William H. Danforth, chairman of the Board of Trustees, has selected as the Commencement speaker for the University's 1999 graduation, according to Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton. The 138th Commencement will be held May 14, beginning at 8:30 a.m. with the traditional academic procession into Brookings Quadrangle.

Danforth's selection recognizes his half-century of service to the University—as a faculty member, medical administrator, chancellor and board chair—and the completion of his term as chair of the Trustees.

"I think of no greater help in higher education today than Bill Danforth," Wrighton said. "His impact on this University is profound and will endure as we continue to move forward on so many fronts."

"Now that Bill Danforth has decided to ask the nominating committee to suggest a successor as chair of the board," Wrighton continued, "I thought it was appropriate that he should address the students and the parents at this time of transition. He represents our past, present and future, and we will be rewarded by his continuing leadership role as a Life Trustee. I am personally grateful for the mentorship extended to me during my early years as chancellor, and I instruct my commit- ment to serve as chair beyond his original plan."

Danforth, who was chancellor from 1971 to 1995, will join other former board chairs as a Life Trustee of the University. These include Lee M. Liberman, chair from 1988 to 1993, and William M. Van Cleve, chair from 1993 to 1995. The nominating committee will bring the name of Danforth's successor to the May 14 meeting of the Board of Trustees for its action. "One of the great opportuni- ties anyone could ever wish for is the honor of serving an institu- tion," Danforth said.

Historic grant

Human Genome Project here gets $218.4 million NIH grant

By Linda Salk

The School of Medicine has been awarded the largest grant in University history. Robert H. Waterston, M.D., Ph.D., the James S. McDonnell professor and head of genetics, will receive a five-year $218.4 million grant from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), including $38 million announced in March.

The grant is part of a five-year strategic allocation from the NHGRI to three institutions that are sequencing major portions of the human genome. The other two are the Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research in Cambridge, Mass., and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Waterston directs the medical school's Genome Sequencing Center, which is a leader in the interna- tional Human Genome Project. "Bob Waterston, his staff and collaborators have implemented an outstanding program to define the sequence of human DNA with a high degree of accuracy and speed," said William A. Peck, M.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the medical school, "confidence in our abilities that has been demonstrated by the NHGRI in making this award," Waterston said. "We are committed to working with the other labs to get this vital information out and available to researchers who are working on cures for diseases in humans and other organisms.

In collaboration with the Sanger Centre in Cambridge, England, Waterston directs the Genome Sequencing Center, which is a leader in the interna- tional Human Genome Project. "Bob Waterston, his staff and collaborators have implemented an outstanding program to define the sequence of human DNA with a high degree of accuracy and speed," said William A. Peck, M.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the medical school. "This grant will help form the basis for hitherto unimagined medical progress."

The human genome is all of the DNA in our chromosomes, and it contains the instructions that sustain life, and determine the characteristics of an organism. By determining the exact order of these instructions, researchers will decipher our genetic blueprint and know, as never before, the ways in which genes contribute to health, disease, physical conditions and cancer.

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New Stanley Elkin humanities chair goes to Steven Zwicker

By Lisa Otten

Steven N. Zwicker, Ph.D., professor of English, has been named the first Stanley Elkin Professor in the Humanities in Arts and Sciences. A formal installation ceremony will take place next fall.

"Professor Zwicker is an internationally recognized scholar, an outstanding teacher and a valuable University citizen," said Edward S. Macias, Ph.D., executive vice chancellor and dean of Arts and Sciences. "He has contributed to Washington University in every aspect of its mission and purpose."

The Elkin Professorship honors the life and works of Stanley Elkin, Ph.D., the Merle Kling Professor of Modern Letters at the University, where he served on the faculty for 35 years. The professorship was created as a result of a 1997 gift by the late Stanley Elkin.

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New skills

Staffers earn state certification

BY CHRISTINE FARNER

P
tenter Willie Heffernan is teaching his coworkers in the Facilities Planning and Management Department a new and very useful set of skills—how to paint, wallpaper, refinish doors and install windows—all part of an innovative in-house training program.

Last week the students were tackling wallpaper—learning how to measure, go around corners, line up patterns and set the seams. They proudly show visitors their projects from the 12-week course, everything from a faux marble finish on an old dresser to a refinished chair with ivy stenciled on the seat.

