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SOCIAL WORK FELLOWSHIP ASSISTS MSW STUDENTS
Rx FOR SUCCESS
THE PROMISE OF TECHNOLOGY
SUMMER 2017

In this issue of Carolina’s Future, you will learn about the institutional impact that gifts from alumni and friends have on our students, faculty and programs. This impact is felt beyond our borders. In February, Carolina Guardian Society members gathered in The Zone at Williams-Brice Stadium to hear four student athletes share stories about the support that Carolina has provided to help them excel both in the classroom and in athletic settings as well as their volunteer activities (page 5).

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Also in this issue, Tim and David Wise discuss why their mother, the late Yancey Kemp Wise, created the Dorothea Crouch Kemp Fellowship Fund in social work. On page 3, read about one of these fellowship recipients and the inspiring ways in which she has used the gift of an education to impact others.

With a background in social work and public health, Sue Levkoff is a social gerontologist who uses a range of communication technologies to address disparities of health among aging populations. In the Faculty Insight section (page 4), she discusses her creation of communication tools, such as apps and culturally sensitive websites, to help diverse and aging populations navigate health decisions.

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All of these donors started with small annual gifts and later increased their giving through major and deferred gifts. Gifts of any size can make an impact. Carolina changes everything through the support of loyal alumni and friends!

ELEANOR FOSTER SWARAT, LAW ’95
Associate Vice President for Development and Legal Liaison to University Foundations

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Forever to Thee,

Eleanor Foster Swarat
Named for a trailblazer

Social work fellowship assists MSW students

Tim and David Wise describe their mom as a warrior, and thanks to a fellowship established in USC’s College of Social Work in honor of her family, her strength continues to inspire others.

Yancey Kemp Wise did many things ahead of her time — a trait she came by honestly from her mother, Dorothea Crouch Kemp, who got a degree from Carolina before most women did such things. Yancey Wise blazed trails of her own as she spoke openly, honestly and often about the depression and bipolar disorder she battled for most of her adult life.

She also fought against mental illness by earning a master’s degree in social work from USC in 1981 and working as a family therapist and advocate for the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

“It’s hard for anyone who doesn’t suffer from mental illness to understand or appreciate,” says Tim Wise, a Carolina graduate who also received his law degree from the university. “Most people would just hope to get up in the morning, not necessarily go back to school and get a masters of social work.”

Yancey Wise, who died in 2014, created the Dorothea Crouch Kemp fellowship to honor her mother and help students in the College of Social Work pursue their own passions. “She definitely was a very hard-working, strong person,” says David Wise, Tim’s brother. “It was always a passion of hers to try to help others.”

One student benefitting from Yancey Wise’s generosity is Edikan Ndon, a native of Nigeria who is pursuing an MSW after realizing that her original career path — she graduated from Lander University in 2012 with a degree in exercise physiology — was not her calling. After an unsatisfying occupational therapy internship, Ndon got a job as a financial case manager at a hospital.

“I asked her, ‘What does Nigeria really need right now?’ She told me that Nigeria needed a lot of counselors because a lot of families were being displaced,” Ndon says. “At that point, it kind of clicked for me.”

To help defray graduate school costs, Ndon applied for the Dorothea Crouch Kemp fellowship, which enabled her to take part-time classes while also working. When she graduates in three years, she plans to return to Nigeria to help establish the infrastructure to build a widespread network of social support.

“I knew I wanted to go back. I just didn’t know in what capacity,” Ndon says. “It’s not something I can tackle on my own. Part of what I’m going to take from social work is the importance of mobilizing others. The work is there. We just need more people.”

Ndon’s ambition is one Yancey Wise would approve. “My mother had a passion for eliminating the stigma of mental illness and improving treatment,” Tim Wise says. “The fellowship is a great legacy for her to leave.”

SUMMER TRIVIA

In Elizabeth Cassidy West’s book, “University of South Carolina,” she notes that USC considered another mascot before settling on the gamecock. What was the other mascot, and what were the circumstances of the gamecock being chosen?

Fall 2016 Trivia Answer: The five East Coast states that send the most out-of-state freshmen are: North Carolina, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland and Georgia.
American society is going through the most important demographic transition in more than a century with far-reaching implications for the health and well-being of older adults.

With baby boomers aging rapidly, it is projected that more than 20 percent of the population will be 65 or older in 2030. While many adults make the transition to older age in relatively good health, 92 percent have one chronic disease and 72 percent have two chronic diseases, including often-debilitating conditions such as heart disease, cancer or dementia.

Research has shown that many of the chronic diseases of old age can be prevented or better managed. Nearly all older adults can benefit from increased levels of physical activity, either through regular exercise or participating in activities such as walking or bicycling. Older adults should also pay attention to their diets, reducing their salt intake while eating more nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables and whole-grains.

Maintaining brain health is also important, and active learning into old age has been shown to slow cognitive decline. However, embracing a healthy lifestyle in old age can be difficult to do on one’s own as we all need help and support in making such changes. Even if we adopt these healthy lifestyles, many people might still be afflicted with heart disease or cancer due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Emerging digital and mobile health technologies can help us have the right information about our health at the right time, better communicate with our physicians and other health professionals, and be nudged to adopt behaviors to better manage our chronic diseases.

USC’s Center of Economic Excellence in SmartHOME™ is at the cutting edge of this digital transformation in aging by bringing together faculty from computer science and engineering, public health, pharmacy, medicine, nursing and social work. This is leading to new collaborations, interdisciplinary research projects and opportunities for graduate students to participate in an emerging field at USC. These projects are designed to help older adults live independently in their homes.

