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Mammoth undertaking

Researcher inventories thousands of cave artifacts

By De Ann Aronson

Conducting an archaeological project in a cave has its pros and cons. On the one hand, artifacts are right out in the open, so no back-boring digging is required. In addition, the constant humidity and temperature (about 54° F) and protection from the elements mean that archaeological remains in caves are exceptionally well preserved. On the down side, archaeologists have to work in nearly complete darkness and in tight quarters. This activity is not recommended for the claustrophobic. Washington University anthropology research associate George Coebers, Ph.D., must not be a claustrophobic. He has spent the last seven years in Kentucky’s dark, chilly Mammoth Cave, inventoring the contents of a three-mile portion of the cavern’s 150-mile reach. The project has yielded a treasure trove of native American artifacts, from tools to textiles to pictographs and more.

Mammoth Cave, located in the south-central part of the state, is the longest cave system in the world. Native Americans explored and used the cave as early as 4,800 years ago. During the Early Woodland period — 3,000 to 2,200 years ago — they mined the cave for gypsum (perhaps to use as plaster or white paint) and mica (known for its reflective effect).

“Many other caves were also entered and explored prehistorically — hundreds by a conserva- tionist’s eye,” said George Washington University Professor in Arts & Sciences and consultant on the project. “But the fairly intensive mineral mining in Mammoth and Salts Cave (also in Kentucky) is unusual. Most caves were probably used as mortuary places, or places to contact the supernatural world below the Earth’s surface. Caves were special places for the prehistoric people who went into them.”

Levin named first Hitchcock professor

By Ann Nichollson

Ronald M. Levin, J.D., a member of the School of Law faculty since 1979, was installed as the inaugural Henry Hitchcock Professor of Law March 29 in a ceremony in Anheuser-Busch Hall’s Bryan Cave Moot Courtroom.

This new chair provides a wonderful opportunity to recognize not only the outstanding contributions of a member of the law school faculty, Ron Levin, but also to pay tribute to such an important person in the history of the law school, Henry Hitchcock,” Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton said.

“It was in large part due to Hitchcock’s efforts that the law school was founded, allowing us to celebrate 133 years later the tremendous strength of the school and honor one of its most distinguished faculty members,” he added.

Iro Seligman, J.D., law school dean and the Ethel A.H. Shelley University Professor, also had high praise for Levin. “Ron Levin is a nationally recognized scholar in administrative law and an outstanding teacher and member of our School of Law community,” Seligman said. “I think of no one more deserving of the new chair in honor of Dean Hitchcock, upon whose legacy we continue to build as we strive toward new levels of excellence.”

A nationally known authority on administrative law and the law of legislation, Levin’s interests range from rulemaking and judicial review issues to regulatory reform to legislative ethics. He is the current chair-elect of the American Bar Association’s Section of Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice; when he assumes the chair in July, he will be the first law school dean to chair the section.

Seligman went on to explain that Levin was one of the first to focus on the intersection of law and medicine, which later evolved into the field of bioethics.

“Professor Levin is a leader in the field of bioethics, which in the past several years has influenced the way science is thought about and used,” said Robert H. Waterston, M.D., Ph.D., the James S. McDonnell Professor and head of genetics and director of the school’s Genome Sequencing Center. “Having all these data in GenBank for everyone to use in revolutionizing the way science is done.”

GenBank is the public database of DNA sequence from all organisms. Operated by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), it is accessible freely and without restrictions to all scientists in industry and academia. The international consortium — the Human Genome Project — deposits all of its data into GenBank as they are obtained.

The 2 billionth letter, or DNA base pair, was deposited by the Wellcome Trust’s Sanger Centre in Great Britain. The letter was T, the detection for thymine, one of the four chemicals or bases that make up DNA. The base pair now in GenBank were mapped to their locations on the 24 human chromosomes.

