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UofL Geriatrics, Dr. Patrick Murphy Finalists for MediStar Awards

By: Jill Scoggins, Sr. Public Relations Specialist

Congratulations go to UofL Geriatrics and Dr. Patrick Murphy who were among the University of Louisville finalists for the 2011 MediStar Awards, presented Tuesday evening, March 29, at the Marriott Downtown Hotel.

The awards are presented by Medical News, a publication focused on health care news in Kentucky and Southern Indiana. More than 120 nominations were submitted for the eight awards presented; 28 were named finalists.

UofL Geriatrics was a finalist for the A.O. Sullivan Award for Excellence in Education, presented for development and implementation of programs that increase knowledge, education and career opportunities in health care.

UofL Geriatrics was cited for its programs that ensure all School of Medicine students interview older adults to assess their functional and mental status; rotation of medical students through UofL clinical sites to learn how to care for the unique needs of older adults; and the annual Geriatrics Healthcare Symposium that educates medical professionals on geriatric medicine principles.

Patrick Murphy, M.D., director of the Geriatric Medicine Home Call Program, was a finalist for the ARGI Financial Physician of the Year Award, named for its underwriting sponsor. The award is presented to a physician who has demonstrated outstanding leadership on a local, state or national level to improve accessibility, affordability and quality of health care.

Dr. Murphy was cited for starting the Home Call Program that provides older adult patients better accessibility to health care; training of family and internal medicine residents and geriatric fellows in the care of older adults; and instituting the Palliative Care Committee and Behavioral Committee at nursing homes to ensure patients get the best palliative care, behavioral management and overall quality of care.



Dr. Patrick Murphy

Dr. James O'Brien Honored with Induction Into Royal College of Physicians of Ireland

Congratulations also go to Dr. James O'Brien who was admitted to the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland on March 4th at their headquarters in Dublin, Ireland. There are several paths to Fellowship in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland and his was through Distinction/Eminence/Outstanding achievement in the practice of medicine. This honor is given individuals, with distinction or eminence in their fields, who the Royal College wishes to recognize for their outstanding achievement in the Science or Practice of Medicine.



Dr. James O'Brien

Why Visit?

By: Jane Thibault, PhD, Clinical Gerontologist

Dementia is a frightening, life altering, often misunderstood happening in the lives of families. Because it eventually strips the victim of his or her unique personality, many believe that the person actually disappears, that only an empty shell of the person remains. In my thirty-five years of work with dementia-afflicted older adults and their family members, I've often heard the following laments: "She's not my mother any longer," or "He left a long time ago." "I don't visit—I'd rather remember him as he used to be!" "Why should I visit—she doesn't know who I am—she thinks the aides are her family." If family and friends do continue to visit, especially when the person is in a long term care facility, the visit is often driven by duty, grief, and or guilt---in addition to love.

How can we respond to such cries of broken hearts and tired lives? Can we offer any response to sustain the caregivers of parents, spouses, relatives, and friends so that their once-vital bonds of mutual relationships can somehow survive? Yes!

When I counsel families I suggest they change their mindset—the way they interpret their visit—from one of "This is a waste of my time" to "No act of love that I give—no matter how small—is EVER wasted." I suggest that they think of their loved one, not as being absent, but as being trapped in their body, still capable of experiencing love, even if they are not able to process the love cognitively. In spiritual terms, I believe the afflicted person's soul is alive and well and continues to feel love that is offered, even if there is no sign that the person intellectually receives it.

When my mother-in-law was in the nursing home, I initially hated to visit, because she was no longer capable of the wonderful chats we had enjoyed when she was well. She didn't know who I was. It grieved me and devastated my husband, who felt he had lost his mother. One day when I visited her hair was a mess, so I took her brush and started gently brushing it. Within a few moments, she visibly relaxed and started talking about her early childhood and how much she loved her mother. I asked about her family and she responded! Apparently the brushing brought back long-forgotten, pleasant memories. I realized then that brushing her hair was a tiny act of love that opened up a long-forgotten self and enabled us to connect in a new way.

