n October 11, 2007, the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences launched its inaugural Medical Leadership Academy, an ambitious forum designed to encourage leadership development among medical students, residents and faculty. Keynote speaker and lead facilitator for the event, titled “Pathways to Leadership,” was N. Lynn Eckhert, MD ’70, DrPH, director of academic programs for Harvard Medical International, the international division of Harvard Medical School. (In conjunction with this event, a one-act play written by Eckhert about the life of Elizabeth Blackwell, America’s first female physician, was performed in Butler Auditorium for the 2007 Lawrence and Nancy Golden Lectureship in Mind-Body Medicine. See article below.)

The leadership forum, which convened after the performance of the play, brought together chief residents, members of the UB residents committee, student members of the Professional Conduct Committee, student-government representatives and junior faculty nominated by their department chairs. “You have an excellent history of people taking leadership roles at UB, or when they leave UB,” said Eckhert, who is one of two alumnus of the school to have served as chair of the Medical School Board of Visitors. “I think it’s important for physicians to look at that—to see where our expectations to follow a dream that had nothing to do with perfect embroidery stitches or a well-tended garden. One particularly poignant newspaper article she found describes Blackwell’s graduation from medical school and refers to her as “a lady alone.”

“I first heard about Blackwell’s world, the more she found herself relating to her predecessor’s struggles. As one of only 10 women in her UB medical school class in the late 1890s, she was far outnumbered by her male counterparts. During a medical rotation, Eckhert recalls the resident declaring, “I hate women in medicine.”

Right then I knew I was in for 12 weeks of a really good time,” she says. In 1984, Eckhert became the first female department chair. So I’m sure Blackwell’s story resonated with me,” says Eckhert, who later served as the medical center’s vice chancellor and dean of international and public health programs.

At Harvard Medical International, Eckhert does the sort of trailblazing work that would not doubt have resonated with Blackwell. Since joining the not-for-profit subsidiary of Harvard Medical School in 2003, she has joined colleagues in developing 50 medical education programs in 30 countries. Her work has focused on training leaders in such areas as community service, research, organizational medicine, teaching and public health. It aims to teach medical leaders how to adapt and respond to factors that impact health-care delivery in the region. These factors include hospital mergers, the growing number of underinsured and uninsured patients,

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Emergency Preparedness Exercise
Training ground for health-care practitioners

Approximately 1,500 state employees participated in a New York State Health Department training exercise November 8, 2007, on UB’s South Campus to help public health officials rehearse a public health response in the event of a medical emergency.

The state health department conducted a point-of-dispensing (POD) exercise to evaluate the state’s emergency response when rapidly delivering vaccines to nearly 1,500 state employees in a short time period.

“The department’s mass flu-vaccination exercise served as a training ground so health care practitioners will be ready for all types of public health emergencies,” says State Health Commissioner Richard E. Daines, MD.

During the exercise, state health department employees provided flu shots or Flu Mist® intra-nasal vaccine, free of charge, to state and UB employees who previously registered to get vaccinated.

In addition to administering vaccines, volunteers were assigned to help fill out forms, give people directions, keep track of supplies or perform other essential tasks.

“Every county in New York State has already identified locations that could serve as PODs for local residents, if necessary,” Daines explains. “This event is part of the department’s public health preparedness initiative that is improving New York’s ability to respond to a naturally occurring or man-made health crisis. Preparedness is crucial, and we are committed to enhancing our readiness in every way possible.

“In a true emergency, we’ll need to ensure that state employees whose jobs are critical to protect public health and safety continue to have the ability to provide services and care to those in need. We must be prepared to respond quickly with antibiotics, antiviral medications or vaccines to stop the spread of disease.”

UB’s participation in the exercise involved much more than simply serving as the host site, according to David L. Duanas, MD, PhD, UB vice president for health sciences. UB worked closely with the state Department of Health to organize the exercise and encouraged UB employees to participate as exercise volunteers and recipients of flu vaccinations.

“UB’s participation in this very important event reflects our longstanding commitment to improving the health and well-being of the Western New York community,” Duanas says. “The goals of this exercise complement the goals of our UB 2020 strategic vision, which calls for leveraging UB research strengths in health and wellness, civic engagement and disaster mitigation, among other strengths, to help solve some of the most pressing problems of our community and the world at large.”

For more on New York State’s emergency preparedness efforts, visit the state health department’s website at www.nyhealth.gov.

