

# THE NIH RECORD

Still The Second Best Thing About Payday

## New Team Governance Model

### Steering Committee Provides Corporate Oversight, Efficiency

By Carla Garnett

Just as the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research is helping to prepare the scientific community for a new collaborative, interdisciplinary model for conducting research, NIH itself is ushering governance in a similar direction for handling the business side of the agency. Since last summer, the concept of "shared governance" in the form of a new NIH steering committee has undergirded most of the organization's decisions on such issues as streamlining the human resource corps, maintaining and building facilities and improving information technology—topics common, and crucial, to all institutes and centers.

"The steering committee was created in an  
SEE STEERING COMMITTEE, PAGE 2

### New Wing of Children's Inn Opens

The Children's Inn at NIH held grand opening ceremonies May 5 to celebrate the first major expansion in the inn's 14-year history. The new wing, which provides 22



Emcee Cokie Roberts

additional resident rooms and new public spaces for pediatric outpatients at NIH and their families, opened May 10, bringing inn capacity to 59 families.

Past and present residents of the inn and their families joined HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni

SEE CHILDREN'S INN, PAGE 4

## HIGHLIGHTS

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

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## Walking a Narrow Line

### Blue Ribbon Panel Urges Changes In NIH Conflict Policies

By Rich McManus

Like a tailor crafting a garment for a customer of unusual dimensions, the blue ribbon panel on conflict of interest policies drafted a custom-made set of 18 recommendations and presented it May 6 to NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni and the 88th meeting of the advisory committee to the NIH director (ACD). The new suit—a little looser in the middle, a little tighter at the top—should not only be more unobjectionable to wear in public, but also be certain to attract and retain the interest of potential employees.



NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni (r) makes a point as deputy director Dr. Raynard Kington (c) and Dr. C. Martin Harris look on.

The recommendations, which were unanimously accepted by the  
SEE BLUE RIBBON PANEL, PAGE 8

## 'Hot Potato'

### Science Writer Kuska Publishes Basketball Book

By Rich McManus

There are at least two kinds of dribbling in the world, and dental institute science writer Bob Kuska is interested in them both: by day he might be found describing the evolution of saliva in the animal kingdom for a magazine article. But at night and on weekends he's likely to be writing and thinking about a game that has consumed him from his youth—basketball.

Kuska, a long-time NIH science writer, has spent the last decade writing a definitive history of black basketball, focusing on what he determined were the sport's twin African American cradles—Washington, D.C., and New York City.

Standing 6'1" and formerly a starting guard for his Sacramento, Calif., high school, Kuska spent evenings and weekends researching his topic, mostly at the Library of Congress. His book, *Hot Potato: How Washington and New York Gave Birth to Black Basketball and Changed America's Game Forever*, was published this spring by the University of Virginia Press.

SEE BASKETBALL BOOK, PAGE 6

## Women's Fair Honors Magliozzi

The 24th annual Montgomery County Women's Fair, a 1-day event sponsored by the NIH Office of Community Liaison and the Office of Research on Women's Health, was held recently at Montgomery Blair High School.

Angela M. Magliozzi, manager of the Women's Health Program at NIAID and cochair of the fair, was selected as the recipient of the Founder's Award in recognition of her "unfailing dedication, dependability, and extraordinary levels of support to the Fair." The Women's Fair will celebrate its 25th anniversary in 2005. For more information on award nominations, becoming a fair benefactor, presenting a workshop or participating on the planning committee, visit <http://www.womensfair.org>.

## STEERING COMMITTEE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

effort to make more transparent and efficient corporate-level decision-making," explains NIH deputy director Dr. Raynard Kington, who as an *ex officio* committee member, along with NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni as chair, participates in the 10-member committee created to oversee all cross-agency non-scientific NIH functions. "The world has changed. There's a much greater need to coordinate our functions better across institutes and centers. This is a more appropriate model for modern times."

The idea of developing a new paradigm was suggested by Zerhouni at a December 2002 meeting of the IC directors. In response to a report from the internal group that develops funding plans for trans-NIH resources—the NIH funding advisory review board (FARB)—the director requested options that would "encourage shared, transparent governance and a crisper, more fluid strategic direction to corporate functions."

Citing the changing times and economic realities for NIH, Kington says, "there were three major reasons for developing the steering committee model several months ago—the growing size and complexity of NIH, the need for better coordination of management functions, and the increasing prevalence of management issues that cut across institutes and centers."

Before the steering group was established, such governance issues often proved time-consuming and duplicative for IC directors as well as for many Office of the Director staff.

"Many new activities would require formation of ad hoc committees of IC directors," confides Kington. "The steering committee provides a solid framework for oversight of activities such as those funded centrally, operations in which all ICs have chipped in to provide funds."

Only so-called corporate functions, resources or policies are under the new group's purview, Kington stresses. Cross-cutting scientific and research issues will continue to be governed by the NIH director and individual IC directors.

Unlike the ad hoc approach of previous models, the composition of the steering committee follows a predetermined formula. The core group includes nine members, all IC directors, plus the NIH director and the deputy director as an *ex officio* member; the three largest institutes—NCI, NIAID, and NHLBI, in terms of budget—have their directors as permanent representatives on the committee, and the 6 remaining slots rotate among IC directors in staggered, 3-year terms with 3 IC directors from mid-sized ICs and 3 from smaller ICs. Expert advice and support for the committee are provided by the various NIH associate and deputy directors and other senior OD staff.

One of two options proposed by a sub-group of IC

directors charged with exploring alternative governance structures, the steering committee maintains five permanent working groups to handle management and budget, information technology, intramural activities, extramural activities, and facilities.

"One of the best examples of the advantages of the steering committee is how it helped the agency develop and implement a plan to determine FTE [full-time equivalency] allocations at a time when FTEs are much more tightly controlled than in previous years," Kington says. "The new model is working well, and is proving itself as an effective tool for governance during challenging times." ■



NIDCR's Dr. J. Silvio Gutkind (l) received the International Association for Dental Research's 2004 Oral Medicine and Pathology Research Award from IADR president Dr. Stephen

Challacombe. The award recognizes outstanding and sustained research that has contributed to understanding mechanisms governing health and disease of the oral cavity. Gutkind is chief of the Oral and Pharyngeal Cancer Branch, NIDCR. His research focuses on identifying the molecular mechanisms of oral cancer with the goal of developing biomarkers of disease progression and, ultimately, novel cancer treatments. The award is supported by Sunstar Butler and consists of a cash prize and a plaque. Gutkind was honored at the recent IADR meeting in Honolulu.

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### Asian/Pacific Islander Heritage Program

Everyone is invited to continue the celebration of the 32nd anniversary of the NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Program on Friday, May 28 in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10 between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. The program will include performances of Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Korean music and dances performed by the Hua Sha Chinese Dance Center, Konark Dance School, USA, Onoe Kikuyuki Dancers and the Peace Mission Dance Group. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

A reception in the area outside Rm. 1C174 will immediately 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.

