Fired up for Match Day

Rainy skies this St. Patrick’s Day didn’t put a damper on the Match Day excitement! The right of passage shared by medical students across the country fell on March 17 this year and the class of 2005 was fired up! The “high-fives” and celebratory yells were heard way beyond the tin walls of Skipper’s Smokehouse in Tampa. Of the 103 College of Medicine graduates, 40 are staying at USF for their medical residency programs. The placements included Georgetown University in Washington DC, Emory University in Atlanta, Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, and Brown University in Providence, RI. Forty-three percent of this year’s group will perform their residency programs in primary care, with the majority specializing in internal medicine. See more photos and stories on pages 2 and 3.

RESIDENCY MATCHES

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Speed Collaborating for Researchers

The first Synergy Social Hour was a hit with researchers who gathered at the Alumni Center March 23 for the event hosted by Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, dean of the College of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences.

The goal of the program is to spur interdisciplinary research proposals that will lead to pilot projects funded by the HSC vice president and USF provost. The format is similar to the “speed dating” trend. Researchers paired up at tables to share information about their research projects, identify prospects for collaboration, jot down notes and swap business cards. Every three minutes, HSC Associate Vice President for Research Phillip Marty, PhD, blew a whistle signaling it was time for half the researchers to move to the next table.

It wasn’t exactly dating and a typical opening line was “what’s your specialty?” not “what’s your sign?” The opportunity to explore common research interests in the field of biomedical engineering drew more than 80 scientists and clinicians from the Colleges of Medicine, Engineering, Nursing and Public Health, as well as the VA and Shriners hospitals. The next Synergy Social Hour, later this spring, will focus on sports medicine.
Meet THE physician Vegas Brown

By Lissette Campos

He’s the president for this year’s graduating class from the USF College of Medicine; the former president of the Student National Medical Association; and a voting member of the Medical Student Selection Committee here at USF. He is 26-year-old Vegas Brown. While the aforementioned titles are impressive, they paint only part of the picture that is Brown.

When the other 6-year-old boys in his Sarasota neighborhood were pretending to be superheroes, Brown was the “doctor.”

Matching medicine with politics

By Anne DeLotto Baier

The Tuesday before the Match Day, David Winchester was in Washington DC, walking the halls of the U.S. Capitol and waiting to speak with Sen. Bill Nelson about federal student loan programs.

Winchester, 26, spent the last year as chair of the 50,000-member American Medical Association Medical Student Section (AMA-MSS), the country’s largest organization of medical students. He’s answered thousands of e-mails, traveled nearly every other weekend, and recently published a letter to the editor in ContraCostaTimes.com commenting on physicians’ critical role in health care teamwork. He has met with legislators, legislative aides, boards of medical examiners and fellow students to discuss issues impacting physician education and practice.

The first USF medical student to hold a national office, Winchester engaged in political discourse since his first year at the USF College of Medicine, when he was elected president of his freshman class. As president of the USF chapter of the AMA-MSS, he testified at hearings before Florida legislators studying the issue of medical malpractice reform.

“I’ve learned so much about how government works,” Winchester said.

“Many people don’t realize that state and federal government, through law and regulation, determines how physicians get a license, set up a practice, create charts, and even see patients,” Winchester said.

“Understanding government’s impact on the practice of medicine before I go out on my own empowers me to advocate for change sooner and more effectively.”

Winchester’s interest in organized medicine and politics is not without precedent. His father Gary Winchester, MD, a Tallahassee medicine and politics is not without precedent. His father Gary Winchester, MD, a Tallahassee

In high school, though, he began to wonder if the dream would become a reality for him. Brown is one of eight children. His family is not rich. His divorced parents and his grandparents were already making sacrifices to provide the basics. “I began to think about pursuing a degree as a physician’s assistant. It was shorter. I needed to graduate and start making a living as soon as possible,” recalled Brown. But during his junior year in high school, he was challenged by a counselor: “Why be the assistant to the physician when you can be THE physician!”

One-hundred thousand dollars in loans later, Brown will become Dr. Brown this May. He’s packing his bags for Detroit to begin his residency in emergency medicine at Wayne State University. He’ll miss the Florida sunshine, his mother, and especially his grandmother Inez’ chitlins! His advice to other students: “Study a little bit harder, and take preparatory classes. We have a saying in my old neighborhood. It’s ‘step your game up!’ and that means work harder than you already are.”

USF Health Sciences Center experts were called upon by national, regional and local media to comment on legal, medical and ethical aspects of the Terri Schiavo case in late February and March.

Jay Wolfson, DrPH, JD, distinguished service professor of public health and medicine, was appointed Mrs. Schiavo’s independent guardian ad litem in 2003 and prepared a report on her for Gov. Jeb Bush. Dr. Wolfson was interviewed by dozens of news outlets including local stations, ABC Action News Ch. 28, Bay News 9, Fox 13 News, News Channel 8, Tampa Bay’s 10 and WUSF-FM 89.7.


