

nih record

Zerhouni Presents 2008 Budget Request to Congress

By Belle Waring

NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni appeared Mar. 6 before the House appropriations subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education to present NIH's FY 2008 budget request and to discuss priorities for this year and beyond. Flanked by 10 institute and center directors, he requested \$28.9 billion, up \$313 million from the FY 2007 request of \$28.587 billion.

Subcommittee chair Rep. Dave Obey (D-WI) welcomed Zerhouni and his colleagues: "Let me say, doctor, that we want numbers put in context. What will this country look like in 10 years?"

"Major factors will force a transformation of medicine and health," Zerhouni replied, and laid out the megatrends. Due to advances over the past 30 years, Americans are now living longer and healthier, thanks in part

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NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni (r) responds to questions at a House appropriations subcommittee hearing, with NICHD director Dr. Duane Alexander (l) and NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci.



ABOVE • Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) examines a microchip NIH director Elias Zerhouni brought to Capitol Hill. See story below.

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Col. Hiram Mann, an original Tuskegee Airman

Fighting To Be a Fighter Pilot

Tuskegee Airman Headlines NIH Black History Salute

By Carla Garnett

The third time was the charm for Hiram Mann's dream.

In 1940, he was a young man with a year or so of college behind him. Tensions between the U.S. and its foreign enemies were heating up. Mann felt a war was unavoidable. But he was also a newlywed whose bride threatened to shoot off his toe if he even considered enlisting in the seemingly inevitable conflict. Even that didn't stop Mann from yearning to be a fighter pilot. He wrote to the Army asking to attend flight school. The Army replied "in no uncertain terms," Mann recalled: "There are no facilities to train Negroes to fly in any branch of the American military service." Twice more

SEE BLACK HISTORY, PAGE 8



Dr. Gretchen Birbeck (c) with Esther and Loreen of Malawi

NINDS Grantee Birbeck Studies Epilepsy in Africa

By Shannon E. Garnett

A typical day for Dr. Gretchen Birbeck may sound familiar to many in medical research. She begins with the "morning report," a daily update on her patients' condi-

tions and issues. Then she evaluates patients, consults with colleagues and even counsels patients and their family members. But her days are anything but typical. A neuroepidemiologist and NINDS grantee, Birbeck spends her days—at least for half a year—in sub-Saharan Africa, specifically Zambia and Malawi, studying epilepsy and tending to patients as part of the Chikankata Epilepsy Care Team.

In one study cofunded by NINDS and the Fogarty International Center, Birbeck and her colleagues at the University of Zambia are

SEE BIRBECK, PAGE 4



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briefs

Alumnus Pert To Address Women's Fair

Dr. Candace Pert, an internationally recognized psychopharmacologist and former research professor at Georgetown University School of Medicine who was also a section chief at the National Institute of Mental Health (1975-1988), will be the keynote speaker at the 2007 Montgomery County Women's Fair on Saturday, Mar. 31. The fair, a day-long event featuring 30 workshops and a variety of exhibits, will be held at the Hilton-Washington D.C./Rockville Executive Meeting Center (formerly the Doubletree Rockville Hotel), 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville. For information and to register visit www.mcwomensfair.org or call (301) 649-5551. Pert is currently scientific director of RAPID Pharmaceuticals, where she is developing peptide T, a therapeutic treatment of HIV.

NIH 9-Hole Golf League

The NIH Golf Association (9-hole coed league) is seeking new members for the 2007 season. The 9-Hole league meets after work and plays at Needwood Golf Course in Rockville (Tuesdays) or Northwest Park Golf Course in Silver Spring (Thursdays). The league features two flights of mildly competitive handicapped-match play and one non-competitive flight. The season starts with an optional Spring Outing (members and guests) in April, then regular play through the summer, and a members and guests Fall Outing in September. The league has a block of reserved tee times (generally 4:15-6 p.m.) and serves as a great social/networking opportunity to meet fellow NIH'ers and to improve your golfing skills. Interested players need only join the R&W Association and the NIH 9-Hole Golf League then coordinate their preferred monthly playing schedules a couple of weeks in advance with their flight captain and the league treasurer—the rest is fun. For more information, email John Hamill at jhamill@mail.nih.gov or visit <http://www.recgov.org/golf/>.

NIH Hosts Federal Environmental Symposium

NIH will host the 6th annual Federal Environmental Symposium in the Natcher Conference Center and Lister Hill Auditorium June 4-6. This year's theme will focus on the recently signed Executive Order 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy, and Transportation Management." The symposium will include federal facility presentations and displays on environmental successes and best federal government management practices. There will be a wide variety of topics covered of interest to personnel involved in public health, environmental management systems, pollution

prevention and toxics; environmental compliance and partnerships; transportation and energy conservation; construction planning and sustainable buildings; facilities management and information technology. Green procurement workshops will be available and participation may satisfy refresher training requirements for procurement officials. For more information on the workshops, contact Linda Stivaletti-Petty at (202) 720-1906.

The symposium is open to employees and contractors of all federal agencies; advance registration for attendees and exhibitors is required. Registration is free; to register and get more information visit <http://www.fedcenter.gov/symposium2007>.

