

# THE NIH RECORD

Still The Second Best Thing About Payday

## Couric To Receive Communicators Award from NCI

The National Cancer Institute will honor Katie Couric, coanchor of NBC News' *Today*, with its Extraordinary Communicators award on Friday, May 18 at 2:30 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. Couric will present "The Power of Television" in this second lecture of the Eleanor Nealon Extraordinary Communicators Lecture Series.

Through her work on *Today*, as a contributing anchor for *Dateline NBC*, and as cofounder of the National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance, Couric



Katie Couric

teaches millions of Americans that colon cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable. Her crusade against the disease is both professional and personal. She will share how cancer has touched her family and describe her mission to promote colorectal cancer screening.

The Nealon Lecture, which is free and open to the public, is a tribute to outstanding individuals who have advanced the science of communication or the communication of science through their professional or personal experiences. The series honors Eleanor Nealon, a beloved NCI employee who displayed passion and persuasion in her communication and advocacy work until breast cancer claimed her life in 1999.

For more information, visit <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/excl>, contact Linda Gaskill at (301) 984-7191 or email [excl@matthewsgroup.com](mailto:excl@matthewsgroup.com). Sign language interpretation will be provided. For reasonable accommodation, contact Dawn Ford at 402-9686.

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History of Genetics Lecture

## Kevles Discusses Issues Involving 'Patenting Life'

By Rich McManus

Masur Auditorium was transformed into one of the city's largest law school classrooms on Apr. 17 when Dr. Daniel Kevles, a Cal Tech professor of humanities and author who is soon to join the history faculty at Yale University,



Dr. Daniel Kevles signs copies of his books during NIH visit.

gave the second History of Genetics lecture, cosponsored by the DeWitt Stetten Jr. Museum of Medical Research at NIH and NHGRI. His talk, compressing the 208 years of patent law history that have elapsed since Thomas Jefferson drafted the field's original dicta in 1793, concluded that ethical and moral claims about patenting life forms "are here to

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## NHLBI To Warn Women of Heart Disease Danger

By Ann Taubenheim

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recently brought together more than 80 leading experts on women's health and patients to help develop a new national program to educate American women about the dangers of heart disease.

The 2-day workshop "Women's Heart Health: Developing a National Health Education Action Plan" was held in Bethesda and resulted in a host of recommendations that will help shape the program's goals, messages and activities. Among these were recommendations to target communication efforts to young and minority women, promote community involvement, and work with physicians and other health care professionals to improve detection and treatment of heart disease in women.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death and disability in women in the United States. It kills approximately 500,000 American women each year; of those, 250,000 die of heart attacks. Despite these statistics, a recent survey on health concerns of women showed that less than 33 percent identified heart

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disease as the leading cause of death. Moreover, twice as many women reported being worried about breast cancer as about heart disease. "Our vision is to lead the way to a time when all women live healthier lives, free from the pain, fear and disability caused by heart disease," said NHLBI director Dr. Claude Lenfant in his opening remarks to workshop participants.

The workshop included plenaries, small group sessions and a talk show-like presentation of personal stories from four women battling heart disease. The web broadcast of the workshop can be viewed at <http://videocast.nih.gov/>.

In her opening presentation, workshop chair Dr. Susan K. Bennett, Washington Hospital Center, called participants to action, charging them with developing a science-based blueprint for a comprehensive heart health education action plan for patients, health professionals and the public. She asked participants to think of what their organizations have not been able to do alone and to consider linking strengths with NHLBI and its governmental partners, as well as with the very people sitting next to them.

Dr. Nanette Wenger, professor of medicine, Emory University, then spoke about, "Taking Aim at the Number One Killer of Women." She emphasized that 43 percent of women who die of heart disease have no clinical symptoms. Moreover, women with heart disease do not fare as well as men with heart disease. Studies show that women who have heart attacks die or have another heart attack more often than men who have heart attacks. Women heart attack patients receive less thrombolytic therapy, aspirin, heparin, or beta-blockers than their male counterparts.

Dr. Elizabeth Ofili, chief of cardiology at Morehouse School of Medicine, spoke to participants on the challenges and opportunities of reducing heart disease in minority women. She said heart disease disproportionately affects African American and Hispanic women, with black women developing the disease at much younger ages than women of other races.