But what if she had not responded? Would the brushing have been a waste of time? I don't believe so. Physics tells us (as do most religions) we are all connected in some way, physically and spiritually. In this way of looking at things, whatever good one does goes out into the universe and makes it a better place in which to be. If my mother doesn't know who I am, she may or may not feel my presence, but at some level she knows someone loves her, and nurses and aides are inspired to continue caring just by watching love being offered. Who knows how far the effects of one loving act of visiting will go into the world? Try changing the way you think about caring for a person with dementia to "No act of love is EVER wasted" and see what happens!

The author, Jane Thibault, PhD, serves on the faculty of the Department of Family and Geriatric Medicine. She is involved in teaching geriatrics and gerontology to medical students, residents and fellows, as well as providing clinical services as part the Geriatric Evaluation and Treatment Team (GET). She spends much of her research and community service time in the promotion of spiritual development among the older adults and has published two books: "Understanding Religious and Spiritual Aspects of Human Service Practice" and "A Deepening Love Affair—The Gift of God in Later Life".

Validating the "Old old" ala Naomi Feil

By Kim Toebbe, Special Projects Coordinator

Esteemed researcher, Naomi Feil, has long studied the behaviors of those with dementia and has developed wonderful techniques to use with them to avoid "vegetating" or shutting out the world completely and willing themselves to die. Simple, but thoughtful techniques can be used by professional caregivers, loved ones or anyone interacting with persons with dementia.

Even those with advanced dementia, completely dependent upon others for all activities of daily living, have human needs. Validation theory suspects that repetitive motions, for example, in persons with advanced dementia replace words in communication. Instead of dismissing repetitive motions as mere behavioral symptoms of dementia, we should attempt to validate the person with dementia and join them in patting the chair while singing or rocking. Sway our bodies, sing and tap our feet in unison with them as a way of connecting with them emotionally.

Humanistic psychologists agree that accepting our patients, clients and loved ones without judgment is the kindest and most productive way to fulfill their needs. When we treat people with respect, no matter what their cognitive status, we are showing empathy which is much better than condescension or scorn.

Persons with dementia may crave a human touch beyond that of routine care giving. If one sees a person, who is unable to verbally communicate repetitively, rocking or patting the chair with a tear running down her face; it is a signal that this person needs nurturing. Try a gentle touch on the cheeks with the tips of your fingers which often causes the person to look up, even if sightless, as if into the eyes of her mother. Sing hymns, old tunes or songs which you know the person especially liked and make a physical and emotional connection with her.

Gentle hugs, spraying a balloon with her favorite scent and tying it to her wheelchair, playing music, and petting of gentle animals are simple ways of communicating with those who are considered "non-verbal." Persons with advanced dementia may provide us with good reason to slow down ourselves, enjoy simple pleasures and show unconditional love to those who need it most.

Dr. David A. Casey, A Champion for the Aging

By Pat Buster, ElderServe



Dr. David A. Casey

Dr. David A. Casey has been named as ElderServe's 2011 *Champion for the Aging*. Dr. Casey is Senior Vice Chair and Head of Clinical Services for U of L's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He joined the U of L faculty in 1985 and has assumed a variety of roles including developing and directing the Geriatric Psychiatry Program.

ElderServe, Louisville's largest non-profit senior services organization, has presented this award annually since 1989 to recognize major contributions to the well-being of the elderly in our community. According to Harriette Friedlander, ElderServe CEO, "This is the first year we received two nominations for the same individual. That fact, along with our own personal knowledge of Dr. Casey's reputation in the aging services community here, made the selection an easy one."

Dr. James O'Brien, Chair of Family and Geriatric Medicine, one of those submitting a nomination and himself a Champion honoree, says, "Dr. Casey is the consummate academic geriatric psychiatrist: He is a superb diagnostician with an incredible knowledge base; he offers a gentle and sensitive approach to older patients; and he serves as an outstanding teacher of students, residents and peers."