FAES Bookstore Offers Material of All Sorts

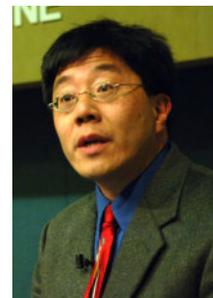
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Zerhouni To Lecture on Diversity, Apr. 4

NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni will speak at the NIH Diversity Seminar Series on Wednesday, Apr. 4 from 11 a.m. to noon in Wilson Hall, Bldg. 1. Sponsored by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, the seminar will kick off a series on "Valuing Diversity." The series is a tool for incorporating concepts of diversity in the workplace and a resource for managing a multicultural workforce. All are encouraged to attend. Sign language interpreters will be provided. For more information, call (301) 451-0478. Individuals who need reasonable accommodation should call Carlton Coleman at (301) 496-2906 or (301) 451-2290 TTY.

Sha Gives History of Medicine Lecture

Dr. Richard C. Sha, associate professor of literature at American University, recently gave an NLM History of Medicine lecture on "A Physiology of the Imagination: Romanticism, Pathology, Transcendence." He discussed popular views of the imagination in the 18th and 19th centuries and analyzed its role in the lives and work of Romantic poets such as John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Sha is particularly interested in the fact that these poets had great faith in the imagination "as the means to transcendence and social transformation," despite the fact that scientific writers of the time "overwhelmingly saw the imagination as pathological."



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Koroshetz Named NINDS Deputy Director

Dr. Walter J. Koroshetz was recently named deputy director of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. His appointment began on Jan. 2.

Prior to joining NINDS, Koroshetz was vice-chair of the neurology service and director of stroke and neurointensive care services at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). He was also a professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School and has led neurology resident training at MGH since 1990.

“Dr. Koroshetz is an internationally renowned neurologist and outstanding investigator and administrator. His leadership skills and recognized expertise in stroke, imaging, training and neurointensive care will serve the institute well,” said NINDS director Dr. Story Landis.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Koroshetz earned his undergraduate degree from Georgetown University in 1975 and his medical degree from the University of Chicago in 1979. He trained in internal medicine at the University of Chicago and MGH, in neurology at MGH and did postdoctoral studies in cellular neurophysiology at MGH and the Harvard neurobiology department. He joined the neurology staff, first in the Huntington’s disease unit and then in the stroke and neurointensive care service.

Koroshetz has conducted basic electrophysiology research in cell membranes and in cultures of nerve cells and glial cells (which support nerve cells). His clinical research has focused on finding new treatments for patients with Huntington’s disease and stroke. He is the author of more than 100 peer-reviewed publications as well as numerous book chapters and review articles. He has supervised the training of more than 150 residents and fellows.

Koroshetz is no stranger to NINDS. He has served on NINDS intramural review and oversight committees, been involved in various NINDS symposia and clinical trials and served as the institute’s representative at the American Neurological Association’s Career Development Symposium. He was not only a member of the NINDS-chaired Brain Attack Coalition—a group of professional, voluntary and governmental entities dedicated to reducing the occurrence, disabilities and death associated with stroke—but also led the committee whose work resulted in significantly higher hospital reimbursement for acute ischemic stroke management.

As an NINDS grantee, Koroshetz received funding for laboratory and clinical research projects on Huntington’s disease, neuroprotection and translational research in acute stroke.

He is a member of numerous professional societies including the American Academy of Neurology, Society for Neuroscience, Huntington’s Disease Society and National Stroke Association. He is associate editor for MRI with the *Journal of Neuroimaging* and was an associate editor of *Cerebrovascular Diseases*.

Koroshetz replaces Dr. Audrey Penn, who had served as deputy director since 1995 and is now senior advisor to the NINDS director.—

Shannon E. Garnett



Dr. Walter J. Koroshetz

Mider Lecture Set Apr. 4 in Masur

NICHD’s Dr. Jennifer Lippincott-Schwartz will deliver this year’s G. Burroughs Mider Lecture on Apr. 4. Part of the NIH Director’s Wednesday Afternoon Lecture series, the talk will be held at 3 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. Lippincott-



Schwartz will speak on “Emerging Fluorescence Technologies for the Analysis of Protein Localization and Organelle Dynamics.” She is chief of the section on organelle biology of the Cell Biology and Metabolism Branch, NICHD. She has pioneered use of green fluorescent protein technology for imaging intracellular protein traffic and organelle biogenesis in live cells. She and her colleagues have also developed the photoactivated fluorescent protein molecules used for photoactivated fluorescent microscopy (PALM), which can determine the arrangement of proteins in cellular organelles. The Mider Lecture was created in 1968 to commemorate Mider’s distinguished career, which included a term as director of NIH laboratories and clinics.

Right:
 Birbeck (third from l) and members of the Chikankata Epilepsy Care Team provide care to people with epilepsy in the community.

Below:
 Birbeck conducts a community-based follow-up visit in Malawi.



BIRBECK
 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

examining epilepsy and its social and economic consequences from the perspective of diverse groups. Her grant, “Epilepsy-Associated Stigma in Zambia,” resulted from an FIC request for applications.