Celling their marching orders More than 250 participants prepare to pick up their heels March 29 for the kickoff of WU Walks, the University’s new walking club for students, staff and faculty. With Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton leading the pack, the group traversed a 1.2-mile route around and around campus. To enroll in the club, which meets at noon every Wednesday in front of Graham Chapel, call 935-7386 or send your name, phone, campus box and e-mail address to WU Walks (walking@rescomp.wustl.edu).
Daughters to visit campus for annual event April 27

On April 27, millions of girls between the ages of 9 and 15 will participate in the Girl Scout Cadette Championship, an annual "Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

Since 1994, Washington University has participated in this national event in an effort to attract girls to college and careers.

"This is a wonderful way for our female students to be involved in the community,"said Joel Seligman, J.D., dean of the business school, "and we are especially pleased to have our executive vice chancellor, Dr. Sue Greenbaum, dean of the business school, share research experiences with our students.

While many of the activities and learning about a subject or a potential career tend to be appealing to all students, we hope that girls will be able to find something to interest them in the Career Symposium," Seligman said.

Scientists are rapidly annotating the human DNA sequence in GenBank, for basic research and disease-related studies. Recently, the genes for familial disease causing seizures and brain malformations, as well as the genes for familial disease causing seizures and brain malformations, were detected with data from GenBank.

Dr. Jeff M. Gold, dean of the business school, said, "This is a great opportunity for our students to learn more about their area of study and to interact with other students who are interested in the same field.

Dad and Mom programs ranked in top 10

Washington University School of Medicine ranks first in student satisfaction, fourth overall, and it has the nation's leading physical therapy program and a top occupational therapy program, according to this year's U.S. News & World Report rankings of graduate and professional programs.

The School of Law's Clinical Training Program ranks sixth, and the George Warren Brown School of Social Work changed from a tie for first place to second all told, the University placed in the top 10 in 15 ranking categories.

Pep rally: The third time was a charm for the UW women's basketball team, as the Bears repeated as the national champions.

Stay well: Whether you just want to have your blood pressure checked or are concerned about cholesterol levels, or if you'd rather take it to the next level and get your diet or posture analyzed, Wellness Fest 2006 can help.

Helping hand: Students who traveled to Latin America to run the Campus Y's Alternative Spring Break service projects last spring, are being invited donations for the poor with whom they worked. Clothing donations, or monetary contributions in good condition may be dropped in a box at the Campus Y, basement at the east end of University Hall. Cash contributions would be gratefully accepted.

Campus quiz: This unhappy fellow grunts passively as to what point on the Hilltop Campus? Answer below.

For more information, call 935-9393.

Deanna Wicking, director of the Office of Public Affairs, Washington University, at least 100 girls from Maine to California will be going to work. At Washington University, at least 100 girls are expected to show up in offices, engineering labs and for the annual "Take Our Daughters to Work Day.

School of Medicine, Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA) program jumped up five places to rank 10th, 10th national title.

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Sharing research: Monica L. Wright, a Ph.D. candidate in Romance languages and literatures in Arts & Sciences, discusses her investigations of "The Narrative Function of Clothing in Medieval French Literature" with Kevin Chen, a Ph.D. student in earth and planetary sciences in Arts & Sciences. The two were among 30 who made poster presentations at the fifth annual Graduate Student Research Symposium Saturday, April 1, in Holmes Lounge.

15 WU programs ranked in top 10

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This is the third consecutive year the medical school has been ranked number one in student selectivity. "We are especially pleased to be attracting the best students in the nation on such a consistent basis," said William A. Hedli, M.D., executive vice chancellor and dean of the school of medicine.

The school ranked fourth overall after Harvard, Johns Hopkins and the University of Pennsylvania and has been placed in the top 10 ever since U.S. News began ranking medical schools in 1987.

"We are proud to have been ranked fourth overall for two consecutive years," Heck said. "To be among those top-ranked institutions and to have such highly regarded physical and occupational therapy programs is a well-deserved tribute to our fine faculty.

