



## Message from the Chair

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Over the last twenty years, the UAB Department of Pathology has grown to become one of the leading Departments of Pathology in the country. This was accomplished through both aggressive "outside" recruitment and retention of talented individuals "from within". This strategy remains the blueprint for future Departmental success and I am optimistic that we will continue to grow despite significant financial

challenges resulting from the current economic conditions. Indeed, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has resulted in substantial funds being allocated to the National Institutes of Health to help stimulate the economy through support of biomedical research. Our Department has responded to this opportunity by submitting over fifty applications for challenge grants, competitive revisions, supplemental funds and new faculty recruitment awards. The magnitude of this response has required extraordinary effort and cooperation from faculty, students and staff and I commend

everyone in the Department for their hard work and dedication. Although the outcome of these efforts remains to be determined, I am confident that we will see an influx of National Institutes of Health Recovery Act funds over the next two years which will significantly enhance the exciting biomedical research already underway in our Department.

Best wishes,  
Kevin A. Roth, M.D., Ph.D.

## Faculty Profile: Nirag Jhala, M.D., M.I.A.C.



Since 1999 Dr. Jhala has been on faculty in the division of anatomic pathology at UAB. He now serves as the Head of the GI Pathology service. He also directs the GI pathology Fellowship program and coordinates the cytopathology fellowship program.

His training in India included successful thesis defense on Renal Biopsies in Nephrotic Syndrome and passing the specialty board in Pathology and Bacteriology as a top ranked student. He served as a faculty member in the department of microbiology funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research,

and later in the department of pathology at one of the largest teaching hospitals in India. From there, he continued on to work as a faculty member in a WHD and UICC approved regional cancer center. In pursuit of learning advanced applications in cytopathology, he came to US and worked at the Medical College of Pennsylvania to learn from one of the leading experts in the country. Simultaneously, he worked to generate extensive data on safety analyses of a now FDA approved proton pump inhibitor (marketed by Takeda Abbott Pharmaceuticals as PrevacidR) for alleviating variety of acid peptic diseases. He then joined a pathology residency program and completed training in anatomic and clinical pathology at

an accelerated pace from the Allegheny University of the Health Sciences. He also completed fellowships in cytopathology from Allegheny University Hospitals and GI pathology from the Baylor college of Medicine and spent a short time at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in the division of Urologic pathology/Nephropathology. Over the years, Dr. Jhala has developed a unique niche in the area of endoscopic ultrasound guided fine needle aspiration and GI surgical pathology and has extensively published in these fields. He also has extensively presented his findings at national and international scientific meetings, and has been invited to present his experience on this subject both nationally as well as internationally

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### Pathology In Focus Editorial Committee

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## Faculty Profile Cont'd: Nirag Jhala, M.D., M.I.A.C.

by individual institutions and organizations. At UAB he has served as course master for the GI correlative portion of the medical curriculum, and has been nominated and won the Argus Award for teaching.

Dr. Jhala is also involved nationally with different pathology organizations. In the recent past he has served as the President of an international organization – the Association of Indian Pathologists in North America (AIPNA). He has successfully initiated and sustained programs to disseminate knowledge in pathology within the USA as well as beyond the borders and across the world including countries of the Far East and South East Asia. In an effort to uphold and develop uniformly higher standards of practice he has also served as co chair of the

committee to advise Indian Laboratories to prepare for CAP laboratory accreditation and is frequently invited to jointly serve as US based pathologist to coordinate International CME program in surgical pathology, cytology and hematopathology. Dr Jhala has now initiated and chairs the educational quality assurance program committee for AIPNA in collaboration with the Indian College of Pathology to enrich educational experiences in diagnostic surgical pathology for colleagues from multiple countries across the world. As a result of such efforts he became the first US based pathologist to receive the outstanding service award by AIPNA. He also has been recognized amongst the best doctors of America and according to one account has been ranked amongst top 5 in the field of fine needle aspiration.