Zambia has an unusually high prevalence of epilepsy—at least 12 persons per 1,000 are affected. By comparison, the United States has an epilepsy prevalence of 2 persons per 1,000. In addition to the high prevalence, Zambia—and the continent of Africa as a whole—attach a huge social stigma to the disorder. People with epilepsy—who generally rely on traditional healers instead of standard medicine and have limited access to standard medical care—are often misunderstood by their family and the community. Many believe epi-

lepsy is contagious and that seizures are a sign of possession by evil spirits.

As a result, a large part of Birbeck’s research involves education to improve social acceptance and access to treatment and to eliminate the stigma. She and her colleagues are designing community-based interventions to improve quality of life for people with epilepsy. The interventions are based on data gleaned from focus groups of adults with epilepsy and parents of children with epilepsy and from interviews with the area’s traditional healers.

“Early in my Zambia-based work, the reality that epilepsy-associated stigma may actually cause

more morbidity than seizures became evident,” said Birbeck. “As we tried to deliver care and conduct biomedical studies of seizures, stigma was the 900-pound gorilla in the room that everyone knew was there, but no one bothered addressing. When NIH came forward with a request for applications aimed at studying stigma—well, wow! We recognized that we might be given the opportunity to better understand the mediators and impact of stigma. The possibility of formally assessing this phenomenon and subsequently developing programs to alleviate the negative impact of such stigma grabbed everyone’s attention here.”

Ask Birbeck how she ended up in Zambia and she will tell you the country sort of chose her. In 1994, as a medical student, she did a rotation at a rural Zambian hospital. “I wanted to see what it was like to deliver medical care without an MRI down the hall,” she said. “I’ve been spending time here regularly ever since.”

In fact, she explained that she was even sort of called to work in the field of neurology as well. As an undergraduate at Indiana University studying a pre-med curriculum—which included dissecting starfish and counting fruit-fly offspring—Birbeck struggled to maintain enthusiasm for a career in medicine. Then one day she wandered into a neuroscience class in the department of psychology and her life changed. “I was hooked,” she said. Neurology was her calling.

Birbeck went on to graduate in 1990 with a degree in chemistry and psychology. She then earned her medical degree in 1994 from the University of Chicago and a master of public health degree in epidemiology in 2000 from UCLA. From 1994 to 1998, she completed a neurology residency at Johns Hopkins Medi-

cal Center. After receiving her M.P.H., she spent 2 years as a Robert Wood Johnson clinical scholar at UCLA and then joined the faculty at Michigan State University. She has been dividing her time between the U.S. and Africa since 1994.

She co-founded the Chikankata Epilepsy Care Team in 2001, after conducting several hospital-based studies that suggested there was a substantial burden of undiagnosed and untreated epilepsy cases in Chikankata, a community in Zambia. Because she did not know how big the burden was, she and her colleagues conducted a door-to-door prevalence study of epilepsy there. "When we started there were 32 people with epilepsy registered from the community," she said. "By the time we finished, there were almost 900 and once we began to expand health care services, even more came out."

The goals of the team—which is made up of two physicians including Birbeck, a clinical officer, a ward auxiliary and two other non-medical staff with expertise in patient advocacy and counseling—are to provide care to people with epilepsy, conduct epilepsy research relevant to the area and assist Zambia in expanding its medical infrastructure to improve neurological care.

Birbeck's other research project in Africa is based in Malawi. There she is funded by NINDS to look for a link between cerebral malaria in children and subsequent epilepsy by studying children admitted to the Blantyre Malaria Project (a long-standing NIAID-funded venture focusing on children who die of severe malaria). She and her colleagues are following a group of survivors to determine if cerebral malaria is a risk factor for later epilepsy development. They are also conducting ongoing enrollment for the study.

Birbeck's ultimate goal is to develop acute interventions using neuroprotective agents with antimalarials to reduce the development of epilepsy in survivors of severe malaria. "I'm not a clinical trialist, but I think this is an important goal," she said. "Undoubtedly, we need to improve the lives of people with epilepsy. But wouldn't it be fabulous to prevent the development of epilepsy altogether?"

In addition to her work in Africa, Birbeck also serves as director of, and associate professor in, MSU's International Neurologic and Psychiatric Epidemiology Program, a relatively new venture that studies neurological and psychiatric disorders in developing countries. 🗨

'Recruiting 101' Seeks Gifted Ambassadors for NIH

The auditorium is bustling with activity. An eager job seeker paces the room, anxious to learn more about a career at NIH. She makes eye contact with a friendly recruiter and strides toward the booth. There she is met with a smile and a polished introduction:

"Good morning! My name is Alesia and I work at the National Institutes of Health. Would you like to learn more about our new Administrative Fellows Progr...wait, can we do that over? I meant 'Good afternoon.'"

Welcome to Recruiting 101.

On Jan. 31, 30 would-be recruiters gathered at Natcher auditorium for the inaugural session of Recruiting 101. The course was offered by the NIH human capital group to teach prospective recruiters from different ICs and professions the dos and don'ts of recruiting job seekers to careers at NIH.

