

for TUFTS MEDICINE

Drug development center celebrates 30 years at Tufts

The Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development will celebrate its 30th anniversary in February. In honor of its founder, **Louis Lasagna, M.D.**, who died in 2003, the center's research library will be renamed the Louis Lasagna Library of Drug Development Science and Policy.

In addition to directing the Center for the Study of Drug Development from 1984 to 2002, Lasagna was dean of the Sackler School of Graduate Biomedical Sciences at Tufts from 1984 to 2002.

Lasagna was a pioneer in clinical trial methodology, medical ethics and regulatory science. He was often called the "father of clinical pharmacology," largely a result of his considerable teaching and research in the field following the publication of his groundbreaking article in the *American Journal of Medicine* in 1954 in which he showed that taking a pill, even one containing no medication, can have a "placebo effect." In 1997, *The Lancet* ranked that research among the world's 27 most notable achievements in a medical canon dating back to the time of Hippocrates.

He established the nation's first division of pharmacology at Johns Hopkins in 1954. As a faculty member at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, he founded the Center for the Study of Drug Development, which he moved to Tufts in 1976, when he arrived as a faculty member at the School of Medicine. **Kenneth I Kaitin, Ph.D.**, is the center's current director.

Lasagna's congressional testimony in 1962 was instrumental in establishing the efficacy requirement for new drugs in the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. He is also remembered as a passionate teacher, and an endowed professorship in pharmacology and experimental therapeutics at Tufts is named in his honor.

Compassionate physician

Paul Jodka, M.D., assistant professor of medicine and a member of the clinical faculty at Baystate Medical Center, received this year's Kenneth B. Schwartz Center Compassionate Caregiver Award. An ICU attending physician at Baystate, Jodka, M91, was one of 60 Massachusetts caregivers nominated for the award.

Nominated by his colleagues for his unfailing patience and respect for his colleagues, students and patients and their families, Jodka helped create Baystate's "Going Home" program, which eases the transition from the ICU to home at the end of a patient's life. "My patients and their families have taught me many lessons about the need for clear, timely and honest communication, about the importance of being fully available as a human being in times of crisis," Jodka said.

HERE & THERE

Henry (Rick) A. D'Angelo, M.D., assistant professor of medicine and a member of the clinical faculty at Newton-Wellesley Hospital, has been appointed chair of family medicine at the hospital. *Boston Magazine* recently named him one of the top five local family medicine physicians. He succeeds **Robert L. Dickman, M.D.**, clinical associate professor of medicine, who continues to chair the family medicine department at Tufts.

Charlotte Kuperwasser, Ph.D., assistant professor of anatomy, won the 5th annual Eastern Cooperative Oncology Group/Aventis Young Investigator Award at the group's annual meeting in November. She presented her work on a novel mouse model of estrogen promotion of estrogen-negative breast cancer.

Mary Y. Lee, M.D., dean for educational affairs and associate provost, attended the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Tunisia, in November, when she participated on the panel, "The Growing International OpenCourseWare (OCW) Movement." More than 100 leaders of the global education community attended the summit. Tufts launched its own OCW offerings last summer (<http://ocw.tufts.edu>), and Lee stewards the university-wide collaboration that, she says, "is helping to develop open source learning tools that will impact the way students around the world both access information and learn."

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT

The American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists presented its 2005 Research Achievement Award in Clinical Sciences to **David J. Greenblatt, M.D.**, at its annual meeting on November 6. Greenblatt is the Louis Lasagna Professor and chair of pharmacology and experimental therapeutics at Tufts. The author of more than 700 original research publications, Greenblatt investigates the mechanisms of altered drug disposition and response in old age and the factors that modulate the response to psychiatric medications.

ACOG PRESIDENT

Kenneth L. Noller, M.D., professor and chair of obstetrics and gynecology at Tufts, has been elected president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The Louis E. Phaneuf Teaching and Research Professor of Gynecology, Noller investigates the effects of diethylstilbestrol (DES) given during pregnancy to prevent miscarriage. In the 1970s, Noller and his colleagues determined that the daughters of women who took DES faced increased risk of infertility, rare forms of vaginal cancer and increased pregnancy losses themselves. Noller and his colleagues also found that DES mothers had a 30 percent higher risk of developing breast cancer than women who did not take the drug. He also is principal investigator for the Ovarian Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Study, a study of 3,400 women across the country funded by the National Cancer Institute in collaboration with the Gynecologic Oncology Group.

Taking the lead on influenza research

Two scientists in the Department of Public Health and Family Medicine are participating in groundbreaking interdisciplinary research on human immunity to influenza.

Elena N. Naumova, Ph.D., associate professor, and **Nina H. Fefferman, Ph.D.**, assistant research professor, will join colleagues from the Blood Center of Southeastern Wisconsin, the Medical College of Wisconsin and the University of Massachusetts Medical School as part of the NIH-funded Center on Translational Research in Human Immunology and Bioterrorism, a \$25 million enterprise.

Naumova is leading a team to develop conceptual and mathematical frameworks that describe complex immune responses on individual and population levels. Fefferman will build mathematical models to predict the dynamics of influenza and design tools to analyze changes in immune response. The Tufts researchers will be supported by \$3 million in NIH funding over five years.

Naumova and Fefferman also will serve as the lead investigators for the Tufts Initiative for the Forecasting and Modeling of Infectious Diseases (InForMID), a new program in public health and family medicine. InForMID is designed to improve biomedical and public health research through the development of these kinds of analytical and computational tools. InForMID offers training and hands-on experience for a wide range of professionals, and Naumova and Fefferman encourage students and faculty to join this interdisciplinary initiative.

Career advice

A program that gives Springfield, Mass., high school students hands-on experience in six medical fields is doing well in its second year at Baystate Medical Center, according to Baystate's community health planning consultant **Peter Blain**. More than 20 Baystate staffers volunteer to mentor 75 students in general medicine, pathology, pharmacology, medical imaging, pediatrics and nursing with the goal of kindling their interest in health-care careers.

The students visit the Tufts teaching hospital eight to 10 times during the school year. Blain expects the number of students and volunteers to grow, especially as Baystate expands the program into Springfield's middle and elementary schools.

FEEDBACK

The *Dean's Letter for Tufts Medicine* is published eight times a year by the Office of the Dean of Tufts University School of Medicine. We welcome comments and story ideas. Contact Editor Jacqueline Mitchell at jacqueline.mitchell@tufts.edu or 617.636.3602.

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