UT Southwestern Medical School ranked among nation’s best in research, primary care

UT Southwestern is ranked among the top 25 for research and in the top 26 for primary care among 192 medical schools nationwide, according to U.S. News & World Report's 2021 Best Graduate Schools rankings. UT Southwestern Medical School ranked 16th for primary care and 25th for research. Only six institutions in the country rated above UT Southwestern in both categories. Among biomedical specialties, UT Southwestern Medical School ranked 25th nationally in biology.

“The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recognizes the pioneering contributions that he has made in elucidating the genetic basis of chronic conditions including heart disease, liver disease, and obesity,” said Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., President of UT Southwestern. “As a member of the Academy, he will advance its mission of providing independent, objective advice to the nation on matters related to science and technology.”

Dr. Cohen was among 120 new U.S. and 30 nonvoting foreign members announced on May 3. UT Southwestern now has 26 members of the NAS, more than any institution in Texas and the most at any time in UT Southwestern’s nearly 80-year history.

“This latest election is a testament to the caliber and expanse of science taking place at UT Southwestern and will serve as an inspiration to new generations of trainees and scientists that will continue the long tradition of discovery that we embody here,” said W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D., Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Provost, and Dean of UT Southwestern Medical School.

Grant supports UTSW push to make genomic data more accessible

“UT Southwestern is nationally recognized for its work with protein engineering and biophysics,” said David Baltimore, Ph.D., the A. Compton Broders III, M.D. Chair in Emergency Medicine honors the former chair and improve the life-changing treatment options for patients. The A. Compton Broders III, M.D. Chair in Emergency Medicine honors the former chair and improve the life-changing treatment options for patients.

Recognizing service and longevity

In a special section that begins on page 3, we honor UT Southwestern colleagues celebrating milestone years of service, including this year’s new members of the Quarter Century Club.
An innovator at the helm: Chair of Radiation Oncology plans big changes

By Carol Marie Cropper

UT Southwestern's new Department of Radiation Oncology Chair, Robert Timmerman, M.D., is best known for his groundbreaking work in developing a treatment called stereotactic ablative radiotherapy (SABR) that delivers high, very precise doses of radiation to kill cancer. This year he published a study in 2020 showing such dramatic results in treating lung cancer that it quickly became a new standard of care and was considered one of the top 100 papers in 2020 by JAMA. His research pioneered the use of image-guided technology to deliver radiation and has led to the development of new cancer treatments that are now used worldwide.

Timmerman is a leader in the field of radiation oncology and has been a member of the American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO) for over 20 years. He was elected as the President of ASTRO in 2019 and has served as the Chair of the ASTRO Board of Directors. He has also been involved in many other organizations and has published over 300 papers in peer-reviewed journals.

Timmerman earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from the University of Notre Dame and his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He completed his residency in radiation oncology at the University of California, San Francisco, and his fellowship in stereotactic body radiation therapy at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Timmerman’s research focuses on developing new treatments for cancer using image-guided radiation therapy. He has been involved in several clinical trials and has contributed to the development of new cancer treatments that are now used worldwide.

Timmerman’s appointment as Chair of Radiation Oncology comes at a time when the field is rapidly evolving. With advances in imaging technology and the development of new drugs, there is a need for new approaches to treating cancer.

As Chair of Radiation Oncology, Timmerman plans to continue to lead the Department in advancing the field of radiation oncology and developing new treatments for cancer. He also plans to expand the Department’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Timmerman is a strong advocate for the Department’s mission and is committed to providing the best possible care for patients.

“UT Southwestern is a leader in the field of radiation oncology and I am excited to be part of this team,” said Timmerman. “I look forward to working with my colleagues to continue to advance the field of radiation oncology and provide the best possible care for our patients.”
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.

Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., President of UT Southwestern Medical Center, will host a June 7 luncheon to honor employees with 45, 40, 35, 30, and 30 years of service and to welcome new members of the Quarter Century Club.

A superhero in the hospital for more than four decades

By Carol Marie Cropper

Medical Technologist Gary Gaulden
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, Core Lab

Medical Technologist Gary Gaulden tries to convince you that nothing spectacular has happened in his 45 years of work at UT Southwestern, first at St. Paul Medical Center and now at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital. But don’t let his humility fool you – his actions once saved a hospital visitor’s life.

St. Paul, the facility later replaced by Clements University Hospital, became the setting for the drama that Mr. Gaulden describes as “the most satisfying thing that ever happened to me.”

He and a lab co-worker were having lunch in the former hospital’s cafeteria when they noticed an elderly woman choking nearby. “She reminded me of my mother,” Mr. Gaulden says. As she kept coughing and struggled to breathe, it became obvious she was in danger. “You could tell that whatever it was she was choking on was getting farther down in her throat, restricting her airways,” he says.

Although Mr. Gaulden wasn’t a doctor, he had volunteered as an adult leader for his son’s Boy Scout troop, so he knew how to perform the Heimlich maneuver.

“I hadn’t used it before then, and I haven’t used it since,” he says, but he sprang into action, and it worked. “The instant relief that was on her face was priceless.”

The woman thanked him, even though to this day he does not know her name. “After she got clear of what she had in her throat, she went back to eating – and so did we,” he says.

That moment, still frozen in his memory, has stayed with him through the years, along with his dedication to medical service. “Seeing your kids graduate high school and college - that’s one level of satisfaction,” he says. “But helping another human being is just a different level.”

Mr. Gaulden has spent his entire career at UT Southwestern. He says he took the job because it was in his field and he liked the people he worked with in the lab.

He started part time at St. Paul on Feb. 14, 1976, testing enzyme levels in patients’ blood while finishing his medical technology training there. After graduating that July with a Bachelor of Science from Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas, Mr. Gaulden joined St. Paul’s Hematology lab full time.

Mr. Gaulden, who likes to garden, hunt, fish, and carve small wooden animals to give to his four grandchildren, says he hasn’t decided on a retirement date yet. He says he hopes to continue working at least another couple of years.

What keeps him here? When he was offered a job after graduation, he could not think of a better place to work than St. Paul or UT Southwestern.

“But basically it’s the people I work with – that’s the honest reason I stayed on. They’re a good bunch of people who work in Hematology and the Core Lab.”

One hundred longtime employees honored for enduring legacy of UT Southwestern service

By Carol Marie Cropper

One hundred UT Southwestern employees will be honored at an event hosted by President Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., an recognition of exceptional career longevity and loyalty as part of a campus-wide Employee Recognition Week celebration in June.

The June 7 luncheon will recognize employees for their contributions over the years to the institution’s growth and success.

In all, 100 employees are invited to this year’s event to commemorate 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 years of UT System service. More than half of the honorees – 52 to be exact – are joining the Quarter Century Club this year, meaning they have achieved 25 years of service.

The keynote speaker is Susan Hernandez, D.N.P., M.B.A., RN, Associate Vice President and Health System Chief Nurse Executive, who is responsible for oversight of nursing practice in the UTSW Health System, setting goals for nursing, and managing budgets and staffing. She is also one of four patient care service lines.

Dr. Hernandez came to UT Southwestern in 2014 as Associate Vice President, Chief Nursing Officer, from the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt University. She holds a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Jackson-ville University in Florida, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix, and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from Vanderbilt.

One of her proudest moments at UTSW, she said, was when UT Southwestern earned Magnet designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) in 2016 – and then achieved Magnet redesignation five years later during the pandemic. It’s a recognition received by fewer than 9% of U.S. hospitals, according to the ANCC’s Commission on Magnet, and considered its highest honor. Magnet designation is awarded to health care organizations that develop and execute nursing goals to improve patient outcomes.

Please see SPEAKER on page 4
Making people laugh and scheduling radiology procedures are her specialties

By Cathy Frisinger

Inside Brenda Johnson beats the heart of a comedian—or at least the passion of someone who is partial to an occasional prank and loves to make people laugh.

Each day, Ms. Johnson shows up at work with amusing stories to share, warm-hearted chuckles that she sprinkles liberally throughout her conversations, and a daily “mom” joke. On a recent Wednesday morning it was this: How much does a new roof cost? Answer: Nothing. It’s on the house.

Ms. Johnson’s career with UT Southwestern began in 1981 when, armed with just-completed nursing-assistant training, she went looking for work. UT Southwestern didn’t have any nurse aide positions, so she applied for a job in housekeeping, thinking she’d get a foot in the door. That strategy worked, and a few years later she was able to transfer to a position doing electrocardiograms (EKGs).

She has remained with the UT Southwestern Division of Cardiology ever since, though she switched years ago to a position as a scheduler for cardiovascular and interventional radiology procedures. “When I transferred to my present position, I had to interview with John Warner, M.D., and Brian Baldwin, M.D., who was the head of Cardiology at the time. I don’t know if they knew how nervous I was.” Today, Dr. Warner is Executive Vice President for Health System Affairs and Health System CEO.

Except for that rare nervous occasion, most of the time Ms. Johnson is a relaxed, fun-loving person. That’s especially true when she’s roller-skating. She began disco skating in the ’70s, going regularly with a group of seven or eight friends to a rink at the Cotton Bowl. Skating was her passion for years, and she fondly recalls skating with her cadre of friends in an MLK parade one year. She still gets out for an occasional turn around a skating rink with her daughter, Myka.

Another fond memory from her early days is winning a hula hoop contest at a UT Southwestern fair. “I won a big stuffed bear for winning my hips,” Ms. Johnson says. “These days, her hobbies are less physical. She’s a big reader, is partial to sci-fi and mysteries, and owns up to having watched the television series “Luther” three times.

Ms. Johnson grew up in Dallas, a middle daughter with a gaggle of sisters. Today she lives in Arlington with her younger sister. Because she’s an extrovert, the pandemic put a damper on her usual social interactions. She is therefore glad that her job has continued to take place at William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital, where co-workers are nearby to mingle with.

