School of Medicine’s 11,000th graduate highlights first commencement weekend of 2017

Loma Linda University conferred degrees and certificates on 423 students during three commencement ceremonies held on the campus mall Sunday, May 28. Thousands of family members and friends attended the three services, celebrating the accomplishments of these newest university alumni.

School of Medicine

Loma Linda University School of Medicine commencement service celebrated the academic excellence of each of the 177 students receiving degrees. However, for one graduate, the day included a major surprise.

Michelle Wheeler became the 11,000th graduate from the School of Medicine since its founding in 1909. She is a third-generation graduate of the School of Medicine on both sides of her family. Her medical studies complete, Wheeler will remain in Loma Linda to begin a residency in OB-GYN.

The School of Medicine is the only institution in the Western United States to produce 11,000 graduates, and one of only a handful of schools nationwide.

"Each year we graduate outstanding physicians," said Roger Hadley, MD, dean of the School of Medicine. "Our graduates make an impact on people's health around the world, just as they have every year since we began in 1909. Our mission today is just the same as it was more than 100 years ago."

Two graduates reflected that heritage of service. Jonathan Burden is a descendant of John Burden, one of the founders of Loma Linda University in 1905 and the fourth generation of his family to graduate from the School of Medicine. Jonathan Gaskill is a fifth-generation graduate of the school.

Amy C. Hayton, MD, clerkship director for internal medicine at the School of Medicine, addressed the graduates on the theme "You Were Designed for This!"

"Today it’s easy to affirm why you came to medical school. Today you are in touch with your vision and your purpose," Hayton said. "God has uniquely designed you to be courageous healers."

"I have watched many of you being courageous," Hayton related. "Acknowledge your past victories. Get inspired. Remember the things God has done for you and know that He will be faithful to do it again."

Michelle Wheeler (above) is the School of Medicine’s 11,000th graduate. She’s a third-generation School of Medicine graduate.

Robert Lemon, chair of the Loma Linda University Health Board of Trustees Finance Committee, receives an honorary Doctor of Humanitarian Service degree during the School of Dentistry Commencement.

Healdsburg City Council. In 2014, he was elected Assemblyman, California State Assembly District 2 where he has worked to improve efficiency and the availability of California’s health-care system. In addition, dedication to lifelong learning led him to study forensic dentistry; he was called as a member of a national emergency response team to the World Trade Center after 9/11 and to New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Wood said that while many of the graduates’ future patients will have the ability to take care of their health and teeth, some will be in poor health and may not want to smile. "You can give them back their smiles, you can send the message to them that they matter. The world needs the gift that you’ve been given," he said. As they face new challenges in their careers, Wood encouraged the graduates, quoting the words of Nelson Mandela: "I never lose. I either win or learn." Following the commencement (continued on page 2)
address, Victoria Kha, president of the class of graduating dental hygienists, and Evan Agnetta, president of the class of graduating dentists, gave the response for graduates.

Addressing her classmates, Kha thanked her professors who she said had spent hours away from their families helping her class prepare for boards. She then thanked her classmates for motivating each other, providing clarity as they pushed their limits while completing the dental hygiene program.

Agnetta spoke for his classmates, thanking spouses in the audience who were patient and an inspiration to them. He thanked the faculty members who had overseen the students’ work, addressing it not as a rough sketch, but as a work that over many attempts became a work of art.

Baccalaureate highlights

Each year the university conducts a baccalaureate service in the center of each commencement weekend for graduates of schools holding commencement events. The service allows students and families to reflect on the ways God has blessed their academic efforts.

“It’s particularly meaningful that buildings in the center of our campus, the Campus Hill and the University churches, symbolize the Christ-centeredness of our academics,” said Ronald Carter, PhD, university provost.

The services, held in the Loma Linda University Church on May 27, featured students from the medical, pharmacy and dental schools sharing personal reflections about their educational journey.

Whitney Evans, School of Medicine, shared a time when she faced serious doubts about her ability to complete her medical education.