Improvements also have appeared in the shop in the Millbrook Building where the course is held, once a week after work. The cold steel doors have been finished to look like wood, an office has been created to create a marble effect on a wall and an office has been finished to look like wood, an office has been created to create a marble effect on a wall and an office has been created to create a marble effect on a wall and another wall.

"Once you do a project and it looks nice, you get the confidence to do more, and it's fun to learn new things," said Steve Hedgcock.

Previous courses offered were electrical maintenance, plumbing and carpentry. After completing five courses, students earn a general maintenance certificate from the district.

The carpentry class built a three-wall room for the students in the painting and decorating class to practice on.

Kary Eckrich, a utilities employee who is taking the painting and decorating class, taught the plumbing class two years ago.

"This is a whole lot better than taking the courses somewhere else," he said. "We can name out staff members who can troubleshoot the problem," Wiley said. "We're not trying to make them experts through these courses but give them multicraft skills to handle various situations.

Wiley also gives feedback from employees who took courses elsewhere indicated the locations and times were not convenient. Also, while the training was useful, it was not oriented to the needs of the University," he said.

"This was a lot about new home building, but it didn't add a lot to the job situations we have here.

Four or so years ago the University decided to start offering more streamlined courses on campus through the Special School District. Facilities pays for the students' class costs as long as students earn a C or better in the course; and the Special School District pays for the instructors' fees.

Wiley added that the program was geared toward the good employee morale. The committee formed the right time to give employees training that is hard to miss.

"They provided relationship-building among the workers," he said.

Pat Steimayner, an administrative assistant in capital projects, started taking courses when she was building a new home. "I took two courses at North County tech and three here," she said. "The ones at North County were relevant to the campus. They were geared more towards new construction. We have a lot of fun and learn all kinds of new things. Two of my boxes are in this class with me.

The class also has inspired many students to take on home projects.

Steve "Stick" Hedgcock, a plumber, remodeled three rooms of his home, installed a dishwasher and two archways after taking the carpentry class. "I've been doing it for a year and it looks nice, you get the confidence to do it in your own home, and it's fun to learn new things," he said. Sometimes I think the maintenance people don't get a lot of credit for what they know. They can do a lot of things.

Wiley added. "The courses make them more valuable employees, and if they can use the experience outside of work too— that's great."

The five-year grant will enable University researchers to complete a working draft of up to one-third of the human genome by the spring of 2000. They will then have a high-quality assembly of the genes, which could be sequenced by or before 2003. The genome project is the most ambitious of the five grants, which will provide annual NIH funding, with $178.3 million for research plus $81.1 million for training.
**Advanced imaging**

Noninvasive method spots language regions in children's brains

By Barbara Rodriguez

I think it's tough to coax a child's cooperation when you're getting a haircut, imagine asking a youngster to be immobile for hours. And to take language and memory for language. The same neurosurgeons who study development. Their findings suggest that neurosurgeons can now use fMRI as a noninvasive way to evaluate brain function. The images from the trials revealed that the left hemisphere of the language center for 10 of the children who completed both trials successfully. Four children also favored the left side of the brain in one trial, and one child didn't show greater left hemispheric activity, or lateralization, in either trial. Lee said an imitation of a task children to focus accurately or perform the language tasks well might help improve the detection of lateralization.

By Linda Sage

The School of Medicine has become a partner in a large, scale effort to map points along human DNA that vary between individuals. The map will accelerate the search for disease genes, aid in the development of diagnostic tests and provide a foundation for developing tailor-made medications.

The two-year $45 million project involves five academic centers. It is being funded by the Wellcome Trust and 10 pharmaceutical companies, which have formed the not-for-profit Human Genome Sequencing Consortium. SNPs (pronounced "snips") or single nucleotide polymorphisms are the most common variations in the human genome. John D. McPherson, Ph.D., assistant professor of genetics and assistant director of the Genome Sequencing Center, and Elaine R. Mardis, Ph.D., research assistant professor of genetics, are directing the medical school's portion of the project.

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By Maurizio M. Corbetta, M.D., Ph.D.

