3-8-2007

Washington University Record, March 8, 2007

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T

im Russert, the managing editor and moderator of NBC's "Meet the Press" and political analyst for "NBC Nightly News" and the "Today" show, has been selected to give the 2007 Commencement address, according to Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton.

The University's 146th Commencement will begin at 8:30 a.m. May 18 in Brookings Quadrangle. Russert also anchors "The Tim Russert Show," a weekly interview program on CNBC, and serves as a contributing anchor for MSNBC; and is senior vice president and moderator of NBC's "Meet the Press" as "the most interesting and important hour on television."

The Washingtonian magazine has described Russert as the "best and most influential journalist" in Washington, D.C., and "Meet the Press" as "the most interesting and important hour on television."

TV Guide selected his use of the dry erase whiteboard, on which Russert predicted "Florida, Florida, Florida" would be the pivotal state in the 2000 presidential election, as one of the most memorable television moments of 2000.

"Meet the Press" in December 1991, the show has become the country's most watched Sunday morning interview program and, according to NBC, the most quoted news program in the world. Now in its 60th year, "Meet the Press" is the longest-running program on television.

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Men's, women's hoops go to NCAA Sweet 16

The No. 8 men's basketball team advanced to the Sweet 16. The Bears will face No. 1 University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point at 8 p.m. March 9 in Stevens Point.

Sophomore Tyler Nading tied his career-high with 25 points to win in the second game. The women's swimming and diving team wins over to NCAAs

Women's swimming, diving off to NCAAs

The women's swimming and diving team will wrap up its season March 6-10 at the 2007 NCAA Championships. WUSTL qualified six competitors for the NCAAs, which will be held in Houston.

Baseball wins two of three at home

The baseball team (4-1) earned a split Feb. 27 against Fontbonne University, falling 7-5 in Game 1, then bouncing back for an 8-3 win in the second game. The Bears then beat Webster University, 11-4, March 1.

Wanda Quigley

Register now for Mini Med classes

By BETH MILLER

Ever wondered what it’s like to perform laparoscopic surgery? Now is your chance to find out, along with learning about other areas of medicine.

Registration is open for the spring session of Mini Medical School, which begins the week of March 19. For more information, call 314-935-4800 or visit meded.wustl.edu.

Washington University in St. Louis, 114-1, March 1.

The University's Board of Trustees met March 2 at the School of Medicine, where they heard a special presentation by internationally recognized scientist Jeffrey Gordon, M.D., according to Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton.

Gordon, who is director of the Center for Comparative Genomics and the Dr. Robert J. Glaser Distinguished University Professor of Molecular Biology and Pharmacology, shared insights on the human digestive system in a presentation titled "Dining In With a Few Trillion Friends: Exploring the Microbial Part of Ourselves." Gordon's comments were based on his recently published research that shows gut microbes to be biomarkers, mediators and potential therapeutic targets in the war against the worldwide obesity epidemic.

"Billions of friendly microbes reside in the intestine, where they help digest food that the body can't use on its own, such as the complex sugars found in fruits, grains and proteins," said a part of the digestive process, the microbes break down nutrients to extract calories that must be stored as fat.

"As lead investigator in the studies published in the Dec. 20 issue of the Journal Nature, Gordon and his fellow scientists reported the relative abundance of two of the most common groups of gut bacteria is altered in both obese humans and mice. By sequencing the genes present in gut microbial communities of obese and lean mice and by observing the effects of transplanting these communities into germ-free mice, the researchers showed that the obese mouse's microbiota has an increased capacity to harvest calories from the diet."

The trustees also heard a report from the Center for Advanced Renewable Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an International Symposium on Energy and the Environment May 4-7 at the University as part of the McDonnell Academy Scholars Academy. Wrighton announced an Internation...
Enzyme critical for growth of abdominal aortic aneurysms

BY CAROLINE ABNAS

Surgery is the only treatment for abdominal aortic aneurysm, a weak spot in the body’s main artery that dilates dangerously over time. If the vessel ruptures before surgery to repair it, a quick death is virtually certain.

