

## Scoop

The University of Texas Medical School at Houston  
Office of Community Affairs and Public Education

Thursday, July 19, 2001

### DEAN'S LECTURE SET FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Dr. Owen Witte, professor, Microbiology, Immunology and Molecular Genetics, and investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, will be the next upcoming Dean's Lecturer, Wed., Sept. 12, 4 p.m., MSB 3.001.

Dr. Witte holds the President's Chair in Developmental Immunology. His talk is titled "Lymphocyte Growth Regulation." Dr. Witte, a recipient of the prestigious Leukemia Society of America's 50th Anniversary Commemorative Award, pioneered key research on a type of mutant gene linked to chronic myelogenous leukemia. The disease strikes more than 4,300 U.S. adults each year.

Dr. Witte has also investigated possible causes and treatments of prostate cancer. His research interests include cell growth regulation and differentiation of hematopoietic cells, the function of oncogenes found in certain human leukemias, and the human immunodeficiency disease called X-linked agammaglobulinemia.

He recently has recently begun to look into the mechanisms of metastasis of epithelial cancers to the bone marrow. His laboratory has been studying the function of oncogenes found in certain human leukemias.

A reception will immediately follow Dr. Witte's presentation.

### DR. LANDRY TO PRESENT AT WHITE HOUSE SUMMIT JULY 26-27

Dr. Susan Landry, division director of Developmental Pediatrics, is an invited speaker at a July 26 - 27 White House Summit on Early Childhood Development. The event is sponsored by Mrs. Bush and the secretaries of both Education and Human Services. More than 500 are expected to attend, representing the heads of major foundations and leaders in the scientific community. Dr. Landry, who worked with then Gov. Bush and his wife on Texas initiatives in this area, will speak for 35 minutes on a variety of topics, including her current research, professional development, and models of training.

### DR. JOHN SLOPIS IN THE NEWS ON NEUROFIBROMATOSIS FINDINGS

Dr. John Slopis, clinical associate professor, Department of Pediatric Neurology, and medical director, the Neurofibromatosis Clinic, the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, was recently quoted (Houston Chronicle, 7/17/01), on the pediatric effects of neurofibromatosis. It's a disease that affects more than 100,000 U.S. citizens.

Ten to 15 percent of those with NF develop cancer during their lifetime. But Slopis mentions a possible bright side to this disorder. Hopes for a cure or at least arrest of NF are pinned on a farnasyl transferase inhibitor. It's a chemical compound that checks cells from spreading and causing tumors. "The inhibitor freezes the tumor at the current level. It's really exciting," comments Slopis. Details: [www.chron.com/cs/CDA/story.hts/health/968967](http://www.chron.com/cs/CDA/story.hts/health/968967)

#### DR. YONG-JIAN GENG'S ARTICLE AMONG ATVB'S TOP FIVE CITED

An article by Dr. Yong Jian Geng, Division of Cardiology, and his associates was cited as one of the top five in the journal of the American Heart Association, Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology (ATVB). Their "Apoptosis of Vascular Smooth Muscle Cells Induced by In Vitro Stimulation with Interferon- $\gamma$ , Tumor Necrosis Factor- $\alpha$ , and Interleukin-1B" was first published in 1996. The journal is ranked among the best vascular publications in the world.

#### EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE CARRIERS DEADLINE APPROACHES

To a packed audience in MSB 3.001 this past week, Ed Fullerton, Benefits Manager, outlined changes in health insurance carriers, (see Scoop 6/1/2001), costs, and physician options, among other topics. The annual enrollment period for employees' group insurance is July 1 through July 31. Changes, if made, become effective Sept. 1, 2001.

The University of Texas System offers two options, called UT TOUCH, to make benefit selections during Annual Enrollment. UT TOUCH Online, located at [www.utsystem.edu/egi](http://www.utsystem.edu/egi) allows you to view and change coverage on the Internet. By now you should have received a coverage option letter that includes a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN). The PIN provides you access to both UT TOUCH systems, and you must have it to make automated updates to your coverage. If you have not received a letter by now, call Employee Benefits at 713-500-3935.

Another option is an interactive telephone system that can be accessed by calling (800) UT-TOUCH, (800) 888-6824.

If you want to change benefit selections, you may do so as often as you wish before the enrollment period ends on July 31 at midnight Central Daylight Time.

A coverage option letter details your current coverage, your future coverage options, and, if you are being defaulted into a new plan, your rolled forward coverage. Rolled forward coverage is the coverage into which you will automatically be enrolled on Sept. 1, 2001 if you do not make any changes during Annual Enrollment. You must enroll to keep or join the UT FLEX benefit. You may wish to confirm the ZIP code in which you live.

