Seeking multigenerational Monash families

Inside this issue

• Meet the new Dean
• Overseas alumni keep in touch
• Nursing news
• Malaysian campus officially opens
This is my first dean’s message for Monash Praxis, and I would like to use this opportunity to thank everyone for their warm welcome. I have really appreciated the numerous messages of encouragement and support. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Leon Piterman for his enormous effort as acting dean over the past six months, and his detailed and insightful handover, which has allowed me to hit the ground running.

I would also like to thank Janet Kemp for her budget briefings. Janet has recently stepped down as faculty manager but will continue part-time to help manage budgets. On behalf of the faculty, I would like to thank Janet for her enormous efforts and personal commitment to the faculty over the past ten years. Welcome to our new faculty manager, Andrew Evans.

The five years I spent as director of the Burnet Institute were very enjoyable and stimulating and the opportunity to link laboratory research with international health outcomes was very rewarding. Given the brunt of the HIV epidemic is now being felt most by those least able to respond, I feel confident that the Burnet Institute is playing an important leadership role and having a real impact. It was an extremely difficult decision to leave the Burnet, however, the new challenge of leading such a successful and diverse faculty as the Monash Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, and hopefully, having an even more broad ranging impact was ultimately too appealing.

During my briefings on the medical curriculum, I have been amazed at not only the growth in student numbers, but also the diversity of our teaching sites. Monash is unique amongst Australian medical schools in having undergraduate and postgraduate curricula spread over metropolitan, rural and international sites, with AMC accredited undergraduate degrees in Melbourne and Malaysia and a postgraduate degree at our Gippsland Medical School.

I have also been extremely impressed with the continuing growth of the faculty’s strength in bioscience. A number of the departments in the School of Biomedical Sciences were recently ranked number one in the country, and the faculty had a really outstanding year in the latest competitive round of NHMRC and ARC grants, with Monash ranked number three in total NHMRC outcomes. At Monash, we are developing Australia’s leading bioscience campus with national and international leadership in biomedical science. The Clayton campus is probably already Australia’s leading bioscience campus, but we need to continue our recruitment, platform and infrastructure developments to remove all doubt.

Coming from the AMREP (Alfred Medical Research and Education Precinct), I am well aware of the strength of our research clusters on the precincts of Monash Medical Centre and The Alfred Hospital. The affiliated, but independent medical research institutes on these precincts, ie Baker, Burnet and Prince Henry’s Institute were also very successful in the latest NHMRC funding round, highlighting the strength of research on these precincts. If we can seamlessly integrate our biomedical and public health research excellence with clinical excellence at our research clusters, we will have a model that ensures both our international competitiveness and importantly, an impact on health outcomes and workforce development. Critical to this process is strength in public health and clinical sciences. Our Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine was also ranked number one in the country and we can use this strength to further build public health and also international health.

Leon Piterman has put a lot of effort into the development of the Peninsula campus and it now has an impressive record in attracting high-ENTER score students into all courses. We need to aspire for national leadership in nursing and allied health and we are confident that our nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments will continue to grow and develop their curricula providing plenty of challenges for staff as they develop into national leaders.

Over the next few months I hope to get around to all our dispersed campuses and meet as many of our staff and alumni as possible, to discuss my ideas and vision for the faculty. I am very keen to hear of any views and ideas about improving this great faculty. Please send me an email or come and see me for a chat, my door is always open.

Steve Wesselingh
Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

### Monash Praxis

The word “Praxis” has its origins in Ancient Greek. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary explains the word “Praxis” as 1: a) exercise or practice of an art, science, or skill b) customary practice or conduct or 2: practical application of a theory.

This newsletter is published by the Monash University Medical Foundation on behalf of the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Find an online PDF version of Monash Praxis at: [www.med.monash.edu/alumni/](http://www.med.monash.edu/alumni/)

#### Enquiries

Phone:  +61 (0)3 9905 9329

Email:  alumni@med.monash.edu.au
Faculty news

New Monash Malaysia campus officially opened

The Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak opened the new $80 million Sunway, Kuala Lumpur campus of Monash University in September.

The new Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine was also officially named after the Malaysian businessman, philanthropist and Monash University partner during the ceremony.

More than 3,300 students study courses including biotechnology, medicine, science, arts, business and economics, information technology and engineering at the Sunway campus. Postgraduate and research higher degree programs have commenced and an active research program is in place with support from the Malaysian government and industry sources. Academic standards are the same as for courses in Australia with Australian faculties having responsibility for course approvals and quality control.

An active program of student and staff exchange between the Australian and international campuses is in place and is growing.

Recently, two groups of East Gippsland medical students completed a clinical rotation in obstetrics and gynaecology at Sultanah Aminah Hospital in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

Monash University Distinguished Alumni Awards

Two graduates of the faculty were recognised for their achievements at the recent 2007 Monash University Distinguished Alumni Awards.

Tan Sri Dato’ Dr Abu Bakar Suleiman (MBBS 1968, HonMD 1997) was a 2007 recipient of the prestigious Distinguished Alumni Award. Following an extensive career as a nephrologist, Tan Sri Abu Bakar made a substantial contribution to health administration as Director-General of the Ministry of Health Malaysia, and in his roles as Master of the Academy of Medicine and President of the Malaysian Medical Association. He is currently the Vice-Chancellor and President of the International Medical University in Kuala Lumpur.

The inaugural Distinguished Young Alumni Award 2007 was presented to prostate and cancer biology researcher Dr Renea Taylor (BSc (Hons) 1998, PhD 2003). Dr Taylor has made dynamic contributions in this field by studying how normal tissue is transformed into tumour cells. She is currently a Peter Doherty postdoctoral research fellow in prostate stem cell biology at the Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories and Monash Institute of Medical Research. Dr Taylor also works to raise awareness of prostate cancer through her professional publications and public health seminars.