The program is sponsored by the NIH OEODM, Asian/Pacific Islander American committees, R&W Association, Inc. and the NIH Federal Credit Union. For information on reasonable accommodation, contact Charly Wells, (301) 496-4627. Sign language interpretation will be provided. For more information, contact Victor Fung, (301) 435-3504, [vf6n@nih.gov](mailto:vf6n@nih.gov). ■



*Ezra Marcos (c), a director of the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation, joins Jan Weymouth (second from l), Edmond J. Safra Lodge executive director, and Foundation for NIH Executive Director Amy L. McGuire, to tour work-in-progress on the interior of the lodge on Apr. 28. Scheduled to open in fall 2004, the Safra Lodge (seen below, with Bldg. 10 as a backdrop) will provide overnight and temporary residence accommodations to family members of loved ones participating in clinical trials at the Clinical Center. In April 2003, Mrs. Lily Safra and the Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation pledged \$1.75 million to complete funding for the construction of the Safra Lodge and for the creation of a special garden on its grounds. This follows an initial \$3 million contribution to the construction made in memory of her late husband—the most significant contribution ever received by the Foundation for NIH (FNIH) from an individual donor. Also on hand for the tour were Gary Barbarash (l), senior advisor, FNIH, and Joseph A. Bauer (r), Bauer Associates, financial management advisor.*

PHOTOS: BILL BRANSON

### Record Marks 55th Year

The *NIH Record* debuted at NIH on May 20, 1949, and has been published nonstop since then. The newsletter comes out every payday Tuesday, and enough copies are printed that each NIH employee should have one. If you do not get your copy regularly, contact the mail room servicing your area.

### Wednesday Afternoon Lectures

The Wednesday Afternoon Lecture series—held on its namesake day at 3 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10—features Dr. Wylie Burke on June 2; his topic is “Using Genetic Tests to Promote Health: Evidence and Values.” He is professor and chair, department of medical history and ethics, University of Washington, Seattle.

On June 9, from 1 to 3 p.m. in Masur, the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation Laureate Lectures will be presented by winners of the Kettering (Dr. Robert Langer, MIT), Sloan (Dr. Bruce Stillman, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and Dr. Thomas Kelly, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center) and Mott (Dr. Charles Sherr, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital) Prizes for Cancer Research.

For more information or for reasonable accommodation, call Hilda Madine, (301) 594-5595. ■



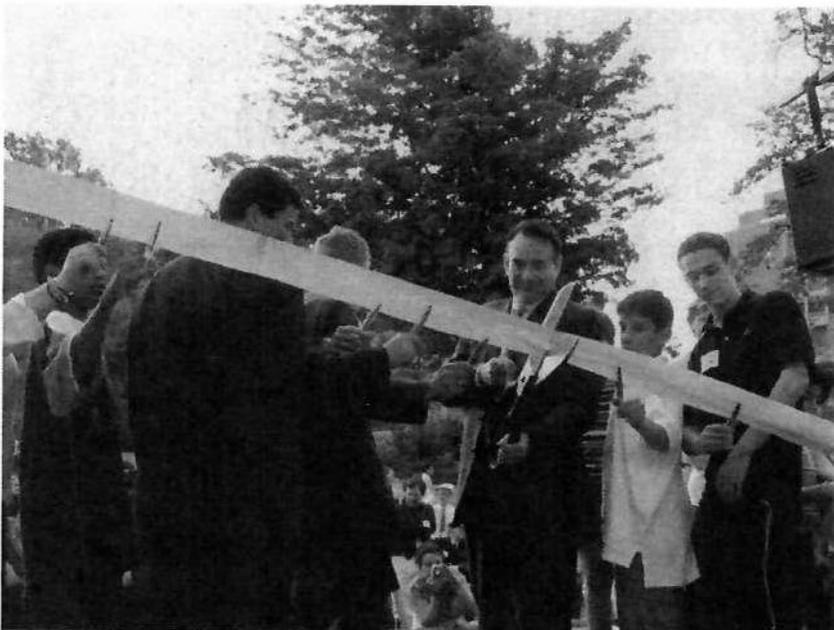
**CHILDREN'S INN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

and others at a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the opening of the new wing. Author and veteran broadcast journalist Cokie Roberts, a long-time board member of the inn, served as emcee.

Since 1990, more than 6,000 children from all 50 states and 57 countries have stayed at the inn, some for a few days and some for months at a time.

The new wing more than doubles the size of the original inn. New, fully-equipped community kitchens, dining and lounge areas will be available to all families residing at the inn. There are also

PHOTOS: ERNIE  
BRANSON, JOE  
GANNON



*Above, HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson wields a large pair of scissors as he helps young residents of the Children's Inn at NIH cut the ribbon to open the inn's new wing. Looking on (at l) is NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni. At right, Thompson also addressed the crowd.*



several outdoor patios, a teen room featuring a large-screen TV with surround-sound stereo, new staff office spaces and conference room, laundry room and a special fitness center with several exercise machines donated by the Lance Armstrong Foundation.

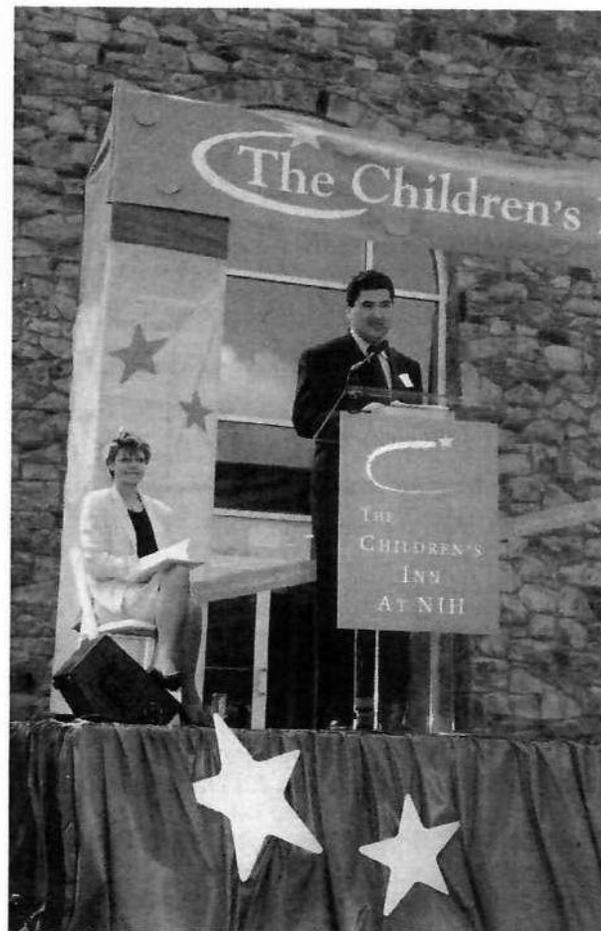
At a May 6 open house for employees, visitors learned that the tower portion of the addition will one day feature a large mobile hanging from the ceiling. From its arms will dangle prisms, to catch the sunlight

streaming into the facility and paint the walls with moving colors.

The Merck Company Foundation provided \$3.7 million toward the \$6.4 million construction costs of the inn's expansion. The foundation has been the lead corporate partner with the inn since it funded the original construction in 1990.



*Dr. Philip Pizzo, dean of Stanford University School of Medicine and founder of the Children's Inn during his 23-year tenure in NIH's intramural program, tells guests what life was like for young patients before there was an inn on campus.*



*Zerhouni welcomes guests and describes the growth in pediatric research over the last 15 years. The inn's new wing will go a long way toward meeting a growing need.*

## NIDDK's Jacobson Wins Hillebrand Prize

Dr. Kenneth A. Jacobson, chief of NIDDK's molecular recognition section and director of the new Chemical Biology Core Facility, was recently awarded the Hillebrand Prize. Given annually by the Chemical Society of Washington, the prize honors scientists who have made original contributions to the science of chemistry.

During his 21 years at NIH, Jacobson, a medicinal chemist, has focused on the structure and pharmacology of cell surface receptors. With a wide range of physiological and disease-related effects, receptors have generated considerable interest in recent years as potential targets for drug therapies. Jacobson has studied how adenosine and nucleotide receptors interact with their ligands, the small molecules that bind to the receptors, with the goal of exploring possible clinical applications.

To understand the physiology of the receptors and their interactions with various ligands, it is necessary to selectively activate or block the receptors' response using small molecules. Agonists are ligands that stimulate a receptor response; antagonists block a response. Jacobson's group developed a number of computer models to allow investigators to examine how agonists and antagonists recognize their specific receptor targets and interact with them.

