



# Celebrating Diversity

*Acceptance, Respect, Understanding, Inclusion*

*HSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Diversity Committees, & Commission on Diversity and Racial Equality*

## David Wiegman: A True Champion for Diversity

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Dr. David Lester Wiegman, an unlikely advocate for diversity, recently retired from the University of Louisville after 34 years of service. He saw a need and pushed to make a change, to make a difference in how we see and appreciate the diversity that is among us. He left with little fanfare, as is his way, but

worked conscientiously in her dad's pharmacy. David grew up like most kids in Fort Wayne being a good student who played sports, particularly basketball. Upon graduation from high school in 1961 he followed the path of so many in his class and attended Indiana University Fort Wayne. He knew he had the knowledge and the skill set to excel in academics. David initially felt his career would ultimately lead him into the medical field so he chose to major in Chemistry. Later he switched to Zoology, but the was not fulfilled until he discovered his interest in teaching. He also became involved in student govern-



*Dr. Wiegman Celebrates his retirement from UofL*

# SPECIAL EDITION: A Champion for Diversity

*Celebrating the accomplishments and impact of Dr. David Wiegman*

his efforts to change the face of healthcare will be long lasting. So, how does a white guy, father of two, from Fort Wayne, Indiana take the lead for the diversity efforts at the UofL Health Sciences Center? Let's take a look at his journey in life that made him the perfect person for the job.

Dr. Wiegman was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana on April 11, 1943 in a town where conservatism was the norm. His parents were hard-working blue collar individuals. His dad completed high school and worked as a milkman. His mother didn't complete high school but

ment and leadership activities, which helped to ignite his passion for more leadership opportunities and to see how he could make a difference. This was when the idea of the Peace Corps and other international service opportunities began to form.

In 1964 David transferred to Indiana University Bloomington. Following the predictable path, he applied to medical school and was accepted. As usually happens, fate intervened. He realized the expected path was not his passion and declined the offer. Instead he

changed his journey to the world of academia and switched his focus to Physiology. By this time he knew he loved the art of teaching, which ultimately led him to get his high school teaching certification. But still, teaching high school was not his desire. He wanted to teach in higher education prompting the decision to go to graduate school to begin his Master's in Physiology in 1967. Destiny interposed another path again in 1968 when the civil rights movement was going strong. [The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders](#) issued a report



stating that the “nation was moving toward two separate societies—one black and poor, the other affluent and white.” Protests were occurring on many of the college campuses demanding changes in the faculty, changes in living arrangements, and even the curriculum. Even more discourse was occurring throughout the nation. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr was assassinated. Ironically, on April 11, 1968, President Johnson signed the [Civil Rights Act of 1968](#) which prohibited discrimination in the sale, rental and/or financing of housing. As would have it, that summer a new center was opening back in Fort Wayne appropriately named after Martin Luther King, Jr. The center was established to assist/guide persons living in the inner city with employment and housing issues. Dr. Wiegman stepped-out of college for the summer to join the organization. He was able to experience firsthand the challenges of many of its citizens. He saw the discrimination and the social injustices that were occurring and he was encouraged by being part of the solution, although to a small degree.

The year 1968 was not all about turmoil. It also brought about a new chapter in his life with the marriage of David and Jill. He returned to IU and completed his master’s followed by his Ph.D. in Physiology, opening up new opportunities at the University of Missouri School of Medicine where he eventually took a position as an Assistant Professor. The Wiegman family also reintroduced the passion of



*Left to right: Dr. Irv Joshua, Dr. David, Wiegman, Mrs. Jill Wiegman, and Mrs. Mary Joshua*

interacting with international citizens. They opened their home as a host family for students and faculty who came from other countries.

A chance encounter opened another new world for the Wiegman family. It was in Missouri where the couple met and became close friends with Irv and Mary Joshua, as Irv joined the Microcirculatory Research Group at the University of Missouri Columbia. Together David and Irv would travel to various neighborhoods to provide services they felt were lacking. It was not unusual to see the two of them going door to door checking the blood pressure of anyone who would allow them. They were there to help the underserved in whatever capacity was needed. Jill stated, “David has always been interested in helping anyone who was disenfranchised.” One problem that the two could not solve

was the lack of diversity within the School of Medicine and the poor retention of the individuals that were there. They wanted to make a difference but their ideas for strategies were not embraced. Life had to take another path; with a baby girl, Betsey, and, ultimately, a move to Louisville, Kentucky and later the addition of a son Matt resulted in new challenges.

