The Truly Academic Physician

There are many obstacles today to launching a medical career, not the least of which is simply getting started. Today’s doctor experiences the pressure of competition all along the way—from his or her earliest striving for top grades in high school to getting into the best college or university, and, finally, the very intense competition to get into medical school. After that, the struggle for grades and funding to pay for school takes over. In many cases, that funding challenge doesn’t go away even throughout the final stages of training in residency and fellowship.

At the Emory Eye Center, one ophthalmology fellow, Brian Sippy, MD/PhD, finds himself much in that category. Because he chose to go a different route—that of the MD/PhD—some of the funding challenge, at least early on, was lessened. A current nationwide push to get medical students to go into the clinician/scientist track allowed for some scholarship money. The problem is that once the training is over—and it is years in the making—the options and salaries on the other end often fail to compensate for the promising future the MD/PhD program suggested. In fact, many MD/PhD graduates don’t make it to the final stages and choose instead to become full-time clinicians, leaving the research for others to pick up. But who will pick up the slack?

“The future challenge,” says Dr. Sippy, “is for programs to support these academic physicians. It’s a risky monetary investment in a way for MD/PhD programs,” he says. “The attrition rate is so high, but the rewards can be so great. Where but in the university setting can one accomplish so much, given the right resources and support?”

Nevertheless, Dr. Sippy (resident ’97-00; oculopathology fellow ’00-01), currently a vitreoretinal fellow at EEC, has chosen all the difficult routes along the way. But, he says, it’s been worth it and he would do it all over again. As he says, “I’m 35 and still ‘in school,’ so to speak, while many of my colleagues are already in lucrative practices. It is

Brian Sippy’s research aids in treating patients. Continued on page 3
Dear Alumni and Friends,

The past academic year has seen continued departmental change, both sweet and sour. The latter was the loss of Tom Aaberg Jr. and Melissa Meldrum, who relocated to their roots in the North, moving to Grand Rapids, Michigan. The positive was the addition of Enrique Garcia-Valenzuela, who assumed the position on the vitreoretinal staff for residents at the Atlanta VA with both his private vitreoretinal practice and his research on pigment epithelium at the Eye Center. After working with Tom Jr. for more than six months, Baker Hubbard has expanded his pediatric retina practice to include children with retinoblastoma. Paul Sternberg has returned to the care of patients with choroidal melanoma, which he did while heading the COMS (Collaborative Ocular Melanoma Study) at the Eye Center.

The ability to diagnose retinal degenerations increased as Machelle Pardue, PhD, assumed oversight of electrophysiological testing after visiting several top centers in the country to develop the proper organization. She and her colleague, Ronald Shuchard, form the growing nucleus of investigational retinal physiology in the department, which complements the molecular biology/immunology efforts of John Nickerson, PhD, Jeffrey Boatright, PhD, Judy Kapp, PhD, and the scientist under recruitment for the new endowed chair, the Reunette Harris Chair.

Resident training in refractive surgery moved beyond the lecture hall and wet lab in January 2002. Diane Song assumed the clinical supervision of resident LASIK surgery, with the first resident on the rotation being Brad Randleman, who will continue at Emory Eye Center and Grady for at least a year as a comprehensive ophthalmologist and mentor for residents. Brad's third-year peers have broken the cornea/LASIK mold of the past few years: Sunil Srivastava will go to a uveitis fellowship while Valerie Biouss will stay in neuro-ophthalmology at the Emory Eye Center. Jiong Freeman (UCLA) and Stewart O’Keefe (EEC) will take retina fellowships. In the past decade, many of our residents have elected to work in an academic environment. We are fortunate to have eight former Emory residents on our faculty: Baker Hubbard III, Dan Martin, Maria Aaron, Laura King, Theresa Kramer, Allen Beck, Tasos Costarides, and Valerie Biouss.

I'm happy to write that teaching continues as a major emphasis of the department. Nancy Newman has been nominated as the recipient of the second teaching chair, the LeoDelle Jolley Chair.

From the Chairman
Tom Aaberg Sr.
Chair (Geoff Brooker holds the other, the Walthour and de la Perriere Chair). Hans Grossniklaus, together with his wife, Daurice, has just received a competitive Emory University teaching award, rarely given to the School of Medicine, for his internet-based ocular pathology program for undergraduate, medical student, resident/fellow and CME teaching.