In a lab at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Medicine, scientists have identified a key enzyme that triggers chronic inflammation in the aorta and promotes the growth of aneurysms. Their finding raises hopes for developing a drug that could prevent small aneurysms from enlarging to the point where surgery is necessary.

Genetically engineered mice that lack the enzyme dipetidyl peptidase I (DPPI) do not develop aortic aneurysms, the researchers report in the online edition of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

“We think DPPI is a viable therapeutic target that may help the growth of aortic aneurysms in check so they don’t become life threatening,” said Robert W. Thompson, M.D., professor of surgery and one of the senior investigators of the study.

The research shows that DPPI is critical for the recruitment of inflammatory cells to the wall of the aorta, and that these cells push the aortic tissue into an abnormal phase into a chronic phase. The researchers suspect that this chronic inflammation eventually causes other enzymes to eat away at the structural proteins of the aorta, causing the vessel to balloon and adapting to the pressure of blood flow in patients whose aortas are greatly distended.

Abdominal aortic aneurysms kill about 15,000 Americans each year. The condition often goes undiagnosed because small aneurysms rarely cause sympotms. Typically, they are discovered when patients have an X-ray or ultrasound for another medical concern.

If an aneurysm is small, doctors generally monitor it closely and recommend surgery only if its diameter grows larger than 5.5 centimeters (about 2 inches).

Eventually, 60 percent of patients with small aneurysms will require surgery, a procedure that costs about $20,000. A drug treatment that could help patients avoid the risks and the high cost of major surgery would be ideal, Thompson said.

In the current study, the researchers used an experimental mouse model in which mice inherit an enzyme deficiency.

Scientists say they have identified a key enzyme that triggers chronic inflammation in the aorta and promotes the growth of aneurysms. Their finding raises hopes for developing a drug that could prevent small aneurysms from enlarging to the point where surgery is necessary.

Murray appointed to Loeb professorship

BY JIM DREYER

David J. Murray, M.D., has been named the Carol B. and Jerome T. Loeb Professor of Medicine. Murray is a pediatric anesthesiologist at BJC HealthCare.

“Murray’s contribution to training and clinical excellence will greatly enhance our education efforts at the School of Medicine.”

“I feel extremely privileged and honored to be able to contribute to the students and residents.”

Murray, who is a professor and vice chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, has served as the residency program director at the School of Medicine. He is also a clinical professor at Washington University School of Medicine.

Murray’s research involves using simulation technologies to give students and residents insight into clinical situations that they may face in clinical practice.

“Murray’s appointment is a testament to the strength of the School of Medicine.”

Murray appointed to Loeb professorship

First step in prevention: High school students from Louis Cartwheel (left) and student teacher James Shutter (right) teach students about AIDS and HIV prevention at the Students Teaching AIDS to Students (STATS) Wellness Day Feb. 24 at the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center. The high-schoolers worked with about 200 area high school students to make a difference in their lives.

“High school students talked with people living with AIDS and attended a play by Chicago’s HealthWorks Theatre about making important life choices and preventing HIV.”

In May 2008, the School of Medicine will discontinue its Health Administration Program, which awards a master of health administration (MHA) degree.

Larry J. Shapiro, M.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the School of Medicine, and Stuart B. Heiser, M.D., senior associate dean for medical education and the Health Administration Program, met with students March 5 to announce the closure.

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Barbara Izenberg explores the identity of Assembly Series

Izenberg examines how the identity of the Assembly Series is constructed and how it aligns with the larger cultural and political context of the time. She delves into the role of the Assembly Series in shaping public discourse and how it contributes to the understanding of the history of ideas.


deep pockets' the dog as model metals and civilization

This section discusses the significance of deep pockets in the context of the Assembly Series. It explores the role of deep pockets in the funding of cultural and educational institutions, and how they influence the selection of programs and speakers.

Film

The film section highlights the significance of cinema in the Assembly Series. It examines the role of cinema in shaping public opinion and how it contributes to the understanding of the history of ideas.