Specialty areas listed among the nation's first 10 were: surgery, No. 1; occupational therapy, No. 2; radiology, No. 3; pathology, No. 4; anesthesiology, No. 5; neurology, No. 6; pediatrics, No. 7; internal medicine, No. 8; geriatrics, No. 9; and health services administration, tied for No. 10.

Also in the rankings: the School of Engineering and Applied Science retained its top position, No. 10; the School of Architecture and the master of fine arts program, unraked this year, previously ranked at No. 11. The School of Business was ranked 10th overall for two consecutive years.

The WU rankings can be found online at http://www.wustl.edu/rankings/

For more information, call 935-9393.
Leptin-signaling failure could cause obesity in white men

By Barbara Rodriguez

Leptin keeps rats and mice slim. But the chemical signal that tells the body it has enough energy in reserve and can stop storing fat and decrease appetite. Leptin does this by traveling in the blood to the brain, where it interacts with the leptin receptor molecule in the hypothalamus. This receptor sends a message to the part of the brain that regulates energy expenditure. So when the body has enough energy in reserve, the brain tells the body to stop eating.

"There appears to be a good association in these men between a modification of the leptin receptor and fatness based on various measures," said Ingrid B. Borecki, Ph.D. The study was led by Yvon C. Chagnon, Ph.D., at Laval University in Quebec, and Claude Bouchard, Ph.D., who recently left Laval to direct the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, La.

Previous studies involving people with differing lifestyles and genetic backgrounds had come up with mixed conclusions about the relationship of the leptin receptor with weight gain and obesity.

In the current study, volunteers shared a similar sedentary lifestyle and were about to begin a 26-week exercise training program as part of the HERITAGE Family Study. The 214 men most interested in determining the proportion of body weight that was fat and measuring skin-fold thicknesses. Leptin was purified from blood samples for further analysis, using three different markers within the leptin receptor.

A modified version of the receptor that appears in some middle-aged white men might respond well to leptin so that these men might begin to accumulate excess fat. "If we can show that this receptor is the cause of the increased body weight among these men, then we may be able to develop a way to treat them," said Borecki.

Leptin-signaling failure could cause obesity in white men

Ingrid B. Borecki, Ph.D.

Borecki suspects that this receptor doesn't grab leptin as well as the future receptor was. If this is true, then the receptor may have a natural advantage over their other receptors because it is more active than their counterparts.

Why are white male children spared, though? Borecki suspects they aren't. They might overcome their genetic drawback because they are more active than their fathers. Some of the younger children in the study have been undergoing growth hormone treatment.

Future studies that involve white men ages 25 and older should provide insights into mechanisms that allow their leptin signaling to be more effective.

New perspective: From a park at the corner of Clayton and Euclid avenues, Central Institute for the Deaf (CID) students Sonya Smith, Yi, left, and Chelsea Norman, 11, get a different view of the new oral school on the CID campus at Washington University. The $14 million facility has specially designed acoustics that allow students to learn in an environment free of "extra" noise, which can interfere when children are learning to speak and to listen.

Health symposium for mature women April 15

A symposium to help older women stay healthy and manage medical problems will be held April 15 at Anheuser-Busch Hall on the Washington University campus. The symposium will be geared to mature women and adult women who have been trying to stay as active and independent as possible.

The symposium, which is geared to mature women and their family members, will begin at 8:15 a.m. and end at 3:45 p.m. Two hotel shuttles can bring you to a continental breakfast and registration is free. Information and to register, call 314-935-5419.
MOMIX in Orbit’ return to deliver Morrin lecture Saturdays at 7 p.m.

The renowned dance troupe MOMIX presents its combination of athleticism and theater in three performances on the Edison stage.

MOMIX in Orbit’ was created in collaboration with Michael Curry, developer and co-designer of masks and props for the classic Walt Disney Broadway production "The Lion King," is considered one of the most innovative dance companies in the United States.

