Susan Bates, M.D. ’78, has two days starred on her calendar: November 5, 2009, and June 16, 2011. Those were life-changing days for thousands of patients with certain T-cell lymphomas. And they were the culmination of years of work in the Molecular Therapeutics Section of the Medical Oncology Branch at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Bethesda, Md., where Dr. Bates leads a team of clinicians and researchers dedicated to developing new cancer therapies and making existing drugs work better.

The “bench to bedside” translation of scientific discoveries into FDA-approved treatments is complex and often unfruitful. But Dr. Bates helped to shepherd a novel drug, romidepsin, to FDA approval twice. The first was for its use in cutaneous T-cell lymphoma (CTCL), a disfiguring, painful and life-threatening disease. In June, the FDA approved romidepsin for treatment of peripheral T-cell lymphoma (PTCL), a cancer that invades the lymph nodes and has a median life expectancy of less than two years.

Dr. Bates has been named the College of Medicine’s 2011 Dean’s Distinguished Alumnus.

“I am incredibly honored,” Dr. Bates said. “I love Arkansas and UAMS and feel that I received the best possible training in medical school and residency.”

Dr. Bates attended high school in Jonesboro, Fort Smith and Little Rock. She attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, and her interest in oncology was sparked while volunteering in Little Rock hospitals between semesters. “I saw leukemia patients and thought that something should be done to make their lives longer and better,” she said. After medical school, she stayed at UAMS for her internship and residency in internal medicine.

Dr. Bates continued her training as a senior resident in internal medicine at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., before joining the NCI as a fellow in 1981. She has served in her current post since 1995.

The success with romidepsin was particularly rewarding for her lab team. “Cancer research is a little like a soccer match,” said Dr. Bates. “Everyone is working toward the same goal, and every once in a while, one of the drugs succeeds. But it requires a lot of attempts and the efforts of many to be successful.”

Dr. Bates initiated studies of the drug over a decade ago, fleshing out the underlying workings of a new class of anti-cancer compounds. Her work, in collaboration with the NCI’s Cancer Therapy Evaluation Program, continued through clinical trials, licensing of the compound to Gloucester Pharmaceuticals, and collection of data supporting the FDA approval process. She designed an international clinical study involving over 20 centers, including UAMS. (UAMS oncologist Laura Hutchins, M.D. ’77, nominated Dr. Bates for the Distinguished Alumnus Award.)

Dr. Bates’ team received prestigious National Institutes of Health and NCI Director’s Awards last year, but they’re not resting on their laurels. Based on promising laboratory results, a new clinical trial is being planned to test romidepsin in combination with another anti-cancer agent.
A Note from the Dean, Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

The academic year is in full swing, fall is in the air, and many good things are happening in the College of Medicine.

We had a wonderful turnout for Alumni Weekend in late August, and I enjoyed meeting or reconnecting with many of the members of the classes ending in “1” and “6.” You’ll read about Alumni Weekend and enjoy a small selection of the sights and scenes on pages 4-5 of this issue of ALUMNI, but be sure to visit the COM Alumni website (www.uams.edu/com/alumni) for many more photos from the class dinners, Golden Graduates reception and tour of the new UAMS Simulation Center.

It was my pleasure to carry out one of the traditions of Alumni Weekend, presentation of the Dean’s Distinguished Alumnus Award. The honor was established in 1973 to recognize outstanding graduates who have made major contributions to the health of all people in areas such as patient care, research, health services administration and leadership.

This year’s recipient, Susan Bates, M.D. ’78, who is featured on our cover, certainly fits that bill. As you know, translational research is one of the top priorities for the nation today in health care and the biomedical sciences. There is a greater focus on multidisciplinary collaboration and other efforts to ensure that we move scientific discoveries from the laboratory to the patient’s bedside as quickly as possible. That’s much easier said than done – but it is Dr. Bates’ strong suit.

Likewise, the College of Medicine is committed to finding ways to translate laboratory discoveries into better medical care as efficiently as possible. Over the past couple of years, we’ve launched seven targeted magnet areas that build on our existing research and clinical strengths to “connect the dots” on complex medical problems. Multidisciplinary teams are collaborating on cardiovascular disorders, the neurosciences, trauma medicine, inflammation, nanomedicine, personalized medicine, and essential research into the comparative effectiveness of various medical care options.

