Advance in atrial fibrillation surgery boosts outcomes

BY GWEN ERICSON

School of Medicine heart surgeons report that by adding a simple 10- to 20-second step to an operative procedure, they achieved a significant improvement in the outcome for the surgical treatment of atrial fibrillation (AF).

Reporting in the April issue of the Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, the surgeons describe an enhancement to the Cox-Maze procedure, a surgical procedure that redirects diastolic electrical impulses causing AF by creating precisely placed scars, or ablations, in the heart muscle. The Cox-Maze procedure is highly effective, offering the best long-term cure rate for persistent atrial fibrillation.

The surgeons added one ablation to the series of ablations typically made during the Cox-Maze procedure, and that short step improved how well patients did after surgery. As a result, they recommend using this extra ablation in all patients undergoing the procedure.

“The single additional ablation makes it easier to ‘select a box lesion,’” said Ralph J. Damiano, Jr., M.D., the John M. Shoemaker Professor of Surgery and chief of cardiac surgery.

“The box lesion surrounds the pulmonary veins and isolates the pulmonary veins from the left atrial left atrial wall from the rest of the left atrium. Our study shows excellent success when using the box lesion, and we recommend its use for patients with long-standing atrial fibrillation.”

See Surgery, Page 6

Early-morning tremor gives wake-up call

Plans already were in place for improved emergency communication

Last week’s 5.2 magnitude earthquake in Southern Illinois and its continuing minor aftershocks have had a rattling effect on students, faculty and staff and were yet another reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness and communication.

A WinAlert was not sent to those registered for text messaging notifications in this earthquake did not result in a significant disruption to the University community.

Over the past year, several University-wide committees have been meeting to implement and improve preparedness and communications strategies for the entire University community. Although these plans are not yet complete, several key programs have been put into place, and more will be announced in the coming months as part of an overall emergency communications program called “Where to Go.”

In the event of an emergency, including situations related to natural disasters, health epidemics, fire, hazardous materials, severe weather or violence, the University has developed an emergency Web site: emergency.wustl.edu.

In addition to updates on a current emergency situation, the site includes key contact information and information on how to prepare for many kinds of disasters.

See Emergency, Page 6

Khinduka awarded top Eliot Society honor

BY BARBARA REA

At the William Greenleaf Eliot Society banquet April 9, the former dean of the George Warren Brown School of Social Work received the society’s “Search” award.

Shantil K. Khinduka, Ph.D., the George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor, was presented with the society’s top honor by Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton at the 41st annual event, held at the Ritz-Carlton, St. Louis. The evening also featured a keynote address by documentary filmmaker Front Burns.

In a University filled with distinguished leaders, Khinduka stands out. In the 30 years he guided the Brown School, he assembled a first-rate cadre of faculty, built up the school’s endowment and doubled its physical facilities. Most important, Khinduka, building upon the Brown School’s initial strengths, created a school that is acclaimed internationally for its teaching and research.

“At the new dean, hired in 1974 to lead the Brown School forward, Shanti took a very good school and guided it to the top of the rank of social work education,” Wrighton said. During this period, Wrighton said, the theory and practice of social work and social development education was evolving, and Khinduka embraced the changes and he is credited for advancing the school and keeping it on the cutting edge.

“He has been an inspirational leader not only at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work but also at Washington University, in the St. Louis region and in the national and international spheres of social work and social development,” Wrighton said.

An expert on community and social development and on international social welfare, Khinduka has published widely and has been honored for his achievements and contributions to his field. He founded the Journal of Social Service Research in 1977; he founded the Inter-University Consortium for International Social Development and served as its president, and he was commissioned by the Board of Directors of MERS/Goodwill.

Born in Jaipur, India, Khinduka began his career as an assistant professor of sociology and social work in 1967. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1969 and 1974, respectively. He was also at Washington University, in the St. Louis region and in the national and international spheres of social work and social development,” said Wrighton.

See Honor, Page 6
“Daniel Bornstein’s teaching, research and scholarship are deeply respected, and they add a significant dimension to religious studies and history at Washington University.”

Edward S. Macias

Professorship.

