

Health Professions **Alumni Connection**

Health Professions Alumni Association News

Summer 2014

## Welcome New Alumni!

Across eight disciplines, Interim University President Gregory L. Eastwood, MD, and Dean Hugh W. Bonner, PhD, conferred 75 BS, 39 MS, 6 BPS and 71 DPT degrees upon graduates of Upstate Medical University College of Health Professions (CHP) at May's Commencement ceremonies in downtown Syracuse. Alumni Association President **Josephine Przepiora, MT '00/MS '10** welcomed each of the 191 graduates to the association with an alumni pin as they crossed the stage.

Guest speaker Barbara Resnick, PhD, CRNP, received the honorary doctor of science degree. A professor at the University of Maryland, Resnick is recognized for her innovative work in geriatrics. Student speakers were Amelia Weimar, Radiation Therapy BS degree graduate, and Anne Reilley, who earned a Doctorate of Physical Therapy.

An alumni scholarship recipient who held the highest class GPA, Weimar noted that each CHP faculty member

possesses, "a heart for their students that I have not witnessed anywhere else. For them, it's not just academic, it's personal! What other professors care enough to allow you to call them at 10:30 at night when you need advice?" She also noted that, "leadership must come with an understanding of what it is to serve others...serving others in genuine selflessness is a source of true satisfaction that can never be taken away from you." Weimar now works at Hematology Oncology Associates of CNY.

The Dean's Outstanding Student Award was presented to Anne Reilley, DPT, who served as student government president and student representative on the CHP alumni association board. She remarked how "passion is what separates exceptional from acceptable, success from failure and a career from a job. Find a job you love, concentrate in an area that excites you, and remain engaged in scholarly activities," she advised fellow graduates.



*Shanamae Victor receives her hood from Physician Assistant Studies Chair Sandra Banas, PA, and L. Thomas Wolfe, MD.*



*Radiation Therapy's top student Amelia Weimar (lower left) poses with classmates.*



*Roneisha Williams, new Bachelor of Science in Respiratory Care graduate*



*Dean Hugh Bonner, PhD, congratulates new Medical Imaging Sciences alumna, Karina Vabishchevich.*

## Students soar because of you!

Graduation is an inspiring time of year, as our students take wing and fly. Many of them could not do it without assistance from you, our valued alumni, and the scholarships awarded because of your generous donations.

The popular matching program has been extended through 2014. Your gift between

\$250 and \$5,000 to an endowed fund will be matched by the Foundation for Upstate, doubling the impact.

Or – create an endowment in honor of a loved one. This is a rare opportunity to establish a legacy while helping CHP students take flight.

For details, call 315-464-4416 or visit [www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni/donate](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni/donate)

## Health Professions Alumni Connection

The SUNY Upstate Medical University Health Professions Alumni Association publishes Alumni Connection quarterly. Distribution is free to college alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends.

**Alumni Director:** Mary Knepper  
**Writer:** Lois Hickey  
**Design:** Marketing & University Communications

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#### Address Corrections to:

Health Professions Alumni Office

Upstate Medical University

750 E. Adams Street – CAB 326

Syracuse, NY 13210

315-464-4416

chpalum@upstate.edu

#### Connect online at:

[www.foundationforupstate.org/](http://www.foundationforupstate.org/)

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## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

### Violinist to become PA

**Melissa Aubin** is a young renaissance woman. Not only is she a classically-trained violinist with a performance degree from SUNY Oswego, but she is an EMT and award-winning body builder/fitness instructor as well.

“EMT work had a lot to do with how I fell in love with the world of medicine,” she commented.

After graduating, she taught violin privately and loved working with children but when she decided to become an EMT in her community she found that she also enjoyed that role very much. “I loved the interaction with patients, particularly the teaching aspect, as well as the anatomy knowledge required.” So, she began to research ways to expand her medical role.

