Wristband helps prevent wrong-site surgery

BY GWEN ERIKSON

In the near future, an alarm sounding outside the operating room door may have surgeons reaching for their pens. That's because a device has been designed to alert the surgical team if a patient's incision site hasn't been marked.

Invented by a School of Medicine physician, the device—a wristband that enforces surgical-site marking—should help eliminate wrong-site surgeries.

About 4,000 wrong-site surgeries take place in the United States each year—that's about one in 17,000 surgeries—and are the fifth most frequent life-threatening medical error.

Using a marker pen on the patient's skin to indicate the surgical site has become common practice in hospitals across the country.

Barnes-Jewish Hospital began requiring the practice three years ago. On July 1, 2004, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Health-care Organizations adopted a set of formal guidelines that established marking surgical sites as a nationwide policy.

"Even with the place, wrong-site errors still do occur, and that's almost always because the surgeon or the site hasn't been marked," said inventor Richard A. Chole, M.D., Ph.D., the Lindburg Professor, head of the Department of Otolaryngology.

Chole's invention consists of a wristband embedded with a miniature, disposable electronic device—like the anti-theft chips attached to consumer items—plus a marker pen with a specialized sticker that deactivates the chip.

When the surgeon or another designated staff member marks—in consultation with the patient or the patient's family—the patient's surgical site, the sticker is removed from the pen and placed on the patient's wristband to deactivate the chip.

If these steps aren't followed, the wristband will set off a detector placed in the hallway between the pre-operative area and the operating suite. The detector can be set up to give a visual or auditory signal and to page hospital personnel.

"It's a simple way to remind surgeons to mark the site," Chole said. "The hand and pen are very simple to use and just add the small extra step of placing the deactivation sticker on the wristband."

Said nurse Edna Woods, a surgical services administrator at the Center for Advanced Medical Technology, which makes everyone more aware, and the wristband is a good way to get the patient engaged with the process, too.

A 26,000-year-old early modern human, "Dolni Vestonice 16," from the Czech Republic, had reduced strength of the bones of the lesser toes. It is one of three partial foot skeletons from Dolni Vestonice that shows reduced toe strength.

Protective footwear nearly 30,000 years old

BY NICH SCHNEIDER

Those high-tech, air-filled, light-as-a-feather sneakers on your feet are a far cry from the leather slabs our ancestors wore for protection and support.

But believe it or not, our modern-day Nikes and Reeboks are a far cry from the leather slabs our ancestors wore for protection and support.

In the program, Ma delved into the inner workings of brain tumors, which are common in children who have a genetic disorder called neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1). The condition was first identified in the 1970s in the laboratory of David E. Gutmann, M.D., Ph.D., the Donald O. Schnuck Professor of Neurology and professor of the University's Neurobiology Center.

The majority of brain tumors in humans are caused by an abnormal proliferation of cells called astrocytes. Working with Danielle Scheidehelm, an M.D.-Ph.D. student, Ma studied the cytoskeleton of astrocytes engineered to lack NF1 gene expression. The cytoskeleton gives the cell shape and is important for a variety of properties of tumor cells, including how fast the cells divide and how they move.

Ma learned that when NF1-deficient astrocytes were maintained under conditions that were not permissive for cell growth, the cytoskeleton resembled that of normal cells that were treated with growth-promoting factors.

Washington University in St. Louis

Future STARS: High-school students conduct research

BY DIANE DUKE WILLIAMS

Izzy Ma, who will be a junior this year at Parkway South High School in St. Louis County, has always been interested in the brain and how it functions.

This summer, she participated in the 2005 Pfizer-Soehlta Partnership of Universities' Students and Teachers as Research Scientists (STARS) program gifted high-school students.

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Students, faculty go overseas to teach teenagers in Georgia

BY NICH SCHNEIDER

Many college students spend their summer relaxing, taking a few classes or working a summer job, but three members of the WUSTL community were spending English to 16 teenage members of the Azerbaijani minority in the former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

Joachim Faust, lecturer in International and Area Studies in Arts & Sciences, senior Aaron Weisman and junior Steve Lopatin were in Georgia for a four-week English language camp supported by the University and the U.S. Embassy in Georgia. They served as teachers, counselors and English conversation partners for a group of 13-15-year-olds.