Bornstein’s ability to question the nature of religious life within the context of the traditional Church is a distinctive characteristic of his scholarship and matches one of Darrow’s reasons for giving this professorship. Bornstein has written extensively on his subjects of expertise, composing books, journal articles, chapters, reviews and conference papers. In addition, he has contributed several me- dium texts. His current research involves editing a volume on Medieval Christianity as part of a four-volume series, due out this spring.

He began his career at the University of Michigan and also taught at the University of Califor- nia, San Diego, before starting a long tenure at Texas A&M University, where he coordinated the Interdisciplinary Program in Religious Studies. Bornstein earned a bachelor’s degree from Oberlin College and earned master’s and doctoral degrees from the Univer-
sity of Chicago.

His research has been sup- ported by the National Endow- ment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society and the National Humanities Center among others. Professional- ization includes the American Society of Church His- tory, the American Historical Association and the Soci- ety for Italian Historical Studies. He sits on the editorial boards of “Rivista di Storia dei Cristianesi” and Medievalia et Humanitatis.”

While the University covers a portion of these costs, the remainder must be recovered through parking fees.

WESTL offers commuting students, faculty and staff several alternatives to automobile parking. The University provides each benefits-eligible employee and full-time student with complimentary U-Pass, which allows the holder unlimited use of Metro buses and MetroLink as an alternative to commuting by automobile. For more information on this benefit, visit parking.wustl.edu/u-pass.htm.

The University also brought the WeCar program to WESTL. This winter it provided a means of transportation for those who might typically commute by automobile. This non-automotive option, public transportation, bicycle or foot. For more information, visit parking.wustl.edu/wecar.htm.

Among the changes made to the parking program is an in- crease in price for 2008-09. Red, Yellow, Blue, North Cam- pus, and Official Business per- mits. Additional increases are planned for 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The parking advisory commit- tee — made up of faculty, staff, students and — recommended significantly reducing permit fees (ranging from $15 to $35 per permit) for those who use off-site parking in conjunction with a Metro pass in 2008-09.

“Off-site parking provides a low-cost alternative to student parking on campus,” said Parking & Transportation Advisory Com- mittee Chair Peter Milne, associ- ate dean for administration at the School of Law. Off-site includes West Campus and North Campus for employees or students who work elsewhere on the Danforth Campus. This incentive will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis with a maximum of 200 permits.

“We hope that faculty, staff and students will consider alter- native transportation and off-site parking as a way not only to re- duce the campus footprint but also to reduce parking expenses, thereby helping to ease parking load and traffic overall,” said Lisa Underwood, director of WESTL Parking & Transportation Services.

In addition to the U-Pass and WeCar programs, which encour- age the use of alternative trans- portation rather than single-occupa- cy vehicles, the University will discontinue the Occasional Parking Program in 2008-09. This pro- gram is designed to provide an occasional, reduced-cost daily parking option for those who use a vehicle at an alternate mode (walk, bike, public transit and so forth) for their commute. The Occasional Parking Program will make a set number of discounted daily permits available annually for purchase by individuals enrolled in the program. Parking Services will have membership packets for the Occasional Parking Program available in June.

Future enhancements also are being considered for evening parking on the Danforth Campus, and the planning process for the Danforth Campus is nearing completion.

For more information, contact Parking and Transportation Services at 935-5601 or ptrans@wustl.edu.
Alzheimer's plaque buildup reduced by drug

**BY MICHAEL C. PURDY**

The ability of brain cells to take in substances from their environment in the production of a key ingredient in Alzheimer's disease plays a big role in the illness.

The researchers used a drug to shut down the intake process, known as endocytosis, in a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease. This led to a reduction in amyloid beta levels in the brains of live mice.

Cirrito and his colleagues linked endocytosis to increased communication between brain cells to higher amyloid beta levels. Cirrito decided to test endocytosis and brain cell activity in a coordinated fashion. He used the mouse model to study how to introduce drugs that reduce endocytosis and the alteration between brain cells.

When researchers gave mice the drug that stopped endocytosis, amyloid beta levels dropped by 70 percent. To see how normal brain cell activity contributed to ongoing amyloid beta production in the absence of endocytosis, they then started a second drug that reduced brain cell function. Social interaction between brain cells decreased by 60 percent.

