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Boston University
Ground was broken on Nov. 2 for the $300-million Center for Advanced Biomedical Research on Albany Street. Participating in the ceremony were, from left, J. Scott Abercrombie Jr., M.D., president of the University Hospital; Judith Kurland, Boston commissioner of Health and Hospitals; Jon Westling, executive vice president of the University; Aram V. Chobanian, M.D., dean of the School of Medicine; Stephen Coyle, director of the Boston Redevelopment Authority; Spencer N. Frankl, D.D.S., dean of the Goldman School of Graduate Dentistry; and James Kelly, District 2 city councilor. (Photo by Boston University Photo Services)

Changes in curriculum overwhelmingly approved at Oct. 31 faculty meeting

School of Medicine faculty members approved by a vote of 174 to 11 the curriculum revisions as proposed by the Curriculum Committee at the Oct. 31 faculty meeting.

"The curriculum revision will serve to better prepare our medical students for the expected challenges in medicine in the 21st century," said School of Medicine Dean Aram V. Chobanian. "Increased emphasis will be placed on the integration of basic and clinical sciences, self-learning approaches, ambulatory care, and the social, ethical, and economic aspects of medicine."

The revised curriculum, which will be implemented in September 1992, reduces the number of lecture hours and allows more time for self-directed study and problem-solving activities. It also calls for integration of subject material in the preclinical courses and between preclinical and clinical courses.

Two new courses—Integrated Problem and Introduction to Clinical Medicine—will be introduced. Clerkships in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and psychiatry will be expanded from 5.75 weeks to seven weeks, while required four-week clerkships in radiology, neurology and primary care will be added to the fourth year. Separate curricula will be developed for ethics, communication and human sexuality.

In addition, an Office of Medical Education will be established to assist with curriculum development, faculty development, case writing, restructuring of faculty and student evaluation and coordination of teaching resources.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation awards five-year, $6-million grant to Boston’s CCHERS

Boston’s Center for Community Health Education, Research and Service (CCHERS) has been awarded a five-year, $6-million grant from the “Community Partnerships: A Kellogg Foundation Initiative in Health Professions Education.” This program was launched by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 1989 to turn around the decline in the number of graduates choosing primary healthcare careers and to develop multidisciplinary models for improving the public’s access to comprehensive primary health care. The Boston program is one of seven sites that have been selected by the foundation from a pool of more than 110 institutions.

CCHERS is a collaborative effort of seven communities: the Codman Square Health Center, the Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Whittier Street Health Center, Northeastern University College of Nursing, the Boston Department of Health and Hospitals, and Boston University School of Medicine. The purpose of CCHERS is to develop community-based, non-hospital settings that stress
primary health-care education and research from a multidisciplinary approach. Students will begin the community experiences during their first year of study and will continue their involvement throughout the academic program.

"The vision that the Kellogg Foundation has about medical education and the social issues involved in medical care are in keeping with the history and culture of this institution," said School of Medicine Associate Dean John McCahan, M.D. "We are pleased to be involved in ways of trying to address the needs of society at large as well as the needs of medical education."

McKinlay appointed acting director of University’s Gerontology Center

John B. McKinlay, Ph.D., a research professor of medicine, recently was named acting director of the Boston University Gerontology Center. In addition to his School of Medicine appointment, McKinlay is a professor of sociology and director of the Center for Health and Advanced Policy Studies at the University’s College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School.

McKinlay is well known for his studies of utilization behavior. He was the first to relate social-support networks to the use of health care. His recent research on menopause, clinical decision-making, a field trial of health-risk appraisals, minority help-seeking behavior, and frail elders and their informal caregivers has received wide acclaim, according to Richard H. Egdahl, M.D., academic vice president for health affairs. In addition, McKinlay is the principal investigator on the Massachusetts Male Aging Study—the largest male endocrine database worldwide. His contributions have been acknowledged with a prestigious National Institutes of Health MERIT Award.

The Gerontology Center was founded in 1974 and was designed to foster research, education, and service in the field of aging. The center offers two certificate programs in gerontology, sponsors a Summer Institute in Gerontology offering academic and continuing education courses, and sponsors lectures, workshops, and conferences.

Grodin addresses ethical implications of technology at Museum of Science lecture

Michael A. Grodin, M.D., F.A.A.P., associate director of the Law, Medicine and Ethics Program and director of medical ethics at BUSM, presented "The Ethical Implications of Creating Technology to Create Children," at the Museum of Science on Nov. 17. The lecture was one of a series of lectures held in conjunction with "Two of Every Sort," an exhibition on reproduction, gender and human diversity at the Museum of Science through Dec. 29.

"Today we have what is probably the most incredible technology that’s ever come along, but there is a lot of nervousness, anxiety and ambivalence connected with it," Grodin said. "That’s true with any new technology, but I would argue it’s even more so in the area of reproduction, because this area is so fundamental to who and what we are. The associated issues have many dimensions—social, ethical, religious, political and more."

Helm-Estabrooks, Albert co-write book featuring effective aphasia therapies

Two investigators at the School of Medicine’s Aphasia Research Center have provided what they call a “book of hope” for people working with patients or loved ones afflicted with aphasia.

Aphasia—the loss or diminishment of one’s ability to produce or even understand language as the result of a stroke or other brain injury—affects over one million people in the United States and millions more worldwide. Manual of Aphasia Therapy was written by Nancy Helm-Estabrooks, Sc.D., a professor of neurology, and Martin L. Albert, M.D., Ph.D., also a professor of neurology.

