

Dean's Newsletter

June 13, 2005

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The Dean's Newsletter will be published intermittently during the summer months. Regular biweekly issues will resume after Labor Day.

Dr. Frank Longo Will Join Stanford as Next Chair of Neurology

I am very pleased to announce that Dr. Frank Longo will be joining Stanford as the next chair of the Department of Neurology; he succeeds Dr. Bill Mobley, who will remain as Director of the Neurosciences Institute at Stanford. Dr. Longo, who was identified through a national search, is currently the H. Houston Merritt Professor and Chair of Neurology at the University of North. Dr. Longo received his MD and PhD from the UCSD. Following an internship in Medicine at NYU, he trained as a resident in Neurology and Fellow in Neurobiology at UCSF. He was Professor (in residence) and Vice Chair of the Department of Neurology at UCSF. In 2001 he moved to UNC where he became Chair of Neurology. By every measure Dr. Longo did a spectacular job as Chair at UNC, building both the clinical and academic programs, recruiting excellent faculty and enhancing the visibility of the department in both the University and community.

Dr. Longo is an internationally recognized investigator and an outstanding teacher and mentor. Indeed he has won numerous teaching awards as well as considerable praise for his research and clinical contributions. Importantly he is also a superb leader with skills that he has demonstrated in numerous settings, most recently at UCSF and UNC. I am enormously pleased to welcome Dr. Longo to Stanford and am confident that he will play a major role in neurology, neurosciences and our broader school and university initiatives. Frank will be joined by his wife Anne, a Stanford alumna and by their two children, Sophia and Daniel. Anne played a major role in the development activities at UNC. We will look forward to welcoming the Longo family to Stanford.

Commencement 2005

June 11-12th marked Commencement Weekend at Stanford. We held our School of Medicine commencement exercises on Saturday June 11th on the Dean's Lawn where

we announced the graduation of 63 students receiving the MD degree, 61 receiving PhD degrees, 7 receiving PhD/MD degrees and 28 receiving Master degrees. For each graduate this represented the culmination of a long and challenging sojourn – albeit one that only ends with new beginnings – as postdoctoral fellows or residents. As always, graduation is a wonderful day – permitting us to celebrate the accomplishments and achievements of our students with their families, friends and with our faculty.

I want to add my congratulations to our 2005 graduates and to their families and friends. Entering the world of science and medicine in the 21st century is extraordinary but carries special responsibilities. Our students will need to be prepared for – and to deal with – the rising tide of anti-science sentiment that is pervading parts of our country as a consequence of an increasing wave of religious fundamentalism. And our students will have to face – and I hope help to address – the reality that we have a fractured and increasingly dysfunctional “health care system” that needs significant repair, if not a total overhauling. It remains my hope that Stanford students will, through their knowledge and intelligence, assume positions of leadership, advocacy and responsibility that will create better paths for the our citizens to follow in the 21st century.

**Commencement Address by Dr Paul Berg, Robert W. and Vivian K. Cahill
Professor of Cancer Research, Emeritus and Nobel Laureate**

Some years ago, as a result of a rather unnerving episode as a university commencement speaker, I vowed never to chance that experience again. Being an alumnus and a then recent recipient of the Nobel Prize, I was invited to speak at the Penn State University’s spring commencement. I worked frantically to prepare an inspirational address, setting forth the critical local, national and international challenges facing humanity that I believed any graduate should be challenged to solve. Confident that I had hit the right tone, I faced the 25,000 students and their families arrayed before me in the stands of their magnificent football stadium. As I began my oration, I glanced up expecting the assembled to be on the edge of their seats waiting for my pearls of wisdom. But all I could make out was a sea of half naked bodies popping champagne corks. As my talk progressed, the din of popping corks rose and the raucous hijinks that often follows popping corks became more and more evident. At that point, the futility of my mission was clear and I skipped much of what I had prepared. A huge roar of approval greeted my words “summing up.” I’m prepared to believe a widely held view that audiences at commencements are notoriously indifferent to almost anything said on that occasion.