Building on this work, Jacobson and his group also have designed and synthesized a number of potent and highly selective agonists and antagonists for three types of adenosine receptors (the  $A_1$ ,  $A_{2B}$ , and  $A_3$  types) and for  $P2Y_1$  nucleotide receptors. These agonists and antagonists are widely used as pharmacologic research tools, and Jacobson's novel chemical probes have been used by researchers in studies described in hundreds of scientific papers. In fact, he has been recognized as one of the most highly cited pharmacologists in the world.

Two factors make these molecules particularly useful. One is their specificity—the ligands target particular receptors, which allows investigators to conduct their work with much greater confidence and precision. The other is that many of Jacobson's adenosine antagonists appear to be useful across animal species, so that scientists working with mouse, bovine or other animal cells can all benefit from using these molecules. "Dr. Jacobson and his colleagues have provided a pharmacologic foundation that has helped an entire field of science move forward in major ways," said T. Kendall Harden, professor of pharmacology at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and Jacobson's current collaborator on nucleotide receptors research.

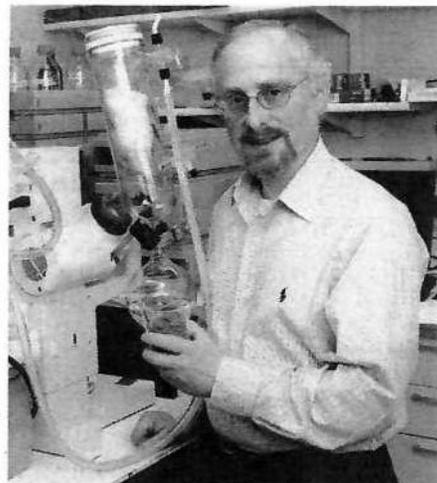
The clinical applications of this field of basic science already have been realized in several areas, including asthma, cystic fibrosis, thrombosis, stroke, neurodegenerative diseases, cardiovascular disease and glaucoma. For example, in collaborative studies

with the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, Jacobson and Dr. Bruce Liang built on longstanding knowledge that adenosine protects the heart when it is overstressed.

This molecule binds to receptors on cell surfaces, rendering the cells more resistant to the harmful effects of coronary artery blockages. Using chick cells, Jacobson and Liang found that agonists that activated the  $A_3$  receptor type caused sustained protection, whereas agonists that activated the  $A_1$  type had only a short-term effect. They found, however, that activation of both  $A_1$  and  $A_3$  receptors provided added protection. They also found that co-activating adenosine receptors can "pre-condition" heart cells and shield them from subsequent damage. These findings may lead to the development of drugs that may someday help to prevent ischemia and heart attacks as well as lessen the chances of post-surgical heart attacks.

$A_3$  antagonists developed by Jacobson's group have also been invaluable in glaucoma research. When  $A_3$  receptors in cells of the ciliary epithelium stimulate the release of salts and accompanying fluid into the eye, intraocular pressure, which can lead to glaucoma, increases. Researchers hypothesized that blocking  $A_3$  receptors in the ciliary epithelium would reduce the rate of fluid formation in the eye, thereby reducing intraocular pressure and the risk of this debilitating eye disease. Studies in wild-type and knock-out mice have shown that  $A_3$  antagonists in fact lower intraocular pressures, suggesting a potentially innovative approach to treating glaucoma in the future. "The development of these molecules has greatly facilitated research and generated many ideas about ways to address important health problems," said Dr. Mortimer Civan, a glaucoma researcher at the University of Pennsylvania.

Jacobson has authored or coauthored 400 original research papers, edited three books and is listed as inventor on 40 patents. He has trained dozens of postdoctoral fellows, and served on the editorial advisory boards of several major scientific journals. In 1996, he received the first Fassina Award for contributing important and novel chemical probes to purinergic research. In 2001, he was awarded the Roon Lectureship at Scripps Research Institute, LaJolla, Calif. Jacobson is also currently the national chair of the American Chemical Society's medicinal chemistry division, serving 10,000 members worldwide. ■



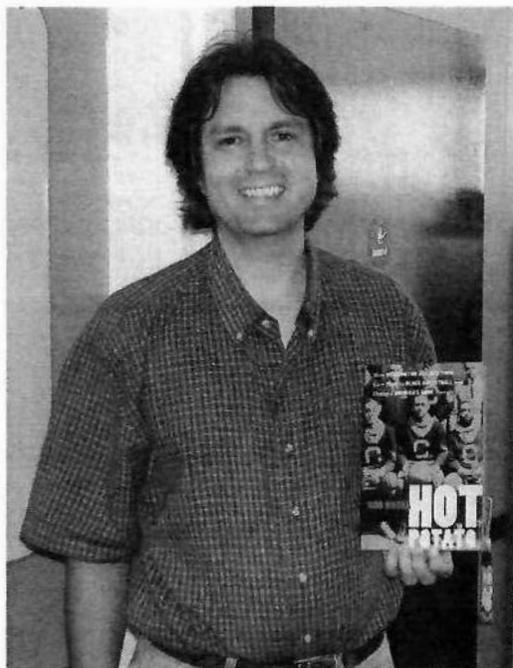
*Dr. Kenneth A. Jacobson, chief of NIDDK's molecular recognition section and director of the new Chemical Biology Core Facility, was recently awarded the Hillebrand Prize.*

## BASKETBALL BOOK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The book idea was an outgrowth of some freelance reporting that Kuska had embarked upon more than 10 years ago. "I wanted to keep my journalistic skills honed, so I freelanced a couple stories, including a story for the *Washington City Paper*," he said.

Kuska had been a comparative literature major at Brigham Young University, then got a graduate degree in journalism at Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. He was working as an environmental reporter for Medill News Service in Washington, D.C., when word came of a job opening at NIH in 1987.

"I had no background in biology whatsoever," he recalls, but took a job at the National Institute of



NIDCR science writer Bob Kuska shows copy of his new book about basketball.

Dental Research anyway. He spent almost 2 years there, then moved briefly to NIDDK where he began freelancing. The odyssey that culminated in his new book (and spawned work on a second) began with a *City Paper* cover story Kuska wrote about a teenage drug dealer in Prince George's County who had dropped out of high school twice, but resurrected his life by dropping in on a midnight basketball league where he became a star player. The young man eventually played ball at a military school and earned a G.E.D.

Kuska's editor at the *City Paper* was Katherine

Boo, who later would earn a Pulitzer Prize at the *Washington Post*. "She suggested that I try another sports story, so my next idea was a history of the playground legends of D.C.," Kuska recalls. "I was going to name the city's best five current playground players."

Basketball had been Kuska's favorite sport as a kid. "I used to play anywhere from 2 to 8 hours a day. I completely lived the game."

He decided to consult a range of recreation authorities in the D.C. area, and develop a sort of ballot or consensus about who the best ballers were, then profile the individuals.

His first contact was Harold Bates, a local AAU coach. Bates put Kuska in touch with Arnold George, a particularly talkative source who had attended high school with Elgin Baylor, a 1954 graduate of Spingarn High who was perhaps the most legendary basketball player in D.C. history.

"I had a 3-hour conversation with Arnold, hung up

the phone, and realized, 'There's a book in this,'" Kuska says.

He abandoned the idea of naming a top five, instead choosing to chronicle the emergence of black basketball decades earlier in segregated D.C. How, he wondered, could a segregated city give rise to a talent such as Baylor, who is credited with elevating, or "putting the float into" modern basketball?

To plot the game's beginnings in Washington, Kuska, who back then was living in LeDroit Park, near Howard University, began visiting the Library of Congress after work, examining microfilm of old copies of the *Washington Evening Star* newspaper.