“Seven years deep into the PhD-MD program, I desperately wanted to return to med school to complete my final years. I felt trapped, and doubted if I had what it took to complete what God wanted for me,” Evans said. “It wasn’t until I saw God for who He was, and not what He could do for me, that I experienced the peace and power of a life surrendered.”

Michelle Montelongo, School of Pharmacy, looked back at her journey as if it were yesterday: “I can say I am not the same person I was in 2013. Even though the journey was far from easy, I can say it was worth it. Loma Linda University has helped me grow spiritually.”

The services also featured students’ personal reflections about their educational journey.

Stephen Choi, School of Pharmacy, remembered his first year as being the most difficult, when obtaining a life balance was challenging.

“During that first year I developed a prayer I said before every test, every presentation and every interview,” he said. “That prayer will stick with me all my life. It’s never failed me, and the Lord Jesus Christ has never failed me.”

Choi’s prayer: “Lord, if Your plan is for me to be a pharmacist and to serve You, I need your help. I can’t do this on my own. Please be with me today.”

—reporting by Larry Becker, Briana Pastorino and Nancy Yuen. Photography by Tawny Alipoon and Daniel Taipe.
A. Jim Wood, assemblyman for California’s 2nd District, spoke to Dental School graduates. Wood is a 1986 graduate from the School of Dentistry.

B. The School of Medicine paid tribute to Leonard Werner, MD, who is stepping down as senior associate dean for medical student education after 34 years. During his service he impacted the lives of 40 percent of the total number of School of Medicine graduates. He will continue to teach.

C. Noreen Chan Tompkins, dean of the School of Pharmacy, presented several awards during her school’s ceremony.

D. Baccalaureate services held in the Loma Linda University Church gave graduates opportunity to reflect on the ways God has blessed their studies.

E. Ronald Carter served as the University Commencement Marshall and led the academic procession during all three services held on May 29.

F. Families celebrated with their graduates in a variety of ways.
Loma Linda University Health opens Neuropathic Therapy Center

New facility home to innovative treatment developed to restore damaged nerves

By Larry Becker

oma Linda University Health has opened a new Neuropathic Therapy Center, home to an innovative, drug-free, surgery-free treatment program for people suffering from peripheral neuropathy (nerve damage) caused by chemotherapy, diabetes or other causes. The Center is collaboration between the School of Allied Health Professions and Loma Linda University Medical Center’s East Campus.

Neuropathy is a debilitating condition, with symptoms like weakness, pain and numbness, typically in the feet or hands. The condition is strongly impacted by reduced blood flow from arteries through connector vessels into the nerve.

Neuropathic Therapy Center patients will be seen by Mark Bussell, DPT, clinic director, and a team of trained specialists. The Center’s treatment features a technique Bussell developed called intraneural facilitation™. This evidence-based approach utilizes physical-therapy-based holds to stretch nerve areas and deliver blood supply to damaged nerves. Many people report improvement in their neuropathy symptoms after the first treatment.

“Nerves have been termed ‘blood hungry.’ Arteries close to each nerve provide the vital blood supply through small connector vessels,” Bussell said. “When a condition interrupts a nerve’s blood supply, the lack of oxygen causes that nerve to begin to lose function, ultimately causing the pain, tingling, numbness and other symptoms associated with neuropathy.”

Loma Linda University Health is the only place where this type of therapy is available. “You probably take it for granted that your figures feel when they touch. But suddenly it hits you when they don’t, just how important the work of Mark and his team really is,” said Kerry Heinrich, chief executive officer of the Medical Center. “One of the wonderful aspects of Loma Linda University Health is breadth and scope of services that happen on this campus. Each program is a tangible way of continuing the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ.”

During a May 30 center opening ceremony, four of Bussell’s patients shared how their treatments have improved their lives.

Genesis Crafton was diagnosed with stage 4 non-Hodgkins lymphoblastic Lymphoma when she was 13 years old. She spent two and a half years undergoing chemotherapy, which eventually led to avascular necrosis in her legs. Physicians told her she would never walk again. Bussell began treating Crafton, now age 17, four years ago. She slowly began regaining feeling in her legs. Eventually she began standing on her own, walking, running, and eventually returning to her beloved sport of cheerleading.

