

# Carolina Public Health

SCHOOL of PUBLIC HEALTH • The UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL • WINTER 1999

FACULTY EXCELLENCE REWARDED —

## Gillings, Okun, Slee Gifts Deliver Record Year: 3 Endowed Professorships

A \$1 million gift honoring health outcomes pioneer Vergil Slee, and matching grants of \$501,000 to the Dennis Gillings and Dan Okun professorship campaigns, place the School of Public Health in the enviable position of celebrating the creation of three new endowed professorships in less than a year.

"High on my list of priorities for the School is the creation of endowments to support faculty," said Dean William L. Roper. "One of the ironies of our School is that our very strong faculty has been built without the benefit of a single endowed faculty position," said Roper. "Through the gifts of some very generous organizations and individuals, however, that picture is starting to change dramatically."

The Gillings Professorship was established last summer through a \$1 million gift from Dr. Dennis Gillings, chairman and chief executive officer of Quintiles Transnational Corporation. Additional gifts of \$2 million are pledged to the professorship and to meet other needs in the Department of Biostatistics. Faculty colleagues of Kenan Professor Emeritus Daniel A. Okun launched a 1994 campaign to fund an endowed professorship to carry his name. State matching funds will carry that campaign past the \$600,000 mark, thereby meeting the University's requirement of \$500,000 to officially establish an endowed professorship. The School hopes to raise \$1

million or more through the continuing campaign.

The Vergil N. Slee Distinguished Professorship in Healthcare Quality Management was created through a \$1 million gift in December from the Commission on Professional and Hospital Activities (CPHA) — the not-for-profit organization that Slee founded in 1955. Under his leadership, the CPHA began collecting hospital discharge data and compiling the country's first comprehensive clinical database to establish comparative norms for diagnosis and procedure data at participating hospitals. The Commission's collection instrument — the Professional Activity Survey — became the prototype for all discharge abstract systems now in use and one of the first research tools in the field now known as 'health outcomes.' The Slee Professorship will be housed in the Department of Health Policy and Administration.

Then in January, \$501,000 in matching

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“ONE OF THE IRONIES OF OUR SCHOOL IS THAT OUR VERY STRONG FACULTY HAS BEEN BUILT WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A SINGLE

ENDOWED FACULTY POSITION. THROUGH THE GIFTS OF SOME VERY GENEROUS ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, HOWEVER, THAT PICTURE IS STARTING TO CHANGE DRAMATICALLY.”

— Dean William L. Roper

## Lines in the Sand

February 1999

One need not look further than politics or sports to understand the perils of boundary-spanning. As difficult as it may be to cross boundaries and explore new ways of pursuing our goals, the rewards often justify the risks. Those of us in the field of public health know this truism far better than most, because the nature of our work places us at the intersection of many different spheres of activity relating to health.

Within the School of Public Health, we are taking the task of boundary-spanning to new levels through a variety of activities. A prime example is the UNC Program on Health Outcomes currently under development (see "Cross-campus Collaboration" on page five). This program brings together scientific and clinical expertise from across the campus — including the schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health along with the UNC Health Care system — to focus on a common set of issues in health outcomes and quality improvement.

Another example is the UNC Management Academy for Public Health, a joint effort by the School of Public Health and UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School to offer an innovative training program for state and local public health managers in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Many other collaborative endeavors are in the pipeline, including the North Carolina Institute for Public Health and the Institute for Ethnicity, Culture and Health described in previous issues of this newsletter. These efforts all build on the School's strong tradition of multidisciplinary research, education, and practice.

As part of the School-wide *Agenda for the 21st Century*, these initiatives are guided by faculty, students, staff, and alumni who are sharply focused on our collective goal of building on past successes and achieving excellence together. All of these endeavors require that we cross intellectual as well as organizational boundaries and work with new partners to advance the public's health. These tasks are ambitious but fortunately, boundary-spanning is one of our natural strengths.

Bill Roper



## Koplan to Deliver Foard Lecture April 22

The 1999 Foard Lecture will be held on the evening of April 22 with Dr. Jeffrey P. Koplan, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as this year's Foard Lecturer. Board certified in internal medicine and preventive medicine, Dr. Koplan was appointed by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala in July 1998 and began work October 5 as both CDC director and administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR).

Dr. Koplan has served previously as president of the Prudential Center for Health Care Research and, during a distinguished 22-year Public Health Service career, as assistant surgeon general and as the first director of CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

In addition to the lecture, highlights of the evening will include the presentation of annual Alumni Association awards: the Bernard G. Greenberg Alumni Endowment Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research and Service; and the Harriet Hylton Barr Distinguished Alumnus Award for achievements in the field of public health and other contributions to the community.

The 7 p.m. lecture will be preceded by a 5:30 p.m. reception honoring Dr. Koplan and the award winners. Both events, which are free and open to the public, will be held at the Carolina Club on campus and should provide good opportunities for interaction between students, alumni, faculty, staff and area professionals.

For more information, contact: Sarah Strunk at [sarah\\_strunk@unc.edu](mailto:sarah_strunk@unc.edu) or by phone at 919-966-8368.



Jeffrey P. Koplan

# Students' Mentor and Friend, Bill Small, to Retire March 1

By Michele F. Blevins

A fixture in the School for more than a quarter century, Associate Dean William T. Small, Jr., will retire on March 1 — a move that while exciting for Bill, leaves those whose lives he's touched at Carolina missing him already.

"Dean Small has not only been a leader and an educator to the students, but he has also been our friend," said Rashmi Agarwal, a master's student in the Department of Health Policy and Administration, and chair of the 1999 Minority Health Conference. "His retirement will be a big loss to students."

Now associate dean and senior advisor for Multicultural Affairs, Small began his tenure at the School in November 1971 as coordinator of minority affairs. Then-Dean William Fred Mayes hired Small to help increase minority student enrollment in graduate degree programs. Promoted to assistant dean in 1976 and to associate dean in 1994, Small assumed his current position in 1997.

Over the years, his duties grew to encompass the interests and well being not only of minority students, but of all students. And he served as advisor to the School's two largest student organizations, the Student Union Board and the Minority Student Caucus.

A native of Wilmington, N.C., Small earned a BS in Chemistry in 1965 from North Carolina Central University in Durham. He then enrolled at UNC-CH, where he earned the MSPH in Air and Industrial Hygiene from the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering in 1969. He spent two years with the State Board of Health in Raleigh as an occupational health chemist in the Epidemiology

Division, Occupational Health Section, before returning to the School.

