

Mizzou Weekly

June 7, 2012 Volume 33, No. 32

A field day at Bradford

MU's Bradford Research Center, 4968 Rangeline Road, will host a free field day on bobwhite quail and native pollinators at 1 p.m. June 21.

The field day will highlight the benefits of managing your farm or property for a diversity of habitats that support populations of bobwhite quail, rabbits, songbirds, insects and pollinators. Tours, seminars and lectures will highlight the day.

No registration is necessary. For more information, call the center at 884-7945.

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Three MU Health Care workers forge decades-long friendship



FAST FRIENDS MU alumni Anne Fitzsimmons (left), Bob Winkelmann and Susan Winkelmann have been friends since the late 1980s. Last Valentine's Day, Anne and Bob underwent surgery in a procedure that gave Bob hope for a long life. Rachel Coward photo

A PRICELESS GIFT

Doctor's organ donation staves off dire health problems for friend

"Friendship is a single soul dwelling in two bodies." — Aristotle

That would certainly apply to MU physicians Susan Winkelmann and Anne Fitzsimmons, who finished their residencies together in 1989 at University Hospital and raised their children in the same Columbia neighborhood.

Yet Susan's husband, Bob, is also part of the friendship mix. Anne and Bob got to know each other in Kansas City in the early 1990s. Over the next two decades, the families did just about everything together.

In February, on Valentine's Day, the three-fold friendship reached another level that literally was a lifesaver for one of them.

"I cry every other day about it," Susan said. "It was a gift you can't repay."

A growing friendship

Bob and Susan Winkelmann met on the MU campus in the late 1970s, when Bob was earning his BS in engineering and Susan a BA in biology. They married in 1980.

In 1984, Bob earned his bachelor's in nursing, and Susan completed her MD at the School of Medicine. Anne, meanwhile, earned a BA in biology in 1981 and her MD five years later at the School of Medicine. Anne married Tim O'Connor in 1987.

Today, Anne is an associate professor of family and community medicine at University Physicians Green Meadows Family Medicine. Susan is an associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Susan and Anne hardly knew each other until they bonded during residency as professionals carving out careers in medicine.

In the early 1990s, Anne was a practicing physician at a Kansas City medical clinic, and Bob was earning a master's in nurse anesthesia at the University of Missouri–Kansas City. Bob and Anne struck up a friendship while playing in the same Kansas City softball league.

In 1992, Bob joined the Veterans Hospital as a nurse anesthetist, and Anne started practicing at University Hospital. She and her family moved to the Winkelmanns' neighborhood. That year, Susan gave birth to Maggie, and Anne gave birth to Ellen — the second child for both. The young mothers shared similar parenting philosophies, such as creating a firm structure for their growing families.

The proximity of the families led to a closer bond. They took vacations and spent holidays together. They played cards and tennis matches together. They attended Mizzou basketball and football games. The young girls, Ellen and Maggie, became nearly inseparable.

In 2001, Anne's divorce from her husband was made easier by the Winkelmanns' support.

"We drop in on each other," Susan said of the friendship. "We don't have appointments." The joke was that a path had been worn between the homes of the Winkelmanns and the Fitzsimmons.

But as the decade of the 2000s neared its end, Bob realized it was time to address his dire health issue.

Helping a friend

In 1994, Bob was diagnosed with a genetic kidney disease. His family history showed that the disease became active typically when family members were in their late 50s. During Bob's checkup at University Hospital in November 2010, his doctor noted the continuing deterioration of his kidney function. The doctor recommended he consider a preemptive kidney transplant and request a kidney from the Cadaveric Donor List.

Bob and Susan left the office in a fog as they realized they finally had to address the situation. The couple ran into Anne in the hallway. "How do you get someone to donate a kidney?" Susan said rhetorically at one point.

"You let your friends take care of it for you," Anne said.

Doctors estimated that Bob had until spring or summer 2012 to find a donor before his kidney failed. Anne offered to be tested, but Bob told her that wasn't necessary since he was on the organ donor waiting list and also seeking a donor within his family.

By spring 2011, with no suitable donor found, Anne tested as a match. But Bob demurred. "Bob wanted to use someone he felt comfortable with in putting through the process," Susan said.

"You are asking a lot of someone, and you can never repay it," Bob said of his hesitation, his eyes blurring with emotion.

Finally, with time running out, Bob agreed in November 2011 to have Anne be the donor. Anne hastened Bob's decision by arguing that he needed the surgery soon to be healthy for the wedding of the Winkelmanns' oldest daughter, Molly, in May 2012.

On Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2012, Bob and Anne were prepped for surgery at University Hospital. Both lay on gurneys outside separate operating rooms when Anne, seeing Bob, joked to him how, despite the low odds, she had to take a pregnancy test among other tests before surgery.

Anne's operation lasted three hours. Bob's started about a half-hour later and lasted more than four hours. Anne left the hospital Friday, and Bob went home Saturday.