"It's hard, hard research to find the origins of black basketball," he said. "Everything fades out [from traditional historical records] in the 1920's and 1930's." He picked 1910 as a place to begin. "The *Star*, which was a white paper, ran occasional filler items on black sports. I'm a good researcher, so I didn't mind reviewing lots of microfilm. And I ran into an incredible story."

He found that in 1907, a man named Edwin Henderson, who had graduated from the old M St. High School in the District, was the first black physical education teacher in the country. Henderson, who had learned to play basketball while attending Harvard University, often visited the local white YMCA to keep up with the sport, which was then played by whites only. One night, Henderson and a friend were thrown out of the white YMCA because of their skin color. Indignant at his rough treatment, he became determined to launch a black league.

"Henderson was very philosophical, a deep thinker," Kuska said. "He observed whites and blacks in sports and decided that the only difference between them was the lack of formal athletic training for blacks. He knew that blacks could be as good or better than whites, with proper training."

Henderson decided that the best and brightest of his athletes could be exemplars; he would groom them to excel at elite, white universities, thereby debunking the notion that blacks were physically inferior to whites, then a popular idea in American culture. "He saw basketball as a way to advance civil rights. My book is that story—how sports were organized to advance fitness and civil rights."

Not yet guaranteed that his efforts would ever pay off, Kuska plowed ahead with his research, having found his talisman in Henderson. "I'm cocky," he admits. "I know a good story when I see one. This became a labor of love. I only do things that I believe in."

Most of the 10 years he spent on the book involved research, not writing. Convinced he had a story he could sell, he retained an agent in 1993, who shopped the book in New York. Publishers there advised him his book was too much of a Washington

story, and Kuska decided to broaden his scope to include not just D.C., but New York City as well.

By now, Kuska was working at what was then the National Center for Human Genome Research as a science writer. He says he simply embarked on "the genome project of black basketball," and systematically went back through historical files, spending thousands of dollars on xeroxing to find such items as a 1908 "first world's championship" basketball game pitting the stars of D.C. against New York's best black team.

"I discovered that what New Orleans was to jazz, D.C. and New York were to black basketball," Kuska says. "The game evolved very differently in New York and Washington over the years, though, given the different social conditions in the cities."

Though vanishingly few living sources on the early era of black basketball survive, Kuska was able to consult with a few, including famed black sports-writer Sam Lacy before he died, and the late Hall of Famer Pop Gates.

Around 1997, Kuska moved out of D.C. to an 8-acre farm in Shepherdstown, W.Va., and began working for the National Cancer Institute, which further honed his science writing skills. The 4-hour daily commutes via MARC train and Metro allowed him plenty of time to edit his opus on black basketball.

Kuska eventually submitted the manuscript to three academic presses—Kentucky, Nebraska and Virginia, and all were interested in the book. Only Virginia, however, took the book sight unseen, and showed the keenest followup interest.

Though the book was finished in 2001, the editorial process dragged on for a few years. The book formally becomes available June 2004 as the Virginia press's lead title, but copies have been available since late March on Amazon.com. The initial press run is 3,000, which is fairly typical for an academic title.

Reviews have been laudatory so far, says Kuska, who is now back with the dental institute, where he began his NIH career 17 years ago. The *Washington Post* has planned a review, and its sportswriter Leonard Shapiro has already pronounced it a "brilliantly researched" tome.

The difficulty of bringing out a book, essentially in his spare time, was nonetheless worth it to Kuska. "This is my gift to D.C.," he says. "It's something they can celebrate. It's a seminal book—it will have a long shelf-life. I knew all along that it would never make the *New York Times* best-seller list."

Kuska is further consoled by the reviews of some old-timers who have read it. "They told me I got it," he says proudly. "That makes it all worthwhile."

The book ends in 1930, before Elgin Baylor was even born. "It was a tough book," Kuska con-

cludes. "I relied almost entirely on primary sources. It was very intensive research."

But the subject of basketball is far from tapped out for Kuska. He is already possessed by a story that grabbed him 2 years ago and which culminated this past March, when he attended the West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament (Division II, NCAA), in Charleston. "My second book is going to be about small-college basketball," he says, eyes widening. "I've attended numerous conference games over the past 2 years and I'm fascinated by the question of why these kids play if no one comes to see them?"

He intends to focus on a particular school—Alderson-Broaddus College of Philippi, W.Va., which has won the WVIAC tourney 3 years in a row—and has budgeted 3 years of part-time work for the project. "The tournament in March was just fantastic," he enthuses of a sport best seen in person. "You can't get that watching Carolina play Duke on television." ■

#### **NINR's Grady a Top Irish-American**

Dr. Patricia A. Grady, director of the National Institute of Nursing Research, has been named one of the top 100 Irish Americans of the Year by the magazine *Irish America*. The list appears in the April/May issue. She is cited for her expertise in research on stroke and its effects. Internationally recognized for her work, Grady has written many articles on stroke, and has served as editorial board member of major stroke journals. She is one of two bioscience researchers on the list—the other being Dr. Michael Lyons, cancer researcher at Rockefeller University. Federal agency head Sean O'Keefe, administrator of NASA, also made the list.

Both of Grady's parents have Irish roots. Her father is a first-generation Irish-American from County Clare, and her mother's family is from County Cork. Grady is proud of her Irish ancestry, saying, "The philosophy and humor of the Irish have been very important in framing my outlook on life."

People on the list also include those recognized for education, medicine, the media, public service, politics, writing, exploration and entertainment. Edward Kennedy and Caroline Kennedy (Schlossberg), as well as Diane Keaton and Jack Nicholson made the list. Homeland Security's Tom Ridge, Pfc. Jessica Lynch, and Thomas Kean of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks are there. From the Senate's Susan Collins to *The West Wing's* Martin Sheen, the Irish Americans cited in the magazine have all contributed to intellectual, policy and cultural advances in the United States. ■



*NINR director  
Dr. Patricia  
Grady*

## BLUE RIBBON PANEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ACD, addressed three main areas—outside activities, financial disclosure and system management and reform. On the tightening-up side, they impose stricter limits on outside consulting for top-level manager-scientists at NIH, bar those with human-



Dr. Reed Tuckson (l) and Dorothy Robinson of the blue ribbon panel commented on findings at the ACD meeting.

subject responsibilities from holding interests in companies involved in the research (with some waiver leeway possible), and set time and income limits on those who do engage in approved outside activities (with exceptions for outside medical practice, which is encouraged and protected). On the loosening side,

they call for NIH scientists to be compensated for teaching, speaking and writing about their work, claim that “there should be no restrictions on royalties received on works written, edited, or

published or on income received from patents licensed by any NIH employee who conducted the work as an approved outside activity,” and, in recommendation 18, challenge the NIH director to work with Congress and HHS to offer higher pay (more than \$200,000) to top-level scientists in order to compete more aggressively in the hiring market.

The recommendations also call for more NIH employees to file annual financial disclosure forms, for ethics rules and training to be made more user-friendly, and for NIH’ers to be more forthcoming in revealing any outside relationships and financial holdings in work products such as publications, speeches and invention disclosures. The complete report of the blue ribbon panel can be found at [www.nih.gov/about/ethics\\_COI\\_panelreport.htm](http://www.nih.gov/about/ethics_COI_panelreport.htm).

“The panel recognizes that NIH is truly a national treasure,” said Norman Augustine, chair of the executive committee at Lockheed Martin Corp. and cochair of the panel, “but we also realize that we could do harm. The rules governing conflict of interest (COI) could be too liberal, such that the credibility of NIH could be damaged. And the rules could be too restrictive, such that NIH couldn’t compete for world-class talent, or transfer the fruits

### Panel Publishes ‘Findings’ in COI Report

A part from its roster of 18 recommendations, the blue ribbon panel on conflict of interest policies also published a series of findings, which were announced at the May 6 ACD meeting.