Exhibits

This section focuses on the role of exhibits in the Assembly Series. It explores the role of exhibitions in shaping public discourse and how they contribute to the understanding of the history of ideas.

Lectures

The lectures section explores the role of lectures in the Assembly Series. It examines the role of lectures in shaping public discourse and how they contribute to the understanding of the history of ideas.

Thursday, March 15

- 4 p.m. Immunology Research Seminar Series. "Factors in Neuroimmunological Disease." Lopata, Andrew, professor of immunology and pathology. St. Louis Children's Hospital. 365-8656.
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Saturday, March 24

- 4 p.m. Immunology Research Seminar Series. "Factors in Neuroimmunological Disease." Lopata, Andrew, professor of immunology and pathology. St. Louis Children's Hospital. 365-8656.

Sunday, March 25

- 4 p.m. Immunology Research Seminar Series. "Factors in Neuroimmunological Disease." Lopata, Andrew, professor of immunology and pathology. St. Louis Children's Hospital. 365-8656.

Monday, March 26

- 4 p.m. Immunology Research Seminar Series. "Factors in Neuroimmunological Disease." Lopata, Andrew, professor of immunology and pathology. St. Louis Children's Hospital. 365-8656.
in the development of social ar- chaeology, which focuses on the dynamics of past social relations and their role in archaeolog- ical interpretation. He has dedicated his work to preventing the loss of archaeological sites and raising awareness of the ethical aspects of his profession.

Among his major works are "Archaeology and Language: The People of Europe's European Origin" (1987); "Lost. Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethnic Crisis in Archaeology" (2006); and "Figuring It Out: The Parallel Visions of Art and Archaeology" (2003)."

He was educated in England at the University of Cambridge, where he earned a doctorate in 1965 and a doctor of science degree in 1976. He taught prehistory and archaeology at the universities of Sheffield and Southampton. In 1981, he was appointed to the Dacee Professorship of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, a position he held until he retired in 2004.

For nearly 15 years, he served as director of the McDonald Institut e for Archaeological Research at Cambridge, where he retired in 2004. Richram has received many accolades, including the prestigious Balint Prize in prehistoric archaeology and the Society for American Archaeology award for his contribution to the field of archaeology.

Renfrew's groundbreaking research has provided a new perspective on how people interact with their environment, and his work has influenced the way we understand human history and cultural development. His insights into the role of language and identity in the development of human societies have been widely recognized and have had a significant impact on the field of archaeology.

African films screened at festival

Four feature films and four short films from six different African nations are part of the African Film Festival held March 22-25 in the annual Ben Dioggrye Baye, direc tor of the African Film Festival at Washington University in St. Louis, announced his award. "In Amour d'Enfants," will be on hand for the screening on March 25, 7:30 p.m. Energy, Environmental 

Relay For Life Despite a low temperature that reached 19 degrees, the annual Relay For Life all-night walk around Bushyhead Track at Francis Field drew more than 2,000 participants March 3 to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Between laps, the warmly dressed participants got a bite to eat and took break shelter inside tents. The national, overnight event is designed to celebrate cancer survivorship and raise money for research and programs. The WUSTL event raised more than any other college participant in the nation with $388,606.

(by Mary Kastens)

BY MARY KASTENS

and Colin Renfrew, an influ- ential and innovative archae- ologist for more than three decades, will present this year's Lord Colin Renfrew, an influ- ential and innovative archae- ologist for more than three decades, will present this year's

Lord Colin Renfrew, an influ- ence in Snakes." Edmond Brodie III, prof, of biology, St. Louis U. Maternity Bldg., Rm. 311.935-6530.

"Diallo, Ph.D., an assistant dean in the College of Arts 8c Sciences, and Film and Media Studies, "Thus, even if the means of production or the pace are at times very different from what we are used to, the great narrative skills often produce a most inspirational and entertaining cinema."

This is the second year the University has hosted the festival. "When we launched the festival last year, we had no idea what to expect, but the reception was overwhelming." Renfrew went on to say, "It has now become an annual event and is gaining acceptance in the academic community."

