



The Arnold P. Gold Foundation Fostering Humanism in Medicine

April 2008

It's Unanimous! Gold Foundation's Right on Course



*Gold Foundation
Professor,
Scott M. Wright, M.D.*

Clinician-investigator, Dr. Scott M. Wright, an Arnold P. Gold Foundation Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins, is studying what he is most passionate about, "how to help healers and leaders in medicine, and medical education in general, to become more humanistic."

In a recent interview, he told DOC he sees clear evidence that his Gold Foundation-funded research has made a difference in the medical school experience of students.

"The dissemination of our research, through publications and presentations locally and at national meetings," he told DOC, "has stimulated medical educators and physician-teachers to pay greater attention to the well-being of medical trainees and to the support of their personal growth."

Dr. Wright, who is in the Department of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center in Baltimore, became a Gold Foundation Professor as an Assistant Professor of Medicine in 2002.

A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE

His first Gold Foundation grant was awarded to identify the factors that contribute to a medical trainee's personal and professional development as a physician. He found that a student's growth – or decay – depends on whether he or she is helped through "powerful experiences" by supportive relationships, and then has time to reflect on what happened.

"Powerful experiences," Dr. Wright explained, "are any occurrences or scenarios that evoke strong feelings and emotions and we have learned that these occur with great frequency during medical training. Examples from our studies include: a patient's death or an unexpected medical

outcome; unpleasant feedback from a physician, teacher or patient; or even driving home tired from the hospital and nearly or actually falling asleep at the wheel."

"A broad range of experiences serve as stimuli," he noted. "They're actually very common occurrences. What is unfortunately less common is the support that's necessary to turn these experiences into professional growth."

Dr. Wright, now an Associate Professor, is currently studying the qualities that contribute to clinical excellence, and working on understanding how to measure and reward it. "While the results to date are only preliminary," he reported, "it is becoming clear that humanism is a critical part of the equation."

RIGHT FOCUS

He added, "It makes me realize how the Gold Foundation is truly on the mark. It has, for a long time, had the right idea, the right focus – humanism in medicine."

He pointed to an interesting study – in which he served as senior mentor to a doctor from the Mayo Clinic – that documented the lack of financial support for medical-education research. He believes that this lack of funding has compromised the quality of medical education research and explains why medical education has not advanced nearly as much as clinical medicine.

"This shows just how important the Gold Foundation is in its commitment to supporting creativity and innovation in medical education. There aren't many other foundations doing this," he said.

"I knew when I decided I was going to be a physician that I wanted to be involved in medical education and training physicians to be humanistic and caring. Because of the Gold Foundation's support, I've been able to make a difference in these areas."

The Gold Foundation Professorships seek to recognize the critical importance that role model-physician faculty play in the humanistic training of future doctors. These professorships secure time for faculty members to spend with their students and residents on issues, research or projects related to humanistic patient care.

Velay Essay Winner Reports Unexpected Rewards



Mitali Banerjee, a fourth-year medical student at the Baylor College of Medicine, has been reaping rewards and recognition ever since she was named winner of the Gold Foundation's 2007 *Frances A. Velay Humanism in Medicine Essay Contest*.

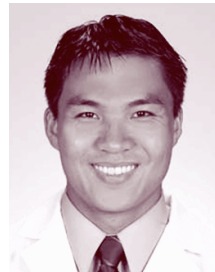
In addition to winning the \$1,000 first prize, Mitali's essay, *Thinking Outside the Box*, was published in the December issue of *Academic Medicine*. It has now become required reading for first-year Baylor students in a course on humanism in medicine.

And that's not all. Mitali reports that "By winning this contest I was also selected by the AMA's online ethics journal, *Virtual Mentor*, to be a theme issue editor. The staff of VM read my contest entry online and said that it was the type of writing they were looking for in their magazine."

There's still more, Mitali notes. "The program director for my top choice residency program in pediatrics told me that he had read my essay. I was surprised, flattered and thankful for this serendipity that helped me make a great impression." (Ed. note: Mitali was accepted in her first choice residency program in pediatrics at Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, Texas.)

"These outcomes from the essay are unexpected and wonderful," Mitali said in thanking the Gold Foundation "for giving me these wonderful opportunities with your recognition."

