

Dear Colleagues:

Fall 2007

We were saddened to learn of the death of **Dr. Clyde M. Berry**. Dr. Berry died July 16, at age 94, in Hendersonville, North Carolina. "Pioneer" is one of the words frequently used when speaking of Dr. Berry, and it is certainly an accurate description in relation to our department. He created his own industrial hygiene program to earn his doctorate from the UI in 1941. He returned in the mid-1950s to run the University's Institute



Dr. Clyde Berry



Dr. Berry (left) studies a device designed to safely clean a corn picker with its inventor Harry Selck. [Cedar Rapids Gazette]

of Agricultural Medicine, leaving the position of Chief Industrial Hygienist of Esso Standard Oil Co. He directed the IH Program at the University of Iowa until his retirement in 1991. The American Industrial Hygiene Association, which he led in 1967, has recognized his achievements with several awards, and established, with donations from Dr. Berry's former students, colleagues, friends and family, the endowed Clyde M. Berry Scholarship. In 1999, **Chandran Achutan, MS 1996, PhD 2001**, a recipient of the scholarship, recorded interviews with Dr. Berry in his home, and the video clips (which are at www.public-health.uiowa.edu/I3hsa/ClydeBerryProject.html) preserve some of his wisdom and wit.

Dr. Berry was a mentor to generations of students who went on to successful careers, including OEH Professor Kelley Donham. Kelley was guided to veterinary school by Dr. Berry and also worked at the



Dr. Berry (left) operates the IAM's "tilt table" that tested stability characteristics of small tractors and riding mowers; Dr. William McConnell (right) holds a steering tiller being tested by IAM researchers.

IAM as a UI graduate student. Kelley says, "I have never run into anyone who put that degree of energy and skill into mentoring students. He could find the best in people in a way that built you up and gave you the confidence to progress." Kelley remembers Dr. Berry as a warm and generous person, who also commanded respect with his experience and his clear ideas on how to succeed in the professional world.

This fall brings some significant changes to our faculty, involving both greetings and farewells. We are very pleased to welcome a new faculty member, **Dr. Marizen Ramirez**. Dr. Ramirez obtained her PhD and MPH degrees from UCLA's School of Public Health, after which she became an Assistant Professor of Research in the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine (Department of Pediatrics) and the Saban Research Center of Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA).



Dr. Marizen Ramirez

Dr. Ramirez's public health research has focused on children's safety and injury prevention. She has partnered with school districts in Los Angeles and throughout California to study a wide range of school safety issues including sports injuries, injuries to children in special education, violence, and emergency preparedness. With CDC support, she studied school-based emergency preparedness, using mixed analytical methods to identify and evaluate preparedness activities and perceptions in a school district in south Los Angeles. Dr. Ramirez has been inducted into the Delta Omega Honorary Society, and her research was featured in

the CHLA "2006 Research Highlights." She has received both a Dissertation Award and a CDC New Investigator Award.

OEH faculty member Dr. Corinne Peek-Asa has collaborated with Dr. Ramirez for many years. In California, they conducted several studies of traumatic injury following the Northridge Earthquake. Dr. Peek-Asa was also on the mentoring team for Dr. Ramirez's New Investigator Award. Dr. Ramirez will work with the Injury Prevention Research Center, which is directed by Dr. Peek-Asa.

At the end of October we will say farewell to a longtime OEH faculty member, **Nancy Sprince, MD, MPH**, who is retiring from the University of Iowa. Nancy came to the UI in 1990, joining the UI College of Medicine's Departments of Preventive Medicine & Environmental Health and Internal Medicine. She became director of the UI Occupational Medicine Residency Program in 1991.

Her own career as an occupational medicine physician had begun 19 years earlier, with medical training at Boston University. The primary research focus of her career—occupational lung diseases—was quite an early interest. As a medical intern, she became aware of Dr. Irving Selikoff's work on

asbestos exposure in plumbers and pipe fitters. She declared her interest when she applied for a clinical and research fellowship at Massachusetts General Hospital and was both awarded the fellowship and made director of the hospital's Beryllium Case Registry. The patients she treated in the Mass General occupational medicine clinic, many of them shipbuilders and construction workers, further stimulated Nancy's interest in the prevention of "workers' diseases," which led her to the occupational medicine residency program at Harvard. She earned her MPH there and spent the next 10 years continuing her clinical and research work at Mass General, while teaching in the Harvard Schools of Medicine and Public Health.



