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Vivian W. Pinn, MD

H. Richard Nesson, MD, Award Winner

AT THE 2008 BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE Careers Student Conference, Vivian W. Pinn, MD, received the H. Richard Nesson, MD, Award and delivered the luncheon keynote address. Pinn is the first full-time director of the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) and associate director for Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She has devoted a significant portion of her impressive career on efforts to improve the health of and career opportunities for women and minorities.

According to Pinn, many of the obstacles faced by women trying to succeed in the biomedical sciences 30 years ago — isolation, the need for better mentors and more role models, a lack of parity and salary equality for women of color, difficulty juggling professional and family responsibilities — continue to be problems. "It's somewhat discouraging that in spite of the progress we've made, many of the issues still exist," she says. "We want to make sure women are not at a disadvantage."

To address these issues, the ORWH expanded its focus on career development in a number of ways. It is now focused on recruitment, retention, advancement and reentry for women who have had to interrupt their careers to tend to family responsibilities. They are also directing their efforts toward "what we can do to help individuals, what we can do to help advance careers, working with institutions and educational organizations, and working with professional and scientific societies."

In 2000, the ORWH also launched Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health (BIRCWH), a mentored

career development program for young scientists working on women's health issues. Pinn explains that the program's goal is to turn scholars into independently funded investigators by pairing them with senior investigators in a mentored, interdisciplinary scientific environment. "Everything I can work mentoring into, I do," she says. Roughly 75% of the participants in the program are women, and most have a medical or doctoral degree. (For more information on the program, go to the NIH website, www.nih.gov.)

While conceding that obstacles remain for women in the biomedical sciences, Pinn is optimistic about the future and proud of the progress that has been made since she entered the field roughly 40 years ago. "Lots of women starting out feel the obstacles are insurmountable, but they aren't," she says. She wants to spread a "message of hope, because there are opportunities... but we in positions of advocacy have to ensure that women won't be discouraged." ■



VIVIAN W. PINN, MD

2008 BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE CAREERS STUDENT CONFERENCE

THE NINTH BIENNIAL Biomedical Science Careers Student Conference for under-represented minority postdoctoral fellows; medical, dental and graduate students; post-baccalaureates; college and community college students; and high school seniors and juniors took place on Saturday, April 5, at The Boston Park Plaza Hotel. A dinner and keynote address by Henri A. Termeer, chair, chief executive officer and president of Genzyme Corporation, on Friday evening were followed by interactive workshops.

The Saturday session opened with a keynote address by Danny O. Jacobs, MD, MPH, the David C. Sabiston Jr. Professor and chair of the Department of Surgery at Duke University School of Medicine and surgeon-in-chief at Duke University Hospital. Vivian W. Pinn, MD, associate director of research for Women's Health and director of the Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health, delivered the keynote address at the luncheon and received the H. Richard Nesson, MD, Award "in recognition of commitment to excellence through diversity and leadership in expanding academic and career opportunities for all" (see related article, page 1).

More than 850 students were registered for the conference, and more than 250 advisors and speakers attended. ■

Mentor Profile Zoltan Csimma

BSCP BOARD MEMBER ZOLTAN Csimma, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at Genzyme Corporation, will be honored at this year's Evening of Hope fundraiser for his years of service and dedicated mentorship. A BSCP supporter since the early 1990s, when he first met Joan Reede, MD, MPH, MS, president and chair of BSCP and dean for diversity and community partnership at Harvard Medical School, he says, "It's hard not to be passionate about this program."



ZOLTAN CSIMMA

"I liked the model quite a bit. Some of the best students in the New England area being guided to life sciences," Csimma says of the program. "I was incredibly impressed with the quality of students and the power of mentoring. There's not enough of a pipeline leading young people into life sciences — especially minorities."

Csimma cites the BSCP's role in exposing students and post-graduates to "people these kids would never have access to" as a chief benefit of the program. He also gives credit to Reede and director Lise Kaye, "who dedicate themselves and have access to so many people."

"It's a very unique program," he continues. "It's hard to export the concepts. It is largely

possible because of the personalities" and the availability of resources in the Boston area.

Over the years, Csimma says BSCP has maintained its considerable credibility. "The path is clear, because we can identify the things that work." Geographically, the program has grown in the pool of students, mentors and speakers it attracts. "It's gotten much broader in terms of where people come from — largely through word of mouth, Lise's dedication and efforts to recruit people."

Wearing his mentor hat, Csimma advises students considering a career in the biomedical sciences or related fields to figure out where their passions lie and use all the tools at their command to pursue their interests. Summer employment can be extremely helpful, for gaining both experience and qualifications, he notes. Talking to as many people as you can is important. And don't underestimate the value of peers. "Peer support sets your limits," he says. "Unless you have people who set limits at the high end, you may not get there. Mentors, peers — either at your level or a couple of years ahead — that's so powerful."

Finally, he says, "Maintain energy and focus. Be optimistic. And don't get discouraged." ■

2008 Evening of Hope

THE IITH ANNUAL EVENING OF Hope will take place on May 1 at The Boston Park Plaza Hotel. The event, which raises money to fund BSCP programs and celebrate successes the BSCP has helped create in our community, will be chaired by board member Henri A. Termeer, chair, chief executive officer and president of Genzyme Corporation; David Satcher, MD, PhD, director of the Center of Excellence on

Health Disparities and the Satcher Health Leadership Institute, Poussaint-Satcher-Cosby Chair of Mental Health at the Morehouse School of Medicine and the 16th Surgeon General of the United States; and Elliott D. Hillback Jr., senior vice president of corporate affairs at Genzyme Corporation.