"I look forward to the festival every year and am excited to see what new films will be showcased this year. These films offer a unique perspective on the human experience and highlight the diversity of cultures around the world."

The festival continues March 26 with "Daydreamer," a film that explores the power of imagination and the role it plays in shaping our reality. A sensory-rich story of a young boy's journey, "Daydreamer" is a heartwarming tale that encourages viewers to dream and follow their passions.

On March 27, the festival concludes with "Mud Season," a film that delves into the complexities of human relationships and the challenges we face in navigating them. This intimate exploration of love, loss, and redemption will leave audiences reflecting on the depth of human connection.

For more information on the festival and a complete schedule of events, visit WUSTL.edu/film.

The festival is free and open to everyone, and anyone interested is encouraged to attend. "I believe that film has the power to entertain, inspire, and connect us as a society," Renfrew said. "I hope that the festival continues to bring these opportunities to our community and encourages us all to explore the beauty and richness of the human experience through the lens of film."
Danforth Campus construction plans outlined

By ANDY GLENNHOF

When author Leo Aikman uttered the words "The shortest distance between two points is unoccupied," he very well could have been talking about the Danforth Campus.

He wasn't, but when one takes into account the recently completed construction projects, the projects now underway and the projects in the works, that might just as well be the case.

There are four major construction projects on the Danforth Campus right now: the Central Underground Parking Garage, University Center, Social Sciences/Law building and Steinberg Hall renovation.

The Underground Parking Garage will add 335 parking places on three underground levels. The lower two levels will be open this fall, but the upper level will not be ready for parking because the University Center construction will have started. University Center is slated to be built on two levels, and is scheduled to be completed by July 2006.

The Social Sciences/Law building is expected to be complete by June 2008 and should be ready for occupancy by fall 2008.

Program

Faculty associates enhance student life — from Page 1

last 30 years from their interactions with students.

"It has been awesome to be a witness to the impact of the program and to celebrate this important milestone," Stratton added. "This initiative has certainly become a part of the fabric of the culture in our residential colleges. We all look forward to 2010.

Faculty associates volunteer to work with resident advisors and about 50 first-year students living on one floor of a residential college. Though faculty associates do not live in the residence halls, the program helps integrate them into the life of the floor by allowing them to share interests, both academic and social, with their students.

Associate receive meal-card credit and a small expense budget for programs. These faculty enhance the undergraduate experience for students. In turn, the faculty associates benefit from informal feedback from students, which increases effectiveness in the classroom.

"The program is so informal," said the program's founder, Margaret "Dodie" Webber. "In that, the faculty associates benefit from informal feedback from students, which increases effectiveness in the classroom."

Steinberg Hall's renovation also is on the fast track, as the auditorium will be ready for use this fall.

But those projects barely scratch the surface of what is to come. In upcoming months, additions, renovations and construction to roads, parking lots and walkways will abound.

The temporary parking lot just north of Simon Hall will be removed immediately after Commencement and by fall, the area will be green as it was before the lot was installed.

In May, construction will begin on a residence hall east of Millbrook Square Apartments at the corner of Thorpe Drive and Forest Park Parkway, adding about 152 beds in apartment-style living mainly for upperclassmen. This is a continuation of the ongoing goal of constructing new or replacing residence halls during the next four to five years.

Of some renovation, both Goldhaber Hall and Mudd/Park Residence College are undergoing upgrades. Goldhaber — home of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work — will have its lobby renovation completed this fall.

Steinberg Hall will have a main front door as well as a much-needed community space.

Renovations to Mudd/Park will add 57 beds to Park Residence Hall. When this renovation is done, the buildings will be similar to the newer residential college.

The University recently acquired a building at 560 Trinity Ave., tentatively called the 560 Building. During the summer, the building will be developed as additional space for the Department of Music and the Performing Arts Department, both in Arts & Sciences. The building houses the 1,115-seat E. Desmond Lee Concert Hall — larger than anything on campus.