"Dean Small was instrumental in creating the Minority Health Conference and establishing its place as an integral part of the School of Public Health," said Dr. Michel Ibrahim, professor of Epidemiology and dean from 1982-1997.



Bill Small

The conference, which grew out of a shared commitment by Small and the students to raise awareness of minority health issues, is now in its 21st year. Over the years, he also coordinated the School's commencement activities.

"Dean Small has a passion for making sure that students are taken care of and that all of their needs are met," said Epidemiology master's student Matthew Garvin.

Friend and colleague Dr. Allan Steckler, associate dean for Academic Affairs and Global Health, smiled when reflecting on Small's contributions. It was difficult, Steckler mused, trying to carry on a conversation with Small while walking the halls of Rosenau and McGavran-Greenberg "because there was always someone coming up to him, either students, faculty or staff, wanting to talk to him about one thing or another."

Active in Durham community affairs as a member of the Durham County Health Department Board and several civic organizations, Small was recently named to the Minority Aging Community Research Advisory Committee, an inter-institutional program of UNC-CH and NCCU. He also serves on the Advisory Committee for the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Health in Education Initiative, a four-year project funded

by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Small said he hopes retirement brings more time for civic activities and his many hobbies — golf, fishing, hunting and painting. He and his wife, Rosa, plan to enlarge their backyard garden and see more of their two grown daughters, Sheila and Maria.

Of his years in Chapel Hill, Small said, "It's been a very satisfying experience, and I've seen the School do a lot of great things."

It is exciting, he said, to run into alumni who are "out there making a difference in the field of public health. We have one of the greatest schools of public health right here at UNC and I think that is reflected in our students."

Dean William L. Roper said, "I speak for the entire School of Public Health community when I thank Bill for his long record of accomplishments and all that he has given the School. We all wish him the best in this new phase of his career."

*Michele F. Blevins, a graduate assistant in External Affairs, is pursuing her MSPH in Environmental Sciences and Engineering, with an interest in science journalism.*

## Two events are being planned in Small's honor.

The first, a reception, will follow the Minority Health Conference from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on February 19 at the William and Ida Friday Continuing Education Center.

The second, a dinner sponsored by the School, is set for March 3 at The Carolina Club. To purchase dinner tickets, call Lisa Morris in Continuing Education at 919-966-1104.

## We Need Your Support

Private gifts to the School of Public Health are essential to our continued excellence in teaching, research, and service, and to our ability to attract outstanding students to our programs. All gifts — whether for the unrestricted use of the School or any of its departments and programs, or for a special fund established to meet particular needs — should be made payable to the School of Public Health, and directed to: Office of External Affairs, School of Public Health, UNC-CH, 422 Rosenau Hall, Campus Box 7400, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-7400. Please always indicate the purpose of the gift by attaching a short note of instruction. Any questions? Please call (919) 966-0198.

## Carolina Public Health

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### *New professorships, from page 1*

grants from the state of North Carolina were added to two other School of Public Health endowed professorship funds. Receiving \$334,000 was the Dennis Gillings Distinguished Professorship in Biostatistics, and receiving \$167,000 was the Okun Distinguished Professorship in Environmental Sciences and Engineering. The matching grants were awarded as part of a \$5.6 million appropriation to the Board of Governors Distinguished Professors Endowment Trust Fund and will bolster eligible funds across the 16-campus University of North Carolina system.

"These external gifts provide the vital margin of excellence that help Carolina stay in the top tier of research-based schools of public health," said Kerry Kilpatrick, chair of the Department of Health Policy and Administration and a member of the team that is helping launch The UNC Program on Health Outcomes. "Large gifts and endowments of this sort can generate funding not only to strengthen traditional research and teaching but to support the infrastructure needed to launch new initiatives to research emerging issues in public health."

Establishment of The UNC Program on Health Outcomes, a multidisciplinary research unit to be directed by Roper, was announced in January. The program will join researchers from the UNC-CH schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health, as well as from UNC Hospitals, the Sheps Center for Health Services Research, and other academic units in studies to better measure and improve the effectiveness of today's many health interventions. A portion of the CPHA gift will be used to maintain administrative databases supporting these and other research efforts at UNC-Chapel Hill and at other institutions across the country.

"The timing of the gift establishing the Slee Professorship and the assistance it provides in recruiting another top scholar in healthcare quality management to the School fit perfectly with our broad goal of

establishing UNC-Chapel Hill as a national leader in the study of health outcomes," said Roper. "One of the most important goals of the outcomes program is to develop education and training opportunities for graduate and post-graduate students — activity that is sure to be advanced through the leadership of the Slee Professor."

Vergil N. Slee, MD, MPH, is chairman of the Board of the Health Commons Institute and President Emeritus of the Commission on Hospital and Professional Activities. He has served for more than 30 years as a faculty member at the Estes Park Institute, which presents national conferences on emerging healthcare issues for hospital trustees, administrators, medical staff officers, physicians, and community representatives. Dr. Slee now resides in Brevard, North Carolina.

Dr. Slee will deliver a lecture in the School of Public Health on April 19 at 4 p.m. The lecture, which will be held in the Ibrahim Seminar Room, 1301 McGavran-Greenberg Hall, will be followed by a reception honoring Dr. Slee and his family as well as the CPHA Board.

The Department of Health Policy and Administration plans to begin recruitment activities for the new professorship next year in hopes of making the initial Slee Professorship appointment in the fall of 2000. Likewise, the Department of Environmental Sciences and Engineering plans an initial appointment to the Okun Professorship in the fall of 2000. The Gillings Professorship will be filled during the 1999-2000 academic year, as part of the Department of Biostatistics' celebration of 50 years in the School of Public Health.

To date, more than 130 UNC-system professorships have been created or enhanced by matching grants from the endowment trust fund, with more than 50 located at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Contributions to the Gillings, Okun or Slee professorship funds can be made by contacting Doug White or Sharon O'Neill at 919-966-0198.

## Health Outcomes Program Receives Glaxo Wellcome Foundation Planning Grant

Responding to the health sector's growing need better to measure and improve the effectiveness of today's many health interventions, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is creating a multidisciplinary program to focus on this area. The UNC Program on Health Outcomes has received a \$200,000 grant from the Glaxo Wellcome Foundation to support an initial 12-month planning and development process, with full operation of the program expected by fall 1999.