The event began with an hour and a half of instruction on best practices for recruitment through a mix of classroom learning, moderated discussions and group exercises. The session also featured a pair of skits illustrating some "worst practices," depicting unengaged and overbearing recruiters.

After lunch, the potential recruiters were given a chance to put their new skills to the test as they staffed a mock job fair. A variety of pre-selected "applicants" wandered the room, simulating the bustling and sometimes chaotic nature of a live career fair. Trainees greeted, assessed and made recommendations to the candidates. Those identified by recruiters as well-qualified were even given the opportunity to apply for jobs online through laptops.

Participants were enthusiastic about the class. "I thought the training was excellent—very informative and fun," said Mary Affeldt, chief of NIDA's Administrative Management Branch and a participant in the event.

The recruiters will get a chance to recruit for real in the coming months. They will be employed at a host of career fairs and information sessions at the area's top colleges and universities, recruiting for the new NIH Administrative Fellows Program.

AFP is part of an NIH-wide initiative to recruit new talent to administrative careers. Three job series were selected for the program pilot: administrative officer, grants management and contracts management. Representatives from each of these areas will interview qualified candidates. Those selected for the program will be hired by individual institutes and centers.—David Uejio 🗨



Top: Jessica Schwartz explains the NIH Administrative Fellows Program to "applicant" Quincy Jones.

Bottom: Penny Jones (second from r) and Shannon Thompson (r) take questions from a group of job seekers.



BUDGET HEARING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Top:

At the hearing, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (I, D-IL) and subcommittee chair Rep. Dave Obey (D-WI) listen as NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni (at right) discusses his outlook for medical research. Shown in the photo with Zerhouni are (from l) Richard Turman, HHS deputy assistant secretary for budget; Alexander; and NHLBI director Dr. Elizabeth Nabel.

Below:

Past chair of the subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH) warmly greets Zerhouni after the hearing.

PHOTOS: MICHAEL SPENCER



to the total NIH investment of \$44 per year for each American. Deaths from cancer, heart disease and stroke have decreased, while life expectancy has risen. Meanwhile, there are challenges in the shift from acute to chronic conditions; an aging population; health disparities; infectious diseases; obesity; and biodefense. As for expenditures, “in 10 years, these will double,” Zerhouni predicted, projecting \$4.1 trillion in health costs by 2017.

Then he made his case.

“The paradigm of the 21st century is to prevent disease,” Zerhouni said. “That doesn’t mean [disease] will only be solved by pills; it may require interventions in the behavioral or social science areas. Can we discover the fundamental drivers of the disease process 25 years before it hits the patient? Can we strike the disease before the disease strikes us? This is the paradigm shift and the focus of NIH research for the next 15, 20 years.”

Zerhouni and the IC directors fielded questions reflecting national issues as well as constituent concerns. The President’s NIH 2008 budget request, Obey cautioned, “doesn’t adjust for inflation or real per capita needs.” He and his colleagues were generally sympathetic to the NIH cause. Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) quipped, “Dr. Zerhouni, I appreciate you bringing in this microchip [which tracks every gene in the human organism]—that’s from San Jose.” Honda’s district includes Silicon Valley, the birthplace of IT innovation.

Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA) recounted how his 4-year-old granddaughter had been brought from California to NIH for help: “I want you to know how grateful we are,” he said, “and I think the country should be [grateful] for the work that you’re about.”

Testimony included these topics:

- **Health disparities.** Overall, American health has improved, but “it’s unequal improvement,” Zerhouni noted. Health disparities are among the top 6 priorities for NIH, with programs coordinated by NCMHD drawing 10 percent of the budget. NIH will provide Congress with a complete review of programs, both intramural and extramural, as well as a review of strategies for training to ensure diversity.

- **Peer review.** Responding to the charge that NIH grantees form an exclusive club, Zerhouni explained that only 50 percent of first-time grants are renewed; after 5 years, only 25 percent are renewed: “The turnover is there. The peer review system is what you have to go through. It’s like democracy—it’s the worst system, until you try the others.”

- **Vaccines.** Current HIV/AIDS vaccines are now in trial, said NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci. Meanwhile, an RFP for developing a third-generation anthrax vaccine has been rescinded because none of the proposals were “mature enough to go ahead,” he said, “and when the field isn’t mature, [we need] basic research.”

- **Heart disease.** Recent declines in heart disease are attributable to lifestyle changes as well as drug therapies, Zerhouni said. NHLBI director Dr. Elizabeth Nabel described the largest

longitudinal cohort study of Hispanic heart health in America, to extend over 6½ years and to straddle several ICs. She also reported that sleep disorders can affect the heart (as well as the lungs and neurological system).

• **Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.** Zerhouni confirmed that NIH is the pass-through funding point for the U.S. contribution to the Global Fund. Obey quipped that NIH acts as “the Bank of Bethesda” in this accounting process.

• **Obesity.** Rates of obesity among the young have increased at rates greater than expected, Zerhouni said, and NIEHS is looking at its relationship to environment. For example, if architects designed buildings whose first 3 floors had no elevators except for those in stringent need of them, “we could decrease obesity by 25 percent,” Zerhouni said.