In terms of roadwork, a right-turn lane from Forsyth Boulevard onto Skinner Boulevard will be added, the crosswalks on Forsyth by Mallinckrodt Student Center will be improved and the intersection of Skinner and Lindell Boulevard will be redone to allow for visual access to the southwest views of the campus and Brookings Hall for those heading west on Lindell.

Additionally, the pedestrian bridge over Forest Park Parkway will be removed. During the summer, it will be both functional and aesthetic. After completion, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms inspectors and members of their families provide DNA samples to researchers, who are isolating DNA regions related to alcohol abuse and dependence as well as a variety of other outcomes.

Some of the participants in the study also took the Wechsler Intelligence Scale Revised, a traditional IQ test. In all, members of 200 families, including members ranging from 2,039 individuals took the Wechsler test, and those results were matched to differences in individuals' DNA.

By comparing individual differences encoded in DNA, the team zeroed in on CHRM2, the neuropeptide receptor gene on chromosome 7. The CHRM2 gene activates a multitude of signaling pathways in the brain involved in learning, memory and other higher brain functions. The research team doesn't yet understand the gene changes its effects on intelligence. Initial evidence was one of the first traits that attracted the attention of people interested in the impact of genes and environmental influences. Early studies of adopted children, for example, suggested that when children grow up away from their biological parents, their IQs are more closely correlated to biological parents, with whom they share an environment. In spite of the association between genes and intelligence, it has been difficult to find specific variations that influence intelligence. The genes identified in the past were those that had a found negligibly small effect on intelligence — genes that cause mental retardation.

Those that contribute to low IQs are harder to isolate. To study traits that contribute to higher intelligence, Russert observed the inner workings of the 2004 presidential election. But those traits are also complicated by the fact that genetic effects are often small compared to environmental influences.

Parents, for example, might be pictures of a child holding a vase, the vase brok

Housing

First-time home-buyers receive counseling — from Page 1

Three of the campus' four traditional residence halls, DeBaliviere, Wise and Students' South, are undergoing renovations.

DeBaliviere Place is bounded west by DeBaliviere Avenue, north by Delmar Boulevard, east by Union Boulevard and south by Forsyth Park Parkway.

The West End area is bounded west by Hodiamont Avenue; north by the Delmar link road of-" width="" height="" /)throws not -2006). Russert, who was born in Buf-" width="" height="" /d,Dick added. Russert observed the inner work-" width="" height="" /national Fatherhood Initiative also recog-" width="" height="" /of the 100 Irish Americans in the country, and he was selected as a fellow of the Fulbright Commission of the European Communities.

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Tickle the ivories and help the university community at reduced rates being offered to the University through the Piano sale benefits music.

The pianos are part of a collection of Steinway and Sons pianos on loan to the University by the Taylor family. The Enterprise Rent-A-Car Institute created at Danforth Plant Center, which is president of the center, located at 973 N. Warson Road. The center is the product of a unique and innovative alliance joining Washington University, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the University of Missouri-Columbia, Monsanto Company, and Purdue University. Founded in 1998, the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center is a not-for-profit research institute with a global vision to improve the human condition.

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Alex Denes has a ‘guiding light’ in cancer care

Kato, at their home in Belleville, Ill., in the late 1950s shortly after inpatient oncology helped revolutionize the way we care for our patients, Alex Denes, a medical oncologist for nearly 30 years, cares for all the hospitalized cancer patients at Siteman Cancer Center, regardless of their type of cancer. Breast, lung, colon, liver or any of the other myriad types of cancer—Denes treats them all with an expertise matched by few.

He was named director of the School of Medicine’s inpatient oncology service two years ago, and with the backing of John DiPersio, M.D., Ph.D., chief of the Division of Oncology, Denes has transformed the service into one that provides exceptional medical care to patients and serves as a model for other academic medical centers.

“The patient oncology service is large and diverse and requires the skills and efforts of a great general oncologist who has had significant experience managing a vast array of cancers,” Dr. DiPersio says. “That person also must be an excellent teacher and mentor to the residents and clinical fellows. Individuals like this are rare, and we are extremely lucky to have Dr. Denes. He has revolutionized the way we care for our inpatients, and as a seasoned oncologist, he is a guiding light to our medical fellows.

