, Monsour and his wife, Cicely Monsour, recently received the “Heart of Westmoreland,” a humanitarian award from the American Heart Association for their efforts to improve health throughout their home county.

'50s P. Kahler Hench, MD '58, is a senior consultant emeritus at the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, in La Jolla, California. Last year he led a delegation of rheumatologists to Cuba through the People to People Ambassador Program. For eight days, he and his colleagues held conferences with Cuban rheumatologists. The Cuban doctors had little access to COX-2 anti-inflammatories, tumor necrosis factor antibodies, and other biologic response modifiers. Even so, Hench was impressed by the resourcefulness of the Cuban rheumatologists, noting they did a lot with what they had.

'60s James Theodore, MD '62, is now emeritus professor and acting chief of pulmonary medicine at Stanford University. Theodore completed his undergraduate math degree at Pitt on a football scholarship, then continued on to the School of Medicine. He later enlisted for two years in the 6570th US Air Force Toxic Hazards Division, where he researched environmental safety of capsules for the Aerospace Medical Research Lab in Ohio. In 1970, he started his career at Stanford. Since then, Theodore has published more than 200 journal articles and editorials on pulmonary disease and heart-lung transplantation.

'70s Howard Rabinowitz, MD '71, is a professor of family medicine at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia, where he also directs the Physician Shortage Area Program (PSAP). This program has been successful in increasing the supply and retention of rural physicians. Rabinowitz credits Pitt's late Ken Rogers with introducing him to issues of rural medicine. As a med student, Rabinowitz visited a Native American reservation for a nine-week rotation. With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, he's taking a sabbatical to write a book about the PSAP.

Diplomatic and Other Immunities

A woman becomes anemic at the US embassy in Paramaribo, Suriname. She’s a Jehovah’s Witness and refuses a blood transfusion. Richard Bruno, MD ’76, directing her care from his office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, must treat her unconventionally. He has her injected with the hormone Procrit, stimulating bone marrow to increase red blood cells. She is flown at a low altitude to a hospital in the States where she recovers.

Regional medical officer for the US Department of State Foreign Service, Bruno travels to South
because he had an opportunity to start a clinical informatics program, an area in which he had considerable knowledge after helping Jack Myers and Harry Pople start Pitt's Decision Systems Laboratory. He recalls getting his start in computers early on, as a high school student working at Westinghouse laboratories in Pittsburgh's east suburbs.

**'70s Residents and Fellows**

Bruce C. Herman (Internal Medicine Intern ’77–’78) maintains a private practice in internal medicine and geriatrics in Thiensville, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. He also lends his talents to the St. Mary's Hospital–Ozaukee Community Health Clinic, which treats the uninsured working poor. Says Herman: “We have individuals who are totally destitute, and health insurance is very expensive in Milwaukee. It doesn’t hurt to volunteer my time.”

**’80s Residents and Fellows**

Stacey L. Berg, MD ’85, has been a member for eight years of the Developmental Therapeutics Committee of the Pediatric Oncology Group and Children’s Oncology Group funded by the National Cancer Institute. The committee meets several times a year to determine what drugs will begin Phase I testing for cancer treatments. A pediatric hematologist and oncologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Berg is codirector of the Texas Children’s Cancer Center Clinical Pharmacology Group. To unwind from patients and the classroom, she enjoys kung fu and her garden.

**’80s Residents and Fellows**

Jonathan Jahr (Pediatric Anesthesiology Resident ’89, Anesthesiology Resident ’86–’89) is a professor of clinical anesthesiology and director of clinical research at the University of California–Los Angeles. For the past six years, he has been investigating blood substitutes for use in cardiopulmonary surgeries. During an operation, one approach to conserving patient’s blood is called acute normovolemic hemodilution (ANH), where some of the patient’s blood is removed at the beginning of the operation, replaced by fluids, and then returned to the patient at the end of the procedure. One drawback is the lack of oxygen-carrying replacement fluids. Blood substitutes may be an ideal bridge during this time and allow for far greater amounts of blood to be conserved.

**’90s Residents and Fellows**

Kaveh Ilkhanipour (Emergency Medicine Resident ’90, General Surgery Intern ’85–’86, MD ’85) is a clinical associate professor of emergency medicine for Pitt and physician quality manager at Mercy Hospital in Pittsburgh. He recently won the Caduceus Leadership Award, presented to a young physician at Mercy every four or five years. He has completed a study evaluating protocols in the emergency department involving acute coronary syndrome management. Ilkhanipour discovered that when emergency medicine physicians use a set criterion to identify patients at high risk for acute coronary syndrome they are more accurate at diagnosis. If the doctors then prescribe appropriate treatments, such as taking aspirin or new blood thinning drugs, complications, including heart attacks and sudden death, are less common.

