UPCOMING RFA MEETING

Detectives, Doctors and Disease: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as Story Teller and Physician

Vincent Cirillo, PhD

Friday, February 17, 2012
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm
Dean’s Conference Room
RWJMS, Piscataway

Dr. Vincent Cirillo, a former Merck researcher, earned a PhD from Rutgers in history, specifically the history of medicine with a concentration in military medicine. Dr. Cirillo is best known for his published work on military medicine during the Spanish American War, “Bullets and Bacilli: The Spanish American War and Military Medicine,” the first book-length work on that subject and a marvelous piece of research and writing. At the RFA meeting, he will be talking about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s medical work during the Boer War, when he went to South Africa and dealt with the widespread typhoid epidemic. Doyle ultimately wrote a non-fiction book on the subject, “The Great Boer War, 1900.” Dr. Cirillo, a Sherlockian, will also include some information about Doyle’s fiction writings. Dr. Cirillo will end with the lessons that the Great Detective can teach all of us on the health sciences that may help in our daily work.

Please RSVP to Paul Manowitz (732-235-4347; manowitz@umdnj.edu) by Monday, February 13 if you plan to attend so that an appropriate number of lunches may be ordered.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST: USING HISTORIC CASES TO TEACH MEDICAL PROFESSIONALISM AND HISTORY

Robert S. Pinals, MD
Clinical Professor of Medicine, RWJMS

(Dr. Pinals presented a talk on this subject at the December meeting of RFA. The following is condensed from his written description of his lecture.)

Dr. Pinals’ interest in the illnesses of famous people began in 1997, when he was involved in the development of an educational program on Humanism and Professionalism in Medicine for the medical residents. Some of the presentations in this program were short and, to fill the hour on one such occasion, he presented the case of a famous historical figure and asked members of the audience to make a diagnosis and also identify the patient from clues about his life. Since they loved it, over a 10-year period he presented more than 50 historic cases, including presidents, first ladies, sports stars, actors, writers, composers, scientists and physicians, some of these published in medical journals. These celebrity cases focus on the patient and provide an opportunity to explore the impact of the illness on career and family relationships and historical context. Diseases seldom seen now such as typhoid, diphtheria, or lead poisoning are explored and allow residents to learn about bygone diagnostic tools and treatments and to identify with physicians of the past.

At the December 2011 RFA meeting Dr. Pinals reproduced a presentation from a June, 2007 conference on “Gender Bias in Medicine,” featuring the stories of two young women, the first a patient and the second a physician. Although they never met, both shared a disease association and a career suppressed by gender bias. The presentation here is shortened and paraphrased from his notes.

EMMA LAZARUS (1849-1887): Emma was the daughter of a wealthy New York City sugar merchant. Educated at home, she developed a burning ambition to be a poet. (continued on Page 3 see Pinals)
Annual Report for 2011
by Eckhard Kemmann, RFA President

The RFA has settled on holding four meetings annually, featuring speakers on topics of general interest to RFA members. These are usually lunch meetings on the Piscataway campus, although December (holiday) meetings have been held at the Rutgers Club on College Avenue for the last two years, offering the advantages of a fine buffet luncheon.

This year the February meeting featured Dr. Gordon Schochet, RU professor emeritus, discussing "John Locke: Physician, Philosopher, Political Theorist." In April, Dr. Charletta Ayers, RWJMS associate professor of obstetrics, gynecology, and reproductive sciences, spoke on "Global Health." In September, Vicki Chirco described "The History of the Delaware-Raritan Canal." Our December talk was given by Dr. Robert Pinals, RWJ, on the topic "Lessons from the Past: Using Historic Cases to Teach Medical Professionalism and History." (see accompanying article by Dr. Pinals.) Typically about 20 people attend each meeting, but, as in previous years, attendance at the December meeting at the Rutgers Faculty Club was lower. In addition, two RFA visits to the Zimmerli Museum for guided tours were scheduled, but attendance at one was very low, and the second was canceled for lack of interest. Suggestions for improving attendance and increasing participation by more RFA members are welcome.

