

CENTER TIMES

JUNE / JULY 2021

A PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SOUTHWESTERN MEDICAL CENTER

CAMPUS EDITION

Making waves with HIFU

MRI-guided high-intensity focused ultrasound opens new paths to noninvasive treatment of brain disease

By Andrew Marton

For years, brain surgery has involved anesthesia, scalpels, drills, and sometimes wires implanted into the brain. Today, some cutting-edge treatments involve no cutting at all.

The latest methods use high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU) waves to penetrate the brain and remove unhealthy tissue. It is similar to how children use a magnifying glass to focus the sun's rays and burn a scrap of paper – only instead of sunlight, ultrasound is used.

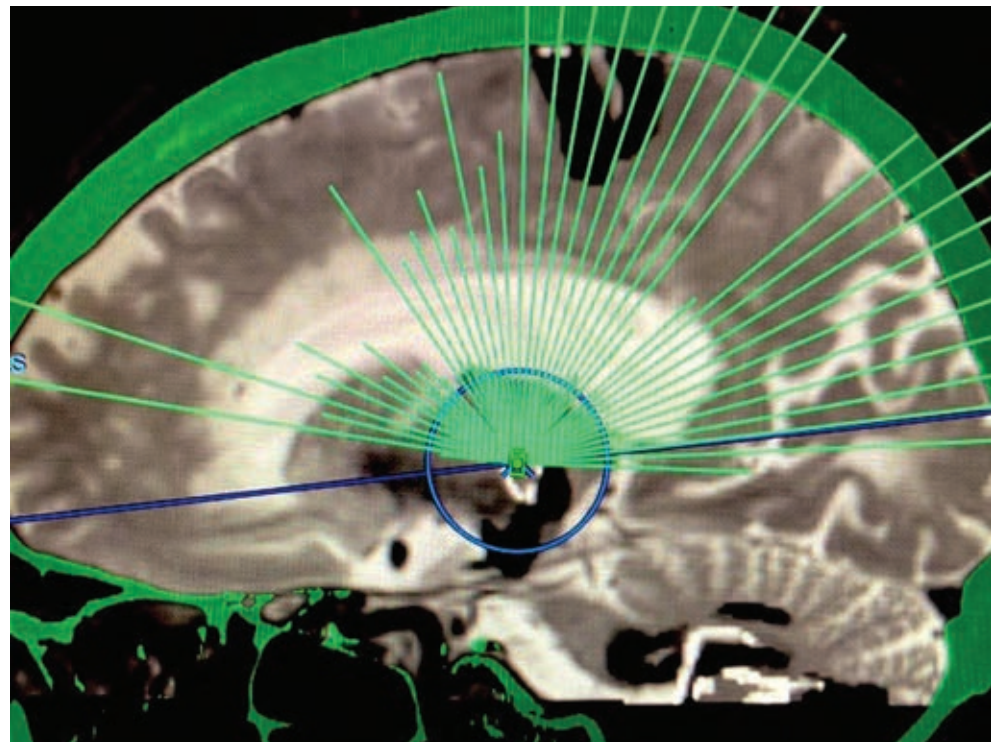
Now, technological advances are taking this treatment to the next level. Guided by MRI, physicians can precisely target specific parts of the brain, locating groups of cells and aiming the ultrasound waves with far greater precision. This technology is known as magnetic resonance-guided high-intensity focused ultrasound, or MRgHIFU.

"MRgHIFU technology can potentially elim-

inate the need for invasive surgery," said Dr. Bhavya R. Shah, Assistant Professor in the Division of Neuroradiology at the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, who is a pioneering researcher at the forefront of this innovative treatment. "High-intensity ultrasound waves can be focused across the skull under real-time MRI guidance to ablate or burn away diseased tissue without the necessity of opening up the skull."

Finding innovative ways to make a difference in people's lives with technology is central to Dr. Shah's work as Director of the Neuro Focused Ultrasound Program. He uses MRgHIFU to treat patients with movement disorders such as essential tremor or Parkinson's disease. The Food and Drug Administration has approved the technology as an effective tremor treatment for both conditions.

"With today's technology, a patient wears a helmet that focuses ultrasound beams onto a precise point in the brain," he said. "There is no
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This ray diagram, which shows ultrasound beam trajectories overlaid on a patient's MRI image, depicts all of the high-intensity focused ultrasound beams as they cross an intact skull to reach a single treatment point in the brain.

Study finds striking disparities in cancer deaths tied to poverty, race

By Patrick McGee

Cancer deaths among Black teens and adults under age 40 are higher, sometimes significantly so, compared with other ethnic groups of similar age, according to a UT Southwestern analysis of Texas cancer data.

The study, published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, focused on cancer patients ages 15 to 39 and broke down their survival rates by race, ethnicity, poverty level, urban/rural location, and insurance type. The study, based on an analysis of Texas Cancer Registry data from 1995 to 2016, also found lower survival rates among cancer patients who live in poverty and have no insurance. The analysis included data on 55,000 women and more than 32,000 men.

"By far the strongest predictor or association was race. In particular, the Black race was consistently associated with lower survival, even if patients are not poor and have insurance," said Dr. Caitlin
Please see DISPARITIES on page 19

Two UTSW faculty elected to National Academy of Sciences

By Patrick Wascovich

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has elected two UT Southwestern scientists in the fields of biochemistry and physiology into its membership, one of the highest honors for American scientists.

Dr. Donald Hilgemann and Dr. Margaret Phillips were elected by their peers in recognition of distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. Dr. Hilgemann has employed innovative techniques to investigate Na/Ca exchangers that are involved in the generation of important cardiac arrhythmias, while Dr. Phillips has conducted groundbreaking investigations to identify metabolic pathways in parasitic protozoa with the goal of developing drugs to treat malaria.
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Dr. Donald Hilgemann



Dr. Margaret Phillips



Dr. Ian Boys

Virologist Ian Boys wins Nominata Award

By Christen Brownlee

Early last March – before social distance became a verb and mask wearing turned into a habit for most Americans – Dr. Ian Boys and his mentor, Associate Professor of Microbiology Dr. John Schoggins, received a special package. In it was a single vial of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The sample had been isolated from early cases in Washington state before the illness became a worldwide pandemic.

Dr. Boys was one of a few graduate students across UT Southwestern and the only one in Dr. Schoggins' lab with the training necessary to safely handle SARS-CoV-2. His dissertation research, which involves the study of flaviviruses – a family of viruses that includes the potentially deadly West Nile, dengue, and yellow fever viruses – had required countless hours of work in the lab's biosafety level 3 (BSL3) facility. Based on the findings he has made involving flaviviruses and his collaborative work on other viral diseases, Dr. Boys, who recently completed UT Southwestern's Immu-

nology Graduate Program, is this year's recipient of the Nominata Award, the highest honor bestowed upon an advanced student of the UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

"When I read the email notifying me of the award, I was in disbelief for a minute," said Dr. Boys, who earned his Ph.D. in May. "It was something completely off my radar, and it was absolutely exciting news."

The Graduate Student Organization created the Nominata Award in 1980 to promote academic excel-
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Recognizing dedicated, longtime service

In a special section that begins on page 3, we honor colleagues celebrating milestone years of service, including this year's new members of the Quarter Century Club.

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Visit our website at utsouthwestern.edu/ctplus

CARING FOR NEW MOMS

An innovative program delivers community-based health care to reduce maternal mortality rates in underserved areas.

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Study identifies key genes in the brain that encode memories

By Christen Brownlee

UT Southwestern scientists have identified key genes involved in brain waves that are pivotal for encoding memories. The findings, published in *Nature Neuroscience*, could eventually be used to develop novel therapies for people with memory loss disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

Making a memory involves groups of brain cells firing cooperatively at various frequencies, a phenomenon known as neural oscillations. However, the genetic basis of this process is not clear, according to study leaders Dr. Bradley C. Lega, Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery, Neurology, and Psychiatry, and Dr. Genevieve Konopka, Associate Professor of Neuroscience.

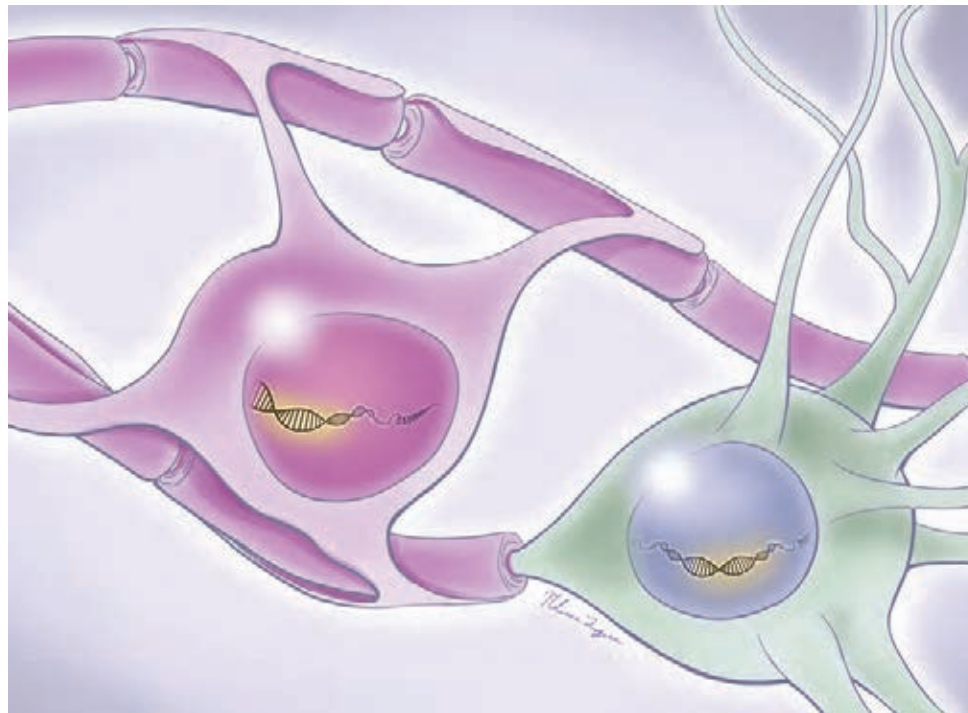
"There's a famous saying for 100 years in neuroscience: Neurons that fire together will wire together," said Dr. Lega. "We know that cells involved in learning fire in groups and form new connections because of the influence of these oscillations."



Dr. Bradley Lega

Drs. Lega and Konopka, both members of the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, collaborated on a previous study to explore this question, collecting data on neural oscillations from volunteers and using statistical methods to connect this information to data on gene activity collected from post-mortem brains. Although these results identified a promising list of genes, Dr. Konopka said, there was a significant shortcoming in the research: The oscillation and genetic data came from different sets of individuals.

More recently, the duo capitalized on an



Above illustration shows a neuron (green) ensheathed by an oligodendrocyte (purple) with "activated" genetic material (DNA) in each cell's nucleus. Differences in each cell type's active DNA may underlie human memory. Credit: Melissa Logies

unprecedented opportunity – performing a similar study on patients undergoing surgeries in which damaged parts of their brains were removed to control their epilepsy.

The researchers worked with 16 volunteers from UT Southwestern's Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, where epilepsy patients stay for several days before having surgery to remove the damaged parts of their brains that spark seizures.

The researchers asked the volunteers to read a list of 12 words, conduct a short math problem to distract them, and then recall as many words as possible. As these patients were memorizing the word lists, their brain waves were recorded. About six weeks later, each volunteer underwent

a temporal lobectomy – removal of the brain's temporal lobe – to cure their seizures. The damaged brain tissue was sent for processing to assess genetic activity and then compared to the dataset on the recall exercise.

Dr. Konopka's team first identified active genes in the temporal lobe samples by performing whole RNA sequencing. Using statistical techniques that linked this activity to the patients' neural oscillations during the free recall task, the researchers identified 300 genes that seem to play a part in oscillatory activity. The researchers narrowed this number to a dozen "hub genes" that appeared to control separate gene networks.

Next, the researchers looked at the activity of these hub genes in separate cell types within the samples. Surprisingly, they found that several of these hubs weren't active within nerve cells themselves but in a different population of cells known as glia, which support and protect nerve cells.

Finally, the researchers used a technique called ATAC-seq, which identifies areas of DNA that are open for molecules called transcription factors to attach to and activate genes. Using this approach, they honed in on *SMAD3*, a gene that appears to serve as a master regulator to control activity of many of the hub genes and the genes they control in return.

Drs. Konopka and Lega note that several of the genes they identified as important in human neural oscillations have been linked to other disorders that can affect learning and memory, such as autism spectrum disorder, attention



Dr. Genevieve Konopka

deficit hyperactivity disorder, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. With further research into these genes and the networks they operate within, it may eventually be possible to target select genes with pharmaceuticals to improve memory in individuals with these and other

conditions, the researchers say.

"This gives us an entry point," said Dr. Konopka. "It's something we can focus on to learn more about the underpinnings of human memory."

Dr. Konopka is a Jon Heighen Scholar in Autism Research.

Anti-racism lecture series addresses institutional racism in medicine

By Jan Jarvis

When students and faculty members asked for a way to better understand institutional racism in medicine and how to dismantle it, UT Southwestern quickly responded with a lecture series to get people talking about tough but important topics. The Anti-Racism Virtual Series launched in 2020, an unprecedented year filled with news of racial injustice on top of political unrest and a pandemic.

The series, begun in October, has addressed topics such as the role of medical schools in health disparities, overcoming the effects of discrimination, and understanding the root causes of racism. Seven experts from across the country have been featured in the series, which will continue through the academic year, said Dr. Shawna Nesbitt, Associate Dean of Student Diversity and Inclusion at UT Southwestern.

"The goal of the series is to help unpack some common ideas about institutional racism," said Dr. Nesbitt, who is also Professor of Internal Medicine. "What does it mean, what role is it playing, how does racism affect us?"

The series started with a lecture on how racialized rules or instructions began in medicine and how they have been perpetuated in clinical practices. This topic helped to expose some of the flaws in the use of race as a marker in health care that perpetuate inequities. Multiple sessions explored how to be allies for diversity and inclusion and finding solutions to combat racism.

"It is not just talking about the problem," Dr. Nesbitt said. "It also includes some heroes and legends in their own time."

One recent speaker, for example, discussed anti-racism efforts in education. Dr. Bernard A. Harris Jr., a former astronaut and the first African American to walk in space, talked about the importance of eliminating barriers that students in disadvantaged communities face, including the need for more opportunities to pursue science and engineering in high schools and colleges.

The series continues monthly and can be accessed anytime online by members of the UTSW community. Dr. Nesbitt serves as moderator for the discussions.

"The idea is to get current and future physicians thinking more about people they treat than their illnesses," Dr. Nesbitt said. "Physicians have a responsibility to do what we can do to make life better."



One of the series speakers was Dr. Bernard A. Harris Jr., a former astronaut and the first African American to walk in space.

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lence and research achievement among graduate students. The winner receives a monetary award and presents their research to the UT Southwestern community. On May 12, Dr. Boys presented his research in a virtual university lecture.

Dr. Boys grew up in Allen, Texas, with parents whose backgrounds are in science. They encouraged him to be curious, he remembered, traits further bolstered by a high school biology teacher and mentors as an undergraduate at Baylor University.