Outside of academic activities he enjoys sports and has played on competitive cricket teams. He enjoys watching a good game of international cricket and taking his son to T- ball and Soccer games. He enjoys light music with an added appreciation of the artistic endeavors of his daughter and talented wife Darshana, who also works in the Department of Pathology at UAB.

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**Dr. Jhala is “the first US based pathologist to receive the outstanding service award by AIPNA”.**

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## Spotlight on Pathology Support: Kathy Coleman



**Ms. Kathy Coleman** recently joined the Department of Pathology Chair's office

after having worked the past six years in the Division of Molecular and Cellular Pathology (MCP). In the MCP Division, Kathy assisted Drs. Ballinger, Feng, Messina, and Ponnazhagan and helped run the MCP Thursday noon seminar series. Kathy was widely recognized

in the MCP Division as an important source of information and as a “team player” who was always willing to lend a hand.

Kathy moved to the Chair's office shortly after Dr. Roth assumed the Chair position in September 2008. Kathy rapidly became an integral member of the Chair's office and her experience in the MCP Division has proven extremely valuable in her new position.

Kathy has been married almost 25 year and has two children. In her spare time she is an avid crafter

and loves to watch criminal justice TV shows and mystery movies.

## Accolades

### Resident Accolades:

*Keith Harrison, M.D.*  
(*Neuropathology Fellow*)- Dr. Harrison had a neuropathology case chosen to be presented as part of the Diagnostic Slide Session of the upcoming American Association of Neuropathologists (AANP) meeting.



*Best Lecturer—  
Hematology/  
Oncology Module:*  
Dr. Vishnu Reddy



*Correlative Pa-  
thology—Best  
Section Leader:*  
Dr. Richard Pow-  
ers

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**Four Pathologists  
receive Argus Teaching  
Awards**

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### Faculty Accolades:

#### Argus Awards:

This year's winners for the Argus Awards are:



*Best Lecturer—  
Cardiovascular:*  
Dr. Ona Faye-  
Petersen



*Best Lecturer—  
Hematopathology:*  
Dr. Marisa  
Marques

Neuropathology was selected as the Best Section in the Correlative Pathology Awards.

Congratulations to those who won awards.

## Casey Weaver Wins HudsonAlpha Prize for Outstanding Innovation



University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Professor of Pathology Casey Weaver, M.D., has been awarded the

HudsonAlpha Prize for Outstanding Innovation in Life Sciences for his lab's groundbreaking studies that identify a new pathway by which the body's immune system normally responds to infections and cancer, and which when uncontrolled, can cause autoimmune disease.

Dr. Richard Myers, president and director of the [HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology](#), presented the award to Weaver during DNA Day festivities held at the institute Friday, April 24.

"I want to thank the HudsonAlpha Institute, the Alpha Foundation and the Innovation Prize Committee for this

tremendous honor," Weaver said. "This award is an acknowledgement of the work of a number of fine young scientists whom I've had the privilege of mentoring over the past few years, and reflects the quality of scientific investigation that is ongoing at UAB.

"Just as the HudsonAlpha Institute represents a forward-looking, entrepreneurial initiative to integrate basic advances in the genomic sciences with education and industry, I'm excited by the potential of this prize to build new ties with Alabama life scientists, to enhance the recruitment and development of scientific talent in our state, and to build on the legacy of health care innovation that we have inherited," Weaver said.

"This recognition is a wonderful affirmation of the innovation, hard work and dedication of Dr. Weaver and his research team, and of the outstanding scientific research for which UAB is internationally known," said UAB

President Carol Z. Garrison.

The HudsonAlpha Institute, located in Huntsville, hosts a synergistic cluster of biotechnology talent - science and business professionals - that promises collaborative innovation to turn knowledge and ideas into commercial products and services for improving human health and strengthening Alabama's progressively diverse economy. HudsonAlpha has a three-fold mission of genomic research, economic development and educational outreach.