The goal of outcomes research is to measure the effectiveness, efficiency, and value of health interventions, with the resulting data then used to inform the health decisions of consumers, providers, purchasers and policymakers.

"There is much to be gained by bringing together the best minds from the University and from leading organizations in the health care industry and public health community to study health outcomes — gains that will ultimately advance the public's health by creating new knowledge and identifying the most effective interventions for improved health," said Dean William L. Roper, who is leading the planning effort. He will serve as the initial director of the program. "The planning grant from Glaxo Wellcome Foundation allows us to explore fully the potential of these collaborations and to outline an initial set of activities to launch the program."

Dean Roper is well versed in the area of outcomes research, having established similar programs while serving as administrator of the Health Care Financing Administration and as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Most recently, he founded one of the nation's first health plan-based health services research centers — the Prudential Center for Health Care Research — prior to ar-

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"THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH HAS A STELLAR REPUTATION FOR ITS WORK TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S HEALTH BY ADVANCING NEW IDEAS. THAT'S WHY THE FOUNDATION IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THIS GRANT TO SUPPORT THE SCHOOL'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO BOLSTER THE QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE."

— Robert A. Ingram  
Chairman, Glaxo Wellcome

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iving in Chapel Hill in July 1997 to become dean.

The program will capitalize on substantial outcomes research skills already existing at UNC-CH within the schools of Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health, as well as at UNC Hospitals, the Sheps Center for Health Services Research, the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and other academic units. By building stronger links between the research activities of the University and the needs of practitioners, the program will bring a more "applied" focus to health outcomes research.

"Glaxo Wellcome recognizes the need to evaluate how various forms of health care can improve patients' lives and enhance the delivery and efficiencies of care. We also recognize the need to demonstrate those improvements to consumers, providers, purchasers, and policy-makers," said Robert A. Ingram, chairman of Glaxo Wellcome Inc. "The UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health has a stellar reputation for its work to improve people's

health by advancing new ideas. That's why the Glaxo Wellcome Foundation is pleased to present this grant to support the School's continuing efforts to bolster the quality of health care and the quality of life."

The research opportunities created by the program will also support the development of a skilled workforce in health outcomes research, as UNC-CH students at the master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral levels will have opportunities to participate in the studies. A coordinated effort among all of the UNC-CH Health Affairs schools (Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health) to develop and maintain these educational and training experiences will be a program priority.

Supporting Dean Roper in key leadership roles during the one-year development effort are Hugh Tilson, MD, DrPH, clinical professor in the School of Public Health, as senior program advisor, and Sue Tolleson-Rinehart, PhD, as program coordinator. The program's Steering Committee includes leaders from across the University's Health Affairs division.

### Strategic Thinking is Focus of Leadership Seminar

"Strategic Thinking: The Future of Public Health" is the theme for this year's Public Health Leadership Program Spring Seminar to be held March 18-20. On March 18, Montague Brown, DrPH, JD, MBA, will discuss "Strategic Thinking for Leadership in Public Health." Dr. Brown is the editor of *Health Care Management Review*, and former chairman of Strategic Management Services, Inc. The second day of the seminar will feature a talk by Louis Rowitz, PhD, director of the Illinois Public Health Leadership Institute and a professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Rowitz will discuss "Developing Leaders for the Year 2000."

Seminar participation is limited so register early. To register, visit the Office of Continuing Education's website: <http://www.sph.unc.edu/ocel/courses/leader.htm>. Additional information can also be obtained by calling 919-966-4032 or sending an e-mail to: [ocel@unc.edu](mailto:ocel@unc.edu).

### School Launches Initiative to Advance Global Health

The School of Public Health has launched a Global Health Initiative aimed at increasing global health-oriented teaching, research and practice, while enhancing cooperative partnerships with individuals and institutions across the University, the state, the nation and the world.

Pierre Buekens, MD, chair of the Department of Maternal and Child Health, is leading a schoolwide Global Health Committee made up of faculty, alumni and students. Assisting will be Allan Steckler, DrPH, whose title changes to associate dean for Academic Affairs and Global Health to reflect his expanded responsibility for coordinating all schoolwide efforts in the area of global health. Additional goals of the Global Health Initiative include improving the emphasis of global health issues in curricula in the School and its departments, and updating and maintaining information, education and communication resources about global health activities in the School.

The Initiative's progress will be highlighted in future editions of *Carolina Public Health*.

## Carolina Gift Annuity Program provides security for donor, School

Charitable giving really can be a mutually beneficial transaction. Through the Carolina Gift Annuity Program, alumni and friends can make a gift to the University to benefit the School of Public Health and receive a guaranteed income for life.

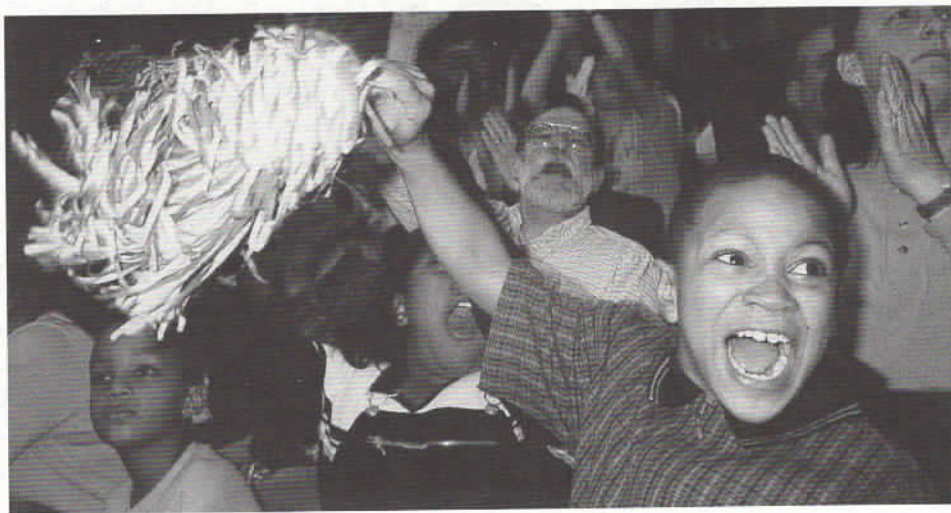
A charitable gift annuity is a contract between the individual and the University. In exchange for a gift of as little as \$5,000 that the University holds and invests, one or two beneficiaries receive fixed annual payments for life. The amount of those payments depends on the age of the beneficiaries on the date the contract is signed.