Financially, membership fees have been sufficient to cover expenses. The biggest expense in 2011 was our application to the IRS for non-profit status. Application was made about six months ago, and is still under review. When granted, this will allow gifts (but not dues) made to the RFA to qualify as deductible philanthropic contributions. The RFA currently has just under $2,000 in its account.

The RFA could not operate without the support of RWJMS, which has encouraged its development from the start. We extend special thanks to Dean Peter Amenta, COO Alice Lustig and Ruthe Gardino for their ongoing help and support. A big "thank you" goes to all the officers and members of the Program and Election and Membership Committees for their fine work during 2011. I would especially like to thank Paul Manowitz, outgoing RFA secretary, for his untiring efforts and for making my work easy and fun.

As always, we invite suggestions for RFA meeting speakers, and encourage all of you in the New Jersey area (or visiting) to attend the meetings.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

This has been a very interesting quarter at UMDNJ in general, and RWJMS in particular. We advise you of the following developments, in order of their immediacy to our school:

REORGANIZATION OF PRE-CLINICAL CURRICULUM AND DEPARTMENTS

Starting last year the first and second year (pre-clinical) curriculum has been re-organized along functional and organ-based themes, and is being directed and administered from the Dean’s Office. This has allowed a reconsideration of the existing pre-clinical departmental structure, which has been traditionally aligned with the titles of first and second year courses. After review by both internal and external review committees, the Department of Biochemistry and the Department of Physiology and Biophysics are in the process of being dissolved. This action was presented to the faculty in October, and is awaiting final approval by the Board of Trustees at its January meeting. All faculty members from these departments have been reassigned to the remaining pre-clinical departments. A reorganization of faculty laboratories into centers of common research interests is also being pursued.
Merger with Rutgers University

As reported in the last RFA newsletter, the interim report of the UMDNJ Advisory Committee has recommended a merger of RWJMS, the School of Public Health and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey with Rutgers University. A final report, which will include the committee’s recommendations for the other components of UMDNJ, is scheduled for mid-January, but has not been released as this newsletter goes to press.

In a December 20, 2011 letter to faculty, students and staff, Dean Amenta wrote that several Integration Teams, comprising representatives of both schools, have been formed to consider and address the various aspects of restructuring. These teams will report to the leaders of the two schools, and to the Governor’s office.

Dean Amenta stressed that “it is important to note that no governmental action has occurred to date…”

Resignation of President Owen

On December 13, 2011, UMDNJ President William F. Owen Jr., MD, announced his resignation. He wrote that: “Identifying new leadership at such a time (i.e., when reorganization of UMDNJ is being considered) is healthy for complex universities like ours, and so is opportune timing for the University to identify a new President.”

We invite Letters to the Editor of this newsletter, concerning the above or any other relevant topics.

RFA Member Notes

Lourdes Laraya-Cuasay writes: “I have returned to New Jersey from 39 months work to take a job with Monmouth Medical Group, part of Monmouth Medical Center affiliated with Drexel University in Philadelphia. It is part of Barnabas Health Care System.”

Notes from other RFA members are invited and encouraged.

Pinals (continued from page 1)

She was well-connected in New York society and literary circles and had additional poems published in newspapers and periodicals, but yearned for a wider acceptance of her work. She corresponded over several years with Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was very supportive and encouraging, but failed to include any of her poems in his best-selling anthology. Indeed, very few female poets were included.

Emma’s life was transformed after news of the persecution of Russian Jews was received in the early 1880’s. She was moved to write poems about anti-Semitism and joined a committee which was fund-raising to build a pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. She wrote a sonnet “The New Colossus” to promote the effort. It appeared in a booklet published by the committee, but was otherwise unnoticed.