Nevertheless, there was no way to refuse the very gracious invitation from the institution where I’ve spent more than half my life in teaching and research. And because I am forever an optimist, I will try to plant a few thoughts that you will carry away from your experience at Stanford.

First, let me say how pleased I am to share this occasion with you and what a real privilege it is to have been asked to speak at this gathering. For you, the graduates, who have worked so hard and sacrificed to make this day happen, it is, indeed, a special moment. It is also a notable occasion for your families and friends who, in spite of

wondering if today would ever arrive, provided the moral and financial support to make it possible. Today is no less special for your teachers, all of whom take pride in the transformation of merely promising, talented college graduates into newly minted science and health professionals. I'm confident that I speak for all members of the medical school faculty in congratulating you all on a job well done. But let me also add that our expectations for your future accomplishments are no less demanding than they were when you arrived.

Experience has shown us that progress in medicine is deeply rooted in and dependent upon advances in science. The inevitable consequence of breakthroughs is an avalanche of new insights and approaches to existing problems. Formerly intractable questions disappear or give way to solutions; other problems change form and raise new issues. A changing perspective is the history of science and medicine. For that reason your experience at Stanford's Medical School has been so heavily weighted to applying a scholarly and investigative approach to medical science.

Pursuing that goal after you leave here requires ongoing learning and paying as much attention to the vast areas of ambiguity and plain ignorance about human biology and disease as you presently do to accepted information and practices. You will have to cope with a rate of change greater than anything we have experienced before. For it has never been clearer that the future of medicine lies in the unknown; so many things about the physiologic and behavioral processes of human and other organisms are waiting to be discovered.

The intense effort in attending to patients in the practice of medicine will challenge your commitment to its science core. That problem came home to me some years ago when I was teaching in the Stanford's Post-Graduate Medical Education Program. During one of the breaks, I asked one of the physicians why he returned year after year when it necessitated paying a hefty fee as well as the costs of leaving his practice for a week. His answer was that when he was a medical student, he believed that medicine was part of the scientific canon. Now, in his every day practice of medicine he felt divorced or dissociated from that base. Aside from being updated about new techniques and therapies, he said that coming back to Stanford each year provided him with continuing evidence and reassurance that medicine was indeed a science. He had to "touch base with the core of medicine."

In my view, each of you by your training acquired an obligation to contribute to the fund of knowledge from which you have drawn. In an essay in *J. Clinical Investigation*, Michael Brown and Joseph Goldstein, Nobel Prize recipients for their work on hypercholesterolemia, emphasized the critical importance of patient-oriented research as distinguished from disease-oriented research. Disease-oriented research, they felt, seeks to understand the pathogenesis or origin of a disease but does not require direct contact between the patient and the scientist; their test for this is whether the investigator has ever shaken the hand a patient with the disease they are studying. By contrast, there is the investigator who studies the disease process by observing, analyzing and managing individual patients and by a synthesis of what they learn are able to uncover clues to the

disease process. The latter type of physician scientists, they lament, are in too short supply because fashion, fame and financial support favor the choice of disease-oriented research. Considering the number of medical and scientific advances that have their origins in patient-oriented research this type of clinical research is a specialty we dare not let wither.

Hopefully your stay at Stanford has, at one time or another, provoked what Horace Judson called “the acute discomfort of incomprehension.” We all need to bear in mind that the successes that have been achieved thus far do not amount to a complete or even a very profound understanding of the distinctions of health and disease. Indeed, current ignorance is vaster than current knowledge. Nothing in the man-made world rivals the complexity and diversity of living things. No man-made information system approaches in content the amount of information encoded in genomes or the complexity of the intricate machinery for its function. In some instances, we have learned enough at least to identify important areas of ignorance. Certain of these concern long-standing questions concerning development and differentiation, or the molecular basis of mind. Others are new questions raised by the very achievements themselves. And of course, we should be wary: some things that we think we know may become less clear in the years to come or even prove to be utterly wrong.

For those of you whose appetite for investigation was whetted let me quote a passage from J. Robert Oppenheimer.

“Although we are sure not to know everything and rather likely not to know very much, we can know anything that is known to man, and may, with luck and sweat, even find out some things that have not before been known to man.”