MOMIX’s streamlined acrobatic and dancerly human kinetic sculptures — which we have come to know as their "MOMIX trademark combination of acrobatics, dance, and the simple, elegant beauty of MOMIX's human kaleidoscopic autistic figures" — have brought the company international attention.

The production of "The Lion King." The show, directed by Walt Disney and choreographed by Matthew Stone, is based on the original concept of director and choreographer Bob Ranford and is performed by the original cast of the Broadway production.

MOMIX’s "Super Imposed." MOMIX is based in Washington, DC. Theater's OVATIONS! Series.

Saturday, April 8

4 p.m. Performing Arts Dept.'s Helen Chaiken Monday lecture: "The Performing Arts and 'Culture Wars: The Rise and Fall of Saturday Night.'" Peter W. Evans, prof. of world affairs. Hosted by Prof. Arts, Room 100 Brown Hall 950-6068.

Monday, April 10

4 p.m. Center for Mental Health Services Research Seminar Series. "Fetus/Newborn Medico-Legal Relationships.

Who seeded the evolution of visual system development and assoc. prof. of pediatric allergy/immunology, Harvard Medical School. Room 300 Eliot Hall 362-2725.

Monday, April 10

4 p.m. Immunology Research Seminar Series. "Detection and Suppressor Pathway." Scott Lowe, assoc. prof. biochemistry.


Saturday, April 8

4 p.m. Travel Lecture Series. "Adventures Along the U.S.-Canadian Border.


Saturday, April 8


Friday, April 7


Friday, April 7

7 p.m. I. Jerome Fiance Visiting Professor Series. "The Imaginary Invalid." Directed by William Whitaker, artist in residence at the PAD. The visit also coincides with a reunion of PAD alumni, including cast members from Pendleton’s 1970 production of the same play.

Wednesday, April 12


The University of Missouri-Columbia. Room 100 Clinical Sciences Research Bldg. 362-3542.

Wednesday, April 12


The Math and Science Research Center 362-2725.

Wednesday, April 12


Monday, April 10

4:30 p.m. Mathematics colloquium. "Waves on Complex Hyperbolic." Gabor Francsics, prof. of mathematics.

University Events - lists a portion of the University's many events taking place this week. For expanded calendars for the School of Medicine, see "University Events" online or call the Office of the Provost/Events at 935-5983.
**Sports**

**Saturday, April 15**

2 p.m. Women's softball vs. William Woods. Billiken Field. 935-5220.

**Monday, April 17**

2:30 p.m. Men's basketball vs. William Woods. Billiken Field. 935-5220.

**Music**

**Thursday, April 6**

8:30 p.m. Roulette Jazz Series. Busch Chapel. 935-5466.

**Softball team wins three of four games**

Washington University's softball team returned to action for the first time this season with three wins in four games last weekend. The Bears stretched their winning streak to eight games with a doubleheader sweep of Concordia University (Illinois) (8-1 and 16-3, 1-3, Friday, April 6), a 9-0 win over Ellsworth College on Saturday, April 7, and a 9-1 win over Elmhurst College on Sunday, April 8.

Bears' pitcher Nandini Pinzur got the win in the second game after posting a five-inning perfect game in the first game. Lincoln Gregory hit his first collegiate home run in the bottom of the second to earn himself his first collegiate win.

**Building many bridges**

In experiences variously described as "amazing," "life-changing" and "heart-wrenching," 57 University students passed up surfing and skiing to spend spring break helping others. In Y's Alternative Spring Break broch groups to Alaska, Florida, Oklahoma, El Salvador, Belize and the Dominican Republic to build everything from houses to chicken coops and, most importantly, new friendships in new places. WSU students taught at a YMCA school operated in Belize; they helped Dominicans build a new build and, because El Salvador is too dry to cultivate crops in the summer, they built chicken coops (above) to help provide Salvadorans another livelihood. The coop crew included (back row, from the left) David Pinzar, Stephanie Baker and Daniel Oliphant, and (front row) Jasmine Wong, Erin Cubbinson, group leader Justine Elliot, Stephanie Peters, Mark Gomez and Elizabeth Brewster.