Funded through a grant from the [Alpha Foundation](#), the annual prize, along with \$20,000, is awarded to a current faculty member or staff scientist at one of Alabama's six research universities - UAB, the University of Alabama, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Auburn, University of South Alabama or Alabama A&M University.

*Cont'd on page 4.*

## HudsonAlpha Award, Cont'd.

It recognizes exceptional talent, dedication and discovery and is designed to increase awareness of biotechnology in Alabama and encourage students to pursue biotechnology as a field of study.

Each research university may nominate up to two candidates who have recently effected advancements in the life sciences that provide significant, practical implications in biotechnology or biomedicine. These achievements should reflect great promise for further development and benefit to mankind. Nominations recognizing efforts that are already delivering on that promise are especially welcome.

At UAB, Weaver's lab studies the immune system; his team is interested in understanding mechanisms by which specialized immune cells called T-cells balance the need to protect against infections and cancer without turning on the body to cause immune-mediated diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory

bowel disease, lupus and multiple sclerosis.

"The studies that this prize recognizes have helped to advance our understanding of immune protection and immune disease by contributing to the identification of a new class of T cells, called Th17 cells," Weaver said. "By understanding how this class of T cells develops and functions in normal and abnormal immunity, we hope to learn how to curb the destructive potential of these cells as a means to identify novel approaches to treat patients who suffer from certain types of autoimmune disease. This might also lead to new ways to harness the potential of these cells to eradicate certain types of infection and malignancies."

Weaver earned his bachelor's in biochemistry and medical degree from the University of Florida. He completed his internship and residency in pathology at Jewish and Barnes Hospitals, Washington University, St. Louis, followed by

postdoctoral training in immunology in the Department of Pathology at Washington University. He was an assistant professor in the Department of Pathology at Washington University until joining the UAB Department of Pathology faculty in 1992.

### About UAB

The UAB Department of Pathology provides extensive clinical services and teaching while maintaining large and productive research programs. Currently, the department has more than \$25 million per year in extramural research funding and its clinical services, including inpatient, outpatient and outreach, complete more than 6 million procedures per year. Its training programs are among the finest in the country, and its faculty have achieved national and international recognition in service, teaching and research.

VIDEO: [www.youtube.com/uabnews](http://www.youtube.com/uabnews)

TEXT: [www.uab.edu/news](http://www.uab.edu/news)

TWEETS: [www.twitter.com/uabnews](https://twitter.com/uabnews)

[uabnews](https://twitter.com/uabnews)

--this article was reprinted from UAB Synopsis.

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**"The studies that this prize recognizes have helped to advance our understanding of immune protection and immune disease..."**

**- Casey Weaver, Ph.D.**

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## Pathology Postdoctoral Fellow Receives Award



Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) by trainees, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA) offers an annual "Inflammatory

In an effort to publicly recognize and stimulate quality research related to

Bowel Disease Young Investigator Award." This \$2,500 award is presented each year during Digestive Disease Week to an investigator who, as a student, fellow, non-tenured tract faculty member or first-year tenured tract faculty member performed outstanding basic or clinical research relevant to IBD. This year's award is being given to Dr. Craig Maynard in the

Department of Pathology at UAB for his abstract entitled "'Contrasting roles for all-trans retinoic acid in TGF- $\beta$ -mediated induction of *Foxp3* and *IL17* genes in developing regulatory T cells". Dr. Maynard is a post-doctoral fellow in Dr. Casey Weaver's laboratory.

## Faculty Profile: Robin Lorenz, M.D., Ph.D.



Dr. Robin Lorenz is a Professor in the Division of Laboratory Medicine, as well as the Department of Microbiology. She is also a scientist in the Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Tumor Immunology Program. She came to UAB in 2002 with her husband, Dr. Kevin Roth and their two children, Theo and Loren, after spending more than 12 years at Washington University.