For me, and hopefully for you, finding out something that has not been known before is an exhilarating experience. Such experiences are rare, personally rewarding and not always recognized by prominent prizes. Triumphs of the mind have their own prize---self-satisfaction!

My parting words to you are that each of you must find your own way. It is your abundant talent, your knowledge, your energy, your spirit, your courage, your commitment to humanity, to scholarship, to work and to family that will define your world and your achievements. You have more freedom to shape yourselves than young people anywhere or anytime in the history of our species. But it is a blessing beyond measure. The burden cannot be conquered nor the blessing realized by standing in anyone’s shadow.

Don’t let your talent and learning be wasted. Think creatively, courageously and independently, but above all think. Don’t allow the most extraordinary organ on earth - your brain - to grow flabby from disuse. It has the remarkable power to improve with continued use. Aim high, try hard, don’t lose your enthusiasm and idealism and above all, keep a sense of humor and enjoy life. Best wishes and good luck to you all.”

MD Student Speaker, Al Vincent Taira

I missed my college graduation, and I wasn't sure I was going to be able to attend this ceremony. A conversation with my mother a few months ago helped to clarify my plans. "My dear," she said, "I do hope you are able to go. But I want you to know that whether or not you go – they will need to tie me down in chains before I miss that ceremony.... And it would be a shame if my own boy weren't there."

I am very glad to be here and I think my mother was right. Graduation from medical school is not the same as graduating from college. When I graduated from college, it never occurred to me to think: "I can't believe they're going to give me an Economics degree. I know as soon as I start working I am going to be unmasked as an incompetent. I just hope I don't kill anyone before I'm discovered."

Have any of you ever felt that way about getting an MD degree? Do any of you feel that way today? I think we all sense that there's something different about having society refer to us as "Doctor." It will, to a large extent, define us for the rest of our lives, in our own minds and in the minds of those around us.

A surgery resident once told me, "It's a real privilege to do what we do. I know that sounds like a cliché, but it's true. We are present at the most important times in people's lives. For them and their families. Over and over. Day after day. It's not always the case, but it happens an awful lot." We have all been witness to this. I remember the faces. I know all of you have your own situations you can't forget. The patient being told, "We can't operate." Family members struggling with a DNR order for their mother or father. The parents of the child in the ICU who might not make it through the night. These images stick to your bones. And they remind you of the unique nature of the work that we are going to be allowed to do.

Before we leave this place, we would be remiss not to thank those who played such an important role in our really remarkable transformation from first year med students to proto- interns. First, for many of us, there were those of you in the faculty who chose ... 'by not killing us to make us stronger.' There is a special warm place in our hearts for your focused attention and care.

And for all of our attendings, instructors and advisors: we know you could find other jobs that would give you more disposable income, more time with your families. But there is something about being involved in the training of young physicians that draws you to academia. For your commitment and caring, we are tremendously grateful. And of course our friends in the office of student affairs and the many others involved in shepherding us through this process: Thank you so much.

Finally, we know that whatever we have been able to accomplish during our 4 to 10 years here, we owe in large measure to the support and caring of our family and

friends, many of whom have joined us here today. Not surprisingly, I have heard often today, “Congratulations Al on graduating!” I say reflexively, “Thanks.” Today though, what I really mean to say is “Thank you.” Thank you to my wife, my friends and family... Mom and Dad. Thank you for being there when things got tough. Thanks for your support, your encouragement, your guidance. Thanks for not giving up on me on those couple of days when I thought I might give up on myself. And of course thanks for making me laugh. Often, that (and sometimes a cold beer if it was a particularly tough day) was exactly what was needed.

Med school can be tough. Each of us has had our own challenges, our own disappointments, and our own minor triumphs. But remarkably, we have made it through. And that is in no small measure because of the support we received from those close to us.

I’m told that a good commencement speech ends with a bit of inspirational advice. My advice is simple. Tomorrow when we officially become doctors, I would sign up for a lot of new magazines. Make sure you check the “Dr.” box on the subscription card rather than the other choices. Apparently, most doctors do this. Then, you too can be confident that even your mailman will know you have entered a new, prestigious phase of your life.