In January 2016, Dr. Boys joined the Schoggins lab – his second stint there after participating earlier in the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program. At the start of his graduate studies, he began working on a project to identify new antiviral effector proteins: species-specific proteins that defend a host against a viral infection.

He and his colleagues were particularly interested in searching for these intriguing proteins in bats, animals that are a rich source of zoonotic viruses – which can jump among species. Research by the World Health Organization and others has suggested that bats are the original source of SARS-CoV-2, which probably passed through another animal host before it infected the first human.

After conducting a broad screen for antiviral effector proteins in a bat cell line, Dr. Boys and his colleagues narrowed their results to the most promising targets. They found that receptor transporter protein 4 (RTP4) is a powerful inhibitor of deadly human flaviviruses including Zika, West Nile, and hepatitis C. Importantly, they found that RTP4 from humans is an inhibitor of Entebbe bat virus, a flavivirus that specifically infects bats. This finding, published in *Cell Host & Microbe* in November 2020, highlights at least 100 million years of an evolutionary arms race in which viruses and their hosts compete for survival.

The research could lead to new therapies for infections caused by different flaviviruses, Dr. Boys said. He has continued to search for antiviral effector proteins in other vertebrate species, including amphibians.

"I am delighted to learn that Ian is this year's recipient of the Nominata Award," Dr. Schoggins said. "Ian has generated an impressive body of work that is changing how we think about the interactions of viruses with their vertebrate hosts over long evolutionary time scales. By studying antiviral mechanisms from humans to mice to bats to frogs, Ian is charting new territory in our quest for a deeper understanding of nature's viral defense systems."

In March 2020, Dr. Boys joined Dr. Schoggins and other researchers across UT Southwestern and beyond to better understand SARS-CoV-2. Tag-teaming in puffy containment suits in the BSL3 facility, Drs. Boys and Schoggins collaborated with colleagues to identify immune proteins, drugs, and other compounds that might inhibit this virus.

In July, Dr. Boys will head to a post-doctoral fellowship in the laboratory of evolutionary geneticist Dr. Nels Elde at the University of Utah to continue studying how viruses and their hosts have evolved over time. He eventually hopes to run his own laboratory.

"I've gotten to where I am because I have had great mentors throughout the years," Dr. Boys said. "I want to give back to academia and the scientific endeavor by helping to train more scientists in the future."

Dr. Schoggins is a Nancy Cain and Jeffrey A. Marcus Scholar in Medical Research, in Honor of Dr. Bill S. Vowell.



CENTER TIMES

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION 2021

Long-term employees play an invaluable role in the life of UT Southwestern Medical Center. Their faithful, dedicated service has helped the institution become what it is today. In this special section of *Center Times*, we showcase some of these employees and their varied interests.

Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern Medical Center, will host a June 9 luncheon to honor employees with 45, 40, 35, and 30 years of service and to welcome new members of the Quarter Century Club.

Helping others is a family tradition for this nurse

By Carol Marie Cropper

Ade Auste came to the U.S. as a young nurse in the '70s, recruited from the Philippines by a small-town Texas hospital desperate for nursing staff. In 1980, she moved to Dallas and began caring for patients at the former St. Paul University Hospital, and later William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

"We have a culture like a small-town family," Ms. Auste says of her UTSW work family. The best part of her job as Registered Nurse II, she adds, is "knowing that I'll be helping somebody get better."

But that doesn't mean she's forgotten about her first home in the Philippines. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Auste was acutely aware of the hardship in her old coastal village. Soon after restrictions were enacted in March 2020, she began sending money to her sister and brother in her home country so they could purchase and distribute food to the community's needy. "We have a lot of poor people in my hometown," she explains.

Giving to those less fortunate is a family tradition. Every January, her late mother would make noodles to give to the poor for Three Kings Day, the Christian holiday commemorating when the three wise men arrived with gifts for baby Jesus.

Texas is now home, Ms. Auste says, and she has no plans of moving back to the Philippines, although she may take an extended vacation. Along with her husband – her college sweetheart whom she married shortly before they came to the U.S. – her son and two grandchildren are here.

Helping the sick has become her life's work. During her time at UT Southwestern,



Ade Auste

Registered Nurse II
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, Day Surgery

she has worked in the Surgical ICU, Cardiovascular Interventional Radiology (CVIR), and now in the surgery preparation and recovery unit at Clements University Hospital, caring for day surgery patients.

Through the years, Ms. Auste has also cared for organ transplant patients and was a nursing educator – the latter being one of her favorite jobs, since it allowed her to orient new nurses coming to UTSW. In fact, one of her current projects is putting

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Skilled at clinical research and picking up a new language



Yolanda Delira

Data Research Specialist
Maternal-Fetal Medicine Division
Obstetrics and Gynecology

By Ashley Green-Jones

One day in the early '80s, Yolanda Delira's mother browsed a Spanish-language newspaper and saw a job advertised that she thought was perfect for her daughter. The former Children & Youth Project in West Dallas was seeking a Spanish speaker to work with patients in clinics.

"I had to replace clerks who had called in, so I went to different clinics and

worked at the front desk signing in patients, coordinating schedules, and pulling charts," says Mrs. Delira, a Data Research Specialist for the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine. "I really enjoyed it."

When the former UT Southwestern program switched over to Parkland Memorial Hospital, Mrs. Delira stayed with UTSW and transferred to a family planning clinic once run by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. She later moved to a clinical research role in the department.

In her current job, Mrs. Delira enjoys working and conversing with patients and providing assistance. She helps the division find patients to qualify for studies, explaining the study and working with patients to sign consent forms if they agree. She also helps the patients schedule appointments and inputs data related to this work. Her demeanor has been credited with helping get much-needed patient information and building a trusting patient-clinic relationship.

She has come a long way since starting at UT Southwestern in 1981. Amid switching positions and witnessing expansions, she also found time to learn a new language.

Growing tired of the Spanish-language movies on Netflix, she became fascinated with a Korean YouTube movie with English subtitles. From there, Mrs. Delira picked up watching online Korean dramas, which are usually 16-episode seasons. Her co-worker became an invaluable resource on the Korean language and culture.

"I started watching the food they ate and observing the culture, which I really like. I had a Korean co-worker and I would ask her questions or to interpret," says

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Almost 100 longtime employees celebrated for their contributions to UT Southwestern's history of innovation, growth, and success

By Carol Marie Cropper

Longtime employees who have reached career milestones at UT Southwestern will be honored during Employee Recognition Week in June for dedicated work that has contributed to the institution's growth and success.

In all, 94 honorees marking 25, 30, 35, 40, or 45 years of service have been invited to a celebration on June 9 hosted by Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern. Among invited guests are two employees who have been at the institution 45 years and 10 employees with 40 years of service to UT Southwestern. Another 54 will join the Quarter

Century Club, meaning they have reached the 25-year service mark.

The keynote speaker is Dr. W. P. Andrew Lee, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Dean of UT Southwestern Medical School. Dr. Lee, who joined UT Southwestern in 2019 from The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, will speak about team building to achieve innovation.

"UT Southwestern has had a remarkable tradition in basic science research," Dr. Lee said, and it is also rapidly expanding patient care at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital and UT Southwestern clinics. "None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication and capabili-

ties of our employees, particularly those who have contributed to the institutional missions for a sustained period of time. Their loyalty and focus on excellence are truly valued."

An internationally recognized hand and transplant surgeon, Dr. Lee formerly served as Director (Chair) of the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Johns Hopkins. He led the surgical team that performed the first double-hand transplant and the first above-the-elbow arm transplant in the United States. Many of his surgeries were performed to restore function to military personnel who had suffered devastating combat injuries.

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Dr. W. P. Andrew Lee



Pamela Hewitt

Senior Administrative Assistant
Patient Care Services Administration

Having compassion, listening, and teamwork are her strengths

By Jan Jarvis

Over the past 40 years, Pamela Hewitt has gathered a wealth of knowledge, developed an ability to be patient, and learned to stay flexible through the many changes that have occurred at UT Southwestern. Her job as a Senior Administrative Assistant has its challenges, but also many rewards, she says.

"You have to be a team player and have a sympathetic ear," Ms. Hewitt says. "So, being able to teach or show others how to accomplish or learn something is very satisfying."

Being compassionate and a good listener who is available whenever people need help is also important, she says. Ms. Hewitt's friendly, approachable personality means co-workers feel comfortable coming to her with any issue or question.

"No matter how busy I am, they know I will stop, give them my full attention, and help solve their dilemma," she says.

Ms. Hewitt is known to be detail-oriented and dedicated to completing tasks or projects. She thrives on learning new skills and is energized by mastering a new process.

Over the years, she has had plenty of opportunities to be energized by new challenges. Her first UTSW job was as a Unit Secretary at the former St. Paul University Hospital, a position she held for 17 years. From 1997 to 2015, Ms. Hewitt worked as a Staffing Coordinator and in 2016 became a Senior Administrative Assis-

tant. She currently works in Patient Care Services Administration.

Since she joined UT Southwestern in 1980, Ms. Hewitt has seen plenty of changes and always adapted along the way. One of the most significant shifts came in 2015 when she started working in the newly opened William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

"The hospital was so big and I didn't know my way around," she says. "The only thing I knew was how to make it from the parking garage to my office on the third floor. One of my co-workers had to take me to the cafeteria because I did not know where it was."

Then came 2020, and Ms. Hewitt faced challenges that she never imagined.

"COVID-19 put a halt on the world as we knew it, and we had to learn a new way of living," she says. "Through 2020 we had to learn how to be flexible, wear masks, and distance ourselves from family and friends. It was hard on everyone, but thank God we are seeing a decrease in cases and looking forward to the day we will be able to gather again!"

Family and faith are an important part of Ms. Hewitt's life. Away from her UT Southwestern job, she is active in her church and enjoys traveling.

"With my daughters being in the military, my husband and I get to visit wherever they are stationed," she says. "We went to Italy twice. But, due to COVID-19, we are not able to go to Japan."

Committed to service, support, and a positive attitude

By Nyshicka Jordan

After a 40-year tenure at UT Southwestern, Administrative Associate Karen Kazemzadeh says the most interesting part of her career experience has been watching the physical evolution of the campus.

"I love working on this beautiful campus. I have watched both the physical growth and reputation of this institution expand, and I have been proud to be part of this development," Mrs. Kazemzadeh says.

After initially joining UTSW in 1971, she took some time off over the years to raise two sons and work elsewhere, returning to the Medical Center each time. She cites the diversity of opportunities, manager support, great co-workers, and affinity for the academic environment as reasons why she's committed to UT Southwestern.

"I have been happy to be a part of this institution, where there is such collaboration, cooperation in the education of students, advancement of scientific research, and development of patient care services. I look forward to watching UT Southwestern grow in excellence from my new vantage of retirement," she says.

Mrs. Kazemzadeh first joined the institution after a neighbor encouraged her to apply so the two could carpool. Her first job was as a Secretary in the Department of Internal Medicine and, after a few years, she moved to an administrative role in the

Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences' Immunology Ph.D. Program, serving for 21 years.

For the past 13 years, Mrs. Kazemzadeh has worked in Facilities Management. She serves as the Administrative Associate to the Director of the Division of Building Maintenance, helping ensure the division's 100 employees have what they need to keep the University operating smoothly. Supporting so many skilled and dedicated people energizes her.

"Attitude and service are important to me. In each position I have held, I've always tried to approach my work as a support to leadership, co-workers, and graduate students," she says.

Outside of work, Mrs. Kazemzadeh has been happily married for 50 years and is a proud grandmother to two grandchildren. After May 31, she aims to walk 10,000 steps each day and start several pending projects, including learning languages. She has a degree in Spanish and speaks a little Persian, Chinese, and Turkish. She says she feels learning languages helps to build bridges between people. In fact, her interest in working with and learning about others has been a contributing factor to her success at UT Southwestern.

"I have appreciated getting to know and working with such a diverse group of thoughtful, inquisitive, and professional people. UT Southwestern has been my home-away-from-home for most of my life, and many people here are part of my family," Mrs. Kazemzadeh says.



Karen Kazemzadeh

Administrative Associate
Building Maintenance Administration

Auste

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together a resource guide that nurses can use to prepare patients for various procedures.

As she's moved from one type of care to another, Ms. Auste says she has enjoyed the variety of her duties. "I like the challenge of the changes," she says.

One thing has remained a constant, though. Soon after arriving at St. Paul in 1980, she befriended Pat Lee, another new nurse who started that year in the Coronary Care Unit. They celebrated their 35th anniversary year together at UT Southwestern in 2016. During the festivities, the two made a pact: "Let's make it to 40 years," they agreed.

This month, the two plan to be together again at the annual celebration that honors UTSW employees for 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 years of service.

Quarter Century Club: Facts and figures

1996 The year the program was established to honor employees with 25 or more years of UT System service.

360 Total number of members in the Quarter Century Club – almost 3 percent of UTSW's 13,385 nonfaculty employees.

47 Number of years of service of the current employee – Bernadine Wafford – with the longest tenure. She is a Unit Secretary for William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, 5 Green NICU.

33 Number of Quarter Century Club members in the department with the most such members, which is Information Resources.



Delira

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Mrs. Delira. "Nowadays I can understand a lot of words and some of their customs, and I've been to Asian supermarkets."

There is no word on if she will travel to Korea one day, but Florida is her favorite place to visit. In fact, she's traveled across nearly the entire state.

"Previously, I would go with my family, my husband, and kids, but now it is only my husband. I am really afraid to travel because of COVID-19, but I cannot stop living," Mrs. Delira says. "I have been vaccinated, but I am still being very careful. Hopefully this summer I might go to Miami again or – who knows – maybe somewhere farther."

"I am retiring this year, God willing," Mrs. Delira adds. "I am a little sad though, because I really love UTSW, our patients, and everything we do to help them."



Renee Krake

Lab Supervisor
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital,
Core Laboratories

Embracing the challenge of constant technology changes

By Carol Marie Cropper

Renee Krake headed to Texas after her college graduation in Michigan 40 years ago and has never looked back.

Equipped with a bachelor's degree in medical technology, Ms. Krake quickly got a job as a Medical Technologist testing patient samples at the former St. Paul University Hospital and has remained with UT Southwestern Medical Center ever since.

She is now Supervisor over three labs located at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital – Zale Lipshy Pavilion, the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center, and UT Southwestern Medical Center at Richardson/Plano.

"I really enjoy the job here," she says. "The lab is pretty much like a family. We all have to work together to get things done."

When she started, almost everything in the lab was done by hand, Ms. Krake recalls. Orders for lab work came in on paper; technicians like her performed the tests and wrote the results by hand; then someone from the lab had to physically deliver the paper results to nursing units and put them in the charts.

Now, she says, "most everything is done electronically." Lab equipment scans the labels on patient samples to determine what test needs to be done, performs the test, and automatically records the results in the patient's electronic medical record.

Ms. Krake sees all of this as a good thing. The automation cuts down on errors: "There are all kinds of checks and balances," she says. The machines' work allows lab technologists to spend their time checking for unexpected results and potential errors.

Rather than being threatened by all the changes, Ms. Krake says the steady innovation has made her work more stimulating. "It's always changing – always something new," she says.

