



College Awards 135 Health Professions Degrees

Upstate Medical University held Commencement ceremonies on May 22, with President David R. Smith MD, awarding 445 degrees and 18 professional certificates to graduates of the university's four colleges. The College of Health Professions awarded 135 degrees — 62 bachelor's degrees, 14 master's degrees, 15 bachelor of professional studies degrees, and 44 doctoral degrees in physical therapy.

The distinguished guest speaker was Thomas P. Quinn, president and chief executive officer of Community General Hospital in Syracuse. The Graduate Student Speaker was Jennifer Davis, member of the first graduating class of Physician Assistant (PA) Studies (see Spotlight, page 2); and, the Undergraduate Student Speaker was Michael Moziak, graduate of the Radiation Therapy program (see photos).

Honor society inductions and awards were given out during the ceremony, including the college-wide Dean's Outstanding Student Award to James R. Bowen, graduate of the Medical Biotechnology Program, who demonstrated academic excellence as well as outstanding professional, campus and community service (see Spotlight, page 2). Eight students received diplomas in the first PA class (see photo). A fast growing program, PA Studies currently enrolls 19 students who graduate next year, and 30 new students are entering the program this summer.



Leatha Damron, DPT '11, is congratulated by son, Neil.



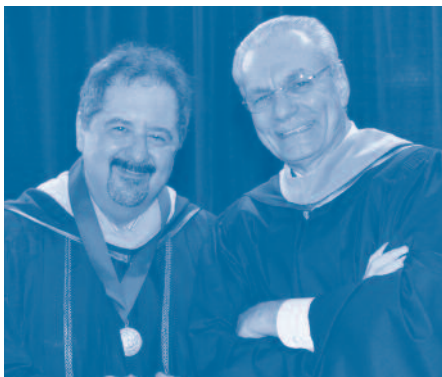
Clockwise from left:

The first graduating class of Physician Assistant Studies, with program director, Sandra Banas (MT '77) MST, RPA-C (far right)

Student speakers, Jennifer Davis (PA '11) and Michael Moziak (RADT '11).

Medical Imaging Sciences graduates, Zainab Ali, Korisa Pritchard and Jeanna Childs.

Keynote speaker, Thomas P. Quinn, MBA, President and CEO of Community General Hospital, Syracuse with Joseph Sorbello, MSED, RRT (RT '75/'77), Respiratory Therapy Education Chair.



Health Professions Alumni Connection

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Budding Lab Scientist is Dean's Outstanding Student

James Bowen, from Rochester, NY, was selected the Dean's Outstanding Student and has been on the dean's list for all of his four semesters in Upstate's Medical Biotechnology program. He completed his senior internship with Ortho Clinical Diagnostics in Rochester, NY where he studied hybridoma stability, and received the John Bernard Henry research award for his paper on, "Development of flow cytometric assay for assessing hybridoma stability." In the experience, Bowen gained "an understanding of what it means and what is required to be a research scientist."

He begins a career to further build upon his research and laboratory skills within an innovative and cutting edge facility. "I'd like to either contribute to current research efforts in molecular biology and immunology or work to benefit patient care within a clinical



Dean Hugh Bonner, PhD, presents James R. Bowen with Dean's Outstanding Student Award.

laboratory using the latest in molecular diagnostics." Bowen also plans to eventually obtain a master's and a PhD in a field related to molecular biology, immunology or infectious disease.

PA Shines in Hands-On Patient Care



PA graduate, Jennifer Davis, Commencement Graduate Student Speaker.

Jennifer Davis of Middleville, NY, Physician Assistant Class President, advised her fellow students as a graduation speaker, "to work hard and treat every patient as though they were a member of your family." Hands-on and patient oriented with a background as a licensed massage therapist, Davis "loves the problem-solving aspect of diagnosing a patient, and working with others to find solutions to the problems that patients bring. I want to jump into a situation to help get the job done." After successfully placing her first chest tube in a pneumothorax patient who once again was breathing with ease, "it was then I knew I had made the right career decision."

Davis is helping to fulfill Upstate's mission to fill the gap in rural regions for medical professionals by starting her PA career at St. Elizabeth Hospital's ER in Utica, NY. She completed a surgical rotation there, including the

OR, office surgeries, rounding, consulting and pre-operative clearances on surgical patients. Very active in student/professional activities, Davis served as a President's Ambassador, Student Society President and coordinated the Student AAPA Society in 2010-2011.