These were general observations made along the way as the 10 panelists waded through their charge of reviewing existing laws, regulations and policies in the COI field.

Panel cochair Dr. Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences, reviewed the half-dozen findings and commented on them.

◆ Government ethics rules are complex and not readily understood. “This is across government, not just at NIH,” Alberts said. “One of the unfortunate results is that there is lots of confusion. The rules are widely misunderstood, even by those to whom they apply. This is significantly damaging to morale.”

◆ Most of NIH’s policies and procedures are fundamentally sound, however, improvements are needed. “Our challenge was basically how to make an excellent institution even better,” Alberts noted.

◆ Current requirements for internal disclosure do not always capture the information needed to manage conflicts of interest. “NIH simply needs to know more,” Alberts commented.

◆ Current rules do not permit sufficient public transparency. This item was especially true for

Panel cochair Dr. Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences



Title 42 appointees, panelists agreed.

◆ Of the 17,526 employees at NIH as of March 2004, 118 employees were involved in consulting arrangements with pharmaceutical or biotechnology companies. “That’s a small number compared to universities,” said Alberts. But it is also “the lightning rod that has drawn all the attention—and is why we’re here today,” added cochair Norman Augustine, chair of the executive committee at Lockheed Martin Corp. He added that the 118 scientists “include some of the most recognized and respected scientists at NIH.”

◆ Senior NIH employees should be subject to special restrictions because of their broad authority and leadership roles.

of its research to the private sector. We tried to walk a narrow line between these two concerns. We also tried to focus on policies as opposed to specific rules.”

Augustine conceded that no set of recommendations would be sufficient to cover all instances: “There are always going to be exceptions, and the NIH director needs authority in these instances. That may be our most important recommendation.”

Panel cochair Dr. Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences, particularly credited the input of intramural NIH scientists. “We received a large number of very thoughtful responses,”

he said. “There was a fair amount of uniformity to them...we feel our recommendations will be favorably viewed by this group.” He also noted, “Scientists are honest people; they generally want to do the right thing. They just need to be better partners with the ethics officials.”

The panel held five official meetings in its 66-day deliberations.

Augustine elaborated on the panel’s balancing act: “Even federal employees deserve outside lives,” he noted. “The government doesn’t own its employees’ minds. Federal workers are entitled to privacy in their lives. But we do need to ask if what they are doing privately impinges on their public work.”

Before itemizing each of the 18 recommendations, Augustine offered his own three-point executive summary: 1) Rules affecting outside activities should be considerably tightened and made more restrictive; 2) Disclosure rules need to be quite broad, both internally and externally; and 3) Participation in the scientific community at large should be encouraged. He added, “We could find no fault in NIH leadership’s intentions [with respect to conflict policies as they have evolved over the years].”

Augustine conceded that the panel did not consider support staff positions at NIH. “We focused mostly on senior employees—the director and his staff, the institute and center directors, deputies, scientific directors, clinical directors and the people who report to them.” Other target audiences included those involved with grants and contracts, “financial decisionmakers,” and those with human subject research responsibilities.

Of some 5,000 technical and laboratory staff with ancillary roles, Augustine said, “They should be able

to act as members of the scientific community without undue restrictions.”

The panel found that, of 17,526 employees as of March 2004, only 118 had consulting arrangements with pharmaceutical or biotechnology companies; that number was down from 228 (covering some 365 agreements) in January, Zerhouni reported. “Many scientists terminated their agreements or didn’t enter any new ones until this issue was settled,” said the director.

The panel was particularly wary of equity as compensation, Augustine continued, and specifically proscribed it in recommendation 3. “The problem with equities is that they essentially make you an owner. Also, there is no upper limit on what the pay-off might be.” Perhaps most dangerously, “the return depends on outcome—this is where a scientist could exert influence.”

Upon completing his summation of all the recommendations, Augustine said, “This issue has had an adverse morale effect, confusion has been widespread, and the rules governing the field have been

arcane, though well-intentioned. We think there is room for substantial improvement in conflict of interest policies.”

Zerhouni thanked the panel for “an extraordinary amount of work in a short time. I really am impressed with the depth of analysis and debate. I think you’re addressing very fundamental changes.”

Most of the ACD members agreed that the panel’s report was, as member Dr. Linda Waite, professor at the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center, said, “a breath of fresh air—especially the way it addresses specific communities within NIH.” But after the kudos came some tough questions. Dr. R. Sanders Williams, dean of Duke University School of Medicine, asked, “Who’s going to track the 400 hours of (permitted) consulting time? Is some kind of audit function recommended?” Dr. David R. Burgess, professor in the department of biology at Boston College, wondered if morale at NIH would be damaged by limiting outside income amounts based on job function.

That led to a general discussion of scientific quality of life at NIH; Zerhouni disclosed that one scientific director here had described the many bureaucratic



Dr. Linda Waite



Panel cochair Norman Augustine makes a point as Dr. Christine Cassel looks on.

PHOTOS: ERNIE BRANSON

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limits, including those on FTE's (number of personnel), as "death by a thousand cuts." ACD member Arthur D. Ullian, chair of the Boston-based Task Force on Science, Health Care and the Economy, urged Zerhouni to undertake what he called "hassle-factor impact analysis" at NIH, examining the many issues engendered by the COI discussion.

For his part, Zerhouni asked the blue ribbon panel to meet one more time "to fine tune the recommendations. I would hate to not have another opportunity to circle our discussions back...we need a reality check, so we're not missing something," Augustine said, at a post-report press briefing, that the panel would comply



Zerhouni (c) poses with the blue ribbon panel's cochairs Alberts (l) and Augustine.

with Zerhouni's wishes.

Also at the press event, Zerhouni described next steps: "We plan to analyze the report and how it might be implemented, including how much NIH can do, how much will require the interventions of other agencies, like the Office of Government Ethics, and what may require statutory change."

Added Augustine, "We walked a very fine line in balancing restrictions. We don't want a laissez-faire approach, and we don't want a clamp-down. We searched for appropriateness in the level of restriction."

Noted Alberts, on the subject of outside consulting, "People I respect have said that scientists get more (intellectually) out of their collaborations than the company does—there's a mutual benefit both ways when it works well."

The COI portion of the ACD meeting ended on an upbeat note as Zerhouni expressed his thanks to the blue ribbon panel. "One of the most satisfying parts of being NIH director is that we can attract great talent to come to NIH and serve for nothing more than cookies." He also cited the 21,000 outside advisors to the agency, scattered across the country: "This is why our country is what it is—we couldn't maintain excellence without people like you. We really owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude."

Noted Larry Sadwin, who attended the meeting as liaison from the NIH director's Council of Public Representatives, "I feel compelled to say thank you to NIH employees," whose work has helped him "successfully manage heart disease for the past 23 years." He urged NIH to get back to its work of improving people's health, declaring, "NIH is great, and it can be a bit better." ■

## Henderson To Give Leiter Lecture, June 28

Dr. Donald A. Henderson, dean emeritus, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and resident scholar, Center for Biosecurity, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, will discuss "Plagues for the 21st Century—A Communications Challenge," the 2004 Joseph Leiter Lecture sponsored by the National Library of Medicine and the Medical Library Association (MLA) on Monday, June 28, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in Lister Hill Auditorium, Bldg. 38A.

New and emergent diseases—AIDS, mad cow disease, SARS—are an increasingly frequent occurrence. To know sooner and better about these diseases and to develop capabilities to deal with them are new challenges with potentially serious implications. Henderson, a world-renowned public health scientist and epidemiologist, is eminently qualified to address these and other issues related to the topic.

