Class Notes

’70s Psychiatrist Sharyn Ann Lenhart (MD ’74) says sexual harassment in the workplace occurs like pockets of air pollution—the atmosphere at one company may be clean, but the climate at the company across the street could be foul. Lenhart, author of Clinical Aspects of Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination (Taylor and Francis), says the differences in climate result from an organization’s leadership. She has devoted her career to clearing the air—and the mind—for those affected by sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Lenhart holds a clinical academic appointment in psychiatry at Harvard University and is a senior attending psychiatrist at McLean Hospital, a consultant for employee assistance programs and legal cases. The resident of Concord, Mass., is also leading efforts to develop a curriculum. The 12-episode series focuses on social media myths, one tweet at a time. Stukus, an associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University, specializes in allergy and immunology at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Recently, he partnered with the podcast PediaCast for the hospital’s health care communications and social media curriculum. The 12-episode series focuses on social media and medicine, with the aim of helping laypeople navigate digital space. “The majority of patients are going online to seek medical information, but the information they find is often unreliable,” Stukus says. “We wanted to provide a blueprint to help.”

’80s Richard Shure (MD ’82) remembers his first orthopaedic surgery experience fondly: still a med student, Shure assisted the then-attending orthopaedic surgery department, and Shure, an expert in hand and microsurgery, has operated on some of the biggest names in athletics, including Brandon Marshall, who at the time was a wide receiver with the Denver Broncos. In his first game back after surgery, he caught a record-breaking 88 passes. Shure also operated on Darrell Armstrong, a point guard for the Orlando Magic who, after his surgery, won the NBA’s most improved player of the year award and Sixth Man of the Year Award (1998–99). But perhaps the biggest name (and hand) of Shure’s career is Shaquille O’Neal’s. Now retired, Shure occasionally works as a legal consultant.

’90s Gloria Beim (MD ’88), director of the Duke Clinical Research Institute School of Public Health at George Washington University (GWU), she built the school’s first research lab from scratch. To her amusement, the virologist and microbiologist was named a professor of epidemiology and biostatistics. “I don’t know a thing about epi-bio,” Jordan says. “I’m a lab person.” But she wanted to convince her new colleagues they would benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration.

’00s Dave Stukus (MD ’02) is dispelling myths, one tweet at a time. Stukus, an associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University, specializes in allergy and immunology at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. Recently, he partnered with the podcast PediaCast for the hospital’s health care communications and social media curriculum. The 12-episode series focuses on social media and medicine, with the aim of helping laypeople navigate digital space. “The majority of patients are going online to seek medical information, but the information they find is often unreliable,” Stukus says. “We wanted to provide a blueprint to help.”

Peterson

Beim (right) with gold medalist Michael Paye in Rio
LEON L. HALEY JR.
DEAN AT JACKSONVILLE

Growing up in Pittsburgh, Leon L. Haley Jr. (MD ’90) dreamed of becoming the first African American sportscaster on network television. “But that changed when I mixed basketball with a trampoline,” he says. Having missed a slam dunk, young Haley wound up with a torn meniscus—and an awakening fascination with medicine.

As a student at Pitt med, he completed a summer program working afternoon shifts at the emergency department at St. Margaret’s Hospital. The variety of injury and trauma cases that came through the door inspired him to pursue emergency medicine. He completed his residency at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Mich., followed by a master’s in health services administration from the University of Michigan.

From there, Haley moved to Atlanta, where he rose through the ranks to professor of emergency medicine at Emory, as well as the university’s executive associate dean for clinical affairs for Grady Memorial Hospital. During his tenure there, he implemented a rapid medical evaluation process that shortened emergency medicine patient waiting times by 45 minutes and reduced the length of stay for the patients with the least pressing cases by three hours. The process also drastically decreased the number of patients who left without receiving care—by 50 percent.

In September, Haley was named dean of the College of Medicine, professor of emergency medicine, and vice president for health affairs at the University of Florida–Jacksonville.

As he looks to the future, Haley says teaching clinicians how to function in a digital environment will be critical. He emphasizes analytics, economics, and a push toward preventive medicine.

Luckily, Haley didn’t always appreciate the latter. A bit of prevention in his basketball years might have been a game changer.