I hope you enjoy reading about the accomplishments of our faculty, alumni and friends in this newsletter. I apologize for highlighting a only a few of the developments, but I encourage you to send information on your activities, or that of fellow alumni, to Joy Bell, director of public relations. Thank you for your continuing support of the Emory Eye Center.

With warmest regards,

Tom Aaberg Sr., director and chairman
Emory Eye Center

Continued from front

absolutely understandable that many do not choose the academic route,” he says. “But I have enjoyed the various challenges and opportunities my particular journey has afforded me.”

The challenges are many for a young physician/scientist who finds him- or herself in a fellowship program, while also needing to spend time in research and academic endeavors. Time is squeezed out of “off hours” to conduct research, write or attend professional meetings. “We need to have strong mentoring programs established and time allotted away from patient care,” says Dr. Sippy. “We also need facilities and equipment at our disposal. What happens is that these young physicians can begin to feel unproductive, knowing that they could do more. The typical system fails to facilitate them, for whatever reasons.”

At a university, having strong ties and relationships between the academic (research) and the clinical departments can help foster a real understanding of the particular needs of the clinician/scientist.

At the University of Southern California, where Dr. Sippy attended medical school, the relationship between the graduate school and the School of Medicine was nonexistent some years ago. Dr. Sippy worked with the dean of the graduate school on a regular basis to coordinate activities with the medical school, and thus, to help remedy that relationship problem. These are the sorts of things that need to begin happening across the nation in order to recognize the particular strengths these clinician/scientists can bring to a university setting, he says.

“MD/PhD’s are trained as leaders in administrative tasks and by their nature are generally leaders,” says Dr. Sippy. “We can be an integral part of meeting the challenges that face medicine in our time. Because I’ve been in the academic and administrative worlds since 1989 when I first began medical school, I have certain talents and experiences that can be helpful to academic programs. For example, I have been able to foster a relationship

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Class Notes

- Maria Mendicino Aaron (resident ’96-99) and husband Wayne have a new baby girl, Christina. This new addition in her life will undoubtedly compound her work load as director of the Residency Program!
- W. Houdijn Beekhuis (visiting scientist ’84), whose focus is cornea and refractive surgery, resides in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, with his wife, who has a computer training programs business. His son has a degree in civil engineering, and his daughter is training to be an orthopedic surgeon. He has a hobby of ceramics and devotes a lot of time to porcelain, reduction-fired tableware and other pottery.
- James J. Bedrick (retina fellow ’81-82), who lives in Charlotte, N.C., with wife Adele, a realtor, focuses on vitreoretinal diseases and surgery. He and Adele have two children: daughter Emily, a first-year medical student at Northwestern University, who plans to practice ophthalmology; and son Jonathan, who has been admitted by early decision to Emory University, class of 2006.
- Robert Beldavs (cornea fellow ’91-92), who lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada, has two children: Evia, 3 years old, and Erica, 5 months old. He and his family enjoy hiking. The focus of his practice is cataract surgery and some cornea and refractive surgery.
- Randolph L. Carter Jr. (resident ’62-65) has retired. He and wife Charlotte are looking forward to the completion of a new home in Amelia Island, Fla. Dogs, grandchildren, home building and hunting and fishing occupy their time.
- Michael Collins (resident ’97-00), wife Kristin and daughter Elizabeth Claire have relocated from Shawnee, Kan., to Ft. Myers, Fla.
- Geoffrey Crawford (cornea fellow ’83-84) is serving a clinical university appointment in cornea and refractive surgery at the University of Western Australia in Perth. He has authored or co-authored 53 articles in major peer-reviewed journals, mainly related to keratoprosthesis research on pterygia. He is involved in trials with a new solid-state refractive laser also.
- Dominick A. Cruciani, Jr. (resident ’59-62), who lives in Clarks Green, Penn., with his wife of 48 years, has five children. Among them are two physicians in internal medicine, one pharmacist, one full-time mother and a tavern owner. His 11 grandchildren fill his life.
- Ravi Gutta (cornea fellow ’00-01) and wife Madhavi have relocated to Woodland Hills, Calif. where he is in practice.
- John C. Hagan III (resident ’72-75) has been appointed editor of Missouri Medicine, the medical journal of the Missouri State Medical Association. He has published more than 100 scientific articles, designed several commercial surgical instruments, and is a reviewer for three medical journals. He also writes for Medical Economics magazine, and the Dec. 4, 2000, issue featured his article on the Porsche High Performance Driving School at Road Atlanta.
- David J. Harris (cornea fellow ’86-87) practices cornea/external disease and refractive surgery in Knoxville, Tenn. Spouse Patricia is a hospital pharmacist, and they have three children: Lauren (19), David (16) and Andy (14). Hobbies include boating, hiking, swimming and landscaping.