From November 2001 through April 2003, he served as director of the Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness, and later, as principal science advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. His previous positions include associate director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (1990-1993) and dean of the faculty of Johns Hopkins School of Public Health (1977-1990).

The annual Leiter Lecture, whose purpose is to stimulate intellectual liaison between NLM and MLA on topics relating to biomedical communication, is held at NLM on alternating years. ■

## Asian/Chinese Volunteers Needed

The department of transfusion medicine (Blood Bank) at the Clinical Center seeks healthy volunteers (male and female) 18 years of age and older to participate in a research apheresis study that assesses the influence of ethnic background on immune response. Volunteers are needed who were born in China, including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore or first generation offspring of parents who were born in these countries. Two visits are required and compensation is available. Call Rose Werden, (301) 402-0757. ■

## Muscular Leg Pain?

If it is caused by blocked arteries and it occurs with activity but improves with rest call NIH at 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) for more information on a new study. Refer to study 04-H-0143. ■



Dr. Donald Henderson

## CSR's Janet Newburgh Retires

By Don Luckett

"Sometimes it was a little scary along the way," says Dr. Janet Newburgh, looking back as she retires from the Center for Scientific Review, where she was associate director of the Division of Receipt and Referral. "There weren't tons of people doing what I was doing."

At age 18, she left her family in Miami, Okla., and went to Oklahoma State University to study foreign languages. But she soon realized she "was in the wrong pew." Newburgh discovered a keen interest in science and switched majors. At the end of her first semester, however, she got married and dropped out of school so her husband could continue his studies. "It's one of the things that a lot of Oklahoma girls did," she explains. But she still kept her foot in the door at the university. "I worked in the dean's office," she says, "and took correspondence courses."



Dr. Janet Newburgh

A year later, she gave birth to a son. Her desire to become a scientist only grew, and she returned to school 7 months later. "You put together child-care situations—wives of other students and day care centers," she explains. "And sometimes my grandmother stayed to help." Newburgh still struggled to manage her studies and her growing family—she had a second child a year later. "Sometimes I'd walk into an exam totally cold," she explains, "but it worked...it's pretty amazing."

Newburgh received her degree in chemistry in 1963 and applied for graduate study in biochemistry at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. "This was the very early days of increased funding for the natural sciences—post-Sputnik," she explains. "Two weeks later, I received an acceptance letter." She focused on enzyme and protein chemistry and her family. In her third year, she was pregnant with a third child and in the midst of a dissertation on the structure of the enolase enzyme.

It was impossible to avoid criticism back then. "My husband's mentor at the university leaned on me to abandon my studies," she explains. "He felt that I was not providing the proper wifely support...I came close to being swayed, but then I thought I was entitled to graduate school, and support from a fellowship made it possible to continue."

After receiving her Ph.D. in 1967, she moved to Bogotá, Colombia, where she taught chemistry and biochemistry at a private university and a high school. Newburgh returned to this country in 1971 and continued her protein enzyme research at

Oregon State University and the University of California, Berkeley. She then studied the pyruvate kinase isoenzymes. She later moved her NIH grant to the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

In 1980, Newburgh joined the NIH Grants Associates Program, which recruited accomplished scientists from the academic community for careers in research administration. "It was a year of working assignments, seminars and courses," she says. "Sometimes I had to pinch myself it was so wonderful." After completing the program, she spent 7 years as a program officer, first at the National Eye Institute and later at the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

In June 1988, Newburgh had a life-changing conversation with Dr. Yvonne Maddox, now deputy director at NICHD. Maddox invited her to see her run the Marine Corps Marathon. Newburgh, who was 46 years old at the time, surprised both Maddox and herself by saying she would run it with her despite having never run a marathon before. Since then, Newburgh has completed marathons in all 50 states. (See the Mar. 5, 2002 *NIH Record*.)

In 1990, Newburgh left NIH to take a year off and work as a consultant. During this time, she became involved in peer review and liked it so much she spent the next 7 years coordinating scientific review groups, which primarily assessed biomedical grant applications for the U.S. Army.

Her interest in peer review eventually led her back to NIH, and she joined CSR's Division of Receipt and Referral in 1998. "We sort out the applications to the different referral officers, who assign them to the appropriate institutes and review groups," she explains. "The most rewarding part has been helping people, both applicants and NIH staff, with problems concerning grant applications...and there have been loads of opportunities to do that."

Newburgh plans to continue to work as a consultant and run marathons. "I ran a marathon on Pike's Peak last August," she says, "and I've committed myself to going back this year because I think I can do that better."

When she reflects on her career, she says she is heartened by the fact her six children never complained about her working. "My oldest daughter once said, 'One of these days you're going to win a Nobel prize [because] you're a very good scientist,'" says Newburgh. "I'm still waiting to hear from Stockholm," she adds, with a quiet, satisfied laugh. **R**



Newburgh has completed marathons in all 50 states, including here at Pike's Peak.

## NINDS's Extramural Research Director Atwell Retires

By Shannon E. Garnett

"I could not imagine having a more exciting and rewarding career than the time I have spent at NIH," said Dr. Constance W. Atwell, director of the NINDS Division of Extramural Research, who recently retired after 26 years of service to NIH.

"To move from conducting research in academia to facilitating research through grants and contracts was clearly the right choice for me, and I have never looked back."

Atwell earned her undergraduate degree in 1963 as a National Merit Scholar from Mount Holyoke College, where she graduated *magna cum laude* and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. She earned both her master's and Ph.D. degrees—specializing in developmental psychobiology—from UCLA in 1965 and 1968, respectively.

After UCLA, she went to Pitzer College and the Claremont Graduate School in California to serve as a professor—teaching perceptual, developmental, cognitive and physiological

psychology—and a scientist—serving as principal investigator on an NIH-funded research project on the development of vision and the vestibular system in human infants. She spent 1968 conducting cross-cultural color vision research in Kenya and teaching child psychology at University College in Nairobi. She then returned to Pitzer.

Atwell joined NIH in 1978 as a grants associate in the Division of Research Grants (now CSR), where she received a year of training in health science administration with an emphasis on extramural programs.

She then moved to NEI to become chief of the Office of Clinical Applications of Vision Research, directing a program on the role of the central nervous system in vision. In 1981, she became chief of the Strabismus, Amblyopia and Visual Processing Branch. In this post she planned, developed and evaluated research and training programs in the visual, oculomotor and perceptual sciences. Her accomplishments included starting the first NIH-funded clinical trial in strabismus and neuro-ophthalmology, and developing a clinical research collaboration among basic vision scientists, ophthalmologists and optometrists.

Later, in 1988, she took on an added duty, becoming NEI's deputy associate director for extramural and collaborative programs—assisting the associate director in reviewing research and training programs, coordinating the administrative efforts of the scientific program branch chiefs and managing the day-to-day activities of the extramural and collaborative programs.

Atwell left NEI in 1992 to accept the position of

associate director for extramural activities, NINDS.

In 1998 she served as acting NINDS deputy director and was appointed associate director for extramural research in 1999.

"Connie is an extraordinary manager," said NINDS director Dr. Story Landis. "Her keen encyclopedic knowledge of extramural research and training policy and programs has been a great and invaluable resource to NINDS staff, the NIH community at large and especially to our many grantees and award recipients. Throughout her time at NIH, she has been extremely committed to the research career development and training of investigators—junior and senior. She has served as a wonderful mentor to those around her, and perhaps most importantly, to thousands of individuals and institutions that have received our grants and awards. Her willingness to give of her time and counsel to potential applicants at professional meetings stands out as a measure of her complete and total devotion to the job. She will be sorely missed."

In addition to her work at NINDS, Atwell was involved in a number of trans-NIH committees. She cochaired the advisory committee for research on women's health, which helped to increase visibility of women's health issues at NIH, and later led to the establishment of ORWH. She also chaired the improving peer review committee, a reinvention component.