Her national recognition is exemplified by such facts as having been a member of more than 10 NIH committees to date, and currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Microbial Pathogenesis and Cancer Review Committee for the American Cancer Society, being an associate editor for the *Journal of Immunology* from 2004 to 2008, being a reviewer for several journals such as *American Journal of Physiology – Gastrointestinal and Liver Physiology*, *The World Journal of Gastroenterology*, and *The Journal of Histochemistry and Cytochemistry*, and for having received the ACLPS' Ellis Benson

Award in recognition of "Outstanding Achievements in Clinical Pathology" in 2006.

Her major research interests are in the area of mucosal immunology; in particular, the host interaction with *Helicobacter pylori*. More recently, her laboratory has expanded to study the effect of gastric infection on the development of pulmonary asthma as well as intestinal epithelial barrier function and the development of inflammatory bowel disease. Throughout her career, Dr. Lorenz has had many grants, trained over 20 students and fellows, published over 50 manuscripts and 4 book chapters, and presented lectures all over the United States, at institutions like Yale, Emory, and the New York Academy of Sciences. She has been a leader at UAB as the program director for the SIBS Undergraduate Research Program, which brings students from around the country each summer for introduction to modern biology in a clinical and scientific community, the director of the UAB Medical Scientist Training Program and associate director for the Mucosal HIV and Immunobiology Center. In 2006, she was honored with the Award for Excellence in Resident Education in Clinical Pathology and, in 2008 she received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Mentorship at UAB.

Besides her extremely productive and thriving career, Robin is an

example of dedication as a mother. She has always found time to take her daughter Loren to skate lessons and is an active member of the Birmingham Figure Skating Club, for which she was chosen as President for 2008. Since Theo is a member of the Vestavia Hills Math Team, she has participated in committees over the last several years and is the newly elected President for 2009-2010. In summary, Robin is a role model to other women who want to be able to balance a rewarding and successful career with a happy and fulfilling family life.

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**"In 2006 she was honored with the Award for Excellence in Resident Education in Clinical Pathology and in 2008 she received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Mentorship at UAB"**

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## From the Chief Residents

### *From the Chief Residents*

We would like to extend a hearty farewell and thank you to our outgoing chiefs Diane Peterson and Jeremy Henderson. We owe our recruiting success this year, in no small part, to their efforts.

**Mark Steciuk and Amanda Crowe**

Chief Residents, 2009-2010

### **RECRUITING**

Match day was March, 19<sup>th</sup>. We did very well with our recruiting efforts and would again like to thank all those who contributed. We look forward to welcoming our new residents in July and hope for them the greatest success in the upcoming year.

### **RILEY B. BALLARD, M.D., M.P.H.**

Tulane University/ UASOM-Huntsville

### **CHRISTOPHER P. KRAGEL, M.D.**

Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University

### **RONG LI, M.D., Ph.D.**

Tianjin Medical University

### **THUY LINH THI NGUYEN, M.D.**

LSU-New Orleans

### **ZHIYONG REN, M.D., Ph.D.**

Tianjin Medical University

### **JOHN ROBERT ROSS, M.D.**

University of South Alabama

### **AMANDA L. TREECE, M.D.**

Duke University School of Medicine

### **JASON A. WICKER, MD., Ph.D.**

UT-Galveston

We also welcome our new fellows:

### **SHARATH K. BHAGAVATHI, M.D.**

Molecular/Genetic Pathology

### **HAYWARD S. EDMUNDS, M.D.**

Hematopathology

### **CHANDRANI GHOSH, M.D.**

Surgical Pathology

### **FAISAL MUKHTAR, M.D.**

Surgical Pathology

Congratulations to Jeremy Henderson, M.D., who will be continuing his fellowship training with us next year as a surgical pathology fellow and to Leona Council, M.D., who will be continuing her fellowship training with us next year as a GI fellow. Furthermore congratulations to James Post, M.D., Amanda Crowe, M.D., Ami Linder, M.D., Diane Peterson, M.D., and Jose Lima, M.D. who will be leaving residency for a time in order to pursue fellowships with us next year in Hematopathology, Cytopathology, Forensic Pathology, and Transfusion Medicine.