When they reversed the experiment, reducing brain cell communication first, amyloid beta levels decreased by 60 percent. Adding the drug that stopped endocytosis caused an additional small reduction in amyloid beta levels. The results show that normal amyloid beta production requires both brain communication and endocytosis, so endocytosis is essential for a slightly larger share of amyloid beta.

Cirrito conducted the research in the laboratories of co-author David M. Holtzman, M.D., the Andrew B. and Greta C. Jones Professor and chair of the Department of Neurology at the School of Medicine and neurologist-in-chief of Barnes-Jewish Hospital; and Steven J. Monenrick, Ph.D., associate professor of neurology and psychiatry.

Drug prevents abnormalities that lead to seizures

**BY MICHAEL C. PURDY**

Current medications for seizures are comparable to the-counter cold and flu remedies. They block abnormalities that don't significantly affect the underlying illnesses that cause them.

Now School of Medicine scientists have taken the first step toward developing another option. They've shown that a drug can prevent the brain abnormalities that lead to seizures in mice with an inherited form of epilepsy.

Working in a mouse model of tuberous sclerosis (TS), an inherited human condition that causes seizures, researchers showed that regular doses of the drug rapamycin prevented the mice from seizing. The treatment also blocked the development of structural abnormalities in the brain and extended lifespan.


"One percent of the general population has epilepsy, and 60 percent of those patients don't respond well to current treatments," said senior author Michael Wong, M.D., Ph.D., assistant professor of neurology and co-director of the neuro-ophthalmology program at the Siteman Cancer Center, created a mouse model of TS.

Research by other scientists showed that the genes mutated in TS overproduce a mammalian target of rapamycin (mTOR), a protein that regulates several aspects of cell growth and proliferation. Those results led to clinical trials currently underway to see if rapamycin, an FDA-approved drug used for more than a decade to block growth by decreasing activation of the mTOR pathway.

"We reasoned that mTOR might also be abnormally regulating genes that produce neurotransmitter receptors, ion channels and other proteins involved in brain cell communication, and that this might contribute to the seizures in TS patients," Wong said. "If that's the case, rapamycin should decrease the chance of seizures by decreasing mTOR activation."

The researchers developed a rapamycin-labeled lab normally starts having seizures at 1-2 months of age. When Linghai Zeng, M.D., Ph.D., a postdoctoral fellow in Wong's lab, gave a group of the mice regular doses of rapamycin starting at 2 weeks of age, they were seizure-free.

"A closer look at the structure of brain cells in the treated mice revealed that the drug had prevented the development of structural and molecular abnormalities in brain cells known as astrocyte hypertrophy," said Wong. "Normally the mice die at 3-4 months of age, but with regular rapamycin doses, they were still alive at 6 months of age. As a bonus, the laboratory took them off the rapamycin, and the mice started seizing."

"These results support the initiation of clinical trials to test this drug's ability to alleviate seizures from tuberous sclerosis in human patients," Wong said.

Deadly genetic disease stopped before zebrafish birth

**BY BETTY MILLER**

By injecting a customised "genetic patch" into early stage fish embryos, researchers at the School of Medicine at the University of Missouri were able to correct a genetic mutation caused by the embryos developed normally.

The research could lead to the prevention of up to one-fifth of birth defects in humans caused by genetic mutations, according to the scientists.

The researchers led by Erik C. Madsen, first author and an M.D./Ph.D. student at the School of Medicine, made the groundbreaking discovery using a zebrafish model of Menkes disease, a rare, inherited disorder of copper metabolism caused by a mutation in the human version of the ATPA gene. Zebrafish are vertebrates that develop similarly to humans, and their transparency allows researchers to observe embryonic development.

Children who have Menkes disease have seizures, extensive neurogeneration in the gray matter of the brain, abnormal bone development and kinky, colorless hair. Most children with Menkes die before age 10, and treatment with copper is largely ineffective.

The research was published last month in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences' advance online edition.

The development of organs in the fetus is nearly complete at a very early stage. By that time, the mutation causing Menkes disease has already begun to cause neuronal damage,

Madsen and Bruce Mendelsohn, also an M.D./Ph.D. student at the School of Medicine, wondered if they could prevent the Menkes-like disease in zebrafish by correcting genetic mutations that impair copper metabolism during the brief period in which organs develop. Both students work in the lab of Jonathan Ling, a G.M. and the Helen B. and Edward R. Robertson Professor of Pediatrics and director of the Division of Genetics and Genomic Medicine at St. Louis Children's Hospital.