• **Mental health.** Zerhouni described depression as a growing concern, especially among people ages 24-44. NICHD director Dr. Duane Alexander described the problem of “the outdoor experience” now missing from many children’s lives and how that lack may contribute to their rising rates of depression.

• **Budget constraints.** The U.S. is holding its own, said Zerhouni, “but when I project into the future, I am concerned. We are number one in research production, but there is increasing equilibration worldwide.” Furthermore, NIH is seeing a 44 percent drop in its foreign trainees “because there’s no money,” Nabel said. NCI director Dr. John Niederhuber added: “The impact on our clinical trials is dramatic. There will be 30 fewer phase III trials; 60 fewer phase II trials; and 3,000 fewer patients in clinical trials overall.” Alexander said there would be a trans-NIH plan to rebuild lost funding for Down syndrome, which concerns his institute as well as NIA.

• **Child health.** Newborn screening is high on the list of priorities, Alexander said. As for funding the National Children’s Study, Obey stated: “We’re going to put that money back next year.”

Slides of Zerhouni’s presentation are available at <http://www.nih.gov/about/director/budget-request/index.htm>. ❶

NIGMS’s René Receives Mentoring Award

As a student in the racially segregated South, Dr. Anthony René attended predominantly African-American schools. Prohibited from going to the local state college in his hometown of Lake Charles, La., he attended Southern University, a historically black university in Baton Rouge. There, René met one of his first mentors, who provided him with an opportunity to conduct research and encouraged him to pursue a Ph.D. in the sciences.

“I’m not sure I would have had the courage or confidence to go to graduate school without the direction and advice I received from my mentors,” René said. “My parents received very limited schooling in rural Louisiana—even a college education was something beyond their imagination.”

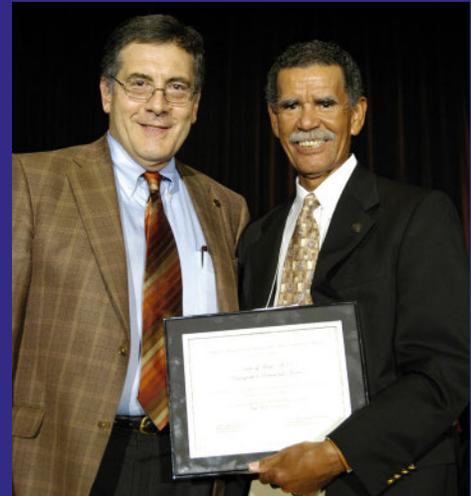
Today, as assistant director for referral and liaison at NIGMS, René oversees programs that offer internships, training and research support for high school, college, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. A large part of his career focuses on recruiting underrepresented minorities into biomedical and behavioral research careers.

“I was lucky to have had great mentors, and now I have an opportunity to ‘pay back,’” he said.

René was recently honored for his “unparalleled commitment to fostering the success of underrepresented students in the sciences” by the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). He was among three recipients of the society’s 2006 Distinguished Awards, which recognize individuals who have dedicated themselves to science, education and mentoring. René accepted the society’s Distinguished Professional Mentor Award at a recent ceremony during the SACNAS national conference in Tampa.

Dr. Robert Pozos, a biology professor and director of two NIGMS Minority Opportunities in Research (MORE) programs at San Diego State University, was also among the honorees.

“I am delighted that a former NIGMS advisory council member and an NIGMS employee were recognized with awards for their lifelong contributions to mentoring,” said Dr. Clifton Poodry, director of the MORE division. “Mentoring is key to improving diversity in the next generation of biomedical scientists.” —Jilliene Mitchell



Dr. Anthony René (r), NIGMS assistant director for referral and liaison, displays mentoring award with Dr. Clifton Poodry, NIGMS MORE division director.



BLACK HISTORY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Above:

Black History Month observance participants include (standing, from l) NIAMS director Dr. Stephen Katz, Capt. Janelle Harden (whose mother, Dr. J. Taylor Harden, works at NIA), Col. Nathan Thomas, Kay Johnson Graham of OEODM and (seated) Lt. Col. Hiram Mann and Kristina Soper, staff assistant to U.S. Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD).

Below:

In a photo from the World War II era, Mann fulfills his dream of flying combat missions for his country.

EVENT PHOTOS: BILL BRANSON



he'd appeal for combat flight training before he got his wish. More than 65 years later, Mann remembers like it was yesterday. A man doesn't forget being rejected to serve his country simply because of his race.

Despite the fact that Mann is one of fewer than 500 black pilots who flew combat missions in World War II, it's hard to find his story—or the story of his fellow Tuskegee Airmen—in most American history books. Such gaps in knowledge get closed usually only once a year, in February. That's why the nation still needs to celebrate Black History Month, said Dr. Vivian Pinn, NIH associate director for research on women's health. She hosted "Telling Our Story: Across the Generations, African Americans' Service to Country," a Black History Month observance sponsored Feb. 28 by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management.

The program gathered Mann and representatives from two other generations of African Americans who have served in the U.S. military to tell their stories of achievement.