- Jeffrey A. Kammer (glaucoma fellow ’00-01) and wife Karen have moved to Beachwood, Ohio, where he is in practice in nearby Fairview Park.

- Price M. Kloess (cornea fellow ’90-91) has recently opened the Alabama Laser Eye Center in Birmingham (www.alabamavision.com).

- Thomas Lenart (pediatric fellow ’98-99) and wife Sylvia reside in Woodinville, Wash. He recently published a book chapter with EEC’s Scott Lambert (Pediatric). He and wife Sylvia, a clinical nurse specialist in critical care nursing, have a 4-year-old son, Andrew Thomas, and 2-year-old daughter, Nicole Ann. Hobbies include jogging, hiking, biking and building model rockets with son Andrew.

- Edward C. Mattison (resident ’69-71) lives in Anderson, S.C., practicing general ophthalmology. Son Craig, an anesthesiologist who trained at Emory, practices in San Francisco, while son Brian, a CPA, also works in the city by the bay. He has three grandchildren.

- Jeffrey Sheridan (resident ’94-97) is currently in practice at Total Eye Care Center in Clermont, Eustis and Leesburg, Fla., with alumnus Craig Fishman (resident ’93-96). Hobbies include paintball and recent training for a rock’n roll marathon.

- Fumio Shiraga (visiting professor ’98-99) has published in several major journals this year. He also was an instructor in several courses at AAO, including the Retina 2001 subspecialty course. He resides in Okayama, Japan.

- John A. Wells, Jr. (resident ’66-69), who lives in Columbia, S.C., works three days a week with son Jack (resident ’88-91) at the Palmetto Retina Center.

- William R. Wilson (glaucoma ’96-97) now serves at Martin Army Community Hospital in Ft. Benning, Ga., transferring from Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

- Neil Bryan Zusman (resident ’85-88), lives in Port Charlotte, Fla., with wife Amy and sons Ryan (14) and Robbie (9) and daughter Rachel (10). After 12 years of being associated with a multi-specialty clinic, he opened his own private practice, Zusman Eye Care Center, and does general ophthalmology with a special focus on clear corneal cataract surgery under topical anesthesia. His hobbies of exercise, tennis and swimming obviously are enjoyed in his Florida setting.
Residents Day 2001

Our “Residents Day 2001,” Emory Eye Center’s annual celebration in honor of senior residents and fellows, was held June 1 and 2. The weekend featured academic presentations from second- and third-year residents, as well as our annual golf tournament and a dinner reception to cap it all off. The award for best research project was awarded to Sunil Srivastava (best second-year) and to Mark Lobanoff (best third-year). Our guest lecturer, Ben Glasgo from Jules Stein Eye Institute, presented “The Role of Tear Lipocalin in Dry Eye Disease.”

Colonel Steve Grimes, US Army, cornea fellow in '93, now is Chief of Ophthalmology at Brooke Army Medical Center. The center, located in San Antonio, Texas, is one of only three Army training sites for ophthalmology. It provides support for “Enduring Freedom” as well as support for the military in Germany. Dr. Grimes works at a new state-of-the-art hospital which will soon acquire a new Autonomous Summit Laser system. When current EEC fellow Tony Johnson ('01-02) concludes his fellowship, he will join Grimes and be involved in the laser clinic. Personnel from the center also go on an annual missions trip to a third-world country—Honduras this year—where they perform cataract and strabismus surgery to underserved citizens. In addition, a telemedicine program provides diabetic screening to numerous patients off-site. We salute you, Col. Grimes!