"This book shows there can be very organized, informed and well-motivated approaches to treating different forms of aphasia and different aspects of aphasia, not just some shotgun approach
where we hope to hit upon an effective therapy," said Helm-Estabrooks. "It tells us that probably every aphasic patient deserves a chance to be treated and that, even in the cases where language seems to be totally lost, there often are ways we can help these patients to communicate."

Many therapies described in the manual were developed to help the very severely aphasic patients, including those with little or no speech capabilities, according to Helm-Estabrooks. "Once we get away from the idea that communication is synonymous with speech, we can start to take a different and better view even of patients who have been termed globally aphasic," she said.

"We can communicate not just through speech, but through gesturing and drawing."

The manual by Helm-Estabrooks and Albert discusses clinical research and treatment techniques developed by the two during more than 18 years as research colleagues. Although the manual is primarily for speech and language pathologists, neurologists, neuropsychologists and anyone working in the rehabilitation of brain-damaged patients, the book is written in an easy-to-understand manner for the lay person, said Helm-Estabrooks.

The manual is available from the publisher, PRO-ED, at 8700 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Austin, TX 78758; (512) 451-3246.

Faculty members honored at recent College of Rheumatology meeting

Two School of Medicine faculty members received honors at the recent meeting of the American College of Rheumatology in Boston. Alan S. Cohen, M.D., the Conrad Wesselhoeft Professor of Medicine at the School, and chief of medicine and director of the Thordike Memorial Laboratory at Boston City Hospital, was elevated to the position of Master of the American College of Rheumatology. Appointment to this position represents an honor reserved for distinguished physicians who have made major contributions to clinical, research and educational aspects of rheumatology over the years.

David Felson, M.D., an associate professor of medicine and head of BCH's Department of Medicine's Quality Improvement Program, was honored as the Outstanding Young Investigator for the year in recognition of his research on the epidemiology of osteoarthritis and osteoporosis, and his studies on meta-analysis.

In addition, Robert Meenan, M.D., a professor of medicine and head of the Section of Arthritis at BCH and UH, presided over the meeting as president of the American College of Rheumatology.

Genetics paper wins national award

A manuscript by a School of Medicine student and two faculty members has been selected by the editors of The American Journal of the Medical Sciences as the 1991 Tinsley Harrison Award winner. The paper, titled "Presymptomatic and Prenatal Diagnosis of Myotonic Muscular Dystrophy with Linked DNA Probes," was written by fourth-year student Jeffrey M. Milunsky, James C. Skare, Ph.D., an assistant research professor of pediatrics, and Aubrey Milunsky, M.D., D.Sc., director of the School's Center for Human Genetics. Jeffrey Milunsky will present the paper during the Southern Clinical Research Meetings in New Orleans, La., on Jan. 30, 1992. At that time, an award of $1,000 will be presented to him.

The Tinsley Harrison Award is given for the manuscript judged to be the most original published in The American Journal of the Medical Sciences during the year. It is given in memory of Dr. Tinsley Harrison, one of the founders of the Southern Society for Clinical Investigation and a world-renowned physician who wrote Principles of Internal Medicine.

Posner to serve on NIH study section

Barbara M. Posner, Dr.P.H., an adjunct assistant professor of sociomedical sciences and community medicine, has been selected to serve as a member of the study section, Division of Research Grants, Epidemiology and Disease Control, of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Her four-year term will end June 30, 1995.

Radiology resident honored

Douglas Gibbens, M.D., a second-year resident in the Diagnostic Radiology Program, has been selected as one of 80 residents from across the nation to participate in the "Introduction to Research" program. The program is sponsored by the three national radiology organizations. In addition, Gibbens has been invited to attend the annual 1991 meeting of the Radiological Society of North America meeting in Chicago with 19 other second-year residents.

Upcoming CME courses

The following is a list of upcoming courses sponsored by the Department of Continuing Medical Education.

A course called "Laparoscopy for the General Surgeon" will be held from Jan. 16 through Jan. 17 at the Colonnade Hotel in Boston and at Boston University Medical Center. This course is designed to instruct surgeons in laparoscopic techniques and their application to general surgery. The course will combine didactic sessions at the Colonnade Hotel with an extensive animal laboratory experience at the Medical Center.

A seminar titled "Winter Urologic Forum" will be held from Jan. 26 through Jan. 31 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Beaver Creek, Colo. This conference is designed as an update of new developments in the diagnostic and therapeutic options available to the practicing urologist.

For more information on these and other courses, contact the Department of Continuing Medical Education at 638-4605 (x4605).
Briefly noted:

At the 1991 annual meeting of the American College of Surgeons in Chicago, Ill., held from Oct. 20 through Oct. 25, Barry M. Manuel, M.D., associate dean for continuing medical education and external affairs, presided as chairman and moderator of a nine-hour postgraduate course on "Professional Liability/Risk Management and Legal Preparedness." Robert M. Weiss, M.D., the recently appointed director of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at Boston University Medical Center, presented "Analysis of Serum HCG Levels in Normal, Singleton, Multiple, and Abnormal Pregnancies" at the annual meeting of the American Fertility Society in October. During the University's Homecoming activities on Oct. 26, School of Medicine alumna Marion K. Moulton '38 was presented with the Boston University Alumni Award for Distinguished Service to the Community. The award was in recognition of her dedicated career as a Maine country doctor for over 43 years.

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