She also likes the variety of the work performed at UT Southwestern.

"There's always opportunity to do more challenging things within the lab because of all the different areas that we have," she says.

All this has been positive for an employee like Ms. Krake, who describes herself as committed and inquisitive.

"She is extremely dedicated to UTSW," says her supervisor, Mohammed Ahmed, Manager of Core Laboratories. "She always looks for solutions and is very diligent in her work."



Betty Laury

Gift Shop Clerk
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

Spreading love and kindness to patients and their families

By Courtney Borchert

You would be hard-pressed to find someone friendlier and more thoughtful than Betty Laury, a Clerk in the gift shops of William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital and Zale Lipshy Pavilion.

Ms. Laury found her way to UT Southwestern when she joined as a Unit Assistant at the former St. Paul University Hospital in 1980. During her 40-year tenure, she spent much of her time working in the Central Supply Department at St. Paul, including the campus mailroom.

Ultimately, Ms. Laury found her strengths were best suited for a customer-facing role; she has worked in the gift shop for more than 25 years. "I find this work incredibly meaningful because I am able to spread love and kindness every day," she says with a warm smile.

Her job responsibilities include, but are not limited to, managing shop displays, processing sales transactions, and making celebratory and get-well gift bundles. With a kind heart and creative soul, she helps patrons passing through the gift shop find the perfect item to brighten someone's day.

"I always push myself to think outside of the box to make people happy and bring patrons' visions to life," she says. A self-taught expert in paper creations, calligraphy, and customization, Ms. Laury has found ways to add her special touch to floral arrangements and gift basket orders alike.

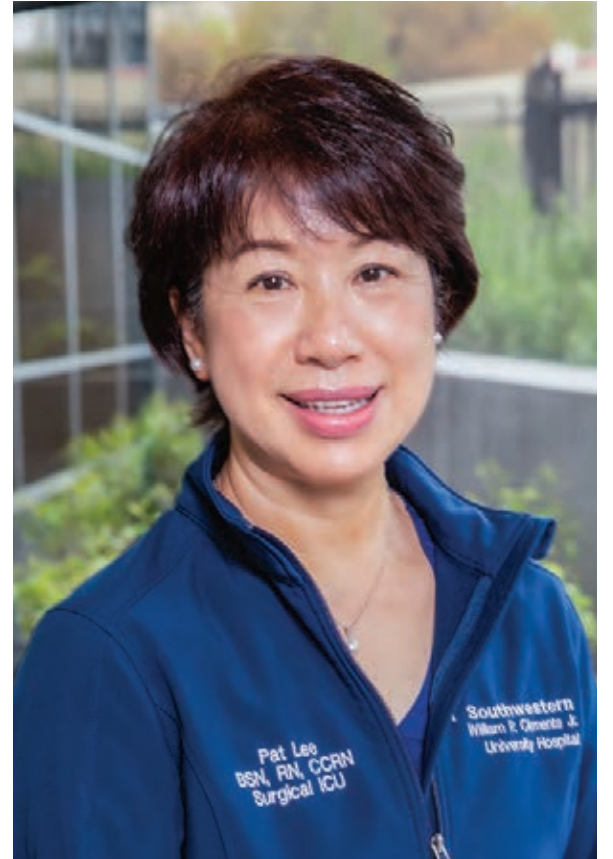
Her favorite part of her job is seeing the joy on a customer's face when the person receives a completed order. "I like to think we do our part to help in the healing process by providing a token of comfort to patients and their loved ones," she says.

And so it comes as no surprise to learn that her most cherished memory is a time when she went above and beyond for a patient at Clements University Hospital. On a cold day, she took it upon herself to obtain new clothing and shoes for a patient to wear upon discharge.

She says working in a hospital requires great empathy and a desire to deliver compassionate care on all levels because some guests may be going through the hardest moments in their lives. "It's important to provide all of our guests with top-notch customer service and be a listening ear when life is tough," she says.

Outside of work, Ms. Laury likes to peruse antique shops and flea markets, always on the lookout for another vintage teddy bear for her beloved collection of about 40 bears, including a valuable Steiff teddy bear handmade in Germany.

Ms. Laury is most looking forward to life post-pandemic, when she is able to safely spend time with loved ones at in-person gatherings. Her family includes two sons, a daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren.



Pat Lee

Registered Nurse II
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital,
2 Orange, Surgical Intensive Care Unit

From transplanting hearts to meeting heartthrobs

By Lori Sundeen Soderbergh

It's been a wild and rewarding ride for Pat Lee as a nurse the past 40 years. Not only did she have the opportunity to take part in a revolutionary new surgery, but she also experienced a pandemic.

In 1988, she was a member of the team that performed St. Paul University Hospital's first successful heart transplant. She still gets goosebumps thinking of the excitement and anticipation, which seemed to permeate the former UT Southwestern hospital.

It was also during the 1980s when she met a celebrity while working. Actor John Travolta had come to St. Paul to visit a sick friend. He spoke with the nurses, danced a bit for them – even joined them for a bite to eat.

"It touched my heart that he flew in to see his co-star. He visited during the night shift so he wouldn't attract attention and interrupt our workflow. The next day we were on a meal break, and he just sat down to join us," remembers Mrs. Lee.

Not all days are as exciting, however. Working in ICU can be both rewarding and challenging, she says. One of her strengths is to help families with the grieving process. Simple gestures like getting water, helping to make phone calls, and just sitting with them can make a difference.

"Nurses step in to comfort people before the chaplain gets there. Especially during COVID-19, I feel passionate about this, and I'm glad I'm able to be there for the family," she says.

Growing up in Malaysia in the 1970s, Mrs. Lee always dreamed of studying overseas and becoming a nurse. Luckily, one of her 11 siblings was living in Arlington, Texas, so she took the opportunity to join her brother and attend the College of Nursing at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. She began her UT Southwestern career in 1980 at St. Paul.

"When I was in nursing school, I wanted to take care of seriously ill patients. I joined the cardiovascular intensive care unit (ICU), later moved to medical ICU, and finally surgical," Mrs. Lee says.

Mrs. Lee reflected on the past year, including coping with the pandemic and moving forward. "We've all leaned on each other. It's been a tough and tiring year that has brought us closer as a team. When we look back, COVID-19 will be history that's imprinted in our minds and in our hearts," she says.

The favorite part of her job, she says, is making a difference in a patient's recovery.

"I once received a letter from a patient who said that I saved her life when she had decided to give up. She thanked me for being constantly by her side with encouragement and support," Mrs. Lee says.

Close to retirement, she looks forward to spending more time with her two children and two grandchildren in New York City.



Michael Meyers

Groundskeeper
Facilities Maintenance and Landscape Services

Planting seeds of generosity while beautifying the campus

By Jan Jarvis

Every morning for 40 years, Michael Meyers has arrived at his job as a Groundskeeper at UT Southwestern before the sun rises.

"I'm an early bird, even on the weekends," he says. "I get up at 2, take the train in every day, and I usually get to work at 3:51 or 3:52 in the morning."

As soon as his co-workers arrive, Mr. Meyers gets busy doing what he clearly enjoys and takes pride in – keeping the UT Southwestern campus beautiful. He often can be spotted around the campus trimming shrubs, watering plants, pulling weeds, or somehow otherwise maintaining the property. He is dedicated to doing whatever he can to make the landscape lovely so people enjoy being on campus.

"I enjoy helping to keep the campus grounds looking good every day and seeing all my longtime friends who also work here," he says.

Quick to greet everyone he meets with a smile, Mr. Meyers always asks others how they are doing. He's known for his cheerful personality and willingness to help – in ways big and small.

For example, Mr. Meyers helps transport and install interior plants for use at various events.

During the winter holiday season, he keeps busy delivering poinsettias, along with a big smile and holiday cheer throughout the campus.

For four decades, Mr. Meyers has watched the campus landscape change in many ways. He has also seen many UT Southwestern faculty and staff come and go.

As much as he enjoys maintaining the campus landscape, his favorite memories have more to do with people than plants. In particular, Mr. Meyers treasures the special celebrations with co-workers shared over cake and ice cream.

At the end of a workday, he takes the train home to his two-bedroom Dallas condo. In his spare time, he enjoys bowling, helping at his church, and spending time with his two brothers, who live in Dallas, too. He also has three brothers and three sisters in Louisiana. In a few years, he plans to retire.

Even when off the job, Mr. Meyers' dedication to hard work and helping others doesn't end. He's known for assisting his neighbors with home maintenance chores, such as changing lightbulbs.

"I enjoy lending a helping hand whenever I can," he says.

Serving as a lifeline to lung transplant patients

By Patrick McGee

As an avid scuba diver, Cheryl D. Nava breathes with an oxygen tank underwater. For many years at UT Southwestern, she's been part of the team helping people breathe on their own after a lung transplant.

"It is an honor to get to know these patients and their families. You become a link, a connector, a liaison, a lifeline to them," she says. "You develop a bond with them – a bond that gets tested with the challenges that come their way in their journey after they receive their new lung or lungs."

Ms. Nava, a Registered Nurse and Post-Lung Transplant Coordinator, has worked at UT Southwestern since 1980.

After first working as a Staff Nurse, she was assigned to work nights in the intensive care unit. She remembers keeping as busy as possible, "doing something every minute," because she is not a night person. Years later, Ms. Nava still remembers how she and her co-workers once had a sack race in a hallway when they had some time to spare.

"I never laughed so hard in the middle of the night," she says.

From 1999 to 2003, Ms. Nava was a Clinical Educator, a position in which one of her responsibilities was to train new graduate nurses. She loves her current position because it enables

her to take care of patients and still have an educational role – teaching patients and their family members how to thrive after a lung transplant.

"To hear them say, 'I love you, Cheryl,' and 'Thank you for everything you've done for me and my family,' at the end of their journey can be heart-wrenching, but at the same time very fulfilling, knowing you've made a difference in their lives," she says.

Ms. Nava's personal philosophy is to trust in God and see each day as a gift: Moments of stress can be overcome by remembering what great impact the work has had on patients and their families, she says. Co-workers would describe her as a detail-oriented person who can find a needle in a haystack.

Her connection to medicine and UT Southwestern runs deep: Three of Ms. Nava's four sisters also became nurses. When she worked at the former St. Paul University Hospital, two of her sisters and her father, an electrician, also worked for St. Paul.

Outside of scuba diving, Ms. Nava loves baking, building and fixing things, photography (including underwater photography), and dogs. She participates in the Dog Scouts of America, a nonprofit that promotes responsible ownership to improve the lives of dogs and their owners.



Cheryl D. Nava

Registered Nurse and Post-Lung Transplant Coordinator
Heart-Lung Transplant Program

Speaker

Continued from page 3

Dr. Lee moved to the U.S. from Taiwan at age 15. He graduated from Harvard College, then attended Johns Hopkins, where he later completed the surgery residency and a fellowship in microsurgery. He also completed a residency in plastic surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital.

At UT Southwestern, Dr. Lee has focused on enhancing institutional leadership and establishing new educational offerings.

In support of these efforts, a new position of Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research was created. "We aim to enhance the infrastructure and support

in clinical and translational research for our faculty to engage in productive clinical investigations and trials," he said.

Also during Dr. Lee's tenure, new positions in Academic Affairs have been established to emphasize UT Southwestern's strategic initiatives to promote diversity, inclusion, and wellness among faculty, trainees, and students. Leaders for new key positions in diversity and inclusion include an Associate Dean for Faculty Diversity, an Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion in the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, and an Assistant Dean for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Affairs in the School of Health Professions. Focusing on the physical and mental health of faculty, a new Assistant Dean for Faculty Wellness was also added.

To utilize technology efficiently and

enhance UT Southwestern's processes for extracting, analyzing, and sharing the rich clinical data produced at the institution, a Clinical Informatics Center has been established. Related to that effort, plans are underway to launch a Master of Science in Health Informatics Program and a Clinical Informatics Fellowship, Dr. Lee said.

In another significant initiative, in February UT Southwestern received approval from The University of Texas System Board of Regents to establish a School of Public Health. "We plan to establish a research-intensive, 21st century School of Public Health at UT Southwestern by building upon our existing strengths in biomedical sciences and clinical care of diverse patient populations," Dr. Lee said.

"Despite its economic growth, Texas has

been lagging the country in a number of key health care indices," he said, "and the lack of public health expertise was painfully evident during the COVID-19 pandemic in the ineffective implementation of preventive interventions, epidemiologic crisis response, surveillance, and contact tracing."

Dr. Lee holds the Atticus James Gill, M.D. Chair in Medical Science.

Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.



Melissa Brown

Administrative Manager
Pathology

A gift for helping others achieve their potential

By Rachel Stowe Master

The best part of Melissa Brown’s job is helping other people with their jobs.

“I like putting the pieces together into a whole,” says Ms. Brown, an Administrative Manager in Pathology. “I enjoy coordinating the details to produce a final project with the intended outcome as well as identifying and managing the perfect team of people with the skills, talent, and passion needed to get the job done.”

She draws energy from thoughtful colleagues. “I appreciate when people can see beyond themselves,” she says. “I love a project with a theme and a team to work with to produce or develop an outstanding work product.”

In return, her co-workers describe Ms. Brown as caring, funny, and encouraging – someone who puts a personal touch on her work and is truly interested in getting to know individuals and what motivates each. Able to see the potential in others, Ms. Brown has a gift for helping people reach their full potential. She’s not one to micromanage, and her team appreciates the space she gives them to grow.

Ms. Brown started her UTSW career as a Faculty Associate and Rehabilitation Counselor in 1985. A perspective grounded in 35 years of experience helps her see the big picture, ascribe an appropriate amount of importance to the moment, and strategize. Her proudest UTSW memories have also been among some of the most challenging.

“I have seen tremendous growth and development, both in the physical landscape and culture at UT Southwestern in the last 35 years, but never have I been more proud and honored to be a part of UTSW as I have this past year in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” she says. “The constant communication, genuine concern for our welfare, and remarkable resourcefulness of our leadership and our co-workers have truly been exceptional and inspirational. What a privilege to be a part of this institution and our missions!”

Singing since she was in junior high, Ms. Brown has been a featured soloist in several churches. “I also sing and perform with a group known as the Divine Bovines,” she says, “and, yes, we wear cow-inspired costumes, tell corny cow jokes, and sing lyrics that have been customized to fit the bovine theme.”



Karen Elmore, D.N.P.

Interim Director of Women’s Services and Manager
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, 6 Blue

Unable to imagine a more fulfilling career than nursing

By Jan Jarvis

For Dr. Karen Elmore, working as a nurse fulfilled a dream since childhood. In high school, she fell in love with the profession when she helped a campus nurse as a member of the Future Nurses Club. Later, a tour of the former St. Paul University Hospital before its opening foreshadowed her destiny.

“I really thought then I would work there one day, and I did,” she says. “I can’t remember even wanting to pursue any other career.”

For 35 years, Dr. Elmore has worked in nursing for the UT System. She first worked at UTMB Health’s John Sealy Hospital in Galveston while in nursing school, then Parkland Memorial Hospital, later St. Paul, and, finally, William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. Her first job at St. Paul was in the Emergency Department, then Women’s Service, which led to her current role as Interim Director of Women’s Services at UT Southwestern. She cannot imagine doing anything else.