The patients Denes sees are often critically ill, either from their disease or complications related to treatment. At any one time, he manages the care of some 40 patients, and because they have different types of cancer and medical needs, it is unusual for any two patients to be on the same treatment regime.

“At times, its extremely challenging,” admits Denes, associate professor of medicine. “We focus on taking care of each patient with the best possible care for his or her disease.”

Before Denes took the helm, the structure of the inpatient oncology service was similar to those at other academic medical centers. Oncology fellows were assigned to overseeing the care of hospitalized patients, typically for a two-week stint many times a year.

But thinking was shortcomings to this system.

“Doctors were overwhelmed by caring for hospitalized patients in addition to seeing their regular patients in the oncology clinic,” Denes says. “The residents were unhappy because they didn’t know who to turn to for guidance, and the patients saw a different doctor each time they were admitted.”

DiPersio and Denes developed the current model one night over dinner as they brainstormed for better ways to care for hospitalized patients. Denes is the full-time attending physician on the service, which means he is there all day and often into the evening. Monday through Friday, making sure patients get the specialized care they need.

As a matter of routine, he and a resident see each new patient admitted to the service, and Denes holds daily conferences with all the residents to discuss patients admitted within the previous 24 hours.

The new model is a noticeable improvement.

“Patients are much happier because they have some continuity to their care both during their stay and when they return,” Denes says. “And more residents are now giving serious consideration to careers in oncology. They needed someone to serve as a role model, and they didn’t have that before.”

Word of the medical school’s new approach to inpatient oncology care has spread. Leaders from a number of other large academic medical centers have called or visited to understand how they might restructure their inpatient oncology services.

“Many are currently trying to move to our model — with our guidance and help — but most of them do not have a senior, highly skilled general oncologist like Alex Denes to serve as a teacher and mentor, an advocate for patients and a leader for the service,” DiPersio says.

Scraping Soviet rule

Denes’ journey to Washington University began with his parents’ decision to flee their Hungarian homeland in 1956 after the failed revolution against Soviet-led communism.

Denes and his twin brother, Gelu, were both only 9, but their parents realized their sons would have limited opportunities under the country’s repressive communist rule.

Until the revolution, in which thousands of civilians were killed, the family had a reasonably comfortable life. His father was a lawyer and then a judge in Budapest, and his mother, a housewife. But they were soon Communists.

In 1956, the family quickly obtained immigration papers to join them.

When Denes and his family arrived, they did not speak a word of English. The uncles provided a lot of assistance to the family, and Denes’ parents worked hard to establish themselves. His father took a job in a laundry, and his mother worked as a housekeeper.

One of the uncles was a doctor and a role model to Denes and his brother. Both boys liked science and were good students, so careers in medicine seemed like a good choice. (Denes’ brother is a urologist in California.)

The brothers earned bachelor’s degrees from WUSTL, where they attended on full scholarships, and medical degrees from the University of Missouri.

After an internal medicine residency at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and two years in the Public Health Service with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Denes returned to WUSTL in 1977 for a fellowship in hematology and oncology and later internal medicine.

In 1985, he moved his practice to St. John’s Mercy Medical Center but continued to teach part time at the medical school, and in 1999, Denes rejoined the full-time faculty at the University and Siteman Cancer Center.

During his career, Denes has witnessed tremendous advances in cancer, including new chemotherapy drugs and treatment regimens, and the recent development of targeted cancer therapies.

However, more effective chemotherapy drugs do not displace the need for caring, hands-on doctors, and Denes is known as much for his warmth and compassion as for his expertise in oncology.

“Dr. Denes’ patient and comforting manner, his skill in explaining test results and treatment options and the time he spends with patients make all the difference,” says colleague Steven Sorscher, M.D., assistant professor of medicine. “My colleagues and I value him for his tremendous knowledge of oncology, and we breathe easy knowing that while we are in clinic, he is in the hospital offering that same wonderful experience and support to our patients.”

A ‘guiding light’ in cancer care

Washington People