Without the surgery, Bob would have had to go on dialysis. Almost half of patients on kidney dialysis die in two years, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing; 90 percent die in 10 years.

Anne jokes that Bob inherited some of her better traits through the transplant, such as her skills in playing cards and potluck cooking.

But the tears that flowed as they recounted the Valentine's Day operations suggest the gravity of what occurred.

"It means Bob will be walking Molly down the aisle," Susan said the week of the wedding. "It's just a priceless gift."

To read another feature profile on staff personnel, click on the following link for a piece on Matt Ross, who died in March 2012 after 24 years at Mizzou:

<http://mizzouweekly.missouri.edu/archive/2012/33-30/matt-ross/index.php> (../33-30/matt-ross/index.php.html)

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Billing fraud investigation leads to two departures at medical school

RADIOLOGY UPHEAVAL

Medical school dean to retire in October

Two radiologists have left the School of Medicine after an internal investigation discovered possible billing fraud, Harold Williamson, vice chancellor of the MU Health System, said June 1.

Williamson said he believes Kenneth Rall and Michael Richards violated Medicare and hospital rules by certifying that they had performed services that were actually performed by resident physicians.

Rall and Richards are under federal investigation for the alleged fraud. Any criminal charges will come from the U.S. Justice Department.

It was also announced that medical school dean Robert Churchill will retire in October. In 1998 Churchill hired Rall — who had a criminal history, including an embezzlement charge in the 1980s — as radiology department chair. Rall retired as department chair in December 2011 but remained a faculty member.

There is no evidence that Churchill was complicit in the supposed conduct of Rall and Richards, Williamson said. “But Dr. Churchill does not want to allow distractions that will accompany this matter to delay any of the significant progress made at the medical school in recent years.”

Williamson said the main concern of health system officials throughout the investigation was the possible impact on patients. So far, extensive investigation of computer data and numerous interviews with medical professionals have found no evidence that patient care was compromised, Williamson said.

Health system officials are making changes in the radiology department as the result of the internal investigation, conducted by an outside law firm beginning in November 2011 on behalf of the university. Revisions to the department’s operating process will require changes to the way doctors view and report on patient radiology images.

Additional safeguards will be built into software programs physicians use to analyze images.

Under Medicare and the health system’s procedures, a resident physician can read a patient’s X-ray and work with a patient’s doctor. But Medicare requires that, before it will pay for the X-ray, an attending radiologist must also review the image.

“We believe these two doctors sometimes claimed that they had actually completed this second review without actually looking at the image,” Williamson said.

Radiology patients with concerns can visit muhealth.org or call the health system at 888-754-0963.

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Mizzou researchers bring hope to people with rare neurological condition

CMT DISEASE

Insights from new model may aid development of therapeutic interventions

MU scientists have created a genetically modified mouse that mimics key features of Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, an inherited neuromuscular disease infecting some 150,000 people in the United States.

Charcot-Marie-Tooth, or CMT, is a group of progressive disorders that harms the peripheral nervous system, the part that connects the brain and spinal cord to things like muscles.

The disease largely affects the distal nerves, which are those running to the feet and hands, and can progress to include the legs and arms.

“Wasting and weakening of the muscles occur because the distal nerves are either dying or not functioning properly,” said Michael Garcia, study leader and associate professor of biological sciences. “The condition can be very debilitating depending on the muscles affected and the degree to which they are affected.”

The breakthrough was reported in a recent edition of the online journal *Genes, Brain, and Behavior*.

No cure exists for CMT, but Garcia hopes that insights gleaned from the new mouse model may aid the development of therapeutic interventions.

“By learning about the basics of disease initiation and progression, perhaps we can soon test therapeutics designed to stop or reverse the pathology,” he said.

Garcia and colleagues created the mouse model by inserting a mutated copy of a human gene into a fertilized mouse egg cell. Similar mutations in that particular gene have been linked to a specific form of CMT, known as Type 2e, in humans.

The cells were then implanted into female mice. The offspring that contained the mutated human gene were reared and observed for signs of CMT.

At four months of age, the mice developed symptoms shared by humans with CMT Type 2e, including muscle wasting and weakness, foot deformities, and reduced mobility. No significant neural problems or detachment of the nerves from the muscle were observed in the mice, which surprised the scientists.

“With such severe muscle atrophy we expected to see a loss of nerve connections on the muscles, but they are all there, and they look relatively healthy,” said Garcia, who is also an investigator in the Christopher S. Bond Life Sciences Center.

The finding was surprising since another mouse model, which also mimicked CMT Type 2e, showed nerve detachment. This other mouse model, developed by a team in Canada, had a mutation in the same gene but at a different site in the genetic code. According to Garcia, the lack of nerve detachment observed in his mouse model may point to different underlying mechanisms for CMT Type 2e.