Emma never married and died in 1887 of Hodgkin’s Disease. The clinical features and gross pathologic findings had been described by Thomas Hodgkin in 1832. At the time of Emma’s death only one paper on the microscopic pathology had appeared. It had always been regarded as an unusual form of tuberculosis, and this seemed to be supported by the finding of atypical giant cells.

Emma’s obituary did not mention her sonnet. Her sisters published some of her poems but destroyed her letters.
and diaries. In 1903, a plaque on which her sonnet was engraved was placed on the Statue of Liberty pedestal by Emma’s friend Georgina Schuyler, but it attracted little attention. However, on the statue’s 50th anniversary it was popularized by the journalist Louis Adamic, a Slovenian immigrant. Emma had anticipated the massive influx of immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. Her poem had reflected a radical change in the significance of the statue, which had been a gift from the French to the American people, honoring shared values of liberty, equality and enlightenment. Immigrants, poverty and suffering were never mentioned.

Emma probably never saw the statue erect on its pedestal. She left for Europe in 1885 and was terminally ill when she returned. However, she had seen it through the eyes of thousands of future immigrants for whom the words of her sonnet would perfectly express their hopes and dreams:

“Give me your tired, your poor
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these the homeless, tempest-tossed to me
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

DOROTHY REED (1874-1964): In 1896 Dorothy Reed, daughter of a wealthy Ohio boot manufacturer and a graduate of Smith College, applied for medical school admission. She chose Johns Hopkins, the only school which would admit women on an equal basis with men. This progressive requirement in the school’s charter did not please some of the faculty, who had negative views on the subject of professional careers for women. Indeed, even on her first day in Baltimore she was accosted by Dr. William Osler in a hostile manner. However, Osler’s behavior was more civil when he eventually found that Dorothy was one of the best of his students. She and her Smith College classmate, Florence Sabin, were the first female graduates to be offered internships at Hopkins. They chose the most popular service, Osler’s, much to the chagrin of many male students. Both young women were told by the hospital administrator that, since they would be in charge of male wards, they were obviously motivated by sexual curiosity. Nevertheless, both women completed the year successfully.

Dorothy applied for a research fellowship under Dr. Welch, the dean and chief of pathology and was assigned to a project on Hodgkin’s Disease. In 1901, it was possible to identify the organism causing tuberculosis and to determine whether this could be found in the tissues of Hodgkin’s Disease patients. Dorothy’s publication in 1901 concluded that Hodgkin’s Disease was a distinct entity and not a form of tuberculosis. She clarified the microscopic pathology, concluding that the giant cell of Hodgkin’s differed from the giant cells found in tuberculosis. Dr. Welch offered her a second year of fellowship, but she needed a larger stipend and requested a faculty appointment. Her male predecessor had been placed on faculty even though he had no publications, and Dorothy had three. However, Welch replied “….no woman has ever held a faculty position in the school and there would be great opposition to it.” Aside from salary, there was another even greater problem.

Dorothy had fallen in love with a Hopkins graduate. They were secretly engaged and met surreptitiously, recognizing that marriage, or even a formal engagement, would certainly end her career. Near the end of her fellowship she had heard that her fiancé was “playing the field.” She made an impulsive decision to leave Baltimore and move to New York. With Dr. Welch’s assistance she found a position as a resident in Pediatrics at Babies’ Hospital.

Her experience in New York over a period of three years was depressing, exhausting and frustrating. The hospital had only one resident and she was always on-call. The Chief of Service was cold, unsupportive and seldom available. She was told that an appointment to the attending staff was highly unlikely.

Charles Mendenhall, a childhood friend, arrived in New York from Europe; he was traveling to Wisconsin, where he would be a Professor of Physics. He had majored in physics at Johns Hopkins when Dorothy was a medical student, and his proposal of marriage had been declined appreciatively. Now her mindset had changed. As his train moved out of Grand Central Station she shouted impulsively “Take me with you!” He sent her a telegram from Albany “Did I hear you correctly?”