“I liked the idea of helping people, and I was very interested in the human condition and the illnesses and disease processes that we were able to treat,” she says. “This interest evolved into caring relationships with patients and helping them through hospitalizations. After being in the field this long, I continue to have a passion for helping nurses to grow in their roles and improving the care for our patients.”

Along the way, Dr. Elmore has combined her dedication to nursing with her love of learning. While working, she earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in nursing. Then in 2017, she completed a doctorate in nursing from Texas Christian University.

One of her most memorable experiences at UT Southwestern was opening and managing the Kidney and Liver Transplant Unit. In 2019, she was named Interim Director for Women’s Services. The work continues to be satisfying.

“No two days are the same, and there is always something to improve or learn,” she says. “I enjoy taking care of the staff and helping them to be their best at taking care of our patients.”

With more than five decades in nursing, she has cherished memories. “I still have vivid memories of the patients I have cared for,” Dr. Elmore adds.



Arlie Jenkins

Central Sterile Technician II
Sterile Processing

Committed to giving surgeons the tools needed to succeed

By Jan Jarvis

In 1985, when Arlie Jenkins began working as a Transporter at the former St. Paul University Hospital, she quickly discovered she loved helping patients.

“When you are in Transport, you are taking patients to the operating room, blood bank, or lab, and I would always talk to everyone,” Ms. Jenkins says. “I liked working with the patients and greeting their families.”

Although she left Transport for Sterile Processing 34 years ago, her commitment to helping patients continued. Even though Ms. Jenkins doesn’t have direct contact with patients anymore, she still strives to make a difference for them.

“I always think about the patient who is on the operating table and how fast I can help them get out of surgery,” she explains.

A UT Southwestern employee for more than three decades, Ms. Jenkins says she enjoys the challenges of her job that involve sterilizing instruments for surgery.

“Every day is a different day with a different surprise,” she says.

When she first started working in Sterile Processing, the number of surgical patients caught her by surprise. “I did not realize,” she says, “that so many people had surgery every day.”

Over the years, she has learned so much by listening to and watching others. She has tried to stand out as someone who is loyal, responsible, and dependable.

And although she’s known to usually have a smile on her face, Ms. Jenkins says people would be surprised to know she is very shy.

Thirty-six years have gone by fast, Ms. Jenkins says, but she has cherished the journey and the fond memories made with the people she has worked with.

“I’ve seen so many changes in the field of improving health,” she says. “I have enjoyed my time here.”

Away from work, Ms. Jenkins likes reading, baking, traveling, and spending time with her three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

“I’ve had a wonderful time working and meeting new people,” she says. “Now, I’m looking forward to retirement.”



A problem-solving techie – and occasional jokester

By Lori Sundeen Soderbergh

Figuring out what makes things tick is a passion for John Poindexter.

“I’m good at problem-solving when faced with a dilemma. Once you know how something works, it is easy to figure out how to make it better,” says Mr. Poindexter, who works as a Software Systems Supervisor in the Charles and Jane Pak Center for Mineral Metabolism and Clinical Research.

Anyone who has ever experienced software issues would be happy to have him on their team – not just for his skills, but also for his positive attitude and willingness to help.

“The leaders of the Center energize me. I have always worked for someone who is not only the smartest person in the room, but also the hardest worker. Consequently, it inspired me to do the same,” Mr. Poindexter says.

He shared a fun memory from the early years of his career at UT Southwestern: “The people I worked with in the laboratory at the time would go to happy hour on Fridays. One Friday, we were holding the elevator, waiting for our supervisor,” he recalls. “When I looked down one of those long hallways, I saw her leaving the lab. Jokingly, I told her to RUN! Unfortunately,

I did not realize there was another woman halfway down the hall, who began jogging toward the elevator. I was so embarrassed that I immediately hid behind my friends in the back of the elevator.”

While Mr. Poindexter considers his work colleagues as family, he also built his own family with his wife, Dana. “I don’t know what Dana and I did, but whatever it was, we did it right because we have two great kids,” he says proudly.

Now that retirement is nearing, his priorities are family, friends, golf, and fishing. “If I can become somewhat of an expert at fishing, I know what I’ll be doing in retirement,” he says.

John Poindexter

Software Systems Supervisor
Charles and Jane Pak Center for Mineral Metabolism and Clinical Research



Anthony Barnes

Apheresis RN II
Apheresis

First UTSW job: Medical Surgical ICU Registered Nurse.

Best part about my job: Just being a nurse and being a part of patient healing.

What energizes me at work: The joy of helping others and making people feel loved.

How co-workers describe me: Someone who is nice and pleasant to everyone.

Favorite UTSW memory: All the fun times with big food spreads we had in the unit.

I wish I were an instant expert at: How to always carry God’s love to others each day.

Hobby: Snow skiing.

Surprising fact: My hair has always been this red.



Bruce Clark

Enterprise Systems Administrator
Information Resources – Systems and Operations Group

First UTSW job: Desktop Support at Zale Lipshy Pavilion – William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

Best part about my job: The people I have met and get to work with.

What energizes me at work: Because of the pandemic, most of Information Resources is working from home. This has really turned into a positive thing. The overall reduction in stress has been great.

How co-workers describe me: While I’ve never asked them, I would hope supportive is included. A few joke with me about being the same age as their dad, so “fatherly” might be said, as well.

Funny UTSW memory: Getting stuck on an elevator with Kirk Kirksey, our VP of IR at the time, and some co-workers. We were on our way to eat lunch at the Faculty Club. With the amount of people packed in the elevator, you could say we were a very “close” group.

Hobby or passion: My biggest passion is my family – investing myself in them. The time I spend with them is invaluable to me.

Final note: UT Southwestern is such a great place to work and really is a second family in many ways. The medical staff here were instrumental in helping save the life of our daughter several years ago. I’m very grateful for UT Southwestern.



Suzie Carter

Administrative Coordinator
Department of Urology

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant to Dr. John McConnell.

Best part about my job: The unpredictability of each day.

What energizes me at work: I like a good challenge and having to think outside the box to solve a need.

How co-workers describe me: The go-to person for the Urology Clinic. I am the person who will fix it or find someone who can.

Recipe for success: Stubbornness, I guess. I won’t take “it can’t be done” for an answer.

Best UTSW memory: The fun we had trying to outdo each other decorating offices for birthdays. We actually managed to put a wading pool filled with water in someone’s office!

I wish I were an instant expert at: Computer programming – but that would require constant upgrades.

Hobby or passion: I love spending time with my grandchildren as well as traveling abroad – or just down to the beach.

Surprising fact: I am the prodigal employee. I have quit Urology twice – only to come right back.



“ UT Southwestern is such a great place to work and really is a second family in many ways. The medical staff here were instrumental in helping save the life of our daughter several years ago. I’m very grateful for UT Southwestern. ”

– Bruce Clark, Enterprise Systems Administrator



Faye Collins

Radiologic Technologist
Cardiovascular Radiology and Imaging Department

First UTSW job: Radiologic Technologist.

Best part about my job: Assisting the physicians by scrubbing in to invasive and noninvasive procedures.

What energizes me at work: I enjoy the excitement of helping to care for our patients and working with our staff and physicians.

How co-workers describe me: A friendly and caring team player who enjoys teaching others.

Recipe for success: I treat my team and patients with respect and compassion because that is how I would like to be treated.

Best UTSW memory: When my co-workers surprised me with a wedding shower in 1991.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a stockbroker, so I could educate others on how to invest their money.

I'm really good at: Encouraging others.

Claim to fame: Being married for 30 years and raising two beautiful, intelligent, and respectful children.

Hobby or passion: Traveling, listening to gospel music, reading, and cooking.

Surprising fact: I have a bachelor's degree in theology, and I'm on my church marriage counseling team.



Brenda J. Johnson

Therapy Technician
Outpatient Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

First UTSW job: Therapy Technician.

Best part about my job: Being able to work with therapists and helping patients.

How co-workers describe me: A person with a great attitude and professionalism who thinks outside the box to try to help our patients, assumes responsibility and accountability for the successful completion of assignments and tasks, and is always thinking of ways to help the program work more effectively.

Recipe for success: Being honest, consistent, and trustworthy.

Best UTSW memory: Receiving a meritorious award.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Orienting new therapy techs. I have been here long enough to know the ins and outs of the tech duties.

I'm really good at: Staying on top of the compliance logbook.

Claim to fame: Willingness to help others and flexibility.

Hobby: Watching movies.

Surprising fact: I am a shy person.

Harriet King

Certified Health Unit Coordinator
Departments of Neurology and Neurosurgery

First UTSW job: Patient Care Technician at Zale Lipshy Pavilion – William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

Best part about my job: The different people I meet every day.

What energizes me at work: Technology changes – putting back the old and going forward with the new.

How co-workers describe me: The go-to person for any questions to be asked.

Recipe for success: Just being me has carried me a long way.

Best UTSW memory: It was when the annual picnic was held at Six Flags Over Texas. The park was only open that day to UTSW and American Airlines.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a Health Unit Coordinator liaison.

I'm really good at: Getting people together to participate in any event.

Hobbies: I love the outdoors and barbecues.

Surprising fact: I'm very supportive and caring.

Final note: It's been a wonderful experience over the years.



Ronald Fischer

Operating Room Attendant
Outpatient Surgery Center

First UTSW job: Post-Anesthesia Care Unit Patient Care Tech.

Best part about my job: My UT Southwestern family.

What energizes me at work: My co-workers – they are family and outstanding.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable.

Recipe for success: Persistence. My parents taught me to never give up.

Best UTSW memory: When my daughter was born at the former St. Paul University Hospital 20 years ago.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cancer, so I could find a cure.

I'm really good at: Horticulture.

Hobby: Fishing.

Claim to fame: My parents.

Surprising fact: My twin brother, Donald, and I were born at St. Paul and both work at UT Southwestern.

Final note: My nurse managers have been great. In the last 30 years, I have had many, but the one I have now – Julie Merchant – is the best ever.



Martha Kingman Liberty

Nurse Practitioner
Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic

First UTSW job: Assistant Nurse Manager in the Emergency Department. Later, I became the Manager and then the Director of the ED.

Best part about my job: I love to see our pulmonary hypertension patients' quality of life and prognoses improve after they start therapy. Also, my teammates inspire me with their expertise and knowledge.

What energizes me at work: Our weekly case conferences, as I invariably learn something new.

How co-workers describe me: Thorough, knowledgeable, caring, and efficient.

Recipe for success: Having a continued interest in learning and striving for excellent patient care.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Landscaping.

I'm really good at: Editing manuscripts.

Hobby or passion: Spending time with family, traveling, gardening, and sailing.

Surprising fact: I have been playing canasta (a card game) every month for 30 years with a group of friends.

Final note: I have worked in the Pulmonary Hypertension Clinic since 2000, when I became a Nurse Practitioner. Since then, the program has grown into one of the largest in the country. I have had wonderful opportunities to lecture and educate health care practitioners about pulmonary hypertension.



Lisa Renee Horton

Senior Administrative Assistant II
Department of Neurology

First UTSW job: Patient Account Service Representative.

Best part about my job: I like the collaboration, because everyone shares the same vision and is dedicated to the mission.

What energizes me at work: Providing outstanding administrative support.

How co-workers describe me: Sweet spirit, professional, pleasant to be around, no-nonsense, dependable, and honest.

Recipe for success: Willpower – I have the strength to see things through. Patience – I can remain calm, even when I've been dealing with something slow or I'm trying to teach someone how to do something.

Unusual UTSW memory: How the 2020 pandemic evolved and progressed through the year with challenges.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Speaking a second language – Spanish – so that I could communicate with a variety of people on different levels.

I'm really good at: Interior design and hospitality.

Hobbies: Horseback riding, bowling, fishing, interior decorating, and party planning.





Yiau-Chuwn Jordan Lin

Senior Financial Analyst
Medical Group Financial Affairs

First UTSW job: Accountant.

Best part about my job: Joining a finance team to create the charge analyzer and W finance folders of standard reports. They are very important to all 28 clinical departments, the Billing Operations Group, and top-level management.

What energizes me at work: Achieving my goals.

How co-workers describe me: Knowledgeable and intelligent.

Recipe for success: Accountability, excellent customer service, attention to detail. I also enjoy learning something new.

Best memory: About 30 years ago, our son, Christopher, took his first step and walked toward my wife and me.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Mentoring in a church environment. It would be a blessing to positively impact younger generations.

I'm really good at: Excel pivot tables and Microsoft SQL for data analytics. I also can do public speaking in Mandarin.

Hobby or passion: Playing basketball and traveling.

Surprising fact: I like to think outside the box and not necessarily conform to the rules.

Claim to fame: Becoming a certified public accountant and serving as chairperson of the deacons' board at church.



“The best part of my job is being part of a state-of-the-art health care facility. You always feel a sense of pride when people talk about the outstanding care they received at UT Southwestern.”

– Terri Tuggle, Senior Administrative Associate

Terri Tuggle

Senior Administrative Associate
Information Resources Chief Technology Office
IR Infrastructure

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant.

Best part about my job: Being part of a state-of-the-art health care facility. You always feel a sense of pride when people talk about the outstanding care they received at UT Southwestern.

What energizes me at work: Great co-workers. There's never a dull moment.

How co-workers describe me: Friendly, helpful, and dependable.

Recipe for success: Treating people the way I would like to be treated.

Best UTSW memories: Our Thanksgiving feasts, Christmas parties, birthday celebrations, and baby showers. We are a fun department and have shared so many laughs and good times.

I wish I were an instant expert at: DIY projects inside and outside the house.

I'm really good at: Being a Dallas Cowboys fan!

Hobby or passion: Bowling, fishing, and gardening.

Surprising fact: I am a Native American (Cherokee). I also was an avid World of Warcraft gamer for many years.

Claim to fame: Being a proud mom of two amazing kids. Both are employed at UTSW.

Final note: My co-workers are like family – lots of laughter and shenanigans, and some tears. I will cherish those memories forever.



“Students have deemed me ‘the Queen of UT Southwestern.’ They even made me a crown.”

– Suzette Smith, Director of Student Life

Suzette Smith

Director
Office of Student Life, Bryan Williams, M.D. Student Center

First UTSW job: Coordinator of campus activities.

Best part about my job: Our students! I like helping them connect with others, enhance their wellness, develop leadership skills, and escape the pressures of academic stress.

What energizes me at work: Helping students bring their visions to fruition – our Celebration of Cultures Show and Food Festival is an example.

How co-workers describe me: Committed. It takes extra hours to make student programs successful.

Recipe for success: Getting involved and providing opportunities to help others shine.

Best UTSW memory: Finding out we received funding for the Student Center during a bus tour in Dallas. So many opportunities started with being involved in the design and construction of the facility.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Technology. We have an amazing support team, but I rely on them too much.

I'm really good at: Connecting with others.

Hobby or passion: Traveling to warm-weather places and reading.

Surprising fact: I love small-town farm life.

Claim to fame: Students have deemed me “the Queen of UT Southwestern.” They even made me a crown.