At the ceremony, Monash University also honoured the founders and first presidents of Monash’s most established chapters including Dr Yeo Poh Tech (BMedSc 1969, MBBS 1971, PhD 1976) of the Singapore Monash Alumni Association.
Specialised assistance for international students

Undergraduate and postgraduate international students and associated staff will now receive assistance from two new support areas within the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

International postgraduate research and coursework students are being assisted by the work of Associate Professor Rosemary Clerehan in the new role of Director, International Postgraduate Academic Support. Associate Professor Clerehan’s research into areas of doctor-patient communication; disciplinary understandings and writing genres; and cross-cultural issues in teaching and learning, is known nationally and internationally. She will develop new teaching programs to address international postgraduate students’ academic and professional learning needs. There is a current focus on intensive support for students from the Middle East. Associate Professor Clerehan also provides specialist advice on language and cross-cultural issues and curriculum or policy development. Ph: (03) 9905 3053.

The new Student Academic Support Unit (SASU) provides assistance to undergraduate students in the development of English language and academic skills with particular emphasis on the needs of international and local non-English speaking background students. SASU comprises a team of four exceptionally well-qualified staff in the areas of language and learning, teaching English as a second language, curriculum development, cross-cultural issues, medicine, international teaching and communication.

Advice is available to staff on language and academic needs, student academic performance is monitored and the team conducts research into discipline-specific discourse and teaching and learning in medical and health sciences education. Dr Sheila Vance coordinates the unit working alongside John Hamilton, Andrea Paul and Dr Erica Schmidt. Ph: (03) 9905 4027

Papua New Guinea nursing alumni return to Monash

Even though the weather in Melbourne is much colder than equatorial Papua New Guinea, a group of alumni has happily made the temporary move to complete their Masters of Nursing degrees.

An Ausaid-funded project allowed Monash School of Nursing and Midwifery to implement a post registration Bachelor of Nursing in Papua New Guinea (PNG) from year 2000 to 2005. In that time, 89 registered nurses gained their degree through a two-year mixed mode program.

Now 12 of these nurses are undertaking their Master of Nursing at the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash’s Peninsula campus.

Alumna Anna Anda, who works at a 230 bed hospital in the highlands, paints the health services picture for PNG. Anna said that there are two major hospitals, 15 health centres, 45 sub-centres and more than 100 aid posts servicing Papua New Guinea’s 5.9 million people. Nursing is demanding due to a nurse-patient ratio of one nurse to 40 patients.

She said that at her hospital they most regularly help patients with malaria, respiratory infection, diarrhoeal diseases and other tropical illness.

“Studying nursing at Monash has helped me understand nursing as a profession and changed my attitude towards my clients and improved my practice,” Anna said.

Fellow student Lucy Langer is from the Mendi School of Nursing and works there as a nurse tutor/manager. About 100 students from all over Papua New Guinea study at their residential school.

One of the issues that Lucy faces at the school is the shortage of qualified nurses and scarcity of teachers, mainly due to limited funds available for their training.

“My training at Monash has provided me with a vision to plan strategies that would benefit my institution and staff,” Lucy said.

“I’ve also improved my performance in how I deal with my administrative responsibilities and in the preparation and presentation of my work.”

Both alumnae agree that the people at Monash are fantastic, helpful and considerate. Not only have they assisted the nurses with their studies but also in settling into a new and more expensive environment.

Lucy is particularly pleased that PNG staple food is available here in Melbourne. Anna has brought her daughter with her and Lucy’s children are excited about moving here to be with their mother as soon as their visas are issued.
Vale Professor Geoff Bentley

Professor Geoff Bentley was a foundation member of both physiology and pharmacology at Monash and was deputy chair of both departments. In 1952, Professor Bentley was the first PhD graduate in pharmacology at Melbourne University. Prior to joining Monash University in 1961, he was Director of Pharmacology at the Nicholas Institute and also worked at the Baker Institute. Once at Monash, he was involved in teaching and research until his retirement in the late 1980s, although he continued to be part of the pharmacology department until the mid 1990s. He was known for his brilliant engagement with students, as a supervisor of postgraduate research degrees and as a popular figure within the university. Professor Bentley served on the university council, professorial board, faculty board and was a foundation member of the university’s ethics committee. He published 69 refereed papers and reviews in the fields of analgesia, antihypertensive drugs, cardiovascular control and drugs of abuse and addiction.

Vale Dr Peter Waxman

By Bruce Waxman and Michael Nolan

Peter Joseph Waxman (MBBS 1978) was a formidable advocate for general practice and was adored by his patients, family and friends. Peter spent almost all of his 53 years, living and working in the Bayside suburbs of Melbourne. He was born in Mckinnon and went to Ormond State School and later Caulfield Grammar School, where he represented the school in rowing and Australian Rules football and went on to play with Caulfield Grammarians Football Club in the A Grade VFA as a top ruckman. He completed Medicine at Monash University, graduating from The Alfred Hospital Clinical School in 1978. As an undergraduate at Monash, he was involved with MUMUS and fellow students have fond memories of him dressed in his superwax outfit emulating superman, drawing the attention of the class to give important notices about social events.

After intern and JRMO years at The Alfred Hospital, he entered physician training and was a medical registrar at The Alfred Hospital for a time before settling on general practice training, obtaining the FRACGP in 1986. He established the Highett Medical Centre in Highett Road in partnership with Dr Peter Mitchell in 1988 and in the same year was appointed as Clinical Teacher, Monash University Department of Community Medicine. He was the inaugural Chairman of the Central Bayside Division of General Practice in 1993, Chairman of the Senior Medical Staff, Sandringham and District Memorial Hospital from 1987 to 1992, VMO at that hospital from 1984, and on the staff at Linacre and Como Private Hospitals.

Vale Branko Cesnik

Monash alumnus Professor Branko Cesnik (MBBS 1978, MD 1995) was an Australian pioneer and international leader in Health Informatics. The use of information management and technology to improve the quality and safety of health care was the basis of Professor Cesnik’s work. Professor Cesnik made a major contribution to the world’s medical knowledge, according to friend and colleague, Professor Michael Kidd (MD 1995).