For a long time before 1940, Mann recounted, the U.S. military remained resolute about who was qualified to wear an American uniform. After all, a 1925 Army War College study of "Negroes in combat" had concluded that they lacked intelligence, ambition and courage; they were unsuitable to serve in the military, much less as fighter pilots. That document was used to deny not only flight training, but also many other potential leadership posts to African Americans in the U.S. armed forces.

Nevertheless, Mann said, civil rights leaders of the era and several officials in Congress began

to push for black pilot trainees. "Give our boys a chance to fly," became a mantra for a small, but persistent cadre. Under pressure in 1941, the Army set up an all-black pursuit squadron to train for combat duty. The "Red-Tail Angels" (named for the markings on their aircraft) were born.

"Tuskegee Army Air Field was built as an experiment destined to fail," Mann explained. "They built it trying to prove that we could not handle high-technical equipment. But we fooled them. We turned that adversity into victory."

Mann's second appeal to train was rejected for two more reasons: he was married (pilots at the time were required to be single) and he only had 1 year of college (flight trainees needed a minimum of 2 years). By 1942, however, the military needed pilots more than it needed to uphold strict academic and marital standards. The Army granted Mann's third request. Despite poor treatment by white instructors and pilots during the training, he graduated from the TAAF flight program as a single-engine combat fighter pilot in June 1944. He went on to fly several aircraft, including the P-51 Mustang, P-40 Warhawk and P-47 Thunderbolt fighter planes and a C-45 Expediter cargo plane. He retired from the U.S. Air Force as a lieutenant colonel with more than 21 years of service. He also eventually earned bachelor's and master's degrees.

Only 992 men completed TAAF pilot training, with 450 serving combat missions. The Tuskegee Airmen (as they came to be called in 1972) are known for never having lost a bomber to enemy aircraft. On Mar. 29, the group will receive the Congressional Gold Medal.

According to U.S. Army Col. Nathan Thomas (ret.), the Tuskegee Airmen not only paved the way for full integration of the U.S. military, but also accomplished much more.

An Alabama native with a front-row seat at several historic events of the civil rights era, Thomas was among the 600 protesters beaten back by police in the Mar. 7, 1965, Selma-to-Montgomery march. Within a week, legislation for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was introduced in Congress.

"I had already become a warrior in many respects and I appreciated the fact that gentlemen like Col. Mann had already set the stage for me because they had to fight for their civil rights as well as their silver wings [a pin pilots earn in U.S. Air Force]," said Thomas. "For me that set a pattern for why we could resist all the things that happened in Birming-



Dr. Vivian Pinn, NIH associate director for research on women's health, welcomes living legend Mann to the agency's observance of Black History Month.

ham [called "Bombingham" by locals who lived through the era] and certainly the things that happened in Selma."

In 2001, Thomas made more history, becoming the first ever African-American lieutenant colonel in Minnesota and in 2005, the state's first black full-bird colonel. His 36-year military career included stints in Vietnam, Panama and the Persian Gulf.

"This is a brief history of the Tuskegee Airmen and many others who paved the way for young African-American officers like me," said Capt. Janelle Harden, a Tuskegee Airmen Inc., scholarship recipient now assigned to the National Reconnaissance Office. "I was able to earn a bachelor's...go on to complete my [U.S. Air Force] commission and serve my country with pride...On behalf of my generation, I would like to thank those who made it possible for me to wear this uniform and to continue to serve my country and make black history."

NIAMS director Dr. Stephen Katz, who gave closing remarks at the observance, quipped that he hopes Mann will visit NIH again to discuss not only his history-making career but also his 66 years of happy marriage.

"As we heard from Col. Thomas about how the Tuskegee Airmen led the way for other African Americans to serve in responsible positions in the country," Katz concluded, "I couldn't help but reflect on [former Secretary of State] Colin Powell, [current Secretary of State] Condoleezza Rice and also the excitement of even thinking about [Senator] Barack Obama running for president of this country. I think that's really [due to] the leadership of the Tuskegee Airmen. Some things that must have been unimaginable back in those days we are imagining today. I can only think how exciting it must be for you, Col. Mann, to see those realities come true. On behalf of all of us here at NIH, we do appreciate your coming here and sharing your experiences." 🗣️

NINDS Mourns Former Contracting Officer Denney

By Shannon E. Garnett

Patricia "Patty" Denney, a former contracting officer in the Research and Development Contract Management Branch, NINDS, died Jan. 31 at age 58. She retired from NIH in September 2005 with 25 years of service.



As contracting officer, she was responsible for the negotiation and award of a significant number of research contract initiatives critical to the NINDS mission. Of note are a \$25 million contract to establish an innovative translational research program to accelerate the development of a treatment for spinal muscular atrophy and a \$15 million contract with Coriell Medical Research Institutes for the NINDS Human Genetics Resource Center.

A recent message posted on Coriell's web site acknowledges Denney's work on the contract. "Her hard work to lessen the burden of neurological disease is apparent in this repository which in part serves as a living memorial to her, and all people who have suffered from neurological illnesses," the message reads in part.