The 2008 honorees will be the late (1933–2008) Judah Folkman, MD, Andrus

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Internship and Employment Opportunities

LAST YEAR, TUAN HA-NGOC, president and CEO of AVEO Pharmaceuticals, attended his first BSCP Evening of Hope at the request of his friends Henri A. Termeer and Zoltan Csimma, both longtime BSCP board members. He bought a table for the fundraising dinner, and brought eight scientists and research associates from his company. "They were so moved by the cause of BSCP, they said, 'we have to be involved,'" he relates.

After the dinner, Ha-Ngoc mentioned to a BSCP board member that he would be very pleased to support the mission of the BSCP, and when a seat became available on the board in January, he was invited to join.

AVEO, founded six years ago, is a clinical-stage private biopharmaceutical company focused on discovering and developing novel, targeted cancer drugs. The Cambridge, Massachusetts, company employs just over 100 people. Ha-Ngoc, who grew up in Vietnam and recalls, during his very early years, having to collect rain from the roof for drinking and cooking water, says, "It is very gratifying to be where I am today and to do what I do, because it enables me to give back in a meaningful way."

One way to give back is to offer opportunities to young people who may not have had them in the past. Ha-Ngoc says that AVEO and other small companies like it are great starting points for people graduating from college or graduate school who want to get

into the biotechnology field. Small companies have the advantage of exposing employees to a more diverse range of projects than most large companies. And, says Ha-Ngoc, "It's like a family. They'll be more nurtured."



TUAN HA-NGOC

At AVEO, the initial opportunities are usually paid internships, which may develop into full-time jobs. Ha-Ngoc says his company looks for people who are "smart, passionate and team players. Relevant skills are important, but we also support our employees in growing their skill sets and continuing to advance their careers. What can't be taught are core values

that are key to success at AVEO, including desire to collaborate, strong work ethic, commitment to quality and scientific curiosity." Of the company's 105 employees, he says 25 to 30 are from Asia and several are from Latin America.

"We would like see even greater diversity in our workforce at AVEO and in the biotech industry as a whole, including more African American and Latino candidates," Ha-Ngoc adds. "As a member of a minority group, I have seen first hand how powerful strong role models from diverse cultures and races can be in inspiring the next generation to achieve success in this industry."

Anybody interested in exploring opportunities at AVEO should contact the Human Resources Department at hr@aveopharma.com or visit the company's website at www.aveopharma.com. ■

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Darlene Gabeau-Lacet, MD, PhD

WHEN DARLENE GABEAU-Lacet, MD, PhD, was an undergraduate at Wellesley College in the early 1990s, she attended a Biomedical Sciences Careers Student Conference on the recommendation of her advisor. She recalls that the conference "had a pretty big effect" on her life.

It was there that Gabeau-Lacet, who is now a resident in the Harvard Radiation Oncology Program, learned about a summer program at the California Institute of Technology. She applied to and got into the program, "and that experience had a huge impact on my decision to attend graduate school," she says, "which, in turn, had a huge impact on my life." So it all comes back to her experience at the BSCP conference.

After graduating from Wellesley, Gabeau-Lacet went on to Yale, where she earned a medical degree and then a doctoral degree in neuroscience. Mentors have been important in her education and training.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

IN THIS ISSUE

H. RICHARD NESSON,
MD, AWARD WINNER

MENTOR PROFILE:
ZOLTAN CSIMMA

2008 EVENING OF
HOPE

WHERE ARE THEY
NOW?

INTERNSHIP AND
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

APRIL 2008 ■ VOL. 13 NO. 2

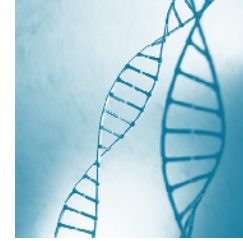
DARLENE GABEAU-LACET, MD, PHD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

She says, "I definitely have learned it's not that easy to find someone, and when you do, you have to hold on for dear life."

Being a woman in her field has had its own special challenges. Gabeau-Lacet is married and has three children, ages 4, 7 and 17 (the oldest is a stepson). "Balancing family expectations with that of residency training is a constant challenge," she says.

Gabeau-Lacet will speak at the Evening of Hope fundraiser on May 1, drawing on her experiences as a former BSCP student. ■



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2008 EVENING OF HOPE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Professor of Pediatric Surgery and professor of cell biology at Harvard Medical School and director of the Vascular Biology Program at Children's Hospital Boston, and Zoltan Csimma, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at Genzyme Corporation (see related article, page 2). Dr. Folkman passed away suddenly on January 14, but the BSCP board remained steadfast in its desire to honor him for his distinguished life, extraordinary scientific career and dedicated mentorship. Csimma will be

honored for his long commitment to the BSCP and to his students.

Four people who have devoted their energies to the BSCP over the years will be named to the 2008 Honor Roll: Keith D. Crawford, MD, PhD, director of the Laboratory of Molecular Diagnostics at the Center for Molecular Orthopaedics at Brigham and Women's Hospital and instructor of orthopaedic surgery at Harvard Medical School; Edward A. Kravitz, PhD, George Packer Berry Professor of Neurobiology at Harvard Medical School; Karen McAlmon, MD,

Department of Pediatrics, Children's Hospital Boston, director of the Special Care Nursery at Winchester Hospital and instructor in pediatrics at Harvard Medical School; and Michael T. Watkins, MD, FACS, director of the Vascular Surgery Research Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital and assistant professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School.

Darlene Gabeau-Lacet, MD, PhD, a resident in the Harvard Radiation Oncology Program, will speak at the dinner about her experiences as a BSCP student (see related article, page 3). ■