Following graduation from Monash, Professor Cesnik worked in accident and emergency medicine and renal medicine in Australia before working in South Africa for a time. In 1988, he was appointed as a senior lecturer at Monash and later went on to establish the first research and education unit for medical informatics in any Australian medical school. According to Professor Kidd, delegates at a medical informatics conference in 1989 were amazed by Professor Cesnik’s practical prototype examples of using this technology in clinical medicine. His vision of the use of IT in health preceded the internet and hypermedia applications that appeared later.

In 1991, Professor Cesnik was a founder of the Health Informatics Society of Australia to which he was later made a life member. The International Medical Informatics Association also honoured him with a life membership in 2005. He was vice president of this organisation in 2001. He was a founder of both Australian College of Health Informatics and the Asia-Pacific Association for Medical Informatics, completing terms as president for each.

In 1995, he was awarded his Doctor of Medicine at Monash University. Later, he and a medical informatics team were invited to join the new Monash Institute of Health Services Research (MIHSR). He was an advisor to government including membership of the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

In addition to his academic work, Professor Cesnik worked as a clinician in the Emergency Department of Knox Private Hospital. Due to illness, he retired in 2005 but continued to provide advice to government, fellow academics and clinicians. He was an Honorary Professor at MIHSR and the Centre for Health Informatics at The University of New South Wales. Professor Michael Kidd’s full tribute to Branko Cesnik can be found online at: www.monash.edu.au/news/newsline/story/1194
As Monash University approaches its 50th anniversary in 2008, it is timely to identify families with two (or even three) generations of Monash graduates.

Distinguished alumnus and author Professor John Murtagh was one of Monash’s first medical graduates in 1966. At the end of 2007, his daughter Clare will graduate with her medical degree. Here are profiles of one of our most long-standing graduates and one of our most recent.

**Professor John Murtagh AM**

**What is your best memory from the days when you were a Monash student?**

The early days when the university and medical school opened with the newness of everything from the campus to the foundation professors and staff and, of course, the students including Stewart Bowman who set the social agenda. I must mention the vigorous political activity that followed – very exciting as various ideologies wrestled for the minds of the students.

**What has been the most gratifying part of your career to date?**

Taking on the challenge of a run-down solo rural practice in the mountains of Gippsland. Working with my medical wife Jill and with a well run small hospital we managed to provide an almost complete service to the community on a 24-hour every day of the year basis. Providing emergency and trauma care, most of the surgery, obstetrics, anaesthesics, inpatient medical care, sports medicine, psychiatric care and so on was very gratifying and fulfilling.

**What did you aspire to be as a child? Why?**

A country doctor because I came from a small rural community and admired the doctor especially as I had much contact with him as a child.

**What kind of patient are you?**

Perhaps I’m not the best judge of that matter but I have had considerable practice when as a child I spent several months in bed with presumed poliomyelitis. Yes, I was in Fairfield Hospital while a medical student with complications of chicken pox. I recently had about four weeks in hospital following complications of surgery. I think that I was a reasonable patient under the circumstances.

**What are the biggest differences in medical training between those you undertook 46 years ago and those you teach now?**

It was more demanding in the early course because there was a more rigorous assessment process, especially in the basic sciences and multiple high pressure clinical examinations, particularly in final year. By contrast, the current students have a ‘softer’ course but are expected to be expert at self directed learning. The modern students are very bright but no more so than students over the past 46 years. Modern students have the advantage of wonderful learning resources, including text books and the internet, but the teaching is not as directive as I received. Now there is a much greater student/teacher ratio and more complex clinical cases. They have it tough.

**Generally, the photo archives show some fun occasions or indicate funny stories. What is the funniest thing that happened to you during your student days at Monash?**

I was selected to be student representative possibly because I was a virtual teetotaler with no taste for the golden liquid, unlike most of my colleagues who were real pisspots. I was given an allowance by the union to run an end of year bash. The boys ordered up big and so I packed great quantities of bottled beer and wine into the boot of my car. I parked it momentarily in Tucker Road en route to the function. Sadly, some inebriated driver ran into the back of the car at great speed leaving a horrendous rubble of broken bottles with a boot awash with grog. I then had to explain the situation to the bemused police, the use of union funds to the authorities and worse still – to my disbelieving colleagues already in the stages of withdrawal symptoms.

**Who was your biggest inspiration and why?**

My special friend and future wife Jill who commenced medical studies at the University of Melbourne the year after I started at Monash. As our love developed, I thought that it would be marvellous to eventually practice together as a team – my ambition not hers! This common career goal was most inspirational to help focus my enthusiasm, learning and ambition.
Clare Murtagh

What is your best memory of being a Monash Student?

Sitting at the Cinque Lire Café at the STRIP with friends, talking about life and eating far too much cake. I also worked at the café part-time, so I developed a great sense of community there, getting to know so many more students and staff members.

How great an influence were your doctor parents on your choice to enter the medical field? When did you know you wanted to be a doctor?

In my family, medicine has always been about people’s stories. As a child, I went on home visits with my mother and watched the special relationship she had with her patients. This is what inspired me most, wanting to know people’s stories inside out and providing care that plays a vital role in their lives.

What did you want to be as a child and why?

I’ve always wanted to be a doctor. I remember pretending frozen peas were medicine and prescribing them to my teddy bears.

What aspects of medical practice are you looking forward to? What are your aspirations?

I’m looking forward to the variety that a medical career can offer. I look forward to being a general practitioner, with a variety of special interests such as sexual and public health, third-world medicine and teaching future generations of doctors.

How is it having a dad who is famous in the medical field?

I feel proud of him when people recognise my surname. However, to me he is always just dad, but with the added bonus of being a walking, talking medical encyclopedia.

What is the funniest thing that has happened during your time as a Monash student?