"It was an absolutely amazing experience," Weisman said. "The kids were great to work with, as was the rest of the staff. It was also wonderful to see how the kids' English proficiency had developed through the month."

The three WUSTL community members visited Georgia as part of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) called the International Initiative for Georgian Development (IIGD) that started last year in cooperation with a Georgian student.

Essentially, any organization that deals with problems of public policy that is not part of the government is considered an NGO. Examples include Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union and the World Wildlife Fund.

Faust, Weisman and Lopatin were in Tbilisi, Georgia, last summer to participate in a seminar called "Emerging Democracy and Civil Society," taught by James V. Werchek, Ph.D., the Marshall S. Snow Professor in Arts & Sciences and director of International and Area Studies.

During that time, the students, in cooperation with Georgian student Tants, served as teachers, counselors and English conversation partners for a group of 13-15-year-olds.

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**School of Medicine Update**

**Cancer matters**

Siteman reduces disparity in cancer care

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**By Gwen Ericson**

Each day, 3,400 people in the United States are diagnosed with cancer, and another 1,500 die from the disease. Although these numbers are disturbing, they also harbor a fundamental inequality: Racial and ethnic minority populations form a larger proportion of these totals than their proportions in the general population.

Since its inception in 1999, the Siteman Cancer Center has implemented highly successful strategies for reducing such disparities in cancer care.

From 2006-08, African-American participation in Siteman breast cancer studies went from 10 percent to 28 percent. In the St. Louis metropolitan area, African-Americans comprised about 18 percent of the population.

On the basis of Siteman’s success in increasing participation of underserved groups in its research and medical services, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has awarded the center a five-year, $1.25 million grant to support its Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD).

Siteman was one of 25 institutions nationwide selected to receive the NCI grant from its Community Networks Program.

In addition, Siteman’s Breast Imaging Team recently received recognition from the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the world’s leading professional organization representing physicians who treat cancer. ASCO presented the Breast Imaging Team with one of 12 annual Clinical Trials Participation Awards because of its outstanding success in recruiting minority members to its clinical trials, which is vital to improving cancer care.

Siteman’s strategies are based on enhancing awareness among underserved patients by improving working partnerships with local community organizations.

These organizations help the center spread the word about cancer risks, screening options, funding programs and referral centers in non-threatening ways. Siteman has made this grassroots model one of the most successful efforts in the country at reducing cancer-care disparity.

Siteman’s efforts to reduce imbalances in care are now coordinated by PECaD. The program is directed by Katherine Jehng-Mathews, M.D., assistant director of oncology and gynecology and physician in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the St. Louis region’s health-care safety net, and Diane Farria, M.D., assistant director of radiology at Washington University in St. Louis.

PECaD monitors Siteman’s research, clinical and policy initiatives as well as its outreach programs. Siteman strives to improve cancer care for underserved populations in the St. Louis area that includes rural, low-income and immigrant populations as well as minority populations.

"We build relationships with people by working with community organizations," Farria said. "By making personal connections, we are better able to establish the trust that attracts patients to our clinical trials. At the same time, we disseminate information, and we provide the information people get the care they need."

As it developed outreach strategies, Siteman began with a focus on breast cancer.

It introduced breast-cancer programs that involved local church groups and other community-based organizations and used a mammography van to reach underserved people in their neighborhoods.

Siteman members distributed educational materials in accessible, culturally appropriate ways and found sources of funding on behalf of women of limited means.

As a result of Siteman’s initiatives, for example, 3,500 uninsured women were screened for breast cancer. Subsequently, 100 of those women were diagnosed with breast cancer and received treatment at Siteman.

This NCI grant will enable expansion of PECaD’s infrastructure, which in addition to adding staff will include forming a corps of volunteers who go out into the community to talk about breast cancer.

It will also allow PECaD to add new and enhance existing community partnerships and to educate staff, researchers and clinicians about health-care disparities.

The funding also provides a chance to collaborate more closely with other NCI-funded institutions such as Saint Louis University School of Public Health’s Center of Excellence in Cancer Communications Research, headed by Matt Kreuter, Ph.D.