“Mark brought new hope back into my life. He believed in me and gave me back a normal life,” Crafton said.

Valerie Weber was a survivor of the December 2, 2015, terrorist attack in San Bernardino. Shot twice during the attack, doctors considered amputating her left arm in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. Eventually treatments by Loma Linda University Medical Center’s occupational therapy got some movement back into her arm.

“I began treatments with Mark and over time have developed increased motion and ability to use my arm and hand,” Weber said. “Mark’s treatments literally push my body into this limb that might never been used again.”

Nancy Hernandez, a pediatric trauma manager at Loma Linda University Medical Center for 18 years, related the story of her 15-year-old daughter. Suffering migraine headaches since a young child, Hernandez’s daughter suffered a concussion while playing soccer on a national youth team. Conventional treatments did not improve her daughter’s condition, so Hernandez approached Bussell about providing treatment. Hernandez’s child has been migraine free, her vertigo has improved, and she is playing soccer at the national level again.

“Mark’s treatments have reduced swelling in my feet and hands. I’m able to walk much farther,” Mendes said. “I’ve also noticed a change in the location of the numbness in my body. I have lots of hope for continued recovery. With continued treatments and time, there will be continued improvement.”

“My desire to research alternative manual therapies comes from my deep commitment to help my family, particularly my son who was not responding to traditional treatment,” Bussell said. “Through research and with God’s help I was able to develop intraneural facilitation™. I have a vision of being able to treat many conditions using this technique, and the research that will be done in this center is key to bringing this therapy to many more patients.”

The center is located at 25455 Barton Rd., Suite 100 in Loma Linda. More information about the Neuropathic Therapy Center and its treatments is available on its website (https://ntc.lluh.org) or by calling 909-558-6799.
“Stand Up to Stigma” run/walk focuses attention on importance of behavioral health

By Larry Becker

“Stand Up to Stigma,” a 5K run/walk sponsored by the Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center, drew more than 400 runners and walkers of all ages. By participating in this first-time event, runners demonstrated their support for mental health services. The race took place Sunday, May 21, at the Behavioral Medicine Center in Redlands, California.

“We want to raise awareness of issues surrounding mental health,” said Edward Field, MBA, Vice President/Administrator of the Behavioral Medicine Center. “We have found there is a lot of stigma surrounding mental health, so people are nervous to talk about it.

“Many find it’s easier to talk about heart disease or cancer,” Field said. “The disease of mental illness is no different. It’s all part of health care.”

Loma Linda University Health’s Behavioral Medicine Center has provided a full spectrum of mental health services for more than 25 years.

“Our services and programs cover issues such as addictions, anxiety, or depression, for all ages, ranging from children to senior adults,” Field said. “We offer free assessments to anybody that needs help. We’re open to any person in need of our services.”

May is National Mental Health Month, a time when events like the 5K help spread the word that mental health is something everyone should care about. According to statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five adults experience a mental illness at some point in their lifetime. More than 16 million American adults live with major depression.

Race entry fees and sponsorships supported the future construction of playground facilities for the Behavioral Medicine Center’s youth patients.

More than 400 people took part in the “Stand Up To Stigma” 5K run/walk sponsored by the Behavioral Medicine Center. Along with the run, participants and guests could visit a variety of booths sharing health information and services available.
Research suggests eating beans instead of beef would sharply reduce greenhouse gasses

By James Ponder

A team of researchers from four American universities says the key to reducing harmful greenhouse gases (GHG) in the short term is more likely to be found on the dinner plate than at the gas pump.

The study, which was conducted while Harwatt was an environmental nutrition research fellow at Loma Linda University, also found that beef production is an inefficient use of agricultural land. Substituting beans for beef would free up 42 percent of U.S. cropland currently under cultivation — a total of 1.65 million square kilometers of agricultural land.

The researchers — who hail from Loma Linda University School of Public Health, Oregon State University Department of Forest Ecosystems and Society, Bard College Physics Program, and the Harvard Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study — explained that beef cattle are the most GHG-intensive food to produce, and that the production of legumes (beans, peas, etc.) results in one-fortieth the amount of GHGs as beef.