School of Public Health alumni and friends have found that the returns from the Carolina Gift Annuity Program can be quite generous. Typically, these returns outpace the returns on traditional fixed-income investments. Rates currently go as high as 9.2 percent for beneficiaries of one-life gift annuities age 80 and above.

This may be a great time to consider participating in the Carolina Gift Annuity Program, and to consider funding the annuity with a gift of appreciated stock. Doing so locks in gains from recent stock market highs, as annual payments will be based on today's fair market value of the stock, regardless of its actual cost basis. Participants will also qualify for a charitable income tax deduction for a portion of their gift, save on a portion of their long-term capital gains tax, and receive a portion of their annual payment tax-free.

Best of all, with a charitable gift annuity one can help provide a secure financial future for himself or herself or for a loved one while assuring an important future gift to the School of Public Health that will have a lasting impact for generations.

Anyone wishing additional information on the Carolina Gift Annuity Program, call Doug White or Sharon O'Neill in External Affairs, 919-966-0198.



### SPH Night Contingent Helps Make History at Carmichael

The game may have gone in the loss column, but the Lady Tar Heels and their fans, including more than 150 enthusiastic patrons of School of Public Health Night, were winners January 22 as a crowd of 10,000 — the largest in Carolina women's basketball history — packed Carmichael Auditorium to see the Lady Tar Heels take on rival Duke. Helping pack the stands behind the bench was Malachi Evans (with pom pon), a guest of Alumni Affairs Director Sarah Strunk; to his right were his sister, Qua-Neta Hinkson and Jake Shields, son of Aundra Shields, associate dean of students. Behind him and equally spirited was Biostatistics professor Mike Symons (center).

## Benefits, Reach of Award-winning Nutrition Curriculum to Expand

An award-winning CD-ROM nutrition curriculum created for medical students by a team of UNC-Chapel Hill physicians, nutritionists, and educators will now benefit undergraduate students as well. Led by Department of Nutrition Chair Steven H. Zeisel, MD, PhD, and supported by \$300,000 in gifts from the Dannon Institute, the curriculum team is adapting the popular medical school modules for use by undergraduates pursuing health-related degrees. Biology and Nutrition undergraduates at Carolina are using the initial modules in classes this spring.

"Four of the ten leading causes of death in the U.S. — diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer — are diet-related," said Zeisel, who assembled the curriculum development team in 1994. "Given this direct correlation between diet and disease, and realizing that only 30 percent of medical schools nationwide offered even a single nutrition course, we launched the Nutrition in Medicine curriculum project in hopes of plugging this serious educational gap." The first interactive CD-ROM — "Nutritional Anemias" — was released in 1995. Additional modules have followed, with the series now in use or being tested at more than 110 of the nation's medical schools.

UNC-CH's nutrition department is housed jointly in the Schools of Public Health and Medicine — the only nutrition department so positioned in the nation. With its location comes an increased focus on prevention methods and awareness strategies related to nutrition.

Work began last year to create the undergraduate series. Already completed are modules addressing nutrition and cancer, nutrition and heart disease/obesity, and

nutrition and stress. Still to come in 1999 are three additional modules that cover nutritional anemias, nutrition and diabetes/weight management, and maternal and infant nutrition. Zeisel said that in the next two years, with additional funding, he hopes to create a 10-module series — paralleling the medical school curriculum.

The CD-ROMs contain pre-programmed, interactive videos with patient interviews, laboratory visits, and pop quizzes. Students can review the material in small sections and at convenient times, making the curriculum perfect for use as a supplement to existing courses. Such independence doesn't negate faculty supervision, however, as the programs log student work onto floppy disks, thereby providing instructors with a record of the time spent on each section of each program and the results of the frequent quizzes.

The medical curriculum series has earned wide acclaim. The first program, "Nutritional Anemias," won the 1997 Bronze Medal of the National Educational Media Association. The undergraduate project was seeded by a \$30,000 Chancellor's Technology Grant awarded through UNC-CH Chancellor Michael Hooker's office last year.

"Dannon Institute has provided us the chance to again broaden the reach of nutrition education — this time among a younger crowd that is still defining its health career goals," said Zeisel. "At a time when the public is searching like never before for sound advice about diet and nutrition, we need to equip all of tomorrow's health professionals with answers. Our interactive curriculum does exactly that."

### 1999 Loyalty Fund Receptions slated for Atlanta, Charlotte, DC

Loyalty Fund receptions are being planned for this month and next by local committees in Charlotte, Atlanta and Washington, DC. In addition to providing a great opportunity for fellowship and networking among alumni, this year's receptions will feature a two-part program that should prove enlightening and fun.

At each of the three receptions, Dr. Steven H. Zeisel, chair of the Department of Nutrition, will present a short talk titled "You Are What Your Mother Ate." In addition, Aundra Shields, associate dean for students, and Sarah Strunk, director of alumni affairs, will talk about their first months in Chapel Hill and the expanding array of opportunities for alumni to become involved in the life of the School.

The reception season kicks off in Charlotte, where area alumni will gather on February 25 at the Charlotte Mint Museum of Art at 2730 Randolph Rd. On March 18, the road show heads to Washington, DC, for a gathering with metro Washington alumni downtown at the National Press Club, 14th and F Streets, NW. And on March 29, Atlanta-area alumni will get together at the home of David Ballard, PhD '91, MSPH '84, 414 Mt. Paran Road, NW, in Atlanta. Each reception will run from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Alumni living in any of these three regions will receive reception invitations shortly. If you live outside these areas but have travel plans that coincide with reception dates, please be sure to attend. For more details, contact: Martha Monnett, director of the Loyalty Fund, at [martha\\_monnett@unc.edu](mailto:martha_monnett@unc.edu) or by phone at 919-966-0198.