Ms. Johnson brings just as much warmth to her interactions with patients. “I think it’s really important if you work in a hospital to love people,” she says. “She takes pride in her conversations with the patients she is scheduling, knowing that many of them are anxious about their impending procedures. “I love it when I can get them laughing,” she says.

Dr. Warner holds the Jim and Norma Smith Distinguished Chair for Interventional Cardiology, and the Nancy and Jeremy Halbreich, Susan and Theodore Strauss Professorship in Cardiology.

Brenda Johnson
Radiation Imaging Services Scheduler
Cardiovascular Interventional Radiology

Maria Manzo
EKG Technician
Clinic Noninvasive Cardiology
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

Aziza Young
Nursing Manager
5 Green Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

Speaker
Continued from page 3

The quality of the nursing team’s work and accomplishments during the pandemic are achievements that she cherishes. “What we offered our UTSW family and the community through testing, care, and vaccination was incredible,” Dr. Hernandez said. “It was obvious that our efforts made a positive impact.”

While patient experience scores at some health care institutions fell during the pandemic, “ours continued to soar,” she said. “The clinical staff kept a positive attitude in front of patients even when they were having a very difficult time.”

Although Nashville had been home and the only place Dr. Hernandez had ever worked, her decision to move to Dallas with her husband, a native Texan, was easy. “After the first visit to UTSW, I wanted the job,” she said. “The staff and leaders were engaging, articulate, and clearly talented. The executive leaders had a vision for the organization that was consistent, and I could tell at every level there was alignment to do the right thing for patients and staff.”

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

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.

347 Total number of members in the Quarter Century Club – about 2.5% of UTSW’s 13,700 nonfaculty employees.

48 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.

32 Number of Quarter Century Club members in the Department with the most such members, which is Information Resources.
Mary Baldwin
Manager, Quality Improvement Programs
Office of Quality, Safety, and Outcomes Education

Early teaching experience helped her find a niche at UT Southwestern

By Cathy Frisinger

Mary Baldwin has held a variety of professional positions in her 35 years at UT Southwestern, but one thing has been a constant: “I have always felt energized by the wonderful reputation of UT Southwestern locally, nationally, and internationally. It’s a real honor to work for this institution.”

Her career did not begin in the medical field, however, but in elementary and collegiate education. She grew up in North Carolina, earning a bachelor’s degree in education at Appalachian State University. She then taught junior high school for five years before returning to teach at Appalachian State.

In 1980, Ms. Baldwin changed course, earning a master’s degree in health education and two years later moved to North Texas for a job with the regional health department in Arlington.

She joined UT Southwestern in 1986 as Director for Program Planning and Development at the James W. Aston Ambulatory Care Center. “We developed many new programs. Mohs surgery was just beginning. It was an exciting time,” she says.

Highlights of her career include putting together the program that_WRITE_ her find a niche at UT Southwestern.

As a people person, she thrives on connecting with others.

By Jan Jarvis

When co-workers need a sympathetic ear, Radiation Oncology Administrative Manager Sandra Durr is always ready to listen.

“I believe I take the time to listen to anyone who needs help, advice, or just a kind ear to let someone ‘vent’ whenever they need it,” she says. “I have a sign right inside my office door that says ‘The Doctor Is In,’ and I really mean it! And I don’t even ask for the 5-cent fee!”

For 35 years, Mrs. Durr has been listening to others at UT Southwestern and acting as a go-to person whenever her co-workers need support. Not surprisingly, she considers helping supervisors and employees solve problems as the most rewarding part of her job.

“The variety of work keeps me coming back every day and seeing the growth and success of my colleagues in their careers over the years,” she says. “I’ve often said that ‘juggling the 5-flame ball is a wonderful challenge!’

A people person, Mrs. Durr stays busy working as a writer and departmental historian among her many duties. Her other responsibilities include assisting with hiring; coordinating performance appraisals; serving as a liaison to recruiters; performing employee relations functions; and helping with supervisor training, policy interpretation, and multiple other needs to support the 450-member Department of Radiation Oncology.

Her dedication to helping others extends beyond the workplace to assisting anyone in need. In fact, Mrs. Durr is a frequent participant in the Susan G. Komen 3-Day walks. Before she retires in August, Mrs. Durr plans to travel, do yardwork outside her home that sits on 5 acres, and enjoy more time with her husband, Steve.

Still, saying goodbye to UT Southwestern will be difficult.

“I will be taking away a ton of great memories,” she says. “I am incredibly grateful for all the support I have received over the years.”

Victoria Esser, Ph.D.
Senior Research Scientist
Department of Biophysics

For career achievements, add cloning a membrane protein to the list

By Lauren Philips

Victoria Esser, Ph.D., finds that her work brings an opportunity to learn something new every day—“not only about science, but also about life.”

She joined UT Southwestern as a postdoctoral fellow in Molecular Genetics in 1986, later moving to Internal Medicine and eventually to her current role in Biophysics.

Working in different labs has enabled her to grow as a scientist, she says.

Her current research in the lab of Jose Rizo-Rey, Ph.D., Professor of Biophysics, Biochemistry, and Pharmacology, focuses on “understanding how neurons communicate in real time,” exploring the tightly controlled series of interactions that trigger their signals.

Co-workers appreciate Dr. Esser’s ability to bring people together and foster an environment of collaboration. In turn, she says she’s energized by observing her colleagues’ hard work throughout the day. She credits her success to perseverance: “I don’t give up when things don’t work.”

Dr. Esser’s career highlights include cloning carnitine palmitoyltransferase 1A (CPT1A), a membrane protein that connects carnitine to long-chain fatty acids so they can enter mitochondria and be used to produce energy. CPT1A is associated with Type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance.

Away from the lab, Dr. Esser enjoys spending time with her dogs, both “foster failures”: Clyde, a Lab mix, and Harvoc, an aptly named German shepherd. She brought home her first dog, Tiger, in 2003.

In 1989, she connected with La Casa de España, an organization focused on sharing the culture of Spain in Dallas-Fort Worth. For the last three years, Dr. Esser has served as the group’s President, and has been a longtime member of its board of directors.

Dr. Esser cherishes the enriching interactions she’s had at UT Southwestern with people from all over the world. “I would never have dreamed of meeting so many intelligent and fascinating people,” she says.

Dr. Rizo-Rey holds the Virginia Lazenby O’Hara Chair in Biochemistry.
By Jan Jarvis

From his first days working as a pharmacist at the former St. Paul University Hospital in Dallas, Kyle Kerr began looking for ways to implement technological advances to improve patient safety. And now after 35 years at UT Southwestern, Mr. Kerr has enjoyed opportunities to do just that.

“When I started at St. Paul, we didn’t have Pyxis (automated medication dispensing cabinets), we didn’t have inventory management software (carousels), and we didn’t have the sterile compounding software,” he says. “All of these developments were designed to improve patient safety.”

Indeed, the high-tech world of pharmacy that Mr. Kerr embraced turned out to be dramatically different from that of the southwest Oklahoma farm where he was raised as a child.

“I grew up working cattle, plowing the field, and driving a combine during harvest,” Mr. Kerr says, amazed at times to grasp the transformation from country boy to urban medical professional.

As Manager of Pharmacy Operations today, Mr. Kerr says he has been fortunate to contribute to the implementation of many technical advances, especially in inventory management, sterile compounding, and drug distribution. His interest in innovation – either technical or operational – keeps him looking forward. But it’s his memory of the past that has come in handy on the job.

“As such a longtime employee, I have the historical memory of why we did something or why we didn’t do it, and I have been noted to often say, ‘In 1902 …’,” Mr. Kerr says.

Known for being a good listener, Mr. Kerr says his secret to really hearing what co-workers say is understanding how important it is to get feedback before implementing a change.

Since he started working at UT Southwestern in 1986 as a Clinical Staff Pharmacist, Mr. Kerr says he has enjoyed the collegial staff and leaders who have supported him.

“One of his greatest assets, he says, is an ability to stay cool, calm, and collected in any situation.

In retirement, he has a short list of things he wants to do: “I’m looking forward to reading, playing the piano, and traveling,” he says.

Journey from the farm to high-tech pharmacy operations

By Melody Townsel

Since landing his first job at UT Southwestern as a courier in 1987, James Philip’s stock in trade has been making people on campus happy.

“The most fulfilling aspect of my job is helping others,” he asserts, “and putting smiles on people’s faces.”

Mr. Philip recalls one incident in particular when a driver had a flat tire on one of the parking lots. He aired up the tire and discovered it still had a nail, so he recommended that she follow him to a local auto shop.

“I didn’t understand the impact I had made until she sent a letter of thanks to my department,” he says. “It made me realize that little acts of kindness don’t go unnoticed.”

That dedication to customer service is no surprise to his co-workers, who are quick to point out Mr. Philip’s commitment and the joy that he finds in talking to people. “I think my extroverted personality allows me to engage with people about any kind of matters,” says Mr. Philip, a Parking Enforcement Officer who prides himself on helping those in need.

That said, his greatest source of joy is his family. “I have a beautiful wife and two children – one son and one daughter – who make me proud every day,” says Mr. Philip. “It energizes me to know that I can provide for my family through this job, and that I learn something new every day.”

While he wishes he were an expert at playing pool, Mr. Philip is nevertheless just as happy with his skills as a singer and keyboard aficionado. A polyglot who in addition to English speaks fluent Malayalam, Telugu, and Hindi, his ultimate claim to fame is his voice.

“When I sing ‘Can’t Help Falling in Love,’ some people say I sound like Elvis Presley,” he says with a chuckle in his voice.