In second year, a student from my year dressed up in a koala suit and walked in during the middle of a physiology lecture. The koala was promptly ushered out of the lecture theatre as we all found the koala much more engaging than physiology.

Who is your biggest inspiration?

It was my parents who initially inspired me to embark on a career in medicine and now, as I finish medical school, they both continue to inspire me: my mother for the skill with which she balances her roles as GP and mother of a large family, and my father for his indefatigable devotion to medical education.

Might we, one day, see a third generation Murtagh studying at Monash?

I’m excited about the prospect of any of the third generation Murtaghs studying at Monash, regardless of which faculty they choose to enter.

2007 Rod Andrew Oration

The medical and social history of longevity and the implications of increased longevity in the future were explored during the 2007 Rod Andrew Oration. The special lecture was presented by medical journalist and commentator, Dr Norman Swan. Members of the public, alumni, staff and students were enthralled by the address which was controversial at times, challenging some current day approaches to healthcare. Those interested in this fascinating topic can still benefit from Dr Swan’s lecture by linking to the podcast at: www.med.monash.edu/alumni/events.html#event/...
MUMUS – who ran the show in 2007?

The Monash University Medicine Union of Students has provided many years of social and other activities for students. So how is this institution going these days? MUMUS 2007 president and fifth-year MBBS student, Belinda Hibble, shares news, insights and experiences here.

MUMUS

What encouraged you to have a hands-on role with MUMUS?

I’ve always liked to keep myself busy! I also really believed there was a role for the organisation to start representing the students more effectively, both within the faculty, and in the wider community.

In my past three years on the MUMUS executive, I have been given the chance to interact more with other year levels within the course, and network with medical students nationwide – I’ve made many good friends from my involvement with both MUMUS, and AMSA (Australian Medical Students’ Association).

MUMUS has quite a long history. As MUMUS president, what do you see as the role of the organisation these days? And what has it done this year to achieve this?

MUMUS has traditionally held quite a social focus (which it still does!), however I believe the role of the organisation has broadened significantly in the past two to three years. MUMUS is now focused on academic issues, student equity issues and we also have representatives for our rural and international students.

In 2007, MUMUS created a Student Representation Policy, and has ensured that students are represented effectively on over 15 faculty committees, as well as representation at AMA Council, AMA Doctors-in-Training Subdivision, AMSA Council and VDHP Consultative Council. MUMUS is also joining with the University of Melbourne to launch the Medical Student Council of Victoria, which will represent all Victorian medical students.

Now we are in the days of student fees, how do you generally think students are coping financially? Are medical students working the average 20-hour week as students of other disciplines?

Traditionally, medical students have not worked the typical part-time hours as other disciplines have, however many are being forced to work more and more, due to the financial strain placed on many families. Costs to the student have risen significantly in past years, with increasing fees for both Commonwealth Supported Place students and full-fee paying students. Voluntary student unionism has also caused price rises at the university, reflected in huge increases in parking costs, gym costs etc.

This is a concern given the large workload for most medical students, and often results in students not having enough time or money to participate in their extra-curricular activities, eg sport, social and MUMUS! However, it is these activities which are so important to keep the healthy work-life balance which we are encouraged to retain as medical students and doctors.

Since alumni activity is building at Monash, what services or interaction would be useful for new graduates?

Alumni activities provide such a fantastic service in keeping cohorts in touch, as so many friends are made during the five plus years in medical school. New graduates are looking for an increased presence of the alumni in the future, which has been occurring very well in the past 12 months.

Many also see keeping in touch as alumni as a way to get back into the Monash community should they aim to teach at the university in the future, and appreciate the academic opportunities provided by the alumni, eg evening lectures and seminars. Finally, services that make past students feel as though they are still part of the Monash community are always valued – keeping library services for registered alumni is very important.

On a personal note...

What made you decide to study medicine?

I’d always loved listening to mum’s medical stories when I was growing up. (Mum is a midwife at Geelong Hospital). As I started planning my tertiary options, I was attracted to the challenge of medicine and I enjoyed studying the sciences, however I was too much of a people person to become a scientist. Medicine seemed to be the most appealing goal to set myself.

What career direction can you see yourself taking? GP, specialist, city, rural? Why?

I really loved my final year rotation in a suburban emergency department, and I currently see this as a very attractive option. It’s very challenging and I enjoyed the hustle and bustle of the department. It was so interesting to see patients at the very beginning of their illness or injury – I dealt with some very tough diagnostic dilemmas!

I haven’t decided where I might practise in the future. This will depend on where my work takes me, and the work options for my fiancé. I haven’t spent much time in rural Victoria due to sporting and MUMUS commitments, so I would like to spend some more time in the country in the future.

You recently did a practicum in Katherine? How has this experience embellished your education?

It was a huge challenge. I saw patients in the emergency department every day, and the vast majority of Indigenous patients spoke very little English – I quite often invented my own form of medical sign language! I was also given the chance to practise semi-independently, which reinforced my clinical skills significantly, and greatly increased my confidence. Also, being a small hospital, I was given the opportunity to gain experience in a wide range of procedural skills, all of which will stand me in good stead for 2008!

Stop press!

Belinda Hibble was awarded the 2007 Monash Medical Alumni Award at the graduation dinner on 17 November. This award is decided by the vote of fellow students who recognised Belinda as the most outstanding student of their year.
Alumni news

Andiope Hatzis, (BA 1995, BNsg 1998, GCPNP 1999), RN, has been employed since 1999 in various divisions of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Mental Health (VIFMH) – widely recognised as an international centre of excellence in understanding and treating mental disorders associated with criminal behaviour. Adiope gives us an insight into her career path and her work here...

After graduating from Monash University with two degrees, I was actively seeking opportunities to utilise my qualifications in a challenging field. I was also keen to pursue a career path that would foster diverse experiences. Fortuitously, I came across the since decommissioned Rosanna Forensic Psychiatry Centre located at Mont Park. I immediately realised I had found a unique environment in which to commence my career. I was accepted into the Graduate Nurse Program at Rosanna and completed a post-graduate qualification in psychiatric nursing practice the same year.