In a follow-up study, Garcia and colleagues showed that the mice they engineered also developed an abnormal gait. The scientists evaluated the gait using a so-called CatWalk system, a device that uses light and a high-speed camera to capture certain dynamics of a running mouse’s footfalls.

Abnormal gaiting was observed as a decreased paw print overlap and increased hind limb drag on the left side of the body, the authors report in the study.

A high-stepped gait is characteristic of people with CMT. Weakness of the foot and leg muscles often results in foot drop, an inability to move the ankle and toes properly, which is compensated for by raising the foot higher.

“It’s an exciting time for CMT Type 2e,” Garcia said. “With two really good mouse models, we’re now in a powerful position to begin to ask questions about how the disease initiates and how it progresses.”

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Mizzou to take part in D.C. Smithsonian Institution festival this summer



D.C. AWAITS The Smithsonian Folklife Festival, shown here in 2004, has been held annually on the National Mall since 1967. This summer will be the first time MU has taken part. Courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution

SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

One million people are expected to attend

The University of Missouri is going to Washington.

For the first time, MU has been invited to take part in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival exposition on D.C.'s National Mall. Started by the Smithsonian Institution in 1967, the annual summer event highlights aspects of American and international culture. The underlying message is applauding diversity, education and ingenuity.

This year's theme is "Campus and Community: Public and Land-grant Universities and the USDA at 150" — that is, 150 years after the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was founded and when the Morrill Act was created to support higher education through a gift of, or receiving proceeds from selling, federal land.

Besides MU, about 25 other public land-grant institutions are taking part, including the University of California at Davis, University of Florida, University of Illinois, Texas A&M, West Virginia University and the University of Hawaii.

The festival is presented by the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and runs June 27–July 1 and July 4–8. Mizzou will present Missouri history and culture beneath a 20-by-30-foot tent.

Washington, D.C., is a major tourist attraction during summer, and about 1 million people from around the world are expected to attend the festival.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to explain to folks why land-grant public universities are so important and that they are endowed to serve the people," said Lisa Higgins, director of Missouri Folk Arts Program in the Museum of Art and Archaeology.

“People will see how we are striving to serve campus and communities across the state, country and internationally,” she said.

The festival will feature four themes that reflect the work of public land-grant universities and the USDA: Reinventing Agriculture, Sustainable Solutions, Transforming Communities and Building on Tradition.

Mizzou will be part of Building on Tradition. Among the booths beneath its tent are a food kitchen, Missouri produce, cheese making, wine tasting and agriculture displays. MU experts will be on hand to talk about Missouri history and agriculture.

Participants dressed in period attire will discuss early life in Ste. Genevieve, the European settlement along the Mississippi River established in 1735 before Missouri was a state.

At the festival, musicians and dancers will perform at the Justin S. Morrill Performing Arts Center; a Missouri traditional band is slated for a couple shows.

Alumni can reconnect and share memories at Alumni Hall. And an area called the Commons will be dedicated to promoting dialogue about university issues.

Among the 17 people working the MU tent, 11 are employed either on campus or at an MU Extension office.

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Missouri Press to close after 54 years

The University of Missouri Press, publisher of such books as *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes* and *Mark Twain and His Circle*, will begin phasing out its operations in July.

Funding the press became a challenge in recent years, UM System President Timothy M. Wolfe said May 23 in a statement about the University's shifting strategic priorities.

In fiscal 2012, the press received a \$400,000 subsidy. But as state funds for higher education have declined, the University has had to make tough decisions to balance its budget.

Opened in 1958, the press has published more than 2,000 books on a variety of topics, such as world history, biography, journalism, women's studies and creative nonfiction. The press was a leader in scholarship on native sons Twain, Hughes and Harry S Truman.

Other university presses have also closed as states struggle to balance their budgets during the nation's extended economic downturn. In 2009, Eastern Washington University, the University of Scranton and the Southern Methodist University shuttered. The following year, the Southern Methodist University Press closed.

System officials say the press may be revamped in some way for online. But nothing concrete has been decided. In the May 23 statement, Wolfe said that leaders are "exploring new models for scholarly communication, building on its strength in journalism, library science, information technology, the libraries and its broad emphasis on media of the future."

Scholarly online publications may include "much more than text, such as simulations, audio and other elements," Wolfe said.

The closure announcement has sparked national attention. Efforts are being made by some supporters to save the press.

The University of Missouri Press closure will affect 10 press workers. Its official closing date has not yet been determined.

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Volunteers needed for Show-Me State Games

The Show-Me State Games in Columbia needs volunteers for June 8–10, July 20–22 and July 27–29. People can choose the sport for which they are interested in volunteering.

The games is Missouri's Olympic-style sports festival, offering more than 40 sporting events for all ages and ability levels.

This year includes the Missouri State Senior Games for athletes 50 and older. Last summer, nearly 27,000 athletes competed in the games.

For more information, visit smsg.org, or email Emily Lorenz at peurrunge@missouri.edu.

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