“After visiting Upstate’s PA program, I knew that this is where I needed to be,” Melissa said. In 2015, she’ll graduate as a physician assistant.

Her master’s capstone project, she says, will combine her love of music, fitness and medicine by investigating the effects of music therapy on Alzheimer’s patients. “I am going to structure my research on the effects of music on the longevity of memory in Alzheimer’s patients. If music can be used to help patients remember their activities of daily living, then it can potentially prolong independence and increase quality of life.”

As a young girl, Melissa’s personal

passion for health and fitness was sparked by the loss of her father who died of cancer at 36. Turning grief into productive energy, at 16 Melissa won an award for largest individual fundraiser at a local Relay for Life event, raising \$12,000 in her father’s memory. She remains active in raising cancer research funds.

Melissa also teaches high-impact RIPPED classes in the CAB and mentors students in healthy diet and exercise. She trained and won third place recently in her first heavy lifting competition. Melissa also finds time to volunteer as student representative on the CHP Alumni Association Board.

“It’s important to have a strong connection with my school. I think that students can benefit immensely from networking opportunities with alumni. I also want to advocate for potential non-traditional students who feel it may be too late to change careers or think they have no chance with the stiff competition in medical fields. If you really put in the effort, anything is possible.”

Melissa tries to keep the musician in her alive and well too. She wants to organize a chamber orchestra with other musical students on campus who want to practice together, “to help unwind from studies.” After all, noted Melissa, “music is the soul of life.”



### Perfusion student presents nationally

Cardiovascular Perfusion’s **Laura Rigg** received the Class of 2014 Academic Excellence Award and Jeanne Lange Excellence in Perfusion Award, and is already an accomplished scholar, having crisscrossed the country presenting her clinical studies at four national conferences. This spring she presented two: “Circuit Arterial Line Pressure: A 2013 Survey” at the American Academy of Cardiovascular Perfusion (AACP) Annual Meeting in Orlando; and “Techniques of Monitoring Pressure in the CPB Circuit: A 2013 Survey” at the AmSECT International Conference in San Diego. Laura received several scholarships, including from CREF and AmSECT, and served as AACP’s vice president for student ambassadors. She works as a perfusionist at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, Pa.



*Honors graduate Laura Rigg with perfusion faculty/mentors Bruce Searles, CCP '93, program chair, and Ed Darling, CCP (left).*



*Upstate President Carlyle “Jake” Jacobsen, PhD, puffs on a cigarette during the opening ceremony for University Hospital in July 1964.*

Fifty years ago, Upstate’s University and Community hospitals opened their doors and the US Surgeon General issued the first report on Smoking and Health, linking cigarette smoking to lung cancer and heart disease. That report, followed by 30 more, laid the foundation for the

tobacco control efforts we know today. In 1964, more than half of adults in the US smoked and even the hospital’s gift shops sold cigarettes.

Today it’s hard to imagine that people ever smoked in hospitals. But **Cindy Cary, RRT ‘86**, who has worked at Upstate for 28 years, remembers when social norms were different and second-hand smoke was rampant.

“There were ash trays at nurse’s stations. Patient rooms were smoking and non-smoking,” remembers Cindy, who now directs Upstate’s Smoking Cessation Program. Today she is dedicated to tackling lung cancer and tobacco use and is certified by the Mayo Clinic as

a Tobacco Treatment Specialist. Cindy runs free smoking cessation classes year-round at multiple locations through Upstate’s HealthLink program.

Also Mayo Clinic certified, **Theresa Hankin, RRT ‘84**, serves as the campus resource person for employees, students and others seeking help with smoking cessation. She worked at the Community Campus for more than 30 years before joining Upstate’s program this year. One of her memories of Community’s “smoking days” was of a staff break room used for smoking situated “right across from a patient on a ventilator 24/7.”

“How far we have come!” Theresa commented. “I am very proud of all the strides we have made to clean the air for employees, patients and the communities we serve. Upstate has always been at the forefront and is an example to other health institutions in New York State.”