“Given the novelty, we would expect that the study will be useful in demystifying just how much of an impact changes in food production can make, and increase the utility of such options in climate-change policy,” Harwatt said.

In a 10-page paper released on May 12, Harwatt and her colleagues noted that dietary alteration for climate change mitigation is currently a hot topic among policymakers, academics and members of society at large. The paper, titled “Substituting beans for beef as a contribution towards U.S. climate change targets,” can be found online at: http://bit.ly/2pSQW0m

In addition to reducing GHG, Harwatt and her team — which included Joan Sabate, MD, DrPH; Gidon Eshel, PhD; the late Sam Soret, PhD; and William Ripple, PhD — concluded that shifting from animal-sourced to plant-sourced foods could help avert global temperature rise.

Sabate, who serves as executive director of the Center for Nutrition, Healthy Lifestyle and Disease Prevention at Loma Linda University School of Public Health, said the findings are substantial.

“The nation could achieve more than half of its GHG reduction goals without imposing any new standards on automobiles or manufacturing,” Sabate said.

Two recent studies, the first conducted by global think tank Chatham House and the second by the British government, suggest the public is open to making the switch.

The Chatham House study surveyed more than 12,000 people in 12 different countries, including the United States, and found that among those aware of the climate impact of meat consumption, 44 percent were likely to reduce their intake of meat, and 15 percent said they had already done so. The British government found even greater support for the idea. Of 3,000 participants surveyed, more than 85 percent said they either will change, or will seriously consider changing, their eating habits to improve the health of the planet. Another 53 percent said they were willing to give up red meat.

Harwatt is convinced a shift from animal to plant-based foods will become necessary as population growth increasingly puts pressure on already-strained resources.

The United Nations’ Department of Economic and Social Affairs predicts the world’s population will swell to between 9 and 11 billion people by 2050.

The study, which was conducted while Harwatt was an environmental nutrition research fellow at Loma Linda University, also found that beef production is an inefficient use of agricultural land. Substituting beans for beef would free up 42 percent of U.S. cropland currently under cultivation — a total of 1.65 million square kilometers or more than 400 million square acres, which is approximately 1.6 times the size of the state of California.

A native of Great Britain who works with non-governmental organizations on sustainable food and planetary health issues, Harwatt says a 2006 report from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on the environmental impacts of livestock highlighted her interest in the topic.

“As an environmental social scientist looking for solutions to our major environmental problems, the idea of changing our diets as a pro-environmental behavior really appealed to me,” she said.

Harwatt applauds the fact that more than a third of American consumers are currently purchasing meat analogs: plant-based products that resemble animal foods in taste and texture. She says the trend suggests that animal-sourced meat is no longer a necessity.

“Given the scale of greenhouse gas reductions needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, are we prepared to eat beef analogs that look and taste like beef, but have a much lower climate impact?” she asks. “It looks like we’ll need to do this. The scale of the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions needed doesn’t allow us the luxury of ‘business as usual’ eating patterns.”
Consecration service honors university diversity, student accomplishments

Students from diverse backgrounds recognized for achieving academic and career goals

By Larry Becker

Loma Linda University Health’s 18th Diversity Consecration Service honored the educational accomplishments of diverse and first-generation graduates from the university’s eight professional schools.

The annual service recognizes the work by students who have overcome a variety of historic or cultural obstacles to achieve their education and career goals. This year’s event took place in Randall Amphitheater on May 19.

“Our campus diversity is a real strength as we develop mutual understanding through the learning opportunities that happen each day,” said Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, Loma Linda University Health president. “This service allows us to take special notice of what this means to our students, their families and friends.”

Two student organizations serve as resources for minority and first-generation students—the Black Health Professional Students Association and the Association of Latin American Students. Both groups provide academic, spiritual, social and ethnocultural support as students complete their professional programs.

“To the parents of these students, you sacrificed a lot. You continually motivated your children and kept them pushing forward,” said Obed Martinez, sponsor of the Association of Latin American Students (ALAS). “We congratulate you parents for the support and motivation you have given your kids.”