Graduates of the Class of 2005, it has been my great fortune to spend the last five years of my life with you as friends and colleagues. Good luck and congratulations to us all.

Graduate Student Speaker, Karine Alexine Gibbs

Like my parents before me, I ran track in high school. So my natural instinct is to compare graduate school to a running event, for example a marathon. Instead, I think a more accurate comparison is to a mid-distance race such as the 800-meter dash. The 800-meter dash is a race in which there is no time to think; one simply runs as fast as you can for half a mile. Before you fully comprehend it, it’s over. And it’s hard to believe as I stand here today that graduate school is truly over.

However, I think in making the comparison to a sprinting race, I fail to fully explain the amazing experience that graduate school is, especially here at Stanford. Who cannot remember the excitement of interviews? Our first glimpse of the Stanford campus, staying at the Sheraton hotel, having the chance to speak with some of the top scientists in the world, enjoying drinks at the Nuthouse or Oasis with current students—these all contributed to the initial excitement and thrill of not only being at Stanford, but of also starting a new chapter in our lives.

And then we arrived on campus starting with the Biomass camping trip and departmental orientations. Giddy with the freedom of having the chance to pursue in-depth studies of our chosen field, we migrated from one lab to another during our first

year of rotations. For those unfamiliar with rotations, during our first year, we spend 10 weeks in three different research groups anywhere within the University (including on main campus). At the end of these rotations, we choose a lab in which to pursue our doctoral studies. To those outside of graduate school, these rotations must seem like a strange dating ritual: I hang out with you for three months, you hang out with me for three months. We see if we get along. And if so, do we really have enough in common to actually make this relationship work? Yes, the research matters... but only so much.

Lucky for me, my advisor, Julie Theriot, has been a wonderful fit, and I have had a great time working with her during graduate school.

Once we chose a lab, we devised a novel biological question to answer as our thesis project. We began to develop the tools and processes needed to address it, and it seemed as if life and work continued to fly by at a rapid pace. Somewhere along the line, our initial enthusiasm of “learning new things and exploring the unknown” began to wane under the reality of classes, qualifying exams, committee meetings and experiments that didn’t seem to work no matter how hard we tried. Nights of going to the Nuthouse with friends were slowly replaced with nights of sitting at our bench moving a small amount of liquid from one vial to the next. Saturdays of hiking in the foothills slowly became weekends of analyzing data or watching cells move in the microscope. Our thesis project in the abstract was exciting. And though we were doing the kind of work that we enjoy—making small, but new discoveries—the repetitiveness of the everyday could sometimes be discouraging. And before we knew it, we were in the middle of graduate school—in other words, a dark tunnel with no light readily apparent at either end.

I think most, if not all, graduate students go through this at some point. I did. I remember sitting in Julie’s office one day during one of our bi-monthly meetings, and saying, “I’m done. I can’t do this anymore.” And she sat silently for a moment, looked at me kind of strangely and said something to the effect of, “no, you’re not. But you’re closer to being done than you were.” And to tell you the truth, at that moment, that did absolutely nothing to help me feel better.

You see, that’s kind of the point. Graduate school, for all of its requirements and examinations, is really a personal journey. It is a time where we are able to solely focus on one question—of our own creation—and to take the time and care to answer it as deeply as we so desire. With this gift, however, come drawbacks. There is self-doubt. There is fear. There is tiredness. There is loneliness. Because in the end, we are responsible for our own work. If it doesn’t get done, it’s our fault. If it is inaccurate, again, it is our fault. Quite frankly, this awesome responsibility is daunting.

Worse, to actually leave this place, we must pass through the penultimate moment of writing (and defending) our dissertation. But really, who wants to sit down and chronicle the failures and achievements of their studies of the past few years when more exciting discoveries are waiting to be made? Especially since graduation seems to come just as all of our (or at least my) experiments are working really well. However, we

cannot move on with our lives or explore new opportunities without completing this task—this final hurdle of presenting the sum total of our efforts and discoveries to our colleagues and mentors with the expectation of being deeply questioned about it in order to show that we are the experts on our work.