My entry into forensic mental health coincided with a momentous period in the evolution of this field in Victoria. This was marked by the opening of Thomas Embling Hospital in 2000. This is the state-wide secure inpatient forensic mental health facility, located in Fairfield. Incarcerated persons who are afflicted with a mental illness and who satisfy the criteria for involuntary treatment may be transferred to this facility. Whilst based at the hospital, I focused on obtaining clinical experience in the acute care units and also participated in opportunities to develop leadership skills.

Thereafter, I obtained a transfer to the Community Forensic Mental Health Service. My role entailed working more independently within a multi-disciplinary clinical team. The focus was on risk assessment and developing management strategies for persons afflicted with a mental illness and who had either engaged in or, were at high risk of engaging in serious offending behaviour. An integral component of this role involved court appearances including, in the Supreme Court of Victoria. The experiences within this role became the foundation for my current position within the Courts, which I commenced in 2002.

The Mental Health Court Liaison Service (VIFMH) is a specialist service currently delivered by five Senior Registered Psychiatric Nurses who operate as autonomous clinical practitioners within the Magistrates’ Court of Victoria. Persons who are afflicted with serious mental health issues and who are appearing in court may be required to undergo psychiatric assessment with the results presented to the court as evidence. The role also involves the provision of advice to magistrates, legal practitioners, police and other key stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

The facilitation of community education is another key function of the VIFMH. The aim is to increase awareness within the community and other agencies, in relation to forensic mental health issues and the range of services available. The VIFMH has also developed synergistic affiliations with the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine at Monash University, with the establishment of joint chairs and more recently, postgraduate courses in forensic behavioural science.

Reflecting on my career trajectory so far, electing to complete a major in psychology followed by a nursing degree, certainly provided an excellent foundation. Registered nurses are particularly well placed to practise in diverse areas, given the breadth of their academic studies which include pharmacology and courses in the biological and social sciences which underpin direct patient care.

I am especially inspired to see that Monash University is actively contributing to the development of dynamic career pathways for registered nurses. Dual degrees in nursing, emergency health and psychology respectively, are now offered at Monash. These degrees recognise both the intrinsic value of the professional discipline of Nursing and the inherent complementary relationships with other healthcare disciplines. These are all developments from which the entire community can benefit.
Peninsula News

Vale Dr Peter Waxman: continued from p5

He supported the RACGP training program and was an examiner from 1987, and at the time of his death was General Practice Advisor to the Department of Human Services, where he was instrumental in promoting the perspectives of both DHS and general practice to enhance understanding between each sector. Peter was not just a GP. He was a great GP who demonstrated outstanding commitment to his patients and was a powerful advocate for them to ensure they received the best treatment available. He used the same qualities in caring for his elderly parents. His humbling detailed patient medical summaries were like encyclopaedias. Woe to any specialist who failed to communicate with him in a timely and efficient manner.

He relished committee work and was a fair but incisive chairman and used his height and physical presence in getting his point across, always in the best interests of his patients and the wellbeing of general practice. He had a wonderful sense of humour and could often turn a serious moment to a happy event with a wry smile, a chuckle and raising his left eyebrow.

Peter was diagnosed with a high grade melanoma in 1994 and after several recurrences and remissions, became overwhelmed by his disease in April this year and died on June 17, 2007. He coped with each setback and hurdle with resolve, resilience, optimism and good humour, and would never whinge.

He met Gillian MacLennan whilst she was a dental RMO at The Alfred in June 1977 and they married in 1978. He is survived by Gill and three adult children, Andrew, Christopher and Emily, all of whom have pursued tertiary education.

He was an ardent Essendon supporter and when he could, attended most of the Bombers' games, usually with his family and friends. He played golf each weekend at Sandringham with medical friends: Mr Peter Lobb, Dr Michael Nolan and his partner in general practice, Dr Peter Mitchell. In winter he enjoyed skiing at Mt Hotham with Gill and the kids and spent many happy weekends at his family home at Lorne, playing tennis, beach cricket or just relaxing. Most Sunday mornings he could be found sipping a cappuccino and reading the paper at his favourite Lorne foreshore cafe, Beach Bites, now The Bar & Grill. It was adjacent to this café, where the surf meets the sand, that Gill and his children spread his ashes on father's day weekend 2007.

Peter lived up to his name as a ‘rock’: a pillar of wisdom; a giant, and new ideas are built on the shoulders of a giant, the cornerstone of the family and just a great bloke! See you later, Pete! You are a legend!

Improving after hours palliative care

A project to improve after hours palliative care is being led by Vivian Bullwinkel Chair in Palliative Care Nursing, Professor Margaret O’Connor.

Professor O’Connor said that the provision of after hours palliative care can be problematic for a number of reasons and may cause distress to patients and families, resulting in unnecessary hospital admission.

“Little work has been undertaken to examine this aspect of palliative care service delivery and its effectiveness in maintaining support for patients and carers in their home environment,” Professor O’Connor said.

“Therefore, we are implementing a three-year project to examine current services and develop care planning strategies that will better meet the needs of patients, families and health professionals.”

General practitioners and palliative care nurses will be widely surveyed to ensure the views of a large group of palliative care providers is obtained.

It is considered that the results of this three-year project will inform the Victorian Department of Human Services in the development of policy and practice.

Emergency health graduate wins major prize

Graduand Ziad Nehme won a peer review award that will have him present his research paper at one of the world’s foremost paramedic conferences in Baltimore in 2008.

The Australian College of Ambulance Professionals voted Ziad’s paper entitled ‘So you think you can ventilate using the self-inflating bag?’ as the best research paper for the year.

Ziad has completed a Bachelor of Emergency Health (Paramedic) course and is currently undertaking Honours while employed by the Metropolitan Ambulance Service in Victoria as a graduate paramedic.