Enjoy this issue of ALUMNI!

Debra H. Fiser, M.D.

A Note from the Director, Judith McClain

Some of your best memories from medical school probably relate to the experiences that led to your decision about what specialty or area of medicine to pursue, and to your interactions with others who shared the same passion.

We love talking with medical students and seeing their interest in certain aspects of medicine begin to surface. Not surprisingly, their interests often change over time. But it is always amazing to hear these bright, young individuals with so much potential begin to realize how their career – their own mark on medicine – might unfold.

Our students have formed more than a dozen “special interest groups” that allow them to meet regularly and receive guidance as they begin to hone their focus on a particular specialty. They are always in need of practicing physicians to educate them on the joys and intricacies of the specialty – and you can help! If you enjoy meeting, teaching or mentoring students, please let me know so that I can put you in touch with the student who is responsible for planning their meetings.

The student interest groups include:

- Anesthesia
- Emergency Medicine
- Family Medicine
- Geriatrics
- Global Health
- Internal Medicine
- Obstetrics & Gynecology
- Orthopaedics
- Pediatrics
- Plastic Surgery
- PM&R Sports
- Psychiatry
- Radiology
- Surgery

Your experience and enthusiasm for your own specialty can be an inspiration to tomorrow’s physicians. Call me at 501-526-4330 or send an email to jmclain@uams.edu if you’d like to participate.

Judith
They Wear it Well …

Freshmen Franchesca Lau and David Lee joyfully return to their seats after donning their white coats for the first time at the White Coat Ceremony on August 5. Franchesca is holding the Medical Student Oath, which affirms the students’ commitment to the highest standards of professionalism, compassionate care, integrity and scholarship. The ceremony also includes the presentation of the White Coat Award, supported by the Class of 1951 and chosen by the Honor Council, to a student in each of the other classes who has consistently embodied the ideals of the Medical Student Oath. The recipients were Amen Ismail (M2), Aaron Strobel (M3) and Chris Merrick (M4).

ALUMNI FALL 2011

Giving their Time and Expertise

When UAMS needed experienced community-based physicians to serve on its Institutional Review Board, a panel that provides essential review of clinical research proposals, we knew that College of Medicine alumni were perfect for the job. All research by faculty that involves human subjects requires rigorous scrutiny by the IRB, which is made of scientists, physicians and community representatives.

We want to thank the generous alumni who recently have volunteered to serve on the IRB: Sarah Carter, M.D. ’65, Richard Clark, M.D. ’58, Joycelyn Elders, M.D. ’60, Robert Kerr, M.D. ’63, and Bruce Schratz, M.D. ’56.

Students Present Research at Major Conferences

College of Medicine senior Joel Simon recently returned from the Congress of Neurological Surgeons annual conference in Washington, D.C., where he was one of only a handful of students nationwide to be invited to present his research at a digital poster session. Joel was the first author on a paper exploring the risk factors for failure in endoscopic ventricular shunt catheter insertion in pediatric patients with hydrocephalus.

With the added senior year costs of travel to residency interviews, the future neurosurgeon appreciated the grant he received from the 1941 Alumni Class fund to help pay for his travel to the conference.

“It was an outstanding learning experience and opportunity to interact with other students, neurosurgeons and residents from around the nation,” Joel said.

Last July, fellow senior James Barnes had the honor of presenting his own research in a podium speech at the International Meeting on Advanced Spine Techniques in Denmark. The Class of 1941 also supported a portion of the student scholar’s travel costs to Copenhagen.
Alumni from class years ending in “1” and “6” reunited in Little Rock August 26-27, enjoying celebratory receptions and dinners, tours of the UAMS campus, an update from Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. ’77, and much more. The record turnout of attendees spanned six decades. An all-class reception Friday evening at the headquarters of Heifer International featured music by jazz pianist and former Caduceus Club board member Alan Storeygard, M.D., a silent auction, and the presentation of the Distinguished Alumnus Award to Susan Bates, M.D. ’78. (See our cover story.)