In 2005, Upstate became the first smoke-free SUNY campus.

Read more 50th anniversary stories at: <http://whatsupatupstate.wordpress.com>

## Respiratory Therapy grads present at Ross Research Day

**Jeremy Andrews** and **Adlin Noel**, newly-minted Respiratory Therapy graduates, presented their senior research at the university’s annual Charles R. Ross Memorial Student Research Day in April.

Fascinated by the surgical research led by associate professor Gary Nieman in the Pulmonary and Critical Care Laboratory, the two joined forces to conduct an independent project, “Airway Pressure Release Ventilation (APRV) Causes Retrograde Secretion Movement in an

in Vitro Test Lung.” Their work explores the benefits of using APRV in preventing the development of acute respiratory distress syndrome.

“Clearing out mucus in pulmonary compromised patients is usually a challenge, so obtaining a better understanding of the physiology behind the retrograde movement of secretions when using APRV may be a gateway to preventing other related conditions,” explained Adlin. Further research could help influence mucous clearance and ventilator protocols, he said.

The project helped expand their knowledge in how to better care for the critically-ill patient while using mechanical ventilators.

“I enjoy solving problems and hope to stay involved in research,” said Adlin. He also conducted field research on smoking while participating in medical missions in Ghana. He plans to go on to medical school to become a critical care physician.

Jeremy, who pursued a medical career after saving a woman from choking when he was a restaurant manager, says he plans to work in an ICU or in critical care as well. “I find it very gratifying to see patients recover from full supportive care, to breathe on their own again.”



*Adlin Noel (left) and Jeremy Andrews in the lab*



*Cindy Cary, RRT ‘86, RPFT, CTTS, (left) and Theresa Hankin, RRT ‘84, CTTS*

# Alumni Connection

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SUNY Upstate Medical University  
326 Campus Activities Building  
750 East Adams Street  
Syracuse, New York 13210

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## FACULTY UPDATES

**Patricia J. (Finocchiaro) Duffy, MIS '72, MPS, RT (R) (CT)**, clinical education coordinator for Medical Imaging Sciences, was awarded the Donald C. Goodman Faculty Enrichment Award to attend the national conference of the Association of Educators in Imaging and Radiological Sciences this July in Providence, RI. The award was established by the Health Professions Alumni Association in 1995 to honor Dr. Goodman, who served as dean of the college from 1983 to 1995.



"I am not a stranger to the national conference forum but have not been able to attend this conference since 2001," noted Duffy, who served as an AEIRS officer from 1989-1991. "To attend after all this time will be very rewarding and the topics for this conference are very timely."

Duffy will also be able to meet the newest authors of the 13th edition of Merrill's Atlas of Radiographic Positioning and Procedures. Duffy served on the Advisory Board for this edition to be published in 2015.

In Cardiovascular Perfusion, **Ed Darling, MS, CCP**, associate professor, was honored with the AmSECT Award of Excellence for work that exemplifies creativity and intellectual honesty in perfusion. **Bruce Searles, CCP '93**, program chair, received the AmSECT President's Award recognizing his 17 years of service on the society's Internet Committee.

**Dale Avers, PT, DPT, PhD**, was awarded the Catherine Worthington Fellowship in June from the American Physical Therapy Association, the highest honor among APTA's membership recognizing lifetime achievement and service. Avers directs the Transitional Post-Professional DPT program and chairs the Faculty Council.

**Susan Graham, MS, MT(ASCP), SH**, director of Clinical Laboratory Science, will be honored with the Distinguished Service Award from the American Society of Clinical Pathology at its national meeting this fall.

**Debra Wolf, BS, RPA-C**, was welcomed to the Physician Assistant program faculty in January, bringing more than 30 years of clinical experience, primarily in family practice. She has served on the program's advisory board since its inception.