Laughter also colors his strongest memory of 35 years at UTSW. “I was on South Campus once, walking through the bird sanctuary,” he relates with a smile. “Then, a landscaper jumped out of the bushes and said ‘gotcha!’”

A multilingual customer service enthusiast – and Elvis sound-alike

By Melody Townsel

Quarter Century Club: By the Numbers

Source: UTSW Department of Human Resources, data as of February 2022
John Shelton
Operations Manager
Histo Pathology Core

This race car enthusiast finds microscopy just as riveting and challenging

By Jan Jarvis

As Operations Manager for the Histo Pathology Core Laboratory, John Shelton has spent much of the past 35 years peering into a microscope. Far from tedious, it’s an aspect of his job he finds extremely rewarding.

“I enjoy microscopy immensely, having been given my first microscope for my ninth birthday, ordered from the Sears and Roebuck catalog,” he says.

In 1986, Mr. Shelton joined UT Southwestern, armed with a degree in plant and laboratory sciences. He applied his microscopy skills to clinical pathology in the Division of Comparative Medicine and in 1992 co-founded the Histo Pathology Core laboratory, which serves the University by preparing and evaluating tissue from research animals.

At any one time, up to 300 projects are underway in the lab. Mr. Shelton is responsible for all technical and business functions of the lab.

“I have been blessed to work on myriad projects and have contributed as an author on more than 150 publications,” he says.

After more than three decades at UT Southwestern, looking into a microscope and sharing the experience with others who are equally as enthusiastic continues to be his greatest passion.

“Looking back on the past 35 years, I am rewarded by the memories of people I have interfaced with through the Histo Core ... those whom I have helped, trained, and sent on their way to corners of the globe,” he says. “I am rewarded to know that the histology service that my Core offers is unparalleled, and I am proud to have had a hand in building it to that stature.”

Away from work, Mr. Shelton enjoys racing vintage cars such as his 1965 AC Cobra replica. He also owns a 2012 Corvette Grand Sport.

“The adrenaline I experienced the first time I tracked my car was addicting,” he says.

Since 2009, he has participated in events at Texas Motor Speedway, Eagle’s Canyon Raceway, MotorSport Ranch Crosson, Harris Hill Raceway, and Hallett Motor Racing Circuit. He also organized track events at Harris Hill from 2010 through 2013, raising approximately $50,000 for the charities of Operation Comfort Automotivation and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.

Sue Wetherbee
Business Analyst
Information Resources/Client Services

Computer acting up? She has a trick

By Cathy Frisinger

When she is dealing with a computerphobe, Sue Wetherbee has been known to advise the client to “give that computer a slap.”

“Did it hit back?” she’ll ask. “Well, there you go. Nothing to be afraid of.”

Ms. Wetherbee has been smoothing the way between information systems and UT Southwestern computer users with a combination of humor, knowledge, and patience for 35 years. In 1986, Ms. Wetherbee took a chance, moving from Corpus Christi, Texas, where she had lived most of her life, to Dallas in search of job opportunities. She initially stayed with her brother, whose girlfriend at the time knew of a receptionist’s opening in the IR Department at UT Southwestern. Although her brother and the woman stopped dating, the job was a perfect employment match for Ms. Wetherbee. Even better, her brother’s ex turned into her best friend, and the job became her life’s work.

Her favorite thing about her job is being able to show a client a pathway that can cut work time. When Ms. Wetherbee was a software trainer, she was proud of her ability to work with everyone in the room, engaging both those with little knowledge and those with high levels of computer skills.

The IR Department has changed names four or five times since 1986, but whatever the name, it has always been home for Ms. Wetherbee. She has risen up in the ranks through the years and stayed with the Department for so long because of the variety.

“No two days are the same. Every day there is something to learn from my co-workers to pass on to clients,” she says.

During her more than three decades here, Ms. Wetherbee has been a part of several launches, including being one of the first individuals to staff the UT Southwestern help desk when it began. Recently, she was part of the Command Center for the newly launched myTime timekeeping system.

When she’s not at work, Ms. Wetherbee enjoys gardening and camping. Her son and grandson live just a mile from her home, and one of the joys in her life is fishing with her grandson, Marshall.

Ms. Wetherbee was born in Paris – France, not Texas – and, with retirement beginning to swim into her thoughts, she is starting to muse about getting back there some day.
Sheela Das
Pharmacy Technician
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital Pharmacy

First UT SW job: Pharmacy Technician.
Best part about my job: My job mainly involves sterile compounding of intravenous solutions in the pharmacy.
What energizes me at work: Self-motivation. Sometimes, no one will be around to support your good work, but on the other side, there is always a patient who appreciates the timely care and medication they receive. Pharmacy has a great role in patient care.

Recipe for success: Hold on to your stand when others push you down.

Best UT SW memory: I was able to be around some great people at my department from different ethnicities and learned a lot in our journey from the former St. Paul University Hospital to UT SW. Many are retired and now it is just a sweet and unforgettable memory.

Hobbies: I like to cook whenever I get the opportunity. My husband and kids enjoy homemade tasty food!

Shawn Cohenour
Director
Contracts Management

“Sometimes, no one will be around to support your good work, but on the other side, there is always a patient who appreciates the timely care and medication they receive. Pharmacy has a great role in patient care.”
– Sheela Das, Pharmacy Technician

Mary Chibundu
Accountant II
Medical Group, Finance

First UT SW job: Cashier/Accounting Clerk.
Best part about my job: The fact that you never know it all, there are always new things to learn even after more than 20 years of experience working as a malpractice coordinator for UT Southwestern and the UT System.
What energizes me at work: The joy of helping others find solutions to some challenging questions they may have.

How co-workers describe me: Knowledgeable, expert at my work, respectful toward co-workers, with a good attitude toward patient care.

Recipe for success: Hold on to your stand when others push you down.

Best UT SW memory: I was able to be around some great people at my department from different ethnicities and learned a lot in our journey from the former St. Paul University Hospital to UT SW. Many are retired and now it is just a sweet and unforgettable memory.

Hobbies: I like to cook whenever I get the opportunity. My husband and kids enjoy homemade tasty food!

Daphne D. Adams
Administrative Associate
Auxiliary Enterprises

First UT SW job: Administrative Assistant in Printing Services.
Best part about my job: Being the resource contact for my department.
What energizes me at work: Appreciation. Anytime you feel appreciated, whether on the job or in your personal life, it makes you feel that what you’re doing is being valued and not taken for granted.

How co-workers describe me: Passionate and resourceful.

Best UT SW memory: Attending the departmental Christmas parties that were held at the Faculty Club and serving on the Employee Advisory Council.

Recipe for success: I take pride in my work and like to ensure my department members have what they need to be productive in their daily tasks. Also, with the knowledge I have, my team and campus contacts know they can reach out to me for assistance.

Hobby: Spending time with my family who means the world to me, traveling with my wonderful husband, spoiling my 2-year-old grandbaby, shopping, and planning functions.

I’m really good at: Event planning.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Counseling. People come to me for advice or when they just need to vent – and those who come to me feel comfortable speaking with me. I always say that I should put a “Lucy Jar” on my desk.

Surprising fact: I enjoy listening to country music, and I get nervous speaking in front of a large group of people.

Jeffery Akens
Cook
Nutrition Services
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

First UT SW job: Cashier/Accounting Clerk.
Best part about my job: The fact that you never know it all, there are always new things to learn even after more than 20 years of experience working as a malpractice coordinator for UT Southwestern and the UT System.
What energizes me at work: The joy of helping others find solutions to some challenging questions they may have.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable, calm, patient, and pleasant to work with.

Best UT SW memory: My best memory is serving as a window cashier at the B Tower building, cashing checks and meeting other employees, especially esteemed physicians like Charles Squire, M.D. One day, he came to cash a check. I was overwhelmed after hearing so much about him that I stared for a while. He asked me if there was a problem with his check and realized I was lost by looking at him and had to apologize. I said I was just happy to finally meet him in person.

Recipe for success: Patience, listening, and treating others the way I would like to be treated.

I’m really good at: Compassion.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Predicting the mortality of loved ones and finding cures to ailments that affect them. Losing my 39-year-old son has left a big hole in my heart, and I wish I’d had the power to cure him of his kidney disease to keep him alive.
Elizabeth Edwards
Department Administrator – Clinical
Department of Dermatology

First UTSW job: Staff Services Specialist in Pathology.

Best part about my job: That it’s complicated, service-focused, challenging, frustrating, rewarding, and offers opportunities to bring ideas to life and encourage new young leaders. I love the mix of these things that my job provides.

What energizes me at work: Fresh ideas and challenges. I love to learn and try new things.

How co-workers describe me: Caring and, probably, opinionated.

Recipe for success: Having a keen sense of responsibility.

Best UTSW memory: When Y2K had everyone in the world worried that computers would fail to boot up on Jan. 1, 2000. For months, the country and the University prepared for this event, and I was designated as the person to come in on New Year’s Day to check all the computers in the Department. The world, the nation, and UTSW all breathed a sigh of relief, the computers were fine.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Playing a musical instrument like the guitar, mandolin, or piano. Music feeds the soul.

I’m really good at: Finger snaps. I do them all the time.

Hobbies: My husband and I love to find things at estate sales, restore or repurpose them, and then resell them. In some small way, I think I’m helping the Earth by saving something from the landfill.

Surprising fact: I’ve actually gotten into the water with a full-grown shark just so I could get my picture taken. I don’t know if that makes me brave or stupid.

Claim to fame: I once won a chili cook-off.

Greg Emmerling
Enterprise Resource Planning Specialist
Academic and Administrative Information Resources

First UTSW job: Computer Programmer I.

Best part about my job: Working with my co-workers and feeling a sense of accomplishment when I resolve the system issues my users have.