Richard Wayne

Assistant Director
Health Sciences Digital Library and Learning Center

First UTSW job: Manager of Client Services within Academic Computing Services.

Best part about my job: It aligns with my values – making the world better through knowledge and data.

What energizes me at work: Interacting directly with customers and showing them a resource that will be a game changer for their work, plus charting direction and priorities via strategic planning.

How co-workers describe me: Thoughtful and empathetic. I analyze the viable options and listen to other points of view.

Recipe for success: Patience.

Best UTSW memory: In early 1994, I wrote and released UT Southwestern's first internet security white paper to inform IT stakeholders about information security risks.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Climate change.

I'm really good at: Socializing feral cats. I only wish there were more homes for them.

Hobby or passion: Hanging out with family and our six cats, fly-fishing, reading nonfiction works, and playing the drums.

Claim to fame: My three sons are fine men, and I've been married 40-plus years to an amazing woman.

Surprising fact: I'm from Hicksville, New York – just like Billy Joel.





Doramarie Arocha, Ph.D.

Director
Health Systems Infection Prevention & Control Department

First UTSW job: Assistant Professor in the School of Allied Health (now the School of Health Professions).

Best part about my job: I love helping others. My job motivates and inspires me to make a difference in people's lives despite all the challenges I face on a daily basis.

How co-workers describe me: Vivacious, energetic, and a team player. I try to be cheerful and have a positive attitude on a daily basis.

I'm really good at: Softball and target shooting.

Funny UTSW memory: Conducting an outbreak investigation led me to the Professional Office Building penthouse to collect air samples from the air handler system. This environment was like walking into a tornado. By the time I returned to the hospital to attend a monthly meeting, it looked like I had placed my finger in a light socket. I'm sure everyone at the meeting thought, "What happened to her?"

Passion: Playing, watching, and coaching softball and baseball.

Surprising fact: I was homecoming queen.

Claim to fame: Named a Fellow of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (FAPIC), which honors advanced practitioners of infection prevention who are leaders within the field.

Final note: I want to always be caring and kind, because we never know what struggles others may be experiencing.



Dinah Barrilleaux

Senior Division Operations Administrator
Division of Cardiology, Department of Internal Medicine

First UTSW job: Assisting with implementation of the human resources management system (HRMS) project.

Best parts about my job: The people, and creating processes that help others do their jobs more efficiently.

What energizes me at work: My team and its ideas. We are always trying to innovate and make our work environment a better place.

How co-workers describe me: Passionate – I get excited about new projects and sharing that vision with others in terms that energize them so that we share a common goal.

Recipe for success: I like to accomplish things – it's that checklist thing. You determine a goal, map out what it takes, share the vision, and watch it take shape. Then you celebrate and move on to the next idea.

I'm really good at: Creating all kinds of things with textiles and a sewing machine.

I wish I were an instant expert at: All things Microsoft 365.

Surprising fact: I designed and made several wedding dresses, including my own.

Claim to fame: I am a cancer survivor.

Hobbies or passions: Being with my family, spending time with my grandkids, and reading.

Final note: Over the years I have had eight family members working at UTSW, plus my husband was involved in the mechanical engineering plans for William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.



Kimberley Avila

Senior Research Associate
Hamon Center for Therapeutic Oncology Research

First UTSW job: Sequencing the human genome for the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development.

Best part about my job: My boss and co-workers are very kind and supportive, which makes it a fun place to work.

What energizes me at work: I think what motivates us the most is when experiments work and we see our hard work published in journals.

How co-workers describe me: Outgoing – I am a very social person.

Recipe for success: I'm an extrovert. UTSW is all about helping people and making connections.

Best UTSW memory: One of my favorite memories was getting together with my co-workers for my baby shower.

I'm really good at: Benchwork.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking. I can cook basic meals, but I would really like to be as good as the people on the cooking shows.

Hobbies: Gardening and sewing.

Surprising fact: I am a huge animal lover. I have three dogs, one cat, and a fish.

Claim to fame: My greatest sources of pride and joy are my husband and three kids.



Jerline Bell

Claims Analyst
Medical Service Research and Development Plan (MSRDP)

First UTSW job: Temporary Billing Clerk.

Best part about my job: I enjoy being a part of a team that provides resolutions.

What energizes me at work: Helping others and being a part of the solution.

How co-workers describe me: Quiet.

Recipe for success: Being supportive to others.

Best UTSW memory: My best moments at UTSW are the Christmas parties, picnics, and community fairs.

Something I'm really good at: Listening to and observing people.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Counseling others.

Passions: Going to worship and volunteer work.

Surprising fact: I am an outdoor person who loves nature.



Yolanda Barner-Thomas

Administrative Manager
Department of Psychiatry

First UTSW job: Employee Relations Supervisor in Human Resources.

Best part about my job: Every day it's something new. That keeps me thinking.

What energizes me at work: A new problem – I will find a way to work it out.

How co-workers describe me: Tough but fair. Everyone knows that I expect them to do their absolute best and we always follow the rules, policies, and procedures. But I am fair because I hold everyone to the same exacting standards. If you come to me for help, I will do everything I can, but I expect you to have tried your best.

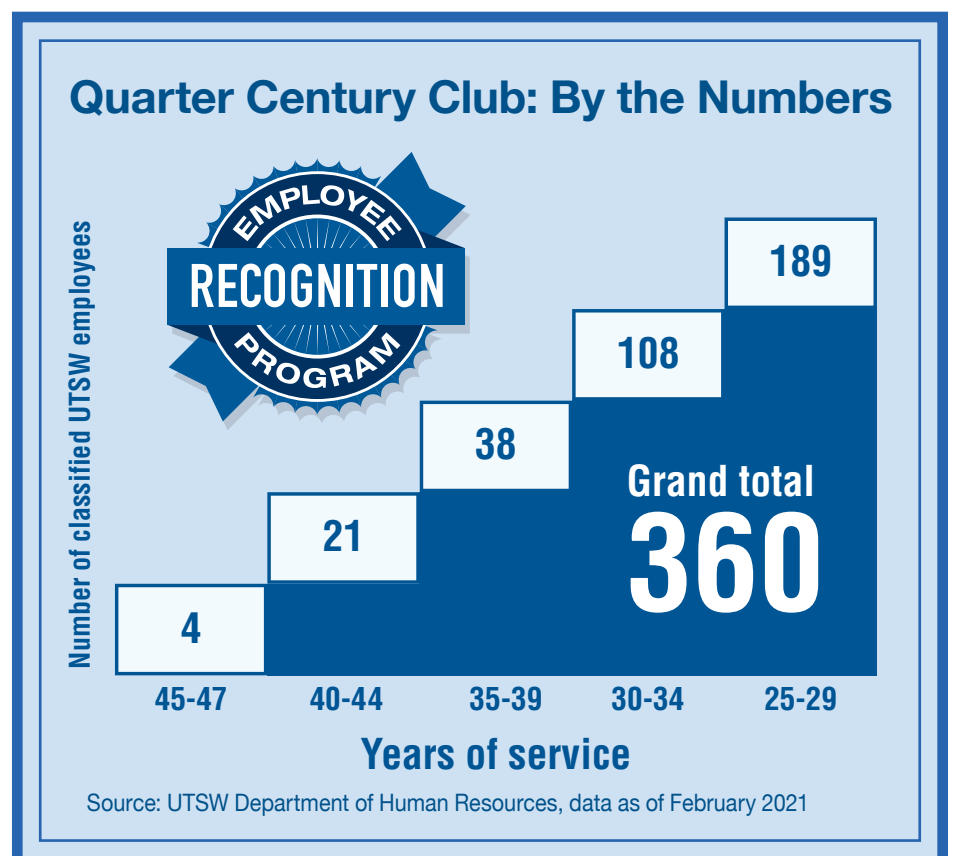
Recipe for success: Perseverance. Throughout my life, I've been told that I couldn't do the things I wanted to do for one reason or another. But if I wanted to do it, I found a way – whether it was around it, over it, or through it.

I'm really good at: Seeing how things are interconnected.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Kenjutsu (Japanese swordsmanship).

Surprising fact: I studied ikebana (art of flower arrangement) in Japan.

Claim to fame: I once partied with the artist formerly known as Prince.





Bonnie Bratcher

Financial Affairs Manager
Department of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery (CVTS)

First UTSW job: Medical Service Plan Revenue Accounting Supervisor.

Best part about my job: Working at UT Southwestern has given my life purpose. By managing the financial operations effectively and efficiently, I enable our providers to focus on what they do best – providing excellent patient care, conducting research, and educating upcoming physicians.

What energizes me at work: I never tire of hearing patient success stories, learning about research, or reading about fascinating discoveries.

How co-workers describe me: Analytical, accountable, caring. I play the game “Can my boss stump me?” and try to have answers to any questions they may ask.

I'm really good at: What my colleagues humorously call “the Bonnie Way.” I am analytical, tend to utilize the scientific method of problem-solving, and look at issues from many different angles.

Claim to fame: I worked with Dr. Steves Ring to change CVTS Division to a Department in FY2000, later adding two Divisions. Participating in the growth of CVTS has been an honor and privilege!

Hobbies: I enjoy yoga, mindfulness, reading, and decorating.

Surprising fact: I love movies, especially psychological thrillers.

Final note: A brown recluse spider bite first brought me to UTSW. I credit the UTSW team for saving my leg! I continue to reflect on their kindness, efficiency, understanding, and professionalism.



Vera Campbell

GME Program Coordinator III
Division of Cardiology, Department of Internal Medicine

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant.

Best part about my job: The caring and supportive physicians and staff I work with.

What energizes me at work: Being able to see and speak with people, co-workers, and friends – something COVID-19 has temporarily put on hold.

How co-workers describe me: I have been told my laugh is contagious.

Recipe for success: Loyalty and dedication.

Funny UTSW memory: When I first began working here, I got lost trying to go from the old Parkland Hospital to the former Medical Illustration Services department.

I'm really good at: Trying to be kind and uplifting. You never know what someone is dealing with, so one act of kindness creates ripples.

Claim to fame: I received the Donald W. Seldin Award for Outstanding Service in 2018.

Hobbies: I enjoy jigsaw puzzles, sudoku, reading, concerts, plays, and opera.

Surprising fact: My whole tenure at UT Southwestern has been in the Division of Cardiology. I love the people I work with and what I do.

Final note: On South Campus, I enjoy seeing the ducks and ducklings swimming and waddling at the fountain area, the yearly Christmas tree, and the calmness of the koi pond.



Saj Chacko

Assistant Manager
Zale Lipshy Pavilion – William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital
Respiratory Therapy Services

How co-workers describe me: Calm. I'm a good listener.

Hobbies: Tennis, basketball, fishing, and keeping a saltwater reef tank.



“Working at UT Southwestern has given my life purpose. By managing the financial operations effectively and efficiently, I enable our providers to focus on what they do best – providing excellent patient care, conducting research, and educating upcoming physicians.”

– Bonnie Bratcher, Financial Affairs Manager

Ronnie J. Brown

Senior Research Associate
Department of Neurological Surgery
Clark-Samson Bioskills Lab

First UTSW job: Staff Technical Assistant.

Best part about my job: I thoroughly enjoy working with the surgical research team and assisting in the process development of the excimer laser-assisted nonocclusive anastomosis technique with Dr. Babu Welch in the Department of Neurological Surgery.

What energizes me at work: Working as part of a team.

How co-workers describe me: Consistent in pursuing and reaching goals and working best under pressure.

Recipe for success: I try my best to stay optimistic and positive.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Surgery. There are so many health-related challenges that people around the world struggle with, and I would love to help.

I'm really good at: Encouraging young people to consider science and biological careers.

Hobby and passion: I am an adult Sunday school teacher at my church. My greatest passion is being a very proud grandparent. My wife, Fannie, and I are the very proud parents of three children and 10 grandchildren.

Claim to fame: Being included in the 1992-1993 Premier Edition of “Who's Who in Science and Engineering.”

Surprising fact: I am a selective perfectionist, but not the kind of person who beats myself up when things don't go as I think they should.



Karen Chapman-Arispe

Research Scientist
Department of Biophysics, Rosenbaum Lab

First UTSW job: Research Technician in the Department of Pharmacology.

Best part about my job: The people I've met over the years.

How co-workers describe me: Lab Mom. I try to make sure things run as smoothly as possible.

Recipe for success: My sense of responsibility and dedication.

Funny UTSW memory: When my daughter was young, the only thing she knew about my job was that I had to take care of the cells. One day she was explaining that to someone, and they asked her if I worked at the prison.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking delicious, healthy meals. Luckily my husband eats everything I make, even when it is a little bit burnt or not very tasty.

Passions: My daughter and husband. My work at UTSW allowed me to care for my daughter as a single mom for many years. I was lucky to have the stability, benefits, and work-life balance my job provided.

Final note: It was wonderful to start my career in the Pharmacology Department just before the late Dr. Alfred Gilman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1994. We celebrated in both serious and silly ways. I still have a photo of Dr. Gilman in a cap that says “I know Jack.”





Debra Clamp

Clinical Practice Manager
Department of Neurology

First UTSW job: Insurance Claims Analyst.

Best part about my job: I love the people!

What energizes me at work: Collaborating with people and turning ideas into reality is exciting!

How co-workers describe me: Persistent, compassionate, innovative, a good listener and mentor, “brainiac,” and “the safety net.”

Recipe for success: I’m a process person and can see the big picture easily. This helps me identify gaps, streamline things, and get things done efficiently.

Best UTSW memory: On one of my birthdays, my team gave me a gift basket full of fruits and veggies since they know I’m very health-conscious.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Landscape architecture and design – I love to garden and create beautiful outdoor spaces.

I’m really good at: Reading fast. I can read a book in just a few hours.

Claim to fame: The new “sign and done” button in Epic was my idea.

Hobbies and passions: I am passionate about meditating and working out every day. I love to read, garden, go to the movies, spend time with my family, and keep in touch with friends.

Surprising fact: When I’m not at work, I’m pretty quiet in social situations.



Nancy Cooper

Accounting Supervisor
Facilities Management
Hospital Facilities Administration

First UTSW job: Accountant II. I was responsible for paying all utility bills and supervising one accounting clerk.

Best part about my job: The variety of duties, working with the Facilities Management accounting group, and learning new computer upgrades.

What energizes me at work: Working on special projects.

How co-workers describe me: Resourceful, with a keen knowledge of my job and how the system works.

Recipe for success: I have a professional attitude, take ownership of my responsibilities, and know when to table a conflict.

Best UTSW memory: Learning to navigate through the buildings on campus. I had great support from the Physical Plant staff.

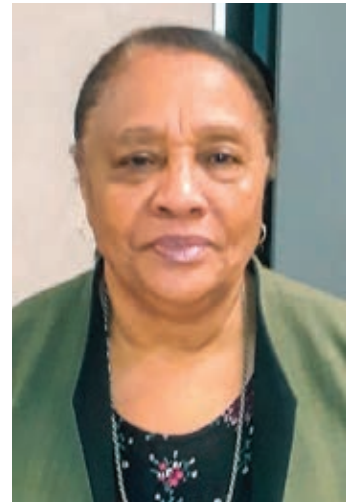
I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking.

I’m really good at: Being understanding and patient.

Claim to fame: I do not stress out in uncontrollable situations.