For more than 10 years, Denney also served as contracting officer for NINDS's scientific meeting and conference logistical support services contracts. These contracts, which have been in place since the early 1990s, are multi-million dollar awards. Services under these contracts support research meetings, conferences, workshops and data and safety monitoring board meetings sponsored annually by NINDS. Denney worked with the Small Business Administration and many small and disadvantaged business concerns to make sure they received a fair and equal opportunity to compete and receive contract awards for these services.

"Quite simply, Patty was the heart and soul of our branch," said Kirkland Davis, chief of the branch. "She was the most dedicated and committed person that I've ever had the privilege of working with. It was truly an honor, and a personal blessing, to have had the opportunity to work with Patty, but more importantly to be able to call her my friend."

According to Davis, shortly after Denney retired, she was presented with a plaque from the NINDS contracting office. "This was our attempt to summarize and to share with her what she meant to us," he said. The plaque said, "We salute you for your many years of tireless dedication; we salute you for being our pillar of strength; we salute you for making the CMB, NINDS what it is today; you have set the example and left behind the footprints for us to follow; you have touched each of us in such a special way—we are all the better because of you."

Although most of her federal career was spent at NINDS, Denney also worked at NHLBI and at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

She is survived by her husband Edward; son Christopher, of Fanwood, N.J.; daughter Mary Ellen Ehrsam, of Westfield, N.J.; eight sisters, four brothers, a grandchild and many other relatives, including a sister-in-law, Sue Rogus, who works at NHLBI.

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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NIDDK Postdoctoral Fellow Chen Dies

Dr. Yng-Gwei Chen, a postdoctoral fellow in NIDDK's Laboratory of Chemical Physics (LCP), died on Mar. 6 in a car accident en route to the Biophysical Society annual meeting in Baltimore. She would have been 31 years old on Mar. 25.



Chen came to the United States from Taiwan to study physics and received her doctorate from the University of Maryland in fall 2004. Her enormous scientific curiosity and interest in physics, biology and the life sciences led her to NIH in January 2005. During her time at NIH, Chen served as a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Gerhard Hummer, chief of the theoretical biophysics section of the LCP.

The Foundation for Advanced Education in the Sciences has established an emergency fund to assist Chen's family. Donations in the form of checks payable to the FAES can be sent to the following address: FAES, Bldg. 60, Suite 230. Write "Dr. Chen emergency fund" on the memo line of the check.

Spring Lecture Series on Evolution and Medicine

The National Institute of General Medical Sciences and the Office of Science Education are presenting a 4-part lecture series this spring. The Evolution and Medicine lectures will examine how evolution affects both basic science and clinical research.

- Apr. 4: Evolution and the Origins of Life, Harold Morowitz, George Mason University
- Apr. 11: Evolution and Cooperation, Joan Strassmann, Rice University
- Apr. 18: Evolution and Gender, Joan Roughgarden, Stanford University
- May 2: Evolution and Health, Stephen Stearns, Yale University

All lectures will be held in Natcher Bldg., Balcony B, noon to 1 p.m. A discussion period from 1 to 2 p.m. will follow. Live webcasts will be available and archived at <http://videocast.nih.gov/>. Sign language interpreters will be available on request. If you require this or other reasonable accommodation, contact OSE at least 5 days before the event at moorec@mail.nih.gov, (301) 402-2470 or (301) 496-9706 TTY.



Child with Behavioral Problems?

Researchers at NIMH are seeking child and adolescent volunteers with behavioral problems to participate in research studies. Your child may be eligible if he or she is between the ages of 10 and 17, is medically healthy, has had problems at home or in school (disruptiveness, anger or aggression) and doesn't feel guilty when doing something wrong. Parents are asked to call (301) 402-6850 for more information. Participation may include behavioral observation, brain imaging and psychological interviews. No treatment will be offered. Financial compensation and transportation assistance will be provided.

Study of Influence of Genes on Brain Function

Researchers at the Clinical Brain Disorders Branch, NIMH, are seeking healthy volunteers to take part in a study that examines the role that genes play in brain function. This large genetic study has a shortage of Caucasian volunteers. Healthy Caucasian volunteers, ages 30-50, are needed to match with unaffected Caucasian siblings who have a brother or sister who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Protocol procedures will involve either 1 or 2 days of a volunteer's time and will include a blood draw, an interview, neuroimaging and neurocognitive testing. English must be a participant's native language. No overnight stays are required. Compensation is provided. For details call (301) 435-8970 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) or email Thorpek@mail.nih.gov.

Neck Pain Study Needs Volunteers

Are you a healthy individual with or without neck pain? If you are between the ages of 18 and 65, you may be eligible to participate in an NIH neck pain study and receive a comprehensive cervical musculoskeletal examination without compensation. This is a 3-month natural history study, not a treatment study. For more information, email neckpainstudy@gmail.com or call (301) 496-4733. Refer to study 02-CC-0245.

Sleep and Obesity Study

Sleep and weight study for obese adults ages 18 to 50 who sleep fewer than 6 hours at night. Compensation is provided. Call 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study 06-DK-0036.

ADHD Genetics Study Needs Volunteers

Take part in an NIH study seeking to identify the genes that contribute to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. For more information call 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study 00-HG-0058.