Passing the Torch to Radiation Therapy Students

Passing the torch of professional excellence to radiation therapy students is an alumni team effort of the Radiation Oncology Department at Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare Regional Cancer Center in Utica. A clinical affiliate of the College of Health Professions for many years, the department boasts an outstanding Radiation Therapy (RT) staff comprised predominately of Upstate alumni (see photo). The entire staff serves as volunteer instructors to about six students each year for one of their professional field experiences, according to staff therapist, Clark Brown, RT (T) of Canastota, a 2007 graduate.

A retired state trooper, Clark is passionate about his second career and his teaching role through Upstate. In addition to providing clinical instruction, Brown teaches Applied Radiation Oncology Anatomy each spring on campus using the medical anatomy laboratory.

"I enjoy the challenge of teaching students about the human body and how it is visualized through the many technologies we use. Upstate students assigned to Faxton have an opportunity to learn from many different therapists. Faxton is a very busy place too, with two linear accelerators and a CT simulator, we handle approximately 60 patients a day. Additionally, the anatomy lab at Upstate is a critical learning tool and a tremendous learning environment."

"I receive a feeling of accomplishment," Brown added, "when one of my students finally understands a difficult concept."

Brown was recently spotlighted in the Utica Observer-Dispatch (March 20, 2011) for his remarkable efforts "transforming empty cans and bottles into compassion." Since last summer, Brown has been collecting and recycling to raise money for the purchase of MP3 players so cancer patients can listen to their favorite music during therapy. An avid cyclist who scours the countryside, Brown has recycled at least 8,000 cans and bottles, buying 4 MP3s. He now provides patients with very diverse playlists.

"Something as simple as a choice of song can dramatically change their treatment experience by giving them some control over a situation in which they often feel powerless," Brown commented. "I have witnessed firsthand that music calms the patients and gives them comfort." Brown's idea has inspired the entire staff to offer MP3 music in other treatment modes.



Faxton St. Luke's Cancer Center RT Staff, including Alumni: (Front:) Clark Brown, RT(T) ('07), clinical instructor, holding MP3 player; and Amy Liotta, RT(T) ('88), lead clinical instructor. Second row: senior student Bonnie Bazydlo (RT '11); Carly Sperati, RT(T) ('02); Department Director Nancy Borden RT(T) ('93); Chief Therapist Robin Wrench, RT (T) ('77), clinical supervisor (see profile, page 4); Sandy Dygert, LRT (T); Kristen Rogers RT(T) ('08). Back row: Paul Abbass, MS, RT(T) '06; Linda Talarico, RN, NP ('10); Sean Ferguson RT(T) ('09); Robin Abbass, RT (T); Danial Bowoski, CMD, dosimetry instructor; Carol Hall RT(T) ('96); Meredith Thompson, CMD, RT(T) ('90); and Victoria Walley, CMD, RT(T) ('05).

After the newspaper article: "Wow, what a response! I received bags of recyclables from people off the street, and plan to buy larger capacity MP3 players with the extra help," Brown said. An environmentalist, Brown accepts no cash donations for this cause, as the effort serves a dual purpose — raising awareness about landfills and conservation.

Brown also holds another very personal interest in his connection to Upstate. His wife, Lisa, underwent successful brain tumor surgery and radiation treatment at University Hospital the year he graduated. "So I've had a firsthand look as someone sitting in a waiting room and worrying about what is going on behind the closed door and also with my best friend needing my advice about the treatment process." Clark and Lisa Brown have established a scholarship fund at Upstate for Radiation Therapy students as well.

For scholarship information, visit:
www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni.

Alumni Connection

Health Professions Alumni Association News

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Alum Values Professional Growth in Colleagues and Students in Clinical Affiliate

Robin Wrench has been chief radiation therapist at Faxton St. Luke's Regional Cancer Center in Utica for five years. She worked at Bassett Healthcare for 26 years as RT head. After leaving the area, she returned to Utica to engage in patient treatment again. Wrench keeps her strong passion for her work in part because she has changed with it.

"While working in Massachusetts I realized the field was changing dramatically, and if I were to lead therapists again, I needed to know exactly what therapists were doing. The technology had advanced significantly and the treatments had become more complex. The therapists not only have to know how to treat the

patient but use the advanced technology to deliver the treatment. I knew I needed to experience that too."

As chief therapist, "What I enjoy most is coaching the therapists and helping them reach their potential - I thoroughly support and value them."

"I maintain a strong connection to Upstate as a clinical supervisor." Wrench notes that even before their first clinical rotation, students are introduced to the clinical setting at her facility. First year students go one evening for hands-on experience and advice. "Students see CT-simulation and two different treatment rooms. We let them know what they are expected to do in the clinical setting and give encouragement."



Robin Wrench, RT(T) '77

"I value what Upstate teaches and being the 'go-to' person for students here," said Wrench.