Gold Summer Fellowship Cultivates Altruism



The pilot project that medical student **Tuan Truong** set up as an Arnold P. Gold Foundation Summer Service Fellow has made him more certain of his goals as a doctor.

"My experiences reinforced my desire to establish a free clinic that attracts more health-care professionals from all areas – including myself – to volunteer their time."

Tuan, who is in his second year at the University of South Florida Medical School, spent last summer in Gwinnett County, Georgia, where he designed a diabetes education program for satellite clinics serving the region's growing Asian and Hispanic populations.

Tuan's focus was to help improve a patient's understanding of diabetes, including self-monitoring, gaining control through lifestyle changes, and proper administration of and compliance with medications. He hoped that through his program, patients would care for their own health and have greater control over their disease.

"Thanks to the Gold Foundation Summer Service Fellowship, I learned the value of communication and the importance of doctor-patient rapport," he said of his experience. "I also gained a great amount of clinical and social knowledge to become a more confident and determined medical student."

White Coat Ceremony's Theme Inspired 'Gold Doc' Letter

Once again, the Gold Foundation has received high praise for our commitment to compassionate patient care sparked by our White Coat Ceremony. In the last issue of *DOC*, we published kudos from Dr. Lisa DeAngelis, who wrote to us after her son's Yale White Coat Ceremony lauding the Foundation for "elevating humanism to its rightful place in medical education and practice." As you will read below, this tribute is from a patient.



Dr. Steven Papish was nominated for a Gold Doc award after a long-time lymphoma survivor attended her daughter's White Coat Ceremony and realized her New Jersey oncologist is a living example of the ceremony's message of compassion in medicine. "The ceremony truly hit the important points from a patient's point of view,"

wrote patient Susan S. Ballantine, who called Dr. Papish "my rock" and described him as "extremely dedicated and skilled."

She recalled how he diagnosed her lymphoma 22 years ago and "sat me down to tell me exactly what to expect. His gentle, yet direct approach was always welcome. As you might imagine, the pendulum swings of lymphoma were challenging, but I always had Dr. Papish's support."

He remained her doctor even after she moved to Massachusetts eight years ago "in the middle of aggressive treatment for a mass that had developed on one of my kidneys . . . I always knew I was in the best, most compassionate and respectful hands. . . . I am blessed to call him a friend as well as my doctor," she wrote.

(continued on page 7)

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 the practice of medicine is
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White Coat Ceremony

(continued from page 2)

She believes her daughter Brooke, whose White Coat Ceremony she attended last August, has also been blessed to have had him in her life. She noted that Brooke has been so “profoundly influenced by Dr. Papish, she hopes to practice oncology when she completes her training.” Mrs. Ballantine closed her Gold Doc nomination by thanking Gold Foundation founders Drs. Arnold and Sandra Gold for their work. “As a chronically challenged

patient, I want to assure you that you are making a huge impact and are right on course.”

At White Coat Ceremonies here and abroad, students are set on the “right course” by taking an oath that obligates them to care for their patients as respectfully and compassionately as Dr. Papish cares for Susan Ballantine. Turn to page 8 to see an example of a student-written oath.



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The 87th class at Keio's 2006 Inaugural White Coat Ceremony, which Drs. Sandra and Arnold Gold attended. At the 2007 ceremony, students wrote the following oath affirming their responsibilities as physicians.

White Coat Ceremony Oath

The 88th Class, Keio University School of Medicine, Japan

We, the 88th class, swear before you the following:

In order to be a doctor infused with a spirit of independence and self-respect, I will hold true to unwavering faith, endeavoring to become an honorable role model.

In order to understand patient suffering, I will nurture in each day a rich sense of humanity, striving to be a sincere and modest doctor.

In order to provide the best medical care to patients, I will cherish relationships and mutual trust with the medical team, seeking to work together as one.

In order to attain professionalism in medicine, I will study continuously throughout my career, pursuing precise skills and profound knowledge.

And in order to fulfill the mission of physicians everywhere, I will hold these ideals in my heart, knowing that simple phrases cannot describe all that I feel.

As members of the 88th class of Keio University School of Medicine, we pledge that we will respect each other, we will inspire each other, and we will support each other.

Now, as we dedicate our lives to the practice of medicine, we swear to remain true to this oath forever.

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation

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