Corbetta to study brain's control over what we see

Maurizio M. Corbetta, M.D., assistant professor of neurology, of radiology and of anatomy and neurobiology, has received a five-year $1.7 million grant from the National Eye Institute for his research. Corbetta and colleagues will determine how the brain controls what we notice when we look at a scene.

When we enter a gallery, for example, we typically spot the most colorful painting. But if we want to know how a familiar painting and know its location on canvas, we must travel to see it first. In this case, our neurons may be in the wiring system of our brain to focus on the familiar paintings. To study these studies, conducted with positron emission tomography, which revealed the brain's visual areas that spring into action when we look for specific objects in a scene. But it takes 60 seconds to make a PET image, and brain activity is recorded as a person repeats a task many times. "PET research has shown us which parts of the brain become active during a task but not the order in which they become active," Corbetta said.

The researchers now will obtain pictures of the brain at work with a new technique called functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), which can generate an image every two to three seconds. Using new methods of analyzing data development with Gordon Shulman, Ph.D., assistant professor of neurology, and John Ollinger, D.Sc., assistant professor of oncology and radiology, they will test out events in the brain during each presentation of a scene. "Event-related fMRI will allow us to find out which members of the orchestra play first and who is conducting," Corbetta said. "Our main goal is to distinguish between memory and visual signals and to determine which areas of the brain control visual perception." Corbetta and colleagues will also compare the effects of different types of instructions — visual, as when one watches a favorite brand of cereal at the grocery store, for example, or verbal, as when one pronounces the name of a needed report. Corbetta is especially interested in attention because language provides an additional way of instructing the visual centers of the brain. Although the project aims to explore the role of visual interactions, Corbetta wants to use the new technology to study emotional recovery in people who have suffered brain damage. "These studies may shed light on the visual neglect, which affects about 20 percent of people who have had strokes," he said. "This attentional deficit significantly reduces the ability to return to a productive life."
**University Events**

A model displayed by a gaffe by Nade Tindall, a senior in the School of Art's Fashion Design Program, part of their 70th annual Fashion Show, which takes place at the Saint Louis Gallery May 2.

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**School of Art marks 70 years of fashion at May 2**

B. LAS MICHAEL

All street was riding high in 1929. Babe Ruth was the Sultan of Swat and Anheuser-Busch was weathering promotion with baker's yeast and non-alcoholic "Beer." And the 12th Annual Fashion Show as it was then known, a part of the 1970's Annual Fashion Show descends on the Saint Louis Galliera.

The show — a fully choreographed, Paris-style extravaganza featuring close to 100 models — locks off with a reception at 7:30 p.m. in the Galliera's Garden Court, located near the Lord & Taylor entrance. The entire event gets underway at 8 p.m. and is followed by a catered reception for the designers and audience.

Tickets are $45 per person for general seating. Tickets with special seating (and recognition) available for $73 - $83,000 with all monies over $45 and up sold by Mary Kelly, a coordinator of programming and events. To register, call 935-6543, at the Galleria's concierge service center or through Metrotix, $3,000 for special seating, available at 935-6543.

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**Films**

April 22

7:30 p.m. Film screen feature series, "The Wedding Singer." (Also April 24, same time and April 25, 7 p.m. cost: $3; 119 Washington Ave., St. Louis. 935-8960.

April 23

7:30 p.m. Film screen feature series, "The Doors at High School." (Also April 24, 7 p.m. and April 25, 7 p.m., 100 Brown Hall. 935-5983.

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**Lectures**

April 22

11:30 a.m. Systems science and mathematician seminar, "Supply Constraints." Chris A. Benney, assistant professor of management science, Room 101 Cupples II Hall. 935-6611.

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**Exhibitions**

April 22


"Artists, '93." Through April 24, Master of Fine Arts exhibit work 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Room 101, Brown Hall. 935-9656.

"First of Fine Arts Thesia Exhibits." Through April 25, 7th year graduate students exhibit work. 935-7499.

"Triad." Room 219 Ridgley Hall. 935-5156.

"Mason, "WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS"

University Events

Runaway Technologies • Transfusion Medicine • Safe Food

**WILD invitation**

A model displaying a gown by Nade Tindall, a senior in the School of Art's Fashion Design Program, part of their 70th annual Fashion Show, which takes place at the Saint Louis Gallery May 2.