A program to reach those living in areas of Missouri’s Bootheel region has begun, and Siteman researchers are studying whether personal "navigators" who guide patients through the steps involved in cancer treatment will aid in reducing disparities by making the process less intimidating.

"Breast cancer outreach has provided a prototype," Farria said. "From what we’ve learned from observing information we’ve used in our outreach in the areas of prostate, lung, colorectal and cervical cancers."

**Cancer research grant seeks junior faculty**

Applications are being accepted for the University’s American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant. The program provides seed money for new projects initiated by junior faculty members. Awards of up to $25,000 will be made for one year.

Eligibility is limited to faculty who are within six years of their first independent research or faculty appointment.

Applications must include a letter from the department head. The program is open to all faculty appointment levels but the program administrator is an independent investigator.

Applications are due Sept. 26. For more details, go to online version of this publication, research/funding.shtml.
African-Americans may suffer more arthritis pain — whether a patient had private insurance status, not to their race." Damiano said. "We found that inflammation led to lost uniformity of operation of electrical impulses in the atria," Damiano said. "There were areas of very slow conduction and areas of normal conduction. The result was chaotic contractions of the atria," Anti-inflammatory therapy increased the uniformity of conduction of electrical impulses and decreased the incidence of atrial fibrillation. The researchers will continue their studies in dogs and attempt to block inflammation of the heart tissue and preserve the normal inflammatory response in the rest of the body. "Our hope is that we can bring this treatment to the operating room and eliminate one of the major complications of heart surgery," Damiano said.

**Irregular heart rhythm treatment shows promise**

**BY GWEN ERICKSON**

Atrial fibrillation, one of the most common and most manageable post-operative complications of heart surgery, may soon have an effective treatment. In recent years, tests in the school of Medicine, cardiac researchers have found treatment with anti-inflammatory drugs after heart surgery may lessen or prevent atrial fibrillation. The findings were published in the Aug. 4 issue of Circulation.

"The authors are in the upper chambers of the heart — occurs in a quarter to a half of patients who undergo heart surgery, such as coronary bypass or valve replacement. The condition can lead to serious post-operative complications, including congestive heart failure or stroke."

Patients have suffered post-operative atrial fibrillation since the early days of cardiac surgery, where beta-blockers (drugs used to prevent abnormal heart rhythms) seem to reduce the incidence, the researchers have found. One of those studies is reported in a recent issue of Circulation.

"One possibility — a rapid, irregular twitching of the upper chambers of the heart..." Damiano said. "We found that inflammation led to lost uniformity of operation of electrical impulses..."

**African-Americans may suffer more arthritis pain**

**BY MICHAEL C. PURDY**

Scientists have discovered that a group of important immune-system cells has a surprising resemblance to cinematic British superspy James Bond. The cells may allow patients to "license" their so-called "natural killer" cells. The cells rapidly attack infected cells only after being "licensed" in the bone marrow, leading to replacement of the entire population of those cells in those cases that are quantified approximatively once a week.

Scientists led by Wayne M. Yokoyama, M.D., M.S., and Sungjin Ko, M.D., of Research in Arthritis and Rheumatism, professor of medicine and of pathology and immunology, discovered through experiments in mice that the amounts of natural killer cells only become fully armed after a receptor on their surfaces interacts with a molecule on the surfaces of other cells. Yokoyama

"So many other terms that are used to describe the natural killer cell's ability to attack is inhibited when these receptors encounter a molecule known as major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class I on the surface of other cells. MHC serves as a kind of molecular I.D. badge, helping the natural killer cells to distinguish the self from an invader. But Yokoyama's group found that the inhibitory receptors switch roles during licensing. Although the structure of the receptors is exactly the same in immature natural killer cells, they act not as inhibitors but as enablers. In the researchers' studies, natural killer cells in mice became much more capable of mounting attacks against invaders after they first encountered the mouse version of MHC. "This could be an important advance both conceptually and in terms of clinical practice," Yokoyama said. "It could also help us match bone marrow transplants in a way that increases the immune system's ability to fight off a relapse of leukemia."
**Economist Ping Wang to hold Seigle Family Professorship**

**BY BARBARA REA**

Internationally renowned economist Ping Wang, Ph.D., has been named the inaugural holder of the Seigle Family Professorship in Arts & Sciences and will be installed in a ceremony later this school year.