--Jeffrey Hammond

Mary Beth Quine vaccinates Ernest Sternberg, professor of urban and regional planning.

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Eckhert leads a small-group discussion with students from a variety of health-science backgrounds.

and physician-researchers need to take, we must be content with the terms imposed on us,” he says.

Through small discussion groups, forum participants explored characteristics of an effective medical leader, compared experiences and challenged each other to contemplate the direction of their own leadership. Another goal was to link emerging medical leaders with established leaders in their field who can serve as potential mentors.

“I have been impressed with the talent and commitment of our faculty, staff and students,” notes Cain. “Our inaugural Leadership Academy further stimulates their growth and leadership potential by exploring components of medical leadership.”

Still, moonlighting as a playwright comes in as a close second. Since its premier in 2005, “A Lady Aline” has been presented at the medical schools, at the annual meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges and for several historical societies.

Its Buffalo debut took place after Pam Golden, daughter of Nancy and the late Lawrence Golden, MD ’46, happened to see the play at a library in Marshfield, Massachusetts. It was only when she approached the actress who portrays Blackwell, Linda Gray Kelley, that Golden learned the playwright was a UB medical school alumna. Not only that—Eckhert’s father, brother and uncle are graduates of the medical school as well.

“It was like it was meant to be,” Golden says. “The success of “A Lady Aline” has emboldened Eckhert to begin another play, this one about the discovery of the birth control pill. To prepare her for the rigors of crafting dialogue, she took a playwriting course at Sarah Lawrence College. Once she’s completed her draft, she plans to have it critiqued by members of the writing group she joined while writing the first play.

“I’ve had a fantastic career in medicine—just extraordinary,” Eckhert reflects. “But this has given me a wonderful new world of people with whom to work and collaborate.”

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the region’s aging population and the influx of biotech companies into the area.

According to Dean Michael E. Cain, MD, lessons learned from the forum will help medical school leaders achieve the strategic initiatives outlined in UB 2020, the institution-wide plan for achieving enduring academic excellence.

“If we don’t learn to understand what our patients need and what research projects and research directions we as physicians

countries on five continents. Collaborating with faculty and administrative leaders at universities in the Dominican Republic and Lebanon who are establishing medical schools within their respective regions. “It’s very stimulating work with very bright people who are innovative thinkers trying to do the best for their students,” says Eckhert, a pediatrician who has a doctorate of public health from Johns Hopkins University. “It doesn’t get much better than that.”

“UB’s participation in this very important event reflects our longstanding commitment to improving the health and well-being of the Western New York community,” Dunn says. “The goals of this exercise complement the goals of our UB 2020 strategic vision, which calls for leveraging UB research strengths in health and wellness, civic engagement and disaster mitigation, among other strengths, to help solve some of the most pressing problems of our community and the world at large.”

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Winter 2008
The Ira G. Ross Eye Institute Opens

By Lois Baker

Located on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the institute is an integral part of the university’s major initiative to grow by 40 percent between now and the year 2020, in part by creating a more vibrant presence in downtown Buffalo.

The institute is dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of adults and children with diseases of the eye and the vision system. While its research component will be located on UB’s South (Main Street) Campus, patient care and training of physicians will take place at 1176 Main Street. That work will be overseen by faculty in the university’s Department of Ophthalmology, who constitute University Ophthalmology Services, a practice plan that is part of UBMD.

The affiliate Olmsted Center, to which the institute is physically linked, provides vision services, rehabilitation, job training and social services for those with visual disabilities.

The close collaboration between the institute and the center will make it possible to meet the needs of the visually impaired at one location, an approach to vision care thought to be unique in the U.S.

“We believe this is one of the first true collaborations between a medical school department and a social-service agency,” said James D. Reynolds, MD, professor and chair of the UB Department of Ophthalmology, who heads the institute.

“Our work will span the entire spectrum of vision care, from community medicine to high-powered research.”

In a program marking the opening of the institute, he noted: “This arrangement opens up a new world of possibilities for clinical research,” citing as examples potential studies of rehabilitation protocols and the causes of macular degeneration.

The institute would not have been possible without the vision and philanthropic leadership of Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted, MD, a 1939 graduate of UB’s School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, who died in September 2007. An ophthalmologist and nationally renowned champion for the blind and visually impaired, she offered a $3 million challenge grant to UB in 2003 to establish the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute and subsequently followed up with an additional $1 million challenge grant.