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Wednesday, April 28
11 a.m.-5 p.m. Earth Week Grand Rounds. "The Myth of Monocultures and the Tyranny of the Pointy Front Door. protest of path, surgery, and urology, and microbiology, and transcription. Aud. 4103 School of Medicine. 314-362-0789.

Thursday, April 29
3 p.m. Genetics seminar. "Languages, libraries, bus stops and other works in the parks, courtyards, libraries, and public spaces of Washington University's neighbor to the north. It's really a year-long process," said Newhattan, Brown, associate professor in sculpture, who co-directs the program with Amy Naegele, curator of the American Art and Sculpture.

"It's a great opportunity for sculptors to get some professional experience before they graduate," she said. "It's also a good opportunity for public artists, who must do all of the above work in order to fulfill the support of public officials.

Such is the task posed by the School of Arts annual Sculpture City Series, now in its 15th year. The program, sponsored by University City, the Regional Arts Commission and the University City Municipal Arts Committee, requires students to meet with local officials, choose sites, design projects, and submit proposals. If their proposals are selected for funding, artists are expected to take the opportunity to install their works in the parks, courtyards, libraries, and public spaces of University City.

"From the artist's point of view, there are several ways to look at public art," Ward-Brown concluded. "Artists can adapt their ideas to a site, a budget and a deadline. Many times the artist's concepts are inspired by the site itself — by its physical characteristics, history or natural beauty. As well as issues of safety and accessibility, our challenge is to work with new kinds of components then combine to create the sculpture. It's a challenge to the artist to think outside the box. What is new and different in our creativity in our students?"

Music
Thursday, April 22
6:30 p.m. Student recital. Graham Chapel.

Friday, April 30
6:30 p.m. Earth Week workshop. "Health Care in the 21st Century."
4950 Children's Hospital. 314-362-0789.
7:30 p.m. Earth Week panel discussion...And more..."Artists can adapt their ideas to a site, a budget and a deadline. Many times the artist's concepts are inspired by the site itself — by its physical characteristics, history or natural beauty. As well as issues of safety and accessibility, our challenge is to work with new kinds of components then combine to create the sculpture. It's a challenge to the artist to think outside the box. What is new and different in our creativity in our students?"
Danforth Retiring as chair of University Trustees
— from page 1

Danforth, 75, retired last year as chancellor of Washington University, becoming the University’s 13th chancellor, succeeding the late Thomas H. Stassen. The associate professor in 1965 and full professor in 1967—a position he still holds. In 1965, he was appointed vice chancellor of medical affairs.

In 1971, Danforth became the University’s 13th chancellor, succeeding the late Thomas H. Stassen. He is also a member of the University Board of Directors, where he has served since 1973.

The following incidents were reported to University Police from April 10 to 18. Readers with information that could assist in investigating these incidents are urged call 853-5555. This release is made in a public service effort to prevent crime, and not available in the University Police Website at www.wustl.edu/police.

April 14
3:10 p.m. — A Campus Y staff member reported someone stole a computer and monitor, valued at $370, from Ulman Hall.
April 18
12:30 p.m. — A University shuttle bus was involved in an accident at the intersection of Forsyth and Skinker boulevards. The drivers of both vehicles were treated at local hospitals for minor injuries.

Honorary degrees
Political leader, scientist, philanthropist to be honored

April Welcome Alexandra Carroll of Washington, D.C., and Aaron Rosenstock of Summerville, N.J., build towers with straws and marshmallows at the Engineering Olympics, part of the annual Undergraduate Admissions Office’s month-long April Welcome program for prospective students.

Committed to community, breakthroughs in medicine and efforts in politics and education are among the contributions exemplified by prominent leaders who will deliver the commencement address and receive honorary degrees during Washington University’s 138th Commencement May 14. The University also will bestow academic degrees on some 2,500 students during the ceremony, which begins at 8:30 a.m. in Brookings Quadrangle.

William H. Danforth, former chancellor and retiring chair of the Washington University Board of Trustees, will deliver the commencement address. In addition, philanthropist Alvin Goldfarb, Philip Needleman, Ph.D., president of G.D. Searle; and former Congresswoman Patricia Scott Schroeder will receive honorary degrees.