Dorothy broke off her previous engagement and married Charles Mendenhall. She was appointed to the University of Wisconsin Faculty in the Home Economics department, lecturing on child health and nutrition, and she established and worked in infant welfare clinics. She died in 1964 at age 90.

In 2002, her secret fiancé was identified as William MacCallum who later became chairman of pathology (at Johns Hopkins) and the author of the popular “Textbook of Pathology” in 1916. By this time Dorothy’s research on Hodgkin’s disease had been forgotten, but his 6-page chapter resurrected it; her name appeared on 5 pages and illustrations showed the giant cell which, ever since, has been known as the Reed-Sternberg cell.

IN MEMORIAM

Robert Shelden, PhD (1938-2011)

I was shocked and saddened to hear of Bob’s untimely death, having seen him just a few months ago, when he made a trip up to New Jersey from his retirement home in Florida. He seemed settled and content—nothing told me that this would be our last encounter. I lost my closest coworker and a friend. My condolences go out to Joanne and his family.

Bob Shelden was the first faculty member hired by Dr. Ernest Paige, the first chair of OB-GYN at (then) Rutgers Medical School. Bob arrived in early 1976 and I arrived later that year, and we worked together most of the time until we both retired in 2006.

While Bob initially worked in areas Dr. Paige was interested in, such as what causes preeclampsia, after the arrival of Dr. Jones as chair in 1978, the focus of his laboratory shifted to support clinical subspecialties and related research. Soon Bob’s lab was performing sex hormone assays and semen analysis—essential services for patients requiring infertility care. With the birth of the first baby born by in-vitro fertilization (IVF) in Great Britain in 1978, the decision was made to establish an IVF program at RWJMS in 1982, with Bob in charge of the laboratory. The first birth from this program was recorded in 1983—the first IVF baby in New Jersey and the third in the tri-state area. Bob introduced new developments that were incorporated into the IVF services such as cryopreservation, sperm injection (ICSI) and blastocyst culture.

Bob continued to lead the laboratory until his retirement in 2006. During these decades he trained many laboratory technicians in IVF techniques. These were talented people who would gain immensely from his expertise and meticulous work habits. A number of them moved on to become IVF lab directors themselves. He was a teacher for countless students, many residents, and about a dozen fellows who had the opportunity to learn from him and interact with him. He was always eager to spend extra time and effort with those who shared his interests. Thousands of infertile patients benefited from his services, and were able to conceive. In collaboration with his coworkers, his research also focused mainly on the field of reproductive infertility. Always interested in faculty affairs, Bob was a union representative for the faculty, and, after retirement, became the first president of the RFA. He will be sorely missed by all his friends and colleagues here.

Eckhard Kemmann, MD

A Memorial Ceremony Honoring the Life and Career Of Robert Shelden, PhD

The memorial ceremony will be held in New Brunswick by the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey in Auditorium A, between 8:00-9:00am on Wednesday, February 22, 2012.

Retired Faculty Association

If you have not already done so, please send in your 2012 dues. Dues are collected for the calendar year. Please cut along the dotted line and return this portion with your payment.

RWJMS Retired Faculty Association 2012 Dues

Benefits of RFA Membership:
• Defining, advocating for and publicizing the benefits of retired faculty at RWJMS,
• Fostering ongoing engagement and participation of retired faculty in RWJMS activities,
• Promoting continuing interaction among retirees,
• Providing information and options for faculty considering retirement, and
• Interacting with other academic retired faculty associations (e.g., Rutgers Retired Faculty Association).

Please Print:

Name: __________________________________________
Address: _________________________________________
________________________________________
Phone:  __________________________________________
E-mail address: __________________________________

Please enclose a check in the amount of $15 made payable to “RWJMS Retired Faculty Association” and mail it to Nancy Stevenson, PhD, at the following address:

Nancy Stevenson, PhD
444 Harrison Ave.
Highland Park, NJ 08904

Please include any personal information that you wish to share with others.

Thank you.                                       January 2012