Alumni Weekend was generously sponsored again this year by the Arkansas Financial Group and the Arkansas Medical Society. Proceeds support scholarships for College of Medicine students.

Visit www.uams.edu/com/alumni for more photos of Alumni Weekend, including group photos of each reuniting class.

RECONNECTING …

[1] The all-class reception was held in the inspirational Educational Center (top of page) at the Heifer International Headquarters. Photo by Timothy Hursley, courtesy of Polk Stanley Wilcox.


[3] Jack Burge, M.D. ’61, and his wife, Eleanor, of Lake Village, catch up with J. Ryan Bariola, M.D. ’01. Dr. Bariola, now an assistant professor of medicine at UAMS, was best friends in high school with Dr. Burge’s son John. Dr. Burge will begin serving on the Alumni Advisory Board in January 2012.

[4] Freshman and student ambassador Blake Jacks takes a break from volunteer duties to talk with James Suen, M.D. ’66, who chairs the College of Medicine Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Blake’s dad, David Jacks, M.D. ’76, of Pine Bluff, and Barry Pierce, M.D. ’01, of Mountain View.

[5] SIM-ply Amazing: Campus tours on Saturday morning culminated in hands-on experiences in UAMS’ comprehensive Simulation Center, which opened in March. The reuniting Class of 1966, the Class of 1967 and the College of Medicine Founders Society all have supported clinical and simulation education at UAMS. Pictured: Tim McCowan, M.D. ’81, of Ridgeland, Miss., and Marvin Kirk, M.D. ’66, of Benton, work with others to resuscitate a manikin programmed to simulate cardiac arrest.
‘61

GOLDEN GRADS …

They arrived as freshmen in the fall of 1957, the first class that would complete their entire four years of medical school at the Markham Street campus. The hospital had opened the year before, and what is now known as the Winston K. Shorey Building, the only pre-clinical educational building at the time, had just opened in March of 1957. The class watched the Jeff Banks Student Union and Dormitory arise on the spacious campus grounds and open when they began their junior year.

And so when Joe T. Wilson, M.D. ’61, of Jonesboro, called the contrast of the campus today “just mind boggling,” he undoubtedly echoed the thoughts of many of his reuniting classmates. “We’re having a great time,” he said on Saturday of Alumni Weekend. “We’re seeing a lot of old friends and classmates and are enjoying meeting alumni from other years as well.”

‘01

FIRST REUNION …

Over 40 members of the Class of ’01 took a break from their busy practices to reunite for the first time. Class Agent Schuyler Jones, M.D. ’01, of Durham, N.C., wasn’t surprised at the excellent turnout.

“In medical school, most of us realized that we were a group of diverse people from all over Arkansas and all over the country, and we got along very well,” he said. “Different groups from our class stay in touch both geographically and via the internet, specifically through Facebook, but I would say that for the majority of us, this truly was a weekend to catch up after 10 years. We had a really wonderful time.”

The class is intent on building its legacy in the College of Medicine. “We have a pretty strong dedication from our classmates (to develop) our class scholarship,” he said. Though the poor economy and concerns about the possible effects of health care reform haven’t helped fundraising efforts in recent years, Dr. Jones said, “A number of our classmates were outspoken about their support for UAMS.”
Dr. Steven Collier’s office in Augusta, Ark., has typical furnishings for a successful physician and CEO: a stately desk; bookcases lined with family photos; an architectural rendering of the company’s latest building project on an easel.

But the art print behind his desk depicts a scene from socially conscious novelist Charles Dickens, whom Dr. Collier admires. And you might spot the Polaroid snapshot tucked into the frame. It shows a rickety cot on a slab in a vacant lot – the “home” of one of Dr. Collier’s patients a few years ago.

“That photo helps keep me focused,” says the 1980 College of Medicine alumnus and Dean’s Society member.