Olmsted Ross provided a major gift to the Blind Association of Western New York in 1999 to renovate its facility, which now bears her name.

The institute is named in honor of her late husband, Ira G. Ross, who was an innovative scientist and engineer responsible for establishing aerodynamic and in-flight simulation techniques that still are used in testing commercial and military aircraft. He was head of Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory, which became Calpian and is now Veridian.

Olmsted Ross’ challenges were met through additional major gifts, including $1.2 million from the John R. Oishis Foundation; $400,000 from the Lions Club of Western New York, which is funding the institute’s curating-edge diagnostic technology; $1 million from the New York State Senate; $225,000 from the Margaret E. Wendi Foundation; $220,000 from Research to Prevent Blindness; and $150,000 from the Cummings Foundation. The City of Buffalo has provided $300,000 to enable the final completion of the project.

“The Ira G. Ross Eye Institute is destined to be a leading center of its kind, and a model for medical research and clinical care,” UB president John B. Simpson said at the institute’s grand opening program. “The vision behind this center brings community outreach, patient care and leading-edge medical research together in innovative ways.

“For UB, the Ross Eye Institute represents a very significant extension of our longstanding commitment to ground-breaking research with a far-reaching public impact,” Simpson noted. “For our Western New York community and for the patients it serves within and beyond our region, the institute represents access to the most advanced clinical research, diagnosis and treatment available.

“There is really no distinction between those two outcomes,” he added. “The future of our university and our community are really one and the same.”

Praising Olmsted Ross’ philanthropic leadership, Simpson noted that her vision for the institute “is perfectly aligned with the vision that guides UB as a public research university: a vision of excellence that is grounded in our commitment to improving the quality of life for people in our region and beyond.

We are deeply grateful for her leadership in advancing this critical university mission.”

Michael E. Cain, MD, dean of the UB School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, described the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute as “an excellent example of the three interwoven aspects of a strong medical school—medical research, teaching and clinical care.”

“Dr. Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted Ross knew the value of high-quality facilities for research and teaching, and she thought carefully about the location of a clinical site for patients with eye disease,” he noted. “Her determination to locate this significant medical resource in downtown Buffalo is a testament to her lifelong support of her community and, in recent years, to her commitment to the medical school and the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

“The Ross Eye Institute simply would not have come to fruition without Dr. Olmsted Ross’ vision and philanthropy,” Cain added. “Today we recognize the results of her bold leadership and unflappable spirit—and what she has made possible for generations of medical researchers and students and the patients who will ultimately benefit from their research and care.”

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Ira G. Ross Eye Institute is another important addition to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, which continues to evolve and fulfill its promise of contributing positively to Buffalo’s growing health-care corridor,” Brown said.

I commend President Simpson and the University at Buffalo for continuing to expand and strengthen the university’s presence in the medical campus, as well as elsewhere in Buffalo. The institute will play an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of adults and children with diseases affecting their vision.”

The new two-story home of the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute is located in newly created space in the Louis Engel Jr. Building, which originally housed Engel’s Studebaker truck and auto dealership and, in more recent times, was the home to another auto dealership.

The first floor contains a large reception area and adjacent eyewear center, the Lions Diagnostic Center, several state-of-the-art imaging and diagnostic facilities, 12 exam rooms, laser and minor surgery area, plus faculty offices and a conference room.

The second floor pediatric reception area contains video-game stations and other amusements for children, eight exam rooms, a pathology lab and a surgical lab used for resident training, and computer stations, plus offices and conference rooms.

To provide care for Buffalo’s underserved populations, it has been rewarding for me to play a role in making this project become a reality and part of UB’s growing investment in downtown Buffalo.”

The Buffalo mayor Byron W. Brown presented Simpson and Reynolds with a check for $300,000, representing the city’s commitment to the project.

“The opening of the Ira G. Ross Eye Institute is an important addition to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, which continues to evolve and fulfill its promise of contributing positively to Buffalo’s growing health-care corridor,” Brown said.

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FROM LEFT: Michael E. Cain, MD, dean of the School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences; Helen M. Coppess, PhD, president of the Medical Alumni Association; and Francis J. Klocke, MD, 2007 Distinguished Medical Alumnus.

The following is a list of award recipients and a description of the awards received.

**Departmental Awards**

The departments of the school have established awards to recognize meritorious performance as well as outstanding achievement in other curriculum-related activities.

