1986-12

BUSM News & Notes: December 1986 no. 104

Boston University School of Medicine Office of Informational Services

http://hdl.handle.net/2144/20768

Boston University
Accomplishments of Dean Sandson honored by award from ADL

The accomplishments of Boston University School of Medicine Dean John I. Sandson, M.D., drew broad acclaim this month when the New England Regional Chapter of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith honored Sandson with its first Maimonides Award for excellence in medicine and education. Recognized for his efforts in improving access to medical school education for minorities and low-income students, Sandson also has been a leader in developing innovative medical school curricula. More than 500 friends and colleagues of Sandson attended the Dec. 14 award dinner at the University's George Sherman Union.

Honors philosopher-physician

The Maimonides Award, named for the 12th-century Jewish philosopher and physician, was established by the ADL to honor an individual for contributions in the fields of medicine and education. The award also symbolizes a deep sense of human values. Robert Bretholtz, co-chairman of the ADL Society of Fellows, presented the award.

Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn, who delivered the keynote address, described Sandson as "one of the city's natural assets," who could be called on for advice about diverse problems facing the city. Flynn said that Sandson's efforts on behalf of Boston City Hospital's proposed new building exemplify the Dean's commitment to providing quality medical care for all. The Mayor also presented a Paul Revere bowl to Sandson.

Edward I. Masterman, co-chairman for the award dinner, read a letter from University President John R. Silber, who was out of the country at the time of the event. Silber likened Sandson to Maimonides, who through the course of an illustrious career demonstrated the highest standards of skill, piety and scholarship, according to Silber, with "the modesty of the truly great." Other speakers included the Hon. James A. Shannon, the Commonwealth's incoming attorney general, who said, "No one has done more than John Sandson to make it possible for the underprivileged to get a medical-school education." The Rev. Charles Stith, a well-known community leader and civil-rights activist, also cited Sandson's efforts to increase the number of minority students at BUSM and to improve access to medical school for all, regardless of economic status.

Upon accepting the award, Sandson said, "Coming to the School of Medicine 12 years ago was the fulfillment of my lifelong ambition. The faculty here has been unusually responsive to the needs of society. In just a short period of time we have developed programs to recruit minority students and train primary care physicians, established a school of public health, and created low-interest loan programs for students of modest income. I think Maimonides would be pleased with our School, our faculty, and all our accomplishments over the past years," he concluded.

Memorial service held Dec. 4 for anatomy professor Raviola

Faculty members, family and friends attended a memorial service Dec. 4 in the University Hospital's Interfaith Chapel for the late Giuseppina d'Elia Raviola, M.D., Ph.D., a BUSM professor of anatomy and research professor of physiology, who died suddenly Oct. 30 at age 51.

Raviola was an internationally known expert on the anatomy of the eye and had been on the faculty for 14 years, during which time she taught gross anatomy to medical and dental students. "Her lectures, always meticulously prepared, reflected her wide range of knowledge of anatomical and medical disciplines and she was constantly available to her students for clarification and advice," said Alan Peters, Ph.D., chairman and professor of the Department of Anatomy. "In the Department," he continued, "she represented an invaluable source of information for faculty members and graduate students alike, both because of the breadth of her expertise, spanning from cell to organismic biology, and her willingness to share it with her fellow scientists."
A memorial fund has been set up in Raviola's name to provide for an annual prize for a graduate student who has performed well in anatomical sciences. Contributions to the Giuseppina d’Elia Raviola Memorial Fund should be sent to the BUSM Department of Anatomy, 80 East Concord St., Boston, MA 02118.

Cardiovascular Institute team identifies cholesterol protein

A Cardiovascular Institute research team headed by Vassilis Zannis, Ph.D., an associate professor of medicine and director of the Section of Molecular Genetics at BUSM, has identified the molecular structure of a protein called apolipoprotein (apoB), marking an important new link in the understanding of the cholesterol metabolism chain. The data from the BUSM team was published in the December issue of European Molecular Biology Journal. ApoB’s significance lies in its role as transporter of cholesterol that circulates in the bloodstream. Instead of the cholesterol molecules passing freely in the bloodstream, approximately 2,000 cholesterol molecules, other lipids and one molecule of apoB form a complex 250 Å in diameter known as low density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol. ApoB ferries the LDL to the surface of the cells where it binds to another protein called the LDL receptor. "In this regard, apoB serves as the key and the LDL receptor serves as the lock," explained Zannis.

What concerns Zannis and his group is what happens when the apoB LDL receptor system breaks down, causing a harmful increase in blood cholesterol. "The buildup of cholesterol may occur as a result of genetic changes in one or the other protein," he said. "Then the interaction or locking in of apoB and the LDL receptor is inefficient and the cholesterol, rather than being delivered to the cell, builds up in our bloodstream. This increase in cholesterol clogs the arteries and increases the risk of atherosclerosis and heart disease."

The BUSM team included: Christos Cladaras, Ph.D., a research instructor in medicine and principal collaborator in the research; Margarita Hadzopoulou-Cladaras, Ph.D., a research fellow in the Section of Molecular Genetics; Robert T. Nolte, a graduate student in BUSM’s Biophysics Institute; Rafael Avila, M.D., a colleague from the Harvard School of Public Health; and David Atkinson, Ph.D., an associate research professor of medicine and biochemistry.

Funds for the research were provided by the following organizations: the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the National Science Foundation, the American Heart Association and the March of Dimes Foundation.