Editor’s Note: See separate story on page 1 about William H. Danforth.

Alvin Goldfarb is the retired president of Worth Stores Corp., a St. Louis-based retailer of ladies’ apparel, and the Alvin Goldfarb Foundation. Goldfarb earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University in 1957 and began a career in retailing that would take him to the top of Worth’s. He and his family have been generous supporters of the University and major contributors to charitable and religious organizations in the community.

His late wife, Jeannette Rudman Goldfarb, graduated from the University’s George Goldfarb’s support also enabled the George Warren Brown School of Social Work in 1936 with a master of social work degree and went on to complete her fieldwork in St. Louis. The Goldfarbs had three children: David, who joined the University’s School of Business in 1963 and graduated with honors in 1965; and former Congresswoman Elizabeth "Ivy" Gray in 1950. They have four grown children.

Alvin Goldfarb is a man of vision who has shown extraordinary generosity toward the University. He and his wife were founding supporters of the Scholars in Business Program in the John M. Olin School of Business. The Alvis Goldfarb Scholarship, which is named in honor of his wife, where he has served as director and also as campaign chairman. He is also past chairman of the Israel Emergency Fund.

Goldfarb’s support also enabled the George Warren Brown School of Social Work to construct a new building, Alvin Goldfarb Hall. Goldfarb’s backing for the new building was especially critical to the project’s success because the school’s alumni, while doing key work in the St. Louis community and beyond, often do not have the financial means to support a building project of Goldfarb’s magnitude.

In 1996, the School of Social Work recognized Goldfarb’s many contributions by awarding him the University’s first alumni award. In recognition of his key role in building the University to the forefront of the 21st century, he will receive an honorary doctorate in humanities.

Philip Needleman, Ph.D., chaired the School of Medicine’s Department of Pharmacology from 1976 to 1989 and now is chief scientist at Monsanto and president of G.D. Searle, Monsanto’s pharmaceutical sector. As adjunct professor of molecular biology and pharmacology, he maintains close ties with the University, where he was elected Basic Science Teacher of the Year five times during his 22 years on the faculty.

Needleman made news last month when he helped spearhead the Medicare Reform Act and the National Health Administration approved. Called "salvage" because of his role in drug discovery, it is recognized worldwide for his work on organic nitrogen, his work on blood pressure regulation and the discovery of molecules that convey information from the heart to the kidneys.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Needleman obtained both a bachelor’s degree in pharmacy in 1960 and master’s degree in pharmacology in 1962 from the University of Washington. He served as an assistant professor in 1960, associate professor in 1965 and professor in 1975.

In recognition of his contributions to science, health and medical education, he will receive an honorary doctorate in science from former Congresswoman Patricia Scott Schroeder, whose 24 years in office made her the longest-serving woman in the House of Representatives, is renowned for her independence, leading the House in 1995 to the 1998 Congressional Women’s Caucus on Women’s Issues, which she chairs.

As chair of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families from 1993-95, Schroeder wrote the Family and Medical Leave Act. The co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women’s Issues, which she chairs.

Needleman was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 1981, the National Academy of Medicine in 1987 and to the Academy of America in 1993. He received Washington University’s Distinguished Faculty Award on Founders Day in 1987 and the Second Century Award in 1994. In recognition of his contributions to science, health and medical education, he will receive an honorary doctorate from the University.

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In recognition of her support for the United States military, women and children, and her role championing women’s rights, she will receive an honorary doctorate in humanities.
Clemens receives 1999 Eliot Society Search Award

Former head volleyball coach Teri Clemens, who led the Bears to six NCAA Division III titles, was awarded the University's 1999 William Greenleaf Eliot Society Search Award April 13 at the society's annual dinner at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in St. Louis.

Clemens, both as a coach and as a person, has been an inspiration to her players and to her colleagues, said Paul H. Danforth, chairman of the Board of Directors of the William Greenleaf Eliot Society.

Clemens has been appointed associate dean of Finance, Planning, Development, and Growth, where she has received a master's degree in systems science and mathematics in 1981, co-founded Project ASK (an acronym for Alumni Sharing Knowledge). The program helps University engineering students gather practical career information. The two are being honored for their vision and ongoing commitment to the engineering school and its students.