SmartHOME™ is contributing to healthy aging and better care for older adults by developing new technologies, transforming care systems for providing services to the elderly, and helping us live a healthy lifestyle as we age.
Attendees of the 2017 Carolina Guardian Society Luncheon enjoyed a presentation by student-athletes, who talked about their experiences at Carolina and the impact scholarships have had on their education and lives. Held at The Zone at Williams-Brice Stadium, the annual luncheon honors donors who have made significant commitments to the university through planned gifts. Guests were treated to a panel discussion with four student-athletes and got to meet other athletes and coaches, including football coach Will Muschamp.

Presented under the theme, “University of South Carolina Athletics Providing a Championship Experience,” the students and University President Harris Pastides talked about how student-athletes devote much more time and effort to their collegiate careers than many students.

Senior men’s basketball player Justin McKie talked about growing up as a Gamecock fan and wanting to follow in the footsteps of his father, Carolina’s all-time leading scorer BJ McKie. Senior woman’s swimmer Taylor Vincent says she also grew up with the Gamecocks as her father was a member of the Carolina Band and that when she stepped on campus, she felt like she was with family.

Women’s soccer senior Chelsea Drennan spoke of her service on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, which helps bring together all student athletes, not just individual teams.

Senior football player K.C. Crosby shared how much the staff at the Dodie Academic Enrichment Center have helped him improve his study habits for success in the classroom as well as on the field.

Carolina Guardian Society chair Sherry Whatley announced at the conclusion of the luncheon that membership in the society had reached 835 and that current society members had made 10 additional gifts.

(above) Jackie M. McNeill poses with Cocky
Rx for success

Kennedy Pharmacy Innovation Center equips pharmacy students with a mindset for business.

By Megan Sexton

The majority of the students who earn pharmacy degrees from the University of South Carolina will build careers as retail pharmacists. But, as the future of health care and business changes, so does the career path for pharmacists.

Enter the Kennedy Pharmacy Innovation Center at the USC College of Pharmacy. A gift from William and Lou Kennedy helped create the center, which prepares future pharmacists to be entrepreneurs and innovators. The center is a home for collaborative research and education, combining principles of pharmacy, business and management.

“I wanted to help educate young pharmacists who are still in school about non-traditional career opportunities. Our goal is to prepare them to deal with the business world of pharmacy,” William “Bill” Kennedy says. “I hope that KPIC continues to grow. We aim to make a difference in the lives of these kids and give them opportunities that they didn’t know existed.”

Bill Kennedy graduated from the USC College of Pharmacy and is the founder of Nephron Pharmaceuticals Corp., which manufactures generic respiratory medications and medical devices. Lou Kennedy, a graduate of Carolina’s School of Journalism and Mass Communications, serves as president of Nephron, which now is located in West Columbia.

Their gift to the university established the center in 2012, opening the door to expose students to a different side of a pharmacy career.

“With health care reform, there’s always something going on. It’s an ever-changing field. That’s our mission — to equip students with the entrepreneurial skills to tackle those changes,” says Patti Fabel, interim executive director of the Kennedy center and clinical assistant professor at the College of Pharmacy. “There are over 130 pharmacy schools in the country. Students have to be more creative. Part of what we do is help them figure out their own career path.”

That includes showing students the possibilities for a pharmacy graduate. For example, the center’s annual business plan competition has helped some students — even those who initially saw themselves bound for hospital or retail pharmacy work —
realize they love the business side of pharmacy. About 60 pharmacy students, of the more than 400 on campus, are completing the business track in the college.

“The Kennedy Pharmacy Innovation Center is sparking revolutionary ideas in pharmacy education and the profession of pharmacy,” says Stephen J. Cutler, dean of the College of Pharmacy. “We’re the leading provider of pharmacy ownership education nationwide through our partnership with the National/Community Pharmacists Association. Our students learn to develop business plans and get hands-on practice with the entrepreneurship skills they’ll need to succeed.”

The center is “an effort to teach pharmacists that there are more things they can do. There is all manner of things that you can do with a fantastic pharmacy degree from the university,” Lou Kennedy says. “We knew if students could learn what we do here and see the opportunities for a Pharm.D., it would give them practical experience to help them choose what they want to do when they graduate. We want to expand the horizons for these students.”

The Kennedys stay involved with the center, attending board meetings, going to business plan competitions and hiring student interns — from pharmacy and other colleges around the university.

“We’ve used the KPIC as a catalyst for the entrepreneurial spirit. The ultimate goal is to end up with a top tier pharmacy program. We’ll be known like the international business program is known,” she says. “Bill and I have a dream of seeing the pharmacy program become best in the country.”

“My husband and I didn’t come from any great money. We are so happy to be part of the excitement at the university,” she says. “It’s important to us to help students succeed. It’s a true honor to be back home trying to further that cause. We’re often classified as a poor state, and the way we can elevate that is through education. We want to be a part of that. We both love giving back. We have a lot of pride toward our school.”

LEFT Winners of the @KennedyCenterSC business plan competition: (from left) Courtney Clark, Vy Nguyen, Michelle Simmons and Morgan Dammeron
George Thomas never planned to become a patent attorney, but a chance meeting with a U.S. Patent Office recruiter just before he graduated changed the trajectory of his career. “I hadn’t considered law school, because I didn’t think you could blend the two fields. ‘Turns out you can,” says Thomas, a Class of ’57 engineering graduate who went on to work in patent law, opening a private practice in that field more than 50 years ago that’s still going strong.

With his wife, Cathryn, ’57 education, the Thomases have established a charitable gift annuity to establish and support the Engineering/Computing and Law Program at USC. The program gives engineering students a leg up in preparing for the LSAT, law school and careers in patent law, product liability and more. A select number of top students will be named Thomas Scholars.

The Thomases live in Atlanta, but their hearts are forever with Carolina. Their gift to assist engineering-to-law students is just the latest evidence of that devotion.