Recent Awards

- Thomas M. Aaberg Sr., MD, the F. Phinzy Calhoun Sr. Professor and chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology in the Emory School of Medicine, received the prestigious Hermann Wacker Prize at this year’s conference of Club Jules Gonin held in Taormina, Sicily, in fall 2000. As recipient of the Wacker Prize, Dr. Aaberg also was the guest lecturer for the conference.
- Paul Sternberg, MD, received a plaque from the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) for his role in developing the AAO Leadership School.
- Doyle Stulting, MD/PhD, received the Heed Award at the Heed Luncheon, held during the recent AAO meeting in New Orleans. Additionally, he has been appointed the new editor of the prestigious journal, Cornea, which is published eight times per year. He will serve for a six-year appointment.
- Hans E. Grossniklaus, MD, director of the L.F. Montgomery Eye Pathology Laboratory at the Emory Eye Center (EEC), has received Emory University's Teaching Fund (UTF) grant. Co-investigator of the grant and co-creator of the initiative is Daurice Grossniklaus, his wife. Preliminary findings from this initiative were presented at the American Association of Ophthalmic Pathologists in New Orleans in November 2001. This new award, together with two other grants he currently holds, provides Dr. Grossniklaus a total of $1,429,408 in grant money.
Our National Tragedy and One Alumnus Who Intervened

The tragedy of September 11 has affected us on a personal level and collectively, as a nation. For those in Manhattan and Washington, D.C., the heroic and selfless efforts of others are now part of the local oral history in Manhattan.

For Emory Eye Center alumnus Emil William Chynn (cornea fellow ’96-97), volunteering his time to help those in dire need was a natural reaction to a horrific event. His professional skills and quick response helped numerous victims of the World Trade Center (WTC) tragedy. According to a New York times article (1/15/02), among the 790 injured survivors treated by nearby hospitals, some 204 were treated for eye injuries.

A native Manhattanite, Dr. Chynn lives in “the Village,” as New Yorkers are fond of saying. Because of his proximity to the Towers, Dr. Chynn quickly arrived at “Ground Zero” upon finding out about the attacks. He stayed for six days. Using supplies from his home, he worked alone helping survivors who had eye injuries. He is a stellar example of how one person can truly make a difference.

To see an in-depth account of his story—with photographs—go to the interview by the American Council on Science and Health:

http://www.acsh.org/interviews2001/drchynn/default.html

In Memoriam

The following Emory Eye alumni passed away since our last newsletter. We extend our condolences to their families and friends.

Eugenio de Juan Sr. (resident ’56-59)
William A. Steed (resident ’47-49)
George Sumner Blodgett III (resident ’65-68)
Andrew Jack Causey (EENT-VA ’53-56)

New Perimeter Location

The Emory Eye Center has opened a new facility within the Emory Clinic - Perimeter location at 875 Johnson Ferry Road. Serving the northern metro area, the new center provides general vision screening exams and spectacle and contact lens fittings along with a state-of-the-art optical shop. Ann Van Wie, OD, and Ken Rosengren, OD, highly skilled optometrists, are on site to provide the highest level of vision care for a variety of patients.

To schedule an appointment, call 404-778-6010.

Coming Up in 2002

Lecture and grand rounds
Thursday, April 18 noon to 1 p.m. and Friday, April 19, 8-9 a.m.
Steven Bernstein, MD/PhD
Department of Ophthalmology
University of Maryland

Residents Weekend
Friday and Saturday, June 7 and 8

Updates in Macular Degeneration:
A Public Symposium
Friday, October 25
(tentative date)
Emory Conference Center
and Hotel

Alumni Post-Graduate Course
Friday, December 6
Emory Conference Center
and Hotel

Category 1 continuing medical education credit is offered on an hour-for-hour basis for grand rounds and continuing medical education courses.