The award will be presented to Dr. Casey at ElderServe's annual luncheon on May 20 at the Galt House. William Altman, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Public Policy at Kindred Healthcare, is serving as Honorary Chair. The luncheon theme this year is Louisville: Center Stage for Aging Services to capture the importance of Louisville's place in healthcare innovation and services for our nation's growing population of elderly citizens. For information, contact Pat Buster at 736-3825 or pbuster@elderserveinc.org.

Thank You UofL Geriatrics

During the months of December and January, several doctors from your practice treated my mother and educated her family. She was Rose Taylor and was at Jewish with pancreatitis and finished her days at the Episcopal Church Home.

All that we dealt with were patient and understanding. Quite simply we wanted to say thank you for assisting her, but also for choosing to practice geriatric medicine.

Those aging years are very challenging and having people to assist them with their health needs and who understand this part of life is so important.

Thank you.

Tony Taylor, T.B.,

Pat, & Donna Taylor

Thank you so much for your time and expertise this morning with my father, Randy Beatty. As we left the clinic both Mom & Dad remarked on what nice people I work with. I know that we received very helpful information, much needed answers, guidance, and encouragement. I just can't thank you all enough.

Please let me know if there is ever anything that I can do for you.

Thanks again!

Lana Metzler

Tell us about your experience with UofL Geriatrics

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You Can Help UofL Geriatrics Improve Clinical Care for Older Adults

A private donor has made a gift of \$250,000 to UofL Geriatrics specifically to enhance clinical care. This gift was given as a challenge hoping that others would provide gifts to match this \$250,000 gift by June 30, 2011.

Successfully meeting this challenge will significantly enhance clinical care for older adults in the region and the University of Louisville invites other donors to be a part of this success.

Your gift of any size can help us meet this challenge.

You can donate by check, over the phone or online. To donate by check, please simply mail your check to the attention of Larissa Reece, UofL HSC Development Office, 132 East Gray Street, Louisville, KY 40202. Please write your check out to the **UofL Foundation**, with **Geriatrics Match** in the memo line. You can also give online at www.louisville.edu/give. Please designate **Geriatrics Match** in the **other** designation line. If you have questions or would like personal assistance with your gift, please contact Larissa Reece by phone at 502-852-8910 or email at l.reece@louisville.edu.

From the Geriatric Medicine Student Interest Group

By: Norma Thieman, Program Coordinator Sr.

On February 15, the Geriatric Medicine Interest Group, along with faculty and staff and the Geriatric Medicine Fellows, attended The Kentucky Author Forum held in the Bomhard Theater at the Kentucky Center for the Arts. The speaker was the legendary neuroscientist, Dr. Eric Kandel, recipient of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his research on the physiological basis of memory storage in neurons. Dr. Kandel is currently a professor of biochemistry and biophysics at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, Director of the Kavli Institute for Brain Science, and author of *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science*. He has also recently appeared on the Charlie Rose Brain Series, which is devoted to looking at explorations of the brain, one of science's final frontiers.

Dr. Kandel was interviewed by Jonah Lehrer who has been called a "popular science prodigy" by *The New York Times*. Jonah Lehrer is a graduate of Columbia University with a degree in neuroscience and a past student of Dr. Kandel. He is a Contributing Editor at Scientific American Mind and National Public Radio's Radio Lab and author of *How We Decide* and *Proust Was a Neuroscientist*.

This entertaining program gave everyone a glimpse into Dr. Kandel's life and work. Dr. Kandel's interest in human behavior was a result of his first hand experience of fleeing the Nazis during their takeover of Vienna. For over 50 years, he has been studying the brain's molecular processes, which affect human behavior and memory.

The UofL School of Medicine Geriatric Medicine Student Interest Group (GIG) is a group for medical students and residents interested in geriatric health and care for aging populations. Under the leadership of President Farrah L. Harden, first year Medical Student, and GIG Advisor Dr. Belinda Setters, Director Geriatric Medicine Fellowship and Hospital Services, the GIG has taken on several projects and participated in numerous events centered around supporting the Geriatric Community, including the Annual Memory Walk in support of Alzheimer's Research.



Dr. Eric Kandel

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