Ofili described the most common risk factors of heart disease in women, which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, overweight and obesity, type 2 diabetes and physical inactivity. She added that there has been a dramatic rise in the rates of type 2 diabetes in the U.S., and it is estimated that up to 50 percent of cases have not been diagnosed.

A highlight of the workshop was a "talk show" presentation, "Women and Heart Disease: Personal Perspectives," which featured four women sharing their experiences with heart disease. Brenda Romney spoke about her family history of heart disease and the steps she is taking, as a woman in her 30s, to reduce her risk profile. A 14-year survivor of

breast cancer, Marsha Oakley shared her feelings about going through early menopause at age 38 after having had chemotherapy and the resulting consequence of having her risk of heart disease greatly increased. Judy Mingram and Paula Upshaw, both of whom suffered major heart attacks 10 years ago, at ages 40 and 34, respectively, shared their experiences, which taught them that women need to know the facts about heart disease and manage their own health care.

Much of the workshop was devoted to small group work sessions, during which participants developed action plans for the NHLBI program. ■

*Dr. Phillip L. Gomez III has been named director of vaccine production at the Dale and Betty Bumpers Vaccine Research Center. The VRC's vaccine production program is dedicated to the development of manufacturing processes that will provide material for clinical trials as well as a solid foundation for the eventual manufacture of vaccines. Gomez comes to NIH from Baxter Healthcare Corp. in Columbia, Md., where he served as senior director of process development in the vaccine business unit, as well as project leader during the launch of the NeisVac-C vaccine in the*



*United Kingdom. He has also served as a project manager and director of product development at Pasteur Mérieux Connaught in Swiftwater, Pa. At Abbott Laboratories, he held several positions in bioprocess development, including senior research scientist and group leader.*

### Healthy Overweight Women Needed

The Uniformed Services University weight management program is looking for healthy nonsmoking overweight women ages 18-55 to participate in a weight management program as part of a research study examining factors affecting weight maintenance. The program meets weekly for 3 months with followup extending to 2 years. In addition, applicants should not be pregnant, have problems with thyroid, kidney or heart disease, diabetes or uncontrolled hypertension. If interested call (301) 295-9664.

## N I H R E C O R D

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### Varmus Returns to Give Mider Lecture

Former NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus showed—by leaping to the stage of Masur Auditorium, eschewing the steps—that he was indeed energized by his return to campus to give the annual NIH Director's G. Burroughs Mider Lecture on Apr. 25. A packed hall heard him review the past 40 years of research on the genetic basis of cancer, focusing on the history of mouse models of the disease.

Currently president and chief executive officer of Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, he appeared as the campus knew him best: tireless and anxious to get down to business. NIH acting director Dr. Ruth Kirschstein had announced that this year's Mider lecturer was a man who needed no introduction, and Varmus seemed to appreciate the economy. "That was a serious nonintroduction," he quipped. "Frankly, it's exhilarating to be back on campus, to see Bldg. 50 nearly completed, to see the CRC fairly leaping out of the ground, and to feel very welcome."

He reminded the audience that the Mider lecturer

### NIH Asian Cultural Program, May 25

Everyone is invited to continue the celebration of the 29th anniversary of the NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Program on Friday, May 25 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. The program will include performances of Balinese, Cambodian, Chinese, Indian and Filipino music and dance.

A reception in the Visitor Information Center will follow the program. Everyone is invited to the reception to meet the artists and to sample Asian pastries and snacks.

There is no admission charge for the performance and reception, and no reservations are necessary. As this is intended to be a family affair, children (preferably 5 years and older) are welcome.

The program is sponsored by the NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American heritage committee, the NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Organization, various NIH components and the R&W Association. For information on reasonable accommodation, contact Michael Chew, 496-6301. Sign language interpretation will be provided. For more program information, contact Victor Fung, 435-3504, email [vf6n@nih.gov](mailto:vf6n@nih.gov).

### Kirschstein Adds to Honors

NIH acting director Dr. Ruth Kirschstein recently accepted a trio of honors acknowledging her distinguished scientific career and leadership in a variety of roles at NIH.