**Alternative Spring Break takes students far afield**

The women's tennis team continued its rebound from a 3-5 start as it won its sixth and seventh straight matches, 8-6 over Augustana College and 8-1 over the University of Chicago, this weekend at the 2010 NCAA Tournament. The women's tennis team continued its rebound from a 3-5 start as it won its sixth and seventh straight matches, 8-6 over Augustana College and 8-1 over the University of Chicago, this weekend at the 2010 NCAA Tournament. **Women's netters extend streak**

**Today's Alumni Update**

**Saturday, April 8**

9 a.m. Continuing Medical Education program: "Minnesota Breast, Bladder and Bowel Conditions." Cost: $175, physicians; $80, allied health professionals. Eric F. Newman Education Center registration (registration and technical 30 days prior, $100; after 30 days, 25% increase). 935-3977. Banquet reservations, 361-3977.

**Saturday, April 8**

4 p.m. Men's tennis at Washington University. 935-5220.

**Saturday, April 8**

4 p.m. Digital Cultural Resources Group meeting. **Saturday, April 8**

4 p.m. in Graue Music Hall. 935-5220.

**Saturday, April 8**

4 p.m. Men's and women's track and field. WU Invitational. Busch Stadium. 935-5466.

**Saturday, April 8**

4 p.m. Wind Ensemble concert. Dir. Graham Chapel. 935-4841.

**Saturday, April 8**

5 p.m. Piano recital. Rita Ho, piano. Steinberg Hall. 361-3737.

**Saturday, April 8**

7 p.m. International Writers Center reading group meeting. "Ralph Rickard, author and poet, will discuss his latest book, "Making Women Pay: The Hidden Costs of Fetal Rights." Hurst Lounge, Room 201 Duncker Hall. 935-5310.

**Saturday, April 8**

7 p.m. PRINTMARKET preview party. Cost: $50, $35 for those under age 35. Free tickets only to current student. 361-3737.

**Saturday, April 8**

7 p.m. PRINTMARKET. Sale of fine prints, and other works on paper. (Also April 9, Sunday, April 9, noon to 5 p.m.) 935-5466. Steinberg Hall. 361-3737.

**Saturday, April 8**

8 p.m. PRINTMARKET. Sale of fine prints, and other works on paper. (Also April 9, Sunday, April 9, noon to 5 p.m.) 935-5466. Steinberg Hall. 361-3737.

**Saturday, April 8**


**Sunday, April 9**


**Tuesday, April 11**

5 p.m. International Writers Center Reading Series. Nadia Tilly. "Once in a Lifetime" will read her work of fiction and other works. Kingston Ballroom. University Center. 935-5310.

**Wednesday, April 12**

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Russian Dept. open house. Room 216 YWCA. 935-5955.

**Thursday, April 13**

4 p.m. Digital Cultural Resources Group panel discussion. "Delivering Streaming Media Across the WMU Campus." Representives from the music dept., libraries and general cavas office. Room 216 YWCA. 935-5466.

**Thursday, April 13**

4 p.m. "We the People" policy forum. "Student Life in the 21st Century." 935-5310.
them. They did not enter the dark cave casually or in a workaday mode.

Mammoth Cave is a national park since 1941, and the project has been conducted under the auspices of the National Park Service. Park managers had wanted to inventory the cave for some time. Robert Ward, park historian and co-principal investigator on the project, explained that by knowing what and where everything in the cave is, the park service better able to preserve the cave's cultural and natural heritage.

Volunteers from Earthwatch, a nonprofit organization that connects amateur volunteers with scientific researchers all around the world, were provided key help.