The researchers used zebrafish with two different mutations in the ATPA gene, resulting in a disease in the fish that has many of the same characteristics of the human Menkes disease. Madsen designed a specific therapy to correct each mutation with morphotixin, synthetic molecules that modify gene expression.

The zebrafish embryos were injected with the customized therapy during the critical window of development, and the researchers found that the zebrafish hatched and grew without any discernable defects.

"This method of copper delivery suggests that the prevention of the neurodegenerative features in Menkes disease in children may be possible with therapeutic interventions that correct the genetic defect within a specific, developmental window," Madsen said.

The work is an important step toward personalized medicine, which can tailor treatment to an individual's genetic makeup.

"Eventually, we would like to know how each person's genome sequence so we know what mutations each person has that may lead to disease," Gillen said. "That way, you don't get a drug for cancer that works against any kind of cancer. You get a drug for the specific mutation that causes that. That's personalized medicine is all about!"
The 19th-century Barbizon movement explored in new Kemper exhibit

Juliette Dupin’s "In Pasture" came to the University by subscription in 1886 — just four years after it was created. It is one of several landscapes in the exhibition "The Barbizon School and the Nature of Landscape" on view May 2-July 21.

These include simple, straightforward scenes of nature, ranging from mysterious forests to bucolic fields, as well as images of city dwellers. Sometimes, the two elements co-existed — for example, Julien Dupre’s "The River" (c. 1850) is a dramatic, almost elegiac composition depicting a sun-lit oak-leafed tree over a picturesque riverbank. "Wood Interior" (1867) by Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña is a large-leafed scene (or forest undergrowth) in which density packed brushstrokes mimic the color and texture of leaves, soil, bark, and rock.

The exhibition's second section explores the broad impact of the Barbizon School, which reached from impressionists such as van Gogh and Pierre Auguste Renoir to later French Salon painters such as Juliette Dupin and Leon Lhermitte. For example, Lhermitte’s large oil "La Malouine (The Milkmaid)" (1883) — viewed by thousands at the Paris World’s Fair in 1889 — depicts a group of rural workers engaged in agricultural labor, while Julien Dupin’s meticulously executed "Haymaking" (1852), like "In Pasture," is notable for brava brushwork. Barbizon painters also exerted a powerful influence on their American contemporaries. In "New England Village (Catkill Creek)" (1863), George Inness, who visited Barbizon in the mid-1880s — integrates Hudson River School romanticism with the Barbizon School’s looseness and darker palette.

Conversely, the softened focus and subtle values of "Beyond the Sunlight" display the Barbizon approach through the lens of Impressionism.

Other American artists reaping the Barbizon landscape were Todd Bumstead and Hollywood Art Direction, who worked with multiple Barbizon artists through the laten-19th-century. Andrew Horton, prof, of film and media studies, says, "Miniature Books "Before Sunrise (Morning Twilight"")" (1906-07)

For example, Jules Dupre’s "In Pasture" (1882) was purchased both by the Ministry of Fine Arts in 1916, while Dwight William Tryon’s "The Barge (With the Receding Light at Daybreak)" (1906-07) was purchased in 1910. More than a dozen works are on view 1905 as part of a major bequest of St. Louis banker Charles Parsons. Notably, 18th-century Barbizon painters have recently undergone conservation to repair old, yellowed varnish in order to reveal original color of their landscapes. The surrounding area appeared to members of the Barbizon School both for its diverse landscapes and for its reputed natural springs — which Barbizon artists enjoyed. 

The pristine quality of the area was largely fictionalized, part of a battle to bolster a fledgling tourist industry that was developing in response to growing popular demand for nature, ranging from mysterious forests to bucolic fields, as well as images of city dwellers. Sometimes, the two elements co-existed — for example, Julien Dupre’s "The River" (c. 1850) is a dramatic, almost elegiac composition depicting a sun-lit oak-leafed tree over a picturesque riverbank. "Wood Interior" (1867) by Narcisse Virgile Diaz de la Peña is a large-leafed scene (or forest undergrowth) in which density packed brushstrokes mimic the color and texture of leaves, soil, bark, and rock.