In early April, she accepted the Medal of Merit from Vanderbilt Medical School, and was also Chapman professor there, giving the fourth annual John E. Chapman Lecture on the Ecology of Medicine and Medical Education, in honor of the 25th year of the school's dean. Her lecture topic was "The Intersection of Research, Training and Care."

Kirschstein was also honored by the Anti-Defamation League of Greater Washington, both for her scientific leadership and for a career distinguished by service to others. "She's been a prime mover at NIH for women and minorities, a spokesperson for underserved communities who didn't have access to care," according to ADL, which honored Kirschstein and two other women at an awards dinner in April at the Mayflower Hotel.

In March, Kirschstein received a resolution from the Maryland House of Delegates honoring her years of service and leadership at NIH. Representatives of Montgomery County's District 16 invited her to accept this honor during a House session on Mar. 20.



Former NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus (c) accepts plaque in honor of his G. Burroughs Mider Lectureship from NIH acting director Dr. Ruth Kirschstein and Dr. Michael Gottesman, NIH deputy director for intramural research. At left is the poster announcing the lecture.

traditionally hails from—and pays homage to—the ranks of intramural NIH, and that he still meets that requirement as a guest worker at the National Cancer Institute. NCI hosted his laboratory after Varmus moved it here in 1993 from the University of California, San Francisco.

Confessing to a fascination with "cabalistic computations," Varmus noted that G. Burroughs Mider, former director of laboratories and clinics at NIH, began his distinguished NIH career in 1939, the year of Varmus' birth. The Mider Lectures began in 1968, which was the first year of Varmus' two stints at NIH (1968-1970, and 1993-1999), and the first Mider lecturer was Dr. Gordon Tomkins, a friend of Varmus'.

The ex-director then blazed away with twin slide projectors into his talk, "Mouse Models of Human Cancer" before the capacity crowd. ■

### Healthy Volunteers Needed

NIDCR is seeking healthy volunteers, ages 40-60, to participate in a study comparing absorption of drug levels to aid in treatment of oral ulcers. You may be eligible if you are not taking any prescribed or over-the-counter drugs except birth control, do not have oral ulcers or a chronic illness and are not participating in any other study at the same time. Participation involves three outpatient visits. Compensation is provided. Call 1-888-606-0220.

### New Lactation Center Opens

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new lactation center was held recently at 6100 Executive Blvd. The space was donated by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

"The NICHD is delighted to have a lactation room for our off-campus new mothers at last," said NICHD director Dr. Duane Alexander, who was on hand to cut the ribbon. "We are grateful for the

cooperation and assistance of Jane Balkam of the NIH Lactation Program who provided guidance during the design of this facility so that it responds to women's requests, and for the lactation equipment to meet the need."

The NIH Lactation Program is a free service offered by the Work and Family Life Center to all NIH employees. It is designed to help ease the transition back to work for women who are

breastfeeding their babies. Services available include:

- prenatal breastfeeding education classes
- telephone support while on leave after the birth of a child
- consultation concerning return-to-work issues
- onsite lactation rooms

With the addition of the new space, there are now 12 NIH lactation centers. Sites include Bldgs. 10, 31, 37, 38, 45, 49, Rockledge II, the Neuroscience Research Center at 6001 Executive Blvd., EPS/EPN, 301 Stonestreet, and on the Frederick campus. Each NIH lactation room is clean, secure and private, equipped with table, chair and a fully automatic electric breast pump. Employees can either bring their own pump, or buy an adapter kit to use the NIH-provided pump. Use of the room is reserved in advance through one of the NIH onsite lactation consultants who facilitate scheduling.

Women who choose not to use the lactation rooms are still eligible to sign up for classes, phone support and consultation services. The ideal time to register for the program is in the third trimester of pregnancy.

To enroll in the lactation program, register for prenatal education classes, or for more information, visit <http://lactation.od.nih.gov/> or contact one of the consultants, Jane Balkam or Colleen Prorok, by phone 435-7850 or email ([balkamj@od.nih.gov](mailto:balkamj@od.nih.gov)) and ([prorokc@od.nih.gov](mailto:prorokc@od.nih.gov)). ■



Five-month-old Jabel Sabel helps NICHD director Dr. Duane Alexander open the new lactation center.