Hobby: Attending my grandkids’ activities.

Surprising fact: I love music and going to blues festivals.



Marian L. Colorado

Program Coordinator
Office of Accounting

First UTSW job: Senior Administrative Assistant for the Procurement Card Program.

Best part about my job: Over the years, I have had the opportunity to meet so many people.

What energizes me at work: A sense of accomplishment. No matter how small or large the project, I like getting things accomplished every day.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable and dedicated.

Recipe for success: Wanting to get the job – whatever it may be – done successfully.

Funny UTSW memory: I was told by another employee that my instructions were not user-friendly because they had to read them.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Finding a cure for cancer in children.

Claim to fame: Going from being an overweight kid in a small rural town to completing college, losing weight, and running marathons and an ultramarathon.

Passions: I enjoy walking and using weights, taking care of our three cats (Rusty, Catniss, and Samantha) and dog (Watson), reading, and cross-stitching. I also enjoy spending time with my husband, Don. We just celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary.

Surprising fact: I was a runner for over two decades and loved it. I have run 17 official marathons (26 miles and 385 yards) and one official ultramarathon (50 miles).



Eric Corbin

Dock Coordinator
Materials Management

First UTSW job: Receiving Tech at Zale Lipshy Pavilion – William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital.

Best part about my job: Being a key asset to solving all hospital issues and complaints.

How co-workers describe me: A reliable team player. I’m not afraid to jump in and work beside team members to get the job done.

What energizes me at work: The ability to organize the workflow to the final results.

Recipe for success: Being an overachiever, hardworking, and willing to succeed.

Best UTSW memory: Being recognized as an Employee of the Year in 1997.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Communication, so I can understand and solve others’ problems or issues.

I’m really good at: Taking care of my family.

Claim to fame: Making it to the quarter-century employment mark.

Hobby: Building muscle cars.

Surprising fact: I enjoy building and restoring older cars.



Wende Davis

Operations Coordinator
Clinical Laboratory Services

First UTSW job: Medical Laboratory Technician.

Best part about my job: The people I work with. Everyone works together as a team to get the lab results out for the treatment and care of the patients.

What energizes me at work: My team. They are compassionate people with many talents.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable and supportive. I always try my best to assist anyone in need and recognize my co-workers’ needs.

Recipe for success: If I decide to do something, I do it as well as I possibly can.

Best UTSW memory: One of my favorite times was working on the Heart Team on-call. You really get to know your co-workers when you spend 20 hours at work with them!

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a chef and having my own restaurant. I love to cook but don’t have time to do it very often.

Passion: I play piano/keyboards for my church. Our lives changed so much due to the pandemic, and music has brought a unique sense of peace for me.

Surprising fact: Every year I serve as the director of my church Vacation Bible School and enjoy every minute of it!



“I was a runner for over two decades and loved it. I have run 17 official marathons (26 miles and 385 yards) and one official ultramarathon (50 miles).”

– Marian L. Colorado, Program Coordinator



Regina Elliott

Animal Care Attendant
Animal Resource Center (ARC)

First job at UTSW: Building Attendant.

Best part about my job: Being able to be part of a greater process beyond my day-to-day tasks at work. I believe my work in the processing area has a domino effect of being able to, in some small way, help the scientists in laboratories develop cures for diseases and illnesses. We all have our part to play, and that's an invaluable part of coming to work.

What energizes me at work: Being able to help co-workers energizes me to accomplish more because I know that at the end of the day, teamwork is more important than what I'm personally feeling.

How co-workers describe me: Organized and willing to push myself.

Recipe for success: Passion for work is the fire that has kept me focused and grounded for over 25 years.

Funny UTSW memory: ARC management participating in a talent show for Technician Appreciation Week and showcasing their outfits.

I'm really good at: Organizing, making what was disorderly into something orderly, and making my vision for something a reality.

Passions: Decorating, DIY projects, and planning birthday parties.

Surprising fact: I served in the U.S. Navy as a boatswain's mate for six years.



Lastacey R. Giles

Logistics Technician
Logistics

First UTSW job: Patient Care Technician.

Best part about my job: The honor of serving others daily. Often we forget that not only are we co-workers, but many of us are UTSW customers as well.

What energizes me at work: When we really work together as a team for the good of the patients.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable, serious, and reliable.

Recipe for success: Being raised by a village of wonderful, strong women. It has given me so much strength when life knocks me down.

Unusual UTSW memory: Working here through the years, I encountered so many personalities. That alone wraps up many funny and unusual moments.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Managing and saving money better.

I'm really good at: Being a peacemaker.

Claim to fame: My son, McClendon D. Giles.

Hobbies: Gambling and traveling.

Surprising fact: I'm really an undercover superhero. I love helping others secretly.



Carol Goldsmith

Senior Database Analyst
Office of Medical Education

First UTSW job: Programmer Analyst II.

Funny UTSW memory: I thought I would only work here for two years when I started at UTSW, and here I am.



“I believe my work in the processing area has a domino effect of being able to, in some small way, help the scientists in laboratories develop cures for diseases and illnesses. We all have our part to play, and that's an invaluable part of coming to work.”

– Regina Elliott, Animal Care Attendant

Joseph Fields

Technical Support Specialist II
Animal Resource Center

First UTSW job: Animal Health Technologist.

Best part about my job: Helping people successfully navigate through complicated processes to get what they need is very rewarding.

What energizes me at work: Knowing I'm helping people who appreciate my help, the fact that my job can't be done by a robot, and constant problem-solving.

How co-workers describe me: A good teammate.

I'm really good at: Understanding training material and implementing what I learn to solve problems.

Recipe for success: Fortitude – I keep working at something until I succeed at the task.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Computer programming. We will become more and more reliant on computers, and to speak the language makes one part of that future.

Claim to fame: I created an online web application and five other databases that have enabled my department to store, share, and retrieve information to do many of our tasks for the last 22 years.

Hobbies: I enjoy exercising, fitness, weight training, bike riding, and walking my dog. The COVID-19 lockdown inspired me to learn more about cooking.

Surprising fact: I really enjoy cooking and sewing.



Mone' Greene

Purchasing Manager
Supply Chain Management

First UTSW job: Patient Care Technician.

Best part about my job: The team I work with. They are like family. I love being part of something larger that makes a difference.

What energizes me at work: Being able to problem-solve – having the knowledge and experience to solve a problem gives me a sense of accomplishment.

How co-workers describe me: Compassionate and a hard worker. I'm not afraid to be in the trenches with my team.

Recipe for success: I conduct myself with integrity and I'm organized. I joined the U.S. Army after graduating from high school. The military provided me with discipline and taught me leadership skills that will forever have an impact on who I am as a person.

Best UTSW memory: Building sandcastles on the beach while on a Supply Chain alliance trip to South Padre Island.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Speaking Korean fluently. I lived in Korea while serving in the Army and would love to go back for a visit.

Hobby: Gardening. I love getting my hands dirty.

Surprising fact: I'm actually shy.





Mary Hestand

Executive Assistant
Department of Molecular Genetics

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant.

Best part of my job: The people I work with on a daily basis – especially my officemates! And I appreciate that the research done in my Department has contributed to finding cures and treatments for heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

What energizes me at work: Feeling like I am contributing to a larger goal that is important.

Best UTSW memory: The day the two sculptures that Nobel Laureate Dr. Joseph Goldstein donated were installed on the Dr. Donald Seldin Plaza on South Campus. It was hard not to keep looking out the windows or running out to the Plaza for a minute, so I'm not sure much work got done that morning!

Claim to fame: Over the past 25 years I have talked to more Nobel Prize winners on the phone than I ever imagined I would when I was growing up!

Surprising fact: I was once the lead singer of an all-mom rock band called Merry and the Mood Swings that had a Grammy-nominated single. Before that, I made a short film – “He Was Once” – that was nominated for a Golden Globe Award and was shown at the Sundance Film Festival and on the Discovery Channel.



Keng-Mean Lin, Ph.D.

Senior Research Scientist
Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Nephrology, Lu Lab

First UTSW job: Postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Helen Yin's laboratory, Department of Physiology.

Best part about my job: I like doing research because you don't know when you are going to discover something new and important, and I also like the flexibility in my daily schedule.

What energizes me at work: I like my job very much! Research is exciting and challenging because there is always room for improvement.

How co-workers describe me: Trustworthy.

Hobby: Gardening.



“Over the past 25 years I have talked to more Nobel Prize winners on the phone than I ever imagined I would when I was growing up!”

– Mary Hestand, Executive Assistant

Miroslava Ortiz

Senior Administrative Associate
Pulmonary and Critical Care
Department of Internal Medicine



Janie Iglehart

Research Assistant II
Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center

First UTSW job: Research Technician.

Best part about my job: The opportunity to work and meet people from a variety of backgrounds and the constant challenges.

What energizes me at work: My co-workers – we work as a team toward the same goals. It is such a positive environment to be in.

How co-workers describe me: Helpful, kind, hardworking, reliable, dependable, and takes pride in my work.

Recipe for success: I have always been a people person, respecting everyone. I'm also a problem-solver and like being organized.

Unusual UTSW memory: In 2020, I got stuck in an elevator for 40 minutes.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Curing all diseases and illnesses.

I'm really good at: Training people on the cryostat machine. For 18 years, I've been helping with their research and articles.

Claim to fame: God first, and my family.

Hobbies: I love the outdoors, fishing, and hiking.

Surprising fact: After my own two children grew up, I adopted two little girls. They are sisters and I didn't want to split them up.

Final note: I have seen UTSW grow a lot over the last 25 years. It has been exciting and rewarding. We truly are the future of medicine, today.



Claudia Quittner

Research Nurse
Division of Nutrition and Metabolic Diseases, Department of Internal Medicine

First UTSW job: Research Nurse.

Best part about my job: I enjoy interacting with our patients. Our patients deal with rare disorders, which can be hard to diagnose and treat. Helping them to deal with these rare health issues is rewarding.

Claim to fame: Recipient of the 2016 *D Magazine* Excellence in Nursing Award.





Adriana Ramirez

Accountant III
Department of Ophthalmology

First UTSW job: I was an Office Clerk in Medical Service Research and Development Plan (MSRDP) Finance during my senior year in high school. It was part of a co-op student program, and I still remember interviewing here. I've been at UTSW ever since – 10 years in Finance and 15 years in Ophthalmology. It was destiny!

Best part about my job: I never stop learning.

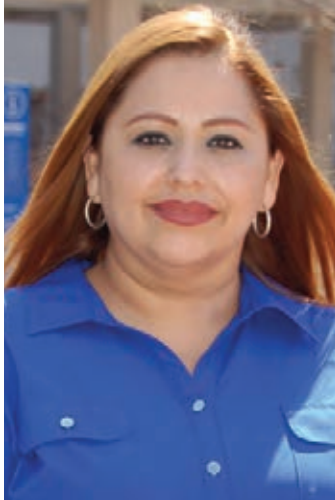
What energizes me at work: My cup of coffee!

Recipe for success: Being adaptable and self-motivated. Working at UTSW requires learning system upgrades. It's always interesting to learn something new.

Unusual memory: In 2015, while I was pregnant with twins, I remember the file cabinets behind my desk started shaking. Luckily, it didn't last long. Earthquakes were common that year in the Irving area.

I'm really good at: Making Mexican red enchiladas. It's my mother's recipe.

Final note: I'm married and have 5-year-old twins – a boy and a girl – and a 17-year-old daughter.



Cheryl Ross

Scheduling Coordinator
Radiology Imaging Services, William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

First UTSW job: Working as an Admitting Representative.

Best part about my job: I enjoy helping others.

What energizes me at work: Teamwork. It makes everything better.

How co-workers describe me: I think they would say I'm dependable, because I'm always available to help.

Recipe for success: Being willing to help others.

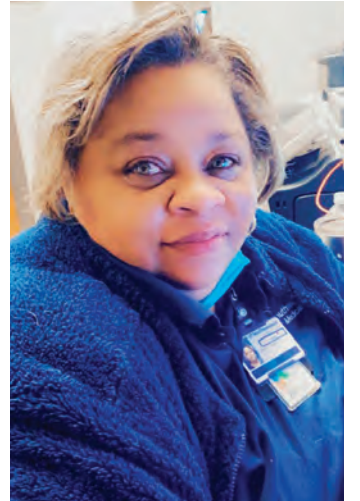
I wish I were an instant expert at: Making everything run smoothly.

I'm really good at: Helping others.

Claim to fame: Driving to Dallas on ice!

Hobby or passion: I love watching any TV shows that have Andy Griffith in them.

Surprising fact: I like to watch old movies.



Arnecia Robinson

Senior Administrative Assistant
Clinical Ancillary Imaging Department

First UTSW job: File clerk.

Best part about my job: The meaningful relationships.

What energizes me at work: Supporting each other and trying to be on the same page.

How co-workers would describe me: Efficient and knowledgeable. I have assisted and trained many others.

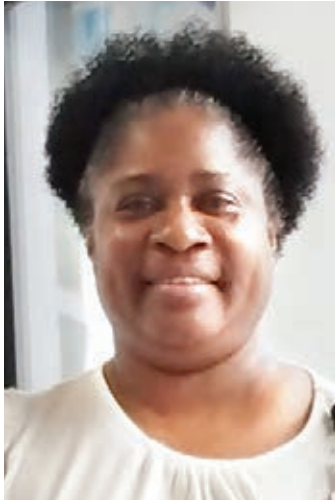
Recipe for success: Having the strength to see things through and not procrastinating.

Funny UTSW memory: When I first started here, a "patient" started having health issues while lying on the floor. I ran off to get help, and when I got back, everyone was standing around talking. It had been a drill for our department to see how we would react, with an employee serving as the patient. It wasn't funny at the time, but I can laugh about it now.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a nurse. I love to help people.

Hobby or passion: Traveling and getting together monthly with a group of friends.

Surprising fact: I have eight grandchildren – four boys and four girls.



Kellie Shaw

Graduate Medical Education (GME) Program Coordinator III
Division of Child Neurology, Department of Pediatrics

First UTSW job: Senior Administrative Assistant in Neurology.

Best part about my job: Being part of the initial group of program coordinators to develop a career path for that profession. It is the career achievement of which I am most proud.

What energizes me at work: The people I work with – program directors and coordinators, fellows, and residents – are my second family. I am still in contact with my residents and fellows, even after graduation. Many have stayed on as UTSW faculty.

How co-workers describe me: Organized, attentive to detail.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Becoming an excellent public speaker.

I'm really good at: Developing personal relationships.

Claim to fame: I was one of three program coordinators nationally to develop the initial national certification tools for the Training Administrators of GME (TAGME) in Child Neurology.

Hobby or passion: Spending time with my three beautiful grandchildren. They bring me my greatest joy.

Surprising fact: I turned down a full-tuition scholarship to play the flute.

Final note: It's amazing to see UTSW's growth over 25 years. We now have North, South, East, and West campuses, and it's still expanding.



Rebecca Rooney

Faculty Affairs Coordinator
Office of the Provost and Dean

First UTSW job: Administrative Staff Assistant IV, Office of the President.

Best part about my job: Interacting with people from all over campus.

What energizes me at work: Being part of a team working together to solve problems.