What energizes me at work: Solving problems. It helps that I believe in the mission of UT Southwestern.

How co-workers describe me: A team player willing to help where needed.

Recipe for success: I’m a good listener, and I work on a problem until I find a solution.

Best UTSW memory: Once we had a company picnic to celebrate completing a project, we rented a volleyball net with poles at the Bryan Williams, M.D. Student Center. No one told us that the poles would be attached to huge cement blocks. I got a pretty good workout that day.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Maybe fishing. I can’t catch a fish to save my life.

I’m really good at: I think I’m a good driver, even if my wife disagrees!

Surprising fact: My grandfather performed for both the circus and Ripley’s Believe It or Not! (He could turn his head around 180 degrees.)

Alice Johnson
Assistant Nurse Manager
7 Green, William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

First UTSW job: Registered Nurse.

Best part about my job: Interacting with patients and their loved ones when they’re in a vulnerable state, helping them experience the best stay – and I love mentoring young nurses, helping them meet their career goals.

What energizes me at work: Seeing the joy and happiness of my patients and their families when they go home with a new kidney or liver transplant.

How co-workers describe me: Pleasant and empathetic – the go-to person for any job-related questions.

Recipe for success: I stay calm during chaotic times.

Best UTSW memory: The time my manager, staff members, and I went bowling after work. We had a blast!

I wish I were an instant expert at: Painting natural outdoor scenery, because I love natural beauty.

I’m really good at: Listening to my staff’s concerns and patient complaints and getting them solved.

Hobbies: Gardening and traveling to new places.

Pamela Jones
Department Administrator
Department of Neuroscience

First UTSW job: Accountant in the Department of Pediatrics.

Best part about my job: Working with a terrific group of faculty and staff who are dedicated to making out Depart-

How co-workers describe me: Flexible and accessible.

Recipe for success: I start each workday with a goal to always do the best job that I can. I also make sure that I am available to meet with or listen to others, which I believe is important in establishing relationships with those you work with.

Best UTSW memory: When I applied to UT Southwestern in 1991, Human Resources was located in the B Building, second floor. All open positions were in a binder, and you actually completed a paper application for the positions you were interested in!

I’m really good at: Listening to others.

Hobbies: Sewing, reading, and doing crossword puzzles.

Surprising fact: I’m a huge football fan, especially college football!

Keith Ferrier
Operating Room Surgical Attendant
Outpatient Surgical Center

“I what energizes me at work is seeing the joy and happiness of my patients and their families when they go home with a new kidney or liver transplant.”

– Alice Johnson, Assistant Nurse Manager
Veronica Lopez
Telemetry Technician
Central Monitoreng Unit
First UTSW job: Housekeeper.
Best part about my job: Keeping my patients safe and being a team player.
What energizes me at work: Assisting co-workers and other staff to resolve issues. It makes me feel confident. How co-workers describe me: Patient, very nice, and always willing to help others.
Recipe for success: My determination to succeed. I like to do my job to the best of my ability.
Best UTSW memory: Receiving the Meritorious Service Award in March 2024.
I wish I were an instant expert at: Precepting incoming staff in our department.
Hobbies: I like spending quality time with my kids and grandkids.
Surprising fact: I like to go out and have fun, like dancing.

Paul Stodolka
Manager
Biomedical Engineering
First UTSW job: Biomed Tech II.
Best part about my job: Working with staff in almost every building on campus, on both the clinical and research sides.
What energizes me at work: That’s easy: our fellow staff.
How co-workers describe me: Goody’s Headache Powder. I make their headaches go away.
Recipe for success: Staying calm when clinical staff think the problem is too big.
Best UTSW memory: When we were bringing William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital on line, standing in the lab and listening to the vendor explain how he had repaired all plumbing leaks. The main water supply line broke, and we both looked like we had taken showers with our clothes on. I wish I were an instant expert at: How to very, very neatly scrape the old popcorn ceiling in my home. It would make my wife of 42 years smile a lot.
I’m really good at: Solving clinical staff problems.
Hobbies: Hanging out with family, helping two grandchildren and a son-in-law with home projects, even though I’m not very good at it.
Surprising fact: As Christmas approaches, I spend time watching Hallmark movies.

Cheryl Thomas
Registered Nurse II
Cardiovascular Interventional Radiology
First UTSW job: Staff Nurse in Medical Surgical ICU at the former St. Paul University Hospital.
Best part about my job: Working in all the departments: Cardiology, Electrophysiology, Heart Catheterization, and Non-Invasive Cardiology.
How co-workers describe me: An entertainer. I love to sing, but I can’t hold a note.
Recipe for success: I’m approachable. My co-workers say I’ll talk to anybody.
Best UTSW memory: When the Cath Lab was being remodeled, some procedures were done in a mobile lab trailer. We transported patients there using wheelchairs or stretchers through the Professional Office Building (POB). Looking at patients’ expressions as we traveled through the POB on carpeted floors was quite amusing. I wish I were an instant expert at: Fitness training.
Hobbies: Gardening and traveling.
Surprising fact: I was in the Navy Nurse Corps.
Claim to fame: I was instrumental in getting nurses on the units to perform the bubble studies for echocardiograms.

Brent Townsend
Director Front-End Medical/Surgical Billing
Medical Group Revenue Cycle
First UTSW job: Clinical Department Representative.
Best part about my job: Being given the daily opportunity to be a servant leader to my team and others.
How co-workers describe me: A web browser. They tell me they can always come to me and get the answers they need to perform their jobs.
I’m really good at: Working with my hands. I’ve always enjoyed repairing, maintaining, or building things myself.
Best UTSW memory: The surgical and clinical care provided to my mother-in-law saved and extended her life. Our family will be forever grateful.
I wish I were an instant expert at: The art of barbecuing. Barbecue is my family’s favorite meal, we’re always searching for the best barbecue and rating it.
Hobbies: My hobby is hunting. My passion is being in the outdoors.
Surprising fact: When I was an infant, my aunt Anne – not being formally trained – resuscitated me using CPR. Just days before, she had either read an article or watched a TV program on performing CPR.
Claim to fame: Growing up in West Texas and having the opportunity to work at a world-renowned medical center.
Final note: I owe a lot of my professional growth to my current AVP and many other managers who were willing to mentor me along the way!

John K. Varghese
MRI Technologist
Imaging Services
First UTSW job: MRI Technologist.
Best part about my job: My co-workers.
What energizes me at work: Paying my kids’ college tuition.
How co-workers describe me: Dependable and easy to get along with.
Recipe for success: Hard work. I’m really good at: Taking care of my patients and my family. I wish I were an instant expert at: The stock market. I like investing in the stock market and following different stocks.
Surprising fact: I have twin daughters who are physicians, and my son is in college now.
Hobbies: International travel.

“The surgical and clinical care provided to my mother-in-law saved and extended her life. Our family will be forever grateful.”

— Brent Townsend, Director Front-End Medical/Surgical Billing
Walter Andrews  
Supervisor, Technical Support  
Information Resources  

First UTSW job: Parking Enforcement Officer.
Best part about my job: Meeting and helping others, and knowing that I am making a difference.
What energizes me at work: Knowing I can make an impact in the lives of our clients, as well as those of the patients they serve.
How co-workers describe me: Hardworking and dedicated. Those who work with me know how much I care about our clients and about doing my job well.
Recipe for success: Listening. I always listen to our clients and pay attention to the details so they can be carried out. That way, I can deliver service that doesn’t just meet their expectations, but exceed them.
Funny UTSW memory: Participating in a departmental holiday video and my co-workers and I forgetting our lines.
I wish I were an instant expert at: Being an auto mechanic. I love cars.
Hobbies: Talking on citizens band and single-sideband radio.
Surprising fact: I am a geek and I love history.
Claim to fame: Being responsive to clients and going the extra mile.
Final note: I’ve enjoyed the smiling faces, the diversity, and the campus growth I’ve seen over the course of my career at UT Southwestern.

Jason Bailey  
University Police Captain  
University Police  

First UTSW job: Clinical Support Staff member at the Allied Health Physical Therapy Clinic.
Best part about my job: The people I work with, from team members and administrative support to the faculty, advanced practice providers, and trainees. All of them are caring individuals who strive to do their best daily.
What energizes me at work: Interactions with others. I love sharing knowledge about my job and helping others learn and grow.
How co-workers describe me: Approachable, compassionate, and supportive. Someone who works to understand that life presents challenges, and to respond by supporting and encouraging others to keep working toward those goals.
I’m really good at: Being lucky! I win a lot of raffle drawings and prizes. I’m still waiting to hit that big lottery jackpot though!
Hobbies: I love to spend time outside in nature – whether it’s on the lake, at the beach, or just sitting on the patio soaking up sunshine.
Final note: UT Southwestern is ripe with opportunities for growth. You just have to seek them out, apply yourself, and be open to branching out in various directions. If you find your passion, the years will fly by.

Cheryl Baldia, CPC  
Revenue Cycle Manager  
Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Management  

First UTSW job: Clinical Support Staff member at the Allied Health Physical Therapy Clinic.
Best part about my job: The people I work with, from team members and administrative support to the faculty, advanced practice providers, and trainees. All of them are caring individuals who strive to do their best daily.
What energizes me at work: Interactions with others. I love sharing knowledge about my job and helping others learn and grow.
How co-workers describe me: Approachable, compassionate, and supportive. Someone who works to understand that life presents challenges, and to respond by supporting and encouraging others to keep working toward those goals.
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Final note: UT Southwestern is ripe with opportunities for growth. You just have to seek them out, apply yourself, and be open to branching out in various directions. If you find your passion, the years will fly by.