### Mouse Model Sheds Light on Dental Defects

Scientists at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research have created an animal model that mimics two human hereditary dental defects—dentinogenesis imperfecta type II and dentin dysplasia. Their studies of the mouse model offer clues to how these disorders arise.

Dr. Ashok Kulkarni and his colleagues genetically engineered mice that make extra amounts of TGF- $\beta$ 1 (transforming growth factor beta-1) in their teeth. The animals were born with no apparent defects, but at two weeks their teeth became discolored and eventually fractured, leaving behind small stumps. Detailed study of the animals revealed reduced activity of the *dspp* gene, which produces a protein that is critical for dentin formation. The scientists reported their findings in the Apr. 6 issue of the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*.

"Our mouse model sheds light on the role of TGF- $\beta$ 1 in tooth development and points to a reduced functioning of the *dspp* gene as a possible cause of dentinogenesis imperfecta type II and dentin dysplasia," said study author Kulkarni from the NIDCR functional genomics unit and gene targeting facility. "Additionally, this animal model gives us a new tool for developing and testing treatments."

Dentinogenesis imperfecta type II, which affects approximately 1 in 6,000 newborns, is characterized by blue-gray or amber brown opaque teeth. The teeth have narrow roots, are fragile and fracture easily. In dentin dysplasia, tooth color can be normal, or slightly bluish or brownish and opaque. The teeth are shorter and more pointed than normal teeth, and may become loose and fall out because of inadequate root formation. The tooth's dentin is abnormal in both hereditary defects. Dentin, which is a hard material similar to bone, makes up about three-fourths of an adult tooth. It lies between the outer enamel and the innermost core of the tooth called the dental pulp. ■

### NCI Offers Ethics Fellowship

NCI and its Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program are now offering the NCI Fellowship in the Ethics of Public Health and Prevention. It offers ethicists, philosophers, physicians and scientists an opportunity to study ethical issues in cancer prevention research and their application in public health practice. Fellows may obtain master of public health training at an accredited university during the first year of their fellowship, followed by mentored research at NCI, the Clinical Center, DHHS Office of Research Integrity and at such schools as Johns Hopkins and Georgetown. Application deadline is Sept. 1; appointment starts July 1, 2002. For more information call Barbara Redding, 496-8640. ■

## Disney Scientist Thrills Young Crowd

Recently, more than 800 high school and college students poured into Natcher Auditorium to hear Dr. Eric Haseltine, a neuroscientist and a Walt Disney executive. His talk, "The Fantastic Voyage: Let Neuroscience Take You on a Thrilling Expedition into Your Own Brain," was a feature of Brain Awareness Week, an annual event that informs the public about the importance of brain research.

The goal of the evening was to teach students about their brains and to stimulate interest in studies in the neurosciences and in research. Haseltine is executive vice president for research and development at Walt Disney's Imagineering unit in Los Angeles.

He brought the students to their feet with several experiments: tasting a potato and an apple while holding their noses; catching a ruler in the light and in the dark. The first illustrated how various senses work together in our minds and the second was an example of varied reaction time. A lively speaker, Haseltine brought a Disney approach to the slides that demonstrated how the brain works. Students were actively involved and came to the stage and to the microphones during the evening.

Following Haseltine's presentation, NIMH director Dr. Steven Hyman introduced a panel of NIH



search. Five institutes sponsor Brain Awareness Week activities: NIMH, NINDS, NIDA, NIA and NIAAA.—Clarissa Wittenberg

*Audience participates in an experiment: holding their noses and trying to taste the difference between an apple and a raw potato.*



*Walt Disney executive Dr. Eric Haseltine (l) shares stage with NIMH director Dr. Steven Hyman (above) and works with a volunteer (below) on a reflex test to see if she can catch a ruler between her hands.*

PHOTOS: BILL BRANSON



*Audience members participate in a test of reflexes.*

neuroscientists to discuss what brought them to research, neuroscience and NIH. The goal was to stimulate interest in research and show how science crosses disciplines and offers exceptional career opportunities.

More than 125 schools and colleges in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia participated in the Brain Awareness programs. Brain Awareness Week is an international effort led by the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives, a nonprofit organization of more than 190 neuroscientists, including seven Nobel laureates, who are committed to advancing education about the public benefits of brain re-



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