We also say a sad goodbye to Dara Wakefield, M.D. who will be finishing her last two years of residency training at University of Florida, Gainesville.

### **USCAP Meeting 2009**

Several of our residents and fellows presented abstracts at the annual United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology Meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, in March. Shuting Bai, Emily Reisenbichler, Shi Wei, Xiaojun Wu, Mark Steciuk,

attended the spring meeting of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) Residents Forum prior to the start of the USCAP meeting.

Special congratulations to Xiaojun Wu who won the prestigious Autopsy Pathology Award for her presentation entitled "The Impact of Placental Examination in the Autopsy of the Structurally Normal Stillborn", mentor Dr. Stephanie Reilly.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

#### **ACLPS**

The ACLPS 2009 Annual Meeting will be held in June 4 – 6 in Redondo Beach, California.

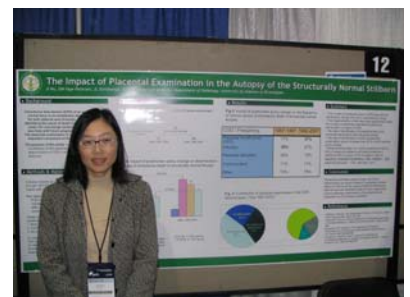
#### **CAP**

The CAP 2009 Annual Meeting will be held on October 11 – 14 in Washington, D.C.

#### **ASCP**

The ASCP 2009 Annual Meeting will be held on October 29 – November 1 in Chicago, Illinois.

### **Xiaojun Wu With Award Winning Poster**





## From the Chief Residents cont'd...

### INTRAMURAL SPORTS

Thanks to the sponsorship of Dr. Alexander and the leadership of Dara Wakefield, the Department of Pathology has an all women's intramural softball team, the *Mitotic Figurines*. Our colors are purple and pink (H&E-like).

The Department of Pathology's girl's softball season has come to an end. The Mitotic Figurines finished first in the league after regular season play and subsequently had a great showing in the playoffs. After an exceptional win over ADII in the first round of playoffs, the Figurines played in the championship game vs. the physical therapy team. Although we did

not emerge victoriously, we had a good game. The season was great fun and we showed vast improvements all along the way. We want to say a big thank you to Dr. Alexander for sponsoring the team and thanks to everyone who came out to cheer us on. I want to ask everyone to think ahead for next year: women's, men's, co-ed. Look out for next year's team: the *Roth Spots*.

Roster includes residents and staff:

Amanda Crowe "Sistercercosis # 1"  
Amberly Nunez "Adenoma Amberly"  
Arianne White "Axillarianne"  
Anna Jones "Annplastic"  
Alison Pickering "Pick's disease"  
Dara Wakefield "Desmoid Dara"

Delicia Munfus "Del 5q" – Injured Reserve

Emily Gorman "GIST Gorman"  
Emily Reisenbichler "ER/PR"  
Ginny Dailey "Sistercercosis # 2"

Jenna Bell Cook "Belladonna"  
Liz Kerr "Hematoxylin"  
Marian Kraemer "Eosin"  
Michelle Myers "Metastatic Michelle"

Lindsay Morgan Burke "LMB 45"

Qian Dai "Q-fever"  
Xiaojun Wu "X-linked Wu"  
Coach Darrell Sanders "Coach"  
Coach George Garib "DiGeorge"



The "Mitotic Figurines"

### Outgoing Reception

The 2009 Outgoing Reception will be held on Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at the Vestavia Hills Country Club.