Dr. Nancy Sprince

Interestingly, she was an MPH student in Harvard's Education and Research Center, which was one of the first of the NIOSH ERCs. Twenty years later, Nancy would establish the 16th ERC at the UI, an accomplishment she considers "my biggest professional achievement." Since 1990 she has seen the Heartland Center for Occupational Health and Safety grow, with more than 120 graduates and current students receiving training and conducting research with ERC support. She speaks warmly of "the thrill of watching my Occupational Health course expand from just a few students to a wonderful group of 25 from multiple disciplines." Under her direction, the Center's occupational medicine residency program achieved successful re-accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in 1992, 1995, 2000, and 2006, and every graduate of the program who has taken the certifying exam of the American Board of Preventive Medicine has passed it (compared to a national pass rate of 67%). Nancy's interaction with the other directors of the nation's ERCs has also been productive. Under her leadership, their professional association persuaded NIOSH to increase its support for graduate student training, faculty development, and research infrastructure.

Over the years, Nancy expanded her research focus to include injuries among older workers and risk factors for farm-related injuries—for which she received a College of Public Health Faculty Research Award in 2003. She is a member of the Delta Omega Honor Society and has been invited to serve on two National Academy of Science (NAS) committees. Now she looks forward to "sleeping in, walks along the Iowa River, and traveling to see friends and family around the country." Fortunately for us and for the field of occupational medicine, she plan to continue consulting on several OEH grants, working on the NAS Committee on beryllium disease, and serving on students' doctoral committees.

Our good wishes also go with **Dr. Dan Anton**, who accepted a position at Eastern Washington University. Dan received his doctorate from our department in 2002 and for the past four years has directed the Ergonomics Training Program of the Heartland Center. Prior to joining our faculty he had a 16-year career in the field of physical therapy, and he will be teaching PT students in Washington. His UI students, meanwhile, will miss the outstanding teaching and mentoring skills he contributed to our ergonomics program.



Dr. Dan Anton

We had some exciting news from **Lindsay Parker, MS 2007**. In May, she started a temporary job with BP-America. As an intern in the North American Gas Business Unit, she traveled to oil and gas production sites across the US, putting her IH skills to use by conducting personal noise dosimetry, sound-level surveys, air sampling and other monitoring procedures. In less than a month, the company offered Lindsay a permanent, full-time position in the Natural Gas and Liquids Business Unit as an Industrial Hygiene Specialist for operations across New Mexico, Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana.

Wayne Sanderson, PhD, CIH, Lindsay's faculty adviser, describes her as "an outstanding student in so many ways." He explained, "She not only excelled in course work, but also supported various research studies and for much of the time she was a student, worked as an IH Technician for Genencor in Cedar Rapids."



Lindsay Parker, working to protect the health and safety of BP-America employees.



WKU President Ransdell (right) congratulates Vijay Golla.

Vijay Golla, who is completing his PhD in Industrial Hygiene, has been working since 2006 as an Assistant Professor in Public Health at Western Kentucky University (WKU). This spring he received a 2007 Diversity Academic Achievement Award, which recognizes exceptional efforts to assist students without regard to their race or ethnicity. Only one faculty member was selected for the award by the WKU Office of Equal Opportunity/504/ADA Compliance. Ms. Huda Melky, director of the Office, had observed Vijay mentoring students. "He encouraged them to work above and beyond classroom requirements," she said, "and helped them with their research. This award recognizes his commitment to all students."

I'll likely have more changes to our faculty to report in future issues, as we are in the process of hiring for three positions—two ergonomists and an occupational physician. If you or any of your colleagues might be interested in one of these positions, please let me know at craig-zwerling@uiowa.edu.

Sincerely,

Craig Zwerling, MD, PhD, MPH
Professor and Head

Department of Occupational and Environmental Health