The professorship was established by Susan Gilbert Seigle, a daughter of Washington University alumnus Samuel B. Seigle, for faculty support. The endowed professorship is administered in the Office of the Provost, and the Arts & Sciences Dean, who serves as the donor’s advisor, makes the recommendation for the inaugural holder.

Wang is a professor of economics at the University of Rochester; and a doctorate, also from Rochester.

Among his areas of expertise are economics, monetary economics, health and social economics, growth and development, and spatial economics.


Wang earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from China University in Taiwan; a master’s degree in economics from National Chengchi University in Taiwan; and a doctorate, also from Rochester.

**Back to school**

NSF grant helps teachers connect their learning to the classroom

**BY DANA BENDECKUS**

More than 100 elementary- and middle-school teachers have been working with students this summer to learn math and science instruction at a graduate level.

Through a National Science Foundation grant, the University is extending teachers’ learning, providing post-course meetings on district curriculums and exchanging materials that schools often can’t afford. The additional time and resources help teachers customize learning for their students.

**Customizing means that grad-**

**Footwear**

from Page 1

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Jobs for new college graduates on the rise

By Neil Schoenbeck

There’s good news for recent college graduates. According to Mark W. Smith, J.D., assistant vice chancellor and director of The Career Center, students now will probably find a job on the first try, with less competition than their predecessors did in the past few years.

Smith says that overall hiring of college graduates is on the rise. “The economy is getting stronger and there is a better confidence level in the economy,” Smith said.”Particularly with entry-level hiring, when the economy slows, companies would rather have a new employee than be forced to let a current employee go because of downsizing.

“People are also cautious after an economic decline and sometimes there can be a lag time before the hiring really starts picking up, but I think there is more of a confidence level now.”

While there are more jobs available, salaries have remained steady for entry-level positions. However, Smith said, “That’s not necessarily a bad thing.”

“Sometimes when there are large increases in salaries or companies cut back on their hiring, especially in entry-level hiring,” he said. “I’d rather see salaries stable and have more jobs available.”

While the Internet job explosion of the 1990s may have come and gone, Smith thinks the health care industry will continue to be the next big growth area. “It’s no secret that the baby boom generation is getting older,” he said. “They will continue to need health care. Also, as older people are staying active longer, there is an increased need for medications and medical devices. As well as seriously ill or disabled, consultants, that can help that growing industry.”

Smith and other popular career choices for recent grads include public, policy, consulting, law, communications, and independently.

“College campuses have traditionally been hotbeds of political awareness and activism, which leads to interest in those fields.”

“Also, in the case of Washington University, hosting the presidential debate in October did much to bolster interest in political careers on campus.”

As the nation’s economy continues to rebound, Smith and traditional specialty salary stores will increase to meet the growing demand and are looking for talented individuals to fill management positions.

“The demand for those jobs will remain high,” he said.

Soccer team ranked preseason No. 11

The women’s soccer team is ranked No. 11 in the NCAA’s/adi- Division III Poll presented by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America. The Bears finished 2004 with a program-best 17-3-1 record and advanced to the NCAA Sectional Final for the third time in school history.

WUSTL also won a share of its third Atlantic Athletic Conference championship in school history.

Fourth-year head coach Wendy Dillinger has guided the Bears to a 41-9-5 overall record and advanced to the NCAA Sectional Final for the third time in school history. Smith says that overall hiring of college graduates is on the rise. “The economy is getting stronger and there is a better confidence level in the economy,” Smith said. “Particularly with entry-level hiring, when the economy slows, companies would rather have a new employee than be forced to let a current employee go because of downsizing.

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just find it! libraries unveil online search tool

University Libraries will host "Just find it!" training sessions Aug. 1-31. These sessions will be open to the University community.

Find it also allows users to customize their research by saving search results in the same place. And because it provides access to a variety of online resources, this service will be especially attractive to novice researchers, for whom accessing online resources can be a confusing process.

More experienced researchers will appreciate the ability to create their own sets of often-searched databases.

Marc Shivers, director of the IIGD, the idea of regional hospitals. According to Richard Chole said.

