

Health Professions Alumni Connection

Health Professions Alumni Association News

Summer 2012

University Confers 188 Health Professions Degrees

SUNY Upstate Medical University conferred 188 degrees – 83 BS, 25 MS, 7 BPS and 73 DPTs – to graduates of the College of Health Professions, May 20th at the John Mulroy Civic Center in Syracuse. Nationally recognized surgeon, Patricia J. Numann, MD, received an honorary degree and addressed the graduates. Student speakers, Julie Thering, Doctorate of Physical Therapy, and Chigozie Onyinanya, Bachelor of Science in Medical Biotechnology, along with other outstanding graduates, were recognized.



Graduate and undergraduate student speakers, (l-r), Julie Thering, DPT, and Chigozie Onyinanya, BS in Medical Biotechnology; and Antonina Benvenuto, BS in Respiratory Therapy, who read an original poem commemorating the occasion.



New Physician Assistant, Christopher Jones, celebrates with his family.



Julie Thering, DPT, is presented the doctoral hood from PT faculty



Alumni President David Clemente congratulates Joshua Smith, BSRC on the Respiratory Care Clinical Practice Award.

GRADUATE PROFILE



College Dean Hugh Bonner, PhD, with Meyy Arunachalam and his proud parents, who came from India for his graduation.

Meyyappan Arunachalam was one of those most notable graduates, receiving the Dean's Outstanding Student Award. Meyy's parents were excited to visit the United States from India for the first time to experience graduation day with their son. Meyy brought a background in electronics and programming which he employed to help aid the Perfusion Department's Simulation Center. He applied himself not only in the classroom – earning Dean's List and five scholarships – but in professional activities as well. He was a Student Ambassador for the university and AmSECT Student

Liaison. In addition to the Dean's Award, Meyy was honored with the Jeanne Lange Excellence in Professionalism Award.

"My perfusion career would have been just a dream if the admission committee at Upstate and my professors had not believed in me and accepted me. I think I have kept up to their expectations," he commented. Meyy is now a perfusionist at Montefiore Medical Center in New York City. The Health Professions Alumni Association also welcomes Meyy as a new member of its Board of Directors.

See other outstanding student stories inside.

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CHP Student Tapped for SUNY Chancellor Award

New alumnus in Medical Biotechnology, Chigozie Onyinanya, was selected one of the statewide recipients for the prestigious SUNY Chancellor Award for Student Excellence and was Commencement's undergraduate student speaker. He has excelled in scholarship and assumed leadership roles both on campus and SUNY-wide.

Among his achievements, Chigozie consistently earned Dean's List and was elected Director of Campus Relations for the SUNY Student Assembly, Student Government Vice President for the College and Vice President of his class. He was selected Student Ambassador for the

Chigozie Onyinanya addresses the Class of 2012.



President's Office and SUNY Student Trustee. Additionally, he served as a Resident Assistant for Clark Tower, was a student mentor and a hospital volunteer.

Chigozie's goal is to continue on to become a physician and contribute to medical research. "Chigozie embodies the values of Upstate. I have no doubt that this success will continue as he pursues a degree in medicine," said Susan Graham, chair of Clinical Laboratory Science.

Top PA Grad To Serve Patients in Rural New York

"My mom is a nurse practitioner, so I was exposed to the medical field growing up and was always interested in medicine and helping people," said 2012 graduate, Sarah Hand. Through the Physician Assistant Studies Program, Sarah is achieving her goal to serve people in a medically underserved region. The PA Studies program was awarded federal grants that support training students who will serve in rural areas and Sarah is from Northville, NY in the southern Adirondacks. She and her husband just bought a home there.

"I knew I had found a perfect fit with Upstate's program," she said.

Entering with an undergraduate degree in youth ministry, Sarah had served as a

nutritional educator and a medical assistant. "Becoming a PA, I can use my background and love of working with people now in a clinical setting."

After completing summer clinical rotations, graduating and taking her boards, Sarah plans to work in primary care because, "You can build long-term relationships with your patients and also focus on prevention."

Recognized with the program's Outstanding Academic Award, Sarah had maintained a remarkable 4.0 GPA.



Outstanding PA graduate, Sarah Hand, with husband, Adam

Gold Standard Faculty Recognized

Two faculty members, who also are alumni, were recently recognized with the Gold Standard Award for demonstrating dedication, passion, vision and commitment to the university and their work.