Clemens is president of the Beta Group, a St. Louis-based consulting company specializing in the applications of information technology for Fortune 500 companies. She is also co-chair of the National Network of the Regional Centers of Excellence and founder of a Technology Gateway Initiative.

Clemens is founder and chief executive officer of G. A. Sullivan, a custom software development services company with offices in St. Louis and offices in Cincinnati and Nashville, Tenn., and Atlanta. Sullivan is recognized internationally as a co-author of several best-selling computer books published by Macmillan Computer Publishing's Que and Sams labels, including the recent release, "Building Enterprise Solutions with Visual Studio 6.0."

Hewer, who received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering in 1984, will be honored for her leadership and success in international business and engineering management. She has held a variety of international positions with Bendix Internationale, the American and International Standard Inc's Automotive Products Group. During her tenure at American Standard, she built the automobile engineering team into a $320 million in annual sales, and she has been a key contributor to the company's $1.3 billion in sales. She remained in the company when it merged with Null-Co Inc. in 1999.

The Eliot Society was founded in 1959 in recognition of the college's long and distinguished association with the University. Each year the society confers recognition of outstanding citizen of the Washington University community. Joining the University in August 1980, Clemens made good on her promise of giving her NCAA championship up to the University within five years. With her recruiting, the program extended itself to seven NCAA titles — including six in a row from 1991 through 1996.

In 1997, Clemens was named the United States Olympic Committee's National Coach of the Year for women's volleyball.

In the midst of her NCAA title run, Clemens coached in a pair of U.S. Olympic Festival (USOF) events.

Clemens will serve as head coach of the north squad for the 1991 and 1994 Olympic trials. Her 1994 USOF squad was the bronze medal in St. Louis. That competition was contested on the Washington University campus, where the Bears program won an NCAA all-divisions record of 182 consecutive home matches from 1991 to 1997.

Greely J. Hutchings, J.D., managing director of A.G. Edwards & Sons in St. Louis, has been appointed associate dean of the John M. Olm School of Business and director of its Western Career Center. Hutchings holds a master's degree in systems science and mathematics in 1981, co-founded Project ASK (an acronym for Alumni Sharing Knowledge). The program helps University engineering students gather practical career information. The two are being honored for their vision and ongoing commitment to the engineering school and its students.

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The Odems - Kathy, Brian, Randy, Matthew and Nicholas — enjoy a catamaran on the waters of Green Bay in Lake Michigan.

Randall R. Odem, M.D., views an ultrasound image revealing a twin gestation resulting from in vitro fertilization.

When Randy Odem talks about the School of Medicine's new infertility center, he sounds like one of his patients. Conception — of the center — consumed him for several years, but he does on the end-product.

Plans for the center, which Odem directs, miscarried several times. At one point, the group even had the wallpaper picked out, but the building was then slated for demolition.

The fortuitous end result is a state-of-the-art facility at 4444 Forest Park Ave. that opened in October 1997. "I am really impressed with what they have been able to do and with the commitment that has been made to reproductive medicine," said Luisa Maestro, M.D., the William Goodell Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and director of the Reproductive Division at the University of Pennsylvania Health System. "Dr. Odem is an acknowledged national leader in the field, and he has created an efficient yet humane program, which is always a fine line when you are dealing with any new technology.

— Randy R. Odem, M.D.

Helping couples become families

Randall R. Odem, M.D., directs cutting-edge infertility program

By Linda Sage

associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology and director of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology, intends to become an obstetrician. But instead of bringing babies into the world, he helps usher them into the womb. "It's very rewarding when people who have struggled for finding fertility problems or lots of months struggling to get a baby," said Odem, who relishes the chance to become a father to his patients. He even gets Christmas cards from couples with teens.

Choosing obstetrics

Odem decided on obstetrics and gynecology during his third year of medical school in 1979, attracted to its mix of surgery and medicine. He chose reproductive endocrinology because the field had a glimmer of hope at that time. The first test-tube baby, Louise Brown of the United Kingdom, was born in 1978. And Odem himself was one of the three siblings. In his hometown of Chicago, his father, a laborer in a grocery warehouse, and his mother, a bookkeeper, "gave us strong encouragement to study so that we could work with our minds instead of our backs.