Three members of the WUSTL, community spend part of their summer teaching English to 16 teenage members of the Azerbaijani. They also cheered on the Cardinals, current Busch Stadium.

One Brookings Drive, St. Louis, MO 63130.

For help while using Find it!, researchers can go to the "Help" link located on every page within the search engine.

African & Afro-American Studies changes its name

BY NEL SCHINDHEIM

The African and Afro-American Studies Program in Arts & Sciences is changing its name and will now be referred to as the African & Afro-American Studies Program in Arts & Sciences.

"One of the important programs of Arts & Sciences is entering a new phase in its life under the leadership of John Baugh (Ph.D., chair of the program and the Margaret Bush Wilson Professor in Arts & Sciences)," said James L. McLeod, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. "The new name reflects this new phase while recognizing the continued commitment to programs taking up the past 30-plus years."

The program offers students the opportunity to explore the social, political and intellectual heritage as well as the literature, culture and artistic life of various peoples who are African or of African descent.

Course work is balanced between the humanities and the social sciences. Principal areas of concentration are sub-Saharan Africa and the African diaspora.

The program also features study-abroad opportunities in Kenya as well as other African countries.

The following incidents were reported to University Police Aug. 11-22. Readers with reports of property damage and injuries are encouraged to contact University Police.

Aug. 17
9:34 p.m. — A person stated it was like to teach them English.

Aug. 19
11:47 p.m. — A handgun slipped out of gear and rolled into the parking lot in front of Simon Hall. There were no injuries and no one was able to retrieve the handgun before it struck the cars. Both vehicle owners were notified and one of the vehicles was towed.

Aug. 22
Following a report of a suspicious person near Myers House, an officer recognized the subject near Myers House, Aug. 17. The subject was found and is available on the University Police Web site at police.wustl.edu.

"This experience has made me more interested in science and helped me realize that I want to go into clinical medicine." — Diom Ma

"This program is useful when conditions are unfavorable for cell growth. "These findings have implic- ations for how tumor cells grow," Ma said. "If we can determine the regulation of the cytoskeleton, we could possibly develop better drugs or develop an application for a current drug."

Diom Ma was one of 54 academically talented high school seniors who participated in the STARS program, which pairs current Busch Stadium.

Faust added that there is a lot of energy and momentum con- cerning the future of IIGD. He said plans are under way for a pos- sible language camp with the same group of teenagers this winter.

Faust said "This program is unique be- cause it is small, and it will be inexpensive, costing around $2.50 for the wristband and $7.00-8.00 for installation of the detectors."

Washington University Libraries announces "Just find it!"— an online search engine that allows users to search hundreds of the libraries’ databases at once.

Now, rather than going through the process of searching one database after another, researchers can quickly access information from a variety of sources. This powerful tool makes navigating the vast amount of information available electronically much faster and easier, making crucial research more manageable for both novice and experienced researchers.

With Find it!, users can search several types of databases or create their own sets of often-searched databases. This service will be especially attractive to novice researchers, for whom accessing online resources can be a confusing process.

More experienced researchers will appreciate the ability to create their own sets of often-searched databases.

Richard Chole said. "I think she can achieve any- thing she sets her mind to."
Notable

Alumni & development's Stoll, Hanson & Schwartz promoted

By Barbara Rea

William S. Stoll has been named associate vice chancellor for development, and Pamela A. Hanson and Jonathan J. Schwartz have been named executive vice-chancellors.

The promotions were announced by David T. Blease, executive vice chancellor for alumni and development programs.

Stoll will lead the major gifts and capital projects teams. He succeeds James D. Thompson, who has accepted a position as senior vice president and chief advancement officer at the University of Utah.

"Bill has been an integral part of the development of our major gifts team and has earned this promotion with his ability to make friends for the University and with his outstanding contributions to the progress of our major gifts and regional initiatives," Blease said.

Stoll joined WUSTL's alumni and development team in 1994 as regional director of development.

"Most recently he served as executive director of regional development programs and as assistant vice chancellor," Blease said.

He came to St. Louis after working in Washington, D.C., first at American University and then at the National Academy of Sciences. He began his career at Univis College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

Stoll also holds a master's degree in liberal arts from Washington University.