Historic plaque donated to School of Nursing and Midwifery

A plaque from the nursing school of World War II heroine and nursing matron Vivian Bullwinkel has been donated to the Vivian Bullwinkel Chair in Palliative Care Nursing at Monash University.

The plaque for the Vivian Bullwinkel School of Nursing was originally located at Fairfield Hospital and was retrieved before the building was demolished in 1996.

The former chief engineer of the Fairfield Hospital, Mr Ken Testa, kindly presented the historic item to Professor Margaret O’Connor, the inaugural Vivian Bullwinkel Chair in Palliative Care Nursing.

It hangs proudly in its new home, the foyer of the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Monash University’s Peninsula campus.

Private hospital end of life care study

A greater understanding of end of life care in private hospitals has been achieved through a year-long study by palliative care researcher, Dr Louise Peters of Monash’s School of Nursing and Midwifery.

The project has highlighted previously hidden end of life care in two Victorian private hospitals that specialise in clinical areas where terminal illness is a consequence.

According to Dr Peters, the study was undertaken as formalised provision of palliative care in Australia predominantly lies with public hospitals. However, whilst it was recognised that significant end of life care occurred in private hospitals, little was documented about it and some of the services may exist but not under the palliative care title.
International Alumni

Developing drought-tolerant corn in Zimbabwe

The development of drought-tolerant corn for the Zimbabwan climate is the current priority for Monash alumna Ester Khosa (MBiotech 1990, PhD Med 1994), Director of the country’s Biotechnology Research Institute.

Based in Harare, Dr Khosa and her team have developed a pre-cooked porridge from indigenous millet that is being market tested with the aim of supplying it to supermarkets next year.

She said another product being researched is a combination of pre-roasted and crushed indigenous Bambara (round) nuts, grains and maize, that can be cooked in five to ten minutes as a snack or meal.

“This product would save people time and enable them to eat indigenous food that would take too long to prepare otherwise,” Dr Khosa said. “It would literally take hours to prepare this kind of meal.”

“The idea is to develop food sources that are better suited to the climate, particularly for the driest region of Zimbabwe. We also produce mushroom spore packages for farmers and individuals. “The institute teaches them how to grow mushrooms and some move into large scale production once they have the skills,” she said.

Dr Khosa visited the university recently while here researching food and nutrition in Australia. She and her husband, Mufunani, studied at Monash in the early 1990s. Dr Khosa is the Monash alumni contact in Zimbabwe, so if you are planning a visit you are welcome to contact her on: emkhosa@mweb.co.zw

Alumna Ester Khosa, Director of the Biotechnology Research Institute in Zimbabwe

Alumna sends news from Iran

Since returning home to Iran in late 2006, Monash alumna and PhD graduate Dr Narges Khanjani has successfully dedicated herself to the fields of environmental health and occupational health.

As an academic at the Kerman Medical University in southern Iran, she currently teaches occupational medicine and non-communicable disease epidemiology.

On the research side of her work, Dr Khanjani said that she was investigating new projects including collaboration with colleagues in northern Iran.

“Recently, some researchers in the north have measured DDT contamination in mother’s milk,” Dr Khanjani said. “The contamination levels are even higher than the 1993 Victorian study of mothers’ breast milk conducted at Monash University, so this seems like a good place to study pesticides.”

Another issue for potential research is the area known as the oesophagus cancer belt of Asia.

“Why? Researchers still don’t know!” she said. “I had a meeting with these researchers and they were interested in collaborating with foreign universities, including Monash, to focus on the possible environmental risk factors.”

She is also involved in environmental epidemiology projects through her department’s Environmental Medicine Committee and is a member of the Iranian Association for Environmental Health which is currently involved in the Caspian Environment Program.

And if that is not enough to keep her busy, Dr Khanjani consults for one day each week at the Kerman Population-based Cancer Registry.

On returning to Iran, both Dr Khanjani and her husband Ali were offered jobs in the northern city of Sari on the shores of the Caspian Sea. However, Dr Khanjani was not able to transfer to the north at the time, so for now, she and her husband are working in separate parts of the country.

As well as being a very busy doctor and medical researcher, Dr Khanjani is mother of a two year-old boy, Ashkan. Dr Khanjani said that achieving work-life balance is definitely not easy.

“I think that’s the way all educated women in this century have to live,” she said. “Besides, living any other way would be boring!”

When asked what her goal or dream is in regard to medicine in Iran Dr Khanjani replied that her dream was to decrease the burden of mortality and morbidity from non-communicable diseases in Iran.

“Something too big to accomplish,” she said. “I suppose the main thing that keeps me happy is that I feel I’m making a difference and that I am working for people who need me.”

“In developing countries this might be the only enthusiasm you get,” Dr Khanjani said.
Congratulations!

New fellowship for women scientists

Monash medical alumnna and research fellow, Dr Catriona Bradshaw (MBBS 1992) was recently awarded one of four L’Oreal For Women in Science Fellowships for her research into women’s sexual health.

Dr Bradshaw’s work centres on understanding the causes and spread of bacterial vaginosis which causes miscarriages, premature births and increasing susceptibility to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Ten to 30 percent of women in developed countries, including Australia, suffer from the disease. Only half of them are satisfactorily treated. Its cause is unknown.

Australasian neurology award

Alfred Hospital neurologist, Mr David Williams (MBBS 1995) was recently presented with the Australia and New Zealand Association of Neurologists’ 2007 Leonard Cox Award.

Mr Williams’ research, performed at the Institute of Neurology at University College London between 2003 and 2007, investigated clinical, biochemical and pathological diversity in progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), the second most common cause of Parkinson’s disease.

More information about Mr Williams can be found on his website: www.drdavew.info

International prize for Professor Zimmet

Australian diabetes expert Professor Paul Zimmet AO (Alumnus PhD Med 1973), Director of the International Diabetes Institute, and an Honorary Professor at Monash University, has been named as this year’s recipient of the prestigious Novartis Award for diabetes.