Osteoarthritis Study Needs Men

Men ages 30-65 are invited to take part in an NIH study evaluating hormones in those with osteoarthritis pain. Compensation is provided. Call 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study 04-AT-0239.

Pulmonary Sarcoidosis Study

Do you have pulmonary sarcoidosis? Consider participating in an NIH study. For more information, call 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study 06-H-0072.



NIDDK acting director Dr. Griffin Rodgers (front, c) meets with new council members (front row, from l) Lisa Richardson, Dr. William Mitch and (back row, from l) Dr. Anthony Schaeffer, Dr. Mark Magnuson, Dr. James Freston, Dr. Charles Elson and Dr. Patrick Tso.

NIDDK Council Welcomes Seven New Members

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases recently announced the appointment of seven new members to its advisory council. They are:

Dr. Charles O. Elson, chair in gastroenterology and vice chair for research in the department of medicine, University of Alabama, Birmingham.

Dr. James W. Freston, chair of clinical pharmacology and professor emeritus, University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

Dr. Mark A. Magnuson, professor of molecular physiology and biophysics and director of the Center for Stem Cell Biology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

Dr. William E. Mitch, professor of medicine and director of the division of nephrology, Baylor College of Medicine.

Lisa H. Richardson, national emeritus chairperson of the board for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, Inc., New York City.

Dr. Anthony J. Schaeffer, professor and chairman, department of urology, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University.

Dr. Patrick Tso, professor of pathology, associate director of the Cincinnati Obesity Research Center, director of the Cincinnati Mouse Diabetes Phenotyping Center, director of the Center for Lipid and Atherosclerosis Research, University of Cincinnati College of Medicine.

Readers' Survey Is Largely Positive for *NIH Record*

A web-based *NIH Record* readership survey conducted late last fall showed that most employees read and value the biweekly employee newsletter, but that there are significant problems with distribution. Many NIH'ers never see it, although a paper copy is published every payday Friday for everyone who works here.

The invitation to participate in the online survey was emailed to 32,408 addresses and garnered 3,779 responses, a rate of about 12 percent. "That's okay, but a little bit lower than the response rate to some of our other employee surveys," said Joe Wolski, an industrial engineer in ORS's Office of Quality Management, which conducted the survey for the *Record*. He said a recent survey of employee opinion about security at NIH drew a more robust response of between 30-40 percent.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents said they read the *Record*; 31 percent don't. The most faithful readers are employees in professional jobs, and those who have been at NIH for more than 10 years. The newest members of the workforce read it least (especially those identifying themselves as trainees or students); many indicated they didn't know it existed.

Eighty-one percent of respondents read the paper version, although many were unaware that the *Record* has an online presence, too (at <http://www.nih.gov/nihrecord/index.htm>). Ninety-one percent say issues are about the right length (typically 12 pages, but occasionally 16); 90 percent say it comes out often enough; 89 percent say stories themselves are about the right length; and 73 percent say the balance of photos to text is about right.

Two-thirds of *Record* readers are women. But only 55 percent of respondents say they see the *Record* regularly and have a chance to pick up a copy.

Four of the survey's 18 questions offered respondents a chance to comment and 2,039 people did, submitting a total of 5,414 remarks. We asked about the *Record's* strengths, weaknesses, advice for the editors and topics needing more attention. "It's noteworthy that more strengths comments were received than weaknesses comments," said OQM's Andrea Davis.

Read Us, Write to Us, This Is for You

A fair number of respondents to the recent *NIH Record* readership survey were unaware that the newsletter already offers the items they want to see.

For example, some called for a Letters to the Editor column, to stimulate discussion on issues relevant to employees. The *Record* instituted such a column in July 1996. Our only requirement was that submissions deal with issues of interest to NIH'ers and be signed by the author. Few took us up on the column, however. The most recent published Letter to the Editor was in May 2004.

If you have a contribution to make to a campus concern, email the editors, whose addresses are published on page 2 of every issue.

A number of readers also admonished us to make known our recyclability as office white paper, which we do, again, on page 2 of every issue.

Some respondents decried the lack of an *NIH Record* web site. We have been online continuously since 1996, every two weeks, at www.nih.gov/nihrecord/index.htm. Others want an email reminder every time we publish. That, too, is available at the site above, if you simply click on the RSS feed link.

Lastly, our survey revealed that desk-to-desk distribution of the paper copies is in disarray. If you are not getting your own personal copy of the paper, contact the mail room in your facility. There are plenty of *Records* to go around and no one should be without The Second Best Thing About Payday.

Strengths included variety of content and well-written articles. The most common observation about weaknesses was that there are none. "Uninteresting" and "non-controversial" stories were seen as deficits and a small but stubborn number of respondents think we should be put out of business.

The most common comment about "topics needing more attention" was "can't think of any." The most common advice to the editors was "keep up the good work." Many respondents also want to see more coverage of the average worker rather than the official whose accomplishments are widely known. Human interest feature stories remain popular.

The editors will use data from the survey to direct future issues and will poll readers again in a year or two to find out how we are doing. Thanks to all who participated.—**Rich McManus** 