Dr. Collier has practiced family medicine in one of the poorest areas of the state since being recruited to his hometown in 1981. In 1986, with Dr. Collier as medical director, the practice incorporated as the private, non-profit White River Rural Health Center Inc. He began serving as CEO in 2002, and in 2010 the corporation, Arkansas’ largest federally qualified community health center, changed its name to ARcare.

ARcare’s 30 physicians, 15 APNs and other staff serve 40,000 patients at 24 primary care centers, mostly in northeastern Arkansas. There are two dental clinics. Vans shuttle patients to appointments. The clinics accept Medicare and Medicaid and have a sliding fee scale for uninsured and under-insured patients.

“As a community health center, we serve everyone regardless of their ability to pay,” said Dr. Collier. “In any given town, our patients include the wealthiest and the poorest.”

He said an outstanding physician leadership team drives the operation. Leaders include College of Medicine graduates West Allen, M.D. ’99; Rita Allbright, M.D. ’97, J.D.; and Danny Moore, M.D. ’93; along with Senthil Raghavan, M.D.

A special services division provides medical services and case management for patients with HIV throughout much of Arkansas, under a contract with the state. ARcare also operates two wellness centers that focus on prevention and education relating to chronic conditions.

But the focus on the “whole patient” goes further, through education and literacy programs and economic development projects in half a dozen communities. “If a person is not ‘healthy’ in their entire being, they’re not going to get well from their physical illness,” said Dr. Collier. “So we do everything we can to improve our patients’ wellbeing.”

An extended version of this feature is in the current issue of the Dean’s Society Connection, an e-newsletter for members of the College of Medicine’s annual giving organization. For information about the Dean’s Society, please contact Judith McClain at 501-526-4330, or via email: jmcclain@uams.edu.
Wesley Burks, M.D. ’80, has been named chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of North Carolina and physician-in-chief of North Carolina Children’s Hospital. Dr. Burks completed his pediatric internship and residency at UAMS and Arkansas Children’s Hospital (ACH) and continued his training with a fellowship in allergy and immunology at Duke University Medical Center. He served on the UAMS College of Medicine faculty before returning to Duke in 2003. He currently is the Kiser-Arena Professor of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of Pediatric Allergy and Immunology at Duke University Medical Center, and will assume his new position at UNC in December.

Toni Darville, M.D. ’87, was invested as the Carol Ann Craumer Endowed Chair for Pediatric Research at the Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh/University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) on July 25. Dr. Darville is one of the world’s leading researchers in the immunological mechanisms for damage to the female reproductive tract caused by Chlamydia trachomatis. She helped establish the Sexually Transmitted Infections Cooperative Research Center at UPMC in 2009. Dr. Darville trained at UAMS after receiving her medical degree and then served for many years in the departments of Pediatrics and Microbiology and Immunology.

Jeanne Heard, M.D. ’85, Ph.D. ’81, has been appointed vice chancellor for academic affairs at UAMS. She began serving as UAMS’ chief academic officer in September, working in partnership with the institution’s colleges and Graduate School deans and other UAMS leaders to enrich the campus’ intellectual environment. Dr. Heard, a former associate dean for graduate medical education and professor of internal medicine in the College of Medicine, returned to UAMS from Chicago, where she helped lead the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education since 2004. She served the ACGME as director of the Department of Accreditation Committees, senior vice president of Accreditation Committees, and most recently as senior scholar.

Billy R. Thomas, M.D. ’80, M.P.H., a professor in the Department of Pediatrics and leader of the UAMS Center for Diversity Affairs, has been named UAMS’ first vice chancellor for diversity. The center has long provided programs for students from kindergarten through college, including preparatory courses for the Medical College Admission Test. Dr. Thomas’ appointment expands the center as a resource for diversity issues at UAMS. A neonatologist and faculty member for 25 years, Dr. Thomas was appointed associate dean for diversity in 2004, after serving since 1996 as assistant dean. UAMS established the Center for Diversity Affairs in 2008, and he was appointed assistant vice chancellor for diversity at that time.