As with most challenging journeys, the joy of completion wipes away most of the tribulations of graduate school. We regain aspects of the enthusiasm with which we entered. Now, however, this enthusiasm for science and new discoveries is bolstered by the knowledge that we were able to excel at a mentally demanding endeavor and that we can achieve great things.

And so with that, congratulations to all the graduates! Enjoy much softball, much sun and the joy of being done!

Faculty Awards

In addition to congratulating our students for their accomplishments, commencement is also a time to honor faculty who have made significant contributions to their education. Accordingly, I am pleased to list the teaching awards that were announced at the School of Medicine Commencement.

The Arthur L. Bloomfield Award: In Recognition of Excellence in the Teaching of Clinical Medicine

D. Scott Smith, Infectious Diseases

Theodore Sectish, Pediatrics

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Award: For Outstanding and Innovative Contributions to Medical Education

Garry Gold, Radiology

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Award: For Excellence in Preclinical Teaching

Clarence H. Braddock, III, Medicine

Andrew J. Connolly, Pathology

David B. Lewis, Pediatrics

Hannes Vogel, Pathology

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Award: For Excellence in Clinical Teaching

Peter Pompei, Medicine

Elizabeth Stuart, Pediatrics
Elliott Wolfe, Medicine

The Franklin G. Ebaugh, Jr. Award: For Advising Medical Students

Alfred T. Lane, Dermatology

The Lance Armstrong Foundation Compassion in Medicine Award

Neil Gesundheit, Medicine

The Alwin C. Rambar-James B.D. Mark Award: For Excellence in Patient Care

George A. Fisher, Jr., Medicine

Stanford University School of Medicine Award: For Graduate Teaching

Joseph S. Lipsick, Pathology

Stanford University School of Medicine Award: For Outstanding Service to Graduate Students

Joseph S. Lipsick, Pathology

The Graduates of 2005

The complete program for the School of Medicine Commencement, including listing of all graduates, is contained in the attached PDF file

Other Awards and Honors

- I would like to add another Stanford University School of Medicine affiliates who was recently elected to the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) – *Iain Johnstone*, who holds a joint appointment in Statistics and Health Research and Policy, was recognized for his contributions to statistics and biostatistics when the NAS designation was bestowed upon him on May 3rd. Congratulations Dr. Johnstone!
- The Pacific Free Clinic was recently recognized with The Dean of Students Outstanding Achievement Award, honoring student

groups for their efforts in the Stanford community and beyond. This student-run free clinic now in its third year of operation provides services to low-income immigrants in the San Jose area, particularly targeting those who require medical interpretation to communicate with health care providers. More information about the clinic can be found at: <http://pacific.stanford.edu>.

Faculty Award Honorees, 2004 - 2005

Paul Berg, Biotechnology Heritage Award,
Chemical Heritage Foundation and the Biotechnology Industry Organization

Mark Blumenkranz, Alcon Research Institute
Award in Ophthalmology; Gertrude Pyron Lecture Award, American Society of Retinal Specialists

Matthew Bogyo, Searle Scholar

Axel Brunder, National Academy of Sciences

Howard Chang, Dermatology Foundation
Physician-Scientist Career Development Award

Ajay Chawla, Charles E. Culpeper Medical Scholar Awards, Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Larry Chu, Career Development Award, National Institute of General Medical Sciences
of the National Institutes of Health

Sheila Cohen, Distinguished Service Award, Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and
Perinatology

Stanley Cohen, Albany Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research; Shaw Prize
in Life Science and Medicine

Mark Davis, Institute of Medicine

Karl Deisseroth, Charles E. Culpeper Scholarship in Medical Science

William Dement, Peter C. Farrell Prize in Sleep Medicine at Harvard

Sarah Donaldson, Elizabeth Blackwell Award, American Medical Women's Association

Peter Egbert, Outstanding Humanitarian Service Award, American Academy of
Ophthalmology

Stanley Falkow, American Society of Microbiology Graduate Teaching Award; Society Citation, Infectious Disease Society of America

Dean Felsher, Burroughs Wellcome Award; American Society of Clinical Investigation