His move to the University of Louisville School of Medicine occurred in 1981. David came as an Associate Professor and Assistant Chair. He also was accompanied by Irv and Mary Joshua; they continued to work together and remained friends, while witnessing the same issues they faced at Missouri. They vowed to make a difference at this university. As David advanced in administration, he was able to slowly build a team to make the difference that he could



not in his previous school. He states, “I know that 30-some years ago I was determined that the HSC/SOM could do far better than the ‘zero’ it was doing at that time...” With help from Michael Byrne, he brought the first formal initiative for a pipeline program to the campus, Professional Education Preparation Program (PEPP). This program focused on rural and underserved students between their senior year of high school and entrance to college. Many other programs followed including the MCAT-DAT Review Workshop, Medical Education Development Program (MED), Pre-matriculation Program, Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP), Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Medical Program, and Gear-Up Program. Each of these [programs](#) focused on an aspect of diversity, whether it was rural, underrepresented populations in health careers or economically disadvantaged students, to provide academic enrichment, recruitment opportunities and, ultimately, retention strategies.

Dr. Wiegman expanded the vision of diversity by focusing on community engagement. He was an integral partner in the collaborative work with the University of Kentucky to start then expand the [Area Health Educational Centers](#) (AHEC). The AHECs work to improve the recruitment, distribution and retention of health care professionals (particularly in primary care) in medically underserved areas throughout the commonwealth. Students from the HSC schools

have been enriched by the educational opportunities across Kentucky.

It is not just the educational initiatives that have been enriched but the culture as well. He has a genuine concern for support and equality for women in the workplace. Hence, in 1994, he was a member of the founding committee on the Commission on the Status of Women, which continues to positively impact the lives of women and families in their faculty and staff roles at U of L. Also, he has long been an ally for the LGBT community. In fact, when the LGBT center was first announced, he placed a call to the new director, Brian Buford, before the office officially opened requesting more involvement and support at the HSC. He was instrumental in launching a student organization so everyone would have the support and nurturing to be successful and helped to facilitate the creation of the LGBT Center HSC satellite office. He was recognized for his work by the Center with the Ally Award in 2013.

His interest in the international community did not die in Missouri either; he has continued to host individuals in his home. Even more so, he is responsible for international travel and educational opportunities for both students and faculty.

As stated earlier, Dr. David Lester Wiegman joined the University during a time when we needed someone to focus on diversity and its importance. He took up the armor and carried it well. He has been a lifetime supporter of un-

derrepresented communities and has focused on correcting disparities. He served as the champion of recognizing the true value of diversity in its broadest sense throughout his career. We want to thank him for his efforts and wish him well in his next journey.

## Aloha

by Janyce Ke-McCue

David L. Wiegman, Ph.D., retired on Monday, August 31, 2015. Through his years of service, he dedicated himself to the growth of the school and its students.

I was a part of the staff reduction in force on UofL’s Belknap campus in June 1989 and not actively seeking another position at that time. However, one morning in August 1989, I received a call to apply for a position on UofL’s Health Sciences campus and our friendship began when I was hired.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with Dr. Wiegman who through the years never failed to show respect for those he came in contact with, who never had a disparaging word about anyone and always spoke with such compassion of those students that came to UofL’s medical school, graduated and then found their niche in the medical field.

Dr. Wiegman is a man of integrity with strong values and a great sense of humor. His motto for each day is “life is good” which cannot be disputed. Thank you Dr. Wiegman (‘Boss’), for sharing 26 years of friendship and I look forward to many more.



## Shoulders to Stand On

by Steve Wheeler, MD

Senior Faculty for Family and Geriatric Medicine, Associate Dean for Admissions, School of Medicine

Isaac Newton in a 1676 letter to his rival Robert Hooke included the much quoted observation: "If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

But Newton didn't originate this thought or phrasing. Twelfth century theologian and author John of Salisbury used a version of the phrase in a treatise on logic written in Latin in 1159. Translations of the difficult Latin are quite variable but the gist of what he said is:

"We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours."

This is the perfect description of the way Dr. Wiegman has supported, encouraged, guided, directed and raised up so many over so long a time.