Dilys Brooks, MDiv, MA, MS, associate chaplain for Loma Linda University, reminded the graduates they have been following in the footsteps of students who have come to the university for more than 100 years for preparation to continue the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

“And yet, what you and I are called to do in this world we cannot do on our own, Brooks said. “We need to decide if we are going to depend on our own strength or on God’s.”

Relating the biblical story of Gideon (Judges 6), Brooks reminded the students that God promised to be with Gideon.

“We are going to a world that is combative, troubled, fragmented, diverse, and maybe unwelcoming to you,” Brooks said. “But, like God told Gideon, you have exactly what you need. There are places you can go that I can’t go. There are places you can say that I can’t say. Because your history, and the flesh you came into this world with, matters.”

Students received a medallion to wear during their upcoming graduation services, carrying the message “Consecrated for a life of service.”

“I pray that when you leave this place, that you will remember the words on that medallion and make a difference,” said Terry Swenson, DMin, Loma Linda University chaplain.
Children learn health and safety while having fun

By Briana Pastorino

The sun didn’t shine, but over 1,500 kids would agree it was not too wet to play. Kids ages 3 – 8 and their chaperones took over the Loma Linda University Health campus lawn beneath a cloudy, drizzly sky Wednesday, May 10, for the 32nd annual Children’s Day, sponsored by Farmer Boys.

Clusters of kids cycled through a series of activities and demonstrations that offered insight into the world of health care. The teddy bear and doll clinic — clearly the largest and most popular — simulated a doctor or hospital visit where the doll or stuffed animal was the patient and the child was the doctor.

The figures were registered, measured and weighed before getting their blood pressure taken. Kids got to wear a stethoscope to listen to the patient’s heartbeat. The final step in the visit was getting a shot—a ritual most kids fear.

Dorothy Brooks, of Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital’s child life services, said one goal of the event is to help kids realize that a hospital is a place to help them when they need it.

“Most kids associate pain with a hospital,” Brooks said. “The teddy bear clinic is just one way to help them understand what is happening so they can learn to trust doctors and nurses.”

In addition to the clinic, kids also rotated through the stitch station, highlighting why a bandage won’t always work; and the finger casting station to show them an example of what might happen if they get hurt under their skin.

“Our purpose is to teach these kids what is going on with their bodies, what happens when they get injured and how long it may hurt,” Brooks said.

A big part of the event focused on prevention.

A recent Safe Kids Worldwide study claims 50 kids end up in the emergency room every hour because they're not wearing the proper safety equipment while riding a bike, skateboarding or rollerskating.

Michelle Parker, coordinator of Safe Kids Inland Empire, said these injuries are preventable. “Parents need to take control and instill rules that will teach kids to be safe when they are playing outside,” she said.

Safe Kids made their presence at Children’s Day with a street safety activity allowing kids to walk through a simulated crosswalk, led by a volunteer, illustrating the dangers that can occur in something as simple as crossing the street.

“Knowledge is power, and if we can educate kids and their parents about safety, then we can eliminate lot of these preventable injuries,” Parker stated.

Other Children’s Day presentations focused on dental care, nutrition, fire safety, and snakes and venomous creatures.

The event was supported by over 200 volunteers from Loma Linda University Health and community members.

Children visiting Loma Linda University Health on Children’s Day learned about health and safety. The day was sponsored by Farmer Boys and attended by more than 1,500 kids.

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Reportable Crimes

The Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act of 1990 requires colleges and universities across the United States to publish interim reports on campus crime activities. Listed below are the crimes reported for Loma Linda University Health for the month of May 2017:

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<tr>
<th>Type of Crime</th>
<th>Number of Crimes</th>
<th>Place of Crime</th>
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<tr>
<td>Burglary Motor Vehicle</td>
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<td>Upper Lot T; Lot X</td>
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<td>Burglary</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Medical Center</td>
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<td>Alarm – Fire</td>
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<td>SB Campus</td>
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You can assist the Loma Linda University Health department of security in maintaining a safe and secure environment by notifying security immediately at extension 9-1-1 if you see or know about a crime taking place.

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