"The stars really lined up for this project," Ward said. "We had great luck and Hart agreed it would be very laborious intensive and expensive. Hooking up with Earthwatch gave us a predictable way to do this project and provides us with a unique source of help."

Ward said working with Crothers is "one of the things that provides us with a unique source of help. Earthwatch gave us a predictable way to do this project," Ward said. "We had great luck and Hart agreed it would be very laborious intensive and expensive. Hooking up with Earthwatch gave us a predictable way to do this project and provides us with a unique source of help."

Several pictographs also have been found. Most are simple geometric designs — spirals, cross-hatching and worry lines. By far the most interesting category is paleofecal, which includes artifacts that may have been used as containers, remnants from mussel shell scrapers, gourd artifacts that are thousands of artifacts have been documented. Artifact researchers inventory the cave for some time. The first searches for artifacts, marking them with flags; the second group photo- graphs, sketches and describes the items and their locations; and the last group uses a digital the exact location of each artifact.

To date more than 8,000 artifacts have been documented. These include digging sticks, mussel shell scrapers, gourd containers, remnants from torches, cordage, twisted slippers and fragments of other twisted textiles which may have been pouches or bags.
Edward L. Spitznagel Jr., Ph.D., professor of mathematics in Arts & Sciences, recently received the 2000 Missouri Section Award for Distinguished Research in University Teaching of Mathematics. The award is given by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA). In winning the Missouri Section Award, Spitznagel, a member of the University’s mathematics faculty since 1963, now is an official candidate for a national MAA award — the MAA Deborah and Franklin Tipper Haimo Award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics. The winner of that award will be determined later in the year.

On assignment

William H. Danforth, M.D., chancellor emeritus and vice chair of the Board of Trustees, will serve as chair of an independent review panel that will conduct a comprehensive review of oversight and monitoring of clinical trials at the Institute for Human Gene Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania.

Speaking of

School of Architecture Dean Cynthia Weese, FAIA, Bill Schuhmeyer, affiliate professor of architecture, and David Mozley, associate professor of architectural engineering, recently spoke at a day-long discussion on clinical trials at the Institute for Human Gene Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania.

Engineering school honors seven distinguished alumni

The School of Engineering and Applied Science honored seven distinguished alumni at its 26th annual Alumni Achievement Awards Dinner Wednesday, April 5, at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis. The school’s Alumni Advisory Council for the engineering school honors seven distinguished alumni.

Edward J. Schaffer, M.D., president of Johnson & Johnson, was named the recipient of a research award from the national Tourette Syndrome Association. One of 15 distinguished awardees, Schaffer will try to develop an animal model for tics. These stereotyped, repetitive motor movements or vocalizations are the hallmark of Tourette syndrome, a common movement disorder in childhood. Each year, the Tourette Syndrome Foundation board selects project applicats that offer the greatest potential for better understanding of and improved treatments for this neurological movement disorder.

Jean E. Schaffer, M.D., recipient of an endowed professorship in medical and molecular biology and pharmacology, recently received a $430,000 grant from the American Heart Association for a project on the genetic basis of Atherosclerosis. A Potential Mechanism of Myocardial Hypertrophy, Schaffer said.

Johnson; Laurel Kaleda; and April 5, at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis.

The firm, co-founded by his father, Theodore, and is currently a candidate for the GTE Academic All-America squad and is currently a candidate for repeat honors.

A French and business major, the niece of Rochester, Minn., has earned a 3.46 grade point average. She has been admitted to the GTE Academic All-America squad and is currently a candidate for repeat honors.

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Robert C. Strunk, M.D., professor of pediatrics and an internationally known expert on asthma deaths, examines a young patient, Brittney Rose, during a routine checkup.

"Bob has a passion for how families work together, especially ones affected by this chronic disease."