Tracee Belzle Dean  
Senior Program Coordinator  
Community Prevention and Intervention Unit  

First UTSW job: Program Manager over a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded HIV prevention training center.
Best part about my job: Supporting my team to ensure that they can do their best work.
What energizes me at work: Supporting the foundation that allows us to be successful and grow.
How co-workers describe me: Reliable, because I’ve been here the longest.
Recipe for success: I pride myself on being accountable – to my Director, to leadership, and to my team. This puts me in a better position to lead by example.
Unusual UTSW memory: The time a colleague and I were detained by drug enforcement agents at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport near Springfield, Illinois. Why? We had “too many suitcases.”
I’m really good at: Making a mean chili dog - hold the relish, of course.
I wish I were an instant expert at: Writing the evaluation sections of grant proposals. This would allow the Unit to be more competitive for funding.
Passions: Farming and family.
Surprising fact: I am a sheep farmer.
Claim to fame: I never need a microphone to be heard when I’m presenting at conferences or loud meetings.

Luther Brown  
Business Analyst/Architect Lead  
Information Resources Health Technical Services  

“UT Southwestern is ripe with opportunities for growth. You just have to seek them out, apply yourself, and be open to branching out in various directions. If you find your passion, the years will fly by.”

– Cheryl Baldia, CPC, Revenue Cycle Manager
**Sharbraun Chatman**  
**Materials Operations Coordinator**  
**Materials Management Operations**

**First UTSW job:** Gas Cylinder Technician.  
**Best part about my job:** The chance to develop and grow, interacting with people, and having weekends off, as well as watching how UT Southwestern has progressed over the past several years.  
**How co-workers describe me:** A hard worker and consistent.  
**Recipe for success:** An outgoing personality and attention to detail.  
**Unusual UTSW memory:** At an employee engagement event, a co-worker and I played spades against my manager and supervisor - and beat them convincingly.  
**I’m really good at:** Listening to people’s problems and sharing my advice.  
**Hobby:** Restoring cars.  
**Surprising fact:** That I can cook.  
**Claim to fame:** I've received Blue and Silver PACT recognition for the level of service I've provided, and I'm just a few cards away from Gold status.

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**Constance R. Crow, LVN**  
**Clinic Nurse**  
**Spine Clinic**

**First UTSW job:** Medical Office Assistant, Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery  
**Best part about my job:** Assisting with patient education and helping connect the missing pieces between provider and patient.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Compassionate and dedicated, loving and nurturing, passionate.  
**Recipe for success:** Tenacity. I enjoy a project or assignment with deadlines – and seeing out the process or accomplishing the task.  
**Funny UTSW memory:** I once tried to take a patient’s blood pressure using an arm that turned out to be an extremely realistic prosthesis. I should’ve known something was up when his wife kept shaking her head. It was my first time seeing the energy of the unit. Working in a medical environment can be crazy at times.  
**Recipe for success:** I’m a person with integrity who can make anything enjoyable – even meetings. Also, in managing staff for 17 years, I am very loyal and supportive to my team.  
**Best UTSW memory:** Getting to work at the same place with my mom, Joyce Lawson. When I started, my cubicle was within earshot of her office, and she was not a quiet talker – so I’m sure the whole office got an earful of our personal business.  
**Passion:** I’m a die-hard Kansas City Chiefs fan and travel to a home game every year.  
**Final note:** I was commuting from Corsicana, Texas, when I started in 1996, and nobody had heard of where I worked. But now, everyone knows UT Southwestern, and I’m very proud to have worked here for 25 years.

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**William Culbertson**  
**Senior Financial Analyst**  
**Department Administration**  
**Department of Molecular Biology**

**First UTSW job:** Gas Cylinder Technician.  
**Best part about my job:** The chance to develop and grow, interacting with people, and having weekends off, as well as watching how UT Southwestern has progressed over the past several years.  
**How co-workers describe me:** A hard worker and consistent.  
**Recipe for success:** An outgoing personality and attention to detail.  
**Unusual UTSW memory:** At an employee engagement event, a co-worker and I played spades against my manager and supervisor – and beat them convincingly.  
**I’m really good at:** Listening to people’s problems and sharing my advice.  
**Hobby:** Restoring cars.  
**Surprising fact:** That I can cook.  
**Claim to fame:** I've received Blue and Silver PACT recognition for the level of service I've provided, and I'm just a few cards away from Gold status.

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**Cindi Donahue**  
**Manager, Information Resources**  
**Health System Information Resources (HSIR)**  
**Revenue Cycle and Business Systems**

**First UTSW job:** Working in managed care collections for Medical Service, Research, and Development Plan.  
**Best part about my job:** My role supporting Epic applications allows me to use what I’ve learned in other billing-related departments, so I can bridge the gap between Information Resources technology and operational needs.  
**What energizes me at work:** Providing support to the HSIR Epic Revenue Cycle team. It’s a great feeling of accomplishment and pride when I’m able to deliver that to them and our customers.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Fun, personable, a people person, easy to work with, willing to help, reliable, honest, transparent, and authentic.  
**Recipe for success:** I’m a person with integrity who can make anything enjoyable – even meetings. Also, in managing staff for 17 years, I am very loyal and supportive to my team.  
**Best UTSW memory:** Getting to work at the same place with my mom, Joyce Lawson. When I started, my cubicle was within earshot of her office, and she was not a quiet talker – so I’m sure the whole office got an earful of our personal business.  
**Passion:** I’m a die-hard Kansas City Chiefs fan and travel to a home game every year.  
**Final note:** I was commuting from Corsicana, Texas, when I started in 1996, and nobody had heard of where I worked. But now, everyone knows UT Southwestern, and I’m very proud to have worked here for 25 years.

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**Annette Forbes**  
**Registered Nurse**  
**B Blue/Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU)**

**First UTSW job:** Patient Care Technician.  
**Best part about my job:** Every day it’s something different. I like working with others and enjoy multitasking.  
**What energizes me at work:** The energy of the unit. Working in a medical environment can be crazy at times.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Funny and fair. I treat everyone equally, and I’m very honest.  
**Recipe for success:** I’m very easygoing. I work hard and always try to stay positive.  
**Best UTSW memory:** The room numbers in our unit have been changed and, after three years, I still go to the wrong rooms.  
**I’m really good at:** Giving advice.  
**Hobby:** Eating and good food.  
**Surprising fact:** I was born in Jamaica. One year, I took a Greyhound bus from Toronto to Florida.  
**Claim to fame:** Working in the ICU for 15 years.  
**Final note:** I’m a very good friend.

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**Elizabeth Foster**  
**Health Unit Coordinator**  
**Post-Anesthesia Care Unit**  
**William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital**

**First UTSW job:** Patient Care Technician.  
**Best part about my job:** Serving people.  
**What energizes me at work:** I like to think of myself as self-motivated, although some of my co-workers have become family to me.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Sweet but firm.  
**Recipe for success:** Being a people person, and understanding that everyone has good days and bad days.  
**Best UTSW memory:** The family member of a patient asked to take my picture after I kept her grandmother calm.  
**I’m really good at:** Listening.  
**I wish I were an instant expert at:** Problem-solving.  
**Passion:** My family.  
**Surprising fact:** My favorite sport is baseball.
Margarita Garcia
Leave Administration Representative
Human Resources

First UTSW job: Benefits Specialist.
Best part about my job: Helping employees understand all of the leave options available to them.

What energizes me at work: I’m motivated by knowing something I did helped relieve someone’s stress.

How co-workers describe me: Compassionate and comical. The former because it’s so important to help others every day, and the latter because being able to laugh at some situations helps maintain some sense of sanity.

Recipe for success: Adaptability. Life is full of constant change, so you have to be able to change as well.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking. I’ve been trying a lot of new recipes lately, so I find myself inspired.

Surprising fact: I’ve gone skydiving before, and I would love to do it again.

Jennifer Gares, M.S.N., APRN, ACNP-BC
Acute Care Nurse Practitioner
Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery

First UTSW job: Telemetry nurse at the former St. Paul University Hospital.
Best part about my job: Working with such an amazing team, and seeing the impact we have on our patients every day.

How co-workers describe me: Dedicated, caring, genuine, and dependable. Someone who truly cares about patients and their well-being.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking meals for large groups. Now that takes a lot of talent!

Passion: Spending time making memories with friends and family.
Final note: My years of service have gone by quickly! I’ve had the pleasure of meeting so many people throughout my career at UT Southwestern. I’ve made a number of lifelong friends here, and I can’t wait to make even more.

Rosie Garza, RMA
Administrative Assistant
Women’s Resource Center
William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital

First UTSW job: Receptionist at the Mobile Mammography Unit at the former St. Paul University Hospital.
Best part about my job: I feel valued by my manager for the work I do and respected by my peers.

What energizes me at work: The positive interactions I have with my peers and patients.

How co-workers describe me: Always happy and cheerful throughout the day and the party planner for our unit.

Recipe for success: Self-discipline: forcing myself to keep at it and never letting distraction overtake me.

Best UTSW memory: Receiving a Diana and Richard C. Strauss Service Excellence Award in 2007 and having co-workers and family there to celebrate this special event.

I’m really good at: Baking. I enjoy making cakes for my family and friends.
I wish I were an instant expert at: Meditation. Nothing beats a clear mind.

Hobbies: Spending time at family cookouts, singing, and dancing.

Surprising fact: I have four grandchildren.

Final note: I intend to stay with UT Southwestern until I retire, God willing.

William Blair Halbert
Senior Information Resources Manager
Infrastructure Services

First UTSW job: Network Analyst.
Best part about my job: It’s never dull – ever.

What energizes me at work: Besides good coffee? Getting a few minutes to talk to my staff or other personnel about nonwork things. I’ve been here long enough that it’s a community.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Either playing music or writing; probably writing. I enjoy fiction so much that I would enjoy studying history or places and weaving that into a story, as my favorite authors do.