"This was not an ordinary committee," Atwell explained. "It was a think tank that allowed us to think outside of the box on how to design a peer review system." Many of the changes in peer review at NIH, such as streamlined review, criterion-based review and expedited council approvals stemmed from the work of this committee.

Beyond NIH, Atwell served on the executive committee of the Federal Demonstration Partnership—a public-private collaboration to improve administration of research grants and contracts at educational institutions, and as chair of the research business models subcommittee (RBMS)—part of the committee on science of the National Science and Technology Council—which was created to address policy implications arising from the changing nature of scientific research and to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of federally funded research.

During her career, Atwell received many honors, including the NIH Director's Award and the NINDS Leadership Award, both in 1998. In 1992, the Low Vision Research Group established the Atwell Award for Excellence in Low Vision Research to honor her instrumental role in encouraging high-quality low vision research. ■



*Another of Dr. Constance Atwell's contributions to NIH has been her 20 years as a YMCA fitness instructor, teaching most of her classes as part of the NIH aerobics and dance program in Bldg. T-39. In retirement, she looks forward to spending more time with her husband, who retired 3 years ago, and her 6-month-old grandson. She will also continue to work with the RBMS part-time.*

## Bike To Work Day 2004 Dawns Sunny, Perfect for Participation

Approximately 100 bicycle commuters enjoyed the mild weather and took part in Bike To Work Day festivities held May 7 on the Paul Rogers Plaza in front of Bldg. 1.

"We've already had a big turnout," said Carl Henn, president of NIH's Bicycle Commuter Club, at about 8:30 a.m., about midway through the event's 2-hour duration. "For once we got great weather for the day." Bike To Work Days past have either been cloudy and overcast, or raining outright—neither atmosphere conducive to encouraging a commute exposed to the elements.



NIH bicyclists forage for food and fashion.

According to bike club member Jim Tomlin of CIT, this year's event was "a great success, getting feedback from cyclists regarding the commuting challenges that NIH bicyclists face, including the need for more bike lockers and covered racks, safer campus access points, and the need for enhanced motorist awareness of cyclists. Many new bicycle commuters chose Bike To Work Day to make their inaugural commute, and reported very positive results to the volunteers from the Bicycle Commuter Club. Many thanks to Angela Atwood-Moore for coordinating the event."



Marti Scheel of NLM

Marti Scheel of NLM's cataloging section uses a

daily combination of biking and Metrorailing to get to work. A Greenbelt resident, she normally cycles to the Greenbelt Metro station, catches the train to Fort Totten station, and bikes from there to NIH.

"It's about 11 miles that way," she says, "and you can bring your bike on the subway before 7 a.m."

Scheel would log about 17 miles from home to work if she rode her bike the whole way. "I rarely do that, though. It



Bike commuter takes off after visiting event.

depends on several factors, including the weather." In addition to partaking of refreshments and information on local riding trails, participants were able to browse for biking outfits and gear, and—at least for a day—not worry about scouting out a parking space, no matter what time they arrived on campus.

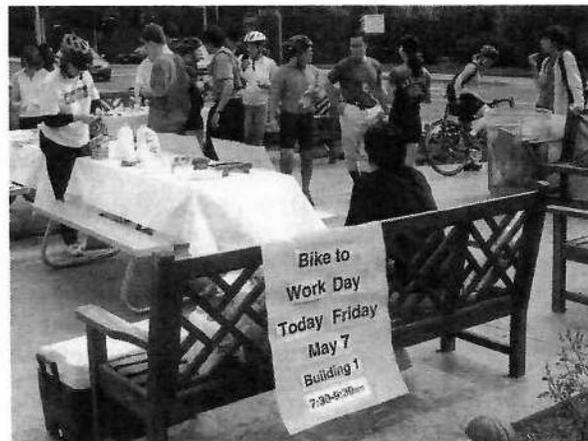
At right, Peter Good and his son, Kevin, commuted about 2 miles from home to work at NHGRI and POPI preschool, respectively, on a bicycle built for two (or one and a half). Below, the refreshment table is heavily trafficked on a perfect day for an outside event.



At Bike To Work Day on the main campus, cyclists shared commuting challenges facing NIH'ers, including a need for more bike lockers and covered racks, safer campus access points, and the need for better motorist awareness of cyclists. Some participants, like Scheel, had made a pit stop in downtown Bethesda, one of several regional stations set up for the day where like-minded folks could exchange similar concerns about the entire metropolitan area.



Pleased with the turnout, NIH bike club President Carl Henn (r) watched more than 100 NIH'ers come and go.



## Need Kidney Transplant?

Do you have kidney failure and need a kidney transplant? NIH has kidney transplant studies designed to reduce your need for anti-rejection drugs. For information call 1-800-411-1222, TTY 1-866-411-1010. Refer to study 99-DK-0120.

## Former Lab Chief Simpson Dies at 65

Dr. Robert T. Simpson of Lemont, Pa., died Apr. 21 after a fall at home. He was an international leader for over 35 years in research on chromatin, a fundamental component of chromosomes, and its role in gene regulation. He spent 25 years directing a biomedical research laboratory at NIH before becoming the Verne M. Willaman professor of molecular biology at Penn State in 1995.

Simpson's research, published in over 120 papers, established numerous precedents in the discovery of important structure/function relationships in chromatin proteins. His early biochemical and biophysical studies of chromatin structure and composition were landmark papers that are now regularly cited in published articles, up to two decades later. His work established many of the crucial parameters for the structure of nucleosomes, chromosomal subunits, and the functions of certain proteins within these structures.

During the early 1990s, Simpson's laboratory used yeast genetics to further explore chromatin function, resulting in what has been called "the first and best evidence of the role of nucleosome-positioning in the regulation of gene transcription and DNA replication *in vivo*."

Simpson was recognized as an outstanding mentor and teacher. His numerous former graduate students and postdoctoral trainees have made significant contributions to chromatin research, an accomplishment of which he was particularly proud. During his time at Penn State, hundreds of undergraduate students benefitted from his teaching in molecular medicine.

Simpson was born in Chicago and received his B.A. with high honors as a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Swarthmore College in 1959. He was an Alpha Omega Alpha graduate of Harvard Medical School, from which he received an M.D. (*cum laude*) in 1963. He earned a Ph.D. in biological chemistry at Harvard University in 1969, after which he joined the Public Health Service.

Simpson was chief of NIDDK's Laboratory of Cellular and Developmental Biology for 15 years and a cochair of the department of biochemistry at the Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences (FAES). In addition, he served as a member of the molecular cytology study section, was president of the Assembly of Scientists at NIDDK and was on the FAES board of directors. His efforts were recognized with a Commendation Award in



Dr. Robert T. Simpson

1982, the Meritorious Service Award in 1992 and the Distinguished Service Award in 1995 from the PHS. He retired as a captain in 1994.

Simpson served on the editorial board of both the *Journal of Biological Chemistry* and *Nucleic Acids Research*, and was a former executive editor of the latter.

His wife, four children and home were primary in his life. He enjoyed camping with children, baking bread and using his extensive cookbook collection to whip up meals for his family and friends, using Swedish themes.

He also enjoyed woodworking, was an avid wrestling fan, and enjoyed sailing and fishing. He owned and cared for an historic Chesapeake drake-tail boat, which he later donated to an area museum.

He is survived by his wife Katherine Rupkey Simpson of Lemont and four sons: Todd Andrew of Reston, Va.; William Robert and his wife, Maggie Hallam, of Fairbanks, Alaska; Michael Scott and his wife, Linda, of Silver Spring; and Brian David of Kensington. He is also survived by four grandchildren and a sister, Karen Kuehl of Somerset, Md. ■

## CIT Computer Classes

All courses are given without charge. For more information call (301) 594-6248 or consult the training program's home page at <http://training.cit.nih.gov>.