The 2007 Novartis Award recognises long-standing contributions and accomplishments in clinical research, education, and clinical practice that have had a major impact on the field of diabetes mellitus.

“I am delighted to receive this honour and regard the Novartis Award as important international recognition of the achievements of the team at Melbourne’s International Diabetes Institute”, Professor Zimmet said.

He founded the International Diabetes Institute and in 1981 it was designated the first WHO Collaborating Centre for diabetes in the world.

Professor Zimmet has contributed extensively in most areas of diabetes research and care. His research has provided new insights into the causes of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes, particularly in respect to genetic and environmental determinants. A drug that Professor Zimmet developed for type 2 diabetes is now in phase one clinical trials in Australia.

Apart from creating the largest centre for diabetes research and care in Australia, Professor Zimmet has played a major role internationally. In particular, his epidemiology studies in Pacific and Indian Ocean nations more than 20 years ago flagged the potential for a global diabetes epidemic.

Bulletin Young Achiever of the Year

Biomedical Sciences graduate (2004) and Monash Institute of Medical Research (MIMR) scientist Prue Cowin was recently named the Bulletin Bayer Smart 100 Achiever Award.

As a PhD student in the Centre for Urological Research at MIMR, Prue’s research involved using embryonic stem cells to help find a cure for prostate cancer.

Working with colleague and 2007 Distinguished Young Alumni award winner, Dr Renea Taylor, Prue was able to make human embryonic stem cells develop into cells with the phenotype of prostate cells under the influence of rodent mesenchyme cells. This breakthrough will allow researchers to further study the development of prostate disease, hopefully leading to improved treatment and even prevention.

Prue’s work was published in the prestigious international journal Nature Methods.
Carrick Citation Award winners

Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences proudly boasts two winners of the Carrick Citation Awards for 2007.

Marketing Officer of the School of General Practice, Julieanne Tilbury (BusEc 1998, 2003) has become the first general staff member at Monash University to receive a citation for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning from the 2007 Carrick Awards for Australian University Teaching.

Julieanne received the award for her support of postgraduate students, particularly those from overseas, within the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Senior lecturer, Dr Jane Tracy (MBBS 1981) was also awarded a Carrick Citation Award for her work with the Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria within the School of General Practice.

Winners of the much-coveted Carrick Citation Awards receive $10,000 in recognition of their achievements.

2007 John Shaw Award

The Heart Foundation’s prestigious 2007 John Shaw Award was recently awarded to Research Fellow Dr James Armitage from the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology. This award recognises his work in understanding high blood pressure in people with obesity so that better treatment can be developed in the future.

The award was sponsored by Merck, Sharp and Dohme (Australia).

Leading neurosurgeon’s work recognised

Alumnus and Head of Neurosurgery at The Alfred, Professor Jeffrey Rosenfeld will be formally admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow in 2008. The election to the Fellowship qua Surgeon ad eundem of the College – FRCS(Glasg) is a significant accolade which is conferred upon surgeons of distinction or eminence.

Healy appointed to international role

Alumnus Professor David Healy, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, has been named President Elect of the International Federation of Fertility Sciences (IFFS) at its recent World Congress.

This is the first time in the 60-year history of the IFFS and Federation for International Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) that an Australian has been head of either body.

After World War II, the medical community developed two international societies to care for women’s health across the globe. While FIGO concentrates on obstetrics and safe motherhood, IFFS focuses on contraception, fertility, infertility and gynaecology.

Professor Healy said the appointment reflected well on Australia as a major centre for obstetrics, gynaecology and women’s health.

“I was very pleased to accept this nomination on behalf of Monash University,” he said. “It recognises the major contribution which Monash doctors and scientists have made over decades to the knowledge of fertility, infertility and the care of couples with fertility issues.”

World congresses of the IFFS are held every three years. The next congress is scheduled for Munich in 2010, followed by Boston in 2013.

Professor Healy is a past president of the Fertility Society of Australia. Next year he will chair the World Endometriosis Society Congress in Melbourne.
‘There’s no such thing as a silly question’ alumni seminar for students

Students entering clinical settings gained insight into assisting children with chronic illness, disability and life-threatening illness and their parents at a special seminar organised by the medicine, nursing and health sciences alumni.

The event sprung from the publication of a book called *There’s no such thing as a silly question* produced by Interact, Very Special Kids and the Gandal Trust.

With the assistance of the Monash Department of Paediatrics, Very Special Kids and the Victorian Paediatric Palliative Care Program, a panel of presenters enlightened students with a real world view of helping families who are in regular contact with doctors, hospitals and the health system.

Parents Lisa Buchner and Lisa Evans shared their experiences, helping future clinicians understand the needs of parents and children where ongoing ill-health is a daily part of life. Monash Department of Paediatrics course coordinator, Dr Amanda Walker (MBBS (Hons) 1984) presented guidance on how to break bad news, and help communicate with parents in difficult times. Social work graduate (1998, 2002), Carol Quayle talked about the paediatric aspect of palliative care.

Nursing shares in $1.1 million for palliative care research in Victoria

An in-depth look into patient decision-making in palliative care will be furthered due to a recent National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) grant awarded to Dr Susan Lee of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and member of the palliative care research team.

Dr Lee will build on her previous PhD research on the processes of patient decision-making in palliative care where she found that relationships and communication skills that health professionals develop with patients were critical to patient involvement in decision-making.

In this new study, she aims to investigate the key components of successful decision-making skills and then develop and pilot an education program and skill measures for undergraduate and postgraduate health professional students.

A podcast of the session can be found at: www.med.monash.edu.au/alumni/events.html#event070220

An electronic version of *There’s no such thing as a silly question*, can be downloaded from: www.vsk.org.au/WhatsNew

Call for participants in knee study

Are you between 25 and 60? Do you have healthy knees?