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East Village Opera Company brings rock arrangements to opera music

You've heard opera, and you've heard rock, but you've never heard opera and rock like the East Village Opera Company.

Over the past five years, this powerhouse ensemble—comprising a five-piece rock band, a string quartet and two outstanding vocalists—has created hard-hitting arrangements of many of opera's greatest hits.

“Peter Kiesewalter and Tyrell Ross bring the East Village Opera Company to presenting opera in a new light,” says Kiesewalter.

“We’ve created something that is not only exciting for the audience, but also for the performers,” Ross adds.

Kiesewalter was once a member of the East Village Opera Company, and while working there, he became acquainted with Ross. The two decided to form their own ensemble and started performing in various locations throughout New York City.

“I was always fascinated by the way operatic music could be adapted to suit different contexts,” Kiesewalter says. “I thought it would be fun to see how we could make it accessible to a wider audience.”

Ross agrees. “I love opera, but I think it’s important to reach out to people who might not otherwise be interested in attending an opera performance.”

The ensemble has performed at various venues, including the East Village Opera Co-Opera and the Manhattan Opera Project. They have also collaborated with other artists, such as the rock band the Mars Volta.

“Peter and I have been friends for a long time,” says the Mars Volta’s Cedric Bixler-Zavala. “We share a passion for opera and rock music, so it was a natural fit for us to work together.”

The ensemble’s upcoming performance at the East Village Opera Company features a selection of songs from well-known operas, such as “La Traviata” and “Carmen.” The arrangements are designed to be easy enough for opera enthusiasts to follow along, but challenging enough for rock fans to enjoy.

“I’m excited to see how the audience will react to our reinterpretation of these classic arias,” says Ross. “I think they will be surprised by how well they fit into the rock genre.”

The ensemble’s performance at the East Village Opera Company is sure to be a hit with opera lovers and rock fans alike. Don’t miss out on this unique experience that brings two classic art forms together in a new and exciting way.
Four nonprofits honored as social entrepreneurs

By Sylia Neuman

Four local nonprofits were honored at an awards dinner April 17 for the third annual Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation Competition (SERC). The teams will receive a total of $10,000 in cash and in-kind support for successfully demonstrating that their ventures have social value and that their group has the ability to implement in plans. Partners in the SERC are the St. Louis Cardinals Charities and Entrepreneurs in the Youth Bridge Community Foundation. The St. Louis Cardinals designed the contest to grow social entrepreneurs who can craft innovative processes, approaches and solutions to help resolve social issues.

WUText, a group of students and young professionals working for racial harmony and economic justice within the St. Louis Metropolitan Area, Kraus served as one of the event organizers.

The clamp directs radiofrequency ablation lines needed to reroute cause fatigue, shortness of breath, and served as assistant dean; in from Page 1

Emergency — from Page 1

of 163 schools with 12.87 pounds of recycled paper per person, and the Per Capita Clause — based on the amount of material recycled per person — finishing No. 49 of 180 schools with 21.45 pounds.

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Social work to present 2008 Distinguished Alumni Awards

T

he George Warren Brown School of Social Work will honor five distinguished individuals for outstanding service during its annual Alumni Awards Dinner on Monday, April 30, at the Coronnado Ballroom.

Three alumni will receive Distinguished Alumni Awards; one faculty member will receive the Distinguished Faculty Award; and one member of the community will receive the Dean's Medal. The honorees are:

Distinguished Alumni Award

Ruth R. Ehrenson (MSW '38) has a passion for social justice that has been the underlying theme throughout her career. For the past 11 years, she has worked on policy analysis, education, and advocacy. Ehrenson was policy director of Citizens for Ma
souri's Children for 11 years and has been the director of policy and budgetary policy at the Missouri Budget Project since 2000. Ehrenson has been a neighborhood ac
tivity, providing leadership to pro
test and develop the Southside National Bank building and working
to promote the development of three downtown commercial sites. She
served on numerous boards and statewide task forces. In 1994, Ehrenson was awarded the St. Louis Post-Dispatch Journal named her a Health Care Hero in Public Policy.