—Kristin Bundy

NEW & IMPROVED!

Are you tired of outdated Web site drudgery? Sick of logging on and wondering, Hey, where’s the beef? Try the Medical Alumni Association’s refreshing new site. Even Mikey likes it!

When you visit maa.pitt.edu, you’ll find it’s everywhere you want to be: connecting with classmates (when you care enough to send the very best), registering for Medical Alumni Weekend and other events (Calgon, take me away!), and giving back to your alma mater and its current crop of students (we bring good things to life). It just keeps going and going and going . . .

While you’re at it, connect with @PittMedAlum on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They’re grrrrrrrrrrreat ways to stay in touch.
Faculty Snapshots

People who suffer from inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) are about twice as likely to suffer from anxiety or depression, according to Eva Szigethy, MD/PhD and clinical director of Pitt’s Visceral Inflammation and Pain Center. And the link, Szigethy notes, is biological. Szigethy was featured in a December Nature article in which she noted that the somatic symptoms of depression, including fatigue, sleep disturbance, and lack of motivation, are associated with inflammation from IBD. The results of her randomized, controlled trials point to cognitive behavioral therapy as a promising treatment option for IBD patients with mental health problems. “What’s really rewarding is, because of my work, now almost all pediatric clinics screen for depression [in IBD patients],” she says.

Pitt has received a contract from the U.S. Department of Defense that, throughout the next decade, could fund up to $90 million for research to improve civilian and military trauma care. The contract’s initial $10.8 million grant will create a nationwide network of trauma centers that collect data from prehospital care through recovery after discharge. This network is known as the Linking Investigations in Trauma and Emergency Services (LITES) Network. Jason Sperry, MD/MPH professor of surgery and critical care medicine, and Francis Guyette, MD/MPH associate professor of emergency medicine, are leading the effort. Their team includes Barbara Early, RN program administrator, Stephen Wisniewski, PhD professor of epidemiology, and David Okonkwo, MD/PhD professor of neurological surgery.

Earlier this year, Jeremy Berg was elected as an American Academy of Arts and Sciences fellow. Berg is Pitt’s associate senior vice chancellor for science strategy and planning, health sciences, and a PhD professor of computational and systems biology. And last year, he was appointed as the editor in chief of the Science family of journals. Academy fellows are expected to represent the current state of their respective fields, propose studies, and shape policy.

William Wagner, PhD director of Pitt’s McGowan Institute for Regenerative Medicine, was inducted as a fellow into the National Academy of Inventors this spring. Wagner lays claim to 19 patents and more than 40 invention disclosures. Among those: a series of new biodegradable, elastic polymers with potential applications in cardiovascular medicine. Wagner also is a cofounder of Neograft Technologies, which is developing new treatment options for coronary artery bypass surgery. —RR

Overheard: With Dr. G

Wondering how to build your child’s character? Have him take out the garbage, says family physician Deborah Gilboa (MD ’00), aka “Dr. G.” A mother of four boys ages 9–15, Gilboa practices at the Squirrel Hill Health Center in Pittsburgh, and she has gained national acclaim as an author, Good Morning America contributor, parenting and youth development expert, award-winning educator, and keynote speaker. Gilboa, a former stage manager for the Second City theater, even offers improv programs to help families. During her recent appearances, she talks about how parents need to “step back so their kids can step up.”

How does taking out the garbage build character?
It teaches kids that their contribution makes the family better. Not just by being. But by doing. It teaches that they’re a necessary member of the family, that they are not too special to do things that are gross that benefit the whole home. To never have to do for themselves or for the household what is unpleasant leaves kids shocked and betrayed by the real world.

What do household chores tell us about the state of the world?
Kids should be unconditionally loved no matter what. But kids have moved to the center in pretty much every metric. Our society is going to grow a generation that expects to be constant receivers and doesn’t understand their role as contributors.

How can parents step back so their kids can step up?
Two percent of the time, they need us to throw ourselves in front of them with our bodies, actions, and voices, because their lives are in danger, emotionally or physically. But 98 percent of the time, they need someone who’s genuinely interested to see what they will do. And that is the hardest work of parenting: to not fix it for them. If your child is growing—physically, emotionally, spiritually, characterwise—you’re doing your job. —Interview by Kate Benz