David Bevans Jr., M.D. ’66, (center) received the City of North Little Rock’s Fritz Friedl Volunteer of the Year Award in May. In 2010, the retired surgeon logged at least 478 hours of service at the North Little Rock Animal Shelter. He initially assisted with spay and neuter clinics (putting those surgical skills to work!) and went on to help out in any way he could, such as recording city licenses, filing citations and other office tasks. Dr. Bevans was honored at the award ceremony by Mayor Patrick Hays (left) and Animal Control Director Billy Grace.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

We want to know what you’ve been doing – and your classmates do too. We’re always looking for alumni news and features for the Class Notes section of your printed ALUMNI newsletter and the online version of Class Notes.

ONLINE: Update your information and post your news at www.uams.edu/com/alumni/mailbag.asp.

EMAIL: riceginny@uams.edu

POSTAL MAIL: UAMS Medical Alumni Association
4301 W Markham ST #642
Little Rock, AR 72205

LOOKING FOR A CLASSMATE? Class Rosters are available online:www.uams.edu/com/alumni
**In Memoriam**

1940s
Guy T. Williams, M.D. ’48, of New Orleans, La., died May 5, 2011.

1950s
Vestal Beecher Smith Sr., M.D. ’50, of Marked Tree, died September 4, 2011.
John Harold White, M.D. ’54, of Waynesboro, Va., died May 19, 2011.
Barbara Anne Barksdale, M.D. ’56, of Rison, died August 16, 2011.
Omer E. Bradsher, M.D. ’58, of Senath, Mo., died August 23, 2011.
Carl B. Arnold, M.D. ’58, of Salem, died September 29, 2011.
Jerome H. Luker, M.D. ’58, of Russellville, died October 14, 2011.

1960s
Noel Frazier Ferguson, M.D. ’66, of Harrison, died June 20, 2011.

1970s
Boyce W. West, M.D. ’70, of Clarksville, died May 15, 2011.
Michael L. Gidcomb, M.D. ’71, of Dallas, Texas, died June 3, 2011.

1980s

**Staying Connected … in NE Arkansas**

More than 30 alumni, members of the medical community and other guests joined College of Medicine Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. ’77, and hosts Kathy and Jim Wilson, M.D. ’60 at the Wilsons’ lovely Batesville home on October 10. The next morning, Dr. Fiser and other College of Medicine representatives were off to Newport, where Jabez Jackson, M.D. ’68, hosted a breakfast for area alumni and guests at Harris Hospital.

Kathy and Jim Wilson, M.D. ’60 (photo at left), hosted the reception in Batesville. Sponsors included (from left in top photo): Gary Bebow, CEO, White River Medical Center; Verona Brown-Bebow, M.D. ’82; Rob Emery, M.D. ’93; Jennifer Emery; Dean Debra H. Fiser, M.D. ’77; and Jeane and Bob Fitzgerald of the College of Medicine Board of Visitors.

**How about a really wild vacation in 2012?** Our travel program kicks off April 12-21 with a Tour of South Africa, home to elephants, rhinoceroses, lions and leopards as well as other extraordinary wildlife, rare plant species and a remarkably diverse landscape. From safari excursions in the Greater Kruger National Park region to bustling, beautiful Cape Town, to the historic sites in Soweto, including the Apartheid Museum and the Nelson Mandela House, this tour will be unforgettable. There’s even an optional extension to Zambia’s Victoria Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

All of our trips are a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with your classmates while enjoying an amazing adventure. Three Oceania cruises also are planned for 2012:

- **Barcelona to Lisbon:** Iberian Peninsula, North Africa & Canary Islands – June 4-17
- **Copenhagen to London:** Norwegian Fjords & British Isles – August 30-September 12
- **Istanbul to Athens:** Italian Reflections – November 7-15

For more information, visit [www.uams.edu/com/alumni](http://www.uams.edu/com/alumni).

**Our History, Your History**

Dr. Susan Bates, the 2011 Dean’s Distinguished Alumnus (featured on page 1), is the latest in a long line of truly outstanding alumni to receive the award since 1973. Can you name the very first Distinguished Alumnus and the achievement for which he was internationally known? The answer, and so much more from the College of Medicine’s 130-plus years of history, can be found on the new College of Medicine History website.

[www.uams.edu/com/history](http://www.uams.edu/com/history)