## From the Graduate Students

### Awards:

**Liselle Bovell** (Dr. Upender Manne's laboratory) received the *Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award* for her abstract titled "MicroRNA Profiles of Colorectal Adenocarcinomas—Racial Disparity". This study was also picked as newsworthy for the AACR 100th Annual Meeting held in Denver, Colorado April 18-22, 2009.

**Joel Jules** (Dr. Xu Feng's laboratory) received the Second Place Award in the Basic Science Oral Presentations from Eastern-Atlantic Student Research Forum 2009 for his presentation entitled "The RANK Cytoplasmic IVVY 535-538 Plays an Essential Role in TNF-alpha-and IL-1-mediated Osteoclastogenesis".

### 2009 Graduate School Student Research Day

Anne Diers—1st Place—Session 6—Life Sciences  
Brian Dranka—2nd Place—Session 6—Life Sciences  
Thomas Bodenshteyn—2nd Place—Session 7—Life Sciences  
Mick Edmonds—1st Place—Session 9—Life Sciences

### Pathology Graduate Student Travel Awards

The UAB Diabetes & Training Center announced recipients of the 2009 ADA meeting Travel Awards for Graduate Students and Post-doctoral Fellows. Each will be presenting their work at the American Diabetes Association national meetings in New Orleans in June, 2009. Three students from the laboratory of Dr. Joseph Messina were chosen for awards. They are

as follows:

**Lidong Zhai** - received a travel award for two posters titled "Potential Role of Reactive Oxygen Species in Hemorrhage-induced Hepatic Insulin Resistance" and "Two Phases of Acute insulin Resistance Following Hemorrhage"

**Li Li** - received a travel award for a poster titled "Reversal of Acute Hepatic Insulin Resistance Following Injury by Angiotensin II-Receptor Blockade"

**Shaoning Jiang** - received a travel award for a poster titled "Effects of Adenovirus Infection on Insulin Signaling Molecules and Glucose Homeostasis"

### Graduate Program Director:

Rakesh P. Patel, Ph.D.

### Graduate Program Support:

Nicole Newton

934-2445

nicolen@uab.edu



MCP Graduate Program Summer 2009 Picnic, Saturday, May 30th from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. at Wald Park-Hwy 31 Vestavia Hills. For more information, please contact Nicole Newton.

## Pathology Grant Awards

The following grants were recently awarded to pathology faculty:

### PIOTR KULESZA

University of Louisville  
*Role of C/EBP-β in Endocrine-Responsive and -Resistant Breast Cancer*  
 \$43,530 8/1/08-7/31/11

### JAY M. McDONALD

Merck & Company, Inc.  
*Confidential Title*  
 \$7,500 2/19/09-6/18/09

### PETER G. ANDERSON

Univ. of Alabama Health Services Foundation  
*Virtual Microscopy for the New Integrated Medical Curriculum*  
 \$97,740 3/2/09-2/28/11

### UPENDER MANNE

Creighton University  
*EDRN Project-Prognostic Markers in Lynch Syndrome Colorectal Cancers*  
 \$36,250 3/1/08-2/28/09

### XU CAO

NIH—National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases  
*PTH-Induced Endocytosis of TβE-tail/PTHrP as a Complex*  
 \$1,576,875 2/5/09-1/31/14

### STEVEN L. CARROLL

DDO—Army Medical Research Acquisition Activity  
*Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Calmodulin Inhibitors for the Treatment of Neurofibromatosis*

*Type I-Associated Malignant Peripheral Nerve Sheath Tumors*  
 \$761,250 4/20/09-4/19/12

### PETER G. ANDERSON

UAB Scholarship of Teaching Grant Program  
*Development of Technology-Enhanced Case-Based "Learning Libraries" to Support the New School of Medicine Integrated Curriculum*  
 \$2,500

If anyone has any news items, accolades, etc. to be put in the quarterly newsletter, please send it to the Path In Focus e-mail address: [pathinfocus@uab.edu](mailto:pathinfocus@uab.edu).

Thank you.