After completing your UT TOUCH Online or UT TOUCH enrollment session, you will receive a personalized confirmation statement of your selections by mail. Completing your selections as early as possible will allow you more time to review your confirmation statement.

**STUDENT ORIENTATION AUG. 8 WITH CLASSES TO BEGIN AUG. 13**  
Freshman Retreat - Camp Allen, Mon. Aug 6, and Tues., Aug. 7. An important introductory event. For more information, call Student Affairs, 713/500-5160, or contact the MS II class president at <John.M.McMenamy@uth.tmc.edu>.

Medical School Orientation - Fifth Floor Gallery, Wed., Aug. 8, 7:45 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
Coffee, juice, and bagels for entering students.

Student I.D. Badge – Entering students can get a head start by having I.D. badges made before orientation at the cashier's window, 22nd floor, at University Center Tower, 7000 Fannin. Students can park free for 90 minutes with their new ID badge; otherwise, it's \$1 per each 30 minutes.

White Coat Ceremony – Wed., Aug. 8  
Hornberger Conference Center. Report by 6 p.m. The ceremony starts at 6:30 p.m. Contact the bookstore for white coats. They should be taking orders on Aug. 1, or contact them by e-mail at <Anne.B.Fefer@uth.tmc.edu>. Parents, spouses or significant others are encouraged to attend the white coat ceremony. No tickets are required.

Student Health Clinic – Temporarily located at the Children's Assessment Center, 2500 Bolsover, Rice Village. Free parking in garage or adjacent surface lots. Phone number, 713-986-3366; fax number, 713-986-3557.

Student Affairs Office – Located in the Jesse Jones Library Suite 320, just across Webber Plaza from the Medical School building. Phone number, 713-500-5160. Send e-mail to Patricia.E.Caver@uth.tmc.edu.

Admissions Office – Located on the 10th floor of the School of Public Health. Phone number, 713-500-5118.

Learning Resource Center – Temporary facilities on the 2nd floor, Medical School.

Offices - Drs. Margaret McNeese, associate dean for Student Affairs, and Dr. Wallace Gleason, assistant dean for Student Affairs, have offices in Suite 7.154, Medical School. E-mail addresses are Margaret.C.McNeese@uth.tmc.edu and Wallace.A.Gleason@uth.tmc.edu

#### DOCTORS ORCHESTRA OF HOUSTON PERFORMS AUG. 19

Whether running over the keys of a piano, sliding a bow across strings, or pressing the keys of a brass instrument, hands are essential to making music. A special chamber concert by Doctors Orchestra and presentation by a hand surgeon will demonstrate just how important hands are to music.

In its first endeavor of connecting music to medicine, about 20 strings of Doctors Orchestra will perform at the Museum of Health and Medical Science in connection with its "A Show of Hands" exhibit, which runs through Sept. 3. The museum is located at 1515 Hermann Dr. and the cost of museum admission is \$4 for adults and \$3 for students and children.

The orchestra, under the direction of Libi Lebel, will perform at 3 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 19 and feature music by Handel, Bach, and Mozart. In addition, Dr. David Hildreth, acting chief, Section of Hand Surgery in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine, will talk about the hand and its importance to music.

Dr. Hildreth, who also is the director of Baylor's Hand Fellowship Program and a clinical assistant professor at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston, specializes in surgery of the hand, wrist, and elbow. He is certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery and has published numerous articles and makes frequent presentations.

Following the concert, audience members will be encouraged to try their hand at playing a string instrument, courtesy of Gold Violin Shop.

CDs of the orchestra's two previous performances are on sale now and may be purchased by check for \$20, postage included. Details: [www.doctorsorchestrahouston.org](http://www.doctorsorchestrahouston.org) or 713-799-2556.

In preparation for future concerts, the orchestra will hold auditions for new members in August and is especially seeking whistlers for its November concert.

The orchestra needs a place to practice whistling and playing – its rehearsal space at The University of Texas Medical School at Houston has

now been converted to offices since the flood. Call Lebel at 713-799-2556 if you can help.

**EVENTS TO KNOW**

Health Insurance News, details [www.utsystem.edu/EGI/](http://www.utsystem.edu/EGI/)

UT-Houston 9th Annual Golf Tournament

Sept. 24, Houstonian Golf Club

Details: [www.uth.tmc.edu/golf](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/golf)

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