Surprising fact: I’ve finished the Hotter’n Hell Hundred bicycle ride in Wichita Falls, Texas, 10 times.

Passions: Barbecue and cycling, though those are more pursuits.
Claim to fame: Scuba diving on a vertical reef of the Atlantic Ridge. I only went down 180 feet, but it was actually over 2,000 feet deep.

Laura Henry
Program Coordinator
Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine
Department of Internal Medicine

First UTSW job: Customer Service Representative in Shipping and Receiving.
Best part about my job: Solving problems and helping others.

What energizes me at work: Helping people, as well as learning new systems and procedures and then sharing that knowledge.

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

Recipe for success: The ability to adapt to and overcome adverse situations.

Best UTSW memory: The year we had the Neuroscience holiday party at the zoo. It had lots of dancing, laughter, and fun with a great group of faculty, postdocs, students, and staff.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Veterinary medicine. It would allow me to help a local rescue group.

I’m really good at: Listening and providing encouragement. I believe the smallest act of kindness can make a difference.

Passions: Supporting animal rescues, gardening, reading, watching movies, and knitting scarves and hats.

Surprising fact: I enjoy silly jokes and puns, and I love to dance. I am a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Fleet Reserve Association.

Louis Henry
Clinical Data Specialist
Infectious Diseases
Community Prevention and Intervention Unit
Department of Internal Medicine
William Jefferson
Senior Information Research Manager
Information Resources Health
Centralized Telecommunications Services (CTCS)

I've worked in six positions across four departments at UT Southwestern. When I started, surgery gave me. This was nine years after my last child, so I made a huge impact on my life, both professionally and personally.

Daphne Lewis
Revenue Integrity Educator III
Medical Group Revenue Cycle

How co-workers describe me: Talkative and funny.
Recipe for success: Curiosity never actually killed the cat. I want to know what's going on, and I want to help.

Kristin Martin-Cook, M.S.
Clinical Practice Manager
Department of Psychiatry

Best part about my job: Working together as part of a team to help patients get the care they need. Although I'm in a position with patients directly, I appreciate being involved with the operation of the Psychiatry Service that offers compassionate care to so many.

Taryn Mayes, M.S.
Program Manager
Center for Depression Research and Clinical Care
Department of Psychiatry

What energizes me at work: Fresh ideas! I love it when someone comes to me to suggest ways we can improve something.
How co-workers describe me: Passionate, purposeful, and an advocate for my team.
Recipe for success: Loyalty and dedication to patients, co-workers, faculty, and UT Southwestern. We all have the same goal of making people's lives better, and that's an exciting, important endeavor.

Yvonne Gloria-McCutchen
Oncology Clinical Data Specialist
Clinical Research Office, Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center

How co-workers describe me: Passionate, purposeful, and an advocate for my team.
Recipe for success: Loyalty and dedication to patients, co-workers, faculty, and UT Southwestern. We all have the same goal of making people's lives better, and that's an exciting, important endeavor.

“I've been involved in all three UT Southwestern missions: I attended graduate school here, worked in research for more than half of my career, and am now involved in patient care. I am so thankful for the time I've spent here, and for the many experiences and people who have made a huge impact on my life, both professionally and personally.”

– Kristin Martin-Cook, M.S., Clinical Practice Manager
Vealisha “Lisa” Miller
Compliance Analyst III
Office of Institutional Compliance

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant to Warren Weinberg, M.D., a pediatric neurologist renowned for his work in childhood depression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and learning disabilities.

Best part about my job: The collaboration: Everyone shares the same vision and is dedicated to the mission.

What energizes me at work: My cup of coffee.

How co-workers describe me: Dependable and straightforward.

Recipe for success: Loyalty and dedication; also, building lasting relationships along the way.

Funny UTSW memory: I’m frightened of cats, and one morning, I walked into my office to find a big picture of one posted on my file cabinet. I turned around to hear my manager outside whispering, “Here, kitty, kitty.”

I’m really good at: Managing finances.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Technology – the struggle is real.

Claim to fame: “Nana” and spoiling my two grandsons, Devin and Deon.

Surprising fact: I am very much a homebody, and I love small-town country living.

Shirley Mitchell
Accountant III
Division of Endocrinology
Department of Internal Medicine

Best part about my job: I love the accounting work, but I like the people I work with the best.

What energizes me at work: The people. In the group I work with, we have a great relationship – it’s like an extended family.

How co-workers describe me: Always willing to help out.

Recipe for success: I always try to be kind and helpful to everyone. I don’t always succeed, but I do try.

I’m really good at: Baking and making candy. I wish I were an instant expert at: Crocheting. I’m a novice, but I wish I could just sit down and whip out an afghan in no time.

Claim to fame: I was in the 1985 Super Bowl halftime show, but I wish I could just sit down and whip out an afghan in no time.

What energizes me at work: Interacting with co-workers. I feel like this is my second home.

How co-workers describe me: Always willing to help, hard-working, dedicated, energetic, and knowledgeable with a positive attitude.

Recipe for success: Dedication and the drive to achieve.

I’m really good at: Organization and remembering numbers for anything.

Passions: Ministry work, including educating and mentoring youth. International travel, planning an upcoming trip to Greece and hopefully even more extensive travel with my beau.

Surprising fact: I’m a murder mystery enthusiast.

Claim to fame: I’m so proud of the children we’ve raised, all of whom have college degrees. The eldest, our son, is an attorney; the first daughter is an education program consultant, and the youngest daughter is a fashion merchandising stylist. They’re passionate about their career choices and are loving, caring believers in Christ who know that through Him, all things are possible. They’re truly a blessing to me.

Tianna Petersen, M.S.
Manager of Clinical Research
Division of Infectious Diseases and Geographic Medicine
Department of Internal Medicine

First UTSW job: Clinical Technologist II.

Best part of my job: The people I’ve met over the years and still stay in touch with.

How co-workers describe me: Committed, caring, gracious, and loyal.

What energizes me at work: The people I’ve met over the years and still stay in touch with.

Recipe for success: Patience is the most important trait – not only in interacting with patients, but in ensuring they can be involved when we perform a procedure.

Claim to fame: I met Pope John Paul II during his visit to San Antonio in 1997.

Hobbies: My wife and I love immersing ourselves in Renaissance fairs. In fact, we’re longtime Friends of the Fair (season pass holders) at the one close to home, the Scarborough Renaissance Festival in Waxahachie, Texas.

Will Rutherford
Radiologic Technologist II
Imaging Services

First UTSW job: Radiologic Technologist at the former St. Paul University Hospital.

Best part about my job: My co-workers and the patients.

How co-workers describe me: Loyal and always here.

Recipe for success: Patience is the most important trait – not only in interacting with patients, but in ensuring they can be involved when we perform a procedure.

Claim to fame: I’m a murder mystery enthusiast.

Surprising fact: I was in the 1985 Super Bowl halftime show, but I wish I could just sit down and whip out an afghan in no time.

What energizes me at work: Interacting with co-workers. I feel like this is my second home.

How co-workers describe me: Always willing to help, hard-working, dedicated, energetic, and knowledgeable with a positive attitude.

Recipe for success: Dedication and the drive to achieve.

I’m really good at: Organization and remembering numbers for anything.

Passions: Crocheting, working out, and reading. I enjoy volunteering at the East Lake Pet Orphanage’s cat shelter, and I have three cats of my own.

Surprising fact: I was part of a team studying the effects of microgravity on the brains and nervous systems of astronauts in 1998. The STS-90 mission crew included two former UTSW faculty members: Jay C. Buckley Jr., M.D., and James A. Pawelczyk, Ph.D.

Final note: I’ve spent 21 of my 25 years here with Infectious Diseases, starting as a Clinical Research Coordinator for studies with HIV-positive patients. Since then, I’ve worked on hepatitis B, hepatitis C, influenza, and now COVID-19 trials.
Linda Sam
Senior Administrative Assistant
Support Services Administration

Lesly Sherman, RDMS
Sonographer
Fertility and Advanced Reproductive Medicine Clinic
Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Tina L. Sigler
Coding Specialist III
Health Information Management
Coding and Clinical Documentation Integrity

Doreen Simonsen
Regulatory Specialist
Department of Urology

Calvin Smith
Building Services Coordinator
Facilities Management

Best part of my job: I like having the opportunity to teach and to share knowledge in my new position.

How co-workers describe me: Hardworking and fun.

Surprising fact: I was a rodeo queen.

Best part of my job: No two studies are the same, so no two days are ever the same. And every time I work on a study, I learn something about urology.

Recipe for success: I strive to do a good job.

Best UTSW memory: Meeting Chuck Norris while he was filming "Walker, Texas Ranger" in the Simmons Biomedical Research Building. My mom was a huge fan, and he was happy to take a photo with me.

Surprising fact: I played the clarinet for 12 years.

Best part of my job: Knowing that what I do helps ensure the safety of our employees and patients.

What energizes me at work: Taking pride in my work and doing my very best. Going that extra mile to help anyone I can.

Best UTSW memory: Our team – and knowing that my job is a part of UT Southwestern's future, mission, and goals.

How co-workers describe me: A hard worker, a team player, and dependable.

Recipe for success: Taking pride in my work and doing my very best. Going that extra mile to help anyone I can.

Best UTSW memory: Department events with my co-workers. We used to get together and have fish fries.

I'm really good at: Problem-solving and being able to think outside the box. My family believes I can do just about anything, even when I know the task isn't possible.

Hobbies: Watching my three grandchildren, Preston, 15, Hudson, 9, and Bailey, 5, grow and enjoy life. That, and living on the lake; I love to fish, hunt, and work in my woodshop.