In high school, Odem decided to become a physician, joining the Medical Explorer Post, an advanced unit of the Boy Scouts movement. At the University of Iowa, his undergraduate education and part of medical school the two overlapped for one year — were financed by an academic scholarship funded by physician/philanthropist Walter E. Neiswanger, M.D. "This was a major event in my life," Odem said. "After completing his residency in Chicago in 1985, Odem came to the medical school as a fellow in reproductive endocrinology. He joined the faculty as an instructor in obstetrics and gynecology in 1986. James B. Schreiber, M.D., professor and head of obstetrics and gynecology, said Odem is a good surgeon, a good teacher, a good clinician and a good administrator. "He's smart, he has experience, and he's nice," said Schreiber.

Odem's main areas of technical expertise are ovulation induction, recurrent miscarriage and minimally invasive surgery of the ovaries, tubes and uterus. For example, he corrects problems within the uterine cavity such as polyps, fibroids or developmental abnormalities that might hamper a good reproductive outcome.

Odem has taken part in nine clinical trials of drugs that make women ovulate, make them ovulate better or enable them to produce eggs for in vitro fertilization. He also played a major role in a large study of recurrent miscarriage; the results will be published soon. "More than half of women with three or more losses will have a good outcome," he said. "We help by finding and correcting problems such as anatomical abnormalities in the uterus, problems with ovulation or a deficiency of the thyroid gland."

It's very rewarding when people who have had longstanding fertility problems or lots and lots of miscarriages finally have a baby.

— RANDALL R. ODEM

On his first day as a fellow, Odem explained, "It's a very rewarding day when people who have had fertility problems or lots and lots of miscarriages finally have a baby."

One of his other areas of expertise is in vitro fertilization (IVF), in which eggs are surgically removed from the ovaries, fertilized in a dish and placed in the womb. In 1998, the program performed 245 IVF procedures, and about 300 cycles are likely to be performed in 1999. Seventy-six of last year's cycles included a technique called intracytoplasmic sperm injection, in which a sperm is injected directly into an egg. This procedure is a lifetime for couples for whom love and passage of time count normally would prevent conception.

Performing correctly, IVF doesn't produce seven mouths to feed. "Our program's philosophy is to provide IVF to the right people with a high success rate; while preventing higher-order pregnancies," Odem said. "So we always try to implant few embryos — usually only two or three — and use procedures that give us the best results possible. That means running stimulation cycles well and having the best possible laboratory procedures, equipment and workers. I don't think people realize how important that is."

Hiring the right workers — 37 in all — is tops Odem's list. All four physicians in the IVF program also are board-certified reproductive endocrinologists — the largest collection in town. Odem also has assembled a top-of-the-line crew of nurses, embryologists and a social worker. "I'm very proud of the bricks and mortar of this place," he said, "but having the right people is what makes the program work."

People skills are one of Odem's biggest assets, according to Schreiber. "He's recruited and assembled really, really good people," Schreiber said, "and he's nice, honest, and a class act."

Looking ahead

Now that the center is in place, Odem can look ahead. He's excited about preimplantation genetic diagnosis, which aims to improve IVF by identifying embryos free of known disease genes. This technology will help couples who discover they are carriers for disorders such as Tay-Sachs disease or cystic fibrosis, for example. It also should help older couples. "One of the reasons why our pregnancy rates are as high as they are is genetically abnormal embryos are genet ically abnormal embryos are being rejected," Odem said. "In the future, we will be able to avoid using embryos with obvious abnormalities that would lead to failure of conception or to miscarriage," Odem predicted. Surgical and drug treatments will become more selective, too. "We will be able to tailor treatments more appropriately to different abnormalities," Odem said. "The more precise we can be, the more likely success rates will improve."

— RANDALL R. ODEM, M.D.

Education: B.A., University of Iowa, 1978; M.D., University of Iowa, 1981

Positions: associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology, director of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology

Family: Wife, Kathryn A. Odem; sons, Nathaniel (13), Brian (11) and Matthew (7)

Other activities: Walking in the woods, fixing his house, landscape- ing his yard, scouting and soccer with his sons, the Repertory Theatre of Saint Louis, St. Joseph's Church in Manchester

Randall R. Odem, M.D.

8 Washington University in St. Louis

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