S. Allan Bock

Robert C. Strunk was interested in both asthma and to provide regular care for asthma and greater understanding of the disease, asthma-related deaths among children 5 through 14 more than doubled between 1979 and 1995. Why this seemingly treatable disease now takes the lives of more than 100 American children every year is one of the questions that absorbs Robert C. Strunk, M.D., professor of pediatrics in the Division of Allergy and Pulmonary Medicine, an international expert on asthma deaths who has worked to discover which children are more prone to die.

"Most of the people who do well in research have a passion for it," said S. Allan Bock, M.D., a physician in private practice in Boulder, Colo., and a clinical researcher at National Jewish Medical and Research Center, who has known Strunk for 22 years. "Bob has a passion for how families work together, especially ones affected by this chronic disease."

Likely victims

Children from families that don't function or communicate well are more likely to die from asthma. But appropriate care and planning could prevent most asthma deaths. "When a death occurs, it's usually clear that the parents hadn't paid attention as their child's asthma was getting worse," said Strunk, who has asthma himself. "Conflict or disorder in the family prevents good care or enhances the possibility of recognizing things late. Children just get trapped." These at highest risk for asthma include children living in poverty or in the inner city, African-Americans and Hispanics. The disease affects almost 5 million children in the United States.

Robert C. Strunk, M.D.

Raised in Park Ridge, Ill., Strunk was a smart, quiet child always interested in bird watching, science and human nature. His father, who had an exciting job as a trade association lobbyist, always wanted Strunk to study business. Strunk tried to keep an open mind about his major when he started studies toward a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University in 1960. But he excelled in science, especially organic chemistry, and knew science was where he belonged.

He didn't feel as strongly about becoming a doctor. "I considered getting a Ph.D. in basic science, but going to medical school seemed like a reasonable thing to do because some of my friends in college were going in that direction," Strunk said. Strunk said, a biochemist at Northwestern University's Medical School confirmed how much he liked research. "This experience made it clear that I was interested in academics," he said.

Asthma Management Program, the largest and most comprehensive look at whether aggressive treatment of asthma during childhood can prevent a decline in lung function as children reach adulthood. Growing up outside Chicago in Park Ridge, Ill., Strunk was a smart, quiet child always interested in bird watching, science and human nature. His father, who had an exciting job as a trade association lobbyist, always wanted Strunk to study business. Strunk tried to keep an open mind about his major when he started studies toward a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University in 1960. But he excelled in science, especially organic chemistry, and knew science was where he belonged.

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He decided to pursue a master's degree in biochemistry and a medical degree at Northwestern. "But the physician in charge of the third-year pediatric rotations made such an impression that I couldn't help but become interested in pediatrics. "He was very dynamic and a great, great teacher," he said. "It was fun seeing the patients and seeing how he interacted with kids of different ages. He made me sure that's what I wanted to do."

After completing an internship in pediatrics at Cincinnati Children's Hospital, he was drafted into the military and served at a naval hospital in Newport, R.I., during the Vietnam War. He learned a great deal at the hospital about common pediatric illnesses, families and psychological problems. "I've always been interested in what happens psychologically to children with chronic illnesses," he said.

Strunk then completed a fellowship in allergy and immunology at Boston Children's Hospital. There he worked in the laboratory of Harvey Colten, M.D., who would go on to be the director of Pediatrics at the Washington University School of Medicine from 1986 to 1995. Although Strunk was interested in both allergy and immunology, he decided to specialize in allergy because it offered more job opportunities.

"What Bob Strunk mastered is combining outstanding patient care, state-of-the-art research in asthma, excellent teaching and total collegiality," he said. "I don't know where else to get that for such a busy practice and active research, but he covered all aspects of his career with passion and enthusiasm. He truly is a role model for us all."

Strunk said one of his goals is to figure out how to generally teach families to provide regular care for asthma and to get parents and patients to comply. "If we could just accomplish this," he said, "we could make such a difference in the lives of children."