Surprising fact: I love to do crafty things. I will try nearly anything DIY. Power tools can be fun to work with!

Wanda Simpson
Administrative Coordinator
Center for the Genetics of Host Defense

Calvin Smith
Building Services Coordinator
Facilities Management

Best part of my job: Knowing that what I do helps ensure the safety of our employees and patients.

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I'm really good at: Problem-solving and being able to think outside the box. My family believes I can do just about anything, even when I know the task isn't possible.

Hobbies: Watching my three grandchildren, Preston, 15, Hudson, 9, and Bailey, 5, grow and enjoy life. That, and living on the lake; I love to fish, hunt, and work in my woodshop.

Surprising fact: I like to go to Canton's First Monday Trade Days and antique shops.

Doreen Simonsen
Regulatory Specialist
Department of Urology

First UTSW job: Grants and Contract Specialist.

Best part of my job: No two studies are the same, so no two days are ever the same. And every time I work on a study, I learn something about urology.

What energizes me at work: Seeing a study opened to enrollment where patients can get treated for their condition in ways that may not be available otherwise.

Recipe for success: I strive to do a good job.

Best UTSW memory: When I started, National Institutes of Health grants were done on paper, and we had to send in 25 copies. There were several occasions when a group of us were still here at 2 a.m. combining packets and mailing them via FedEx's same-day delivery.

I'm really good at: Solving problems.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Playing a musical instrument.

Hobbies: I love to do crafty things. I will try nearly anything DIY. Power tools can be fun to work with!

Surprising fact: I have run one marathon, more than a dozen half-marathons, and I am currently training to complete a half ironman triathlon in the fall.

Wanda Simpson
Administrative Coordinator
Center for the Genetics of Host Defense

First UTSW job: Administrative Assistant, Department of Molecular Biology

Claim to fame: Being voted to the inaugural Employee Advisory Council. Keeping calm in stressful situations with a positive attitude.

Best part of my job: Helping others and working with a great group of people.

Recipe for success: Being hardworking, trustworthy, and approachable.

What energizes me at work: Working to meet a deadline and putting a smile on someone's face.

How co-workers describe me: Reliable and a team player with a cheerful spirit.

Best UTSW memory: Meeting Chuck Norris while he was filming "Walker, Texas Ranger" in the Simmons Biomedical Research Building. My mom was a huge fan, and he was happy to take a photo with me.

Surprising fact: I played the clarinet for 12 years.

I wish I were an instant expert at: Cooking and troubleshooting computer issues.

First UTSW job: Fuels and Contract Specialist.

Best part of my job: Knowing that what I do helps ensure the safety of our employees and patients.

What energizes me at work: Taking pride in my work and doing my very best. Going that extra mile to help anyone I can.

Best UTSW memory: Our team – and knowing that my job is a part of UT Southwestern's future, mission, and goals.

How co-workers describe me: A hard worker, a team player, and dependable.

Recipe for success: Taking pride in my work and doing my very best. Going that extra mile to help anyone I can.

Best UTSW memory: Department events with my co-workers. We used to get together and have fish fries.

I'm really good at: Problem-solving and being able to think outside the box. My family believes I can do just about anything, even when I know the task isn't possible.

Hobbies: Watching my three grandchildren, Preston, 15, Hudson, 9, and Bailey, 5, grow and enjoy life. That, and living on the lake; I love to fish, hunt, and work in my woodshop.

Surprising fact: COVID-19 brought a lot of stress and increased responsibilities as we worked to ensure employees and patients felt safe at our facilities. Our team worked together to make that safe place.
**Linda Smith**  
**Accountant II**  
**Facilities Finance, General Services Department**  

**First UTSW job:** Senior Administrative Assistant in Cell Biology.  
**Best part of my job:** As an Accountant II in Facilities Management, I get to see firsthand the future of UT Southwestern and its vision for expansion.  
**What energizes me at work:** My team and knowing that I am part of a bigger picture at UTSW and its mission to continue to provide excellent care to our patients. The last two years have been a challenge for everyone, but our team has constantly provided support and encouragement to each other.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. I have become the go-to person for assistance with requisitions.  
**Recipe for success:** I always try to do everything I can to help not only my co-workers, but others on campus as well.  
**Best UTSW memory:** Participating in the annual Halloween parade for the day care at UTSW and the annual holiday decorating contest.  
**I’m really good at:** Spending time with my family, especially my three grandchildren, Preston, 15, Hudson, 6, and Bailey, 5.  
**Surprising fact:** I’m a native Texan, I don’t like sweet tea.  
**Final note:** I take great pride in celebrating 25 years with the UT System. Working at both UT Arlington and UT Southwestern has brought me great pleasure. I have worked with some amazing individuals and learned a great deal about the research and medical fields.

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**Steve Stippec**  
**Research Scientist**  
**Department of Pharmacology**  

**First UTSW job:** Research Technician II.  
**What energizes me at work:** I love solving problems and helping people. My work here lets me do both.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Calm and relaxed.  
**Recipe for success:** I’m always willing to take on new projects and help others in the lab.  
**Unusual UTSW memory:** Early on, I was tasked with purifying native protein phosphatase 2 from 22 pounds of fresh cow heart tissue. I was terrified I would fail. It took a month of planning and prep, followed by four 16-hour days of work. It gave me the confidence to learn and try new techniques.  
**Passions:** Writing and recording songs. It could be considered research.  
**What energizes me at work:** Brainstorming and problem-solving.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly and extroverted.  
**Recipe for success:** Being a hard worker, people person, and good multitasker.  
**Best UTSW memory:** Assisting an older patient who could barely walk and was lost in the building. I found him a chair with wheels and got him where he needed to go.  
**I’m really good at:** Making and selling tamales.  
**Claim to fame:** Making and selling tamales.  
**What energizes me at work:** Listening to music and walking around the campus every day.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly and hardworking.  
**Recipe for success:** I’m a good multitasker.  
**Best part of my job:** I have a Ph.D. in microbiology and spent decades as a scientist before moving into administration.  
**Claim to fame:** I can make really good carrot cake. (The secret ingredient is...).  
**Final note:** I’ve had the pleasure of meeting so many great people here at UT Southwestern who have helped me grow within our organization, and I’m so thankful for the opportunity. Now, I’m able to share this knowledge with my current staff.

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**Sharmain Taylor**  
**Research Technician II**  
**Hamon Center for Therapeutic Oncology Research**  

**First UTSW job:** Building Attendant.  
**Best part of my job:** I feel comfortable where I work.  
**What energizes me at work:** Listening to music and walking around the campus every day.  
**How co-workers describe me:** Friendly and extroverted.  
**Recipe for success:** Being a hard worker, people person, and good multitasker.  
**Best UTSW memory:** Assisting an older patient who could barely walk and was lost in the building. I found him a chair with wheels and got him where he needed to go.  
**I’m really good at:** Making and selling tamales.  
**Claim to fame:** I’ve met Sammy Hagar and sang on stage with AC/DC.  
**Hobbies:** Riding my bike and taking walks.

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**Brenda Timmons, Ph.D., M.B.A.**  
**Department Administrator**  
**Hamon Center for Therapeutic Oncology Research**  

**First UTSW job:** Postdoctoral fellow in Obstetrics and Gynecology.  
**Best thing about my job:** When I can make someone’s day better and/or their job easier. I like to help our Center’s faculty and lab staff concentrate on their science by making sure they don’t have to worry about administrative issues.  
**Claim to fame:** I can make really good carrot cake. (The people in my center are nodding right now as they read this.)  
**Surprising fact:** I have a Ph.D. in microbiology and spent decades as a scientist before moving into administration.  
**What energizes me at work:** Being around others who have a strong work ethic and great sense of humor.  
**Passion:** I love to cook. I’m also a sports nut. Most of my teams have given me a lot of grief the past decade or two, but I’m still a fanatic.  
**Recipe for success:** Tenacity. I have had a long, crazy road to get to where I am now. Many times I wanted to give up and go somewhere else. My tenacity kept me moving forward until I could finally catch a break.
I'm really good at: I am a good cook and good at crafts.

What energizes me at work: I love the variety of work and the challenge of learning new things.

Nearly 30 years and described her former boss as a “courageous, visionary leader” who made sure the affected doctors were paid. “He took it upon himself to see that every doctor and staff member affected by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic was financially secure,” said Dr. Broders.

Recipe for success: I am a successful person because I never give up and always strive to improve myself.

I am a good cook and good at crafts.

Yolanda Washington
Lab Technician
Department of Pathology
Recipe for success: I am passionate about my work and always strive to provide the best care possible.

Passions: I am an author, designer, speaker, and community leader.

Surprising fact: I am an author, designer, speaker, and community leader.

Emergency Medicine pioneer Broders honored with endowed chair

By Andrea Marton

For 40 years, the name Compton Broders, M.D., has loomed large at UT Southwestern. Many consider him the founding father of the institution’s Department of Emergency Medicine. The program he helped launch in 1979 is now the largest in the country, training 200 emergency physicians a year.

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Recipe for success: I am a passionate person who always strives to achieve my goals.

Passions: I am a motivational speaker for youth and college students.

Surprising fact: I serve as President of the Usher Board at my church.

Felisha Williams, CCS, CPC
Coding Specialist II
Health Information Management Coding and Clinical Documentation Integrity

Recipe for success: I am a successful person because I never give up and always strive to improve myself.

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Virtually all life on Earth follows cycles tied to sunrise and sunset that allow organisms to anticipate and prepare for environmental changes. Disrupting these circadian rhythms can have serious health consequences; for example, chronic sleep disruption is related to increased infection in humans. But why this occurs has been unclear.