Recipe for success: Paying attention to detail, working hard, and being dedicated and flexible.

Best UTSW memories: Singing "God Bless America" during the seventh-inning stretch on UT Southwestern Spirit Night at the Grand Prairie AirHogs baseball game. Also memorable was hearing Stephen Hawking speak in the Tom and Lula Gooch Auditorium.

I'm really good at: Taking something complicated, breaking it down, and putting it into terms that are easier to understand.

Hobby or passion: Anything that involves creativity – music, theater, art, photography, etc.

Surprising fact: In addition to working at UTSW, I was a children's choir director for 28 years.

Final note: When I first started at UTSW, I helped with the Employee Recognition Program. This included requesting information from honorees for *Center Times* and arranging the Quarter Century Club luncheon. Twenty-five years later, here I am on the other side of it.



“It's amazing to see UTSW's growth over 25 years. We now have North, South, East, and West campuses, and it's still expanding.”

– Kellie Shaw, Graduate Medical Education
Program Coordinator III



Brenda J. Smith

Senior Administrative Associate
Budget and Resource Planning, Shared Services

First UTSW job: Senior Administrative Assistant.

Best part about my job: The teamwork. It's a great group of people.

What energizes me at work: Finding solutions to difficult tasks and having my work acknowledged.

How co-workers describe me: Resourceful, easy to get along with, a team player.

Recipe for success: Staying positive, being easily approachable.

Unusual UTSW memory: After three months of employment, I found out I was pregnant and was in total shock. Even though I was new to the department, the baby shower thrown for me went above and beyond. There were so many gifts, I had to ask a co-worker to bring some to my home. My family from Louisiana even attended.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a nurse. I wish I could assist in the healing process of those who are suffering.

Hobby or passion: Fishing, visiting with my three grandchildren, and traveling to see my mother in Louisiana.

Surprising fact: I can't swim, but I love to fish; my lake name is "Catfish Pookie." Also, I have 11 PACT pins for customer service.



Ann Tate

Director of General Services
Facilities Management

First UTSW job: Budget analyst.

Best part about my job: My co-workers. They are amazingly diverse and interesting people who are committed to what they do.

What energizes me at work: I love seeing individuals I hired move on to better positions, and mentoring other employees to help them do more.

How co-workers describe me: Approachable, empathetic, straightforward, and fair.

Recipe for success: I'm an active listener and can relate to most people.

Best UTSW memory: Most of mine are best told in person – just ask me! – but one dramatically changed my course at UTSW. Around 1999 or 2000, I met Dr. Louis Stool, then Vice Chairman of Anesthesiology, at an annual meeting. I instantly knew he would influence my career. A few weeks later, he persuaded me to change direction, and I never looked back.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Playing acoustic guitar.

I'm really good at: Cooking.

Hobby or passion: Pilates.

Surprising fact: I'm a highly intuitive person.

Final note: I have never been prouder of the UTSW community than during the COVID-19 pandemic. With every challenge, we rose to the occasion, set the standard, and exceeded expectations.



Vanessa C. Thomas

Certified Health Unit Coordinator (HUC)
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital,
7 Blue/Medical-Surgical Intensive Care Unit (MSICU)

First UTSW job: Patient Care Tech.

Best part about my job: I love interacting with patients and their families, as well as co-workers. I like to help them solve problems and meet challenges.

What energizes me at work: We receive critically ill patients in the MSICU, and it lifts me up to know I am helping make the world a better place when patients improve enough to go to a step-down unit.

How co-workers describe me: Punctual, hardworking. I am rarely late to a meeting or out sick.

Recipe for success: Confidence, passion, having a sense of purpose, and self-determination.

Best UTSW memory: Advocating for patients makes me happy.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being a fashion designer and running my own business.

Claim to fame: I passed my HUC exam on the first try. I was mentioned in the UTSW campus paper, and co-workers started asking me for advice on the test.

Hobby or passion: Traveling and spending time with my family. All three of my children went to college, and I am so proud of them.

Surprising fact: I am very quiet and shy.



“I have never been prouder of the UTSW community than during the COVID-19 pandemic. With every challenge, we rose to the occasion, set the standard, and exceeded expectations.”

– Ann Tate, Director of General Services

Mary Tanner

Physical Therapist
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Outpatient Therapy

First UTSW job: Physical Therapist.

Best part about my job: I see many different patients with musculoskeletal and cardiopulmonary diagnoses. Staying up to date on the latest evidence-based medicine keeps me on my toes.

What energizes me at work: Seeing patients take ownership and be facilitators of their own health, so they can improve functionally for the long term.

How co-workers describe me: Willing to share my knowledge base.

Recipe for success: Being friendly and having an outgoing personality.

Best UTSW memory: We had a karaoke contest as part of a team-building event in our department. I quickly realized that I, and many of my colleagues, sing off-key.

Claim to fame: Many years ago when I was employed elsewhere, I taught Terry Bradshaw an exercise program for a promotional video. It was a lot of fun, because he's from my hometown and I grew up watching him play for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Hobby or passion: Focusing on my fitness routine, camping, staying active at church, and spending time with family.

Surprising fact: For my 30th birthday, I went skydiving.



Paula Timmons

Laboratory Coordinator
Radiology Research Administration

First UTSW job: Laboratory Technician Assistant.

Best part about my job: I work in a great department that is very progressive and respectful of its employees.

What energizes me at work: Knowing that I am appreciated drives me to work harder.

How co-workers describe me: Friendly. I try to remember that someone else is probably having a worse day than me.

Recipe for success: You can learn something – good or bad – from every experience or person.

Best UTSW memory: Knowing that I have worked on projects that have made a real difference for many people.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Painting. I admire people who have that skill.

I'm really good at: Organizing.

Claim to fame: A tissue section that I cut and stained was picked for the cover of a journal.

Hobby or passion: My animals.

Surprising fact: There is a covered bridge in Oregon that is named after my family.





Ruby Titus

Registered Nurse II
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, 6 Blue, Labor and Delivery

First UTSW job: Registered Nurse.

Best part about my job: The amazing people I work with – they are professional, caring, and funny.

What energizes me at work: Teaching new parents how to care for a newborn at home.

How co-workers describe me: Organized and kind.

Recipe for success: Staying calm in trying situations.

Funny UTSW memory: I've had some maternity patients whose grandparents say, "You were my nurse when my daughter was born, and now you are her nurse!"

I wish I were an instant expert at: Eradicating the coronavirus so that we can go back to a normal life.

I'm really good at: Time management.

Hobby or passion: Cooking and reading.

Final note: I was able to help as a COVID-19 triage nurse through most of 2020. It allowed me to talk to hundreds of UTSW employees and presented a new side of nursing that was different from what I had done for 25 years!

Mike Young

Facilities Planner
Ambulatory Support Services

First UTSW job: Lead person for Shipping and Receiving.

Best part about my job: Learning and understanding patient care.

What energizes me at work: Seeing the faces of patients whom my services may have impacted directly or indirectly.

How co-workers describe me: Dedicated, because I try to do my best at whatever I'm doing.

Recipe for success: Having a positive attitude and treating others with respect.

Best UTSW memory: Finding out that I was hired at UT Southwestern.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Being thankful. Life has taught me to be that way.

Hobby or passion: Fishing and motorcycle riding.

Surprising fact: I'm a great auto mechanic.



Paul Tuggle

Senior Asset Operations Technician
Asset Management

First UTSW job: Receiving Clerk.

Best part about my job: Meeting a lot of folks daily.

What energizes me at work: I like interacting with people.

How co-workers describe me: Pretty funny.

Recipe for success: I'm easy to get along with and quick-witted. I try to treat everyone as nonstrangers. I like to be treated that way.

I'm really good at: I am the fishing master. I don't just fish – I catch.

Claim to fame: I have played drums with Judas Priest, Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath, Warren Haynes of Gov't Mule, Zakk Wylde of Black Label Society, and Steve Vai.

Passion: Drumming. I have played the drums for over 35 years. I enjoy being in a band and do live gigs a couple of times a month.

Surprising fact: I collect old breweriana. Pre-1970 items such as cans, trays, signs, and neon lights. I love old pre-Prohibition items too, but they can be a bit pricey.



“ I was able to help as a COVID-19 triage nurse through most of 2020. It allowed me to talk to hundreds of UTSW employees and presented a new side of nursing that was different from what I had done for 25 years! ”

– Ruby Titus, Registered Nurse II

NAS Continued from page 1

With their elections, UT Southwestern now has 25 faculty who are members of the NAS.

“The elections of Dr. Hilgemann and Dr. Phillips to the prestigious National Academy of Sciences recognize the pioneering contributions they have made to advance our understanding of cellular and biochemical processes as they relate, respectively, to cardiac function and disease-causing parasites,” said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern. “Their election enables the National Academy of Sciences in its ability to fulfill its mission set when President Abraham Lincoln established it more than 150 years ago to provide scientific advice to the nation on critical issues.”

Drs. Hilgemann and Phillips were among 120 U.S. and 30 new nonvoting foreign members announced on April 26.

“This latest recognition reflects well on the breadth and quality of research underway at UT Southwestern, and will inspire new generations of trainees and scientists to carry on the tradition of discovery that serves as a keystone of distinguished academic medical

centers,” said Dr. W. P. Andrew Lee, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Dean of UT Southwestern Medical School.

Dr. Donald Hilgemann, Professor of Physiology, Internal Medicine, and in the Charles and Jane Pak Center for Mineral Metabolism and Clinical Research

Dr. Hilgemann, who joined UT Southwestern in 1988, initially studied ion transport mechanisms such as sodium-potassium pumps, proteins on the surface membranes of all cells that continuously pump in potassium and pump out sodium. Dr. Hilgemann discovered that ion channels and transporters are regulated by lipids that also direct the trafficking of membranes in cells. This led Dr. Hilgemann's team to discover new membrane remodeling mechanisms that can either increase or reduce the size of the outer membranes of cells. To accomplish these goals, he and his colleagues have developed innovative electrical and optical tools.

“We are presently studying two powerful, ‘unconventional’ membrane remodeling processes – one that can remove large portions of the cell surface within seconds and one that can open large surface membrane reserves that

are sequestered into the cytoplasm without being physically disconnected from the outer membrane. We believe that these mechanisms are critical to allow cell migration and spreading, including migration by cancer cells that is coupled to metastasis,” Dr. Hilgemann said. “Other connections to human disease that we are pursuing involve the unconventional membrane uptake mechanisms that we identified, which are highly active in those cells that take up oxidized cholesterol and become so-called foam cells during the development of atherosclerosis.”

Dr. Hilgemann began his studies at the University of Iowa in general education and earned his undergraduate degree and Ph.D. in pharmacology and physiology from the University of Tuebingen in Germany. His many honors include an Established Investigator Award from the American Heart Association and a Young Investigator Award from the Biophysical Society.

Dr. Margaret Phillips, Professor and Chair of Biochemistry and Professor of Pharmacology

Dr. Phillips, who joined UT Southwestern in 1992 and was appointed Chair of Biochemistry in 2016, is recog-

nized as one of the leading authorities on drug development for the treatment of malaria and parasitic diseases. Although malaria was eradicated from the United States in 1951, it remains one of the world's most deadly infectious diseases, claiming nearly 500,000 lives each year. Among her previous honors, Dr. Phillips received the 1999 Scholars Award in Molecular Parasitology from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. In 2010, Dr. Phillips' research team won the Medicines for Malaria Venture Project of the Year award for its efforts to discover DSM265, which kills drug-resistant malaria parasites in the blood and liver by targeting their ability to replicate.

“I am deeply honored by my election to the National Academy of Sciences,” Dr. Phillips said. “I share this honor with my trainees and collaborators who have been instrumental in the discoveries that made this award possible. I am deeply grateful to my colleagues and the leadership at UT Southwestern for providing a research environment where scientific discovery is valued, nurtured and promoted.”

Dr. Phillips received a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from the University of California, Davis, and

earned her Ph.D. in pharmaceutical chemistry from the University of California, San Francisco, where she was also a postdoctoral fellow. She is currently an associate editor of the journal *PLOS Pathogens* and a deputy editor of *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases*. She has also served on the scientific advisory committees for Medicines for Malaria Venture, the Tropical Disease Initiative at Dundee, and of the University of Glasgow, Wellcome Trust Centre for Molecular Parasitology.

Dr. Hilgemann holds the Floyd C. Rector, Jr., M.D. Professorship in Acid-Base Regulation, and the Roy and Christine Sturgis Chair in Biomedical Research.

Dr. Lee holds the Atticus James Gill, M.D. Chair in Medical Science.

Dr. Phillips holds The Sam G. Winstead and F. Andrew Bell Distinguished Chair in Biochemistry.

Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

Mickey appointed Professor Emeritus of Neurological Surgery

By Carol Marie Cropper

Dr. Bruce Mickey, a UT Southwestern neurosurgeon praised by many of his patients for his personal touch, as well as his precise hands, has been named Professor Emeritus of Neurological Surgery.

Dr. Carlos Bagley, Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery and Orthopaedic Surgery, cited Dr. Mickey's numerous contributions to UTSW over the past 36 years – establishment of brain and pituitary tumor as well as epilepsy surgery programs; work to create the Annette G. Strauss Center for Neuro-Oncology; and fundraising to equip the Neurosurgery resident training laboratory.

"I'm grateful to receive the honor, in part because it will allow me to remain on campus and to continue to transition some of my existing patients to other members of the faculty," said Dr. Mickey, who retired in February and held the William Kemp Clark Chair of Neurological Surgery. He also plans to continue collaborating on research and to teach

medical students and residents.

Dr. Mickey, a Louisiana native, earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Harvard College and then graduated from UT Southwestern Medical School in 1978. He remained at UTSW for his internship and residency and went on to become Professor and Vice Chair of Neurological Surgery and Director of the Strauss Center.

As he steps back from a full-time faculty role, Dr. Mickey said he is thankful for all the help he received from others at UT Southwestern over the years.

"Nothing that I have done was the product of my work alone," he said. "It was a team effort, and that's what made it successful. I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has helped me along the way, who helped me help other people."

Melissa Thompson, a Lubbock mother, is one of those patients who benefited from Dr. Mickey's skills as a surgeon.

At age 18, she had her first brain surgery to remove tumors resulting from a rare, inherited disease called von Hippel-Lindau syndrome,

which can cause tumors in the brain, spinal cord, retina, or kidneys. She was first treated at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) near Washington, D.C. A surgeon there referred her to Dr. Mickey, telling her he was one of the best in the country.

"I've had seven brain surgeries, and Dr. Mickey did six of them," said Ms. Thompson, now 43 years old. "He's always really done a great job taking care of me."

Another patient, Ruth Feldman, also recalled Dr. Mickey's expert, compassionate care. The Plano woman was diagnosed with a brain tumor after her son-in-law, a psychiatrist at UT Southwestern, asked a neurologist family friend to evaluate her for weakness and problems walking. MRIs revealed a massive brain tumor, she said, and Dr. Mickey's office took her in right away.

Ms. Feldman's June 2010 surgery returned her life to as close to normal as possible. "I thank God, knowing where I was before and where I am today. It's a different world," she said.