### Epidemiology Honors Cassel with Dedication

Recognizing the contributions of longtime department chairman, the late John C. Cassel, the Department of Epidemiology this fall dedicated its conference room in his honor at a ceremony attended by a capacity crowd of students, alumni, faculty and former colleagues. The John C. Cassel Epidemiology Conference Room is 2101G McGavran-Greenberg Hall. In addition to serving as a professor and chairman of the Department from 1959-1975, Cassel received the School's McGavran Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1976.

## Student Notes

### Institute of Medicine elects Roper to national governing council

Dean William L. Roper, MD, MPH, was elected in December to a seat on the governing Council of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences.

Roper's three-year term on the Council was effective January 1.

Roper is a past president of the Association for Health Services Research; chairman of Partnership for Prevention; and a member of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. He is also a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association.



### Students Raise \$7,340 to Help Central America Rebuild

A fund-raising effort coordinated by students in the School of Public Health generated \$7,340 in assistance for residents of the Nicaraguan town of Posoltega and affected communities in the Nicaraguan province of Nueva Segovia whose lives and homes were devastated by October's Hurricane Mitch. At a December ceremony, student volunteers, from left, Cara Siano, MPH/HBHE; Matt Price, MSPH/EPID; and Uintah Shabazz, MPH/MCH presented a check to Joe Straley, director of the Carolina Interfaith Task Force on Central America, the fiscal sponsor for the Central America Relief Committee (CARELIEF), a Triangle-based coalition dedicated to the reconstruction of Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador.

**Alfredo Armendariz**, PhD/ENVR, and **Juliet L. Hatcher**, MSPH/EPID, were two of the University's first six Royster Society of Fellows multi-year award winners, garnering a \$15,000 stipend, graduate tuition, fees and health insurance every year for five years. The society is named for UNC-CH alumnus Dr. Thomas S. Royster Jr. and his wife, Caroline H. Royster, whose gifts support talented graduate students.

**Michelle Davis**, PhD/EPID, while pursuing her PhD, has been serving as director of Maternal and Child Health for the health department of the District of Columbia.

**Eric Duell**, PhD/EPID, received one of four Lineberger Fellows Awards from the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. The \$3,000 supplementary stipend, in recognition of the excellence of his research activities, will support Duell's research under **Bob Millikan**, assistant professor of Epidemiology, to investigate whether there is a link between pesticides and the occurrence of breast cancer in women in farming communities.

**John D. Grabenstein**, PhD/EPID, received an Agency for Health Care Policy and Research Dissertation Award for his project "Effect of Community Pharmacists on Adult Immunization."

**Cindy Parlow**, BSPH/NUTR, a senior forward on the ACC Champion Lady Tar

Heels soccer team, runner up in the 1998 NCAA Championship, earned three 1998 National Player of the Year titles and was recognized as the nation's best forward by Soccer News magazine. Parlow was named National Player of the Year by the Missouri Athletic Sports Foundation and won the prestigious Hermann Trophy as the nation's top player — both for a second consecutive year. She was also named to the 1998 Soccer America Women's Collegiate Most Valuable Player's list and to the magazine's first-team All-America squad. She garnered National Player of the Year honors from Soccer News magazine, also for a second time, and was named a Soccer News first-team All-American. Parlow is training with the U.S. National Soccer Team as it prepares for the 1999 Women's World Cup to be held this summer.

**Cara Siano**, MPH/HBHE, was the researcher and associate producer of a report on sickle cell anemia and the attempt to find a genetic therapy for the disease, which aired statewide in December on UNC-TV's "North Carolina Now" news magazine program. **Michael Cassell**, PhD/HBHE, wrote the script and **Stacey Hoffman**, MPH/HBHE served as the researcher and associate producer of a second piece that aired the next night and profiled a ten-year-old North Carolina boy who has HIV. The students were enrolled in the "Medical TV Reporting" class taught by Tom Linden, MD, Glaxo Wellcome Distinguished Professor of Medical Journalism in the UNC-CH School of Journalism and Mass Communication.



## Graduate Assistant Takes Distance Learning to a New Level

Distance is not supposed to be an obstacle in distance education, and Nicole Walker (BSPH '98) is helping to prove that point.

Walker, who earned her degree in May from the Department of Health Policy and Administration, has been serving as a teaching assistant for one of the School's distance education courses and will soon assist faculty members in the development of new on-line curriculum. Common enough in itself, but she's doing it from Portugal!

Last summer, Health Policy and Administration instructor Bob Schreiner hired Walker to help prepare his on-campus course "Health Services Information Systems" for Fall presentation as part of the Public Health Leadership Program's distance learning Master's Program. Walker had taken the course her junior year, and she found that her career interests took a turn toward information technology and systems. During the summer, she helped Schreiner prepare an electronic syllabus, develop new graphics, design web pages, and learn the techniques needed to put the material on the World Wide Web. In the fall she was slated to serve as a teaching assistant.

Then basketball called — from Portugal.

Walker, of Fayetteville, was a starter on the women's basketball team at Carolina, helping lead the squad to the 1998 NCAA tournament. The team was 27-7 for the year, losing in the tournament to eventual national champion, the University of Tennessee. While Walker said she dreamed of a career in the WNBA, she made plans for graduate school. Accepted into the program at the UNC-CH School of Information and Library Science, Walker planned to work part time for the School of Public Health's Information Technology department, exploring emerging technologies



Portuguese League all-star Nicole Walker on defense during her Carolina playing days.

employed by the School in its distance learning program.

In August, however, came the call from a professional basketball team in Povoá de Varzim, a seacoast town in northern Portugal.

Walker suggested that she could continue to help from Portugal. So with only a few days between the job offer and departure and with technical support from Information Technology, she identified and purchased a laptop personal computer, and had it configured for the Internet. All she had to do now was get a telephone and find an Internet service provider (ISP).

"Getting to the course from here is not much different than getting to it from home," Walker said from Portugal. She moderates discussion groups, answers students' e-mail, and helps put material on the web.

In fact, the students didn't know Walker was not in Chapel Hill until Schreiner mentioned it during the third week of classes.

The experience, said Walker, has been very challenging and fulfilling. "I can do the two things that I love — learn more about computers and health services information systems management and play basketball."

Tim Stephens, who directs the School's distance learning efforts, said "Working with Nicole has given us invaluable experience. The circumstances behind Nicole's moving to another location are unique, but as society becomes even more mobile, other faculty and teaching assistants will be involved in instruction from beyond the physical bounds of the University."