Work over the last five years led by John Brooks II, Ph.D., a former postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Lora Hooper, Dr. Hooper’s research suggests that the answer at least partly lies in a unique collaboration between the human innate immune system and the gut microbiome. This research resulted in Dr. Brooks the Brown-Goldstein Award for Excellence in Postdoctoral Research, given by the UT Southwestern Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences to honor the contributions of Nobel Laureates Michael Brown, M.D., and Joseph Goldstein, M.D., to training future scientists.

Accompanied by a $4,000 prize and an opportunity to present a University Lecture, the award represents the highest recognition the Graduate School bestows on postdoctoral trainees.

“I am extremely proud of John for receiving this well-deserved recognition,” said John P. Hooper, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Lorna Maddock, Ph.D., to gain some research experience. There, he not only made contributions to understanding how bacteria localize specific proteins within their cells, but also discovered a love of research that overtook his original desire to study medicine.

After earning a Bachelor of Science degree, Dr. Brooks began graduate school at Northwestern University. Working in the lab of Mark Mandel, Ph.D., he used the bacterial genetics technique he'd learned at the University of Michigan to study the relationship between the Hawaiian bobtail squid and Vibrio fischeri, a bioluminescent bacterium that colonizes the squid's skin, producing light within hours of hatching despite competition from thousands of other bacterial species in its environment.

Following five years in the Mandel lab, Dr. Brooks searched for a postdoctoral mentor who could help him combine his knowledge of bacterial genetics with a growing curiosity about how resident microbes affect their hosts. He found the perfect match in Dr. Hooper, Chair of Immunology, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Investigator, and a Professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics at UT Southwestern.

“Lora provided the space and guidance necessary for me to grow and become successful,” he said. “She had this incredible ability to pair my skill sets with an interesting question, so I could really soar.”

After encouraging Dr. Brooks to apply for the HHMI's Hanna H. Gray Fellows Program, which he received the year after he started working in Dr. Hooper's lab, the pair sought to understand the role of gut microbes in innate immunity. Working in mouse models, the researchers suspected that antibacterial immunity might change in the intestines on a circadian cycle. To investigate, the researchers looked at rhythms in the genetic activation of natural antimicrobial agents produced in the gut of mice to fight foodborne illness.

They found that an antimicrobial molecule in the intestines called REGEG, cycled from being more abundant at night—when mice are awake and active—to less abundant during the day—when they’re asleep. Further study tied this cycling to segmented filamentous bacteria—microbes typically present in the intestines of rodents and primates—that have an ability to attach to the intestinal lining and change their metabolic pathways.

“This cycling had significant consequences for the ability of mice to fight off infection. When the researchers infected mice with disease-causing bacteria, the animals had higher bacterial numbers and rates of death when exposed at sunset vs. sunrise. Mice unable to make antimicrobial proteins, including REGEG, had similarly high rates of bacterial burden and death regardless of when they were infected. If research shows this phenomenon also occurs in humans, Dr. Brooks said, scientists may eventually be able to capitalize on it by either tuning the administration of synthetic antibiotics for intestinal infections and oral vaccines, or by finding new ways to avoid intestinal infections altogether. At Princeton, Dr. Brooks continues to study how microbes impact innate immunity in the gut.

"Understanding the interactions between our resident bacteria and host immunity," he said, “could have untold consequences for human health.”

NAS

Continued from page 1

Dr. Cohen joined UT Southwestern as a postdoctoral fellow in 1989 and worked first with Scott Grundy, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Internal Medicine in the Center for Human Nutrition, where his research focused on lipid metabolism in humans. Realizing that he needed training in genetics to accomplish his goals, he also trained with Helen Hobbs, M.D., Director of the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development, who has long focused on defining the genetic determinants of plasma lipid levels and cardiovascular risk.

In 2000, Dr. Cohen and Dr. Hobbs combined forces and joined with the late Ronald Victor, M.D., to design the Dallas Heart Study, a longitudinal, multiracial, population-based study of more than 3,000 Dallas County residents. They set out to discover new genetic factors that contribute to variations in the levels of cholesterol in the blood, especially LDL cholesterol, often referred to as “bad cholesterol.” High levels of LDL cholesterol in the blood increase the risk of a heart attack. They asked if individuals who had low cholesterol levels their entire lives due to a genetic difference would be protected from heart disease.

At the time they initiated their studies, it was generally thought that common variations in risk are caused by genetic differences that are frequent. The way to identify such genetic differences is to test thousands of common sequence variations using a strategy called genome-wide association studies (GWAS). Drs. Cohen and Hobbs took a different approach: reasoning that sufficiently uncommon sequence differences that were likely to have large effects would be more informative.

In the Dallas Heart Study, they found that mutations in a gene called PCSK9 were associated with increased levels of LDL cholesterol. Moreover, individuals with these mutations were protected from disease. This finding formed the basis for the rapid development of a new class of cholesterol-lowering agents that target PCSK9. They worked with a similar approach to identify other genes that alter plasma levels of cholesterol and triglycerides, leading to the development of a second lipid-lowering therapy.

In addition, the Hobbs-Cohen lab identified the first genetic risk factor for fatty liver disease – an alcoholic and nonalcoholic. This increasingly common disorder will soon overtake hepatitis C as the No. 1 indication for liver transplantation.

Dr. Cohen grew up in South Africa and earned his Ph.D. in physiology at the University of Cape Town. In 2015, Dr. Cohen was recognized with the Barbara Bowman Distinguished Texas Geneticist Award, and in 2016, and he Dr. Hobbs received the Passano Award, given for exemplary research that leads to real-world applications.

Dr. Cohen holds the C. Vincent Pruzin Distinguished Chair in Human Nutrition Research.
New pain management approach reduced opioid use after C-sections

Shift to nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications from patient-controlled medication pumps also boosted breastfeeding rates

By Sarah Williams

For years, women recovering from cesarean section deliveries have been given devices that let them, with a button, control the flow of opioid painkillers into their IV lines. But as researchers and policymakers push to reduce the flow of opioid painkillers, clinicians are developing new strategies for treating pain after C-sections.

A study by UT Southwestern obstetrician-gynecologists, published in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, shows how one pain management approach reduced opioid use after cesarean deliveries at Parkland Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Elaine Duryea, M.D., an Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UT Southwestern and Medical Director of the Maternal-Infant Medicine at Parkland Health, and her colleagues studied 776 women who delivered babies by C-section at Parkland in 2020, either before or after the transition. In the 48 hours after cesarean delivery, women who used the PCA required a median of 128 morphine milligram equivalents – a measure of overall opioid use – while women who followed the scheduled nonopioid strategy required only a median of 28 morphine milligram equivalents, about five times less. In addition, breastfeeding rates among mothers who planned to breastfeed were slightly higher after the transition, only 9% used formula compared to 12% before the switch.

Women in the morphine PCA group reported slightly lower pain scores in the 12 hours after delivery, but there was no difference in pain at 24 hours post-delivery. At 48 hours post-delivery, women in the nonopioid group had less pain than the PCA group.

“Patients shouldn’t go into a C-section, or any other surgery, with the expectation that they’ll be completely free of pain, but they should be able to pain manage their way to being able to manage their pain,” said Dr. Duryea.

The data were encouraging enough that Dr. Duryea and her colleagues are not only sticking with the new pain management system at Parkland, but are implementing other ways to minimize opioid use including customizing the number of painkillers sent home with patients to individual needs, rather than giving all new mothers 30 opioid pills at discharge.

“Considering we do more than 12,000 deliveries a year here, that’s a lot of pills that can end up in the community and aren’t all needed,” said Dr. Duryea.

“Harnessing technology to integrate genomic data into the flow of patient data will allow clinicians to provide the lowest opioid painkillers into their IV lines.

“Supporting that effort, we have clinician input into the care pathways for drug therapies – but this data is not always easily accessible to physicians within the flow of a patient’s health records.

“Genomic testing can identify genetic mutations in tumors that offer pathways for drug therapies – but this data is not always easily accessible.

“Dr. Khan has distinguished himself over the years as an exceptional clinician, educator, and investigator,” said Rebecca S. Gruchalla, M.D., Ph.D., Chief of the Division of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology and Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. “I am very pleased, but not surprised, that Dr. Khan was elected to serve as President of the premier subspeciality organization, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology.”

■ Dr. Gruchalla holds the William A. Sellar’s, M.D., and Joyce M. Sellar’s Distinguished Chair in Allergy and Immunology.

Wadhah Arafat, M.D.

Dr. Khan takes reins as AAAAI President

David Khan, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, has been elected President of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI), the leading membership organization of more than 7,000 allergists/immunologists in the U.S., Canada, and 72 other countries.

“It’s a great honor to be elected to the largest professional association of allergists/immunologists in the U.S.,” Dr. Khan said.

Dr. Khan has three priorities: work on reducing the burden of prior authorization for patients, AAAAI members, and their staff; develop a regional educational program on the importance of the allergy/immunology specialty that also encourages underrepresented minority residents to enter the discipline; and establish a research grant focused on drug allergy.

On August 7, Dr. Khan served an internal medicine residency at the Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix and completed fellowship training in allergy and immunology at the Mayo Clinic. A past President of the Texas Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Society, he spent 15 years as a member of the Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters for Allergy and Immunology. He also serves as Associate Editor for the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology in Practice. His research interests include drug allergy, refractory chronic urticaria, and mood disorders in asthma.

With a passion for education, Dr. Khan has served as Program Director of UT Southwestern’s Allergy and Immunology fellowship program for the past 24 years – helping to train an entire generation of allergy/immunology specialists.

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Carlos L. Artega, M.D.

Grant

Next-generation sequencing (NGS) has opened the door to personalized cancer treatments by identifying genetic mutations in tumors that offer pathways for drug therapies – but this data is not always easily accessible to physicians within the flow of a patient’s health records.

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