**Biochemistry**

Allana Marie Krolikowski, '11, received the Edward L. Carvajal Award, established by the Department of Biochemistry to recognize the student with the highest average in biochemistry.

**Microbiology/Immunology**

Sameer Mathavan Deshmukh, '09, received the Witebsky Award, which is given to the student with the highest average in the field of Microbiology.

**Pathology and Anatomical Sciences**

Amy Lynn Zielinski, '10, received the James A. Gibbon, Wayne J. Arvel and Oliver P. Jones Award, which is given by the Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences to the student with the highest combined average in the anatomical sciences. The award is named in honor of past chairs of the department.

**Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society**

The Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) is a national organization dedicated to supporting academic excellence and upholding excellence in the medical profession. It is the only national medical honor society in the world, and students are selected on the basis of scholarship and integrity. This year's inductees to the AOA are:

**Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA)**

Jenna Lynn Ayres
Meghan K. Barnhart
Adam R. Brod
Anthony John Cerminara *
Jennifer Gaborski-Paul
Matthew Michael Fernandez
Katherine Jean Deshmukh
Samantha M. Fooshee
Rachel Marie Friedman
Jennifer Jillian Gall
Anthony John Cerminara *
Roberta Lynne Metzler
Lori Marie Wittman
Amy Beth Devlin
Lauren M. Duford *
Katherine Jean Deshmukh
Matthew Michael Fernandez
Mariam Imnadze
Praveen Kadimcherla *
Sameer Madhav Deshmukh
Vitoria A. Lelling
Andrew W. Mains
Benjamin P. McGarry
Francis James O'Connell
Jennifer Helen Paul
Rebecca Lynn Zielinski *
David A. Salyer *
Helena Anse Southerland *
Alan Vainer
Lori Marie Wittman
Stephen T. Wu
Justin Mark Zbrzezny

*Donors inducted as juniors

**First Year**

Joshua Abraham
Gregory S. Campbell
Erik Elizabeth Conway
Mary Kathleen Craycroft
Daniel C. Dearborn
Sarah K. Doyle
Xiaohong Fan
Joseph J. Farak
Simon D. Feng-Kai Peng
Jennifer S. Gall
Katherine Ann Glick
Elizabeth Anne Geiger
Colin M. Hauser
Aleen W. Hu
Darren Michael Hoffman
Sara A. Hynka
Zachary Alexander Kasperek
Alexander Kotwain
Allana Marie Krolikowski
Jennifer H. Lee
Evan E. Lesh
Teresa P. Lester
Jia Liu
Natalie J. Mason
Seo Y. Moon
Mohammad Goharshadi Doosta
Jeff Patel
Joseph H. Patel
Melissa Lynn Rayfield
Robert P. Rogers
Aman Shama
Jennifer Y. Suhr
Lori Marie Steel
Oskar Tanweer
Sarah A. Tischler
Ashley J. Wentworth
Amy Lynn Zielinski

**Second Year**

Paul Thomas Albus
Girish Shyam Atluri
Rebecca Bhatti
Sreekumar Raman
Turken Burbarnek
Colleen Elizabeth Bell
Laura E. Brandt
Kelly D. Bergou
Robert Gargani-Berne
Marieka Bruni
Elizabeth S. Butler
James C. Giroi
Sameer Madhav Deshmukh
Gottie Parnamand 
Amy Lynn Castle
Agnieszka M. Gerad
Swati Gopalakrishnan

**Third Year**

Jenna Lynn Ayres
Megan K. Barnhart
Adam R. Brod
Anthony John Cerminara *
Michael John Cipolla
Jennifer E. Costello
Jillian Jean Delmont
Jenna B. Durell
Sara A. Hylwa
Evan S. Hylwa
Elizabeth Anne Gruber
Jennifer S. Gall
Jan R. Wong

**Fourth Year**

Rameous T. Knight, '10, and Amy Lynn Zielinski, '10, received the McGraw-Hill Book Awards, which is given to the two highest-ranking students in the first-year curriculum.

**Society News**

The departments of the school have established awards to recognize meritorious performance as well as outstanding achievement in other curriculum-related activities.

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Allana Marie Krolikowski, '11, received the Edward L. Carvajal Award, established by the Department of Biochemistry to recognize the student with the highest average in biochemistry.

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**American Medical Student Association**

Ben Briggs, '13 (MD/PhD), received the Marek Zaleski's high standards of scholarship in the department.

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Mohammad Goharshadi Doosta
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