The School currently offers a distance learning master's degree in Public Health Leadership as well as a variety of distance-learning continuing education courses. Internet versions of the

School's core curriculum courses are now being developed and will be operational in the fall, with help from Walker, who will work through the spring semester with individual faculty members to adapt their curriculum for on-line delivery.

On the court, Walker and her teammates have done well. She has been selected to play in the All-Star Game and the team has advanced to the European Cup competition and was on track at press time to make the Portuguese League and Portuguese Cup Championships.

Walker, who has deferred graduate school until the fall, said she expects to return to the United States after the European Final Four in May. Stephens and Schreiner expect her to continue to make contributions to the School's distance learning program, even if she herself is no longer distant.

## Alumni Notes

### More than 3,000 Alumni File Update in Directory's First Month

The School of Public Health launched its searchable on-line alumni directory in early January, attracting updates from alumni and connecting old friends and new alike. A collaborative effort of the School, its alumni association, and the University's General Alumni Association, the initiative provides an easy and useful way for alumni to stay in touch with each other and the School.

For the first time, alumni can go online and provide updated information, such as a change in their title or organization, the addition of an e-mail address or a move to a new city, state or country. This information is stored in a central database, which means that one update gets translated to the University and the School.

To date, more than 3,000 alumni have updated their information electronically or in hard copy format, and many have already connected with former classmates and professors. To ensure confidentiality, the directory is password protected and can only be accessed by the School's alumni, current students, faculty and staff.

Searches can be launched for a specific person, by name, or for an entire graduating class. Going to a professional meeting in Chicago? Then search the directory to find friends you can meet for dinner. Interested in learning more about employment opportunities at the CDC? Search the directory by organization. Where available, home and work address, phone, fax and e-mail information are provided, as well as graduating year and degree.

"Locating 'lost' alumni and helping alums reconnect with one another has been a challenge for years," said Meg Molloy, president of the School of Public Health Alumni Association. "This new networking capability is strengthening ties between old friends and with our alma mater. Those who haven't tried it, should go online and check it out!"

**Dana M. Bonas**, MSPH '98, presented her master's research on frequency of concurrent sexual partners in U.S. women at an invitational conference held by the National Center for Health Statistics this fall. Bonas is an outcomes manager for the Care Management Department at Glaxo Wellcome in the Research Triangle Park.

**Michael L. Boner**, MPH '77, has been elected to a two-year term on the Board of Directors of the Biomedical Marketing Association. He is national director of corporate accounts for Roche Diagnostics and lives in Baltimore.

**Tamera Coyne-Beasley**, MPH '97, received the 1998 N.C. Gun Violence Prevention Citizen of the Year Award from North Carolinians Against Gun Violence. She is an assistant professor of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine in the UNC-CH School of Medicine.

**C. Morrison Farish**, MSPH '70, was elected president of the South Carolina Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The SCAAP represents about 550 pediatricians in South Carolina.

**Joe Mangano**, MPH '78, has authored "Low Level Radiation and Immune System Damage: An Atomic Era Legacy," a book which examines how much and what types of man-made ionizing radiation (from atomic bomb tests and nuclear

power plants) have entered the U.S. environment since the 1940s, while analyzing the immune-related health effects to the nation's baby boomers.

**Lynn Douglas Mouden**, MPH '94, received the 1998 Distinguished Service Award from the Missouri Dental Association. Acting chief of the Bureau of Dental Health, Missouri Department of Health, and an associate clinical professor in the School of Dentistry at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, Mouden chairs the MDA's Council on Dental Health and Education and the Missouri Children's Dental Health Commission, and is president of the Missouri Dental Foundation.

**David Rust**, MPH '97, has been named director of the Burke County Health Department.

**Diane Marie St. George**, PhD '98, is doing post-doctoral work with associate professor **Genie Eng** in the Department of Health Behavior and Health Education's Community Health Scholars Program. St. George also spent three months during 1998 in Slovakia conducting research at the Institute of Preventive and Clinical Medicine in Bratislava. Her primary project there was a study of the relationship between low-level lead exposure and cognitive impairments in children.

# Alumni Director Reflects on First Months Back at UNC, Discusses Challenges Ahead for Alumni and Students

*In early November, Sarah Strunk (MHA '91) joined the School as Director of Alumni Affairs. Strunk earned her undergraduate degree in Public Policy from Duke University and her MHA here in the Department of Health Policy and Administration. Since then, she has worked for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, Duke University Health System and Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in a variety of strategic planning, business planning and marketing roles. Active in the SPH Alumni Association and the HPAA Alumni Section throughout her career, Strunk recently took time out to reflect on her first few months in her new position and discuss her vision and goals. Following are excerpts from that conversation.*

**Q** *You've been on the job now for about three months. How have you been spending your time? What has surprised you about being back at the School?*

Time has flown — what a great few months! I've spent a lot of time listening and learning — talking to alumni, section and alumni association leadership, department chairs and registrars, the School's three previous alumni directors, other alumni directors within the University and in other schools of public health — in short, to all who are willing to share their opinions with me! I've learned much from those conversations and intend to use this foundation to help guide the development of my own "roadmap" as well as future plans for Alumni Affairs. I look forward to receiving feedback on these plans from the SPHAA Governing Board in February, then from a broader audience in March and April.

Surprises? Only good ones! Already, I've had the opportunity to interact with hundreds of alumni, and I've been pleased by how easy it is to build relationships with students — our alumni of tomorrow.

**Q** *What are the challenges and opportunities that attracted you to this position?*

We've had a strong central alumni association for quite some time. The addition of alumni sections presents both challenges and opportunities. Many of our alumni identify more closely with the department from which they graduated, as opposed to the School. The challenge will be to continue to build a strong "umbrella" organization that supports the sections and helps their leadership work together as effectively as possible. One place to start is with current students — helping them understand what public health is and how all of the different disciplines interact to impact it.

An even bigger challenge relates to the changing nature of healthcare delivery — in North Carolina, throughout the United States, and beyond. These changes are having a huge impact on our public health infrastructure — and on those who work in these organizations. We have a great opportunity to support our alumni as they are affected by these changes. Tools such as networking and career development events, continuing education and other related activities can go a long way.

**Q** *What is the one function that is most important for the director to assume?*

A critical function is to be a voice and an advocate for alumni within the School as well as across the University. To do that effectively, I'll need to be accessible and work hard to understand the various needs and interests of our diverse alumni body.