Andrew Fire, American Academy of Arts and Sciences; Institute of Medicine; Laureate of the Dr. H.P. Heineken Prize for Biochemistry and Biophysics, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences; Gairdner Award

Robert S. Fisher, Most Outstanding Contribution to Epilepsy, Northern California Epilepsy Foundation; National Service Award, American Epilepsy Society

Sanjiv Gambhir, Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Scientist Award; Society of Molecular Imaging Achievement Award; Distinguished Basic Scientist of the Year, Academy of Molecular Imaging

Christopher Garcia, Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator

Miriam Goodman, Eppendorf and Science Magazine Prize for Neurobiology

Christian Guilleminault, Lifetime Achievement Award, National Sleep Foundation

Edward Harris, Distinguished Rheumatologist Award, American College of Rheumatology

Leonard Herzenberg, Special Immunology Prize, Novartis; Abbott Laboratories Award in Clinical and Diagnostic Immunology

John Huguenard, Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Richard Kempson, H.P. Smith Award for Distinguished Pathology Educator, American Society for Clinical Pathology

Seung K. Kim, Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Living and Giving Award

Stuart Kim, Ho-Am Prize

David Kingsley, American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Arthur Kornberg, Honorary Member, Japan Academy

Ronald Levy, William Dameshek Prize, American Society of Hematology

Robert Malenka, Institute of Medicine; American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Olivia Martinez, Fujisawa Basic Science Award, American Society of Transplantation

Hugh McDevitt, Clinical Immunology Prize, Novartis

Fernando S. Mendoza, Juan Villagomez, M.D. Humanitarian Award, California Latino Medical Association

William Mobley, Institute of Medicine

Tirin Moore, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Research Fellowship; Pew Biomedical Scholar

Robert Negrin, Doris Duke Distinguished Clinical Scientist Award

Indor Perkash, Ronald Reagan Republican Gold Medal

Stephen Quake, National Institutes of Health Director's Pioneer Award; Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator

Marlene Rabinovitch, American Heart Association Basic Science Research Award

Thomas Rando, Ellison Medical Foundation Senior Scholar in Aging

Saul Rosenberg, Karl Musshoff Prize, German Hodgkin Study Group; Rosetta Medical Award, Lymphoma Research Foundation

Oscar Salvatierra, Transplant Pioneer, National Kidney Foundation

Alan Schatzberg, Distinguished Service in Psychiatry Award, American College of Psychiatrists

Matthew Scott, Edwin O. Conklin Medal in Development Biology

Lucille Shapiro, Selman A. Waksman Award in Microbiology, National Academy of Sciences

Norman Shumway, Transplant Pioneer, National Kidney Foundation

Stephen J. Smith, McKnight Technological Innovations in Neurosciences Award

David Stevenson, Neonatal Education Award in Perinatal Pediatrics, Section of Perinatal Pediatrics of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Julio Theriot, MacArthur Foundation Fellowship

Irving Weissman, New York Academy of Medicine Medal for Distinguished Contributions in Biomedical Sciences

Alice Whittmore, Janet L. Norwood Award for Outstanding Achievement by a Woman in the Statistical Sciences

Christine Wijman, National Scientist Development Award, American Heart Association

Sherry Wren, Outstanding Teaching Award, Association for Surgical Education

Appointments and Promotions

- **Todd Alamin** has been reappointed to Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, effective 6/01/05.
- **Dorsey Bass** has been reappointed to Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital, effective 11/01/05.
- **Gerald Berry** has been promoted to Professor of Pathology, effective 6/01/05.
- **Ricardo Castillo** has been reappointed to Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital, effective 3/01/05.
- **Michael Edwards** has been appointed to Professor of Neurosurgery, effective 6/01/05.
- **Cheryl Gore-Felton** has been appointed Associate Professor of Psychiatry, effective 6/01/05.
- **Samuel LeBaron** has been promoted to Professor of Medicine (Family Medicine), effective 6/01/05.
- **David Lewis** has been promoted to Professor of Pediatrics at the Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital, effective 6/01/05.
- **Randall Vagelos** has been promoted to Professor of Medicine (Cardiovascular Medicine), effective 6/01/05.