Register for CME course by visiting www.emory.edu/WHSC/MED/CME
Patient Care

Crawford Long’s New Face Enhances EEC Services

The new Crawford Long Medical Office Tower (MOT) opened in early Spring as an integral part of the Crawford Long $318,000,000 Hospital Redevelopment Project. The new complex provides state-of-the-art medical care to the Atlanta community. Housed on the ninth floor of the MOT is the Emory Eye Center. No longer considered a “satellite,” the Eye Center's second main location features comprehensive and sub-specialty eye care. From routine vision care, eyeglasses and contact lenses to cutting edge diagnoses and treatments for eye disease, the Emory Eye Center at the new Crawford Long Hospital Medical Office Tower has it all!

Eye Center Welcomes New Faculty Member

Dr. Enrique Garcia-Valenzuela has joined the vitreoretinal surgery and disease section of the Emory Eye Center and the Department of Ophthalmology at Emory University School of Medicine and The Emory Clinic. “The Eye Center is particularly pleased to add this pre-eminent clinician and researcher to the team,” says Dr. Thomas Aaberg Sr. “His expertise combines the best of both worlds we are engaged in at Emory—helping patients and conducting vital research.”

Dr. Garcia received his medical degree from the National University of Mexico, Mexico City. He also holds master of science and doctor of philosophy degrees in cellular biology from the New York Medical College. He completed an internal medicine internship at Westchester Medical Center, New York, and an ophthalmology residency at the Eye and Ear Infirmary of the University of Illinois, Chicago. He recently completed a vitreoretinal surgery fellowship at Kresge Eye Institute in Michigan with Dr. Gary Abrams. During his training he earned multiple awards, including the Retina Society Fellow’s Award, the Beem-Fisher Award and the Martha Lucas Pate Memorial Award.

Dr. Garcia has a clinical interest in diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, retinal detachment surgery and other diseases of the retina. His research interest is in retinal transplantation and gene therapy. He is board certified by the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Society for Neuroscience, and the American Medical Association.

15th Southeastern Vitreoretinal Seminar
February 9, 2001

Dan Martin, who coordinated the event, presents the 2001 speaker’s plaque to Gary W. Abrams of Kresge Eye Institute. Abrams addressing a standing-room-only group at Emory Eye Center’s Calhoun Auditorium.
AREDS

Emory was one of 11 national centers that participated in the Age-Related Eye Disease Study, begun some 10 years ago. Principal investigator Dan Martin (resident ’87-90) released findings to a packed audience of some 300 patients, many of whom brought family members. Several local media representatives also were present. Building on the success of this program, the Eye Center is currently planning a macular degeneration symposium to be held in the fall.

The JORDY at Emory and “Good Morning America”

Emory Eye Center’s Director of Low Vision, Dr. Ned Witkin, and two of his patients were seen on ABC’s “Good Morning America” on June 20, 2001. The inspiring piece featured the newest incarnation of the JORDY, a head-mounted low-vision device in its second version. The device was provided to a patient who had never used one and to a patient who had previously used the inaugural version. Both patients—who are grandfathers—were especially grateful to be able to see their families better and to be able to read. One patient was able—while GMA cameras rolled—to read to his grandchildren for the first time, a moment that was touching not only to his immediate family, but also to the news crew. Here, grandfather Jesse Linzer and his Atlanta family chat while the cameras roll.

All Eyes Are On Us — Again!

- The Emory Eye Center is once again listed in the top 10 nationally-ranked eye centers in the July 23, 2001, U.S. News & World Report. This important distinction puts the Emory Eye Center in the top ten for three years running.
- In Atlanta Magazine’s August 2001 special health issue, “Top Doctors,” six Emory Eye Center physicians were ranked among Atlanta’s best doctors, so ranked by their peers. The rankings were derived from the book America’s Top Doctors (Castle Connolly Medical Ltd.).
- In addition, Ophthalmology Times, a semi-monthly newspaper written and reviewed by ophthalmologists, named the Emory Eye Center in “Best Overall Program” as eighth (the same as last year), in “Best Clinical (patient care) Programs” as seventh (a new ranking for the Eye Center) and as sixth in the category “Best Residency Programs” (same as last year) in its November 1, 2001, issue.
Research

between the School of Medicine and the Emory Eye Center. I have had the opportunity to present and teach on several occasions, the most recent being a presentation at Emory’s 26th Annual Comprehensive Board Review in Internal Medicine and a presentation about common eye problems for Emory’s Updates in Primary Care seminar.