Ehrenson received her MSW at Simmons College (MSW '39, DSW '94) has devoted her career to advancing social work edu
cation and to community serv
ices. She began her career as an associate dean at the University of Kentucky. In 1975, she was named as
sociate dean for academic pro
grams at the University of Ken
tyucky Graduate School. From
1983-1994, she was a professor in the social work program and
teaching in the Center for the Humanities at Washington Univer
sity. She was named the Center for the Humanities' Faculty Hu
manities Workshops for 2008-09.

Distinguished Faculty Award

Carol McMillen, Ph.D., is professor of social work and asso
ciation director of the Institute of Mental Health Services Research (CMHSSR) and associate dean for research at the Brown School. McMillen has been the leader in many teaching, research and serv
ice initiatives. McMillen maintains an active research agenda in child welfare and mental health services funded through the National Institute of Mental Health. Active in the local community, she has served closely with three social service agencies. He helped found the Brown School's partnership around evidence-based practices with the Family Resource Center. He is implementing a treatment foster care program with the St. Louis Alliance for Children and Families. He also continues his long-term collaborations with the Missouri Children's Division on multiple quality improvement ef
forts. In 2001, McMillen was named CMHSSR associate director. The center of his kind in a school of social work, CMHSSR fo
scuses on using evidence-based practices to close the gap between what the community needs and what the school can offer.

The Dean's Medal

A. B. Brookner (Ph.D., 1952) retired chairmen and executive offi
cers of Brown Shoe Co. with the St. Louis-based shoe manufac
turer, founded by Brown School's namesake George Brown, spanned more than 20 years. Brookner joined the Uni
versity's Board of Trustees in 1983. He has chaired the University's Educational Policy and Planning Committee and Honorary Degree Committee and served on the Execu
tive Committee and Executive Search Committee. A Brown graduate, Brookner joined the Brown School's National Council in 1974. During his tenure, he has been a director (senior part
ner) at McKinney & Company and was an associate
director of the National Sec
urity and Foreign Affairs Offices of the Office of Management and Budget in the Executive Office of the President of the United States. He has been director of 12 New York Stock Exchange listings and served for six years as a mem
ber of the Brown School's divisional governing board. He is currently a member of the Board of Governors of the Harvard Business School.

Career services dean hired by law school

BY JESSICA MARTIN

Michael Spivey has been named the new assistant dean of career services at the School of Law, announced Kent D. Syverud, J.D., dean and the Elizabeth H. Shepley Shverture Professor.

Spivey, associate director for admissions at Van
derbilt Law School, was named to the position at the University after a national search conducted by Janet McMillen, associate dean for admissions and career services, and Charles Burson, J.D., visiting law pro
fessor.

"Dean Spivey is an enthusiastic manager who is highly motivated to achieve progress in career place
ment of our students," Syverud said. "In his work in admissions at Vanderbilt, he has acquired a national reputation for knowing and recruiting students indi
vidually and effectively and for marketing the school. We believe he will be an excellent manager to lead the challenges and opportunities we face in career

Jazz workshop for K-12 teachers funded by NEH

BY LAMB ONITZ

Gerald Early, Ph.D., the Merle
ERING Professor of Modern

Letters in the Department of

English and director of the Center for the Humanities, both in Arts & Sciences, has received a $73,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Division of Education

Programs. The money will fund "The Impact

of Jazz on American Life," an NEH Faculty Humanities Work

shop for K-12 teachers that will outline how interdisciplinary approaches to popular music, specifically jazz, can enrich a variety of humanities subjects.

The Faculty Humanities Work

shop for K-12 teachers will take place June 16-20, 2008. For

more information, see the Center for the Humanities' website at cenhum.artsci.wustl.edu or can

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**Good sport**

Thakor's work brings together two of his passions: research and football.

Anjan V. Thakor, Ph.D., meets with BSBA student Alexander Zendejas, a junior, in his office. "The level of energy, perseverance and focus that Anjan has is extraordinary, and he brings that to everything he does, whether it's his academic research, professional work or family life," says Stuart Greenbaum, Ph.D., former dean of Olin Business School. "He's a franchise player.

Anjan V. Thakor, Ph.D., meets with BSBA student Alexander Zendejas, a junior, in his office. "The level of energy, perseverance and focus that Anjan has is extraordinary, and he brings that to everything he does, whether it's his academic research, professional work or family life," says Stuart Greenbaum, Ph.D., former dean of Olin Business School. "He's a franchise player.