In 1999, I was the Program Director in the Family Medicine residency, seeing patients myself, and attending in the hospital, including delivering babies. I claimed to be 1.5 FTE faculty. Into this mayhem came an announcement: the School of Medicine was opening a

search for the position "Associate Dean for Admissions", which included oversight of the Guaranteed Entry to Medical School (GEMS) program. "Hmm..." I thought, as I tossed it in the trash, "that would be interesting."

Then, I received a call that Dr. Wiegman wanted to meet with me. Wondering what I had done to get called on the carpet, I dutifully



Dr. David Wiegman

made and kept an appointment. To my surprise, he merely reminded me that the Admissions Dean position was open and asked if I had seen the ad and considered it. After a brief interaction, and noting that many accomplished faculty had already expressed an interest in it, he said, "Please think about applying for it."

When Dr. Wiegman encourages you to think about something I already knew it would make sense to

ACTUALLY THINK about it! So I did, looking into what the position entailed and how it might blend with everything else I was doing. Subsequently, I did apply and in March 2000, I became Associate Dean for Admissions. Of course, I think Dr. Wiegman was right yet again; I think the position fits me well! On the other hand, for those who don't like me as an Associate Dean, I would suggest you blame a phone call from and meeting with Dr. Wiegman; HE'S the main reason I'm here!

Of course, in his multiple roles as Professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and Associate Vice President for Health Affairs, Dr. Wiegman has influenced, touched, encouraged and mentored thousands of students, staff and faculty. Ms. Pam Osborne, Director of Admissions, wished him "a long, enjoyable and productive 'retirement'." in a letter presented at a gathering of

friends and family. She explained, "Retirement is in quotation marks because I know that you already have plans to fill the days with grandparenting, travel and educational pursuits. The work ethic that you have exhibited is fast becoming a lost attribute in today's world. I fondly recall a number of times at 4:55 on a Friday afternoon (much to my chagrin) when others (me included) were focused on the weekend,



you remained vigilant in resolving any dilemma and worked well past office hours to find a resolution. You possess a wealth of knowledge, an incredible memory, a tremendous strength of spirit, and an unbiased interest in the well-being of all people regardless of ethnicity or origin. I have benefitted greatly from your even-tempered ability to carefully analyze situations and offer valuable perspectives. Your contributions to the University, the world at-large and to me will extend well beyond any attempt on your part to retire.”

Mike Byrne, retired Director of Health Careers/Special Programs for the School of Medicine, remembered that Dr. Wiegman “was always eager to do coaching and nurturing of individual students. He took great care to help select participants very likely to be successful. Every success of (myriad students and others) was very much a result of his tireless and steadfast dedication to future students and professionals.”

Thousands of us, in Louisville and now around the world, could legitimately paraphrase John of Salisbury when reflecting back on relationships with Dr. David Wiegman, “He has raised us up, and by his great stature added to ours.” May God bless him as his life’s journey continues.

## Upcoming Diversity Events

- **HSC Medical Education Grand Rounds**  
***LGBT Health Disparities***  
Wednesday, September 30, 12:00—1:00pm  
Location: School of Medicine B115  
Register: [here](#)
- **I Am a Kentuckian**  
*The Muhammad Ali Institute presents national Advocate Jose Antonio Vargas*  
Thursday, October 29, 12:00—1:00pm  
Location: Red Barn, Belknap Campus
- **PRIDE Week Keynote Address**  
*Patrisse Cullors, Co-Founder, Black Lives Matter*  
Thursday, October 1 at 7:00pm  
Location: Multi-Purpose Room, Student Activities Center, Belknap Campus
- **10th Annual Patricia Allen Cultural Competency Symposium: *Health Equity through Interprofessional Practice***  
Tuesday, November 10, 7:30am—5:30pm  
Location: Kentucky Center for African American Heritage  
Contact: [HSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- **HSC PRIDE Party**  
***All you can bowl for \$15***  
Friday, October 2, 6:00—9:00pm  
Location: Vernon Lanes
- **6th Annual Kentucky Health Literacy Summit**  
Wednesday, October 7  
Location: Shelby Campus
- **Interdisciplinary Care of the Adult Patient with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**  
Saturday, November 14, 7:30am—1:30pm  
Location: Basement Auditorium, Ambulatory Care Building  
Register: [here](#)