Hanson has been promoted to assistant vice chancellor for alumni and development programs. She will supervise programs for the Hilltop Campus schools and report to Blease in that capacity.

In addition, Hanson will serve as chief deputy to Richard J. Luce, interim associate vice chancellor and director of the national councils.

She will assist with annual giving, alumni relations, parent programs, and parent and alumni admissions programs.

"Pam has done an excellent job for Washington University during her tenure, and we are fortunate to have someone with her experience and accomplishments to step into these responsibilities," Blease said.

Hanson joined the Washington University staff in 1993 as regional director of development and associate director of major gifts.

"Our priority now is to continue to build relationships and to create opportunities for our alumni, parents, and other friends of the university," Blease said.

Schwartz also has been promoted to assistant vice chancellor. He will serve as senior vice president and chief advancement officer at the University of Utah.

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Focused on the family

Mark W. Eggert makes sure he keeps his priorities in order.

Mark W. Eggert
University title: Associate vice chancellor and deputy general counsel
Military honors: Captain, Infantry; Airborne; Ranger and Pathfinder qualified; Army Transportation Badge; Army Commendation Medal; Army Security Badge; Distinguished Leadership Graduate (first in class of 2004); Wolverines (first class, top 10 percent); Silver Star, Purple Heart, and Good Conduct Medal.

Army undergraduate degree at Harvard: "It was in an odd concentration called social studies, which sounds like fourth-grade geography, but it was a department that tried to use the best elements of the social sciences.

We were required to have a grounding in economics, political science, social theory and philosophy. It was a social science major, but very interesting and a heavy emphasis on social theory.

They pushed us hard in this department. It was a great education."

Mark W. Eggert, J.D., associate vice chancellor and deputy general counsel, talks with Lisa M. Braun, J.D., associate general counsel, in his office in the East Building on the Medical Campus. Says Michael Canavan, J.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs: "Mark Eggert is a great example of what we mean when we say we weave his legal brilliance and experience around a core of great wisdom, extraordinary strategic skills, high integrity, even temperament and an active sense of humor."

Feeling the need to be closer to the new grandparents, Eggert — who grew up on a farm in Franklin County, Mo., and attended Union High School — and Julie moved back to Missouri.

Three children followed in the next few years, twins Natalie and Lauren and youngest son Kevin. Upon his return to Missouri, Eggert served as the U.S. Attorney's Office in St. Louis, where he was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the economic crimes unit of the criminal division.

"At that point in my career, I really wanted the job in the U.S. Attorney's office. It is an important public service position," Eggert says.

"The job gave me a lot of personal satisfaction, and it's an excellent position for litigation attorneys because you spend a lot of time in the courtroom."

But family came first.

"Before children, my focus was on career development — becoming a better lawyer, and how I might use my legal experience to pursue a career in government or politics," Eggert says. "But after Brian was born, almost immediately my focus shifted to how I could be the best parent and how I could turn out the best children possible."

"Since our entire focus is on being parents, Eggert says that because universities are always pushing the boundaries of science and human knowledge, they also push the boundaries of the rules and regulations that govern these endeavors.

The government is constantly updating the rules and offering sanctuary for new discoveries in science or medicine. That's a big factor for the rational officer's affair, to make sure on top of the changing regulatory landscape, we know how the University's physicians and researchers benefit through it.

"This position has given me everything I've wanted," Eggert says. "I work with fantastic people — the faculty members and the administrators are very smart, innovative people, all involved in incredible research or clinical care."

"Even though I don't actually perform any of the terrific work that they do for their patients, or for the advancement of science, I feel good about being able to support them in their efforts. I get a lot of satisfaction from it."

"Mark Eggert is an enormous asset to Washington University," says Terry J. Shapiro, M.D., executive vice chancellor for medical affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. "He brings great knowledge, expertise and good judgment to the table. He is strongly devoted to the mission of the School of Medicine and has a remarkable ability to multitask."

"There is nothing new. It's all out of one of these positions."

"It is said that timing is everything. "I'm not going to sit here and say, 'I had this great idea back and say, 'Hey, my parents were there when I pitched a great game, or performed in a big dance contest, or even at the school concert,' " he says. "I really want them to have that recollection and hopefully have the same empathy with their kids."