The Thakor family (clockwise from left): Anjan V. Thakor, Ph.D.; sons Cullen, 19, and Richard, 23; wife, Serry.

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**Washington People**

Washington University in St. Louis

April 24, 2008

**BY SHEILA NEUMAN**

**WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS**

**Football of his passions:**

BY SHUIA NEUMAN

**American football is “the most strategically complex sport ever devised by man.”**

Ph.D.

In a way, Thakor himself could be called “strategically complex.” On first glance, you might think he's just another brilliant Olin Business School professor (the John E. Simon Professor of Finance, in fact) who also happens to be a senior associate dean. But take a closer look at his background and activities, and you'll soon suspect that something different is going on.

Try calling him over spring break or a long weekend, and he'll be out of town.

Ask other professors at the business school what makes him tick, and they won't know where to start.

Take a look in his office and you'll notice his desk is clear of clutter — aside from a few foot-high stacks of papers leaning against the wall to the side.

Although the evidence points to a man who is seriously locking off now that he is a chaired profes-

son, nothing could be further from the truth. In Thakor's five years at WUSTL, he has published nearly 20 papers, monographs or books and presented papers at dozens of conferences. He helped found — and is president of — the Finan-

cial Intermediation Research Soci-

ey, an international organization of people who study banking.

As senior associate dean, he started the Master's of Science in Finance program. Thakor is in-

volved with the business school's new strategic plan, which includes creating new research centers at the business school — one for finance and accounting research, and the other for innovation.

Did we mention he also gets rave reviews for his teaching?

For Thakor, all of his activity seems to serve as a fuel for him. Thakor bought a house on spec in Thakor's native of India who loves American football is “the most strategically complex sport ever devised by man?” Thakor admits that research brings him a tremendous amount of satisfaction. In fact, he says, it borders on obsessive.

"I grab every little opportunity I have to do this," Thakor says. "For me, research fulfills the same need that leisure or relaxation does for other people. A lot of people around me don't always understand that. But it's essential to who I am. I think for most people, though, if they have a passion, they find a way to fit it in."

**Football as a metaphor**

Most of Thakor's recent research focuses on corporate finance and financial intermediation, which he says is mostly banking. Specifically, he focused on the issue of disagreement among eco-

mics. And he loves research. The following the NFL, but, at some point during his doctoral studies, he was introduced to the sport.

Since then, he has been hooked.

"To call it a football fan fits in no understatement," Thakor says. "In my view, football is the most strategically complex sport ever devised by man. I don't think any other sport even comes close. On average, you have 65 plays on de-

fense, 65 plays on offense. It offers 100 opportunities to coach. What you do on Play 1 is going to affect how the other team reacts if you do the same play later in the game."

Thakor has managed to com-

bine his passion for football with that for research. He is conduct-

ing long-term research with col-

leagues Barton Hamilton, Ph.D., the Robert Brookings Smith Disting-

uished Professor of Entrepre-

neurship, to test his hypotheses on what makes for optimal strate-

gies. They've been collecting data that will enable them to compare what theory says the optimal strategy is with what a team actu-

ally did.

"We're hoping to publish this in a good economics journal, where we talk about how football is a metaphor for the optimality of economic decisions-making in the face of uncertainty," Thakor says.

People might scoff at the idea of merging economic research with football — but they don't know Thakor, a man whose ener-

gy level is so intense that watch-

ing a game of football is equiva-

lent to spending a day immersed in research.

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**Anjan V. Thakor**

**TITLES:** The John E. Simon Professor of Finance and senior associate dean of the Olin Business School

**Family:** wife, Serry; sons Richard, 20, and Cullen, 19

**Personality shape:** Impulse shopper

Thakor might be a touch of a shopper in Estes Park, Col., after only three days of skiing. Why? He and his family fell in love with the town a num-

ber of years ago when they would stop spending the night there while driving home from a conference in Wyoming. What was to be a one-night getaway turned into a mature vacation. It then became a family tradition to spend several days in Estes Park every year. Ten years ago, Thakor decided to add his connection to Estes Park by buying a house. Eventually, he and his son Richard learned to ski.