Patricia Duffy ('72), MPS, RT (R)(CT), who joined the Upstate faculty in 1981, is Assistant Professor and Clinical Coordinator for Medical Imaging Sciences and served as department chair from 1991-2000. Very active in professional groups, she served as past



Sheila Young (AAS '83/BS '85), MS, RRT, RT, joined the faculty full-time 24 years ago and is Assistant Professor and Director of Clinical Education for Respiratory Therapy. She also is professionally active, and received the NYS Liberty Award for her humanitarian work during recovery at Ground Zero.

Son Continues Family Tradition in Respiratory Care

More than most first-year students, Michael Wixson feels a special connection to his chosen program. Not only did his mother, Mary (Milligan) Wixson, graduate from the respiratory care program, Class of 1983, but so did his father, Christopher, Class of '87. His parents met while working at Upstate University Hospital (UH) and married in 1990.

Michael's father was a well-respected healthcare professional in the CNY community, who died unexpectedly two years ago.

"Following in the same career path as my dad – in his footsteps, so to speak – is an honor for me," Michael said. His mother, now a medical-surgical nurse at UH, had worked 28 years as a respiratory therapist.

"I learned of the respiratory therapy profession through my parents," Michael said. "I saw how rewarding a job it was by listening to their exciting stories about work and about saving lives."

Michael has earned financial awards through the

Franciscan Management Endowed Scholarship. "The scholarships have helped me tremendously by allowing me to focus on my studies and, most importantly, helping my patients."

Engaged this summer at the Syracuse VA Hospital, his third clinical experience this year, he wants to work in an ER or ICU following graduation in 2013.

"I absolutely love the program and my instructors," Michael commented.

"I knew that, especially given its faculty, my son would shine in the program," noted Mary.



Mary (Milligan) Wixson '83 and Michael Wixson '13

New Graduate Goes to Paris in Exchange Program

Sarah Goodman, who graduated this May with a BS degree in Medical Biotechnology, is spending June and July in Paris, France – but not on vacation. She is putting her research and laboratory skills to use at a Paris hospital through an exchange program sponsored by the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations.

She spent a good part of her senior year working in the SUNY Microarray Core Facility at Upstate with its scientific director on two research projects related to genetic mutations linked to schizophrenia and Parkinson's disease.

"I've always been interested in genetics and neurodegenerative disorders," Sarah said. "It's like a puzzle, and the mystery is where the pieces should go."

For graduates, one of the Medical Biotechnology

program's advantages is a built-in senior internship, she noted.

In August, it'll be back stateside for Sarah when she'll begin her master's degree program in patent law at the University of Notre Dame. Patent law may seem an unusual choice, but biotech companies and law firms that work with intellectual copyright in scientific research need people with a dual background in science and law.

"There are so many different directions you can go with a Biotech degree," she said. "Biotech companies, academic research, forensics, medical school, even patent law."

Or even, for a summer in Paris.

Read full story on Sarah Goodman and other outstanding Upstate people at: <http://upstate.edu/blogs/withdistinction/>.



Sarah Goodman, MBT '12

AMAZING STUDENTS

Students from the Radiation Therapy Classes of 2012 and 2013, part of the Upstate Medical University Chapter of Colleges Against Cancer, participate in the 2012 American Cancer Society Relay for Life at SU's Carrier Dome this April.

The Upstate Chapter, co-chaired by RADT students, Daniel Zachary and Joseph Pagano, raised more than \$148,000 for the American Cancer Society's patient programs.



Alumni Connection

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CAMPUS NEWS

Geneva Tower

Geneva Tower is the new address to have if you're a student or resident at Upstate Medical University this fall. Formerly known as Townsend Tower, the downtown Syracuse high-rise is getting a complete makeover and occupancy begins August 1.

The new Upstate residence hall boasts 139 luxury fully furnished apartments — one, two and four-bedroom styles — each with

42-inch TVs, and a number offering additional amenities. The building also features a fitness center and lounges dedicated either to studying or socializing.



Alumni Meet in Chicago

Students, alumni and clinical faculty from the Doctor of Physical Therapy program were well represented at the annual APTA Combined Sections Meeting in Chicago. In addition to participating in the conference's educational sessions, 45 alumni and students attended a reception sponsored by the Health Professions Alumni Association. It was a great opportunity to exchange memories, catch up and network. Join us next year at the CSM and alumni reception in Nashville.

SAVE THE DATE Radiation Therapy Picnic

Sat., Sept. 22: Enjoy the beauty of Central New York with your fellow Radiation Therapy alumni at Green Lakes State Park in Fayetteville, NY. Your entire family is welcome to join us for a casual pot-luck picnic with alumni, faculty and friends of the CHP program. Watch for details at: www.foundationforupstate.org/chpalumni