Dr. Bruce Mickey

HIFU Continued from page 1



Dr. Bhavya R. Shah

implantable hardware, no general anesthesia, and no incisions at all."

The technology is also used to treat cancers. Prostate cancer was one of the earliest forms treated using MRgHIFU, but the technique might also be applied to breast or bone cancer.

A first for Texas

The technology's impact on the way physicians treat brain diseases could be seismic. The National Institutes of Health estimates that essential tremor impacts as many as 10 million Americans. Parkinson's disease affects a million more.

Fewer than two dozen hospitals in the U.S. offer treatment using MRgHIFU. UT Southwestern is the first hospital in Texas with the technology, thanks to a \$5 million gift from an anonymous donor to the O'Donnell Brain Institute, which is utilized for both clinical care and research. The equipment is housed in the newly opened third tower of William

P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, which has specialty care units for patients with brain diseases and is the clinical home of the O'Donnell Brain Institute.

The first patient procedure took place in early March 2021. Tremor and Parkinson's patients from as far away as the Middle East and Europe have expressed interest in traveling to Dallas for the procedure.

"We are at the forefront of brain science because of the visionary generosity of our supporters, innovation of our scientists, and outstanding care provided by our clinicians," said Dr. Daniel K. Podolsky, President of UT Southwestern. "This gift enables us to bring a technology with great promise to Texas and surrounding states, expanding our capacity to pursue groundbreaking research and opening up new treatment possibilities for patients in Texas and beyond."

An extensive team of UT Southwestern leaders collaborated across brain research, radiology, and neuroradiology to bring this project

Bypassing the blood-brain barrier

Besides using MRI-guided focused ultrasound in brain surgery, Dr. Bhavya R. Shah is currently leading clinical trials at UT Southwestern to determine whether this technology is effective for delivering drug therapies and diagnostic agents into the brain – past the blood-brain barrier.

Essential nutrients delivered by the blood can pass through the barrier to the brain, but larger particles, such as bacteria or viruses, cannot.

Injecting drugs directly into the bloodstream is not effective for treating the brain because the blood-brain

barrier stops them. Alternatively, when injected directly into the brain, drugs do not extend very far beyond the injection site. As Dr. Shah points out, "Anytime you put a needle close to the brain there is always the chance of injury."

Those risks are not a factor with an MRI-guided focused ultrasound.

One of the best ways to penetrate the blood-brain barrier is to inject a series of small gas-filled bubbles into a vein. Once they reach the brain, they can be targeted with focused ultrasound. When the ultrasound waves interact with the bubbles, the bubbles gently vibrate and push open the blood-brain barrier. Diagnostic agents and other therapies can be delivered through the

opening, directly to the brain.

Through his clinical trials, Dr. Shah sees potential to use focused ultrasound to deliver therapies to targeted parts of the brain in patients with Alzheimer's disease and brain tumors. He also anticipates using the technique to deliver immunotherapy and gene therapies in patients with neurodegenerative diseases, movement disorders, and genetic diseases.

"The future of personalized medicine is in using MRI-guided focused ultrasound to deliver gene therapy, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy to specific regions of the brain instead of destroying brain tissue. These noninvasive procedures could be a game-changing, clinical breakthrough," he said.

to fruition. The Neuro Focused Ultrasound Program works with physicians in Neurology, who initially evaluate patients. Since the new procedure is not appropriate for everyone, Dr. Shah consults with colleagues in Neurology and Neurosurgery to decide on the best candidates. MRgHIFU is one of several types of next generation "neuromodulation" therapies being advanced in the O'Donnell Brain Institute.

Dr. Podolsky holds the Philip O'Bryan Montgomery, Jr., M.D. Distinguished Presidential Chair in Academic Administration, and the Doris and Bryan Wildenthal Distinguished Chair in Medical Science.

More online: Read the full story on *Center Times Plus* at utsouthwestern.edu/ctplus.



UT Southwestern is the first hospital in Texas to offer patients an advanced technology called MRgHIFU that uses ultrasound waves for noninvasive alternatives to procedures such as brain surgery.

Disparities Continued from page 1

Murphy, lead author of the study and Assistant Professor of Population and Data Sciences and Internal Medicine.

"No matter which way we looked at the data, we still saw consistent and alarming differences in survival by race – and these are teens and young adults," Dr. Murphy added. "Survival is not different because of biology. It's not different because of patient-level factors. There is something much bigger at the system level that likely contributes to these disparities."

Dr. Sandi Pruitt, Associate Professor of Population and Data Sciences and another study author, said the numbers show a need for greater investments in health care coverage and neighborhood revitalization.

"Where Black teens and young adults are with cancer survival today is worse than it was for white kids about 10 years ago. It's unreal," Dr. Pruitt said. "I think it is underappreciated how much the conditions in which we are born and live impact

our health, and, in this case, the health of a very special and underserved population – teens and young adults with cancer. Persistent poverty and racism, combined with the low rate of health insurance that is common in Texas, are part of the context that leads to the worse survival for certain population groups we've observed in this study."

The study calls for future research and interventions to address the disparities, including better health insurance coverage, greater inclusion of teens and young adults in clinical trials, more collection of biospecimens from underserved teens and young adults, new programs and policies to combat racism, and additional studies comparing risk factors, treatment, and outcomes.

More online: Read the full story in the newsroom at utsouthwestern.edu/newsroom.



Dr. Caitlin Murphy



Dr. Sandi Pruitt

Analysis of Texas Cancer Registry data revealed:

- Black men with non-Hodgkin lymphoma had a 57 percent survival rate compared with 75 percent for white men.
- Disparities were striking even for cancers that can usually be cured. For example, the survival rate for white patients with testicular cancer was 96.6 percent, compared with 88.7 percent for Black patients.
- For these highly curable cancers, survival also decreased as poverty increased, and for all race and ethnic groups.
- Men with private insurance had survival rates 20 percent higher for non-Hodgkin lymphoma and testicular, colorectal, and kidney cancer than men with no insurance or with Medicaid.
- Being Black or Hispanic, living in high-poverty neighborhoods, and having Medicaid or no insurance at diagnosis were associated with higher mortality in men and women.

Program aims to reduce mortality rates for at-risk new mothers

By Jan Jarvis

An innovative program is delivering health care to new mothers in an effort to reduce high maternal mortality rates reported in parts of Dallas County.

The program, called Extending Maternal Care After Pregnancy (eMCAP), is unique because it is community based and extends the time that women receive care after delivery from 60 days to 12 months, said Dr. David B. Nelson, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UT Southwestern.

"We are providing care to patients in the community as opposed to bringing the patient to the hospital," he said. "It's a paradigm shift."

Under the program, a team of coordinators, nurse navigators, and community health workers from UT Southwestern and Parkland Health & Hospital System provides access to care for the full year following delivery. A mobile care unit goes into South Dallas neighborhoods to bring caregivers to patients for convenient appointment access. Follow-up telephone calls and virtual provider visits also connect these new moms with postpartum care, resources, and community-based services.

Parkland, in partnership with UT Southwestern physicians and other caregivers in obstetrics and gynecology, introduced the program in October 2020. The Hamon Charitable Foundation recently made a \$1 million gift to support eMCAP for the first year.

The program focuses on a geographic area of southern Dallas County that has significant needs



A new mother is enrolled by a UT Southwestern research nurse to participate in the Extending Maternal Care After Pregnancy program for access to community health services up to one year after birth.

and, in some cases, has become a health care desert.

For years, maternal mortality has been a health issue in the state and nationally. In 2018, the most currently available data, Texas reported 18.5 deaths per 100,000 births and ranked 13th highest among 25 states, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. Recently, the postpartum period – rather than delivery – has been identified to be the highest risk for maternal morbidity and mortality. A 2020 state-sponsored Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force found that 61 percent of maternal mortality cases in Texas occurred from six weeks to a year after delivery. Women with limited

access to care with conditions like hypertension and diabetes mellitus are especially at risk.

In 2019, Dr. Nelson provided invited testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce on improving maternal health and access to care. The launch of the local eMCAP program represents the commitment to this charge and call to action.

"For those with high blood pressure and diabetes, follow-up and ongoing coordination of care have an important impact on the future health of the mother, her newborn child, and the entire community," Dr. Nelson said.

The program has already made a differ-

ence. When a mother with congenital hearing loss feared she would not be able to hear her newborn's cry, for example, the team stepped in to arrange for a hearing aid replacement and scheduled an appointment for an evaluation.

From the program's launch on Oct. 1, 2020, through April 7, 2021, the eMCAP program had enrolled 573 mothers and completed 763 virtual nurse home visits. Patients are invited to take part based on targeted home ZIP codes identified to have the highest needs through community health needs assessment. To date through early April, the program recorded 514 provider visits – combining both in-person mobile unit care and virtual visits. The goal is to enroll 1,200 mothers each year.

"When a healthy mother is able to care for her healthy baby, both the family and community benefit," Dr. Nelson said.

Other nursing staff and physicians from the UT Southwestern Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology participating in the program include nurses Lisa Moseley, Melissa Wafford, Imelda Smith, and Andranecia Cox; Dr. Catherine Spong, Professor and Vice Chairman; Drs. Elaine Duryea and Robert Martin, Assistant Professors; and Dr. Don McIntire, Professor.

Dr. Nelson is a Dedman Family Scholar in Clinical Care.

Dr. Spong holds the Gillette Professorship of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Clinical trial reveals that exercise boosts blood flow to the brain

By Sarah Williams

UT Southwestern study in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* shows that when older adults with mild memory loss followed an exercise program for a year, blood flow to their brains increased.

"This is part of a growing body of evidence linking exercise with brain health," said study leader Dr. Rong Zhang, Professor of Neurology. "We've shown for the first time in a randomized trial in these older adults that exercise gets more blood flowing to your brain."

As many as one-fifth of people age 65 and older have some level of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) – slight changes to the brain that affect memory, decision-making, or reasoning skills. In many cases, MCI progresses to dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

Scientists have previously shown that lower-than-usual levels of blood flow to the brain, and stiffer blood vessels leading to the brain, are associated with MCI and dementia. Studies have also suggested that regular aerobic exercise may help improve cognition and memory in healthy older adults. However, scientists have not established whether there is a direct link between exercise, stiffer blood vessels, and brain blood flow.



"There is still a lot we don't know about the effects of exercise on cognitive decline later in life," said Dr. C. Munro Cullum, Professor of Psychiatry at UTSW and co-senior author of the study. "MCI and dementia are likely to be influenced by a complex



Dr. Rong Zhang

interplay of many factors, and we think that, at least for some people, exercise is one of those factors."

The study followed 70 men and women aged 55 to 80 who had been diagnosed with MCI. Participants underwent cognitive exams, fitness tests, and brain magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans. They were randomly assigned to follow either a moderate aerobic exercise program or a stretching program for one year.

Forty-eight study participants – 29 in the stretching group and 19 in the aerobic exercise group – completed the full year of training. Among them, those who performed aerobic exercise showed decreased stiffness of blood vessels in their necks and increased blood flow to the brain. The more their oxygen consumption increased, the greater the changes to the blood



Dr. C. Munro Cullum

vessel stiffness and brain blood flow. Changes in these measurements were not seen in the stretching program group.

While the study did not find any significant changes in memory or other cognitive function, the researchers said that may be because of the small size or short length of the trial. Changes to blood flow could precede changes to cognition, they said. Underway is a larger two-year study, Risk Reduction for Alzheimer's Disease (rrAD), to further investigate the link between exercise and cognitive decline.

Still, these data are important to help explain the effects of exercise on the brain and why it can be beneficial, said Drs. Zhang and Cullum, both members of the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute.

Dr. Cullum holds the Pam Blumenthal Distinguished Professorship in Clinical Psychology.

More online: Read the full story in the newsroom at utsouthwestern.edu/newsroom.

NEWS

MAKERS

Two UTSW faculty inducted into elite research society

Dr. Benjamin Levi, Associate Professor of Surgery, and Dr. Michael Shiloh, Associate Professor of Internal Medicine and Microbiology, have been inducted into the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), one of the most distinguished organizations in academic medicine. Its membership is limited to elite physician-scientists.

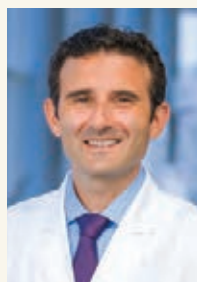
Dr. Levi is Chief of the Division of Burn, Trauma, Acute and Critical Care Surgery and a co-leader of the Center for Organogenesis Research and Trauma, which conducts basic/translational research focused on injury and diseases of the skin, organs, and musculoskeletal system. He is known nationally for his work in heterotopic ossification, a pathology in which bone forms in soft tissue and occurs in more than 20 percent of patients with extremity trauma. His findings have been published in *Nature Communications*, *Science Translational Medicine*, and *Proceed-*

ings of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Levi has been noted for his independent federal funding, clinical excellence, and the positive workplace culture in his laboratories.

"I am honored to be elected to this society, which helps build collaborations with clinician-scientists across the country and promotes the idea that surgeon-scientists can perform impactful work that advances the field and changes clinical paradigms," said Dr. Levi. "I believe surgeons are best poised for this role, given their broad exposure to complex clinical challenges and their natural rigor and focus on solving current gaps in care."

Dr. Levi has additional appointments in the Charles and Jane Pak Center for Mineral Metabolism and Clinical Research, the Children's Medical Center Research Institute at UT Southwestern, and in Plastic Surgery.

Dr. Shiloh has been recognized for his research into how the bacteria *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* cause disease in humans. Tuberculosis killed 1.4 million people around the world



Dr. Benjamin Levi

in 2019 and is thought to infect about one-fourth of the world's population, according to the World Health Organization. Dr. Shiloh's work is focused on understanding the pathogenesis of tuberculosis, starting from disease acquisition, to factors that affect survival of the bacteria in the body, and finally, toward mechanisms of disease transmission from infected to uninfected individuals.

This work is important as our rapidly changing environment facilitates the rise and spread of new global infectious diseases, including COVID-19. His current work aims to connect the identification of molecules that trigger coughs and their receptors to transmissibility of both bacterial and viral pathogens. His research has been published in *Cell*, *Cell Host & Microbe*, and *The Journal of Immunology*, among others. He is also involved in a five-year, multisite study with up to \$37 million in National Institutes of Health funding investigating the potential for harnessing a natural cellular function called autophagy, in which cells destroy



Dr. Michael Shiloh

their damaged parts to attack invading bacteria and viruses.

"I am truly humbled to be inducted into the American Society for Clinical Investigation," said Dr. Shiloh. "Many ASCI members have been critical in helping to shape the scientist and person that I am today, and I am excited to collaborate with others in the ASCI to not only make important advances for patients but also to support the next generation of physician-scientists."

The ASCI was founded in 1908 and is one of the most prestigious honor societies in medical research. It has about 3,000 members and adds no more than 80 members to its ranks each year. Members are selected on the basis of excellence in research, clinical care, medical education, and outstanding scholarly achievement. The society publishes two high-impact journals, the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* and *JCI Insight*.

Dr. Levi holds the Dr. Lee Hudson-Robert R. Penn Chair in Surgery.

Dr. Shiloh holds the Professorship in Infectious Diseases, in honor of James P. Luby, M.D.