The New York Times

Dr. Wolfson was also quoted in the Palm Beach Post and Courier-Journal (Louisville, Ky), March 28; St. Petersburg Times and Orlando Sentinel, March 26; ContraCostaTimes.com, March 25; South Florida Sun-Sentinel and Kansas City Star.com, March 23; and Augusta Free Press, March 22.
The celebration of national Match Day at USF was covered March 17 by several area TV stations. Stephen Klasko, MD, MBA, dean of the College of Medicine and vice president for Health Sciences, was interviewed by WB-38 News Central about Match Day, when senior medical students across the country find out where they will conduct their specialty training. Michael Hoffmann, MD, professor of neurology and neurosurgery, was credited as a source for the graphic of a brain used to explain Terri Schiavo’s condition in the March 23 St. Petersburg Times.

Susan McMillan, PhD, professor of nursing and a founder of the Center for Hospice, Palliative Care and End-of-Life Studies at USF, shared the story of making end-of-life decisions for her mother in a March 24 NPR Radio segment.

Leon Prockop, MD, professor of neurology, commented on the medical findings of brain damage from his review of Terri Schiavo’s CAT scans for the March 25 Fox-13 News, the March 26 Associated Press and ABC News online, and March 29 Toronto Star.

Robert Walker, MD, director of Medical Ethics and Humanities, was a guest on the Feb. 22 Fox 13 News “Your Turn Show.”

By Lissette Campos

Maria Afanador took one look at the white piece of paper handed to her on Match Day, yelled in delight and whipped out her USF cap! The fourth year medical student will be doing her residency in pediatrics at the University of South Florida College of Medicine. Afanador couldn’t be happier!

While other med students will be off to wintery places like New York, Philadelphia, and Michigan, Afanador will be enjoying the Florida sunshine and the company of her twin sister Solimar. Maria and Solimar both dressed in green for Match Day, confusing plenty of the camera crews covering the event.

“Which one is Maria again?” asked a handful of photographers, unable to tell them apart.

The 25-year-old twins were facing the possibility of being apart for the next four years. Solimar is a third-year medical student at USF’s College of Medicine.

“We were preparing for that, to deal with that possibility in case it happened. But it’s nice she will still be around!” said Solimar of her sister soon-to-be Dr. Maria Afanador.

The twins’ parents, Enid and Gilberto Afanador live in Orlando, and are ecstatic! Mom Enid is well known at the College of Medicine Office of Diversity…a mom so proud of her “niñas” she’s been known to write in and ask about the twins. The Afanadors were born in Puerto Rico, growing up near San Juan. “Mom is very proud of the twins and is not ashamed to show it!” said Vanessa Travieso in COM Diversity. “Mom sends us pictures and letters. Once she apologized for being so overzealous, but she’s so excited for them!”

USF names state virologist Lillian Stark Florida Outstanding Woman in Public Health

Lillian, M. Stark, PhD, director of the Virology Department of the Tampa Branch Laboratory, Florida Department of Health, has been named the 2005 Outstanding Woman in Public Health by the USF College of Public Health. Dr. Stark will be honored at the Public Health Week Awards Ceremony beginning 1 pm, Tuesday, April 5, at the COPH auditorium.

Dr. Stark has been a longstanding advocate for water quality standards and sentinel surveillance programs for arboviral diseases. She is recognized nationally and internationally for her laboratory-based surveillance of arboviruses, which are carried primarily by mosquitoes and can cause illnesses such as encephalitis and West Nile virus.

Dr. Stark is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Global Health. She mentors students who apply their academic training in epidemiology and environmental and occupational health at the regional state laboratory. She earned both a PhD in biology and an MPH in public health from USF, and was a charter class member of the USF Public Health Leadership Institute.

The annual Florida Outstanding Woman in Public Health Award was started by the USF College of Public Health in 1988. The award honors women who have made significant contributions to the field of public health. Nominations are solicited from public health practitioners across the state.
Call for nominations:

New award promotes Florida’s top health programs

Nominations are being sought for the Sapphire Award Recognizing Community Health Excellence, a new award sponsored by the Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida to honor programs that provide health care access to Florida’s underserved and uninsured and seek to improve the health care of Florida’s at-risk communities.

The Blue Foundation will select up to three nonprofit recipients annually. Each recipient will receive a financial award of up to $120,000 toward its community health objectives. This year’s selection committee is chaired by Charles Mahan, MD, professor and former COPH dean.

Deadline for submitting nominations is June 29 and winners will be announced this fall. For nomination materials or to submit inquiries about the Sapphire Award, please contact TheSapphireAward@bcbsfl.com or call 1-800-477-3736, ext. 63215, option 2.

Fund raiser to support PT

The School of Physical Therapy has organized a fund raiser to support several school activities, including an induction ceremony for the incoming Doctor of Physical Therapy class and donations to help patients unable to pay for physical therapy.

Students are selling tickets for a $10 meal, dine-in or take-out, at Carabba’s Italian Grill (Fowler Ave.), noon to 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 17. The restaurant will be open only to ticket holders at that time.

Tickets can be purchased at the COM Student Affairs Office or by contacting Angie Giordano at agiordan@hsc.usf.edu or 294-0280. The deadline for purchase is April 8.