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## NEI's Gerald Robison Dies at 70

Dr. Gerry Robison was always careful to note what others may have missed. While golfing with his coworkers from the National Eye Institute, Robison would comb the course's roughs and fish its ponds for lost balls. At game's end, he could proudly go home with a surplus of balls, reward for the extra effort. As chief of NEI's Biological Imaging Core, it was this patient and observant inclination that made him a meticulous scientist.

Robison was also known for his empathy and compassion, and his death Mar. 18 of colon cancer leaves his colleagues and friends missing the warmth and kindness which enlivened his scientific career. Robison was 70.

"Gerry was a wonderful scientist whose work was always of the highest quality," said Dr. Paul A. Sieving, NEI director. "His contributions to understanding aldose reductase and issues of diabetic retinopathy and of cataract formation ultimately will benefit many people with medical problems. On the personal side, Gerry was an excellent mentor to young researchers and a delightful person to be with.

"I enjoyed Gerry and his stories," Sieving continued. "His recollections of how things were, and his suggestions for how they should be, were very helpful. I have heard many stories over the past few weeks about Gerry from his laboratory colleagues and acquaintances. It is clear that the entire NEI family thought very highly of Gerry."

Dr. Peter Kador, professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Nebraska, was chief of NEI's Laboratory of Ocular Therapeutics until 2002 and worked closely with Robison. "Gerry's scientific contributions led to the development of animal models that could be used to study diabetic retinopathy," Kador said. "His studies were crucial in showing the role of aldose reductase in the development of diabetic retinopathy and how the rat can be used as a model for looking at how retinal changes develop in human retinopathy. He was the first to reproducibly isolate rat retinal vessels and carefully document their changes. His cataract findings also complemented work done by others at the NEI by demonstrating that galactose feeding resulted in the quick formation of vacuoles in lens epithelial cells. That was the first time it had been demonstrated by histology that pathology was directly occurring in epithelial cells.

"Gerry mentored many postdocs and students and worked well with them," Kador added. "He was a leader in his field and a gentleman. Everyone respected him. He was a representative of the type of good science that goes on at the NEI."

Dr. Sam Zigler, chief of NEI's lens and cataract biology section and Robison's supervisor for the past 13 years, said Robison was "a tremendous source of expertise regarding the anatomy and

physiology of the eye in health and disease. He was such an optimistic and helpful person who was always ready and willing to consult, advise and give everyone a hand.

"Outside of the laboratory, Gerry was devoted to his family and to the Mormon church," Zigler added. "He was also an outstanding photographer. He enjoyed taking pictures. Gerry was the unofficial photographer at dozens of eye research meetings over the years, sending copies of his snapshots to attendees from all around the globe. He was very meticulous about the micrographs and images that he published in scientific papers, and that high standard was also evident in the photographs he took outside the laboratory."

Dr. Robert Fariss, an NEI staff scientist who worked with Robison in NEI's Biological Imaging Core, said that "through a long and productive scientific career, Gerry never lost his passion for research. He succeeded in striking the perfect balance of patience and intellectual rigor."

Robison received his doctorate in genetics from the University of California at Berkeley. He came to NEI in 1972 and authored or coauthored 117 scientific papers. He was a much sought-after speaker, lecturing at almost 50 scientific meetings, symposiums and seminars in the past 20 years.

"Gerry was a wonderful mentor, outstanding scientist, and caring person who taught me many things," said Dr. Nora Laver, director of the ocular pathology laboratory at Tufts-New England Medical Center who worked with Robison as a visiting associate, visiting scientist and special volunteer from 1988 to 1996. "Dr. Robison was an example of what a researcher should be. He had an incredibly inquisitive mind, and at the same time was such a wonderful person, someone who would help you as a human being. He supported me with family issues and assisted me with visa matters, something most people would hesitate to do because it's a lot of hard work. We had a long, wonderful working relationship. The field of biomedical research and medicine has lost an icon."

Robison is survived by his wife of 46 years, Lucia, four children and 19 grandchildren. ■



*NEI's Dr. Gerry Robison, whom colleagues said ate a pint of ice cream a day and never gained any weight, shows off his "favorite" tie—the ice cream tie.*

## NIH Library Offers New Classes, Convenience

Social scientists, the NIH Library has a new class for you—Social Sciences Resources. This course explores databases and research resources available at your desktop. Free, hands-on classes on 14 additional topics are also held in the Library Training Rm., Bldg. 10. And for your convenience, some classes are now held at the Fernwood Bldg. For more library training information, visit <http://nihlibrary.nih.gov/ResourceTraining/>. ■

*The Wreck of the 3230***Grand Old Tulip Poplar Felled**

At about 2:33 p.m. on May 4, the second largest tree on the NIH campus was felled by workmen after it had been determined that the 100-foot specimen—already the subject of various modes of tree-doctoring—was in danger of collapse. The massive tulip poplar, located in a valley between Bldg. 15K and the on-campus houses of various NIH officials, could have been expected to shake the ground when it fell, but it did not; the tree was rotted to the core, and essentially hollow.

Lynn Mueller, who directs grounds maintenance for the Office of Research Facilities, chronicled the tree's decline: "During our yearly winter inspections of the campus trees, William Scofield discovered that the core wood in tulip poplar #3230 had severely declined with extensive rot (see *NIH Record*, June 10, 2003, for a story on Scofield's



Workers used a large chain saw to topple the trunk of mighty tulip poplar #3230. After pruning away all of the tree's major limbs, they tied a rope to the top of the trunk and attached it to a small bulldozer, which pulled the tree in the proper direction.

diagnostic expertise). The tree was in danger of collapsing, especially once it had leafed out, adding weight and wind resistance. Removal was also timed to be before birds nested and after squirrel babies were able to fend for themselves. No bird nests were found, but a squirrel nest was discovered. The climbers allowed five juvenile squirrels to escape before the upper limbs were removed.

"Since the rot of the trunk was extensive with the center totally void, we were unable to count the rings to determine its age," Mueller continued. "The tree trunk was 63 inches in diameter and 15' 8" (188 inches) in circumference and approximately 100 feet tall, making it the second largest tree on campus. A tree that size may be between 100 and 125 years old.

"Tulip poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) grow exceedingly fast compared to oaks and that makes them generally more vulnerable to rot and storm damage," said Mueller. "It was not a Montgomery County champion, as that tree is 293 inches in circumference. The Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping Team, ORF, had performed numerous prunings and preventive maintenance work on the tree over the years, including installing steel cables between large branches to help share the stresses of weight and wind."

Workers some four decades ago had also tried cavity-filling in the belief that filling trunk cavities would stop further decay and



*Rest in peace, #3230. Arborists had tried wire supports, cavity-filling and other tricks to keep the old tree upright, but the tree kept declining in health.*

strengthen the trunk or limbs, said Mueller. "Today's knowledge says to prune away or leave such injury or cavities alone as a healthy tree may compartmentalize the injury or disease and go on with living or, if not, fall into further decline," he noted.

During the 1950's and 1960's, various materials were used as hole-fillers including concrete, concrete blocks and a hardening liquid foam, Mueller explained. But all eventually failed as they tended to hold moisture, he said. "This tree had the hardening foam. Such fillers then present a disposal problem when the tree is taken down."

Mueller added, "Our largest tree on campus by circumference and spread is a red maple, tree #2315, located along Rockville Pike where the small stream goes under the highway. That tree is 210 inches in circumference, 117 inches in diameter with an approximate crown spread of 65 feet. It may well be over 100 years old too."

PHOTOS: RICH MCMANUS



*Timber!*



*Major sections of the tree await removal by the tree contractor, Custom Touch Tree Removal.*