Daniel Nuss (Cranial Base Surgery Fellow ’89–’93) is chair of the Department of Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans. He’s strengthening the department’s focus on basic and cancer research. Soon Nuss and colleagues will be conducting Phase I clinical trials on intraoperative cytotoxic therapy, a technique they’ve developed for use during surgeries to remove head and neck cancers. Often in such surgeries, the tumor is disrupted, causing cancerous cells to spill into the body. In time, these cells can cause the cancer to recur (sometimes in a form that is more aggressive). Nuss believes that flushing the wounds with a chemotherapy agent prevents the spread, and his theory has thus far proved correct in tests on animals.

Judith Anne Lucas (Pediatric Resident ’91–’94) is an assistant professor in the pediatrics department at Children’s Hospital at the Albany Medical Center in New York. She has been in practice for seven years and recently started part-time so she can rear her 18-month-old twins. Since 1997, Lucas has collaborated on a double-blind clinical trial evaluating the nutritional status of children with HIV, for which the results are being calculated. She recalls her time in Pittsburgh fondly, noting that she nearly cried as she watched Three Rivers Stadium imploded on television. —MH, KM

**The Way We Are: Class of ’52**

Robert Holmes (MD ’52) hit a grand slam, or at least that’s what fly-fishermen say. For 20 years Holmes, now a retired ob/gyn in Titusville, Pennsylvania, and his wife, Martha Holmes, have traveled to the South Pacific, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere to hunt and fish. Along the way, Holmes has collected trophies ranging from an elephant and a buffalo to a brown bear and a leopard. The Holmeses recently booked a fishing expedition on the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico, where Robert Holmes tackled fly-fishing’s greatest challenge, a grand slam: In one day he caught a permit, bonefish, and a tarpon.

His classmate Thomas J. Tredici (Res ’57, MD ’52) is a civilian ophthalmologist and flight surgeon instructor at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine, Brooks Air Force Base, near San Antonio, Texas. He once headed the school’s ophthalmology department and has taught more than 12,000 flight surgeons while keeping pilots who developed eye problems in the sky. After retiring as a colonel in the US Air Force, Tredici remained on the base as a civilian instructor to stay connected with the department he spent much of his professional life building. Scalpels aside, Tredici likes to cut a rug. He and his wife footstrut, rumba, and waltz.

Like Tredici, Samuel B. Challinor (MD ’52) served his country. He was an enlisted man in the army during one of the bloodiest battles of World War II. For some 100 days in 1944, Challinor dug into the beach near the Italian town of Anzio, water bubbling up in the trench, scooping into everything around him. German troops, perched above the Allied invaders, shelled them repeatedly, killing 6,000 beached troops. “I’m lucky to be alive,” he says. Eventually he made it home safely and returned to his studies. After earning his M.D. from Pitt and finishing a
residency at Shadyside, Challinor set up a general practice, soon switching to internal medicine. He retired in 1992 to become medical director of an insurance company known today as United Healthcare. Since retiring again in 1996, he spends much of his time golfing, traveling, and backwater fishing in the shallow shoals of the Indian River in Florida.

Herbert Tauberg (M.D. ’52), organizer of the Class of ’52 reunion, is a semiretired orthopaedic surgeon and now works in occupational medicine for the U.S. Post Office in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He planned several events around Pittsburgh on October 25 and 26, including a tour of the UPMC Sports Performance Complex. No word of any fishing contests on the Mon, though.

FROM LEFT: Linda Thompson (M.D. ’78), Dorothy Christie Scott (M.D. ’56), Jeanette South-Paul (M.D. ’79), Lydia Saris-Mechenbier (M.D. ’81), and Betty Bradley (M.D. ’41)

WISDOM GLEANED

About 30 years ago, Margaret Ragni took out a sheet of paper. She drew a line down the center. Concerned about her future, she listed the pros and cons of becoming a PhD or an M.D. She worried if she went into general practice she would miss a special piece of herself—the researcher who is creative, inquisitive, fun. Then, a mentor investigator took her along on rounds. Ragni, M.D. ’75, now the director of the Hemophilia Center of Western Pennsylvania and a professor of medicine at Pitt, was thrilled to learn that doctors could do research and also care for patients.