BUSM holds Grunebaum Lecture, Annual Cooperband Symposium

The School of Medicine and Harvard Medical School presented the First Annual Karin Grunebaum Memorial Lecture on Dec. 9 in Keefee Auditorium at the University Hos-
Alumna Mary Jane England appointed AMWA president

Mary Jane England '64, director of the Lucius N. Littauer Master in Public Administration program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, was inducted as president of the American Medical Women's Association at the AMWA's Annual Meeting, held this month in St. Louis. Roberta Apfel '62, current president of the BUSM Alumni Association, also participated in the meeting. The BUSM Alumni Association sponsored a reception at the meeting for BUSM alumnae.

England served as first commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services from 1979 through 1983 and is a consultant to both the National Institute of Mental Health and the American Psychiatric Association. She also is an associate dean of the Kennedy School.

Fetal alcohol syndrome topic of conference

Lyn Weiner, M.P.H., director of the Fetal Alcohol Education Program and an associate professor of psychiatry (public health), and Thomas Kemper, M.D., a professor of neurology (neuropathology) and anatomy, and chief of the Department of Neurology at Boston City Hospital, will speak Jan. 6 at a symposium on “Prenatal Alcohol and Other Drug Use: Effects on Nervous System Development,” to be held at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In addition, the BUSM Fetal Alcohol Education Program and the Institute for Alcohol Policy and Training at BUSM sponsored a conference entitled “Women, Alcohol and Pregnancy: Preventing FAS” in November on the University’s Charles River Campus. The seminar was designed to instruct nursing school faculty on how to identify the clinical impact of alcohol use on pregnancy outcomes; to provide effective educational approaches and counseling strategies; and to incorporate alcohol and pregnancy information into the nursing school curriculum.

BUSM Arthritis Center holds press conference

Representatives of the local news media gathered recently at BUSM for a briefing on the variety of research efforts currently under way at the Arthritis Center. The press conference, organized by the Medical Center's Office of Media Relations, was designed to increase the visibility of this largely unpublicized group of diseases that are the cause of great morbidity. Reporters met with Alan S. Cohen, M.D., director of the Center and the Conrad Wesselhoeft Professor of Medicine at BUSM; Don L. Goldenberg, M.D., an associate professor of medicine and clinical director of the arthritis sections at Boston City Hospital and the University Hospital; Robert F. Meenan, M.D., M.P.H., an associate professor of medicine and the associate director of the Multipurpose Arthritis Center; and David T. Felson, M.D., an assistant professor of medicine and epidemiology.

Whitaker Fund announces application deadline

Proposals for Whitaker Health Sciences Fund collaborative research grants should be submitted to department chairpersons by Jan. 15 for grants beginning July 1, 1987. The Whitaker Health Sciences Fund, an independent nonprofit organization that supports joint biomedical research between faculty of BUSM and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will fund nine awards of $40,000 each (excluding overhead) this year. For further information, contact the Whitaker Fund office at 253-7878.

Rothbaums host reception in New York for parents

Paul and Jean Rothbaum, co-chairpersons of the BUSM Parents' Committee, recently hosted a reception for parents of BUSM students. Approximately 60 parents gathered Nov. 9 at the Lake Success Golf Club in Great Neck, N.Y., for the event. Dean Sandson, Associate Dean Arthur Culbert, Ph.D., and members of the BUSM Office of Development also attended. A brief presentation on the School's international health programs was given and a videotape of Dean Sandson's recent interview on WBZ-TV's (Channel 4) “Live on 4” was shown.
‘Desktop publishing’ gives News & Notes a new look

This issue of News & Notes has a new look as a result of recently acquired technology called “desktop publishing.” The technology, also referred to as “electronic publishing,” allows offices like BUMC’s Office of Informational Services to design, paste up and set into professional typefaces a number of publications that formerly were printed from typewriter type—a format called “strike-on” type.

Other OIS strike-on publications, produced for BUSM, the University Hospital and the School of Graduate Dentistry, will be redesigned into desktop publishing formats in the coming weeks. This Week, the Medical Center’s calendar, made its debut on Monday, Dec. 15, in its new format.

Owen J. McNamara, OIS director, said the Office also intends to produce most of its existing typeset publications on the new desktop publishing system. “Through the use of the new technology,” he noted, “we not only will have attractive and professional-looking publications, but we’ll also cut down on turn-around time, have more control over the publication process and, in many cases, save on costs involved in outside typesetting.” OIS will also be doing brochure and special-project typesetting and paste-up, which previously has been done by outside vendors, on the Office’s new electronic system.

The ability to produce set type in-house will also help OIS as it converts BUMC publications to conform with the Medical Center’s recently established Coordinated Graphics Program.

Briefly Noted

Ronald J. Ellis, an M.D.-Ph.D. candidate in the Behavioral Neurosciences program, has been awarded a $250 travel scholarship by the Division of Medical and Dental Sciences for his presentation of “Lateralities: Individual Differences, Interrelationships and Relevance to Other Neuropsychological Variables” at the 1987 meeting of the International Neuropsychological Society in Washington, D.C. . . . Victor Evdokimoff, Sc.M., C.H.P., radiation protection officer at BUMC and an adjunct assistant professor of public health, presented a paper discussing dose estimates from the proposed deregulation of certain biomedical tracers to an American Nuclear Society special session in Washington, D.C. The session was attended by representatives of the medical research community, radiochemical suppliers and government regulators.