**Q** *What are some of the things you've been doing to build bridges to alumni?*



Sarah Strunk

Although I can't take credit for it, the new on-line searchable alumni database is up and running. Many alumni have found that it's a very useful tool for locating long-lost friends and colleagues. We had a great alumni turnout at the School's APHA Reception in November and a spirited School of Public Health Night at Carmichael Auditorium in January with the Lady Tar Heels basketball team. This spring, we're launching a School of Public Health Habitat for Humanity initiative in conjunction with the Chapel Hill Women's Center, and establishing other opportunities for alumni to connect with students, faculty and staff.

**Q** *What do you see as the role of alumni within the School?*

Alumni can be a central part of the School in so many ways — serving as teachers and mentors, precepting students during summer internships, engaging in joint research projects with faculty, helping the School develop curricula and policies that are aligned with the needs of the changing work force, being advocates for public health within their communities. The list is endless. I think it's important to develop partnerships between alumni and the School that are mutually beneficial and relevant. Not every alumnus or alumna is able or willing to teach a course, for example, but we can structure a variety of opportunities for involvement that meet their diverse needs and interests.

**Q** *How can folks provide the most effective feedback to you on alumni activities and involvement?*

I'm always eager to talk with alumni and others who have an interest in the School. I can be reached easily by phone at 919-966-8368, e-mail at sarah\_strunk@unc.edu, or in person in 423 Rosenau Hall.

# School Garners Robert Wood Johnson Funding to Promote Folic Acid Intake, Reduce Birth Defects

The School of Public Health is directing a blue ribbon panel initiative funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to develop a plan to reduce sharply the number of babies born each year with spina bifida and related birth defects.

The central aim of the Blue Ribbon Panel is to promote the increased intake of folic acid or folate among women in their childbearing years. Experts believe that increasing the consumption of this particular B vitamin will reduce the risk of spina bifida and related birth defects by at least fifty percent. To support the efforts of the Blue Ribbon Panel, the Foundation granted \$581,487 to the School of Public Health, which is organizing this yearlong national effort. The panel is chaired by Dean William L. Roper.

The work of the Blue Ribbon Panel will complement efforts by the March of Dimes and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to promote the intake of folic

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“DR. ROPER AND THE MEMBERS OF THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO DEVELOP THE PLAN THAT WILL HELP AMERICA CELEBRATE AN INCREASED NUMBER IN HEALTHY BIRTHS.”

—*Steven A. Schroeder, MD*  
*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

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acid or folate.

Steven H. Zeisel, MD, PhD, chair of the Department of Nutrition, is serving as scientific director for the effort. Zeisel is working with a team of scientific advisers, including Godfrey Oakley, MD, MSPM, formerly of the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention, and Thomas Sadler, PhD, director of the UNC-CH Birth Defects Center. Staff support for the panel is provided by the School of Public Health.

Members of the Blue Ribbon Panel include national experts from the fields of pediatrics, women's health, nutrition, communications, health education, managed health care and birth defects prevention.

“Increasing the intake of folic acid or folate and thus cutting in half the risk of children being born with spina bifida and other neural tube defects is a goal that America can and must meet,” said Steven A. Schroeder, MD, president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Dr. Roper and the members of the Blue Ribbon Panel are uniquely qualified to develop the plan that will help America celebrate an increased number in healthy births.”

More than 4,000 babies are born each year with spina bifida and other neural tube defects.

## General Alumni Association Honors Epidemiology's Kaplan for Outstanding Service to University

Epidemiology Professor Berton H. Kaplan is the 1999 recipient of the UNC General Alumni Association's Faculty Service Award. The award, presented at the January meeting of the GAA Board of Directors, honors faculty members who have shown outstanding service to the University and the Alumni Association.

“He wanders seamlessly across disciplines: medicine, anthropology, religion, law, psychiatry, sociology, public health. He is at once teaching a med school elective on how we confront suffering and writing about the benefits of a joyful heart,” stated the citation honoring Kaplan. “He is Carolina's resident craftsman at interpreting science to the humanities, and the humanities to science — free of inconsistency. ...His scientific quest is a deeper un-



Berton Kaplan

derstanding of the human situation. His business is making people happy.”

Kaplan received two degrees from the University — a master's of science in personnel administration in 1952 and a doctorate in sociology in 1962.

A teacher, mentor and scholar, he has done extensive study on the impact of the social environment on health and illness. His recent work has included probing the problems people have with interpersonal forgiveness and the impact this has on their well-being.

“A true scholar, teacher, mentor and active participant in the University community, he has a Renaissance breadth of knowledge and appreciation of art, music, architecture and literature, it would seem, from every era,” said Vic Schoenbach, an associate professor of Epidemiology who has worked closely with Kaplan. “A lifelong student, Bert has an ability to be interested in nearly everything and everyone, without regard to background, formal education or station in life.”

Kaplan has served as faculty representative for the GAA Board of Directors and is a former member of the Faculty Council. A current fellow of the UNC Institute for the Arts and Humanities, he is past president of Carolina's chapter of the American Association of University Professors.

# HPAA Selected to Direct New National Institute

*Summer program will enhance health knowledge, effectiveness of legislative staffers*

The Department of Health Policy and Administration was chosen in January as the site for a new summer institute that will help train and educate professional legislative staff in the broad field of state health policy. Established by the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Institute for Legislative Health Staff Development will be a collaborative effort between NCSL and the Department of Health Policy and Administration. The Institute will be supported by a two-year grant of \$229,684 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The goals of the Institute are to provide relatively inexperienced professional legislative staff in states across the country an opportunity to improve their abilities as key participants in the development of state health policy, to reflect and retool in an academic setting, and to add to their credentials as researchers and policy analysts.

UNC-CH was selected, in part, because of its faculty's understanding of the legislative policy making process, and the reputation of its department of Health Policy and Administration and School of Public Health as among the best in the country.

The first summer Institute will be held on campus August 7-13. The seven-day program will consist of lectures, panel presentations, case studies, problem-solving activities, computer workshops and participant presentations. The curriculum will be built around the most critical health policy issues facing the states, including Medicaid reform, managed care regulation, licensure of health professionals, long-term care financing, children's health insurance and confidentiality.