Ragni shared her story, as did other alumnae, as part of an anthology of voices speaking out about life choices and challenges at the second annual Women in Medicine Luncheon in the spring. About 20 first- and second-year students gathered in Scaife Hall to garner wisdom from Ragni, Betty Bradley (M.D. ’41), Lydia Saris-Mechenbier (M.D. ’81), Jeanette South-Paul (M.D. ’79), Linda Thompson (M.D. ’78), and the now late Dorothy Christie Scott (M.D. ’56). — KM

NOTE: THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, A PRIMARY SOURCE FOR DEATH NOTICES OF OUR ALUMNI, NO LONGER PRINTS AN OBITUARY LIST. WE ENCOURAGE YOU, MORE THAN EVER NOW, TO LET US KNOW ABOUT ALUMNI WHO DIED RECENTLY. (ON THE INSIDE FRONT COVER YOU’LL FIND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE MAGAZINE.)
Snow and ice made Highland Park hills hostile that day. When Paul Paris was in 10th grade, his father, Robert Paris, fell. He lost his footing, and his body surrendered to gravity, crashing to the ground. Immediately, there were just some bruises, sore muscles, tender flesh. Nothing a few aspirin couldn’t fix. But Robert Paris, known to many as “Dear” for his pleasant disposition, was taking Coumadin to treat coronary heart disease. No one mentioned that the combination of aspirin and Coumadin would make his blood too thin. No one mentioned that it could cause him to bleed internally.

A few days later, Robert Paris woke up looking horribly pale. His wife, Ruth Paris, called the police. Before anyone arrived, he died. “Dear” was 52.

It was clear to teenage Paul Paris that his father’s death was a result of someone’s error. He would be a doctor, he decided. He could do a better job. But he hadn’t been a great student, so he worked harder, pushing himself to make the grades. He went to college at the University of Pittsburgh, was accepted to the School of Medicine, and graduated in 1976. Twenty-one years later, Paris was appointed chair of Pitt’s Department of Emergency Medicine. In June, he became president of the Medical Alumni Association.

After he graduated, Paris left the Pittsburgh area for an internal medicine residency and an emergency medicine fellowship. He returned in 1981, joining Ron Stewart, founder of the Center for Emergency Medicine of Western Pennsylvania, to head the University of Pittsburgh-affiliated residency in emergency medicine, one of the first in the country.

In crafting the program, Paris wanted his residents exposed to a variety of experiences. No room for mistakes. So he rotated them through several hospitals. He taught them to always have a back-up plan (in case intubation doesn’t work, for example, better be prepared to do a cricothyrotomy). He sought their feedback. At the same time, he was busy implementing Stewart’s ideas, like creating a helicopter system and coordinating efforts among hospitals and ambulance services.

Pitt would become one of the few programs in the country that sent residents on calls with paramedics. Then, like now, Pitt ED residents rode in the STAT MedEvac helicopters. They learned to treat someone trapped in a car or under farm machinery. They learned how long they should treat someone at the scene before rushing the patient to the hospital.

“You see how different it is to treat cardiac arrest in a bingo hall,” says Ron Roth, medical director of Pittsburgh Emergency Medical Services, chief of emergency medical services at Pitt, and former resident under Paris.

“And bingo doesn’t stop for anything.”

Not every novel idea played out well. Roth recalls an argument the residents had with Paris and Stewart over their uniforms. Polyester pants, clip-on ties, and vests—residents would wear these outfits, their bosses insisted, to portray a professional image. Yet few rookie residents had flown in helicopters before, so many would get queasy, rushing to the bathroom upon arrival at the hospital, ruining that first impression anyway.

Uniforms aside, Vincent Verdile, who completed his residency in 1987 and recently became dean of the Albany Medical College, says it was Paris’ energy and leadership that made the program such a success: “He allowed for our creativity, but he was watchful and would give us guidance.”

“Instead of just treating the results of poor health, it seems that emergency medicine can keep people healthy.”

When Paris is in the ED, it’s not unusual to see him encouraging a patient to quit smoking. He’s looking out for the many who end up at the hospital because they don’t have a personal doctor. “In general, health-care systems are designed to treat the ill and injured, but they’ve sort of failed to keep people healthy,” says Paris. “Instead of just treating the results of poor health, it seems that emergency medicine can help in a variety of ways to keep people healthy.”

Another Paris initiative is a van sent to Pittsburgh neighborhoods to conduct health screenings. He has enlisted paramedics in his preventative medicine cause as well, instructing them to ask every patient they treat, “Have you had a flu shot?”

In Paris’ world, every patient is dear.