Emory Eye Center’s status as a “Top Ten” program in the country mandates that we value and practice high academic standards. Toward that goal, EEC Director Thomas Aaberg Sr. has actively searched for clinician/scientists to fill positions vacated over the last few months. Enrique Garcia-Valenzuela, MD/PhD, was hired last fall, and Doyle Stulting and Anastasios Costarides are both MD/PhD’s. Additionally, Scott Lambert is a “classic” clinician/scientist, who has NIH grant support and carries on both teaching and patient care. Also at Emory Eye Center, Drs. Paul Sternberg, Nancy Newman, Dan Martin and Hans Grossniklaus carry out similar challenges with their work on multiple research grants and clinical trials. First-year resident Claxton Baer (’01-04) has similarly chosen the MD/PhD track.

The challenge nationwide is that patient-load demands so infringe on available time that these highly specialized physicians often have to attend to patient-care needs first, and academic matters second.

Today’s clinician/scientist has much to offer an overburdened system. His or her particular training, melding research, teaching and clinical skills, enables them to excel in translational medicine, bridging the gap between the research lab and administering care to the patient. Investing in such a clinician/scientist has been deemed important by Research to Prevent Blindness and the American Ophthalmological Society, which established the RPB-AOS-Knapp Fund Ophthalmic Pathology Fellowship. Sippy was the first recipient of the fellowship, which provided him a salary, unrestricted research funds and travel money.

Unfortunately, few choose to go into certain fields like ophthalmic pathology, which is a more academic and a less financially attractive subspecialty, leaving an entire future generation of academic eye centers sadly lacking in ophthalmic pathologists.

The two-year fellowship funding also has allowed Sippy to be mentored by two of the brightest and best in the country—EEC’s Paul Sternberg Jr. for his retinal fellowship and Hans Grossniklaus for pathology/research.

“Brian will have outstanding training in eye pathology and vitreoretinal surgery. This makes him an attractive candidate as an academic physician, and he is currently being recruited by several prestigious institutes,” says Dr. Grossniklaus.

Dr. Sippy, as he says, had “humble beginnings in ‘Small Town,’ Kansas,” but he has managed along the way to win funding and garner the support from many key individuals to get where he is today—a promising, bright and highly trained clinician/scientist.

“The clinician/scientist program is supremely important to the Emory Eye Center,” says Thomas Aaberg Sr., “and we are lucky to have Brian Sippy. He and his colleagues across the country will form the future of ophthalmology.”

Emory Eye Center Receives Core Grant’ Providing 20 Consecutive Years of Funding

Henry Edelhauser, PhD, director of research at the Emory Eye Center, and his colleagues have received $1.5 million in research dollars through the National Eye Institute (NEI), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The grant covers a five-year period, beginning in April. The NEI Core Center Grant includes three modules: 1) Structural Biology; 2) Analytical Biochemistry/Molecular Biology; and 3) Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Emory Eye Center’s past Core Center Grant has successfully supported collaborative vision research and service, involving some 33 faculty (including more than 20 NEI-funded principal investigators), 20 postdoctoral fellows, and six pre-doctoral fellows and has generated over 250 publications over the past five years.

Continued from page 3
2001 AAO Alumni Reception in New Orleans

Lisa and Craig Fishman (resident '93-96).

EEC third-year resident Valerie Biousse with Paul Petelin (resident '98-01) and wife Stephanie, Michael Collins (resident '97-00) and wife Kristin.

Tom Aaberg greets Barry Hyman (resident '67-70) and wife Ellen.

At the OPHTPAC reception, the AAO honored Georgia Rep. John Lewis for his role in sponsoring the Glaucoma Screening Bill. Here, Paul Sternberg and wife Gloria with Rep. Lewis.

The alum who traveled the longest distance to attend — Fumio Shiraga (visiting professor '98-99) of Okayama, Japan, with Paul Sternberg.

Alumni

Paula Sugarman (Masters in Ophthalmic Med. Technology '01) and Brad Randleman (resident '99-02) with Charla Hagman (Masters in Ophthalmic Med. Technology '02) and Stewart O'Keefe (resident '99-02).