"In an era of term limits and relatively high turnover in the state legislatures the role of professional legislative staff becomes increasingly important," said Dick Merritt, who will lead the NCSL team and serve as the project director for the

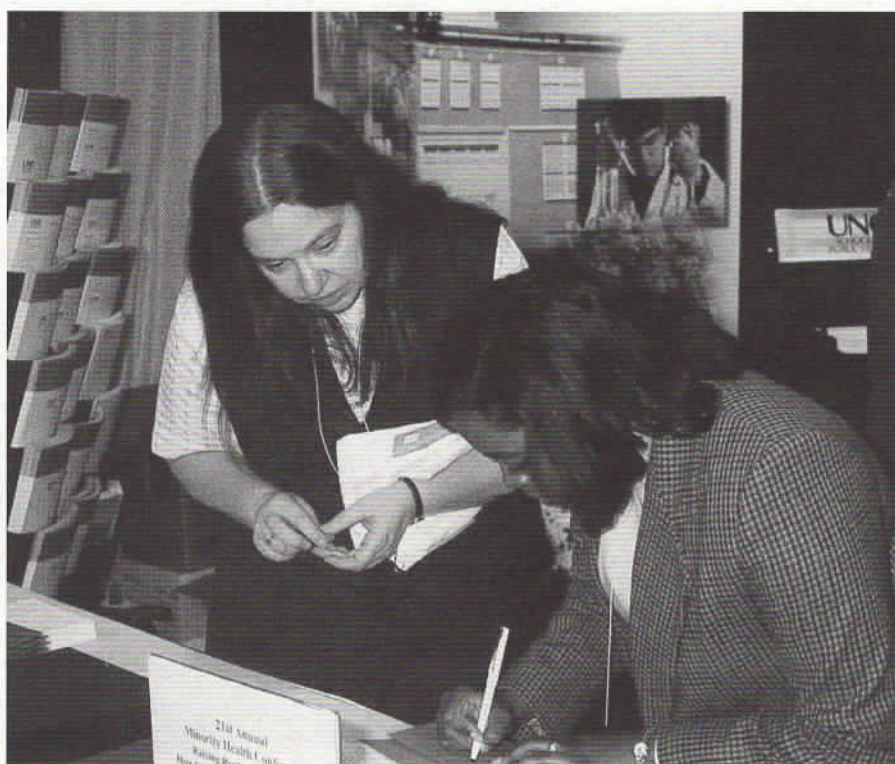
Institute. "Professional staff are a critical component assisting legislators in making informed decisions by providing information and analysis that is credible, accurate, timely and relevant."

Each Institute class will be limited to 30 participants, the majority of whom will be expected to have less than four years of health policy experience within a state legislature. Participants will be chosen to reflect diversity of backgrounds, geographical regions and varieties of professional experience. Appropriate candidates include both partisan and non-partisan legislative staff.

The UNC-CH team will be directed

and coordinated by Thomas C. Ricketts, III, PhD, and Pam Silberman, JD, DrPH. Ricketts is an associate professor in the Department of Health Policy and Administration and is deputy director of the University's Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research, where he directs Rural Health Research and Policy programs. Silberman is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Health Policy and Administration and is associate director for Policy Analysis at the Sheps Center.

For more information on making application, contact Ricketts at 919-966-5541 or Silberman at 919-966-2670.



## New Exhibit Greets Alumni, Prospective Students at APHA

The School's redesigned exhibit and student recruitment materials made their debut during the American Public Health Association annual conference in Washington, D.C. in November. Here, Nancy Colvin, student services manager for the Department of Epidemiology, helps a prospective student. A reception hosted by the School during the conference attracted an overflow crowd of students, alumni, faculty, and other friends that visited and networked well into the evening.

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Private gifts are vitally important as the School strives to fulfill its core mission of promoting health and preventing disease in North Carolina and beyond. An important expression of the School's appreciation for this support is publication of this honor roll of donors who made gifts to the School between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 1998.

Unrestricted gifts enable the School or its departments to meet needs that arise during the year, while gifts made to special funds (restricted gifts) ensure that needs already identified as School or department priorities can be better met. Regardless of designation, the School appreciates each and every gift!

Gifts to the School in 1997-98 totaled \$1.89 million. Alumni and friends provided \$515,000 of that through the Loyalty Fund, with an additional \$1.38 million coming from corporations, foundations, and organizations. The recently established Rosenau Society provides special recognition to our most loyal and generous donors. Alumni and friends who contributed \$1,000 or more to the School last year, or who do so before June 30, 1999, will hold the distinction of being Founding Members of the Society.

*Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this list. Should you discover errors or omissions, accept our apology and let us know of the needed correction by contacting Loyalty Fund Director Martha Monnett at 919-966-0198 or martha\_monnett@unc.edu.*

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# 21st Annual Minority Health Conference, February 19

*"Raising Resilient Children: How Communities of Color Respond to the Challenge" is targeted for students, researchers, practitioners and educators in public health and human services*

Strategies for raising children in communities of color who are resilient and prepared for success will be the focus of the School's 21st Annual Minority Health Conference, February 19, at the William and Ida Friday Continuing Education Center.

The day-long conference, "Raising Resilient Children: How Communities of Color Respond to the Challenge," is targeted for students, researchers, practitioners and educators in public health and human services.

Challenges to the health of American children involve a wide range of sociocultural, political, and economic factors, including low socioeconomic status and

high-risk environments. For example, almost half of all childhood deaths in the United States are caused by unintentional injuries. Death and disability in children can be reduced through education for both children and their caregivers, improved access to health and social services, and the implementation of policies that protect the health and well-being of the nation's children.

Stephen B. Thomas, PhD, director of the Institute for Minority Health Research at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, will deliver the keynote address at 9:30 a.m. with a variety of speakers from across the nation participating in the ensuing sessions. Topics to be

explored range from healthcare/health insurance, reproductive health, and homeless youth, to self-image, neighborhood violence, depression, nutrition and substance abuse, and trauma due to death or divorce.

From 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. — following a conference wrap-up — participants are invited to a reception honoring William T. Small, Jr., associate dean and senior advisor for Multicultural Affairs. Instrumental in the creation and growth of the Minority Health Conference, Small will retire on March 1.

To register for the conference, call 919-966-4032, e-mail [oce@unc.edu](mailto:oce@unc.edu) or register online at: [www.sph.unc.edu/oce](http://www.sph.unc.edu/oce).



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