If so, we would like to invite you to join our study about how weight, body composition and physical activity influence the risk of developing knee arthritis.

It would involve having a Magnetic Resonance Image scan of the knee and a body composition scan now, and again in two years time. This will tell you your risk of osteoporosis and fracture, and how your body composition changes over time.

If you would like more information regarding participation in this study, please contact Judy Hankin on (03) 9903 0553 or email judy.hankin@med.monash.edu.au


Find a friend

Do you ever wonder what happened to that old Monash friend that you had such a good time with?

Please contact us and we’ll do our best to put you in touch. Your name, course and year of completion are needed as a starting point as well as those details for your friend as well. It is useful to have your written permission to pass your details onto the friend in question. If your friend’s contact details are on file, we can then ask the friend to contact you. (The Australian Privacy Act does not allow us to give out contact details without prior permission.) More and more alumni are taking advantage of this handy service. Email: alumni@med.monash.edu.au

A new $4.2 million Melbourne Monash Problem Gambling and Treatment Centre has been established between Monash University, the University of Melbourne and the Victorian Government.

Centre joint director of primary care research at Monash, Professor Shane Thomas said the facility would research new approaches to treatment, develop better clinical practices, train staff working in gamblers’ help services and establish postgraduate training in problem gambling treatment.

“Our aim is to research the many treatments in use to determine which solutions work best, either independently or in combination” Professor Thomas said.

He said the role of the family doctor in helping problem gamblers was also a focus of the centre’s work.

Monash offers help to gamblers
Help reverse disease, protect children or educate regional health professionals

The Monash University Medical Foundation is proud to showcase three of our exciting projects and invites you to support these important causes.

Help us find a cure for MS

Diana Asmar is well-known for her determination. She became Mayor of Darebin, despite being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in 2000. She is still a councillor for the City of Darebin and fundraises to help find a cure for Multiple Sclerosis – an unpredictable and disabling disease affecting 16,000 Australians. Passionate about helping find a cure for MS, Cr Asmar discovered that one of the world’s best research teams was working on her doorstep at Monash University. Your support for leading-edge research into MS will assist in overcoming this painful, debilitating and frightening disease.

Protecting children

Assist foremost researcher Professor Chris Goddard and his team at the National Research Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse to reduce the incidence of child abuse. The centre’s vision is to prevent child abuse, inform policies as well as improving practices responding to abuse. The NRCPCA works in collaboration with the Australian Childhood Foundation. Your support can make a positive difference to children growing up in the harshest of circumstances.

www.med.monash.edu.au/foundation/nrcpca

Help a West Gippsland student

Help a West Gippsland student afford to study a medicine, nursing or specified health sciences degree at Monash. The Tim McArdle Bursary helps students like the 2007 winner, midwifery student Amy Walker-Hassett. She is pictured here with Mrs Patricia McArdle Wilson, mother of the Warragul GP, media personality and Monash alumnus, the late Dr Tim McArdle. Your support will help students intending to work in West Gippsland as health practitioners on graduation.

Photo courtesy of The Warragul Gazette

Yes, I would like to support medical research at Monash University. I make my donation in support of:

- Diana Asmar MS Research Fund
- NRCPCA
- The Tim McArdle Bursary
- $50
- $100
- $500
- $1000 or my choice of: $____________

Payment method: 
- Cheques made payable to: Monash University
- Visa
- Mastercard

Name on card: __________________________ Card number: _______/_______/_______/_______

Expiry date: _______/_______ CCV# (last three digits on back of card): __________

Signature: ______________________________

Please forward your donation to fax: (03) 9905 0750 or Monash University Medical Foundation, PO Box 64, Monash University, VIC 3800. All donations to Monash University of $2 or more are tax deductible within Australia.

Please send my receipt to:

Title: _______ Name: __________________________ Organisation: __________________________

Address: __________________________ Postcode: _______ Phone number: _______

If you have any questions about a specific area of research, please call the Monash University Medical Foundation on: (03) 9905 9329 or email: foundation@med.monash.edu.au. We thank you for your support.
1968 Monash medical alumni 40 year reunion

The 1968 MBBS group has already starting planning their 40 year reunion. The details to date are:

Dates: Friday, 14 November and Saturday, 15 November 2008
Location: Hobart, Tasmania
Venue: To be advised
Contacts: Raold Fullerton, David Challis, John Goy

For more information, please contact the foundation, details below.

Message to the MBBS class of 1968

Dr Gwenda Seiler would like to hear from her classmates from the medicine class of 1968. Please contact alumni@med.monash.edu.au as we have permission from Dr Seiler to pass her contact details onto you.

2008 reunions

Medicine alumni interested in organising or attending reunions in 2008, should contact the foundation to express interest. Some alumni have already been in touch about the following reunions, so if you are from one of the below classes and would like to see your reunion come to fruition, please contact us.

Reunions being talked about currently are:

- 1973 Monash medical alumni 35 year reunion
- 1978 Monash medical alumni 30 year reunion
- 1988 Monash medical alumni 20 year reunion

Please contact the alumni office on (03) 9905 9329 or alumni@med.monash.edu.au and we will ensure that you are put in touch with other alumni interested in reunions.

Seeking MBBS 1987 alumni

Some 1987 MBBS graduates have expressed interest in a 21 year reunion (since there was no 20 year one). If you are keen to be part of the organising committee or to just attend, please contact us to be connected with your classmates.

Keeping in touch

Monash University Medical Foundation
Email: alumni@med.monash.edu.au
Phone: + 61 (03) 9905 9329
Fax: +61 (03) 9905 0750
PO Box 64
Monash University
VIC 3800

1997 MBBS reunion

Alumni at the 1997 MBBS 10 year reunion: Dr Marina Malcolm, Dr Michelle Leadston, Dr Emma Gilbert and Dr Brendan Spence

MBBS Class of 1997 alumni: Dr Carrie Kausman, Dr Lior Rauchberger and Dr Jane Issac